

MEDIATION



Biannual
publication
of Fondation
Hirondelle

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH INFORMATION AND DIALOGUE



For an informed and active youth

From one society to another, youth is either seen as the promise of a better future, or as a threat, a source of instability that may jeopardize the established order. The concept of «youth» also covers different realities and understandings in different cultures. Politicians, marketing or development aid professionals, however, have put “young people” at the heart of their speeches and policies. There are so many misunderstandings when it comes to talking about, or to, young people. Fondation Hirondelle, similarly to other media organizations, sees this as a major editorial and operational challenge: bridging the generation gap, fostering intergenerational dialogue by setting up media platforms and offering accessible, attractive content. Generations that have grown up with the Internet and social networks clearly do not have the same consumer habits as their elders as far as the media are concerned. But their thirst for information is very real. It is up to us to better understand their expectations, their needs. We must become just as agile and help them produce and broadcast relevant information.

Caroline Vuillemin
General Director

A young journalist trainee from Studio Hirondelle Guinea reporting, November 2015 © Tristan Miquel / Fondation Hirondelle

FOSTERING INTER- GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Younger generations are demographically dominant, yet they remain economically disadvantaged and virtually absent from democratic institutions. Building more peaceful societies requires their active engagement. Can the media help?

They represent half of the worldwide population – up to 70% of the population in Africa. Their political representation is insignificant: they make up less than 2% of national parliaments. Their economic situation is precarious: three quarters of their jobs are in the informal economy, their unemployment rate is twice the world average. They are more easily enlisted in militias: they die more than others in armed battles. For girls things are often even worse. “They” are under 30 years old.

From the beginning of the 2000s, the global political situation has increasingly put the younger generation in the spotlight. They were the majority of those who enlisted in often radicalized armed groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Mali, the Central African Republic ... They also represent the largest share of people fleeing these crisis-ridden countries and ending up on

the challenging path of migration. The media has often portrayed them as victims, the states as guilty or undesirable, few institutions have shown interest in the solutions they might hold for the future.

Since 2015, however, the international community has adopted a legal framework that promotes the contribution of the 1.8 billion young people aged 18 to 29 towards “economic prosperity” and the “shaping [of a] lasting peace”. UN Security Council Resolution 2250 urges states to form partnerships with business and civil society to achieve that very purpose, but it remains silent on the role of the media. This leaves them with the responsibility of inventing a way to dialogue with younger generations.

But since the end of the 2000s, young people have stopped waiting for the traditional media’s attention. The latter might still dominate the media landscape in terms of audience levels, but the emergence of the Internet and social networks has allowed younger generations to find their own channels of communication, even in countries where connection rates remain low, such as Burkina Faso or DR Congo. This often generates socio-political improvements, but sometimes makes things worse. Maybe this is where the new role of the traditional media is to be found: connecting these two media hubs, the old and the new, broadcasting the initiatives young people are inventing online. Would this not be a way for the traditional media to build bridges between the generations, to encourage young people to actively and peacefully engage in their societies? ■

Interview



LISTENING TO WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEMSELVES

Interview by the Tunisian Radio of protesters in Gafsa, June 2015 © Gwenn Dubourthoumieu / Fondation Hironnelle

© Shihō Fukada / Pianos pour Interpeace



Graeme Simpson, director of Interpeace USA, is the lead author of “The Missing Peace”, the study carried out following UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on “Youth, Peace and Security” (December 2015). He explains how the media could foster youth’s contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution.

You are the lead author of a study entitled “The Missing Peace”⁽¹⁾, commissioned by the UN Secretary-General in order to implement Security Council Resolution 2250 on “Youth, Peace and Security”. What were the context, the methodology and the objectives of this study?

