



YSF 9th Edition Application Guidelines (Download)

These guidelines aim to serve as a tool for the applicants to submit their project proposals for funding in line with the eligibility criteria. They contain information about:

- The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)
- Youth Solidarity Fund
- Geographical Coverage for the current Call for Applications;
- Eligibility Criteria (Organizations and Projects);
- Selection Process, Selection Committee, Evaluation Criteria;
- How to apply.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC):

UNAOC was established in 2005, under the auspices of the United Nations, and co-sponsored by the Governments of Spain and Turkey. UNAOC works towards a more socially inclusive world by building mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious identities and highlighting the will of the world's majority to reject violent extremism and embrace diversity. UNAOC project activities are fashioned around Youth, Education, Media, and Migration, which can play a critical role in reducing cross-cultural tensions.

Learn more about UNAOC and its activities here: <https://www.unaoc.org/who-we-are/>

Youth-focused programming at UNAOC:

Guided by the principle that youth are key actors to achieve peace, UNAOC develops programming to enhance the ability of young people and their organizations to foster mutual respect, understanding, and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions. This programming facilitates networking and exchange among youth-led organizations; provides them with the opportunities to increase their competencies and implement concrete projects advancing intercultural understanding. More precisely, it provides varied support for the grassroots and regional youth-led initiatives to expand, enhance, and intensify the role and capacity of youth. Ultimately, these contributions make a real and lasting difference for cultural and

religious communities and nations facing tensions and conflicts, as well as nurture the global movement for intercultural and interfaith harmony. UNAOC advocates for, and defends the interests of young people working at all levels. It promotes the work of young people to agencies and established institutions at the international level, aiming to integrate youth participation into all activities and policy related to intercultural dialogue.

UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF):

The **Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF)** supports youth-led organizations that foster peaceful and inclusive societies by providing seed funding to outstanding projects promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue. It awards grants of up to USD 25,000 for the implementation of selected projects that demonstrate innovative and effective approaches to intercultural and/or interfaith dialogue and advance the mission of UNAOC. YSF only supports projects that are entirely developed and managed by youth and for the benefit of youth. The age definition used by UNAOC to characterize youth is an individual between the ages of 18 and 35.

Established in 2008, YSF responded to calls for action made by young civil society leaders worldwide on the importance of establishing funding mechanisms for youth-led organizations. To date, a total of 68 projects have been funded, reaching around 95,000 direct beneficiaries in 40 countries. In total, more than 1.7 million direct and indirect beneficiaries have been impacted over the past twelve years.

The world today is home to the largest youth generation in history, a population that suffers disproportionately from the effects of violence, conflict, poverty, and now COVID-19. The repercussions of COVID19 extend way beyond health and are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. The UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 states that the world is experiencing a “surge of stigma, a tsunami of hate, and ramped-up efforts to exploit young people¹.” To counter this alarming trend, it calls for more action to address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination by promoting inclusion and respect for diversity.

Despite COVID-19 and many other obstacles and challenges, young people continue to find ways to engage, support one another and demand, and drive change. They have the power to transform entire regions to make them more secure, peaceful, and socially inclusive. This has been recognized by the United Nations’ Youth, Peace and Security

¹ United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better, June 2020 https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_comprehensive_response_to_covid-19_june_2020.pdf

agenda, which has increasingly focused on youth as agents of change and key actors in powerful social movements. The latest Security Council Resolution on YPS 2535 (July 2020) reiterates youth-led organizations' critical role in planning and stabilization efforts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Indeed, these organizations have a deep understanding of local conditions and meaningful community relationships, allowing them to work with populations that may be difficult for others to access. Young people implement innovative solutions to peace and security challenges and are the most able to mobilize their peers.

Our world has recently witnessed a tragic surge in religious hatred, with increased attacks and violence targeting members of faiths and traditions. In the face of these unspeakable tragedies, the world has also witnessed extraordinary displays of support, love, and solidarity from religious communities across the globe for the victims of such attacks. That led to the creation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, developed by UNAOC and launched in September 2019, highlighting the need to create counter-narratives to hatred and violent extremism and promote sustained collaboration among different religions through interreligious dialogue, education, and media. Youth empowerment, including their meaningful participation in decision-making, can play an essential role in whole-of-society preventative approaches². YSF continues to support youth-led civil society organizations, with a particular focus on the role of young people in promoting peace and preventing violent extremism. YSF does so by providing the partnership, mentorship, and financial means to help young people implement activities that prevent violent conflict, promote peace and social inclusion. YSF functions as a small grant-making mechanism for youth to develop their own ideas on strengthening community resilience against violent extremism conducive to terrorism. UNAOC believes that young people are uniquely placed to counter and prevent violent extremism within their communities based on their valuable insights, influence, and credibility.

