



ENGAGEMENT  
EMPLOYMENT  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
EDUCATION  
HEALTH



## AUC CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT ON THE 1 MILLION BY 2021 INITIATIVE

*Unleashing the Potential of 1 Million African Youth*

November 2021



# Foreword



Youth are key stakeholders in the attainment of the goals and aspirations of Agenda 2063. This is premised on the fact that over 60% of Africa's population is under 30 years, and the promise of a demographic dividend it holds if adequate investments are made in their social, economic and political agency.

Cognizant of the value young people bring to Africa's development and democratisation process, The African Union Commission recognizes young people as partners, leaders, and beneficiaries in building a democratic culture on the continent. This is why in 2019 I launched the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative with the aim to provide concrete opportunities to young people in the areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Engagement and Health and Well-being.

Providing tangible opportunities to unleash the potential of African youth is the bedrock of our youth empowerment programs at the African Union Commission. It has led to countless mutually reinforcing partnerships with stakeholders within and beyond the continent. The Commission continues to be committed to advancing youth development with a clear view that unless we are capacitating the youth to carry development forward we will have let them down.

I would like to acknowledge all the partners who made the initiative a success; for their commitment, their innovation and shared view that youth issues are a priority in development contexts. I extend my gratitude to UNICEF, the Commission's flagship partner on youth development, without whom a lot of the success we have enjoyed would not have been possible. In 2019, Ms. Henrietta Fore, UNICEF's Executive Director, and I both expressed our commitment to coordinate efforts to reach as many African youth as possible and strive for focused implementation in order to reach 10 million African youth by 2021. The support we have received ranged from financial to institutional and technical as we worked together to deliver for young people.

I also thank the Youth Division at the AUC for reimagining what it looks like to provide opportunities for youth and doing what it takes to refine and modify their approaches until we achieve their goal. For the duration of the initiative (2019-2021) the Youth Division was under the capable leadership of H.E Professor Sarah Anyang Agbor, former Commissioner of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and I extend a depth of gratitude to her for her unwavering leadership.

We all have a duty to get involved in providing concrete opportunities to youth that will result in positive development outcomes for Africa. That is why I am pleased to announce 1 Million by 2021 Next Level Initiative to you. It takes the baton from its predecessor with an even louder clarion call for all stakeholders to implement vigorously and tirelessly as we build the Africa we all want to see.

The priority areas moving forward are to accelerate country-level engagement, continue to build the capacity of youth and avail opportunities through private-public partnerships to deliver on employment, education, entrepreneurship, engagement and health and well-being of youth.

In order to maintain momentum of the ground we have covered, I count on the continued support of our partners as well as Member States to ensure a prosperous and safe Africa for all citizens, especially women, children and youth.

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**H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**  
Chairperson of the African Union Commission

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>AfYWL</b>	African Young Women Fellowship
<b>AGYI</b>	African-German Youth Initiative
<b>ALMA</b>	African Leaders Malaria Alliance
<b>APAYE</b>	African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment
<b>ATVET</b>	Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission
<b>AUDA-NEPAD</b>	African Union Development Agency- New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>AUYVC</b>	African Union Youth Volunteer Corp
<b>AYAP</b>	African Youth Ambassadors for Peace
<b>AYC</b>	Africa Youth Charter
<b>AYM</b>	Africa Youth Month
<b>BCMA</b>	Be A Change Maker Africa
<b>CESA</b>	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
<b>CAS</b>	Country Acceleration Strategy
<b>COVID-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease
<b>CPMR</b>	Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EST</b>	Education, Science and Technology
<b>GenU</b>	Generation Unlimited
<b>GVI</b>	Global Volunteer Initiative
<b>HP</b>	Hewlett Packard
<b>LMS</b>	Learning Management Systems
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>OSF</b>	Open Society Foundations
<b>RECs</b>	Regional Economic Communities
<b>STC</b>	Specialized Technical Committee
<b>TVET</b>	Technical Vocational and Education Training
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNECA</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
<b>UNV</b>	United Nations Volunteer
<b>VLP</b>	Volunteer Linkage Platform
<b>VSO</b>	Volunteer Service Organization
<b>WGYD</b>	Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# Executive Summary

Africa youth population is estimated to reach 1.6 billion by 2030, this number is expected to grow to 2.4 billion in 2063. This exponential growth is an opportunity to harness the demographic dividend through making investments in youth. The pace, depth and scope of Africa's development depends on how well its youth are nurtured, deployed and utilized. African countries have become cognizant of the youth's potentials and are therefore prioritizing investments in youth to promote social development and promote economic performance in Africa.

In 2019, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, launched the 1 Million by 2021 to inspire investments in African youth across 'the 4 E's': Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement. This report outlines the key achievements of the 1 Million by 2021 since inception. In addition, the report highlights on lessons learned and provides recommendations on priority areas for the successor of the 1 Million by 2021.

In the past 2 years, the 1 Million by 2021 initiative has chalked remarkable success in the areas of Education and skills, Entrepreneurship, Employment and Engagement. The Education and skills development programmes reached 1,297 young people through the AU Youth Empowerment toolbox, AUC Education sector response to COVID-19, Technical and Vocational Education Training. The Employment initiatives created opportunities for 2,140 youth through the African Union Youth Volunteer Corp (AUYVC) programme, African Young Women Fellowship (AfYWF) and the Volunteer Linkage Platform (VLP). In Entrepreneurship, opportunities were created for 40,040 young people through entrepreneurial grants, training and mentorship programmes. 8,731,375 young people benefited from programmes under the Engagement pillar through the implementation of activities that enabled and amplified youth voices to address challenges young people face on the continent. In total, the AUC provided opportunities for 8,774,852 young people through the 1 Million by 2021 initiative. To achieve this result, the AUC received financial, technical support and human resources support from partners including Member States, United Nations (UN) Agencies, and other development partners.

Despite the achievements made, the implementation of the 1 Million by 2021 slowed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions imposed

as a result of the pandemic led to a realignment of priorities and a reallocation of financial resources.

The 1 million next level, which is the successor of the 1 Million by 2021, will leverage on the lessons learned from the 1 Million by 2021 to ensure that the implementation of activities leverage fully on the opportunities of virtual and hybrid engagements, reflect the COVID-19 context, maximize the potentials of online engagement to create more opportunities for young people, leverage on sustainable partnerships to ensure the effective delivery of results and increase engagement with member states through the Country Acceleration Strategy (CAS) to strengthen the implementation of youth programming at country level.