Graeme Simpson: Resolution 2250, unanimously voted in December 2015, reconciles two opposite approaches: one premised on the assumption that young people are at the heart of terrorist and extremist ongoing vio-

lence around the world; and the other recognizing that the 1.8 billion 18-to-29 year-old people worldwide are unrepresented in local, national and international political systems and that they need to be given a voice. The resolution called for a study dedicated to the positive role young women and men play in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security globally (see box page 3).

In September 2016, I was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as the independent lead author of this study to support the implementation of Resolution 2250. I had the chance to work with 21 advisers from all over the world, most of them young, practitioners or scholars. For we were addressing mainly a problem of exclusion, marginalization and voicelessness of young people, our methodology has been all the more inclusive and participatory, designed to reach and represent the widest array of world youth. We met 4230 young people, 50% of each gender. Thanks to partnerships with many civil society organisations, we conducted 281 focus groups in 44 countries, including remote groups such as indigenous youths in rural areas in Central America, combatants and former combatants in the Philippines and Somalia, second generation migrants in the suburbs of Stockholm, young African Americans in Chicago and New York, young pastoralists in South Sudan... Instead of speaking of or to young people, we listened to what young people had to

say about themselves. This evidence-based approach was used to learn from their creativity and innovation as a positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution.

In the first part of the study, “Tackling Stereotypes and Policy Myths”, you refer to many young people who regret the degraded image portrayed of them in the media. Can you say a little more about that?

Whatever the place they lived in, most youth we met expressed the common concern that the media most often associated them with violence. They are depicted as troublemakers, rarely as change makers. This stigmatizes youth and creates a pervasive fear factor, based upon gendered stereotypes such as gangs of young men with guns, or young women as passive victims. Both images deny young people ability to bring change, to drive new processes.

Young people are most often depicted in the media as troublemakers, rarely as change makers

A striking example is the coverage by most traditional media of the #FeesMustFall movement in South African universities in October 2015. Most students were leading decent

(1) Read the study: www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy

peaceful protest against the increase of university fees, but most media focused on material violence that occurred in various universities. They notably failed to report the sophisticated alternatives to fund South African universities that some students had brought to the Ministry of Finance. Today in the US, some media report without fact-checking Donald Trump's false assertions claiming in October 2018, that the migrant caravan from Central America is mainly composed of young criminal men, and that some of them come from the Middle East. These media sources focus on and reinforce the 'policy panic' about the security risk those young men may pose, rather than on the courage and resilience they proved, or on the highly motivated workforce they may represent for the US.

In the second part of the study, "Youth for peace", you nonetheless mention stories of young people who managed to appropriate the media to build a rewarding image of themselves and to connect with the society. Can you tell us more about these examples?

We noticed a worldwide trend: while they usually do not recognize themselves in the way they are portrayed by the traditional media spread of them, young people have seen the power of new media as an organisational tool that they can shape and influence to bring positive change. On the web, they can create their own media to involve other people in the promotion of peace. While they lose confidence in representative democracy, cyberspace gives them a chance to change the world: they can express themselves, take direct action, connect with other young people worldwide, then shift their horizon from their local community to the whole planet. They often do so by using creative methods, including diverse forms of popular arts (video, music, hip hop...) to joyfully invade the political space.

However, the recommendations of your study don't really address the media. In your opinion, can the media develop ties with young people and thereby contribute to building more peaceful societies?

The key message of this study is that it is high time to start thinking of young people by reference to their resourcefulness, resilience and contribution, rather than by reference to them as a risk. And the media certainly have a key role

Young people have seen the power of new media as a tool they can shape to bring positive change

in this exercise. A first step can be taken if the traditional media acknowledge the stereotypes most of them disseminate on young people, and if they start making more visible young people who actively contribute to peace locally and worldwide. This could be a fair contribution of the media to help include young people participation in public policy processes. A second step would be that traditional media, mainly radio or TV, broadcast more programs shaped

by young people themselves or with key young people involved. This would help to give young people a voice - to listen to them instead of speaking to or about them. Last, regulation authorities should seek a way to find the correct balance between limiting the damages caused by misinformation and hatred spread on social media, and fostering a free access and use of the cyberspace where young people express most of their social creativity. ■

