



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

Nafore

UNDER EXISTING

YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement

APS No.: 7200AA20APS00007

PLEASE NOTE: This is an addendum to an existing announcement. All interested organizations should carefully review both the *Nafore* addendum AND the full announcement, which can be found here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=325906>.

Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in the YP2LA Addendum.

This activity is authorized in accordance with Part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Through the USAID *Nafore* addendum to the YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement (APS) No. 7200AA20APS00007, USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office seeks to call for concept notes under the YP2 APS umbrella to create a new program to create socio-economic opportunities for youth while preventing violent extremism in Mauritania.

The USAID *Nafore* addendum seeks to empower youth through soft skills and vocational education and training, economic opportunities, and safeguard their communities against radicalization by building their resilience and social cohesion.

USAID seeks targeted support for at-risk youth and their communities in Nouakchott, Trarza, Hodh el Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi. The USAID Nafore activity goal is in line with USAID's Youth in Development Policy and Journey to Self-Reliance: to increase the resistance of Mauritanian youth to the forms of radicalization that leads to violent extremism and terrorism.

USAID seeks qualified applicants to submit concept notes for a co-creation process for innovative program with the goal of using a positive youth focused approach to increasing the resistance of youth to forms of radicalization and terrorism.

Mauritania Country Office anticipates a single new award with an estimated value of up to \$17,000,000 million over the course of three years, with a two-year extension period, subject to the combined successful implementation of the first three years and the availability of funding. The anticipated start date of this award is June,01,2020.

Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the FY 2020 YP2 APS apply (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=325906>).

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the USAID Nafuore (“*add value to*” in the *Pulaar language*) addendum is to solicit concept notes from interested organizations for a new youth program to prevent violent extremism in Mauritania.

The YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement (APS) is an unfunded umbrella APS designed to creatively engage with, among others, youth-led and youth-serving organizations, and systems, to generate cross-sectoral, positive youth development outcomes. An APS is an assistance mechanism that is used when USAID intends to support a variety of creative approaches. Under the YP2 APS, there is flexibility to issue an award in the form of a grant, fixed amount awards, or cooperative agreement and modalities within these award types.

USAID seeks to support a recipient with a defined plan to achieve these outcomes to be further developed through co-creation and in consultation with USAID. USAID seeks to support an implementing partner(s) whose work plan reflects the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach and who can independently identify and address new and impactful interventions with high relevance to the international development community across the spectrum of humanitarian to development contexts.

USAID encourages a successful partner to address and build on the current youth demographic trends, and the results and lessons learned from previous USAID-funded activities. In addition, USAID encourages the recipient to leverage work being supported by other donors and stakeholders, as well as other USAID-funded activities. USAID encourages approaches that leverage the existing platforms of YouthPower and YouthLead, as well as relevant YouthPower communities of practice and other networks such as Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) and Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. The USAID *Nafuore* awardee is encouraged, when appropriate, to collaborate with other awards that fall under the YouthPower 2 APS umbrella and other USAID Washington-based and country-level mechanisms.

An integral part of effective programming in YouthPower 2 is building the evidence base for PYD. USAID *Nafuore* applicants are strongly encouraged to build this evidence base by investing in impact evaluations that uncover causal links between programming and outcomes; implementation research that reveals how to effectively implement programming with a particular population in a particular context with particular intervention characteristics; cost analysis that reveals the relationship between the cost of

our investments and the outputs and outcomes we produce; and collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) that builds and uses strong feedback loops to strengthen programming.

The results expected from USAID *Nafore* will promote PYD by empowering youth to build their social, personal, and technical skills and assets, foster healthy relationships, and, with enhanced agency, become engaged and productive participants in the development of their communities. The USAID *Nafore* PYD strategy will support the creation of enabling environments in which targeted youth will feel empowered to achieve self-established goals. USAID envisions that the strengthening of youth-centric protective environments in the larger community, where youth can actively contribute to community affairs, engage in safe public spaces, and access youth-centric services, will positively contribute to resilience against radicalization to violent extremism (VE).

In publishing the USAID *Nafore* addendum, **USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office is soliciting concept notes from interested organizations according to the review attributes listed below.**

II. BACKGROUND

A. USAID and Youth

There are 1.8 billion young people in the world today, representing the largest youth cohort in human history. More than 90 percent of youth live in developing countries, many of whom reside in countries where USAID works in both stable, and fragile conflict-affected contexts. Educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged youth drive economic growth, resilience, peace and stability, democracy, improved health outcomes, and prosperity. However, when youth are not effectively engaged and their unique needs are not addressed, violence, unrest, and irregular migration can follow, resulting in untapped potential for a country's growth and development. USAID's vision is for young people to be empowered to advance their own livelihoods and help solve their country's development challenges.

Globally, youth face a number of development challenges such as:

- 20 percent of all youth in the developing world are not in education, training, or employment;¹

¹ Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Employment. pp. 2.
<https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/YouthStatsEmploymentpdf.pdf>. Accessed 2, May 2019.

- Five million new jobs are needed monthly to keep youth unemployment at its current high rate, twice the adult unemployment rate;²
- 65 percent of the population is under age 35 while only six percent of political representatives are under 35;³
- 43 percent of the total number of homicides occur among youth;⁴
- 34 percent of new HIV infections occur among adolescents ages 15-24; HIV/AIDs-related deaths for this same age range have not declined in the past 15 years⁵
- Eight out of 10 adolescent girls who died as a result of violence were between the ages of 15 and 19 (World Health Organization, Global Health Estimates (GHE) Summary Tables: Deaths by cause, age, sex and region, 2012, WHO, Geneva, 2014, recalculated by UNICEF).
- In 2011, around 14 million youth were forcibly displaced by conflict and disasters. Today, that number is much higher [PBSO, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1BMZ608>]
- During conflict, weakened institutions, poverty and financial hardship leave adolescent girls vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and violence (including risky livelihoods). [Women's Refugee Commission, 2014), <http://bit.ly/1J666EM>]
- Literacy among youth is rising, but young women lag behind [UNESCO Institute for Statistics global databases, 2018].

While youth face enormous challenges, they nevertheless represent the opportunity of today and tomorrow—as educators and innovators, entrepreneurs and investors, health professionals and scientists, politicians, and peacemakers. This makes it doubly important to invest in them now—making it possible for future generations to not only survive but also thrive, and so that countries that invest in their youth can realize the vitally important ‘demographic dividend’⁶ these youth represent.⁷

² Solutions for Youth Employment. (2015) *Toward Solutions for Youth Employment: A 2015 Baseline Report.*, pp.11 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_413826.pdf. Accessed 2, May 2019.

³ Thompson, Maggie. “A Generation without Representation: How Young People are Severely Underrepresented among Legislators.” *Generation Progress.*, pp. 2. <https://genprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/09/27093134/A-Generation-Without-Representation-Report-2018.pdf>. Accessed 2, May 2019.

⁴ “Youth Violence.” World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence>. Accessed 2, May 2019.

⁵ “Youth Impact.” USAID, <https://www.usaid.gov/youthimpact>. Accessed 3 May 2019.

⁶ Demographic dividend: accelerated economic growth that may result from a decline in a country’s birth and death rates and the subsequent change in the age structure of the population.

⁷ USAID. *Youth in Development Policy: Realizing the Democratic Opportunity.*, pp. 5. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf. Accessed 2, May 2019.

USAID Missions and Operating Units have become more deliberate in prioritizing youth engagement and integration in their Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), strategic plans and activities. USAID's efforts focus on context-specific interventions that advance youth priorities in partner countries. USAID recognizes the importance of building and supporting young people's potential by providing them with the skills, assets, and competencies to be productive citizens in their country's journey to self-reliance. By deliberately working across sectors and engaging youth as active participants in their own development, USAID seeks to address common risk factors and empower youth to be the leaders of today and tomorrow.

