***YELI PROFILE***

1. ***historical***

Youth Empowerment and Leadership Initiative, YELI, was registered or approved by Ministerial Order No. 530/265 of 19/02/2015 and complied with the new Law No. 1/02 of 27 January 2017 on the organic framework of Non-Profit Associations (ASBL) by Act No. 530/1349/CAB/2019 of 20/6/2019. It is a youth-led initiative that provides support to youth organizations and young people from different backgrounds on issues that affect their lives. YELI provides opportunities for young people to explore different skills and develop their leadership potential through training, workshops and community development programs. YELI also believes that well-equipped and empowered youth, with adequate capacities and skills, can create a peaceful and prosperous future for communities and the nation.

Our organization's approach is to invest primarily in youth, who are an active force in the country, in order to contribute to building positive change and sustainable development for all social categories. With well-equipped and empowered youth organizations and young people, we will create new generations of families capable of promoting human rights and peace education for their children from an early age.

YELI is comprised of its founders, board members and qualified youth who have come together with the goal of empowering youth and youth organizations to reach out to families and communities. In addition, YELI engages directly with families and communities with the goal of creating a better community for all without leaving anyone behind. Furthermore, the partnership approach that links our organization with local and international institutions provides opportunities to strengthen YELI’s potential to better serve vulnerable youth, families and communities.

1. **VISION**

A Burundian society where young people are the artisans of peace, the promotion of human rights and sustainable development.

1. **ASSIGNMENT**

Developing generations of young leaders and entrepreneurs capable of promoting peace, human rights and sustainable development.

1. **VALUES**

* Integrity and excellence;
* Volunteering and diversity;
* Community partnership;
* Participation;
* Community ownership;
* Inclusiveness;
* Efficiency and transparency;
* Respect for the environment;
* Sustainability of interventions.

For YELI's partnership policy, there is no discrimination based on HIV/AIDS status, gender, political belief or affiliation, religion, age or race.

1. **GOALS**
   * Helping young people (women and men) become autonomous, productive and responsible leaders.
   * Enable young people (women and men) to participate fully in community development by promoting peace, human rights, democracy and good governance (social inclusion and accountability).
   * To equip young people (women and men) with adequate information, capacities and skills to improve their livelihoods and impact their respective communities.
   * Building a strong spirit of volunteerism among young people (women and men).
   * Promote health in general and the sexual and reproductive health of young people (women and men) in particular.
   * Establish a network of young people (women and men) in the field of peacebuilding, leadership and entrepreneurship, with other organizations at national and international level.

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1. **AREAS OF INTERVENTION**

A. Peacebuilding (advocacy, conflict prevention and transformation, prevention of violent extremism/countering violent extremism, social cohesion, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, peace education);

b. Promotion of Governance and Human Rights (promotion of the rule of law, promotion of women's rights, social justice; fight against gender-based violence; child protection and protection in general, end child neglect;

c. Youth and Women's Leadership and Entrepreneurship (citizen participation, contribution to the implementation of Resolution 2250 and 1325 of the United Nations Security Council, promotion and establishment of start-ups, and AGR, etc.);

d. Sustainable Development (advocacy and participation in the implementation of public policies, economic development, VSLAs. Climate resilience, environmental protection, and prevention of natural disasters, education in SSR, water, sanitation and hygiene);

e. Cross-cutting areas: Gender promotion and media and information literacy.

1. **THEORY OF CHANGE.**

* ***In Burundi, if the youth are well equipped with adequate information, knowledge and skills and if policies enable the youth who constitute an active force to be fully involved in programs and decisions aimed at the development of the nation, then the youth will influence sustainable development in different areas that affect the living conditions of the communities. Thus, the nation will be able to capitalize on peace, human rights, good governance and sustainable development that promote the health and wealth of families and* communities *.***

Change will happen when young people (boys and girls, women and men) have the capacity, opportunity and strategic space to demonstrate leadership and contribute to problem solving.

1. **BENEFICIARIES**

* Young people (girls and boys);
* Women;
* Refugees , returnees and internally displaced persons ( IDPs )
* Marginalized groups (Batwa, people with disabilities, albinos, etc.)
* Children ;
* Families;
* Community-based associations working in the areas of our interventions;
* Young members of political parties;
* Demobilized youth;
* Rural communities in general.
* Grassroots administration (local administration).