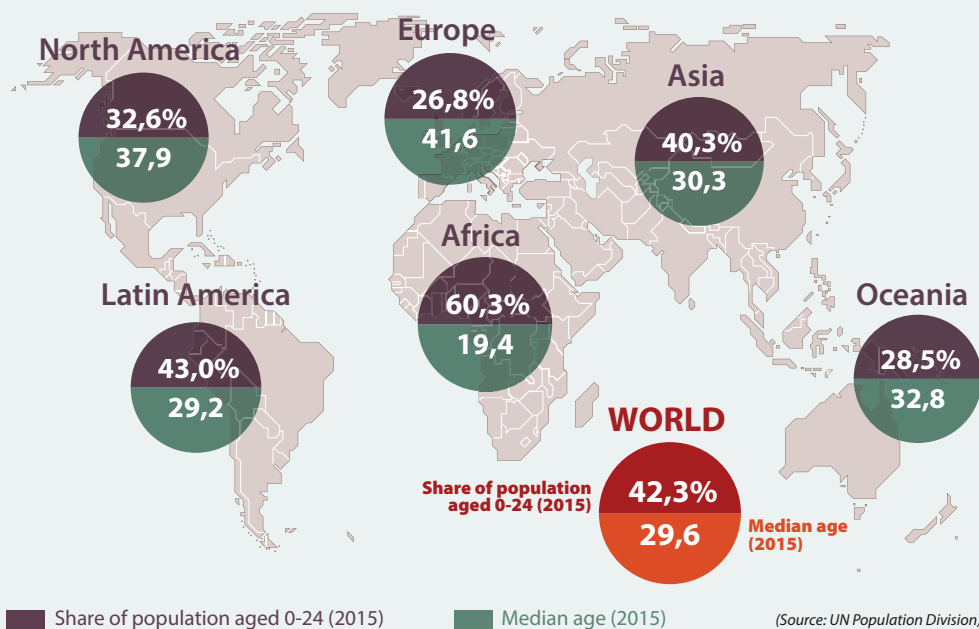
UN Security Council Resolution 2250: an international framework to engage young people in the building of peaceful societies

Unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council on December 9, 2015, resolution 2250 states "that a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies are in place." The resolution defines young people as "persons of the age of 18-29 years old". It considers them not primarily as perpetrators of violence or victims: they "should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace" and "reconciliation."

Resolution 2250 is sponsored by Jordan and was voted at a time when the number of internal conflicts involving young people enlisted in radicalized groups was increasing: North Mali, Central African Republic, Libya, Syria, Iraq, the 2015 attacks in Paris... It was part of an international framework being developed at the time, which aimed to include young people in building peaceful societies: the UN Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding (April 2014), the Amman Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security (May 2015). Its four parts - Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships - "urge" states to foster youth participation in institutions as well as to economically and institutionally encourage their multiple initiatives for peace. The resolution emphasizes the need to develop a "culture of peace" for youth through education, but it remains silent on the role the media could play in it.

Text of the resolution available at: <http://unoy.org>

A world of youth

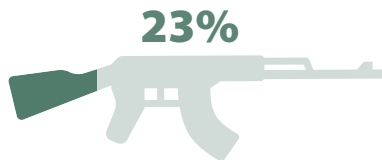


Big Data



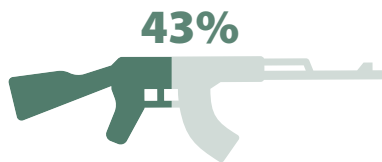
Malagasy children aged 7 to 13 learn how to code, September 2016, Antananarivo © Rijasolo / AFP

Security



23% of young people aged 15-29 in the world live in an area plagued by armed conflict or organized crime