# Chapter I

## Background and Context





## Introduction

This report presents results achieved in the implementation of the 1 Million by 2021 initiative. Chapter 1 of the report highlights the context of the initiative providing a brief overview of the situation of youth in Africa and the policy and normative framework of the initiative. Chapter two describes the 1 Million By 2021 initiative and its underpinning principles. Chapters three to six presents the key activities and results achieved in each of the 4Es. The report concludes with a summary of challenges, lessons learned and way forward to for 1 Million Next Level.

## Youth in Africa

Africa has a youth population and is recognized as the fastest growing continent. The continent's youth population is projected to reach 1.7 billion in 2030 and 3 billion in 2063. About 46 per cent of Africa's labour force is estimated to be young people aged 15-34 by 2063<sup>1</sup>.

The continent's development is contingent on its ability to harness the benefits of the youth population through investments in education, entrepreneurship, employment and youth engagement. Indeed, Aspiration 6 of the Agenda 2063, "An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of its people especially women and youth" positions young people at the center of Africa's development and calls on AU member states to unleash the potential of Africa's youth.

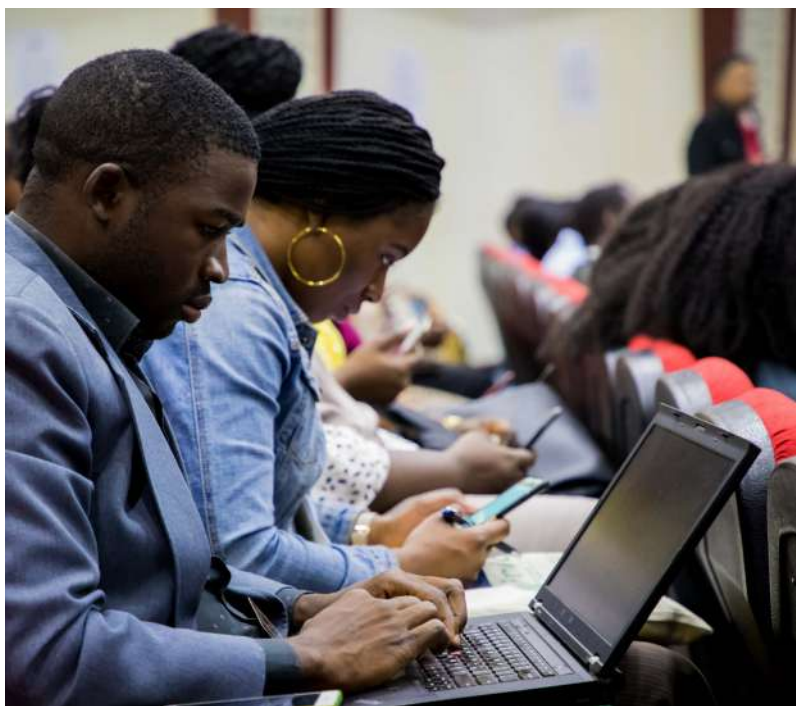
However, young Africans are constantly faced with several challenges that undermine their ability to contribute meaningfully to the continent's development. These include the low literacy rates, increasing rates of out-of-school youth, especially girls, high levels of unemployment and under-employment, education and labour market mismatch, limited access to capital for businesses, several barriers to entry for young entrepreneurs etc.

It is for this reason that the AUC Chairperson, H.E Musa Faki Mahamat launched the One Million by 2021 (1Mby2021) initiative in 2019 to help bridge the gap between the potential and reality of many young people in Africa today.

## Policies and Programmes on Youth Development in Africa

Agenda 2063 provides a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent. Aspiration 6 of the Agenda 2063 calls for unleashing of the potential of Africa's youth. The African Youth Charter (AYC) also provides the blueprint for youth development and empowerment at continental, regional and national levels. It addresses key issues affecting youth, including health and wellbeing, education and skills development, employment, and sustainable livelihoods.

The African Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (APAYE) 2019-2023 is a five-year continental plan of action for implementing the African Youth Charter, the African Union (AU) decision on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth; and the targets on youth articulated in the Agenda 2063 Ten Year Implementation Plan. APAYE serves as AU's overarching programmatic document to guide and influence the efforts and contributions of member states, key partners and stakeholders engaged in youth empowerment on the continent. Together, these policies provide a normative framework to galvanize political commitment for accelerated action and investments in youth.



<sup>1</sup> African Union Commission (2017) AU Roadmap on Harnessing Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth. Available at: <https://wcaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/AU%202017%20DD%20ROADMAP%20Final%20-%20EN.pdf> Assessed on 14.10.2021



## Chapter II

# The 1 Million by 2021 Initiative



In April 2019, the **AUC Chairperson, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat** launched the **1 Million by 2021** initiative in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The initiative aims to reach 1 million young people on the continent with tangible opportunities through direct investments and essential game-changing interventions in the areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement – the 4Es – by 2021. This is part of the AUC commitment to secure the conditions for optimal development for young people aged 15–35 in line with the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2019–2023, Agenda 2063, and other youth development frameworks.

The purpose of the 1 Million By 2021 is galvanize political action and commitment from development partners, Member states and young people in the 4Es. The initiative responds to fundamental questions on new approaches to solving existing problems targeted towards African realities such as:

- How can we embolden stakeholders to consider new perspectives?
- How can we test new ideas and scale up promising ideas continent-wide?
- How can we build ecosystems of efficiencies across the continent?

The implementation of initiative is guided by four principles:

- **High impact** - Targets scalable high impact, high multiplier areas to deliver value.
- **Strong ecosystem** - Facilitate cross learning, sharing and exchange of knowledge and adoption of technology; foster public, private and civil society partnerships.
- **Convening**: Leverage AU mandate to promote affirmative action for youth development and participation; and
- **Commission-wide**: Prioritize use of existing resources and existing infrastructure within the commission





## Chapter III

# Education and skills development





Though African governments have been increasing investments of public resources in education by an average of 6% per year, the resources needed by the education sector continue to outstrip set targets must continuously increase<sup>2</sup>. In some countries, the quality of education is suboptimal in some countries, and about half of young people are out of school, with fewer alternative pathways to education and skills development.

