

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Setting up of EU – CAMEROON YOUTH SOUNDING BOARD

#### EUthCAM



#### 1. Context:

Young people are important change makers and essential partners in the implementation of the European Consensus on Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The European Union (EU) and its member States (#TeamEurope) recognise their creative and innovative potentials and abilities. Investing in, and working with, by and for youth, is of paramount importance to build stronger, more legitimate, peaceful and democratic societies, where human rights and the rule of law are respected, while promoting sustainable and inclusive development and where no one is left behind. As such, it is highly important that we ensure the meaningful inclusion and active participation of youth at all levels of society, the economy and politics.

By 2030, the world's youth population aged 15-24 will have grown to nearly 1,3 billion; which corresponds to just over 15% of the projected total world population of 8,5 billion. In Sub-Saharan Africa, youth population (15-35 years old) is expected to account for 42% in 2030. In Cameroon this youth bulge is estimated at 36,28% of total population, with a median age in Cameroon of 18 years.

#### 2. Challenges face by young population:

Young generations are too often confronted with important challenges including poverty, socio-economic and political exclusion at all levels. Youth's potential is also hindered by early pregnancies, lack of decent work opportunities, low wages, and the consequences of climate change, human rights violations and abuses and shrinking democratic and civic spaces.

This is a population that faces increasing difficulties in accessing basic social services in both urban and rural areas, is exposed to conflict, violent extremism, rights violations, gender-based violence and has limited opportunities to make their voices heard in the public sphere. Every year, about 400,000 young people enter the labour market, of whom only a small minority will find decent formal employment.

The **June 2020 European Council Conclusions on Youth in External Action** give a clear mandate to ensure that youth is meaningfully involved in shaping EU policies and actions. One important conclusion relates to building a structured framework for youth consultations in EU Delegations in partner countries.

Recognising the role of youth in shaping the world of tomorrow and in order to help young people face these challenges, the **European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for External Affairs adopted on 4 October 2022 an Action Plan for Youth in EU External Action**. This plan covers the period 2022-2027. It is the first ever framework for action for a strategic partnership with youth to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future.

The plan aims to strengthen the effective empowerment and participation of young people in EU external policies. By giving children and young people the tools and opportunities they need to reach their full potential, it aims to put young people at the centre of the EU's external action for sustainable development, equality and peace, and to give them a real voice in shaping solutions for a better future.

### **3. Mechanism for youth consultation:**

The EU Delegation in Cameroon has been having regular consultations with youth and youth organisations under the umbrella of the wider Civil Society consultations, whether for preparations of the #TeamEurope roadmap for engagement with Civil Society or for developing the priorities for the calls for proposals under the Civil Society and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) budget lines. In Cameroon, it has been noted that several Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are led by young generations. However, it is now felt that we need to invest in specific mechanisms and structures to support systematic youth consultations and in decision process on priority areas of common interests. It is in this context that the EU Delegation in Cameroon is proposing to set up #TeamEurope-Cameroon Youth Sounding Board along the same line of the Youth Sounding Board set up in the EU Commission Headquarters to establish a well-structured dialogue with the young generation.

### **4. Objective of the #TeamEurope-Cameroon Youth Sounding Board:**

In a spirit of continued engagement with young people as the space for youth to act still remains narrow, the objective of the YSB is to build trust between EU and Cameroon young women and men, and create opportunities for us together with our partners (*government, non-state actors and private sector*) to recognise and leverage the potential of youth in bringing change, in contributing to the achievements of the SDGs, in addressing challenges of common interests among others.

### **5. Selection of youth representatives**

It is proposed to set up a local YSB comprising of representatives of youth and representatives of youth organisations who intervene in key areas of engagement covering the above-cited challenges faced by the youth.

Participants will be selected using a hybrid approach :

To ensure diversity, all motivated young people are welcome to apply, including those with less experience. Candidates with special needs, disabilities, in situation of vulnerability or from minority groups are encouraged to apply.

#### Option A. INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION

Individual candidates can apply to become members of the YSB. They will be selected based on:

- Experience in youth participation and youth empowerment;
- Outreach and youth engagement skills and experience, including work with youth organisations or youth-led initiatives and experience with youth that are in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations;
- Communication skills including language skills and experience with traditional and social media
- Creativity and motivation, including ideas for YSB functioning and activities.

#### Option B. NOMINATION BY AN ORGANISATION

Youth organisations can nominate two individuals, preferably with a diverse profile both in terms of age and gender, to become members of the YSB. Each nominated candidate must apply individually.