**IX. APPROACHES USED IN OUR INTERVENTIONS**

1. Solution-focused approach that enables our beneficiaries to find appropriate solutions to the problems posed in their social environment based on their self-determination
2. Community participation approach in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects
3. Human rights-based approach that allows YELI to take into account human rights and gender aspects in its operations and in all its projects and programs
4. Approach to sustaining project achievements through empowerment of beneficiaries
5. Inclusive approach of all members of divergent groups in the field of peacebuilding to strengthen social unity and community cohesion
6. Community approach to peace and social cohesion that strengthens mutual understanding and living together among members of divergent political groups
7. Community solidarity approach through the establishment of savings and credit groups to strengthen the financial empowerment of community members
8. Participatory approach during training provided to our beneficiaries
9. Approach to mobilizing decision-makers in favor of the causes defended by YELI
10. Awareness-raising approach through cultural events and sport within the overall framework of the IEC (Information, Education and Communication) approach for change favorable to development.
11. Personalized approach for the psychosocial care of venerable people, including listening and individual case orientation

**YELI EXPERTISE IN WORKING WITH REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)**

**YELI** is involved in various development interventions as specified in the areas below discussed in this call for expressions of interest:

* ***Defense of women's rights***

Since 2023, YELI has been implementing the ***“ Bakenyezi ” project dukenyerere amahoro "*** under funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF) via the international NGO CHRISTIAN AID. It is implemented for two years (2023 to 2024) in the 13 communes of the Ruyigi and Rutana provinces in consortium with the local organizations DUSHIREHAMWE, Réseau Femmes et Paix (RFP) and COCAFEM. The direct beneficiaries of this project are returnees, displaced and host women, a percentage of whom are young people, including Batwa, Albinos and those living with disabilities. The project aims for 3 results, namely: i) The institutional capacity of 13 local networks of returnees, internally displaced persons and host women is strengthened to operate and effectively manage their associations; (ii) 9,642 people (99% women, 28% youth, 27% returnees and 5% IDPs) increased their participation in political spaces at local, regional and national levels to strengthen institutional equality between women and men; 12,480 people (50% women, 20% youth, 30% returnees and 5% IDPs) are transforming harmful social/gender norms within their households and adopting new approaches for gender equality.

As the consortium organization responsible for capacity building, YELI intervened in 2023 on the activities contributing to the achievement of the first result. In this context, the activities carried out are:

* Capacity needs assessment of women's community networks;
* Training of trainers from DUSHIREHAMWE, RFP and YELI organizations;
* Training of members of women's community networks.

In 2021, YELI organized a training on the promotion and protection of the rights of children and women, specifically those of young girls who are victims of rural exodus, trafficking and human trafficking and urban refugees, funded by the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Burundi. This training session made it possible to set up focal points in the framework of the protection and promotion of the socio-economic rights of vulnerable young girls, children's rights and the fight against GBV and human trafficking. It is in the provinces of Bujumbura-Mairie, Bujumbura, Makamba , Mwaro and Bubanza .

With these focal points, actions in the field of children's and women's rights are carried out in the community, including awareness-raising, identification of victims, support for assistance, referral, etc.

This training resulted in the establishment of 8 VSLA (Village Saving and Loans Association) savings and credit groups. It was then up to YELI to take charge of the supervision and regular monitoring of these VSLAs. The 8 VSLAs operate normally, the members meet once or twice a week, they save and give each other credits for small income-generating activities (IGAs), exchange and find solutions to some of their social problems. Now, the members are characterized by solidarity and mutual assistance. To strengthen the efficiency of the transactions of these VSLAs, YELI distributed the VSLA Material Kit to them.

The financial autonomy targeted through the VSLA approach is being achieved. 47 AGRs (Income Generating Activities) have been created by the members and allow them to improve their daily lives. It should be noted that among the members there are single young girls and girls/women who have children in their care.

These income-generating activities have therefore been for some a creation of employment because they are the main activities of the day which provide them with a living, and for others a source of additional income to meet their needs.

As part of the 16 days of activism against violence against women, YELI jointly organized a public conference with the European Union delegation in Burundi. The program included three presentations, namely the Sketch by the famous NINDE troupe, the testimonies of two GBV survivors supported by YELI, and a Panel on the care of GBV victims. The " Ninde " troupe performed on GBV that is often found in the community, indeed with consequences that follow. The sketch was followed by testimonies from two YELI beneficiaries who have experienced gender-based violence.