The One Million by 2021 initiative sought to increase access to education and skills development opportunities for young Africans. The programme focused on facilitating learning and skills development, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and promoting more resilient education systems, as part of the COVID-19 response for young people.

## Facilitating learning and skills development of African youth

The AU Youth Development and Empowerment toolbox

As part of the initiative, the AUC developed the youth development and empowerment toolbox that included modules for orienting and activating young people to solve Africa's challenges. These modules covered core areas such as Pan-Africanism, Youth as Change Agents, Health and Wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence, Design Thinking, Systems Thinking, Entrepreneurship, Financial Literacy, Proposal Development, Results-Based Accountability, Community Engagement and Advocacy, Social Media Engagement, Public Speaking and Planning and Results Reporting.

## Building a critical mass of young Africans with skills

The toolbox was curated and rolled out to provide Africa's youth with the requisite tools for optimizing their aptitude, attitude, awareness, and accountability. It was used to train about 1,127 young people including:

**a.** The 11th cohort AU YVC training. AUC in partnership with UNICEF trained the 11th cohort of 238 volunteers from all the 55 member states as part of pre-deployment orientation.

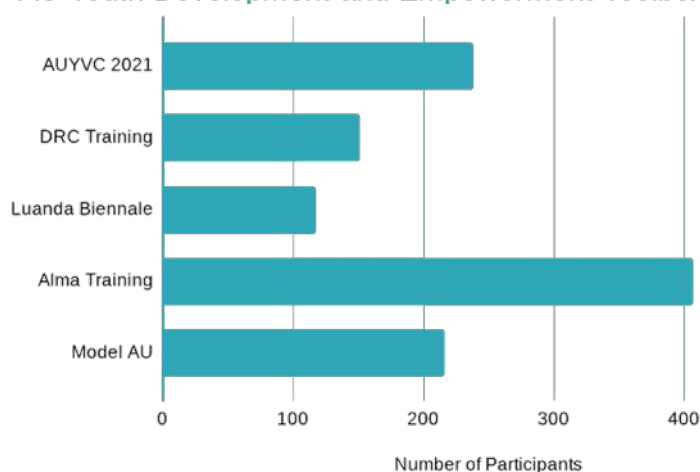
**b.** 150 young people from the Democratic Republic of Congo through the Youth as Change Agents training. The training was a partnership between the AUC and DRC Presidential Panel on AU Chairmanship, and in collaboration Youth Hustlers of the African Youth Charter, the National Youth Council, AfriYAN DRC.

**c.** 117 youth from 50 African countries and 13 other countries trained in a 8-day virtual Youth Leadership Training on Culture of Peace from 14 to 23 September 2021. The training formed part of the second edition Luanda in collaboration with UNESCO, and the Government of Angola and ICESCO.

**d.** The Youth Leadership and Development Training for 406 youth from 38 member states organized from 5 to 7 October in collaboration with the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) for young Africans driving the fight to eliminate Malaria in Africa. The training sought to equip the youth with the relevant skills and tools to implement solutions in their communities.

**e.** AU-Model Summit Preparatory Training organized in partnership with the African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (AUSARO) and the University of Malawi. The training of 216 young people focused on the AU Peace and Security Council, Securing subsistence farmers with AfCFTA and empowerment through Arts, Culture and Heritage. Participants were also trained on the AU's Code of Procedures and the research and development of position papers.

AU Youth Development and Empowerment Toolbox



<sup>2</sup> African Union Commission (2019). Reaching 1 million African Youth with Development Opportunities. Available at: <https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/36534-other-1x21.pptx>

## Promoting resilient education systems

Adoption of DOTSS framework for transforming Africa's Education System

Given the perennial challenges facing Africa's education system, the One Million by 2021 initiative prioritized advocacy efforts to transform education in Africa. This led the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Education, Science and Technology (EST) to adopt the DOTSS framework as the minimum package for transforming education systems.

The DOTSS framework call for action in five domains:

- Digital and electricity connectivity of all schools
- Online learning to complete classroom learning
- Teacher development focusing on teachers and caregivers as facilitators and motivators of learning
- Safe to learn online and offline in classrooms and communities
- Skills focused learning that embraces 360 degrees holistic approach to skills development drawing on modular components including foundational skills in reading and writing; digital skills; 21st century skills such as information literacy, critical thinking, citizenship, and social and emotional learning (SEL) such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making; entrepreneurial skills; and job specific skills.

## AUC Education sector response to COVID-19

In response to COVID-19 disrupting education in Africa, the AUC in partnership with HP Life, launched an online learning platform for young people. The program has provided free online learning tools for educators and students and support to schools and universities to adopt virtual learning solutions.

## Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The AUC in partnership with the East African Community (EAC), hosted the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) TVET Dialogue Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, 27-30 August 2019, under the theme "Harmonization and Harnessing TVET for Regional Integration and socio-economic development". The forum focused on transforming TVET for relevant learning, higher quality, and demand-driven opportunities for young people. Member States were urged to closely align their TVET policies and strategies with the continental and regional strategies and policies, to incorporate reforms that will respond to aspirations of the youth and provide the relevant skills for gainful employment and job creation.

## Strengthening life skills and career guidance

The One Million By 2021 initiative prioritize efforts to strengthen the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) Cluster on life skills and career guidance. The initiative also supported the development and roll out of a harmonized framework for the provision of health education and career guidance to young people in Africa. The cluster served as a platform for coordinating activities of continental partners involved in youth sexual and reproductive health.