Candidates will be requested to upload a pdf-scan of the signed nomination letter and provide further information about their organisation. The selection will be based on two aspects:

(1) the profile of the organisations, taking into account:

- Experience in strengthening youth participation and contribution to policy processes (consultations, advocacy)
- Potential for outreach to youth (membership base, networks, possibility to reach vulnerable and marginalized youth)

(2) the profile of the nominated candidates, based on the same criteria as described under option A

(Please find the individual application form and the nomination letter template on our website)

Representatives of young populations would be intervening in key fields of EU engagement, but not limited to them:

- a) Youth participation and empowerment;

- b) Good Governance, Democracy, fight against corruption, fairness of the system;
- c) Human Rights including women rights, children rights, gender and sexual minorities, Persons with Disabilities;
- d) Gender Equality, Women and Girls Empowerment;
- e) Education and job opportunities, self-development;
- f) Fight against poverty and social exclusion;
- g) Migration;
- h) Peace and social cohesion;
- i) Climate Change, biodiversity (fauna/flora and natural ecosystems), sustainable Agriculture (food resilience), energy and infrastructure;
- j) Protection of the environment;
- k) Health

## **6. Composition of the Youth Sounding Board and Frequency of meeting**

It is proposed that the YSB be meeting at least twice yearly. Ideally, the EU Ambassador would chair it. In addition to youth representatives, we foresee the participation of internal staffs of the EUD from Cooperation and Political Sections. As we are promoting a #TeamEurope approach, representatives of Member States and their agencies will be invited to join the YSB.

The outcome of the YSB could feed discussions during the annual structured political dialogue.

## **7. Implementing modalities**

### *i) Tenure*

The Youth Sounding Board (YSB) members will serve for a period of 24 months. A member of the YSB can cease to be a member at any time before the expiration of the 24 months period.

### *ii) Administration of YSB activities*

The YSB will meet at least twice yearly. Meetings can be held virtually or physically. Additional follow-up meetings can be called by the EUD or by the YSB when the need arises.

The EUD will organize an induction meeting to introduce the YSB concept to the members, refine its objectives and functions with input from the members. After the first meeting, it is proposed that the YSB develops a document with Terms of Reference, Operating Rules and Board Structure, in which they establish who will speak on their behalf, who will be responsible for following up on action points, and address possible other internal transparency issues. The EUD will clarify that being part of the YSB is an unpaid role and its members are not authorized to speak on behalf of the Delegation.

The YSB will also have to define a roadmap with a dedicated calendar, in order to achieve the objectives it has set up for its mandate and action.

The EUD will organize a meeting at the end of the first operational year to evaluate overall performance and suggest changes in the YSB structure if needed.

The YSB may organize themselves and arrange their own preparatory or evaluation meetings.

The EUD and the YSB will be responsible for the administration of the YSB activities, including taking minutes of meetings, developing meeting agendas and logistics.

### *iii) Communication and Visibility*

The EUD and the YSB shall ensure effective communication and visibility of the activities of the YSB. This will help to raise awareness on the purpose of the engagement of youth in the EU's programming in Cameroon. To increase diversity and inclusion, it may be considered to use outreach strategies that do not rely on social media only. This could be done for example through schools and universities, youth organizations and peer leaders, and through community radio.

### *iv) Costs*

Reimbursable costs envisaged are meals, venue for organization of the meetings and any other logistics (travel expenses, organization of webinars etc). Funding will be obtained through EU financial instruments.

Capacity-building opportunities, such as training, workshops, and networking events will always be offered if funds are available.

A certificate of recognition or appreciation will be provided to all members for their contributions to the YSB

### *v) Monitoring and Evaluation*

At the end of each meeting, minutes will be prepared and agreed upon, identifying the next steps to be implemented and with clearly assigned roles of responsibility. The minutes will be consistent with the YSB roadmap, which will be used as a Monitoring and Evaluation tool for the YSB.

For monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the YSB on youth policies and actions the team:

- Develop a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework with specific indicators.
- Conduct regular surveys and assessments of youth representatives' experiences and the effectiveness of the YSB.
- Establish a feedback mechanism for youth representatives and other stakeholders

## **8. Guiding principles**

- Information will be shared in a youth-friendly way, through use of a language that is clear and in an environment of open communication.
- Clarity is needed on the purpose of young people's participation: they need to know what they are contributing to and for what purpose. This includes identification of outcomes for them, for the policymakers, for the community, and for society. Targets, milestones and limits of the participatory process need to be clearly set.

- Consultations need to be regular and the consultation process should be permanent or cyclical.
- Any consultation process needs a follow-up consultation after recommendations have been formulated to see how to translate them into actions (this step is often missing).
- In order to assure meaningful participation, young people should be involved in the process in a timely way, and when possible from the beginning of a policy cycle.
- Consultations will be more real if they are interesting e.g. in-person meetings, trainings, programmes, workshops to connect young people. This includes having meetings between young people and policymakers to discuss issues directly.
- Meaningful consultations should involve local organisations and other youth organisations, the EUD needs to invest in the ecosystem that young people build between each other.
- It will also be considered to connect the Cameroon YSB with other YSB to promote peer review, lesson learning and to contribute to the capacity-building objective.