For more information on previous USAID efforts in PYD, please see [here](#) or refer to YP2 APS.

B. Mauritanian Youth and Violent Extremism

Mauritania, primarily an expansive desert with only 0.5 percent arable land, ranked 161 out of 187 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index⁸ in 2019. Its population of 4.3 million⁹ and population density of 3.9 inhabitants per square kilometer make it the fourth least densely populated country in Africa, and the least densely populated country in the Sahel. Youth, defined in national law as those between 16 and 35, constitute a majority of the Mauritanian population, with over 70 percent of people under 35 years of age and half of those under the age of 25. Recent analyses completed to support the new National Strategy on Youth and Sports¹⁰ shows an employment gap of around 450,000 persons, equivalent to more than 20 percent of the active population.¹¹ According to the Minister of Employment, Youth and Sports, Taleb Ould Sid'Ahmed “[Mauritania] has accumulated a high rate of unemployment for many years. For over two decades, the educational system has produced unemployed [youth]. Mauritania has the lowest rate of technical training in Africa: at 5% vs 60% in Rwanda ¹².” Unemployment is a major problem for at risk youth in particular, in addition to women and rural youth, while a large proportion of urban youth is underemployed within the expansive informal sector.

⁸ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MRT.pdf

⁹ According to census data from 2018.

<http://www.ons.mr/images/Archive/doc/publication/Annuaire%20Statistique%202018.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://prevention-conflicts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Strategie-Nationale-de-la-jeunesse-des-sports-et-des-loisirs-2015-2020-1.pdf>

¹¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/10eSm2ydTNKBSsmFWenCUUjINW5MfSw4l/view?usp=sharing>

¹² In http://cridem.org/C_Info.php?article=739572, Accessed 25 August, 2020

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to exacerbate poverty-related dynamics. In general, global economic contractions will likely lead to fewer investments, which will translate to even fewer jobs for youth. In terms of education, the most vulnerable have been most affected by worsened conditions imposed by COVID-19 due to lack of access to telecommunication materials for distance learning¹³. Second, the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 reinforced an existing lack of economic and educational opportunities for the most vulnerable populations. State-imposed market and restaurant closures due to social distancing requirements affected the informal sector far longer than the formal sector including larger supermarkets (along with pharmacies, hardware shops and gas stations) which were deemed as essential business and remained open throughout the period.

There are several factors to consider when deciding how best to prevent the spread of violent extremism in Mauritania. Youth live in an isolated, stratified society on the fringes of exposure to violent extremism. Mauritania is an ethnically diverse country, but political and economic power is held primarily by the Beidan (Arab-Berber) elite. Unreconciled tensions persist over the country's legacy of the Beidan's enslavement of the Haratine people and the unaddressed aftermath of the conflict between Senegal and Mauritania (1989-91), an armed conflict that included ethnically-based expulsions from the country followed by waves of arrests and torture of Afro-Mauritanian groups, including the Halpulaar (Fulani), Wolof, Soninké (Sarakolé), and Bambara. These events left many people stateless and without access to civil and political rights; others were exposed to violence and exclusion in their own country. The conflict left the country bitterly divided, with exacerbated disparities in social class, increased levels of already high poverty rates, and a lack of social capital.

The aftermath of the events in Mauritania and between Mauritania and Senegal from 1989-91 are linked to today's socio-economic disparities across ethnic groups, systemic discrimination, and unresolved social grievances. The land-tenure system was completely reformed--which resulted in the interruption of traditional farming and herding practices in the Senegal River Valley¹⁴ and displaced Afro-Mauritanian population that never regained their livelihoods and wealth held prior to the events¹⁵. There are also several reports of violent human rights abuses against the Black Mauritanian groups¹⁶ during this time.

¹³ Groupe de la Banque Mondiale, "Rapport sur la Situation Économique de la Mauritanie: Renforcer l'éducation pour favoriser la cohésion sociale et soutenir le développement économique" Juin, 2020

¹⁴ see John Grazyl, Land Tenure Center

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Mauritania's Campaign of Terror: State sponsored Repression of Black Africans" New York, April 1994

¹⁶ *ibid* pg. 3 and Amnesty International, "Mauritania 1986-89: Background to a Crisis. Three years of political imprisonment, torture and unfair trials" London: November 1989.

Today's youth continue to be affected by the tragic events of this period, particularly in terms of their access to education, livelihoods, and social equity in general. The educational system of Mauritania is polarized ever since the 1979 determination to require Arabic to complete high school. The education sector remains divided, along ethnic, and socio-economic lines.

Beyond issues around language use and requirements in the educational system, it is important to note that the quality of education in Mauritania is significantly lower than that of surrounding countries¹⁷ due to inadequate conditions for teaching, lack of competent teachers, poor governance of the education sector and a lack of efficient use of human and material resources available.

In spite of the aforementioned realities, youth today, from various ethnic groups share a common outlook: that they are interested in learning about how to live in peaceful coexistence with others, and be equipped with tools that would enable them to succeed in Mauritanian society.

In Mauritania, while there are four main local languages, Arabic and French serve as the two official languages. Historically, those in power have manipulated the centrality of one language over another to assert dominance—Afro-Mauritanians have advocated for French, while the Beidan elite have sought a more radical Arabization of the country and attempted to forge stronger links with the Arab world. As mentioned above, conflicts over language date back to the 1960s, and the country continues to be divided along linguistic lines. Private schools, for example, typically teach in either Arabic or French and are almost entirely ethnically divided as a result. Political dimensions of the linguistic conflict include religious rhetoric, citing Arabic as the language of Islam and French as the language of the colonizer. At present, the majority of violent extremist organization messaging and recruitment in Mauritania is conducted in Arabic, predominantly conveyed via religious channels. The risk of exposure to this messaging is therefore highest among the Beidan and Haratine, who primarily communicate in the Hassaniya dialect of Arabic.

Following the June 2019 presidential elections, the heavy presence of army patrols, particularly in Afro-Mauritanian neighborhoods, and widespread arrests of Afro-Mauritanian youth, resembled tensions from the 1989-91 war. While the recent historic transition of presidential power is an opportunity to build consensus and positive change within a fractured Mauritanian society, the risk of not addressing these grievances

¹⁷ <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/819601592919148037/pdf/Renforcer-l-%C3%89ducation-pour-Favoriser-la-Coh%C3%A9sion-Sociale-et-Soutenir-le-D%C3%A9veloppement-%C3%89conomique-Rapport-sur-la-Situation-%C3%89conomique-en-Mauritanie.pdf> Accessed, August 28, 2020

exacerbates the risk that disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and aggrieved youth will be tempted to respond with violence.

During the late 1990s, Mauritanian youth, particularly from middle- and upper-class Beidan families, increasingly joined regional and international armed groups, including al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin* (JNIM), and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The majority left to fight abroad, primarily in the Middle East, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso—and some rose to important decision-making positions. From 2005-2011, Mauritania contended with domestic attacks perpetrated by AQIM and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (SGPC). These included kidnappings for ransom, attacks on westerners and military personnel, and suicide bombings.¹⁸ There has not been a terrorist attack in Mauritania since 2011, a point of national pride attributed, in part, to high investment in security forces nation-wide.¹⁹ Since 2011, many analysts claim that recruitment has decreased or all but stopped in many areas.

