



Policy Paper on UN and Global Youth Work Development

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Introduction

The platform for National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations in Europe, the European Youth Forum (YFJ), is recognised internationally as the most developed and sustainable regional youth platform in the world. In this context, its responsibility for youth issues at the global level is consequently high and implies the need for an active involvement in regional and global cooperation processes.

Following growing interest from YFJ Member Organisations, Global Youth Work Development has, over recent years, become a very important work area for the YFJ, and a significant number of cooperation processes with non-governmental and intergovernmental global partners have been initiated and developed, with the YFJ playing a significant role in their evolution. The potential to grow still exists, and should therefore not be neglected.

By means of this Policy Paper, the YFJ is aiming to update the priorities, methodologies and goals of the Global Youth Work Development work area, and also to provide a basis for the position of the organisation towards the United Nations system and other relevant institutions in the field of youth. Thus, the paper seeks to set an encompassing policy framework for the global area of the YFJ.

This Policy Paper will, however, be updated biennially according to the new realities, and future Work Plans and agenda of the YFJ.

In order for this to be achieved, the YFJ needs to identify clearly its vision and mission as well as aims for the coming years while providing a political framework for action.

The work of the YFJ in the area of Global Youth Work Development is emerging as the need mounts for greater interdependence and solidarity in addressing the major concerns facing the youth of the world today. It is a natural consequence of the global society we inhabit, and a clear call for action from the side of young people. In youth, the world lays its hope of becoming a better place for all and a place where commitments do matter.

Currently, the YFJ aims to contribute to the definition and development of global youth policies and to raise awareness with governments and institutions on youth issues, through the promotion of youth participation and the promotion of the role of accountable, democratic, transparent and inclusive membership-based, bottom-up youth organisations - and which represent the voice of young people at the global level.

Vision

The YFJ believes in development cooperation and in the cooperation of youth organisations in different regions of the world as means to develop and improve the living conditions of young people everywhere.

The YFJ is convinced about the need to have a holistic approach to development and of the fact that this cannot be achieved in an isolated manner. Therefore, in order to succeed, the YFJ vision and values have to be promoted beyond the borders of Europe, in coordinated action with all relevant actors, through the establishment of effective and credible mechanisms of cooperation.

The YFJ represents its Member Organisations at the global level and promotes their participation in the different forums and spaces of global cooperation reflected in this document; it also puts to good use the varied expertise of its membership by contributing and giving input to cooperation and policy making processes at the global level.

The YFJ considers it of the utmost importance that the different UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes have a coordinated approach to issues concerning youth, and it is essential that the YFJ's work with any UN agency, fund or programme, is done according to the overall objectives contained in the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The YFJ identifies the UN Focal Point on Youth as a key actor in promoting democratic and representative youth participation in the UN and wants to strengthen the position of this structure within the UN System.

The YFJ believes in the model of co-management and promotes it as good practice to be adopted by the UN system, on policies and programmes affecting youth at the Global level.

With its action, the YFJ seeks also to provide young people the opportunities to explore and enhance global understanding through the means of training, global education and intercultural exchanges.

The YFJ reaffirms its commitment with the promotion of the Principles of Global Youth Cooperation¹ as basic criteria for the progress of its Global Youth Work Development.

¹ An effective participation of young people in global decision making processes and policy implementation implies that youth organisations with a global and regional scope of action are able to:

- exchange information, experience and concerns
- influence political processes and decisions of international institutions
- work/impact on youth
- increase co-operation at the regional level in order to be stronger and overcome individual limitations
- work together on common thematic priorities and to put focus on global youth work

Mission

As *the* representative platform in Europe, the YFJ should advocate for the interests of its entire membership, while raising awareness on issues of global concern. The YFJ should further involve its Member Organisations in its work in the field of global youth work development, namely by creating proper communication channels, work and cooperation mechanisms that allow the higher engagement of its members.