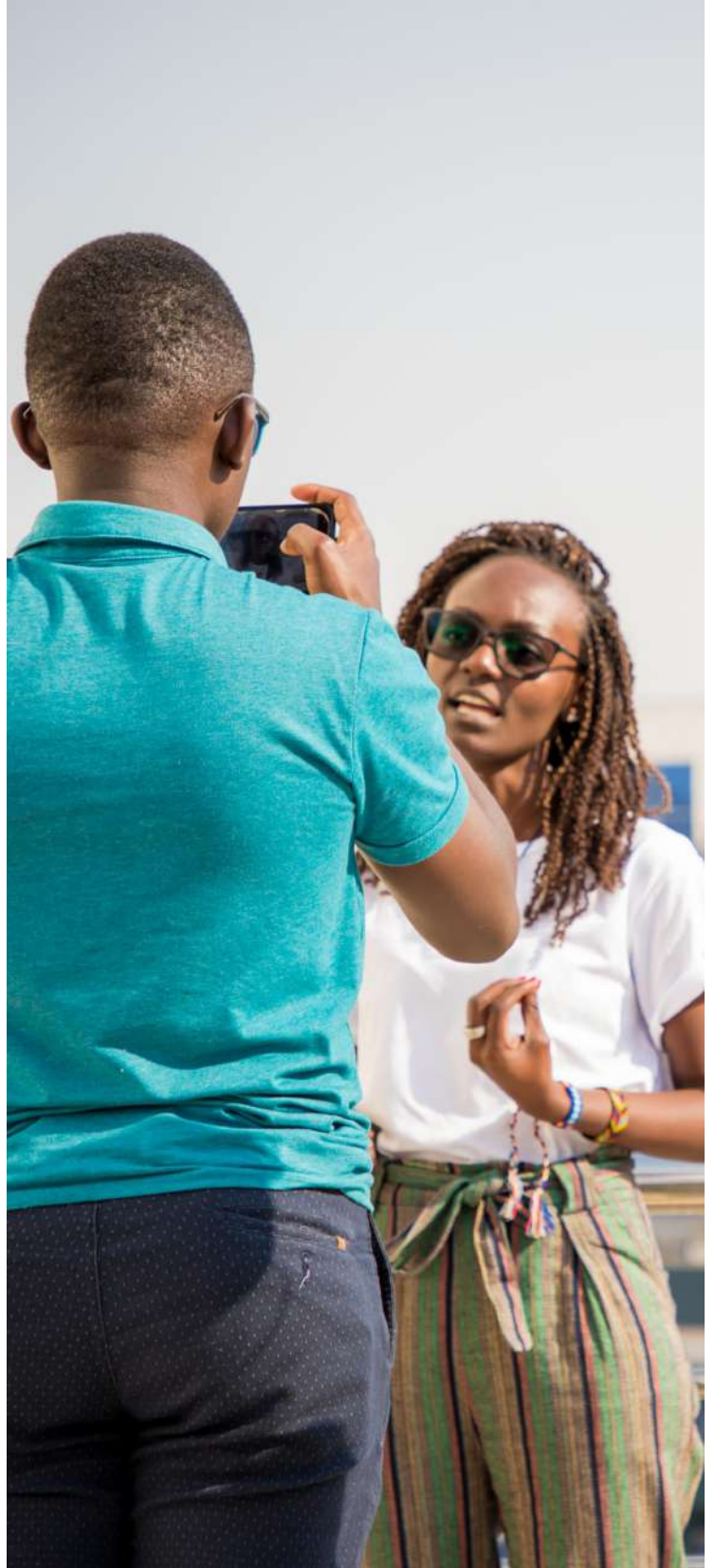
## Safe school declaration

In collaboration with Save the Children, the Youth Division commissioned a knowledge assessment report to identify the needs and priorities of youth organizations, on the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) and protection of education from military use. To ensure youth engagement in the development of the report, a survey was conducted with 170 young people and was complemented by youth-focused social media campaigns.



## Chapter IV

# Employment





Despite increasing economic growth, an estimated 83% of the 11 million Africans entering the job market every year are not able to find formal wage paying jobs due to lack of experience and practical requirements for the labour market<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, the One Million by 2021 initiative worked towards reducing the barriers to gaining employment for young people through the following initiatives:

### Youth Quota in AUC

The Assembly of Heads of State mandated the Commission to take measures to ensure that by 2025, 35% of the AUC workforce will be made up of youth. The One Million initiative continues to advocate and support the implementation of this decision as a strategy for reducing barriers and creating opportunities for young people to be employed by AUC.

### The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU YVC) programme

Between 2019 and 2020, the AUC trained 480 young people from the AU Member States through the AUYVC programme. It also expanded the deployment of AUYVCs and young professionals into partner institutions. To date, a total of 1,400 young people have been deployed into the various AUC Departments, AU organs, and partner's institutions; providing young people with skills, knowledge and working experience to equip them in their respective professions.

### Youth Fellowship programmes Africa Young Women Leaders Fellowship (AYWLF)

In November 2019, the AUC in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship. Under this initiative, 20 young African Women from 20 countries were selected for one-year fellowship with the UN in 15 locations around the world after receiving a 3-day pre-deployment training in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Plans are underway to recruit 20 new fellows for the second cohort of the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship

### AUC/GIZ Tech Fellowship Programme

The AUC/GIZ Tech fellowship was launched in September 2021 to deploy highly competent technology innovators to the AUC and its organs as resident fellows. The fellows are expected to co-create and build innovative tailor products and processes that improve the delivery of the African Union mandate in the context of good governance and citizens engagement.

10 young people have been selected out of 700 applications to the various departments at the AUC.

### Volunteerism in Africa

AUC strongly believes that volunteerism contributes to the economic development and social cohesion of the continent. Therefore volunteering requires an enabling environment and strategic collaboration among stakeholders. As a result, AUC prioritized volunteer mobilization and the implementation of national volunteerism programs through the Volunteer Linkage Platform (VLP).