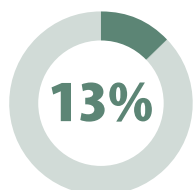
(Source: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016)



43% of homicide victims in the world are young men aged 10-29

(Source: World Health Organization, 2015)

Economy

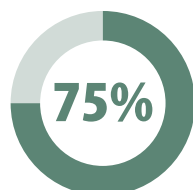


13% Worldwide unemployment rate of under 25 year olds

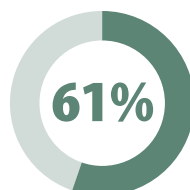
(Source: OIT, 2017-2018)



5,6% Worldwide unemployment rate



75% of 15-29 year olds work in the informal economy worldwide



61% of the active population works in the informal economy worldwide

Political representation



1,9% of members of national parliaments in 2015 were young people aged under 30



43,6% of 18-29 year olds took part in elections worldwide between 2010 and 2014

(Source: "The Missing Peace", UN/UNFPA-PBSO, July 2018)



59,1% General participation in elections worldwide between 2010 and 2014

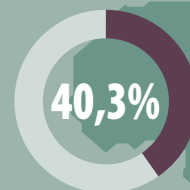
Media



70,6% of 15-24 year olds use the Internet

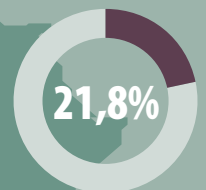
48,0% of the worldwide population uses the Internet

(Source: International Telecommunication Union, 2017)



40,3% of young Africans aged 15-24 use the Internet

(Source: International Telecommunication Union, 2017)



21,8% of the African population uses Internet



57% of the 2.2 billion Facebook users worldwide are 18-34 year olds



60% of the 800 million Instagram users worldwide are 18-34 year olds

(Source: Global Digital Report 2018)

Our experience

A MEDIA LANDSCAPE THAT TAKES YOUTH INTO ACCOUNT HITS A GREATER AUDIENCE



Studio Tamani reporter interviewing an inhabitant of Bamako © Sébastien Rieussec / Fondation Hironnelle



Michel Beuret, Fondation Hironnelle's Head of Editorial Content, explains the special attention the Foundation pays to new generations.

Why is Fondation Hironnelle specifically thinking about how to target young people?

Michel Beuret: Fondation Hironnelle often works in societies where young people represent the largest share of the population, such as in sub-Saharan Africa: depending on the country, 65% to 80% of the population is aged 35 or under. Young people therefore not only represent the future, but are also very much part of these countries' present. However, despite their demographic weight, their representation in the media is very weak or non-existent.

International institutions tend to look at different age groups: the under-25s, the under-30s... This objectifies the youth, but it also tends to represent them as problematic categories of the overall population: statistically, a large share of these age groups is likely to be poorly trained, looking for work, tempted to emigrate, tempted to join

rebel or radical movements... We try to complete this view by including other points of view into our analysis. The discussions we have with sociologists, the reports of our media on their respective fields, scientific surveys on our various audiences ... all of this led us to reassess the concept of "generations": rather than focussing on age groups, our analysis looks at categories of people who have had remarkable experiences at a comparable age and who recognize themselves in these experiences. Thus, there was the African independence generation, more recently an active generation played a role in the Arab Spring or in the fall of President Blaise Compaore in Burkina Faso. Another generation is currently very involved in citizen movements in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

How does Fondation Hironnelle reach the "younger generations"?

We try to understand them first. What are their concerns? What interests them? What are their problems? The answers depend, of course, on whether these young people live in cities or rural areas. They also depend on their level of education. This allows us to understand them better, but we want our editorial content to be inclusive: allow all our audiences to "understand through information and dialogue", by produ-

Putting the younger generations in the spotlight in our media is a way to include them in society

cing news and debate programs broadcast by a network of local media partners, in each country and in the 4 or 5 main locally spoken languages.

