



## World Youth Programme (WYP) Background information & Criteria

### What is the World Youth Programme (WYP)?

The World Youth Programme (WYP) is a joint effort between churches and national, regional and global ecumenical organizations to build the capacity of youth in the churches and ecumenical movement. WYP partners include young people in local churches, denominational youth ministries, youth workers in national or regional ecumenical organizations and other international Christian youth organizations.

The World Youth Programme supports youth to...

- Break down confessional, religious, class, cultural/ethnic and gender divisions among youth aged 18-30 years,
- Build youth networks sustained by local youth movements that exchange information, ideas and support,
- Renew the relationship between the church and youth,
- Equip young people to be agents of justice and peace,
- Raise awareness among youth leaders of cutting-edge issues in the ecumenical movement,
- Highlight the ideas and insights of young people for the churches and ecumenical movement,
- Develop ecumenical resource materials made by and for young people,
- Support young people's self-development programmes that translate and contextualize "ecumenism" so that it makes sense to young people,
- Facilitate national, regional and interregional cooperation, networking and exchanges between youth in the ecumenical movement in order to build community and solidarity,
- Support capacity building opportunities for youth to expand their knowledge and skills so they can better serve the churches.

From 2006 to 2007, over forty two projects were supported or initiated through the WYP in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Pacific regions. Through these projects, over five thousand young people directly participated in seminars, workshops, conferences, ecumenical prayer services and production of media resources supported by WYP. The projects supported through WYP prepared youth to become skilled resource leaders in areas such as leadership development, communication, interfaith dialogue, peer-counselling, HIV/AIDS prevention, human rights advocacy, paralegal documentation, conflict resolution, project planning, working with other churches and theological analysis. Young people who have participated in these projects are trained to continue using these skills in their churches and communities.

WCC encourages youth in the churches to plan projects with an ecumenical perspective—by reaching out to young people in other churches. This renews and energizes the movement by bringing young people into contact with each other and by motivating them to learn about one another as Christians. WCC encourages youth to make the link between their local issues with regional and global concerns. This way, young people see that they are part of a bigger picture. They see that they can share with other people their struggles and that their issues, interests, aspirations and realities are interconnected with those of other youth. This awareness helps to develop a sense of belonging and of responsibility—"I am not alone. My actions and beliefs can have a positive or negative impact on others."

Young people also gain consciousness that they are not alone in their churches but that the Christian family and ecumenical history is diverse and expansive. When given opportunities to come into contact with our rich Christian family, this can encourage curiosity and excitement for young people to discover more about their own identity and faith—“where do I come from. Who am I”? It can also motivate young people to learn about other Christians with whom they share a common faith in Jesus Christ. This motivation is what helps to break down stereotypes, suspicions and barriers that divide Christians. The WYP encourages youth themselves to live out this ecumenical awareness starting from a personal and local level. Then through face-to-face encounters with others, young people learn that the ecumenical movement is not an abstract concept or a headquarters in Geneva. Through contact comes dialogue, disagreements and self-discovery. Then the path is open for true learning, friendships, community and commitment until the desire for Christian unity and peace is ignited in the hearts of a new, young generation. WYP supports the creativity and desire of young people to explore what Christian unity should look like and how churches can tackle real life problems.

The first criteria for the WYP are that projects must be **ecumenical**. How will the project involve youth from different churches in the planning and participation? Secondly, it must be focused on serving young people (which WCC considers as people between 18-30 years of age). Projects supported by the WYP must relate to any of the nine priority themes which have been shaped by the WCC youth program in cooperation with youth leaders from the regional ecumenical organizations and youth movements. The overall goal is to strengthen the life and work of the churches and through that the ecumenical movement. The theological and spiritual dimensions are integral to all themes, reminding us of the mission of the church in the world today.