The YFJ has the responsibility to support and strengthen its Member Organisations in their global work, assisting them in translating to the local, regional and national levels, the different policies developed at the global level. Cooperation should be further developed between Member Organisations and youth organisations from other regions of the world (preferably with members of other Regional Youth Platforms), in order to develop tools that would enable them to follow and participate in the different UN processes, as well as to involve them in consultation processes on external documents on youth issues and on the internal documents of the YFJ.

Political framework of YFJ global youth work development

Together with partner organisations and institutions the YFJ intends to develop new visions and ways of development for its work in solidarity with young people, youth organisations and governments, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights generally, and the World Programme of Action for Youth in particular, not forgetting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The main counterparts of the European Youth Forum at the global level are the Regional Youth Platforms (GCCC²) and the main global youth organisations involved in the International Co-ordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO³), as well as the UN system agencies, funds and programmes.

At the same time, the YFJ maintains working relations with civil society and institutional partners with a clear regional focus. This is the case of the Asia -Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Iberian-American Youth organisation (OIJ). These relations are aimed at following the inter-regional processes at the political level, promoting the development of YFJ Members' regional work and strengthening the institutional recognition of YFJ partners in the region.

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)

The World Programme of Action for Youth is considered as the first "global blueprint" for developing effective policies for young people, with the welcomed aspect of having been drafted by young people, for young people. The document

² The Global Co-operation Co-ordinating Committee (GCCC) is a network of regional non-governmental youth platforms from around the world. The current members are: the African Youth Network (RAJ/AYN), Arab Youth Union (AYU), Asian Students Association (ASA), Asian Youth Council (AYC), Caribbean Federation of Youth (CFY), European Youth Forum, Latin American Youth Forum (FLAJ), Pacific Youth Council (PYC) and the Pan-African Youth Movement (MPJ/PYM). The GCCC was established in 1997 and arose from the need for regional youth platforms to co-operate and work together on common global issues affecting young people. The European Youth Forum convenes the GCCC at least once a year.

³ The International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO) by bringing together regional youth platforms and international youth organisations with a global outreach (representing non-formal education organisations, rural, political youth, trade unions, entrepreneurs, students, etc) constitutes a coalition of youth organisations that are representative and legitimate both in the eyes of international institutions and of the youth movement worldwide.

currently contains 15 priorities⁴ directly linked to the basic and existing working areas of the YFJ, and to the YFJ's comprehensive approach to global youth work development. Therefore the WPAY provides the main political framework for youth at the global level.

The YFJ recognises the clear linkages between the WPAY and the MDGs: young people are an essential force in the achievement and implementation of the MDGs, and the implementation of the WPAY is a fundamental milestone in this regard.

The WPAY also allows the development of a common language, making it possible for youth organisations, governments and institutions as equal partners to establish common priorities and goals. We furthermore commit ourselves to raise more awareness of the existence of the programme and its implementation.

Taking this into account the YFJ considers that:

- The WPAY is the main reference document for its global youth and United Nations work;
- The WPAY is related to many elements of the YFJ Work Plan; therefore it has a great potential to contribute to its implementation in a coordinated way;
- The YFJ will promote, in its lobby work towards governments (such as the UN, the EU, CoE, ASEF, OIJ, etc), the implementation of the WPAY - in particular, in relation to the development of youth policies
- The YFJ will support the development of indicators and monitoring methodologies to evaluate properly the level of implementation and of relevance of the WPAY at the regional and global levels.

Institutional Cooperation

The YFJ maintains its working and cooperative relations with a number of global and regional institutional partners with an intergovernmental profile. The YFJ's interaction with them is aimed at influencing political decision-making processes and at implementing the resulting policies and processes.

The United Nations System is the main and fundamental institutional partner at the global level. Within the UN framework, the YFJ participates with:

- the Commission for Social Development
- the Commission on Sustainable Development
- the United Nations' General Assembly
- other initiatives and events organised by the UN youth focal point, namely in relation with the implementation of the WPAY or with a clear focus on issues relevant to the global youth agenda.

