

International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO)

Project Description

Introduction - The principles of global youth cooperation

Young people are not only a vital large sector of the world population but are also most affected by the challenges and problems that appear globally. The current divides that prevent development call for solidarity, international cooperation and coordination between youth organisations all over the world, with the common aim of empowering youth and making young people full citizens and active agents of change in our societies.

International youth organisations believe that youth cooperation should ensure that objectives and actions, resources and agendas are prioritised according to a global perception. Global cooperation between youth organisations contribute to maximise resources and to rationalise efforts. The advocacy work of youth organisations at the global level must be based on a regional knowledge and approach and must be built on the national and local perceptions and implementation capacity.

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 working/impacting on youth
- increase cooperation 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

It is crucial that the youth organisations that come together at the global level maintain a close link to the regional, national and local levels in order to secure outcomes that are faithful to reality. Hence the needs to guarantee that the youth organisations are membership based, representative and have a strong grass root presence in the different regions of the world¹.

¹ As stated in the principles for global cooperation.

Background of the International Cooperation Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO)

Having the above principles in mind and further to a long period of getting to know each other and comprehensive exchange of information, in 1997 the European Youth Forum promoted the establishment of the **Global Cooperation Coordination Committee (GCCC)**².

The objectives of the GCCC are the following:

- create a space to improve the communication among the platforms (information and agenda exchange)
- create a space for meeting and a continuous dialogue (once or twice a year)
- co-ordinate the platforms' participation and involvement in global youth work and global events, while respecting the independence of each of the platforms
- save resources and efficiently share the small resources we have

Since the establishment of the GCCC the Regional Youth Platforms have been meeting at least once a year to discuss and coordinate actions at the global level. Although the Regional Youth Platforms have been cooperating with International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations as regards to institutional processes, there has never been an autonomous space where they could meet to prepare and coordinate joint efforts and political inputs to ongoing youth policy processes. The experience of the last few years had shown that the stronger the coordination of youth organisations was the more effective and sustainable the impact on the outcomes of youth policy processes became and the better the youth interests were defended.

Therefore some of the major International Youth Organisations and Regional Platforms like the European Youth Forum, together with the International Movement of Catholic Students and the World Organization of the Scout Movement convened an **International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations - ICMYO** with the intention of providing a common space for two main objectives:

- a) the coordination of political inputs to the ongoing political processes affecting youth worldwide
- b) the strengthening of the cooperation between youth organisations with a regional and global outreach.

This first meeting, which took place in Geneva in July 2004, brought together more than 20 Regional Youth Platforms and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations with a global outreach. Since then ICMYO organisations have been meeting regularly and exchanging information on a daily basis.

ICMYO defined the guidelines for the cooperation with the World Bank as regards to the Children & Youth Strategic Framework for Action, the objectives of the cooperation with

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.

the Youth Employment Network and the composition of its Youth Consultative Group, as well as the youth organisation's line of action for the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth. ICMYO will also be a keystone to define the principles and criteria for the future editions of the World Youth Festivals.

The Global Youth Agenda

The **World Youth Festivals** are a space where young people and youth organisations from all over the world came together. In its current format, established since 1998 in Lisbon, Portugal, the World Youth Festivals present two main elements that are important for global cooperation. First it is a worldwide event that belongs to the regional youth platforms and international non-governmental youth organisations with a global outreach. Moreover the decision making is exclusively in the hands of the youth movement. Secondly it is an important opportunity to increase visibility of international youth work and pluralistic participation of young people, while promoting cultural diversity and understanding. During the last three editions young people carried out a much diversified set of activities and participated in workshops and conferences, that can be summed up in the four pillars of the World Youth Festival in Barcelona in 2004: Globalisation, Sustainable development, Cultural diversity and Peace.

The **Children and Youth Strategic Framework for Action** has been adopted by the Governing Board of the World Bank. The strategy guides Bank's staff in its work on children and youth issues of poverty reduction in different countries and regions. It also frames the Bank's interaction with client governments and other international and national partners, including youth organisations to help build a world fit for children and youth and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The second Youth, Development & Peace Conference (YDP) was organised in Sarajevo in the beginning of September following the same format as the first one in 2003, with the European Youth Forum and the World Office of the World Scout Organisation (WOSM) taking the lead of the preparations, on behalf of the ICMYO organisations. The two main outcomes were the decisions to (1) establish a sustainable and structural dialogue with youth organisations and therefore to create a sustainable and accountable structure for the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategic framework for action and (2) organise a conference on Non-Formal Education in 2005.