Additionally, YSF contributes to the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the call to support young people as they take up the causes of cultural and religious pluralism, peace, and mutual respect. The 9th edition of YSF encourages proposals addressing the increased stigma and discrimination of young people and their communities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Proposals focusing on promoting tolerance and respect for other religions and cultures, the right of human beings to practice their faith in safety and peace, and dialogue and respect to combat extremist ideologies and narratives, are also welcome. By addressing the issue of hate speech and its impact on young people, the new edition of YSF will also follow recommendations of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech³.

² The United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship, September 2019

³ UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech:

A critical part of YSF is a comprehensive capacity building and mentorship support provided to the grant recipients. Organizations that will be awarded with the seed funding for their projects will also take part in structured capacity development program, consisting of workshops and regular mentoring sessions. Through tailor-made mentorship, the workshops will offer know-how on diverse topics, including organizational development, sustainability and personal safety in the field. Additionally, the program also provides grant recipients an opportunity to network with their peers and build connections to the international community. This capacity development program is based on the Youth 360 approach developed by Search for Common Ground with UNAOC and other partners.

Who can apply for Youth Solidarity Fund?

- Youth-led organizations registered and/or operational in one of the eligible countries;
 - Registered youth-led organizations with projects entirely developed and managed by youth and for the benefit of youth.
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Type of projects:

Youth Solidarity Fund provides seed funding to outstanding projects promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue. It awards grant of up to USD 25,000 for the implementation of selected projects that demonstrate innovative and effective approaches to intercultural and/or interfaith dialogue and advance the mission of UNAOC. Proposals linked to implementation of the following frameworks/policies are particularly encouraged:

- Projects that support the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace and Security in connection to intercultural and interfaith dialogue;
- Projects that support the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism by promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a prevention tool;
- Projects that support the implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 by addressing the increased

https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/advising-and-mobilizing/Action_plan_on_hate_speech_EN.pdf

stigma and discrimination of young people and their communities exacerbated by the pandemic;

- Projects that support the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites by promoting respect for other religions and cultures, the right of human beings to practice their faith in safety and peace, and dialogue and respect to combat extremist ideologies and narratives;
- Projects that support the implementation of the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech by addressing the issues and their impact on young people.

Geographical coverage of the current call for applications:

Donor countries' priorities or constraints are a key consideration in determining the geographical coverage of YSF interventions for any given campaign. The 9th YSF Call for Applications welcomes proposals from youth-led organizations officially registered and operating in the following countries.

List of eligible countries, in alphabetical order

Proposals submitted by a coalition of youth organizations from different countries are acceptable only when the leading implementing youth organization is registered in one of the below countries. Activities must be carried out in the below-mentioned countries for the benefit of the local community.

Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**; People's Democratic Republic of **Algeria**; Republic of **Angola**; Republic of **Armenia**; Republic of **Azerbaijan**; People's Republic of **Bangladesh**; Republic of **Benin**; Kingdom of **Bhutan**; Republic of **Botswana**; **Burkina Faso**; Republic of **Burundi**; Republic of **Cabo Verde**; Kingdom of **Cambodia**; Republic of **Cameroon**; **Central African Republic**; Republic of **Chad**; People's Republic of **China**; Union of the **Comoros**; Republic of the **Congo**; Republic of **Cote d'Ivoire**; **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**; **Democratic Republic of the Congo**; Republic of **Djibouti**; Arab Republic of **Egypt**; Republic of **Equatorial Guinea**; State of **Eritrea**; Kingdom of **Eswatini**; Federal Democratic Republic of **Ethiopia**; **Gabonese Republic**; Islamic Republic of the **Gambia**; **Georgia**; Republic of **Ghana**; Republic of **Guinea**; Republic of **Guinea-Bissau**; Republic of **India**; Republic of **Indonesia**; Islamic Republic of **Iran**; Republic of **Iraq**; State of **Israel**; Hashemite Kingdom of **Jordan**; Republic of **Kazakhstan**; Republic of **Kenya**; **Kyrgyz Republic**; **Lao People's Democratic Republic**; Republic of **Lebanon**; Kingdom of **Lesotho**; Republic of **Liberia**; **Libya**; Republic of **Madagascar**; Republic of **Malawi**; **Malaysia**; Republic of **Maldives**; Republic of **Mali**; Islamic Republic of **Mauritania**; Republic of **Mauritius**;