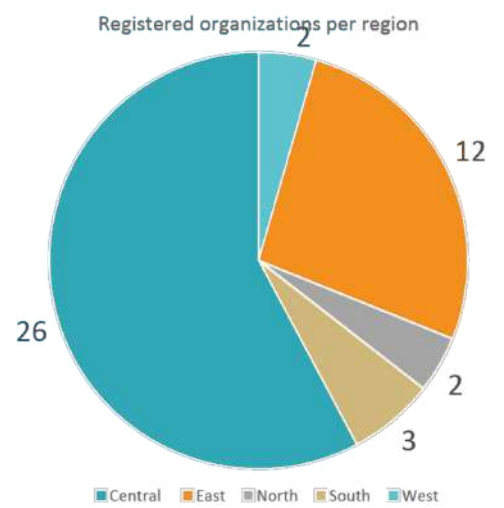
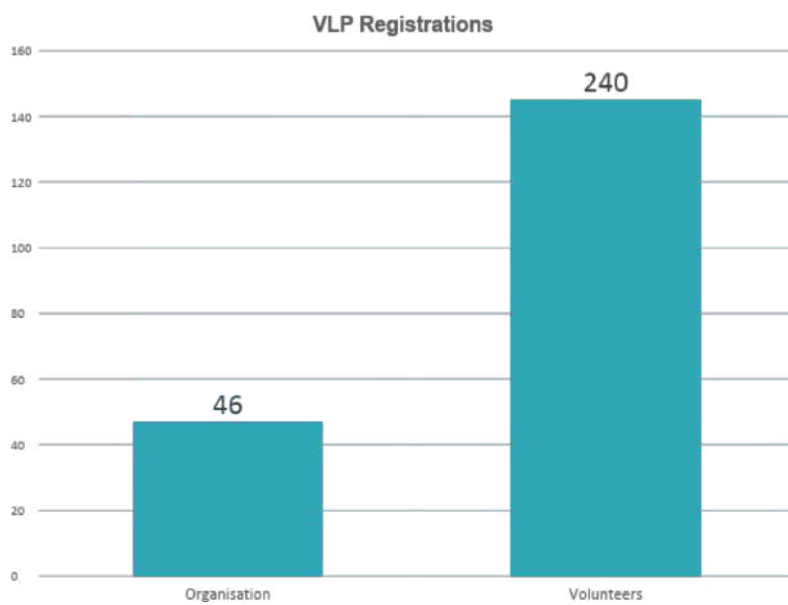
**Volunteer Mobilization.** The AUC partnered with Generation Unlimited (GenU), Global Volunteer Initiative (GVI), United Nations Volunteer (UNV) and Volunteer Service Organization to develop a continental volunteer response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative mobilize up to 500 African youth volunteers to engage community and raise on awareness COVID-19 and mitigation measures. Key activities included organizational mapping, designing of interventions and follow-up support to undertake projects.

### Volunteer Linkage Platform (VLP).

AUC in partnership with the GIZ African-German Youth Initiative (AGYI), and in close consultation civil society organizations, private sector, government, regional structures, volunteers and alumni, volunteer organizations, partners established an online volunteering linkage platform (VLP) to serve as a portal for providing an overview of volunteering and exchange programs, learning and exchange, good practices, tools, statistics and information exchange on volunteerism. The VLP has created a volunteerism mapping and knowledge management online platform as a single access point for volunteerism in Africa; and has provided opportunities to 240 youth in 46 organizations across the continent.



<sup>3</sup> Ibid





## Chapter V

# Entrepreneurship



Young African entrepreneurs face significant structural and economic barriers when building and scaling up businesses. They also usually lack the investment skills, experiences, opportunities and support to start and scale up enterprises nor the right information and networks to access markets. This contributes to the high startup failure rates of approximately 52%.<sup>4</sup>

Given the need to address these challenges, the 1 Million by 2021 initiative created the Young African Programme on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (YAPIE) to provide a platform for:

Engaging young African entrepreneurs to generate innovative market shaping solutions to challenges in their communities; and

Building their capacity and providing them with technical and financial support to thrive as entrepreneurs and increase the number of successful and scalable businesses.

## Generating innovative market shaping solutions

Africa Inclusive Innovation Summit:

In September 2019, AUC hosted the first African Inclusive Innovation Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to explore emerging job opportunities in a technological age and the role of technologies in creating economic opportunities for low- and middle-income earners. The summit brought together over 300 participants and provided the space for young entrepreneurs and startups to dialogue with investors, policy makers and thought leaders.

## The Be A Changemaker Africa (BCMA) Competition

The AUC in partnership with HP Life and Word Skills Initiative (WSI) launched the Be A Changemaker Africa (BCMA) competition in 2020. The competition reached over 500 young innovators and entrepreneurs in Africa, and provided three-month mentorship and coaching sessions, and financial support to accelerate implementation of ideas and innovations.

## African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Innovation Challenge

In November 2020, the AUC launched the AfCFTA innovation challenge in collaboration with UNDP. The Challenge selected 10 finalists from a pool of over 400 applications based on gender, nationality, education level and work experience. The initiative equipped the 10 young African entrepreneurs with requisite capacities, skills and ideas needed to successfully participate in the AfCFTA and contribute to intra-Africa trade and boost Africa's voice and position in the global market and policy space.

## Capacity Building, technical and financial support for entrepreneurs

The 100,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Initiative.

As part of the 1m by 2021 initiative, the AUC in partnership with AUDA-NEPAD launched the 100,000 Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Initiative comprising three priority interventions:

**1.** The MSME Academy provides MSMEs with critical skills and capabilities that will enhance their growth and access to finance. Between August 2020 and February 2021, the academy was launched in thirteen countries, registered 25,000 MSMEs. 247 MSMEs registered on the Academy's platform have successfully completed a four-week virtual training course on business entrepreneurial skills and enterprise development. Over 14,000 MSMEs attended online events and more than 3 million participants tuned into webinars held on radio and online platforms. Scholarships were offered under Stanford Seed Program to provide Forty (40) young African with practical and specialized entrepreneurship training.

**2.** MSME Finance provides MSMEs with direct finance. As part of piloting the MSME Finance Component, Ecobank Group partnered with AUDA-NEPAD to extend a \$2million loan facility to MSMEs in 8 countries: Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda and Togo. 200 MSMEs were selected for a four week training programme and were qualified to apply for a working capital loan of up to USD 5,000.

## Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET)

AUDA-NEPAD in partnership with the AUC launched the Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) as part of the AUC Chairperson's 1m by 2021 initiative. The project is focused on empowering young female agripreneurs with skills in agriculture processing along the value chain and business development.

## Gender Makes Business Sense (GmBS) training

The GmBS training was developed to impart basic business concepts whilst applying a "gender lens". The training is currently offered through face-to-face delivery but is also currently undergoing digitalization to be offered via the AUDA NEPAD e-learning platform.

<sup>4</sup> ILO(2020) Global Employment Trends for Youth. Available at:

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/-publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_737648.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/-publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf)

## Training in peacebuilding

***Virtual Training on Entrepreneurship and Peacebuilding.*** On 9 and 10 September 2021 The African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP) for Southern Africa organized a 2-day virtual training on social entrepreneurship and peacebuilding for 40 African youth. The training covered the following topics: developing entrepreneurial mindset, building a business strategy, fundamentals of marketing, developing a strong value proposition, and fundamentals of business finance, law, labor and people.