Studio Yafa, our new project in Burkina Faso, produces specific programs dedicated to the younger generations: these are radio capsules that, within our generic programs, offer tailored editorial and sound concepts. A fatal work accident in a gold mine, for example, will be covered in a factual way by many radio stations. Studio Yafa will get back to the event the following day, by approaching it from an angle that will capture the interest of younger members of the audience - recalling that a large part of the victims working on the site were minors, even though the constitution of Burkina Faso formally prohibits employment of under-15 year olds. In addition to being broadcast on the local radio, these capsules are used on social networks: Facebook, Twitter and popular mobile applications like Whatsapp, depending on the degree of connectivity in the countries concerned...

We make sure to include young people in our newsrooms: the vast majority of journalists in our media are under 35 years old. We tend to work in exclusive societies, which in turn maintain tensions between different categories of people. Putting the younger generations in the spotlight in our newsrooms and in our programs, talking to them about what concerns them, allowing them to talk freely on air... these are all ways to include them in society. This is how we can release tensions and help societies overcome the challenges they face. ■

Eyewitness

THE INTERNET HAS ALLOWED YOUNG AFRICANS TO CHALLENGE THEIR GOVERNMENTS

French NGO Internet Without Borders, created in 2008, defends human rights online: access to information, freedom of expression, privacy. Executive Director Julie Owono, 32, takes stock of a decade of privileged use of this media by younger generations.

What role can the Internet play in crisis contexts, especially for youth?

Julie Owono: A vital role. The latest report of the International Telecommunication Union⁽¹⁾, a UN agency based in Geneva, indicates that young people aged 15-24 use 1.5 time more Internet than the average population. Africa, the youngest continent with a median age of barely 20, was until recently the most politically frozen continent. In the 2010 decade, we found a correlation between the Internet penetration rate and the political changes initiated by young people. The Arab Spring began in 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt, in the northern, more connected part of the continent. The online political protests then took hold of Burkina Faso in 2014, followed by countries where the Internet took longer to arrive, such as DR Congo from 2015-2016. Young African diaspora, very present on the web, has amplified this agitation online. With its new possibilities of expression, the Internet has allowed young Africans everywhere to challenge or even to overthrow their governments.

Only a minority of Africans have Internet access today, especially in crisis-ridden countries. What role can the online media play compared to media such as radio and TV, which are used by more than 90% of the population?

Africa is certainly the least connected continent, with an Internet penetration rate of 21.8% against 48.0% on average worldwide. This situation is due more to a lack of political will than to a lack of means: jeopardized by the use of the Internet, many African governments choose not to use their public power to reduce the access costs, which sometimes exceed 10% of a monthly minimum, or not to encourage the installation of cell towers in rural areas. Because



Julie Owono © DR

they understood that unlike traditional media, the Internet is difficult to control or censor: it allows a priori access to infinite information.

What are the guarantees of pluralistic access to online information, especially for younger generations?

When it first appeared in the mid-1990s, the Internet revolutionised access to information, thanks to three guarantees: that it would remain an open space, where it would be possible to issue and receive information from anywhere in the world (Internet «without borders», hence the name of our association); that it would remain an area of rights and freedom, including expression and privacy; that users could access all information equally (the famous "Net neutrality"). It is because these three criteria were not respected that the Internet has now become fertile ground for surveillance, dissemination of false information and violent messages: the appropriation of the Internet by some Internet service providers or oligopolistic applications has fuelled the dissemination of paid messages answering to an economic, ideological or political interest. The younger generations must demand compliance with these safeguards so that the Internet, which has been taken over by multinationals and governments, can once again be an area of freedom. ■

The Internet is difficult to control: it allows a priori access to infinite information



Fondation Hironnelle is a Swiss non-profit organization which provides information to populations faced with crisis, empowering them in their daily lives and as citizens. Through our work, millions of people in war-affected countries, post-conflict areas, humanitarian crisis and societies in democratic transition have access to media that speak to them and give them a voice.

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