Systemic racism and institutionalized lack of social equity has had profound psycho-social impacts on Afro-Mauritanian and Haratine youth. Testimonies captured during the Cross Sectoral Youth Assessment²⁰ convey the hopelessness and constant stress experienced by youth in the face of systemic injustices:

“people can be poor and accept it, but they cannot be discriminated against and remain calm.” “In my community [discrimination] is omnipresent, I once attended a distribution of food items and some received and others did not because of their origin.” –Young men, 23–34, Brakna

“. . . especially racism, when you are Haratine, you have little chance of succeeding.” –Young women, 25–32, Kiffa City, Assaba

“. . . a general environment that is very discriminatory toward those with no connection or people not from the ‘big’ crowd of the power in place.” –Stakeholder, Tagant

¹⁸ International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc., “Mauritania Violent Extremism & Media Landscape Assessment: Desk Study & Field Analysis,” Peace Through Evaluation, Learning, and Adaptation AID-OAA-M-15-00022, TO No. 72062478F00001, Washington DC: USAID, September 2019.

¹⁹ William Miles, et al., “EAS Project for Regional Peace and Governance Programs: Mauritania Assessment Countering Violent Extremism: Resources and Programming,” Accra: USAID/West Africa, EAS/WARP, The Mitchell Group, 2016; 9.

²⁰ Making Cents International through YouthPower: Evidence and Evaluation Task Order 1 (YouthPower Learning) August, 2020, p 32-35

“The biggest problem is . . . lack of occupation as it leads to a perception by many youth as rejected, excluded, and abandoned; they often want to belong and feel useful so that are fragile in that sense more than just economic challenges— we see families that provide food and shelter for their children and yet these children engage in criminal activities and reject school. The explanation is more the perception of being part of something rather than being nothing.” –Stakeholder²¹

These sentiments compiled with poverty and lack of opportunity contribute to the push factors which can render youth vulnerable to violent extremism.

Currently, AQIM is the violent extremist organization (VEO) with the largest presence in Mauritania, though that presence continues to be concentrated along the border with Mali. While various factions make up AQIM, they share the same political aim of establishing an Islamic state ruled by sharia law (travel within the Sahelian region is already facilitated by cross-border tribal connections). Violent extremist organization recruitment narratives tend to be defined by strong anti-colonial rhetoric, pointing to the corruption and inefficacy of the current system of government. To date, recruitment has relied heavily on ideological justifications and has only recently begun to shift to exploit inter-group social conflicts and focus on the recruitment of non-Beidan youth. Some subject matter experts suggest that youth from the Haratine and Pulaar communities will likely be the next recruitment targets for AQIM. For Haratine youth, unresolved grievances relating to their enslavement by the Beidan²² and continued patterns of social and systemic discrimination are factors that may make Haratine youth vulnerable to radicalization to VE. Several recent studies have shown that the toll of persistent racial trauma can result in anxiety, depression and even resemble post trauma stress disorder (PTSD)²³. Without the option of other psycho-social services, youth may turn to VE activities as an outlet and solution to their life situation.

The Pulaar, who were like other Afro Mauritians, severely affected by the 1989 crisis, have strong cross-border connections across western and central Africa. Recent reports of violence and injustice perpetrated against members of the Pulaar tribe in Mali and Burkina Faso, coupled with historical grievances, have led to high levels of frustration that can be exploited by VEO recruiters.

C. Mauritania National Youth Programming

²¹ Ibid

²² Slavery was not outlawed in Mauritania until 1981 and only criminalized in 2007.

²³ [psychology today](#), Accessed 26 August 2020

USAID *Nafore* shall work in coordination with the national youth strategy and seek to build sustainability in its approach and support Mauritanian stakeholders with plans to further the country on its Journey to Self Reliance²⁴ (J2SR). USAID *Nafore* will also seek to work in synergy with ongoing public and private initiatives to avoid duplication.

Mauritania's national development strategy, the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP) 2016-2030²⁵, specifies the need to capitalize on the country's demographic dividend, promote inclusive approaches, and establish local resilience mechanisms. While SCAPP remains in force, the current administration has made additional specific commitments to 1) empower youth through job creation, technical and professional training accessibility, and the diversification and widening of education coverage; 2) promote gender equity; and, 3) reduce the vulnerability of local populations. In addition, the ministerial structure recently changed, with the Youth and Sports Ministry becoming the Ministry of Employment, Youth, and Sports. The ministry adopted a new employment strategy that includes the creation of 100,000 new jobs over five years and integrates programming for training and access to finance for entrepreneurs. In February 2020, the ministry launched the "My Project, My Future" campaign to support 500 start-ups around the country, with quotas broken down by region. Finally, the National Strategy for Youth and Sports (2015-2020) is expiring, and the 2020-2025 strategy that is currently being drafted is expected to align with the national employment strategy but include youth service provision components.

A new government agency, *Taazur*, has been tasked with reducing poverty and inequality. Its mission also focuses on empowering youth through the promotion of solidarity and sustainable local programs (e.g., education, health, micro infrastructure). In addition to *Taazur*, key donor-funded national programs executed by state institutions include *l'Agence Nationale de Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes* (ANAPEJ, the national youth employment promotion agency under the Ministry of Employment and Youth), *Caisse des Dépôts et de Développement* (CDD, national savings and development bank), and, in some cases, direct implementation of programs by ministries, departments, and agencies. These donor-funded programs, implemented at the request of the government, are often subject to signed conventions (loans or grants).

At the onset of the pandemic The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (GIRM) undertook deliberate measures regarding COVID-19, including closing borders

²⁴ <https://selfreliance.usaid.gov/country/mauritania>

²⁵ formerly known as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) available at: www.imf.org > media > Files > Publications

and airports, limiting the movement of its population and the size of public gatherings, putting in place a curfew, and closing non-essential businesses. In collaboration with donors, GIRM has mobilized around a three-pillar emergency response plan: 1) healthcare and security, 2) immediate economic relief, and 3) economic recovery. The Ministry of Economic Affairs is leading a cross-sectoral approach, with the Central Bank of Mauritania and the Chamber of Commerce engaged in the economic components of the action plan.

The Empowering Mauritanian Youth in Education and Self-Improvement (EMELI) activity's study of the low skilled job market²⁶ highlighted the labor-intense sectors directly contributing to Mauritania's economic growth as: agriculture, fisheries, construction, and extractive industries. EMELI demonstrated that technical training was a key component of economic growth that could resolve the disconnect between the large pool of unskilled/underskilled youth on one hand, and the specific requirements for qualified labor in the financial sector on the other hand.

Vocational education and training are outlined as one of the key strategies through which the Ministry of Youth and Sports intends to increase economic growth. National priorities focus on increasing the employability of youth through vocational training and entrepreneurship. Current programs help bolster the role of the national agency of youth employment (ANAPEJ), develop internship and volunteerism through UNDP and engage the private sector with support to youth focused startups and entrepreneurial coaching and mentoring programs.

The World Bank's recent report²⁷ highlights the importance of education to future economic growth particularly to bolster a post COVID-19 economy. Additionally, this report captures, in detail, some of the real challenges that Mauritania faces that must be overcome to achieve sustainable growth in the management, quality, funding, and structure of the education sector.