***Youth capacity building in peacebuilding and prevention of violence.*** The AU Youth for Peace in collaboration with UNESCO organized a capacity-building training for 72 youth leaders in Africa. The objective was to empower young people to contribute to the prevention of violence and to promote a culture of peace, mutual understanding and respect among people.

AYAP Southern Africa in collaboration with ACCORD, also organized a 2-day training on Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution (CPMR) for 70 youth in Southern Africa. The objective of the training was to increase awareness of young people in Southern Africa on CPMR. It was organized in collaboration with ACCORD. 70 young people benefited from this training. AYAP East Africa also organized a two-day virtual workshop on Sexual and

Gender Based Violence for 87 young people in East Africa. The objective of the training was to sensitize youth on conflict related sexual and gender-based violence.

## The Goodwall Initiative

In 2020, the Youth Division campaign partnered with UNICEF, GenU and Goodwall to launch the 'Better Together, and Better Together Africa' campaign, an initiative to provide an alternative opportunity for 'learning to earning' during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative focused on providing learning opportunities, skills development, professional experience to African Youth, through a mix of weekly challenges and accreditation for learning achievements.

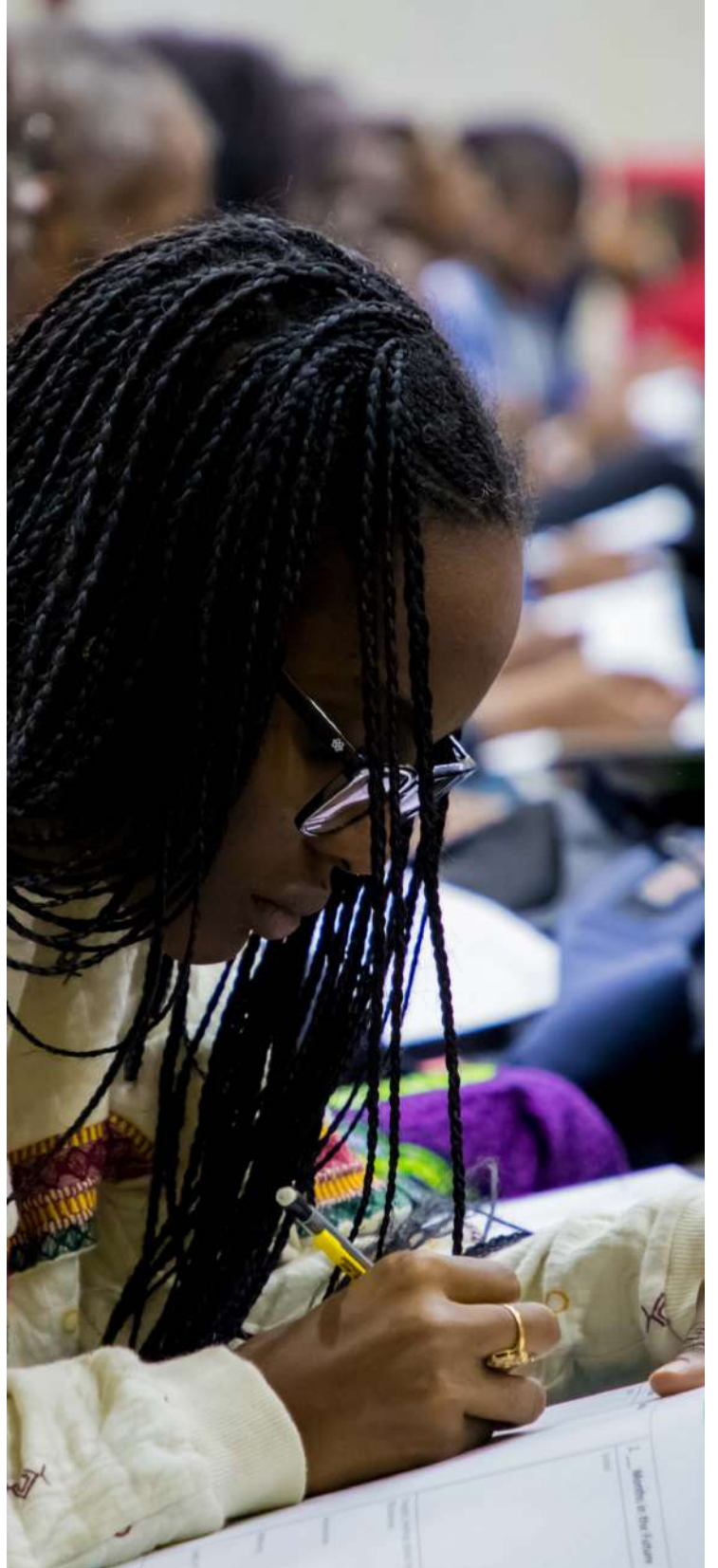
The course was conducted in two phase: phase 1 was for five weeks, and phase 2 was for three weeks. There were 715,091 total engagement from African users on digital platforms in phase 1, and 302,000 in phase 2 and 18 winners from Phase 1, and 34 in phase 2.





## Chapter VI

# Engagement





One of the key objectives of the 1 Million by 2021 initiative is to broaden spaces for youth voices, inclusion and meaningful engagement in policy dialogue and programme design, implementation, and accountability. Activities under youth engagement are captured under the mantra: 'nothing about us without us' and offer opportunities for youth to influence decisions and contribute to their implementation. Meaningful youth engagement required that the AUC is intentional in mobilizing, orienting, consulting, and activating youth to participate at all levels. The youth engagement initiatives focused on:

- Appointment of youth envoy
- Youth-led conversations, both youth only and inter-generational dialogues.
- Youth led advocacy and accountability
- Providing platforms for African youth to participate in specific events.

<sup>5</sup> African Union Youth Envoy (2020) Youth Silencing the Guns, Intergenerational Dialogue. Available at: [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39577-doc-oye\\_stg\\_policy\\_report\\_2020\\_1.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39577-doc-oye_stg_policy_report_2020_1.pdf)

## Appointment of AUC Chairperson's Youth Envoy

The Chairperson of the AUC, appointed Ms. Aya Chebbi, as the first Youth Envoy, to serve as a representative of African youth, harness youth voices, advocate for youth interests AU decisions, including the implementation of the African Youth Charter, the Demographic Dividend Roadmap and Agenda 2063. The office of the Youth Envoy hosted several dialogues reaching over 7.6 million youth on the continent.<sup>5</sup> Following the launch of the AUC campaign on Youth Silencing the Guns on 24th July, 2020, the Youth Envoy, hosted six regional 'Youth Silencing the Guns' Intergenerational Dialogues to provide a platform for young people contribute to the implementation of the Silencing the Guns (STG) Agenda in Africa.