This work has also been expanded to other UN Agencies and multilateral institutions, with the YFJ putting forward the views of the its global youth partners and of the YFJ Membership.

⁴ WPAY priority areas:

Education, Employment, Hunger, Poverty, Environment, Drug Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Leisure-time activities, Girls and Young women and the Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and decision-making. Five additional areas of concern to youth, were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2003: Globalisation; Information and Communication; HIV/AIDS; Conflict prevention; and Intergenerational relations.

The YFJ currently maintains relations with UNICEF, UNESCO, the ILO⁵, and the World Bank, on a wide range of issues such as youth work development, youth participation, national youth policies development, health, employment, non-formal and formal education, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and Human Rights. These relations and cooperation always relate to justified interests, the clearly formulated ambitions of the YFJ's Member Organisations, and are developed under the guidance of the strategy papers adopted by the Bureau⁶.

The criteria for this cooperation are:

- increasing the capacity to change and influence the policies and programmes of these institutions that affect young people
- developing effective dialogue and interaction within ICMYO organisations
- monitoring and assessing the changes in youth policy brought about as a result of YFJ engagement
- supporting the development of spaces for critical and constructive dialogue and interaction between young people, youth organisations, and the Institutions
- promoting quality, detailed and rigorous analysis and input to Institutions' documents affecting youth
- supporting initiatives to increase the capacity of the regional Youth Platforms and youth organisations in ICMYO.

The role of the YFJ is to ensure a regional - European - perspective within global youth work development or advocacy work.

The positions stated by the YFJ at the global level reflect its internal policies and position papers. A good coordination with its global youth partners allows the YFJ to gain leverage and a broader support for its views and values, as well as to ensure the better coordination of the global youth movement. When co-operating with regional partners, it is of great importance to respect different values and views. Sustainable co-operation can only be reached on those policy sectors where common interests are shared.

Besides the United Nations System, the YFJ also cooperates with several institutions with different geographical and thematic scopes of action. These institutional partners play a fundamental role in the promotion of interregional youth cooperation and are key to the recognition and strengthening of youth organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin-American and the Mediterranean region.

At the European level, the YFJ maintains working relation with the European Commission (mainly through the Directorates General for Education and Culture, and Development) and the actors involved in the Euro-Med Partnership (the Council of

⁵ Through the Youth Employment Network

⁶ Strategy paper on Developing Cooperation between YFJ-UNESCO, Bureau Position Paper on Engagement with the World Bank and Strategy paper on Developing Cooperation between YFJ-UNICEF

Europe Directorate for Youth and Sport, the North-South Centre, and the European Commission).

Such cooperation with regional intergovernmental institutions is shared with our regional youth partners so as to increase the effectiveness, coherence and strength of our common political views and collaboration.

Existing Mechanisms for Global Youth Cooperation

The YFJ has the firm determination to contribute to a sustainable, coherent and coordinated global youth movement, influenced by the principles of global youth cooperation, and the set of recommendations, policies and rules defined in our policy and position papers. The YFJ supports the member organisations' existing work in this area.

The YFJ is also committed to the capacity building of our global partners, to strengthen their institutional recognition as well as to support the development of their capacity of influence over the decision-making processes affecting youth.

In this regard the YFJ is committed to the development of youth coordinating structures with a global outreach such as the following:

GCCC - Global Cooperation Coordination Committee

The GCCC meetings are the principal space for RYPs (Regional Youth Platforms) to come together to share information and report on their activities; this is also a political space where decisions are taken on the priorities for the global cooperation between RYPs.

ICMYO - International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations;

The main objectives of ICMYO are the strengthening of cooperation among youth organisations at the regional and global levels, and the coordination of political input to global youth policy processes.

In addition, the YFJ extends its commitment to utilizing the ICMYO as a tool in developing spaces for the direct engagement of member organisations with international institutions and processes.

