**the civil society fund**

**citizen participation intervention**

Application text

1. **Objective and relevance**

***Development Objective:***

Peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections seasons in the three most conflict-prone regions of northern Ghana.

***Immediate Objectives:***

1. CAPACITY BUILDING: Diverse youth have built capacity and gained skills needed to facilitate community cohesion in preventing conflict and electoral violence
2. YOUTH COLLABORATION AND ACTION: Youth organisations have deepened their leadership role in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in northern Ghana, through voluntary participation, collaboration and networking

An important remark to the objective of voluntary participation, collaboration and networking is the issues of young people in the affected areas being both part of the problem and part of the solution. The youth are being mobilized for both good and bad causes, fighting each other inside and between the three operational areas. Existing only sporadic youth-led efforts spark the need to enhance synergy and collaboration, for stronger impact and civil organisation among youth, building resilience towards negative mobilisation efforts. The project thus seeks to change the role of the youth to be positive actors in peace building.

**Overall problem to be addressed**

The main problem the project seeks to address is the recurring conflict and violence during election time in the northern part of Ghana, specifically in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region, West Gonja Municipality in the Savannah Region, and Bolgatanga Municipality in Upper East Region. Election time every 4th year represent a high risk to become a channel for all kinds of conflict to rise and cause promotion for different hidden agendas in the area; be it tribal, religious, land dispute and others. Youth in the area have not previously been part of the election process, neither formally (as election observers) or informally through coordinated youth-led activities promoting peace.

**Background and Analysis**

As one of the few African countries that has not experienced large-scale violence or civil war since independence and the acceptance of democracy, Ghana is generally considered a stable and peaceful country within the volatile West African sub-region. It has even played an important role in peacekeeping assignments in other countries and welcomed a significant number of refugees from war-shattered West African states. Despite being seen as a beacon of hope for democracy, good governance and stability in Africa, Ghana is still plagued by pockets of violence emanating from ethnic tensions, resource based conflict, religious differences, chieftaincy disputes and political mayhem that has claimed lives and destroyed the homes and property of many victims. The most persistent conflicts that have resulted in repeated violence are found in Ghana’s three northernmost regions.

Much is known about the specific location, type (ethnic, political, religious, lack of education etc.), causes and drivers of conflict as well as the actors and their motivations and interests. However, the conflict resolution and management interventions implemented in northern Ghana have yielded only short term stability partly because they have not addressed the root causes of the conflict such as poverty, unemployment, human rights abuses, weak governance, and inequality (and encompassed in the term inequality, feelings that local residents have described as struggles for recognition, respect, and self-esteem). If the root causes of conflict are not addressed, there is little hope that the temporary peace will hold.

Mitigating these root causes of conflict is a long-term objective which involves different stakeholders - and with a scope larger than the capacity of this smaller project, which can mostly address and contribute to the solutions. It will involve the promotion of inclusive development which can potentially reduce inequalities between groups and help diminish the likelihood of violent conflict. But to even be able to address the root causes of conflict in a meaningful way, a relatively safe and stable environment is necessary. It will be necessary to work with community leaders from all age groups who have been trained and sensitized regarding the importance of peacebuilding for the future and development of the community.

**The Need to Engage Youth**

YES-Ghana hosts the Voices of Youth Coalition compromised by youth led organisations all over the country. Youth groups and organisations from the areas mentioned have raised their concern about the conflict prone situation in the north and their role, especially in 2020 being an election year. They thus asked YES-Ghana to assist them with a peace-building effort, that can gather the youth in the regions for the joint cause. During the last quarter of 2019, YES-Ghana conducted an assessment to validate the causes of conflict in the areas and to identify how the youth population is both involved and affected. For this assessment, YES-Ghana held a series of meetings with key stakeholders in the peace architecture in the three target areas, including traditional authorities, local government officials, religious leaders, NGOs and other local groups in Tamale metropolis, West Gonja municipality and Bolgatanga municipality. Including of course the youth-led organisations, both within and beyond the VoY Coalition.

