



2015–2024

Young people and development: 10 years of shared commitment

Since 2015, AFD Group has been supporting the agency of young people through a wide range of funding provided to civil society organizations and local authorities. Thanks to its financing tools – including the I-OSC mechanism, FICOL (Local Authorities Financing Facility), and intermediated funding via the Territorialized Platform for Microprojects (PTMP) and the Forum of International Solidarity Organizations from Migration (FORIM) – AFD Group places youth and volunteer engagement at the center of the initiatives it supports.



Young people at the heart of transformations

A priority at international, European, and national levels

The *2030 Agenda* highlights the important role of young people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, while United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 recognizes their contribution to peace and security. The *European Union* also adopted an action plan in 2022 to strengthen youth participation in its international cooperation and foreign policy, which is also reflected in major international summits (COP/COY, G20/Y20, G7/Y7, etc.).

In France, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs has made young people a priority since 2015, with a dedicated strategy that recognizes the roles they play in contributing to change. A youth¹ roadmap drawn up in 2025 solidified this ambition, aiming to guarantee effective participation of 15-to 35-year-olds in policies of cooperation and international solidarity, in France and partner countries.

AFD Group's commitment

In 2021, AFD adopted a “social link” roadmap which recalls the importance of “including young people in operations to encourage [their] comprehensive integration (economic and professional, social/citizen, and environmental/climatic).” It also indicates that “volunteering measures that already exist may be used as levers to get young people involved in projects.”

AFD's Civil Society Partnerships Division has for several years made youth a priority focus, supporting the development of the nonprofit sector and strengthening the quality and impact of projects that integrate this dimension.

Expertise France's Contrat d'objectifs et de moyens 2024–2026 (Objectives and Resources Agreement 2024–2026) includes a contribution to the presidential commitment to youth, announced during the Presidential Council for Development on 5 May 2023. This contribution focuses in particular on Africa, through a transformational agenda and the mobilization of young people.

Particular attention is given to project appraisal to ensure that young people are fully engaged as actors in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, rather than viewed solely as beneficiaries.



Recognizing the diversity of young people

Young people do not fit into one box, with multiple factors such as age, trajectory, empowerment, and social and cultural contexts all contributing to their diversity. Inclusive vocabulary takes this diversity into account by reflecting transitions towards adulthood, rather than a fixed age range. Young people represent a major demographic issue, with 1.2 billion young people aged from 15 to 24 (16% of the world population in 2021), and numbers anticipated to rise until 2030. They

make up more than half the population in many partner countries. *Their creativity, aspirations and demographic weight make them key levers in future transformations.*

The global demographic transition is a major challenge for shaping France's international action, influencing both the reconfiguration of geographic spaces and the roles that young people will play. The challenges are unprecedented.

¹ Currently being finalized at France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Young people and comprehensive integration

Making young people the focal point also means confirming the principle of intergenerational equality, of not passing on the consequences of an obsolete development model to future generations.

The need for sustainability places young people at the heart of transitions, no longer just as beneficiaries, but as drivers for change, using the impetus of symbolic citizen movements, from Greta Thunberg to the global climate movements, and more recently the various movements started by Gen Z. Young people are key drivers of *“comprehensive integration”* that covers the necessary inclusion and engagement (at social and civic, economic and professional, environmental and climatic levels) required to achieve the SDGs.

International cooperation and solidarity projects show a *double transformational effect*:

- *For young people themselves*, who gain greater agency and become ambassadors for a more inclusive and sustainable future
- *For the projects*, whose relevance, impacts, and sustainability are strengthened through the active participation of young people and greater consideration of local realities, gender, climate, and social equity.

To summarize, putting young people at the center of public policies and projects means investing in a *comprehensive transformation* which combines social justice, sustainability, and citizen participation.