III. PURPOSE & THEORY OF CHANGE

Based on USAID's analysis of radicalization and violent extremism in Mauritania, there is an increased potential of radicalization and/or recruitment by VEOs in poor youth with low levels of education and skills (vocational and soft skills), with low perceptions of self-

²⁶ DeGSta pour le compte de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM) dans le cadre du projet « autonomiser la jeunesse mauritanienne par l'éducation, le leadership et le progrès personnel (EMELI) » financé par l'Agence Américaine pour le Développement International (USAID) via l'Accord numéro AID-625-IO000001-17-Etude des marchés porteurs d'emplois pour le personnel peu ou pas qualifié en Mauritanie. Juillet, 2017

²⁷ Rapport sur la situation Économique en Mauritanie: Renforcer l'éducation pour favoriser la cohésion sociale et soutenir le développement économique, Juin 2020

efficacy and higher feelings of hopelessness, and with limited supportive social networks and lack of critical thinking skills. In addition, Mauritania's unique history and social structures have created deep and long standing structural exclusion based upon language differences and expropriation of land for some, caste system and reverberations of servitude for others and the social-cultural norms to depend on internal clan relationships for status and livelihood rather than seek connections within the broader community. VEOs may seek to leverage or exacerbate these divisions as tactics for radicalization and/or recruitment.

The limited resilience capacities for youth has increased their vulnerability, particularly when combined with a trigger event(s), such as experiences of violence, social injustice, discrimination, and abuse. The Mauritanian history as a center of religious scholarship and teaching unfortunately opens the door for various draconian messages being espoused by religious and quasi-religious entities that influence youth, lacking critical thinking skills, and make them susceptible to radical and extremist viewpoints.

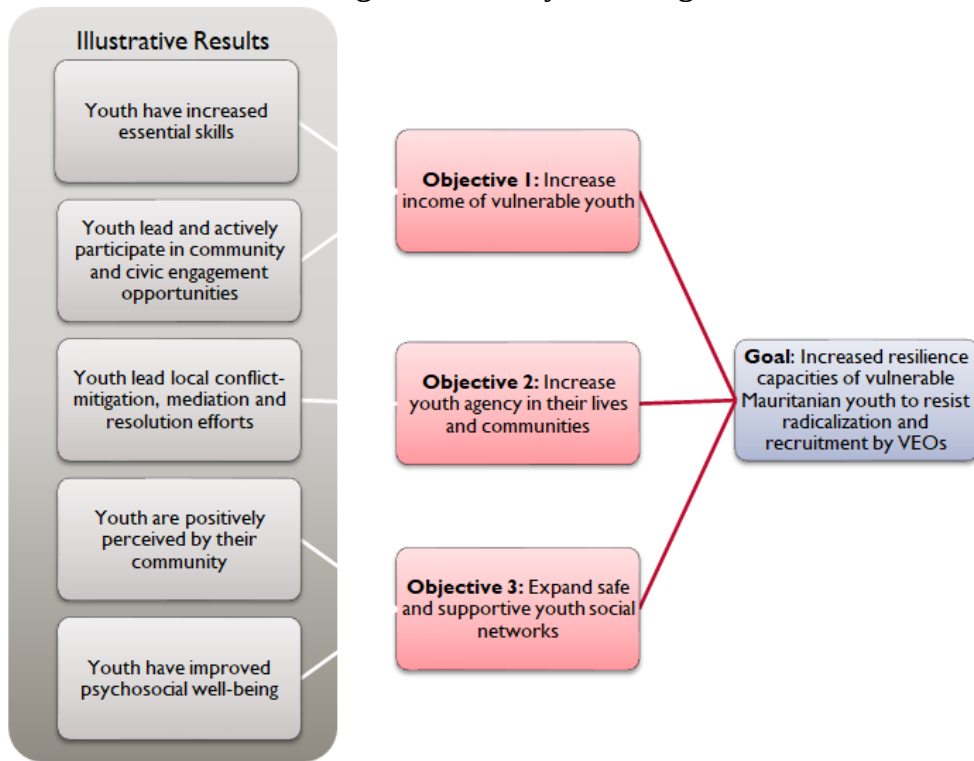
Social cohesion is the glue of internal consistency that transcends such legacies. It is also the ideal method to combat exclusion, discrimination, and the denial of human rights. Mauritania today faces a huge deficit in social cohesion based on its history and aftermath of slavery, discrimination, lingering traditional attitudes, and practices with respect to women and young people, and the organization of society into castes. These are all deleterious to the social fabric.

Therefore USAID *Nafoore* seeks to counter violent extremism through the prevention of radicalization of young people with a positive youth development approach that strengthens individual capacities, social networks and economic opportunities for vulnerable Mauritanian youth in urban and peri-urban communities that have heightened exposure to VEO messaging and radicalization efforts.

USAID *Nafoore* will develop a methodical beneficiary targeting process with USAID to ensure geographic and demographic specificity of the activity. The targeted youth beneficiary populations will focus on Mauritanian youth beneficiaries between the ages of 15 and 34 and reflect vulnerability factors described above.

To achieve this ambitious goal, USAID envisions a complex theory of change whereby mutually reinforcing results for Mauritanian youth contribute to the achievement of the USAID *Nafoore* activity objectives.

Figure 1: Theory of Change



IV. PROGRAMMATIC AND GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Goal: Increase resilience capacities of Mauritanian youth needed to resist radicalization and recruitment by violent extremism organizations.

USAID *Nafore* aims to strengthen the resilience capacities of vulnerable Mauritanian youth in urban and peri-urban communities in order to prevent radicalization and counter recruitment efforts by VEOs. Youth in target environments for this Activity include those at the intersection of socio-economic vulnerability and high levels of exposure to VE activity. Many youth fall victim to cycles of violence and recruitment and/or utilization precisely due to their conditions of vulnerability and lack of a safe, supportive social network. Others are lured into illicit violent activities with the hope of escaping their hostile realities at home and/or in their communities to access what they may see as the only option for protection and/or economic prosperity and/or to feel included and empowered.

USAID expects to support efforts in selected peri-urban and urban areas with a socio-ecological systems approach and with a reference to a moral ecology approach²⁸ to better

²⁸ Bouhana, Noemie. (2019). The Moral Ecology of Extremism: A Systemic Perspective.

understand, prevent, and address violence and mitigate risks associated with VE. Because myriad factors influence how youth develop and thrive or struggle, understanding each level within the system, how they impact one another, and how each represents a key point for prevention, is essential for USAID *Nafore* to mitigate risk factors and increase protective factors impacting youth. USAID *Nafore* is also expected to partner with national and local civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, and the private sector to capitalize on previous USAID and other investments, employ strategies for multiple risk levels, and implement innovative approaches to foster a continuum of care and support that enables youth to thrive.

Geographic Priority: USAID *Nafore* will prioritize interventions for the following areas: Nouakchott, Trarza, Hodh el Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi regions using specific criteria (applicants are welcome to use the aforementioned criteria as a basis to develop their own suggested criteria) to determine the most vulnerable areas of the region prone to violent extremism. The selection of these regions is indicated by the 2019 Mauritania media assessment²⁹ and recent Cross Sectoral Youth Assessment³⁰ considering key push and pull factors facing Mauritanian youth.

Objective 1: Increase income of vulnerable youth

USAID *Nafore* shall promote and implement market-driven workforce development and employment strategies for youth vulnerable to violent extremism. In order to achieve this objective, USAID *Nafore* should build the foundational, technical, financial, entrepreneurial, and other critical soft skills needed to obtain employment or to initiate self-employment. This will build their material and non-material assets and enhance their agency by giving them better control over their own lives and livelihoods. In order to support these efforts, USAID *Nafore* should strengthen, build, and/or consolidate strategic partnerships with the private sector to strengthen demand-driven vocational training, promote curriculum reform to better align training with demand, and enhance the effectiveness of job placement services. Such partnerships are expected to stimulate market demand and create new opportunities for youth-centered start-ups, social enterprises, and informal sector enterprises to scale up and, in some cases, enter the formal sector. Sustainability and resilience to economic and other shocks will be among the selection criteria when identifying the sectors, sub-sectors, value chains, and/or individual

²⁹ Mauritania Violent Extremism and Media Landscape Assessment. Peace through Evaluation, Learning and Adapting Activity (PELA) September 16, 2019. prepared with funds provided by the United States Agency for International Development under AID-OAA-M-15-00022, TO No. 72062478F00001 by International Business and Technical Consultants, Inc (IBTCI) and its subcontractor partner, MSI.