In all three locations, stakeholders identified similar key drivers in conflict and key actors driving conflict and supported secondary data on conflict in Ghana. The most common drivers included chieftaincy issues due to lack of succession plans; land disputes; political differences; distrust in the judicial system and negative portrayal of political leaders in the media. Youth were highlighted as a key group of influence since some have been easily manipulated by politicians and community leaders to engage in conflict for the gain of a particular group, most often political parties. Furthermore, the youth are among the most vulnerable due to lack of employment, inadequate educational opportunities and a low level of awareness of electoral laws and processes, including their own participation and potential roles. The key actors identified as responsible for instigating and perpetuating conflict included youth, youth groups associated with each political party, traditional leaders, politicians, and opinion leaders.

While identifying youth as a key population often responsible for incidences of conflict and violence, stakeholders also acknowledged that these youth acts are usually coordinated by adults. In addition, stakeholders identified youth and the influencing groups as having the largest potential for promoting peaceful environments, especially around the upcoming 2020 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Further evidence supporting the use of an approach that engages youth in promoting peace is found in the 2012 UNDP conflict mapping study that reported that temporary and relative peace has been maintained in northern Ghana for three main reasons – military presence; cooperation among some residents to report potential sources of conflict to authorities before they occur and the willingness of some parts of the youth not to be persuaded to engage in violence.[[1]](#footnote-1)

During the assessment, stakeholders verified that the most significant development concern in the Northern, Savannah and Upper East regions of Ghana is recurrent violent conflict that impedes development initiatives and has the potential to create wider instability. They confirmed that the months leading up to Ghana’s Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in December 2020 are expected to be a period of heightened tensions with increased risks of violence between conflicting parties in that specific part of the country.

It is believed that if latent conflicts are fueled by opportunists and self-interested parties seeking to gain political support and consolidate power, as has happened in the past, existing conflicts could easily erupt in violence. Stakeholders also said there is widespread concern that many idle and unemployed youth will again be manipulated by adults to engage in illicit and violent activities intended to intimidate voters and political opponents as has happened previously. Cases were cited of previous elections-related violence when youth were suspected of accepting payment from politicians to set houses or crops on fire to hurt opponents and warn others of the consequences of not supporting a specific party.

While stakeholders initially identified three main domains of change based on the regional peacebuilding needs, it is not possible to include all the interventions and objectives that were outlined in the assessments, in this project, which will be piloting youth engagement for peace. Stakeholders confirmed the lack of inclusion of youth in formal peace institutions and processes and agreed that idle youth being manipulated by political parties and other actors to engage in violence could instead be trained to contribute to the peacebuilding process.

Based on the above assessment and the urge expressed from the local youth organisations, the decision was made to focus on the immediate priority of peaceful elections and the most accessible avenues for creating an environment where activities promoting peaceful and violence-free elections are highly visible. Participants in the assessment agreed on the need to intensify their work with youth and counteract the continued socialization of youth into violent behavior by inviting youth to a positive role in elections and local peacebuilding processes. The youth-led organisations part of the VoY Coalition further confirmed that shared action and collaboration across the three selected areas would indeed be helpful and increase impact. The context for the project is to a high extent need driven and youth-led, with local anchorage.

1. **Partnership/partners**

**100% for the Children** (100%) works towards improving the living conditions and strengthen the rights of the most vulnerable children and youth in Kenya and Ghana. 100% works particularly from a rights-based approach focusing on access to basic services for marginalized groups among children and youth, but also influence, through advocacy and capacity building of key actors, to participate as active citizens. 100% engages actively in capacity building and advocacy activities with all local partners, where relevant – increasing its development orientation, but keeping a needed service delivery part that attracts different target groups, among both partners, donors and members. 100% has moved from a previously dominating child perspective to a strengthened youth perspective, where the focus is on young people actively shaping their societies, through youth leadership, increased participation, capacity building, campaign and advocacy work, peer to peer efforts etc. CISU supported initiatives like Unheard Voices (with CAS Ghana), the I AM campaign (with WEMA, Kenya) and the REPOSITION project (with YES-Ghana) reflect the peer to peer based advocacy focus. Information activities in Denmark involving local partners in Ghana and Kenya include the Poetic Empowerment project and the recent ‘treasure hunt’ with Danish children tracing the positive implementation of SDG’s in Ghana. Notably, 100% works closely with Danish educational institutions, who send students as interns. Most often, these students become part of the volunteer base of 100% and take part in the project work.