Mongolia; Kingdom of **Morocco**; Republic of **Mozambique**; Republic of the Union of **Myanmar**; Republic of **Namibia**; Federal Democratic Republic of **Nepal**; Republic of the **Niger**; Federal Republic of **Nigeria**; Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**; State of **Palestine**; Republic of the **Philippines**; Republic of **Rwanda**; Democratic Republic of **Sao Tome and Principe**; Republic of **Senegal**; Republic of **Seychelles**; Republic of **Sierra Leone**; Federal Republic of **Somalia**; Republic of **South Africa**; Republic of **South Sudan**; Democratic Socialist Republic of **Sri Lanka**; Republic of **Sudan**; **Syrian Arab Republic**; Republic of **Tajikistan**; Kingdom of **Thailand**; Democratic Republic of **Timor-Leste**; Republic of **Togo**; Republic of **Tunisia**; Republic of **Turkey**; **Turkmenistan**; Republic of **Uganda**; United Republic of **Tanzania**; Republic of **Uzbekistan**; Socialist Republic of **Viet Nam**; Republic of **Yemen**; Republic of **Zambia**; Republic of **Zimbabwe**.

Eligibility criteria for youth organizations:

Youth organizations are subject to the same criteria as other partners of the United Nations System in that they must be accountable, transparent, and refrain from all discriminatory practices.

To be eligible, applying youth organizations need to fulfill every one of the following criteria:

- Be youth-led: a majority of the positions and decision-making roles within the organization are held by women and men between the ages of 18 and 35;
- Be a non-profit, non-governmental organization (except for national youth councils) registered in the country of operation as a charity, trust, foundation, or association;
- Be officially registered and operational for a minimum of two years prior to the deadline for applications with funding base and project implementation (operating in December 2018 or earlier);
- Be registered and operate in one of the aforementioned countries;
- Have a democratic governance structure and decision-making mechanism, including consultative processes in formulating priorities and policies;
- Have an ability to demonstrate proper and consistent monitoring, evaluation, and record-keeping of their activities, including project evaluation reports and financial accounts;
- Have a gender perspective/balance reflected in their staff, beneficiaries, and activities;
- Have no adherence to or affiliations with violent ideologies or antagonism against any particular country, culture, religion or belief system, ethnic group, gender, etc.; and

- Did not receive funding under past editions of YSF or did not receive the Intercultural Innovation Award.

Note: If you applied for YSF in the past but were not selected, you can apply for YSF again.

Upon request, organizations will need to provide documented evidence demonstrating how they fulfill all of these criteria.

Please note that project proposals will not be considered eligible for funding if they are submitted by governments, international governmental organizations, non-youth led organizations, unregistered groups of youth, business entities, as well as individuals.

Eligibility criteria for projects:

All submitted projects must fulfill every one of the following criteria to be eligible and reviewed by the Selection Committee:

- **Origin:** The project was developed and written by youth;
- **Target Audience:** The project targets youth primarily. Gender balance among project participants is ensured;
- **Objective:** The project contributes to advancing UNAOC's mandate of promoting a more socially inclusive world by building mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious identities;
- **Management:** The project is managed by a youth-led organization, responding to all eligibility criteria mentioned above;
- **Project Coordinator:** The Project Coordinator is demonstrably affiliated to the applying organization and is between the ages of 18 and 35 at the time of the application;
- **Duration and Timing:** The project must be implemented between May 2021 and May 2022. Final reports will need to be submitted by 1 May 2022 at the latest;
- **Location:** Project activities are implemented in the country(ies) mentioned in the above list (see geographical coverage section);
- **Budget:** The organization needs to guarantee its capacity to implement all proposed project elements with the funds requested. The amount requested must be no more than 50 percent of the organization's annual budget in 2019. Grants provided by UNAOC will not exceed USD 25,000. The scope of the project and the amount requested is not a determining factor in the selection process. Projects with smaller budgets are encouraged to apply. Please note that the average grant in the 8th YSF edition was USD 15,241.40. The proposed budget will have 90 percent of costs associated with direct project activities, and only up to 10 percent of it will cover the Project Coordinator's salary/fees. Office rent cost, utilities, and purchase of technical equipment (e.g., computers, copiers, printers, cameras, telephones, etc.) cannot be part of the budget;