After these two presentations to the public, the Panel on the holistic care of victims of GBV which attracted the attention of the public saw the participation of 5 organizations and/or institutions namely Medica Mondiale, Centre Seruka , YELI, Association Femmes Juristes au Burundi and the Ministry of Gender.

Given that the organizations present all intervene against gender-based violence and know the reality of things, the panel generated active exchanges where each panelist gave their point of view on the state of GBV and expressed their views on the solution to be taken so that victims are properly supported.

Since 2020, 450 people from the intervention areas of the communes have participated in the awareness-raising workshop for the mobilization of communities to improve the social and cultural status of women in rural areas in the Gihanga communes of Bubanza province and Mutimbuzi and Kabezi of Bujumbura province;

In this same framework, 9 action plans (1 per zone) for the protection and promotion of women's rights within households and communities were established; 9 zonal committees composed of women and men for monitoring the implementation of zonal plans for the promotion and protection of women's rights were set up.

Coaching on the implementation of these action plans was provided and monitoring and evaluation workshops for these same action plans were organized.

As part of the same action, the project beneficiaries were informed about the conventions, resolutions and other agreements that speak about women's rights; The 300 women beneficiaries of the project were made aware of their rights. Thus, experience sharing sessions led by women active in the defense of women's rights were held and 5 best testimonies of women leaders in the defense of women's rights were selected and recorded in audio-visual by the YELI mission team and transcribed in the activity report.

* ***Defense of marginalized groups (People living with disabilities, people with albinism, etc.)***

In 2021, the YELI organization carried out training for the socio-professional reintegration of 143 young girls/women victims of rural exodus and human trafficking, financed via UNDP by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa , UNCHRD” based in Yaoundé;

As part of the project "Harmonization of the monitoring and evaluation tool for gender-based violence in Burundi" implemented in 2020, a harmonized data collection sheet on GBV was developed in collaboration with gender focal points from key ministries in the fight against GBV and discrimination of marginalized groups. The process of arriving at this data collection sheet for monitoring and evaluating gender-based violence consisted of presenting it to the group of experts from key ministries involved in the fight against gender-based violence during a workshop to reflect on data collection and processing tools on GBV . This made it possible to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of existing tools and to provide proposals for the content of a consensus data collection tool for all stakeholders.

* ***Protection and social cohesion***

In 2023, YELI participated in the mobilization of young people for regional consultations. Indeed, the Ministry responsible for youth with the support of UNDP and UNFPA officially launched regional consultations as part of the development of the national youth strategy on Peace and Security (2023-2027). YELI, a youth organization working particularly with young people and working in the field of Peace and Security, was invited as a member of the steering committee (COPIL). This is how YELI mobilized its young people from all provinces of the country, including the Batwa and Albinos, at a rate of 2 per province to participate in these consultations. These consultancies took place in regions of the country, namely the North region in Ngozi, the South region in Makamba, the Center and East region in Gitega and the West region in Cibitoke.

In 2022, YELI demonstrated its expertise in social cohesion and peacebuilding at both the national and sub-regional levels. Thus, through the project ***"Forum des jeunes des zones frontièresières de la région des Grands-Lacs"*** implemented from 2021 to 2022 in the communes of Mutimbuzi and Gihanga respectively in the provinces of Bujumbura and Bubanza in collaboration with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), through the support of CORDAID, six focus groups for the collection of data on the contribution of young people in the peacebuilding process, six workshops for the presentation and validation of evidence on the contribution of young people in peacebuilding were organized and two sessions for the dissemination of evidence on the contribution of young people in border areas in peacebuilding.

