

Press Release

Konrad Adenauer Foundation and LÉO Africa Institute officially launch the “Great Lakes Youth Network for Dialogue and Peace” in Uganda

Kampala - Uganda, 15 June 2021 – The launch of the European Union (EU) and Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) co-founded project, “Great Lakes Youth Network for Dialogue and Peace - Our Our Diversity – Our Opportunity!” took place today at a virtual event held in Kampala. The project represents a partnership between KAS and five organizations in the Greatlakes region, LÉO Africa Institute and Cornerstone Development Africa (Uganda), Pole Institute (DRC), Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle (Rwanda), and Actions for Democracy and Local Governance (Tanzania). The regional project hub is located in Goma, Eastern DRC.

The three-year project funded to the tune of EUR 2 million by the EU and KAS will be implemented in four countries in the Great Lakes Region: The Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

“The overall objective of the project is to strengthen youth groups and initiatives which are engaged in various sectors that contribute to peace and security in the Great Lakes region,” said Kwezi Tabaro, the deputy director of the LÉO Africa Institute who is also the project’s National Coordinator in Uganda.

Speaking at the launch event, the LÉO Africa Institute founder, Awel Uwihanganye affirmed that “Through this new initiative with KAS, the EU and other like-minded partners across our region, we hope over the next three years to highlight and support youth initiatives that are doing important work around challenges that pose threats to peace in the region if left unresolved.”

“Our goal is to empower the virtuous, active, and energetic youth of today because we believe that this is the power to not only preserve what is good, to overcome what is not, but more importantly to build a better,” said Anna Reismann, the KAS country representative for Uganda and South Sudan.

The Great Lakes Youth Network project wants to focus on the positive role that youth play as actors in peacebuilding and the observation that the youth suffer from many internal and external obstacles and challenges that limit their important role in peacebuilding such as the lack of internal organizational capacity or the lack of external contacts to make their work and voice heard.

The European Union delegation in Uganda representative, Elizabeth Ongom emphasised that one of the top priorities of the European Union is youth engagement. “We are just about to roll out a youth mapping exercise. This exercise will inform our processes and our partners what is happening where pertaining to young people in Uganda,” she remarked.

According to Benno Muchler, the project director, this project will take on a three pronged approach. The three pillars of the approach include internal capacity management, fostering and creation of exchange and dialogue among the youth as well as the network among youth initiatives and other stakeholders.

Some of the activities that will be implemented over the next three years include subject based video calls, radio programs organised by local youth initiatives, capacity trainings on national and regional levels, summer schools and regional stakeholder events among others.

In her opening remarks, Doreen Nyanjura, the Deputy Lord Mayor, Kampala Capital City Authority expressed her delight in meeting other young people in the region that are committed to the same cause. "I have been at the forefront of fighting for good and peaceful governance in our country well knowing that peaceful and well governed Uganda positively affects the whole region of the Great Lakes," Nyanjura said.

During the three years of implementation, The Great Lakes Youth Network project will strengthen the internal capacities of selected youth groups and initiatives in the 4 selected countries. The project will link these groups across borders and will contribute to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and success stories. The Project will also work to establish strong networking capability between the youth groups and national and international stakeholders in politics, private sector, development, civil society, universities as well as the media.

The virtual launch gathered representatives of key stakeholders: the EU country delegation, leaders in government and the local community, media and civil society representatives as well as the implementing partners. The project will run from 2021 to 2023.

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