

UNESCO CHAIR ON INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES WEBINAR SERIES

Youth at the Centre of Democratic Peace in Africa

Presented by

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UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competences hosted by
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About the Webinar:

This session explores what it means to place young people at the centre of democratic peace in Africa. While elections are often treated as procedural events focused on ballots and outcomes, they are also moments that test institutional trust, social cohesion, and belonging in diverse societies.

Drawing on practical experience in election observation, human rights monitoring, and regional youth peacebuilding initiatives, this conversation reflects on how meaningful youth inclusion strengthens democratic stability. It examines how identity, gender, digital disinformation, and intercultural dynamics shape electoral environments, and considers how institutions, universities, and regional bodies can better embed intercultural competence into governance and peacebuilding practice.

The session invites reflection on how democratic peace can move beyond technical compliance toward relational trust, dignity, and inclusive participation across Africa.

About the Speaker:



Jessica Uiras is a peacebuilding and governance practitioner with experience in diplomacy and multilateral engagement, with a strong focus on democratic governance, electoral integrity, and inclusive political processes in Africa. She currently serves as a Research and Innovation Knowledge Broker at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. She is the National Focal Point for Youth, Peace and Security, where she contributes to regional coordination, stakeholder engagement, and youth-focused peacebuilding initiatives. Jessica is also a trained African Union Core Team Expert for Civil Society, Women and Youth in election observation, and an alumna of the African Union's Specialised Training for Election Observers.

In addition, she is trained in Diplomacy and Political Advisory for Peace Support Operations by the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre, equipping her with practical competencies in political analysis, mediation support, and engagement in peace operations contexts. She has participated in African Union Election Observation Missions, including to the Republic of Guinea, and Mozambique. She also served as an In-Country Human Rights Analyst during the 2024 Namibian Presidential and National Assembly elections, contributing to human rights monitoring and analysis.

She has previously led youth civic engagement and governance initiatives through civil society, with a focus on media freedom, political literacy, and accountable governance. Her professional interests lie in peacebuilding, governance reform, elections, diplomacy, and the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, particularly in strengthening institutional trust, social cohesion, and inclusive governance in diverse societies.