³⁰ Cross Sectoral Youth Assessment. Making Cents International through Youth Power Learning Evidence and Evaluation Task Order I

enterprises to be assisted, in addition to the potential for new job creation. USAID *Naf Moore* should also help its partners to understand, adapt, and respond to the unique conditions of youth with diverse backgrounds, including by promoting gender equity, ethnic inclusion, peacebuilding, and opportunities for disabled youth.

A variety of skill-building opportunities and training will be needed in order for youth with lower levels of educational attainment and skills to increase their income and build a sustainable livelihood. In particular for the most marginalized and vulnerable youth population (e.g., women and girls, youth from rural communities, and mahadras students), this may include providing and/or strengthening quality learning opportunities for youth to acquire foundational literacy, numeracy and soft skills. Previous USAID studies have found that programming that facilitates the transition from mahadras to vocational training is highly appreciated and attracts an increasing number of participants. However, at present, the vocational training seat capacity remains low, offerings are duplicative, and access standards are high. As such, vocational training is often inaccessible to the most vulnerable youth. Therefore, USAID believes strengthening training content; integrating literacy, numeracy, and soft skills; improving instruction; and adapting delivery modalities will make training more accessible and more effective for vulnerable Mauritanian youth. Remote learning strategies for technical and vocational training are particularly important to consider to bridge access for vulnerable youth where COVID-19 has closed educational facilities and the most vulnerable youth have the least access to remote learning platforms such as the internet and mobile phones.

It is important to understand that building the essential skills of vulnerable youth contributes to all three USAID *Naf Moore* objectives. As such, USAID *Naf Moore* should build youth soft skills, such as critical thinking skills, prosocial skills, and conflict resolution skills, across all areas of programming. Under Objective One, USAID *Naf Moore* should work with youth, the local private sector, and other stakeholders to identify and build the essential soft skills that contribute to employment and workforce success.

Skills acquisition must be complemented by increased opportunities for skills application. USAID *Naf Moore* programming should accompany youth through the various stages of skill acquisition and application to ensure a smooth transition to securing a sustainable livelihood, acknowledging that training alone is insufficient. USAID *Naf Moore* should develop and/or strengthen systems for participating youth to apply what they have learned and will work, in partnership with USAID's [CATALYZE](#) Activity, to leverage its private sector connections to ensure that the largest possible share of these transitional experiences is paid or is at least accompanied by a stipend. Initiatives for this transition from school-to-work may include:

- apprenticeships in vocational traditional fields (e.g., fishing, farming, masonry, carpentry, electricity, welding, and tiling);

- internships in businesses (e.g., production, manufacturing, processing, wholesale, retail, and services) and, possibly, some professions (e.g., dental, or legal assistant, nursing, banking);
- internships in technology (e.g., computer programming, telephone service providers); and,
- innovative initiatives for skills application such as by encouraging and helping to facilitate the creation of new community groups, youth associations, business networks, advocacy groups, cooperatives, and other entities where youth gain leadership opportunities and can try to build their futures.

USAID *Naf Moore*, in partnership with CATALYZE, should also promote youth led micro and small business start-ups. With support from existing private sector partnerships, USAID *Naf Moore* should act as a broker to encourage business complementarities—for example, identifying gaps in value chains; sub-contracting and franchising opportunities; market niches with unmet demand; and, import substitution possibilities.

USAID believes that increasing the income of vulnerable youth will not only have a direct benefit on decreasing their vulnerability to recruitment by VEOs but will also contribute to building young people's sense of agency and social networks. This will create a virtuous cycle of resilience whereby youth are able to strengthen their individual resilience capacities and should have the dual aim of increasing income generation for youth and supporting youth in finding belonging and purpose. Entrepreneurship, in particular, builds essential youth capacities for innovation in solving problems in their communities and in creatively developing both livelihoods-focused and opportunity-driven businesses. USAID *Naf Moore* should promote a local resilience-based approach centered on a social enterprise model and prioritize collective business initiatives that offer solutions to local needs. To reach this end, USAID *Naf Moore* should raise awareness with potential employers of the mutually beneficial outcomes of hiring youth from vulnerable communities including young women, a concept that falls directly in-line with the Government of Mauritania's new Economy Recovery plan.

Illustrative Results:

- Youth gain new employment following participation in United States Government (USG) assisted workforce development programs
- Private employers are made aware of mutually beneficial benefits of inclusive hiring practices for youth and partnerships are developed
- Youth have improved technical and vocational skills that enable them to meet market demand
- Youth have increased economic opportunities as a result of increased access (to networks, financing, and resources, enabled through private sector partnerships)

Objective 2: Strengthen youth agency in their lives and communities

USAID *Naf Moore* should provide opportunities for young people to build, use and refine their skills, knowledge, and motivation to choose nonviolent behaviors and healthy conflict resolution approaches. Based on an understanding that appropriate transformations at the individual level will produce changes in families and communities and vice versa, USAID *Naf Moore*'s targeted youth should be equipped with the necessary social and emotional skills to influence their decisions about their lives, set their own goals, and act upon those decisions to achieve desired outcomes and to contribute positively to their community. Youth should cultivate practical tools to identify and respond to problems in a way that reduces future risks and provides opportunities to exhibit prosocial behaviors and coping techniques for addressing their problems at school, at home, among their peers, and in their community. This will be fundamental for fostering healthy relationships among youth and those impacting their development.

One critical area in which youth are already demonstrating agency is in their consumption and use of information and digital media. With the proliferation of extremist messaging communicated online, through traditional media sources and via text messages, there is a heightened need to ensure that young people responsibly consume information and critically engaging in social media. Building improved youth agency in communities will encompass virtual and local communities. As such, USAID *Naf Moore* will likely need to build vulnerable youth's media literacy skills, inclusive of digital literacy. This will support youth to critically evaluate the information and messaging they access through traditional and social media channels, seek out and use accurate information to inform their individual decisions, and develop or amplify alternative messages related to peace, social cohesion, social justice, and other priority issues for youth. Through this PYD, youth will be empowered to be positive agents of change in their community and directly contribute to the overarching goal preventing radicalization and recruitment by VEOs.

In order to build youth agency, USAID *Naf Moore* should address the psychosocial wellbeing needs of vulnerable youth. As described earlier, vulnerable youth may have experienced violence, abuse, exclusion, and discrimination with a detrimental negative impact on their wellbeing. The psychosocial needs of young women in particular should be strongly considered. In addition, the current context of COVID-19 pandemic and related public health policies may have exacerbated feelings of isolation or experiences of exclusion and discrimination from essential services. To address these impacts, USAID *Naf Moore* should strengthen the institutional capacity of local- and national-level civil society institutions to provide efficient youth- and family-centered psychosocial support services.

In the context of COVID-19 pandemic there is also a heightened risk for exacerbating intergroup tensions and further weakening social cohesion in Mauritanian communities.

This creates an opportunity for USAID *Nafoore* to leverage youth skills and assets to positively contribute to their community and strengthen social cohesion during this crisis. With USAID *Nafoore* support, youth will have opportunities to increase their engagement and demonstrate leadership in activities related to their needs and interests, participate in decision-making processes, and more freely express themselves without fear of violence or retribution. Opportunities for such engagement may include service learning, sports clubs, youth organizations, policy implementation oversight, or youth-led conflict mitigation, mediation, and resolution efforts. Strong emphasis should be placed on providing tailored support to strengthen existing youth-centric initiatives and/or organizations. In doing so, not only will youth be able to realize the potential of increased youth agency, they will also contribute to shifting perceptions of youth in the community as positive change agents.