FEULAT - Euro-Latin-American Youth Forum;

The FEULAT aims at promoting co-operation between youth organisations in Europe and Latin America as well as developing youth policies and strengthening the youth movement in both regions; it also seeks to promote the participation of Latin American youth organisations in the political decision-making process.

AEYF - Asia-Euro Youth Forum;

The Asia-Europe Youth Forum (AEYF) brings together representatives from national, regional and international youth organisations active in Asian and European countries, and belongs to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. Directed towards the promotion of understanding and of a greater awareness of common issues affecting youth in Asia and Europe, the YFJ aims at identifying new methods and approaches allowing young people in Asia and Europe to co-operate and to meet

common challenges. The AEYF highlights sustainable youth collaboration and exchange between the two regions and thereby sets the agenda for Asia-Europe Youth Co-operation.

Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and the Council of Europe

The European Youth Forum has been involved in the Partnership on Euro-Med co-operation since 2003. The YFJ is willing to continue its involvement in the further development of the partnership with a high level of commitment.

The YFJ has identified the Euro-Mediterranean region as one on which priority should be put, recognising the valuable expertise of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe in the region, and calling for the greater involvement of the regional SALTO Resource Centres in the design and implementation of the activities organised in their respective areas.

UYD - University on Youth and Development

The University on Youth and Development (UYD⁷) is a unique space for debate, training, exchange of experiences and affirmative action on Global Youth Work and Global Education. Recognising the value of spaces of this nature, the YFJ will support and assist the establishment and development of initiatives with a similar nature promoted by its partners or member organisations.

The 1% Solidarity Fund

Since 1996⁸, successive Work Plans of the YFJ have always included reference to the Solidarity Fund. The 1% Solidarity Fund is not only a solidarity tool aimed at supporting projects, but also a source of credibility and legitimacy for the YFJ's global cooperation work.

However, the impact of the 1% Solidarity Fund could be easily improved. In this regard, the GCCC meeting held in 2005⁹ recommended taking action aimed at transforming this Solidarity Fund into a more powerful support mechanism that will focus on:

- Activities related to the WPAY (implementation, monitoring or review);
- Capacity Building Activities;
- Lobbying of institutions and partners in order to attract further investment into RYPs.

In compliance with this, the YFJ also limits access to the 1% Solidarity Fund to the members of the GCCC and its respective MOs.

⁷ The UYD is currently a partnership between the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the Spanish Government (INJUVE), the European Youth Forum (YFJ), the Spanish Youth Council (CJE), the Latin-American Youth Forum (FLAJ) and other international youth organisations active at the global level.

⁸ In line with the United Nations recommendations concerning development aid, the General Assembly of the YFJ (Blankenberge, December 1996) decided that "1% of the Annual European Youth Forum Budget would be allocated to finance concrete development projects involving young people".

⁹ CEULAJ, Mollina, Spain, 7-8 July 2005.

Other Mechanisms

The Youth in Action programme, and in particular, Action 3: “*Youth of the world*” is a further tool to be taken into account, both by the YFJ and its Member Organisations, when developing cooperation strategies.

Future Challenges

While maintaining the ongoing processes and cooperation with Asia and Latin-America, European Youth Forum activity will be oriented towards the reinforcement of the partnerships and the development of consistent regional cooperation mechanisms in the African and Mediterranean regions. The YFJ will pay special attention to the involvement of the Member Organisations in this work.

Conclusion

The European Youth Forum will continue its global cooperation and global youth work development, basing it on the principles expressed in this Policy Paper.

In this regard, the YFJ assumes its leadership role as the most empowered regional youth platform existing today, and will promote actions and processes aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the other regional youth platforms.

Thus, the YFJ will advocate for the development of global coordination structures, such as the ICMYO, and the maintenance of the GCCC, which are both aimed at providing genuine substance to global youth coordination. The action of the YFJ will in any case be oriented towards guaranteeing the existence of spaces for Global Youth cooperation, their recognition and the allocation of the necessary resources for their development.