Young people’s role in international solidarity projects

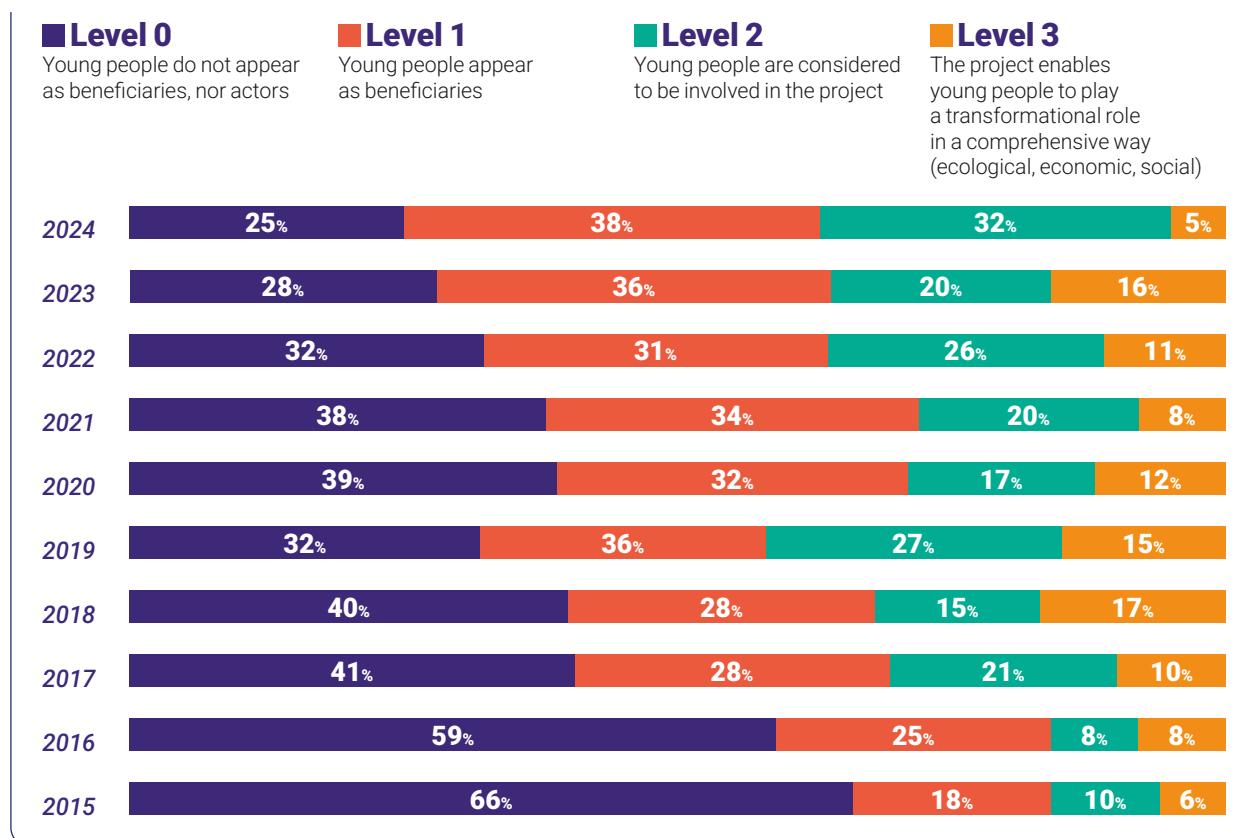
As part of the Initiatives OSC (I-OSC) mechanism, a *youth marker* has been used since 2015 to better reflect the priority given to this theme. In the ongoing dialogue between the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and AFD with civil society, civil society organizations (CSOs) are *encouraged to create the necessary conditions for greater youth involvement in projects*, enabling more effective responses to economic, social, and environmental imbalances. The goal is to promote stronger inclusion of young people around the world, allowing them to fully play the transformational role that is increasingly recognized as essential to achieving sustainable and responsible development.

The objective is to position young people as full actors in both projects and society, so that actions gain in relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability over the short, medium, and long term. This approach clearly reflects an educational aim “through action,” going beyond economic inclusion alone to give equal consideration to social and civic inclusion, and to environmental and climate inclusion, without which development cannot hope to be sustainable. The urgency of this paradigm shift has been strongly reaffirmed by the French government, which has emphasized “greater expectations for beneficiaries, by engaging young people in a spirit of reciprocity.”²

² Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) – 2018

Assessment and Monitoring Framework of youth inclusion through the I-OSC mechanism³

Progression of youth inclusion in projects financed by the I-OSC mechanism from 2015 to 2024



Financing for young people in 2024

Initiatives OSC Mechanism

Distribution of financial commitment by indicator (Levels 0 to 3)

Youth Indicator	Amount of the grant allocated in millions of euros	Number of projects
Level 0	€33.60 M	33
Level 1	€68.30 M	51
Level 2	€44.40 M	42
Level 3	€6.70 M	7
Overall total	€153 M	133

³ Tool-template 4: For young people playing a role in projects and SDGs – CSO financing guide 2025

In 2024, projects brought forward by civil society organizations, supported by the I-OSC mechanism for CSOs, confirm high involvement of young people. Out of 133 projects supported, 75% target young people⁴ and half involve young people as

players in their own right (levels 2 and 3). This sustained trend shows increased integration of youth issues in civil society practices.