Finally, as stated above, it is important to recognize that the development of essential skills and building sustainable livelihoods for youth, as described under Objective One, is an integral component of achieving Objective Two. As such, USAID *Nafoore* should integrate training activities in a holistic, systems-based approach.

Illustrative Results:

- Youth have improved soft skills
- Youth have increased media and digital literacy skills
- Youth have improved psychosocial wellbeing
- Youth participate in civil society activities following completion of soft skills training
- Youth lead local conflict mitigation, mediation, and resolutions efforts
- Youth are perceived as positive change agents in their community
- Local capacity to deliver psychosocial support is increased

Objective 3: Expand safe and supportive youth social networks

USAID recognizes that youth participation in public spaces throughout Mauritania is currently hindered for a multitude of reasons, including cultural norms and patterns of traditional leadership that elevate elders alone and often duplicate social discrimination factors. For youth to realize their full potential, increase their income and mobilize their agency for positive personal and community development, they need to be supported by a safe and positive network of peers, adults, and organizations/institutions. Applying the socio-ecological model,³¹ such networks create an environment where youth are protected

³¹ <https://www.youthpower.org/resources/socio-ecological-approach-understanding-gendered-drivers-poor-adolescent-mental-health-low-and-middle-income-countries>

from violence and can seek out support, advice when confronted with life's challenges, including recruitment efforts by VEOs. USAID *Nafuore* should support and create opportunities for youth to build and benefit from safe and supportive social networks. This will further reinforce youth's soft skills, particularly a healthy sense of belonging, and counter radicalization efforts that exploit youth feelings of exclusion and isolation. Strategies to ensure female youth's participation and leadership in social networks should be a priority.

Building safe and supportive social networks may require expanding, improving, or creating safe spaces where youth, particularly young women, can meet, initiate, and pursue interests and leisure activities, and feel comfortable and welcomed. Such safe spaces nurture positive and healthy peer relationships as well as youth-adult relationships. Youth engagement in building and recovering safe public spaces alongside committed community members and private sector actors will help cultivate local ownership and sustainability of the recovered spaces. Therefore, USAID *Nafuore* may seek to mobilize local private sector partners to invest in these types of efforts, as well as demonstrate a commitment to the sustainability of initiatives implemented under this activity.

In addition, USAID *Nafuore* support for safe and supportive social networks, both within and outside of safe spaces, should include linkages and referrals to essential services and opportunities for youth. This may include the education, training, and livelihood opportunities supported under Objective One and the community engagement opportunities or psychosocial support services described under Objective One.

Illustrative Results:

- Youth have improved sense of belonging
- Youth have decreased sense of victimization
- Youth have increased access to essential social services, including protection services
- Youth demonstrate tolerance and empathy
- Youth have increased health relationships and bonding
- Youth access to and engagement in safe public spaces is increased

Implementation Considerations

Positive Youth Development (PYD): The activity should use a PYD approach for ensuring effective youth development principles and practices. PYD is an intentional, holistic, age- and developmentally appropriate, gender-transformative and prosocial approach to youth development. It promotes the building of assets of young people and communities and strengthens protective factors to achieve greater resilience and both

short- and long-term desired youth outcomes. Interventions should be youth-led for youth.

Do No Harm Approach: Understand the impact of aid and its interactions on the existing context and with its beneficiaries, with the goal to limit or prevent unintended negative consequences.

Conflict Sensitive: Concept Note should integrate conflict sensitive approaches that include, an understanding of the conflict dynamics and contributing factors to violence and conflict, ongoing monitoring of how proposed interventions affect those dynamics, and the ability to reflect on the impact of interventions so as to ensure a flexible approach that results in course correction if activities are determined to exacerbate violence or conflict rather than contribute to reconciliation, social cohesion and peace.

Best practice and best fit: The activity should build upon existing, promising practice models and curriculum, adapted to the current crisis context.

Gender Integration: Poverty, poor quality education, discrimination, lack of opportunities, early/forced marriage, limited participation in civic life, and stigma towards other gender identities, etc. are common issues Mauritanian youth face. However, these are exacerbated for women and youth, particularly from vulnerable groups, who also face gender-based violence. Overcome by sentiments of hopelessness in an unjust vicious cycle, some young women and youth are lured towards extremist ideology groups which provide them with structured resolve to these difficult issues.

Mauritania ranks 150 out of 162 on the Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Human Development Report 2019 and 141 out of 150 on the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index from the World Economic Forum. Even though they exist, laws on gender and social inclusion are not enforced.

Applicants should highlight the capabilities to address gender gaps and empower females and illustrate how the organization or the activity is structured to ensure that gender disparities will be deliberately and adequately addressed in their programming. Although gender-based discrimination persists throughout Mauritania through cultural, social, and political spheres, USAID *Nafore* will promote opportunities to reverse this trend and highlight the societal benefits in so doing.

In order to further investigate sector specific gender gaps, an activity level gender analysis must be conducted during the first 90 days after the award, and the findings must be reflected in the activity work plan. The USAID Gender Policy “holds implementing

partners responsible for integrating gender into programming, developing indicators that measure specific gender equality goals for each activity and consistently reporting to USAID on results related to gender equality and female empowerment.” Implementing partners will be expected to develop a strategy in the form of a Gender Action Plan for ensuring the integration of gender considerations into the work plan, the monitoring and evaluation plan, and in reporting on how the activity benefited men and women. The Gender Action Plan is prepared annually together with the activity work plan or implementation plan.

V. COORDINATION WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) AND OTHER PROGRAMS

USAID *Nafore* should build upon past work and coordinate with current programs led by USAID, the U.S. State Department, the National Government of Mauritania, and relevant multilateral institutions. The activity will coordinate with other USAID and U.S. government assistance activities to complement the efforts in improving socio-economic opportunities for Mauritanian youth. Most directly, the activity will collaborate with the CATALYZE activity mentioned in Objective One. Other current activities consist of:

A. USG Youth Programming in Mauritania

- *Projet de Renforcement d’Employabilité des Sortants des Mahadras (PRESM)*, State Department: Based on recommendations from the 2016 Mauritania Assessment of Violent Extremism³², the Department of State funded PRESM from 2011-2013 to improve the efficiency and quality of schools in Nouakchott, Atar, and Kaedi. PRESM targeted 30 percent of students from *mahadras* and reinforced the capacity of the ministry to consider technical training for *mahadras* graduates. This activity succeeded in providing equipment to selected schools and strengthened teacher capacity. USAID *Nafore* should continue to build on the work done through technical training as a means for improving the economic resiliency of youth against violent extremism.
- *Empowering Mauritanian Youth through Education, Leadership, and Self-improvement*³³ (EMELI), USAID: working with the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership³⁴ (TSCTP) to support vocational education and training activities from 2016-2019. EMELI was designed to shore up youth resiliency and resistance to violent extremism through economic and psychosocial support.

³² William Miles, et al., “EAS Project for Regional Peace and Governance Programs: Mauritania Assessment Countering Violent Extremism: Resources and Programming.”

³³ <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/mauritania/IOM-Mauritania-Empowering-Mauritanian-Youth-through-Education-Leadership-and-Self-Improvement-EN.pdf>

³⁴ <https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-counterterrorism-programs-and-initiatives/#TSCTP>

USAID *Naf Moore* should continue to add to these efforts and will greatly complement the work done in EMELI to continue soft skills development, community engagement and youth leadership creating youth better prepared to resist violent extremism.