## Youth led Conversations, both youth and intergenerational dialogues

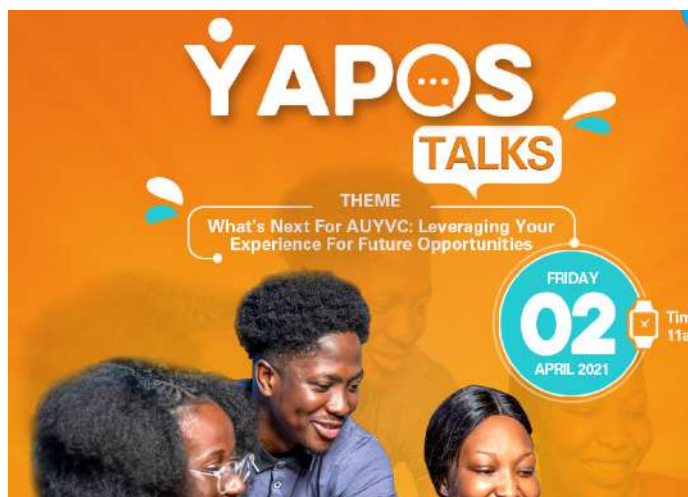
### AUC Youth Corner Series

The AUC Youth Corners was established by the Women Gender and Youth Directorate to create spaces for young people to have conversations with leaders and duty bearers. The Youth Corner Series included webinars, recorded podcasts and intergenerational dialogues through the media space such as zoom, Facebook, twitter chats and other social media platforms. The AUC Youth Corner series has reached 226,754 young people from Africa.

## Fireside chat.

During the commemoration of the 2021 Africa Day, the AUC held a virtual fireside chat that brought together over 440 youth to interact with thought leaders and policy makers. This facilitated conversation was on the AU theme of the year; "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers For Building The Africa We Want" and was used to deconstruct the theme and identify ways to mobilize youth to spark positive, lasting change towards preserving Africa's arts, culture and heritage.





## The Young African Professional Online Series (YAPOS TALKS)

The African Union has promoted the emergence of empowered youth through effective youth participation, and training to ensure the investment in their creativity and contribution that support Africa's human capital development. The YAPOS talks since its inception in April 2021 have reached 2,100 youth through the shared experiences of Africa's professionals for the inspiration and benefit of young Africans. The talks allow the young people to participate in content that would benefit and enrich them professionally.

### Youth-led advocacy and accountability

Capacity building on youth advocacy and accountability.

In 2019, the AUC in collaboration with UNICEF-Geneva adapted the UNICEF youth advocacy guide to the needs of the AU and the African context. The guide was used to train 150 young Africans in youth advocacy and accountability, through a Training of Trainers (ToT) methodology. These young people in turn trained approximately 2000 youth in their communities. The guide was also used to train the 2019 African Union Youth Volunteers cohort, and young people in Ethiopia, DRC, and Tanzania.

### African Youth led advocacy on the COVID-19 Response

In April 2020, the AUC kicked off the African Youth Sector Response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to adapt, mitigate and respond to effects of the pandemic. This included the rollout of four distinct campaigns: Be Safe, Continue Learning, Be An In-

novator and Be A Responder. Six different conversations on education, engagement and youth-led advocacy, social entrepreneurship and mental health were held over a span of 5 months, reaching about 60,000 young people. The AUC also mobilized 3,849 young people for a virtual policy consultation under the theme: "Building Back Better with Young Africans". This consultation focused on developing recommendations for the AU Specialized Technical Committee of Ministers of Youth, Culture and Sport.

### Youth led advocacy and action on ending child marriage

In November 2020, AUC Youth Division and the AUC Child Marriage Secretariat collaborated with UNICEF to host an ideation workshop for 200 youths, social media campaign and intergenerational dialogue with duty bearers on 'Reimagining an Africa without Child Marriage'. A youth reference group was established to continue to advocate against child marriage.

### Continental Youth Mental Health Campaign

The AUC in collaboration with UNICEF, UN Women, IPPF Liaison Offices to the AU and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) launched the first Continental Youth Mental Health Campaign under the theme #HowRUFeeling. The campaign focused on addressing the culture of silence and stigma associated with mental health based on the "A(s)" – Awareness raising, changing Attitudes, and mobilizing public support and Action to normalize mental health conversations on the continent.







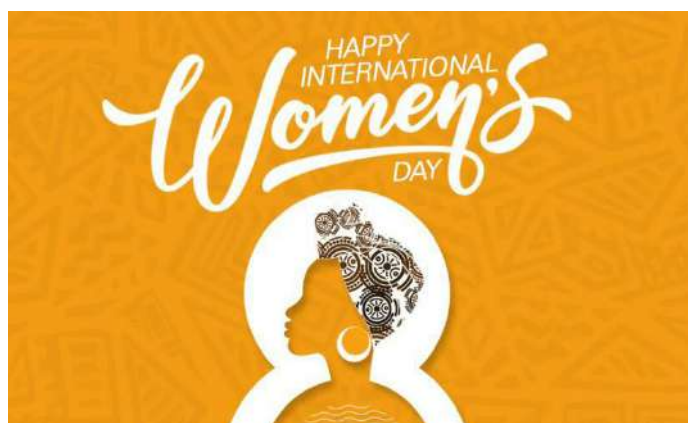
## Provide platforms for youth to participate in specific events

### Day of African Child.

In the spirit of the child-youth continuum, the AUC Youth Division joined the African Committee of Experts to commemorate the 2021 Day of the African Child on June 16. In collaboration with UNICEF a two-week long campaign with the tagline 'An Africa Fit For Me' was launched. This campaign was child-led, and put the voices of children at the center of activities through quotes, stories and lessons learned since the adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) in 1990. As part of the day, conversations that highlighted the three foundational elements of child wellbeing - family and early childhood development, education, and skilling and, psychological and physical safety in communities were organized. The programme reached 3,994 young people virtually.