MULTI-COUNTRY PROJECT (SENEGAL, MALI, BURKINA FASO)

OSEER – Opportunities for comprehensive sustainable socio-economic and environmental integration of young people to transform gender social relations in the Sahel



Proposed by Plan International with nine local partners as well as State and local authority services, **the program aims to transform gender social relations and strengthen young people's involvement in the dynamics of change.**

The following feature as part of the project's objectives:

- Supporting 2,600 young people aged 16 to 28 (70% women) in their comprehensive integration through interventions adapted to specific national contexts.
- Improving the legal and political framework for the inclusion of young people and gender equality by increasing capacity and supporting 300 groups of young people (100 per country) in advocating at local and national level.

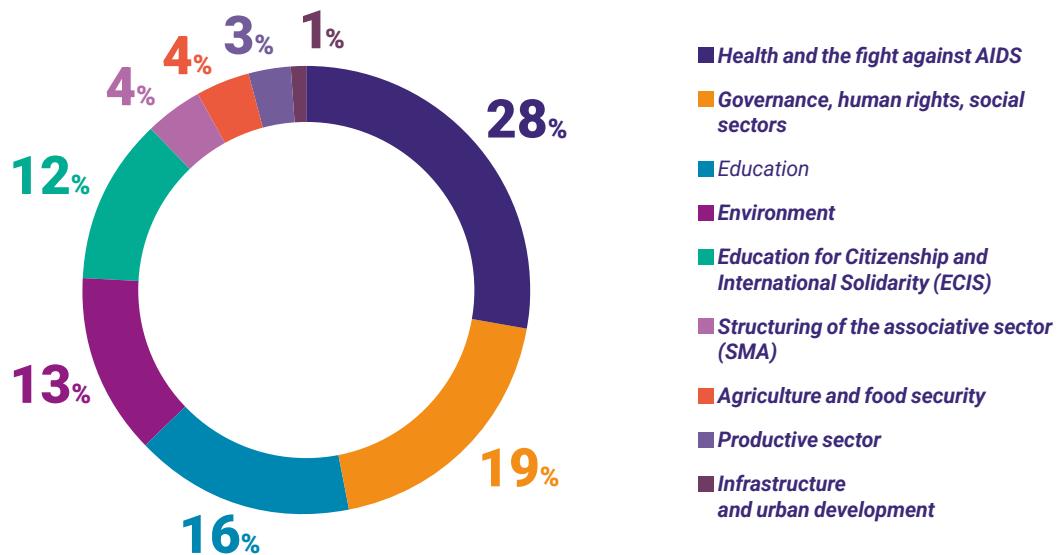
- Strengthening regional expertise in terms of comprehensive integration and transformation of gender social relations by setting up a Regional Expertise Center (CaPE) to capitalize on experience, share knowledge, and improve the quality of the interventions by Plan International and its partners.

Project financing: €3,000,000

with €1,600,000 I-OSC mechanism financing

Project duration: 2021-2024

Sectoral distribution of I-OSC targeting projects with a focus on young people (levels 1 to 3)



⁴ €119 M of "on the ground" project financing (single-country and multi-country agreements) which represent the majority (81 projects), compared with public-interest projects (Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity (ECIS) and Structuring of the Association Sector – 19 projects).

The Territorialized Microproject Platform (PTMP) supported by La Guilde

In 2024, *of the 81 projects funded by La Guilde* under its calls for proposals, *66 initiatives incorporating a "youth dimension* were supported, for an amount totaling €1,258,513.

In addition, the Territorialized Microproject Platform integrated a *tool-template focused on youth mobilization*, to support their involvement and full inclusion in supported microprojects.

The Forum of International Solidarity Organizations for Migration (FORIM) via PRA/OSIM⁵

FORIM, the network of solidarity-based diaspora organizations, brings together more than 40 umbrella groups and represents nearly 1,000 associations engaged in international solidarity. Given the issues it addresses, FORIM places particular emphasis on integrating young people into the initiatives it supports.

In 2024, among the 216 projects supported, 62% completely or partially targeted young people, showing the central place given to their involvement and mobilization.