EMELI targeted youth from *mahadras* and mainly focused on providing young women and men opportunities in the fisheries value chain. Some of the lessons from the EMELI activity³⁵ include the following:

- Consider the target group defined as marginalized youth at-risk of violent extremism in a more deliberate way; drop the criteria that students are *mahadras* graduates.
 - Consider the latest innovations in vocational education and employability.
 - Study opportunities for the growth of entrepreneurship for youth as another alternative to enhancing the productivity of unemployed and underemployed youth.
 - Understand the disparities between young women and men while promoting economic growth opportunities for at-risk youth.
 - Personal development/leadership training coupled with vocational training/coaching forms a solid basis from which at-risk youth confidently begin employment or pursue entrepreneurship opportunities.
 - Social cohesion activities favoring youth-oriented activities and themes are most successful through music, slam, debate, and games. It is important to facilitate access for all groups.
 - Seek internship placement systems with the private sector (fisheries and others) that can eventually lead to employment opportunities.
 - Mentors/coaches in the private sector for at-risk youth are powerful resources for learning.
 - Targeting vulnerable areas outside Nouakchott is important for the next phases.
-
- **DA-AM (*Arabic for Supporting Electoral processes*)** This activity worked with youth to raise awareness for youth and women to participate in historical Presidential elections representing the first democratic transition of power. DA-AM

³⁵ Karla Giuliano Sarr, Phyllis Dininio, Safyatou Diallo, Moussa Keita, and Yaya Mbodji, “Empowering Mauritanian Youth Through Education and Self-Improvement (EMELI), Final Performance Evaluation,” Dakar: USAID/Senegal, 9 August 2019
https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail_Presto.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDhmY2Uy&rID=NTY2MDE2&inr=VHJ1ZQ%3d%3d&dc=YWRk&rrtc=VHJ1ZQ%3d%3d&bckToL=.

also worked through Youth Mediators for Peace (network of Youth) on the identification of conflicts affecting communities and developed tools for facilitation and consensus building, which are key components of social cohesion.

USAID *Nafore* should also complement any forthcoming youth focused activities.

B. Other Related Youth and CVE Programming

This is an indicative (not exhaustive) list of activities of current activities in Mauritania that *Nafore* should consider in order to build complementarity and impact:

- [Partnerships for Peace](#) (PfP): USAID works with Civil Society organizations (CSOs), the G5- Sahel and local Government on strategies and programming to build resilience and capacity to reduce violent extremism. USAID *Nafore* should complement PfP through community-focused, network building that will harness local CSO support for youth in building resiliency.
- [The Future is Ours](#) McGovern Dole School Feeding: Counterpart International and a team of local partners are implementing the USDA - funded five-year program (2019 – 2024) – [The Future is Ours](#) – to assist the Government of Mauritania to reduce hunger, improve health, and strengthen the primary education system. Implemented in Brakna and Gorgol, the program will serve 209 schools through integrated activities aligned with national education and health policies. Improved primary education provides a basis for better economic outcomes, enhancing a number of development objectives and creating a foundation for further educational pursuits. USAID *Nafore* aligns with the goals set forth in The Future is Ours by continuing to support educational attainment for youth to create a more secure society.
- [Humanitarian Assistance](#): The Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance provides Food and nutrition assistance to the World Food Program (WFP) and UNICEF targeting refugees of Mbera camp and the national system to provide therapeutic feeding for the most vulnerable. Based on the Cadre Harmonisé and other data to indicate the most vulnerable for food insecurity, the agencies also work with International Agencies, Save the Children and Action against Hunger. The most vulnerable populations, those displaced and insecure, are the most vulnerable to violent extremism; therefore, USAID *Nafore* aims to work in Hodh El Chargui province (in which Mbera camp is located) to target vulnerable populations at risk of recruitment by violent extremist organizations.
- Family planning: USAID works with the [Family Planning 2020](#) and [Ouagadougou Partnership](#) coalitions which strive to increase women's and girl's access to family planning services and information as well as the [PACE ENGAGE](#) which works with Government, CSOs and faith leaders on awareness raising and creating an enabling environment for increased family planning services. Family planning services are often designed to increase gender equality and empower women, both psychosocially and economically, creating a solid foundation for complementary programs like USAID *Nafore* that seek to engage youth and create economic opportunities for women and girls as a means to counter violent extremists' reach.

- [UNDP](#) partners with Japan and the Government of Mauritania on youth empowerment and peacebuilding programming to combat radicalization across the country. USAID *Nafore* should add to the efforts of other CVE and similar programming by creating opportunities for networking among youth and diversifying the reach of different CVE programs, reaching more youth overall.
- European Union: [PRECOBAT](#) implemented in Gorgol, Guidimakha and Brakna to improve youth employability in the construction sector, [SAFIRE](#) across agriculture and other sectors implemented across the country and [PROMOPECHE](#) which aims to train at least 300 Mauritania youth in the artisanal fisheries sector. Through employment sector strengthening and increasing youth's skills/preparedness for employment, the EU funding complements USAID *Nafore*'s aim to create economic alternatives to violent extremism.

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office has outlined the application process in Section D of this Addendum. Please see the YP2 APS for additional information.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

I. ESTIMATE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE AND NUMBER OF AWARDS CONTEMPLATED

This program is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. Issuance of this Addendum does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor do those commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of questions, comments, suggestions, concept notes, or an application. Applicants submit Concept Note applications at their own risk, and all preparation and submission costs are at their expense.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office anticipates supporting up to one award of \$17,000,000 over the life of the award. USAID reserves the right to award more or fewer awards than this estimate and is not obligated to make any awards. All terms and conditions of the YP2 APS apply.

START DATE AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE FOR FEDERAL AWARD

The anticipated period of performance for awards made under the USAID *Nafore* Addendum to the YP2 APS is three years, with the possibility of a two-year extension.

II. TYPE OF INSTRUMENT

Awards that result from this APS Addendum may take the form of a grant (including but not limited to a fixed-amount award) or cooperative agreement (including, but not limited to, framework agreements or Leader with Associates awards).

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

I. Eligibility Information

Eligibility for this award is not restricted.

U.S. and non-U.S. public, private, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, as well as institutions of higher education (especially minority-serving institutions), public international organizations, and non-governmental organizations are eligible to submit a concept note. Further, the organization must be a legally recognized organizational entity in the country where it operates.

USAID values the participation of the U.S. higher education community in this activity. U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are key partners for developing solutions to development challenges, by serving as intellectual hubs for knowledge, research support, and innovation.

USAID welcomes applicants from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

I. AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT

Questions regarding this USAID *Nafuore* Addendum contact amdiallo@usaid.gov by 1:00 PM, GMT **on November 30, 2020**. If a full application is awarded, the AO will appoint an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) at that time to provide technical and administrative oversight of the specific award.

The Agency will furnish promptly to all prospective applicants as an amendment to this Addendum any information concerning this Addendum given to a particular prospective Applicant, if that information is necessary in submitting applications, or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for USAID *Nafore* Addendum will happen in four phases:

1. An open call for a brief (5-page) Concept Note;
2. Review of concept notes by USAID as outlined below;
3. In-person and/or virtual co-creation discussions and/or workshop(s) with selected Concept Note(s), by invitation only; and
4. Submission and review of Full Application(s), by invitation only.

USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office will be responsible for the review of Concept Notes and Full Applications and management of any subsequent awards issued under this Addendum. Additional information about each phase of the Application and Review process is provided below.