This experience was also extended within the framework of the project ***"HIV prevention among young people in and out of school via New Information and Communication Technologies (social media)"*** started in 2022 and closed the same year, was financed by UNESCO Burundi and carried out in the provinces of Gitega, Ngozi, Cibitoke and Bubanza. Here, 160 young people (80 girls and 80 boys) peer educators (in school and out of school) were sensitized and trained and acquired knowledge and skills in HIV/AIDS prevention, unwanted pregnancies and SGBV and HIV screening, 1 digital platform was set up to raise awareness among young people in school and out of school as well as the community in general, 160 young beneficiaries (80 girls and 80 boys) in school and out of school are sensitized on screening and have knowledge on screening strategies, 160 young beneficiaries acquired information on sexual and reproductive health services available in their environment and the importance of using them. Still with the support of UNESCO, Stop AIDS clubs in schools and youth centers for good awareness raising among young people in urban and semi-urban centers ( Gatumba , Rumonge , Muyinga , Buterere , Cibitoke , Kamenge , Kanyosha , Kinama , Musaga , Nyanza -Lac) on HIV, STIs and reproductive health" were supported. This project was implemented in the provinces of Bujumbura-Mairie, Makamba , Rumonge and Muyinga where a total of 120 young people were direct beneficiaries in the 4 provinces.

Four awareness caravans on media and information literacy for young people were organized in universities in Burundi as part of the project "Media and information literacy for youth civic engagement" funded by UNESCO Burundi and implemented in the Bujumbura City Hall. On this, 4 university institutions namely University of Lake Tanganyika, University Sagesse d'Afrique, University of Burundi and Equateur University hosted the said caravans. Thus, 600 students from the 4 universities were directly reached. The following presentations were the subject of awareness raising:

* Origin and history of Media and Information Education;
* Rumor management;
* Critical thinking as a good way to combat disinformation;
* the importance of EMI for young people.

Since 2020, YELI has been implementing projects aimed at social cohesion among young people via social media. It implemented the project "Youth and ***21st Century Technology (Social Media) in the Fight Against HIV in Burundi*** ". This project being designed specifically for adolescents and young people, it uses the social media strategy to raise awareness, strengthen and provide the necessary resources for adolescents/young people to prevent, train, inform themselves, exchange and share knowledge on HIV/AIDS in order to lead a healthy life and initiate community leadership initiatives to fight this scourge in their respective families and communities. Thus, 40 young people including 22 boys and 18 girls were identified and trained on HIV/AIDS via Whatsapp Group, the YELI platform was therefore complete (Website, Facebook pages, etc. ). All HIV/AIDS/SRH/SGBV messages from all master class activities as well as videos and products from the competitions were posted. In addition, animation segments were obtained from Buja FM radio (the most listened to radio station by young people).

As part of the project ***"Contributing to the prevention of extreme violence by raising awareness among young people in Burundi about disinformation and hate speech conveyed by mass media and social media"*** , at least 100,000 young people were reached via the media and social networks by radio spots and digital and infographic messages aimed at equipping them with the skills to detect the relevance of information and differentiate fake news from reliable information. These messages were produced, broadcast and rebroadcast on the media and social media platforms such as Whatsapp , Facebook, Instagram, X, etc. The young people reached also became aware of the risk of extreme violence caused by hate speech and manipulation by modern information channels of the 21st century .

The same project also enabled young beneficiaries of face-to-face training to acquire the skills to combat stereotypes based on ethnicity, region and political sensitivities.

1. **PERSPECTIVE: Empowerment of women and people living with disabilities through ICT.**

YELI plans to identify girls with different abilities and other women with average abilities in ICT as majority of women are often less considered in the world of modern technology. The program will focus on ICT for Development (ICT4D) to empower women in general and girls in particular girls who are labeled by society as disabled, which increases their marginalization.

YELI, through this program, will help these girls to get trained in ICT, i.e. programming, computer hardware repair, computer networking and many other ICT careers.

For people living with disabilities, we believe that their inability to walk, talk or see does not make them incapable of doing other things like ICT. By doing so, we will help them become productive members of society, which will contribute to national development. Partnering with key ICT stakeholders will help make this happen.

1. **Humanitarian Action and Volunteer Service.**

**Strategy** : To lead is to serve. Therefore, YELI instills in the minds of young people the culture of voluntary service. Areas of action include social work serving people with disabilities, the elderly or the marginalized, cultural work, development projects, reconciliation, education, environmental protection, local initiatives, etc.

YELI contacts:

* Emails: [yeliburundi@gmail.com](mailto:yeliburundi@gmail.com) [/Info@yeliburundi.org/](mailto:/Info@yeliburundi.org/) wakana1982@gmail.com [/chantalbaku@gmail.com](mailto:/chantalbaku@gmail.com)
* Tel: +25769935822 / +25779500400