FICOL: a tool used by local authorities

In 2024, aware of how important young people's issues are, the French Local Authorities Financing Facility (FICOL) began systematically including this theme in its accountability.

Out of *nine projects financed in 2024* through FICOL, a third of the portfolio had a focus on young people, for a total amount financed of €4,262,274.

Like the I-OSC mechanism, FICOL projects engage young people around key issues such as health, environmental protection, and civic education, by integrating them as full participants in implementation. The FICOL instrument continues to strengthen this focus: a methodological support tool is currently being developed to make young people a fully cross-cutting theme in project appraisal and to encourage French local authorities to better integrate this dimension into their cooperation initiatives.

FIELD PROJECT IN THE COMOROS (NDZOUANI, DZAHADJOU, FOUMBOUNI, NYOUMADZAH AND MOHORO)

"Water for Mohoro": sustainably improving the living conditions and health of local residents



Youth engagement is a central pillar of the international action carried out by the local authority leading the project. Following a first experience under the "Water for Itsahidi" initiative, an international mobility program was developed to give vocational high school students the opportunity to live abroad while applying their technical skills to scheduled worksites. Two schools in Dunkirk, France, were involved: a BTS electrotechnics class from Lycée L'Epid and a vocational plumbing program from Lycée Guynemer. This collaboration lays the groundwork for a structured partnership between French and Comorian institutions, with lasting activities that go beyond the scope of the project itself.

To encourage student ownership of the "Water for Mohoro" project, the schools will be involved from the launch and throughout the implementation cycle. Exchange sessions will be organized at key stages with the teams working in the field, enabling students to understand the project's technical, social, and environmental challenges and to strengthen their commitment to international solidarity.

Project financing: €2,105,300.83, with €1,384,000 FICOL financing

⁵ Support program for projects led by international solidarity organizations formed by diaspora communities.

Volunteering: a driver of youth engagement

Since 2021, AFD has been developing a structuring partnership with France Volontaires, alongside Expertise France and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Established through a framework agreement, this partnership aims to systematically integrate volunteer engagement, particularly young people, into development cooperation programs. It reflects a shared ambition: *to empower volunteers as key contributors to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international solidarity efforts*. The partnership is built around six strategic priorities that support the full inclusion of young people: economic and professional, social and civic, and environmental and climate-related.

In 2024, between 100 and 129 international solidarity and civic service volunteers took part in projects through the I-OSC mechanism, representing more than 1,541 months involved in missions. Volunteers were mostly involved in the field (93%), confirming the key role they play in project operational implementation, compared to 7% devoted to public-interest actions. An increasing number of initiatives now include a volunteer work element to maximize impact and awareness.

5 DEPARTMENTS IN AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES

Development Cooperation Service – PRODIGE (Promoting and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals to innovate and grow together)

The PRODIGE project aims to strengthen citizen engagement around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over a three-year period, 40 reciprocal volunteers are being deployed across Greater Lyon, Loire, Drôme, Isère, and Allier to support local organizations in their awareness-raising efforts and to assist the **Réseaux Départementaux Jeunesse et Solidarité Internationale** (Departmental Youth and International Solidarity Networks). The project brings together a network of 40 partners in France and abroad and contributes to capacity building and advocacy in favor of Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity (ECIS) and reciprocity.



Building on pilot initiatives launched in 2015, the *Service Civique de réciprocité* (reciprocal civic service) has demonstrated that reciprocal volunteering is a powerful tool for raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and strengthening local engagement. This approach aligns closely with the fast-approaching 2030 Agenda deadline, at a time when progress on ecological, democratic, and social transitions remains fragile.

**Project financing: €1,245,536,
with €450,000 I-OSC mechanism financing**



Toward a world in common

AFD Group finances and drives the transition to a fairer, safer and more resilient world, working with its partners to support communities all over the world. Drawing on the complementary strengths of its entities – Agence Française de Développement for public financing, Proparco for responsible private investment, and Expertise France for technical expertise – the Group is ideally positioned to meet all sustainable development challenges.

Working in over 160 countries, including France's Overseas Territories and Departments, the Group adapts its operations to the realities on the ground, actively supporting local initiatives. With over 4,000 projects, whose objectives are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), AFD Group works on behalf of the French people, together with all stakeholders committed to economic development and the preservation of common goods: climate, biodiversity, peace, gender equality and global health. Working by your side, toward a world in common.



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