Concept Note Submission

All concept notes must be prepared and submitted in English using the provided template (see Attachment X) on www.grants.gov. Respondents are asked to download the template from grants.gov in Word format, provide their responses in that document, and email a PDF saved copy of the document to amdiallo@usaid.gov with the file name saved as: "Insert File Name." Concept notes must be five (5) pages or less, double-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11-inch paper. Content above five pages will not be reviewed. Concept notes are due by **1:00 PM, GMT on January 04, 2021**. Concept notes submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

After a concept note is received, USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office reserves the right to request supplementary information or pose clarifying questions to any applicant. Requesting supplementary information or posing clarifying questions to one applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all applicants, nor does it guarantee invitation to submit a full application. USAID will host a two-week Q&A period, where prospective applicants are invited to ask questions until **1:00 PM, GMT on November 30, 2020**. Questions regarding the substance and objectives of the USAID *Nafore* addendum should be directed to amdiallo@usaid.gov. One week after the closure of the Q&A submission period, USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office will post written responses on grants.gov.

Concept Note Review

Concept notes will be reviewed based on the proposed approach, feasibility, and alignment with the above-referenced purpose of the USAID *Nafore* addendum. Additionally, concepts should be consistent with USAID legal and policy restrictions, including those set forth in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) and in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

All terms and conditions of the YP2 APS apply.

USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office anticipates notifying authors of concept notes within 60 days of submission if USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office wishes to engage in further discussions/co-creation, maintain the application in a pool for potential future engagement, or if USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office will not pursue further collaboration under the USAID *Nafore* addendum based on the submitted concept note.

Co-Creation Process

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office will invite a subset of the most highly qualified concept note applicants to engage in a round of co-creation with USAID prior to submission of full applications. The aim of the co-creation phase is to further define activity objectives, design interventions, align timelines, and finalize budgets. Through discussions, both the applicant(s) and USAID may identify additional resources, partners, or strategies necessary to successfully implement the activity. This process may involve extensive discussions with USAID/Washington, USAID Mission staff, or other experts, within or outside of USAID. Co-creation may happen in-person or virtually, through video conference, and phone calls.

By applying to the USAID *Nafore* addendum, applicants give USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office the right to share concept notes with appropriate external partners for the purposes of evaluation or co-creation. All parties privy to the contents of submitted concept notes, whether within or outside of USAID, will be required to keep contents in confidence. Additional information about the co-creation process can be found in the "Co-Creation, Collaboration, and Communication under YP2 APS" section of the umbrella YP2 APS and through USAID's Co-creation Toolkits.

Note: Communication with USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office during the concept note/co-creation phase should NOT be interpreted as a commitment to funding or guaranteed request for a full application. Any expenses incurred by

applicants during this time are solely the responsibility of the applicants, unless otherwise stated in writing by USAID.

If USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office decides to continue with the proposed activities following the co-creation phase, USAID will request a full application from applicants, inclusive of all modifications, expansions, discussions, etc. resulting from the co-creation phase and will provide a full application template for completion.

Full Application

USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office will issue a request for full applications with complete instructions only to applicants that are invited to continue in the application process and only applications from those approved applicants will be accepted. In general, it is expected that full applications will expand upon their concept note and incorporate any discussions, ideas, plans, feedback or changes from USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office and other partners discussed during the co-creation phase. **Note: USAID/Senegal's Mauritania Country Office's Request for Application (RFA) should not be interpreted as a commitment of funds.**

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the substance and outcomes of the USAID *Nafore* Addendum should be directed to amdiallo@usaid.gov. Questions regarding the substance and terms of the YP2 APS umbrella should be directed to YP2APS@usaid.gov and the subject line "Question - YP2 APS Umbrella".

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: INFORMATION ON THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

I. REVIEW OF CONCEPT NOTES

Once a Concept Note has been submitted in response to the USAID *Nafore* Addendum, USAID will conduct an initial review of the Concept Note using the criteria outlined in the Merit Review Criteria and Considerations section below.

The purpose of the initial review and related communication is to determine whether USAID wishes to engage in further discussions regarding the proposed approach and activities. The initial review and communication will result in one of three outcomes:

- A decision to forego further consideration of the approach proposed in the Concept Note;

- An invitation to engage in more in-depth and specific co-creation discussions aimed at further developing the proposed approach and determining whether to request a Full Application.

II. Merit Review Criteria and Considerations

Concept Notes to the USAID *Nafoore* Addendum will be assessed according to the following merit review criteria on an adjectival system (Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal).

Criterion 1 - Quality of Partnership and Collaboration Approach for Youth Engagement and Capacity Building

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities describes a commitment to equitable collaboration and deep partnership with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, including marginalized groups as defined by the reference to ADS 201 Additional Help (ADS 201saj), at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation; proposes appropriate, inclusive, equitable, and effective capacity building strategies for youth-serving and youth-led organizational partners; and demonstrates partner commitment to proposed collaboration(s), including a brief synopsis of how each partner will engage within the partnership.

Criterion 2 - Technical Merit Including PYD Approach and Alignment with USAID Programming Priorities

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities and PYD Approach align with USAID Strategies and Policies, particularly the Youth in Development Policy and reflects youth's cross-sectoral needs; demonstrates relevant technical expertise in PYD programming; and proposes effective approach(es) to achieving objectives/outcomes that are technically sound, well-defined, and achievable.

Criterion 3 - Sustainability of Anticipated Outcomes and Impact

Extent to which the proposed partnerships, research, projects, or activities demonstrates contribution to sustainable outcomes beyond the lifetime of the award; demonstrates engagement with the private sector and leverages new or existing resources; demonstrates engagement with government and external donor and platforms/activities; proposes an evidence-informed plan for analyzing, synthesizing and disseminating data and findings that will inform ongoing and future programming and contribute to sustainable outcomes and impact.

Note: More comprehensive information regarding the application and review processes (including concept note submission, co-creation, full application, and merit review stages) can be found in the umbrella YP2 APS, located at grants.gov. Applicants are advised to refer to both the umbrella APS and this addendum in preparing concept notes and full applications, as applicable.

III. Additional Considerations

Applicants should ensure that their concept note is aligned with USAID strategies, policies, and priorities, such as the [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#), [USAID Education Policy](#), [USG International Basic Education Strategy](#), [USG Global Water Strategy](#), [Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance](#), [USAID Global Health Research and Development Strategy](#), [President's Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\) 3.0](#), [Children in Adversity](#), [USG Global Food Security Strategy](#), [USG Feed the Future Initiative](#), and [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#).

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F: INFORMATION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL AWARDS

I. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

The USAID Agreement Officer (AO) is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are prohibited from charging or incurring costs to the proposed award prior to receipt of either a fully executed award or a specific, written authorization from the AO. USAID will administer awards in accordance with Parts 700 and 200 of Title 2 of the CFR, and Standard Provisions for U.S./non-U.S. organizations.

Award of an agreement contemplated by this APS Addendum cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

II. TYPE OF AWARD

USAID has a number of assistance award types to choose when providing funds under this Annual Program Statement to successful Applicants. The type of award and terms and conditions included therein depends upon the type of recipient organization, programmatic factors, and other due-diligence matters (including responsibility determinations.)

III. Award Discretion

USAID reserves the right to make, or not to make, awards through this Addendum to the YP2 APS. The actual number of assistance awards, if any, under this Addendum is subject to the availability of funds, the interests and requirements of USAID, and the viability of Concept Notes/Applications received.

IV. Additional Information on Award Administration

- ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/201.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 204 Environmental Procedures:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/204.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 205 - Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for U.S. organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 318 Intellectual Property Rights:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/318.pdf>
- ADS Chapter 579 USAID Development Data:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/579.pdf>
- Grant and Contract Process: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process>
- USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-branding Guide:
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1869/USAID_GSM_03_05_2019.pdf

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

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[END OF ADDENDUM to APS No: 7200AA20APS00007]