The **Youth Employment Network (YEN)**³ - the partnership between the UN Secretary General, the ILO and the World Bank to achieve a global commitment to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work" was another key process during 2004. The ICMYO youth organisations participated in the High Level Panel meetings promoting the involvement of youth organisations in the design, implementation and evaluation of the National Action Plans to reduce youth unemployment according to the recommendations of YEN. By the time of the High Level Panel meeting in Washington in late September the Youth Consultative Group had been established and participated actively in the meeting. The Youth Consultative Group presented a plan of action for the involvement of youth organisations in the different National Action Plans, which was greatly welcomed and taken on board by the YEN.

³ The YEN has identified Employability, Entrepreneurship, Equal opportunities for young women and young men and Employment creation as top priorities to be included in every national action plan to fight youth unemployment. It is now in the phase of implementation of those action plans.

The process leading to the third phase of the **World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)**⁴ and the follow up and implementation of the Youth Resolution adopted at the 58th General Assembly in 2003 constituted the general framework for the advocacy and lobby actions of youth organisations. Ten years after its adoption, the UN called for a comprehensive review on the progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the WPAY by the national governments and the UN System. As this review coincides in time with the 5-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and both have a big impact on youth worldwide, ICMYO organisations lobbied for both processes to be linked. The 59th General Assembly, where many youth organisations were present, confirmed the consultation with youth organisations, the organisation of a youth conference in parallel to the 60th UN General Assembly in 2005, as well as the interrelation between the WPAY and the MDGs.

Recent well-intentioned institutional efforts to consult youth on a global scale have occasionally resulted in procedures which are not transparent and which are criticised on the basis of composition and lack of clarity about both the legitimacy of the outcomes of global youth processes and the representativity of the youth that were consulted.

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) constitute a coalition of youth organisations that are representative and legitimate both at the eyes of international institutions and of the youth movement worldwide.

Therefore ICMYO is seen as the most legitimate group of youth organisations when it comes to institutional consultative practices on youth issues at the global level. Moreover it is a coalition of organisations that, by cooperating together can help strengthening the youth organisations in the different regions of the world and contribute to a strong youth movement that can efficiently represent the interests of young people and contribute to build participatory and knowledge-based societies.

⁴The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995. It identifies 10 priority issues for youth worldwide and actions to be taken at the national, regional and global level to address them. In 2002 five new issues of concern were added to the WPAY. Those 15 themes and the actions to be taken by national governments, UN Secretariat, regional Commissions and Agencies, Funds and Programmes are the basis of the 10-year review. More at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/>

Making ICMYO an operational structure

For the moment the following organisations are part of ICMYO:

- ICFTU - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
- IFLRY - International Federation of Liberal Youth,
- IFM/SEI - International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International
- IFMSA - International Federation of Medical Students' Associations
- IFRC - International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- IMCS/MIEC - International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS Pax Romana)
- IYCS/JECI International Young Catholic Students
- IUSY - International Union of Socialist Youth
- WAGGGS - World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts
- WFDY - World Federation of Democratic Youth
- WOSM - World Organization of Scout Movement
- YDC - Youth for Development and Cooperation
- YMCA - World Alliance of YMCAs
- YWCA - World Young Women's Christian Association
- YFJ - European Youth Forum
- ASA - Asian Students Association
- RAJ/AYN - Réseau Africain de la Jeunesse/African Youth Network
- UPJ/PYU - Union Panafricaine de la Jeunesse/Pan-African Youth Union
- AYU - Arab Youth Union
- PYC - Pacific Youth Council
- FLAJ - Foro Latinoamericano de Juventud/Latin American Youth Forum

Participants

Each ICMYO meeting brings together the leadership of the above mentioned organisations. Each organisation is represented by 1 person. In addition technical or secretariat staff is also part of the meeting, with an assisting role. ICMYO meeting aims also to invite for a consultative session representatives of relevant international institutions active in the field of youth (UN, World Bank, CoE, UE, etc). Therefore each ICMYO meeting brings together 30-35 participants.

Taskforce

The meetings are organised by a taskforce, which is currently composed by the European Youth Forum, the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, the World Alliance of the YMCA's and the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS Pax Romana). It is also responsible for finding the venue, fundraising and follow up and for securing communication in between the meetings. According to what was decided by the ICMYO organisations and taking into consideration the series of developments at the global level, the taskforce is in charge of organising two meetings per year. Each meeting has two full working days.