- **English:** Application and CV/resume of the Project Coordinator must be submitted in English only;
 - **Registration certificate and statute:** Copies of a registration certificate and a statute need to be attached to the application form. They can be submitted in the original language of the country where the organization is registered. Translations may be requested at a later stage of the selection process.
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Selection process and selection committee; Evaluation:

All received project proposals will be reviewed to assess their eligibility based on the criteria mentioned above and the proposed project's potential. All project coordinators of eligible projects will be given an opportunity to rate the most interesting project ideas to enable more inclusive youth programming. The rating will be complementary to a comprehensive evaluation carried out by the Selection Committee and will result in a shortlist. This is an innovative, participatory approach to shortlisting of eligible projects that UNAOC will introduce to increase youth participation in the YSF programme and enable more youth voices in the process.

UNAOC will contact organizations that are shortlisted with a request to submit a more detailed project budget, as well as a more detailed work plan outlining activities, timeline, milestones, expected outcomes, and outputs (UNAOC will provide forms). Shortlisted organizations will be asked to pitch their projects during an interview, in the final stage of the selection process.

A Selection Committee will conduct a final evaluation and scoring of the short-listed proposals based on the following criteria:

Objectives:

- The project aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism;
- The project promotes the values of peace and development;
- The project objectives are clear, and there is a logical connection between identified issues, proposed activities, and requested funding.

Activities:

- The project includes activities aiming to build positive and long-term collaborative relationships between youth of different cultural and religious backgrounds, therefore contributing to a long-term peaceful coexistence in society;
- The project contains elements of intergenerational partnership and dialogue;

- The project has a solid gender-mainstreaming strategy and is inclusive to minorities and/or marginalized groups to promote a more socially cohesive community;
- The project uses seed funding to implement innovative and effective approaches to intercultural and/or interfaith dialogue and advance the mission of UNAOC;
- The project supports implementation of any of the following frameworks/policies:
 - United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace and Security in connection to intercultural and interfaith dialogue;
 - United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism by promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a prevention tool;
 - United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 by addressing the increased stigma and discrimination of young people and their communities exacerbated by the pandemic;
 - United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites by promoting respect for other religions and cultures, the right of human beings to practice their faith in safety and peace, and dialogue and respect to combat extremist ideologies and narratives;
 - United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech by addressing the issues and their impact on young people.

Relevance:

- The project is appropriate to the local context and targets the local audience; it represents good value for the requested funds, with a clear and appropriate budget.

Quality:

- The organization undertook an in-depth analysis of problems/risks and sets a consistent intervention strategy. The application is concise and provides responses to all questions or sections; it includes insightful arguments and an engaging narrative.

Impact and Multiplier Effect:

- The project will have a significant impact on the ground. The multiplier effect is outlined, and target audiences are clearly identified – priority is given to projects that have the potential to reach youth communities that would not otherwise have a chance to participate.

Sustainability, Monitoring, Evaluation:

- The project has a potential to become sustainable beyond its original duration and bring long-term results that are clearly outlined in the project proposal. Monitoring and evaluation elements are clearly demonstrated.

Selected organizations will be contacted by UNAOC via email and provided with information on further steps, draft agreements to be signed, and a schedule of payments.

To apply:

Interested organizations can apply at the following link: <http://apply.unaoc.org/>.

To be considered complete and valid, the application package must include the following and be submitted through the online application system available at <http://apply.unaoc.org/>.

- The application form, completed and certified by the applicant's organization;
- A copy of the registration certificate of the applicant's organization;
- A copy of the statutes/by-laws of the applicant's organization;
- An organizational chart depicting the ages of key decision-makers within the organization;
- A biography of the current Executive/Managing Director, showing the date of birth (one page maximum);
- The resume/CV of the project coordinator (two pages maximum);
- A picture or scan of the project coordinator's passport identification page. If the project coordinator does not have a passport, upload his or her national identification card.

The word/character limit for each question in the application form needs to be respected. The application system automatically counts words and characters.

Deadline: The application deadline is Sunday, **31 January 2021, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time in New York.**

Disclaimer: UNAOC reserves the right to not select any applicants, or to cancel the call for applications. UNAOC accepts no liability for cancelling the call for applications or for anyone's failure to receive notification of cancellation.

For any additional questions on YSF and this call for applications, please consult:

- [Technical FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions for technical matters](#)
- [Content FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions for content related matters](#)
- [YSF web page](#)

After reviewing all available sources of information, if you still have any questions, please contact: ysf@unaoc.org