As such, 100% has an innovative approach in how to couple its development efforts in Ghana and Kenya with new avenues of information work and increased popular participation in Denmark, reaching beyond normal target groups. Furthermore, 100% is actively engaged in the SDG agenda, aligning all its projects to relevant SDGs and working with its partners to strengthen this focus through youth participation in SDG efforts. 100% has two daily employees and a part time accountant, supported by freelancing project consultants, an active board and broad volunteer base.

**YES-Ghana** is an ECOSOC-accredited NGO operating from its main office in Accra with supporting coordination points in all regions of the country. YES-Ghana’s programming is three-pronged, with a focus on Youth Participation and Active Citizenship, Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship and Youth Policy and Governance. Integral to YES-Ghana’s programmatic focus is training and capacity building, with notable investments in youth training on peace building and conflict resolution. YES-Ghana has previously hosted youth peace camps and youth-led peace building initiatives in the run up to and directly after the 2008, 2012 and 2016 general elections, successfully mobilizing more than 1,000 youth in conflict hotspots within the northern and Volta regions. Such work is always driven by a youth-centered and youth-inclusive approach. YES-Ghana has promoted the training, capacity building and active participation of youth in strategies for conflict transformation – including but not limited to community sensitization, engagement with traditional leaders, youth-led consultations and nationwide conferences, to ensure sustained peace and active youth participation in their target communities. Transcending service delivery, YES-Ghana has prioritized conflict resolution and peace building as a key national policy concern in its landmark policy document published in October 2012: The Youth Manifesto (funded by CISU). Curated by youth members of its 40,000+ member strong Voices of Youth Coalition, the Manifesto provided comprehensive policy recommendations on conflict prevention as well as suggested actions for youth development organizations, youth leaders and wider networks of influence to commit to delivering peace building and conflict resolution trainings for young people in the promotion of intercultural dialogue, civic education and mutual respect. With the Voices of Youth Coalition as the main implementing arm of its activities, YES-Ghana as a national wide organisation is supporting members of the coalition to address particular development needs, where a youth driven intervention can bring desired change and results, showing youth as key actors in the development of Ghana, mobilizing and empowering youth to organize, participate and influence, from the local to the national level.

**The nature of the partnership**

It is a strategic decision for 100% to expand its partnership base to include stronger and more experienced partners as 100% work aim to work strategically with systemic and structural changes through advocacy interventions – which at the same time assist in pushing agendas for its smaller partners and projects. YES-Ghana represents a strong partner, with a shared interest in youth and advocacy, bearing capacity and experience from national wide projects.

Having been informal partners since 2010 based on a shared institutional focus on young people’s involvement and empowerment, YES-Ghana and 100% have worked on smaller activities, like preparatory work in an Accra dumpsite, with the aim of developing a project securing the rights for working children. YES-Ghana has acted as local partner for the ‘Recycling to the South’ project of 100%, utilizing its Accra base and political contacts, and has been part in ‘Reframing the Message’ activities, together with other partners of 100% in Ghana. Subsequently, the relationship between YES-Ghana and 100% was escalated when the partners decided to collaborate through direct CISU funding, including CISU funded projects between CAS Ghana and 100%, where YES-Ghana continues to provide technical support. Currently the ‘Reposition’ project is ongoing and both partners engage in the successful implementation of activities, like co-facilitating the recent SDG Youth Academy.

Also, the SDG Youth Essay Competition had 550 entries from young Ghanaians, giving 100% direct access to the dreams and aspirations of the youth in Ghana, which have added strength to the work in Denmark as well, working with Danish high school students on SDG activities. As expected, this pilot project has drawn the partners closer together and have enriched mutual learning and ambitions. Indeed, this first CISU-funded collaboration is what both partners needed to embark on the shared journey that the two organisations believe will last for long, if the missions and objectives of the two organisations continue to be in the same direction. When the ‘Reposition’ and its succeeding projects aim primarily for content issues, the SDG’s, youth input to and dialogue in election agendas, National Youth Policy etc., this current project is targeted the form and basic conditions for young people to take part.