### Africa youth month

In 2020, the annual Africa Youth Month (AYM) celebrations engaged over 780,000 young people through conversations, competitions, campaigns and intergenerational dialogues. The AUC launched and disseminated the Youth Division monthly newsletter "AU Youth Digest" to increase awareness on AU youth programs and showcase exceptional youth in the continent.



### Pan-African Women's Day.

The Pan-African women's day is commemorated annually by the AU and its partners to celebrate and acknowledge women's contributions towards the development of the African continent while galvanizing efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The Women, Gender and Youth Directorate organized an Intergenerational Virtual Couch Talk on the theme Building the Africa We Want: The Role of Youth in Fostering Generation Equality. This online event reached 28, 874 young people.

### World Sexual Health Campaign

In line with Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol, the AUC in collaboration with the UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNECA and World Health Organization (WHO) held a virtual Tea and Talk conversation on the 10th of September 2021 under theme "Turn It On: Sexual Health in a Digital Age". This Virtual Tea and Talks facilitated a conversation between high-level leaders and African youth. This virtual event reached 23,014 young people through the various media platforms including zoom and other social media platforms.





## Chapter VII

# Partnership for implementation



The 1 Million by 2021 initiative was conceived, designed, and implemented as a public, private and youth partnership initiative. While UNICEF supported the AUC with the conception and design of the programme, several other partners pledged and supported its implementation. Current partners engaged and committed to the implementation of the initiative include:

- UNICEF and Generation Unlimited (GenU) provided institutional support to the youth Division and invested in strengthening the capacity of Youth Division and technical support in the design of its programmes.
- UNICEF and GenU have also been the flagship partner in the deployment of AUYVs, development of the Youth Development and empowerment toolbox, the volunteer mobilization, youth engagement and establishment of the youth reference group and roll out of the child marriage and mental health initiatives.
- UNDP is the lead partner in the deployment of AfCFTA Innovation Challenge and the African Young Women Leadership Fellowship Initiative.
- GIZ is a lead partner in innovation including establishment of innovation hub and the tech-fellows initiative
- Open Society Foundations provided US\$ 1 million for institutional support towards the initiative.
- HP Life are part of the innovation in education ecosystem and online platforms for learning.

The AUC Divisions and Departments, AU Organs have also been significant contributors to the implementation of the initiative. Significant among them are:

- The Youth Division under the Women Gender and Youth Directorate is the business owner and overall coordinator of the initiative.
- Department of Political Affairs leads in youth for peace initiative.
- Education Division leads in the roll out of DOTSS framework and TVET.
- AU-NEPAD leads in the implementation of micro, small and medium scale enterprises under the 100,000 SME initiative.

Member States are key partners in the implementation of the 1 Million by 2021 initiative. The Permanent Representative Council endorsed the initiative and Niger formally launched the initiative. GenU and UNICEF were mobilized to catalyse actions in countries and support scale up of existing national youth development and empowerment programmes.

The African youth is at the heart of the 1 Million by 2021 as a key architect and beneficiary of the initiative. The appointment of the AUC Chairperson's Youth Envoy provided significant visibility and impetus to its implementation. African youth embraced the initiative and made significant contributions to its implementation.



## Chapter VIII

# Challenges, Lessons Learned and Way forward





## Challenges

As a new continental initiative, the 1 Million By 2021 initiative required substantial mobilization of AU member states, partners, and young people for at scale implementation. This large-scale mobilization was not feasible during the first year of the COVID pandemic. The disruption led to loss of momentum and a need to rethink and redefine the pathways and implementation modalities of the initiative to accommodate COVID-19 mitigation measures, including physical distancing measures and travel bans.

Today, online engagement of young people has become the norm, reduced barriers to engagement and offered opportunities scale up activities. Access to internet and associated cost has emerged as a key barrier to youth engagement.

## Lessons learned

Six main lessons have emerged during the implementation of the initiative that will inform the next phase of the initiative.

**Member states engagement.** Member States are critical for ensuring that programmes and initiatives are implemented at scale. The commitment, leadership and buy-in of AU member states provide a launch pad for increasing investment and providing institutional strengthening for youth programmes. The implementation of Country Acceleration Strategies for Member States will further support the development and engagement of young people on the continent.

**Adaptability:** to ensure that the next phase is successful the program will include key elements that allows it to be adapted to any county, context or situation. The targets and measure for success will reflect the opportunities for young engagement across all levels both online and offline.

**Institutional strengthening of AUC:** This is key for effective implementation and stewardship. The investments by UNICEF, GenU and Open Society Foundation provided the team with the flexibility be able to adapt 1 Million By 2021 initiative to the changing context. However there is need for increased support from Member States and other development partners to strengthen the institutional capacity of the AUC if the Commission is to deliver and accelerate the results of the 1 Million by 2021 Next Level.

**Sustained partner engagement:** This role and contributions of youth development and engagement partners are necessary enablers for success. We have learnt that the continued engagement, co-creation and information exchange with partners will be instrumental in delivering on our results.

Therefore, the substantive long term and sustained engagement of partners is important for navigating and creating opportunities for young people across the continent.

**Youth engagement.** The young people are key actors in the implementation of youth development programmes. Therefore, it is important that young people are always engaged and placed at the centre of the design and roll out of youth programmes. The 1 Million Next Level will apply innovative approaches that support the engagement of young people across several platforms and through diverse youth development programmes. This will also include the concrete support for and focus on health and wellbeing initiatives including mental and reproductive health, safety and dignity as important considerations for young people in the next phase of the initiative.

## Conclusions and Way forward

The first two and half years of the 1 Million by 2021 initiative have been used to establish the relevance and feasibility of the 4Es and the 1 Million By 2021 initiative. This has also been a period of learning, re-defining pathways, strategies and implementation models for youth development and engagement programmes. It has also been a period of mobilizing partners, establishing systems and processes for implementation. Given its potential, the impressive results achieved during this period, are only the foundation for the potentials and opportunities that can be harness for the development of Africa's youth. As the successor of the 1 Million by 2021 initiative, the 1 Million Next Level, will focus on delivery, scale and impact.









# 1 MILLION BY 2021

## REPORT

# WGYD

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