

Youth Innovation Challenge for Peace launches in South Sudan

JUBA, South Sudan - The United Nations Development Programme's new Youth Innovation Challenge for Peace launched official activities last week with an introduction workshop designed to explain the competition process, rules, and innovation principles.



Youth Innovation Challenge for Peace workshop

More than 120 young people gathered to learn about the competition, which aims to spark out-of-the-box innovative ideas on engaging young South Sudanese in peace building and as agents of change.

“We want to see South Sudan through your eyes – the eyes of young people who have fresh points of view and the creativity to tackle the complex issues you and your peers face,” said UNDP acting country director, Jean-Luc Stalon, in opening remarks to participants at the workshop.

The Youth Innovation Challenge is organised by UNDP’s Community Security and Arms Control Project to specifically recognise the strength of youth-led initiatives and the impact of home-grown ideas on societies emerging from conflict. UNDP will help the young innovators formulate, develop and mentor some of these ideas through to pilot implementation.

“At UNDP we believe when young people are enabled to fulfill their potential, they have the power to transform their communities, build bridges across generations, and help promote peace,” said Stalon.

Youth in South Sudan make up the majority of the population with more than 70% of South Sudanese below the age of 30, and more than 50% below the age of 18. Nationwide, hundreds of thousands of young people are facing an uncertain future spurred by instability and the absence of peace.

The competition is looking for innovative ideas, developed by youth, which can involve the young people of South Sudan in constructive ways to promote or achieve peace and stability in their country. The competition is focused specifically on ideas, not funding proposals. The most innovative, scalable, and financially sustainable ideas will win prizes ranging from US\$10,000 to US\$4,000 to help implement pilot versions of their ideas.

“UNDP will help the young innovators formulate, develop and mentor some of these ideas through to pilot implementation,” said UNDP Community Security and Arms Control project manager, Judy Wakahiu. “UNDP and our partners are ready to help make them a reality on the ground.”

The introduction workshop is part of the first phase of the Youth Innovation Challenge for Peace. Interested youth who did not attend the introduction workshop can still enter the competition by submitting their ideas by 6 September 2016. Semi-finalists will be announced in late September and invited to a social innovation hackathon to further refine their ideas.

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