**Other partners**

The partnership between 100% and YES-Ghana for the implementation of this proposed Young Peace Ambassadors initiative will benefit tremendously from key stakeholders in the existing peace architecture in the target locations. YES-Ghana always aim to work through a multi-stakeholder approach, to secure the collective ownership and sustainability of each of its interventions. The relation to these stakeholders builds on partly YES-Ghana’s recent assessment for project preparation and for some of them previous cooperation, but also the cases of some of the local youth-led organisations and their partnership with some of the stakeholders in tackling the menace of conflict in northern Ghana. Among them are government institutions (such as National Commission for Civic Education, Electoral Commission of Ghana, and National Peace Council), civil society (such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding and the Voices of Youth Coalition), political parties, traditional authorities (paramount chiefs in the project locations) and religious organizations (catholic church), and local radio stations.

1. **The actual intervention**

The Young Peace Ambassadors initiative is a comprehensive project focused on peacebuilding education, sensitization of youth and capacity building/networking efforts for youth organisations necessary for building sustainable peace in northern Ghana. While recognizing the importance of addressing root causes of conflict, the most urgent need at the current time is a project that can help maintain relative peace in northern Ghana before, during and after the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, so more concentrated attention can be focused on the root causes, following the elections.

The project is designed carefully to be highly participatory in nature, in that young people’s active involvement in shaping their societies has been characterizing the request and initiation and also the core activities of the project; strengthened through mobilizing, organizing and youth-led capacity building, for increased and quality youth participation and for networking among the youth organisations locally to acknowledge each other and stand more unified instead of being ‘played out’ against each other, as seen previously. Initially, the request was for youth-led organisations in the target area to be assisted in how to navigate as youth organisations, as a united and collective force, to promote peace during the elections, knowing that whenever youth are truly seen as part of the solution and not as either useless or as trouble makers, it will be much easier to gain ground support for also their other activities.

**Theory of Change**

The project is premised on the believe that, when youth are actively engaged in positive peacebuilding activities; regional and local peacebuilding institutions are strengthened and functioning effectively and community members value peace and commit to creating a culture of non-violence, community members in the three target regions of northern Ghana will use peaceful pathways to resolve their conflicts.

This is illustrated in the diagram below.

Sphere of Interest

Spheres of Control

Sphere of Influence

**Project Work Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2020** | | | | | | | | **2021** |
| **May** | **Jun** | **Jul** | **Aug** | **Sep** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** | **Jan** |
| **Preparation:** Mapping and organizing youth-led organisations in the target area |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Activity 1:**  Host Youth Forums on Promoting Peace in the 2020 Elections |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Activity 2:**  Organize and hold Young Peace Ambassadors Camp |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Activity 3:**  Support Implementation of Peacebuilding Action Plans |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Activity 4:**  Train and Deploy Youth as Election Observers |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Activity 5:**  Organize Joint Learning Forum for Young Peacebuilders |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Activities**

Below are the main activities of the Young Peace Ambassadors project.

The activities are delineated for each immediate objective, even they can overlap, as follows:

***Immediate Objective 1:*** *CAPACITY BUILDING - diverse youth have built capacity and gained the skills needed to facilitate community cohesion in preventing conflict and electoral violence*

Activity 1: Host Youth Forums on Promoting Peace in the 2020 Elections

These will be held separately in each of the project locations – Tamale, Bolgatanga and Damongo – and will bring together up to 350 young leaders and key stakeholders in each location (altogether min. 1,000), including members of the VoY Coalition and other youth constituents, ensuring that at least 50% of participants are young women, and with access for young people with disabilities. The Youth Forums seek to provide a regional platform for young people to both learn from each other, debate, build alliances, collaborate, share information and challenge perspectives related to their active engagement in policy actions related to progress towards attaining peace before, during and after the 2020 elections. Young people will engage directly among themselves, but also with major stakeholders in the peace architecture in their respective regions, including representatives of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Electoral Commission of Ghana, National Peace Council, traditional councils, Catholic dioceses, Muslim mission, Community Radio stations, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, the broader civil society, the media, political parties and the general public. These networking opportunities will allow young people to map and deepen their understanding of ‘who is doing what’ and thus the potential of building new partnerships for collective action and networking for peace. Slated to happen early in the project, the Youth Forums will also serve as the launch pad for activities to galvanize youth actions for promoting peace under the Young Peace Ambassadors project. In this regard, project staff from YES-Ghana and its local youth implementers will use the opportunity to introduce the project and call for other young people to support and engage in the project through its local actions. Ultimately, the Forums will come up with a statement about the new youth momentum and send a strong signal to all stakeholders about young people’s intention to engage at all levels in promoting peace in their communities. As such, it will also feed into Immediate Objective 2.

Activity 2: Organize Young Peace Ambassadors Camp

The YPA Camp will bring together 60 youth participants, aged between 18 and 30 years, comprised of 20 participants from each of the project locations, half of the participants being young women. The week-long camp is planned four months before the 2020 elections, allowing participants to have enough time to implement their designated post-camp activities, through their respective organisations. The camp will be held at a neutral place outside the three target locations, offering a refreshing venue witnessing life in a conflict-free environment as compared to their belonging communities. Participants will be nominated by local youth organisations, ensuring the needed operational platform for the Peace Ambassadors and multiplication potential of the learning outcome. Criteria for selection will include demonstrated youth leadership and ability to participate in post-camp activities with their youth-led organisation over a four-month period, among others.

Lead facilitators of the Peace Camp will be YES-Ghana’s Executive Director and the Training & Capacity Building Manager – both bringing a wealth of experience in facilitating youth learning, particularly in relation to peacebuilding, advocacy and youth policy. Guest facilitators will lead sessions and will be drawn from groups such as the National Peace Council, West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the National Commission on Civic Education, among others. The programme will combine various approaches to ensure an inclusive and interactive learning and sharing environment. Focus will be on both SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and ATTITUDE to act. Thematic discussions will seek to address root causes of violent conflicts by integrating conflict analysis and will move from analysis to strategy, action planning over learning and evaluation. There will be a focus on related skill sets of awareness raising, communication, advocacy, media-relations and preparation for and implementation of local peacebuilding activities. There will be a total of six patrons, two (a male and a female) from each target location, whose role will include being part of the camp planning. At the end of the camp, the youth participants will have developed their peacebuilding action plans detailing activities they will implement in their respective metropolis or municipality. Participants will be inducted as Young Peace Ambassadors (YPAs) and will receive a certificate of achievement.

***Immediate Objective 2:* YOUTH COLLABORATION AND ACTION**

*Youth organisations have deepened their leadership role in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in northern Ghana, through collaboration and networking*

Activity 3: Support Implementation of Peacebuilding Action Plans

The YPA’s take lead in the implementation of peacebuilding action plans. Each of the three target areas have 20 YPA’s, coordinated through the patrons of their area, who will keep close contact with their fellow teams from the other areas and take on a coordinating role both within their area and across the three areas, thereby knitting the youth network closer together. The YPA’s will be central for their organisation and should be acknowledged as such, receiving the necessary support to mobilize other young people from schools, communities and religious groups and serve as peer mentors and multipliers by sharing their skills and knowledge with their peers. Although each action plan will be unique, overall, they are expected to focus on reaching out to every facet of their communities with the message of peace during the elections and the role of youth in that process. The activities will promote peacebuilding within the communities and engage groups from different religious and political backgrounds to engage in dialogue and participation. For example, teams of YPAs may hold joint townhall meetings with or official visitations to local political, traditional, religious leaders. They may decide to organize house-to-house outreaches, market announcements, church and mosque visitations, roadside campaigns and other grassroots-level campaigning to share the message of peace and build consensus among a broad range of local actors. Other will include planning mobilizations around global days for youth and peace, including International Youth Day (August 12) and International Day of Peace (September 21). Funds will be provided to each area team of YPA’s, encouraging cooperation between the diverse youth actors. Thus, the youth led organisations will get experience both in cooperation to identify the best plans and how to conduct them together, showing the strength in cooperation and networking.

Throughout the implementation of action plans, YES-Ghana supports with quality assurance and feed-back, including strategic revisions. YES-Ghana will run a media campaign, utilizing both traditional and social media, to reach out to a broader national audience with youth voices promoting peace. This will involve engagements (media briefings, theme chats, polls, discussion boards, photos, and short videos etc.) across social media channels. The media campaign will also include honouring interviews and joining panel discussion on TV and radio, as well as writing feature articles and attracting media coverage from major newspapers. YES-Ghana has the capacity and necessary network to lift a local and regional action like this to gain national significance, but also the nationwide Voices of Youth Coalition as a strong instrument will be spreading the work and results of their peers in north, showing their support.

Activity 4: Train and Deploy Youth as Election Observers

To become part of the formal election structures, the YPA’s will be supported by the project to be deployed as election observers during the December 2020 elections. YPA’s not belonging to a formally registered youth organisation (which will be the case for most youth-led CBO’s and NGO’s in the area), will be registered as observers through YES-Ghana. They will be comprised by the 60 YPA’s supplemented by an additional batch of youth who have played an active role in the outreach activities and have the necessary skill sets. Altogether, there will be at least 90 youth observers, 30 from each area. They will be profiled, assessed and registered by the Electoral Commission (EC) through the general call for elections observers. It will be evident, that the YPA’s will qualify, as they are young voters representing their backing organisations or YES-Ghana, which is a core criterion. Meanwhile, the youth in the area have not been part of the election observation system before, due to ignorance or not being able to find the compulsory legal backing of a registered organisation. Once registered by the EC, they will receive a 1-day compulsory training in election-day observation and monitoring. They will join other observers from other parts of the respective regions to receive guidance from EC officials on roles and responsibilities as election observers, including electoral laws and procedures. In addition to the compulsory EC training, the project will organize a 2-days training, which will be led by the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) and the National Peace Council (NPC). This will focus on the young elections observers’ role as peacebuilders and how their monitoring information can feed into the regional and national electoral monitoring system. This will encompass a period longer than the election day where the EC is responsible, as it includes observations both one week before the election day until and when the election results are announced. By the end of these two training the youth will be prepared and equipped for their task. They will receive the materials they need, including YPA branded report cards, pens, bags, vests and others, to perform their duties. On election day, they will be deployed to their designated polling stations to perform their observation tasks, including supervising the voting process and vote counting, and declaration of results, among others. They will follow the detailed procedure to submit reports of their election observations to CODEO. YES-Ghana will provide overall coordination for the election observation effort, ensuring the safety and security of all youth election observers and facilitating all logistics. This activity will place youth in the forefront, participating as informed and responsible young citizens, promoting peace.

Activity 5: Organize Joint Learning Forum for Young Peacebuilders

This will be a half-day multi-stakeholder event held at the tail end of the project to serve as a platform for the YPAs to share their experiences. Prior to the forum, the YPA teams in each area will meet to review their team experience and capture key learnings and areas to share. At the forum, YPA teams will take turns to make presentations using creative and participatory approaches, highlighting the successes they achieved, challenges they faced and how they addressed them and recommended actions for immediate and long terms. They will showcase their activities in pictures and short videos, enabling the audience to concretely imagine their journey through the project. Presentations will be followed by follow-up questions, comments and commendations from various stakeholders of the project. They will include representatives from National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Electoral Commission of Ghana, National Peace Council, traditional councils, Catholic dioceses, Muslim mission, Community Radio stations, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, the broader civil society, the media, political parties and the general public. Their feedback and recommendations will spur the young leaders on and offer the needed assurance they and their organisations need to remain and support active citizens for peace, even after the project. At the same time, this engagement provides an excellent entry point for further collaboration between the youth and community stakeholders as actors for peace and development. Ultimately, the debate, collaboration and networking at the learning forum will help document the YPA experience, which will be shared widely across the Voices of Youth Coalition in other regions and through YES-Ghana’s website and social media channels, as an example of what young people can achieve, when they stand together, networked and capacitated, for a cause.

**Target participants**

The main participants will be youth in the target locations, including local youth groups, youth leaders and activists as well as student leaders. Some are already members of the VoY Coalition or who are available to lead change and crave to contribute to the attainment of peace in their localities. Concrete, targeted activities like in this project is the exact and necessary remedy for the VoY to grow, in strength and number. Currently, the VoY Coalition has around 35 youth groups across the target locations, altogether reaching over 12,000 young people. The youth target participants are split in two groups, being the youth-led organisations who form the local implementation units and select the YPA’s and then the unorganized youth they target with their activities, with the aim of unorganized, idle youth to experience the role model examples of their fellow youth and join them for the cause.

**Direct primary participants:**

* A minimum of 350 youth reached in each of the three locations, around 1000 youth,   
  in a combination of Youth Peace Forums (activity 1) and YPA action plans (activity 3).
* 60 participants at the Young Peace Ambassadors Camp (activity 2)
* 90 Youth Election Observers (activity 4)

**Secondary target groups:**

* Youth reached through YPA action plans (activity 3) With 3 places x 150 people each place, resulting in 450 people reached, as a minimum.
* Communities influenced by YPA activities (activity 3+4) With 90 posted YPA election observers, at 45 designated places, at least voters from 45 election venues will be reached, as a secondary target group.
* VOY coalition (YES-Ghana currently has 22.000 followers on social media) (activity 3)
* TV/Radio component (at least a million people reached) (activity 3)

The situation of the youth: Young people’s inability to fully participate as agents of peace and active citizens has resulted in insufficient attention to their potential contributions to the peace process. Given that many young people have been at the forefront of the violent conflict in these locations, their actions have rather exacerbated the crises. In the absence of peace, socio-economic development has slowed, with massive adverse effects on young people themselves as demonstrated by rising youth unemployment and weak education and training systems, among others. Thus, many young people in the target locations feel left out.

Female empowerment: Young women bear the most brunt of conflicts in northern Ghana. They face discrimination and male domination in decision making processes, mainly due to socio-cultural inclinations. In response to this, young women will be given special attention in the project, showcasing female empowerment, locally. All activities will target a minimum of 50% female participants.

Youth for the present and the future: The overarching effect of participation by youth cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, the broader citizenry, including current and future generations of children, youth, men and women from all socioeconomic backgrounds in the three target regions will be the final beneficiaries of the proposed initiative. As the 2020 general elections are predicted to be a high-stake contest, many citizens are looking up to the youth to play responsible roles as active citizens in making the elections peaceful and transparent rather than become agents of instability. The needs and constraints of the target group and final beneficiaries are addressed by offering a platform through which young people can take on their roles as ambassadors of peace and productive members of society. The initiative is particularly relevant because of its inherent potential for bridging the gap in cultural norms between the young and the old in society.

**Systematisation of experiences both along the way and at the end of the intervention**There is an inbuilt stage of CAPACITY BUILDING – ACTION – REFLECTION in the project.   
The Joint Learning Forum will have the youth reflect, document and share their experiences. Throughout project implementation YES-Ghana is there to monitor, supervise and document the initiative, also for the VoY Coalition to spread through its channels. YES-Ghana will apply the “Do No Harm” principle which attempts to eliminate or minimize any negative impacts of project activities. The project team will ensure that feedback and response mechanisms are present throughout the project by scheduling frequent status updates, participate in youth- led activities to become aware of any concerns with regards to target groups and conducting any other checks deemed suitable. YES-Ghana will share with all implementing partners and stakeholders its Policies on Protection from Abuse and Exploitation and other guides that will ensure the safety and security of all youth who participate in the project’s activities.

1. **Intervention-related information work in Denmark**

Information work in Denmark will follow up and support the youth in Ghana by sharing their experiences through our channels. It means something to the Ghanaian youth to know, that they are seen, also outside Ghana, but the mere fact that youth in Ghana take active part as election observers could inspire Danish youth to take active part too, at the Danish polling stations – by sharing Danish rules for participation, like the project has done in Ghana.

1. UNDP Draft Report for Conflict Mapping-Northern Ghana (2012) The most updated statistics and survey to be found. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)