The World Youth Programme (WYP) supports projects based on the following priority themes:

### 1. Ecumenical Learning & Leadership Formation

Ecumenical Learning addresses the need to train people for leadership with an ecumenical perspective and commitment. It responds to the call of Jesus' prayer “that all may be one” (John 17:21). Ecumenical Learning involves raising awareness of global and ecumenical issues and provides practical training for youth leaders working at different levels of the churches. Ecumenical Learning for youth leaders is a tool to empower youth networks and renew the whole ecumenical movement. The elements of Ecumenical Learning may differ according to the context and may be done through:

- a) Exposing youth to different church denominations and traditions by attending worship in a different church and ask local church leaders and youth groups about their and efforts towards Christian Unity.
- b) Reflect on social and theological issues important in the lives of young adults. Respond by planning actions on these issues that can be done together with different churches.
- c) Establish Ecumenical youth networks (national, regional and international) that regularly exchange information and offer support and advice to one another's ministries.
- d) Put together and share resource material on ecumenism and leadership development (training materials, introduction on working methods, information on resource persons)
- e) Practically encounter diversity by meeting with youth from various cultural, national and denominational backgrounds in order to build understanding and community among Christians.
- f) Learn about the history of the ecumenical movement and study the bible's messages about Christian unity (i.e. John 17:21).



### 2. Overcoming Violence

Young people live in a world where direct or indirect confrontation with violence is the norm. From structural to personal forms of violence, young people bear the burdens of violent conflict in the world and yearn for peace that reflects God's love for all creation. Therefore the WYP encourages



youth to join the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence in making young people agents of peace in a learning and participatory processes of forgiveness and reconciliation. Through this focus WYP encourages youth to:

- a) Equip young people to identify and analyze different forms of violence in order to prevent and transform it by developing practical training resources
- b) Equip young people to build peace through education, dialogue and processes of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- c) Create and encourage peace movements among youth in the churches through networking and exchange between the regions
- d) Contribute to the *International Ecumenical Peace Convocation* in Jamaica, May 2011 by engaging young adults in the churches in theological and biblical reflections on how to overcome violence.
- e) Participate in the *International Day of Prayer for Peace* each September by organizing ecumenical prayer services. <http://www.overcomingviolence.org>
- f) Analyze and overcome social and political structures which nurture, create or reproduce violence. (i.e. unfair trade systems and debt, poverty, military, gangs, abuse within families, schools or churches, social exclusion, environmental destruction)

### 3. HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS infects and affects millions of young people around the world. Tragically in some of our churches and countries dealing with this pandemic is not made a priority and is still a taboo to talk about openly. While there has been a significant amount of information provided to younger generations, there is still lack of knowledge and awareness about prevention and support from the churches to deal with the pandemic. Faced with HIV/AIDS, creative, social and spiritual education and support of youth is important. The WYP encourages:

- a) Creative education for young people about sexual behaviour and risks such as HIV/AIDS from biblical, bio-medical and social perspectives. Promoting creative methodologies to spread awareness about HIV through theatre, games/sports, bible study, prayer, songs, media campaigns, discussion groups, testimonies from HIV positive persons, sermons in church etc.
- b) Provide young people with resource materials grounded in theological reflection and facts on HIV/AIDS
- c) Encourage young people to get tested for HIV and know their status. Create peer support groups trained in counselling and raising awareness about HIV.
- d) Reflect on the social and cultural injustice facing people living with HIV/AIDS and eliminate the stigma that HIV positive persons face from their families, community and church.
- e) Empower young people and youth movements to accept and act in solidarity with people living with HIV/AIDS and encourage the churches to address HIV/AIDS and take concrete steps for prevention.

### 4. Interfaith Cooperation and Dialogue

Religion plays a central role in helping us understanding the purpose of human life, developing personal identity and sense of belonging in community. It is also becoming an increasingly important factor in public life. Young people yearn for spiritual meaning and answers to life's' big questions even though this can be disconnected from institutionalized religion, dogmas, rites and religious practices. Youth continue to encounter religious plurality, atheism and even religious extremism in their daily lives. While youth face these various religious realities among peer groups, through media, in society and politics, the WYP encourages churches and youth to:

- g) Provide space for young adults from different backgrounds to discuss religious identity, challenge harmful stereotypes, understand difference and identify common values for living respectfully together in a diverse world.
- h) Organize cross-cultural and inter-regional encounters where youth from different churches and religious communities can identify common issues or challenges they face (i.e. youth unemployment, ecological stewardship, violence) and make strategies to work on these issues together.



- i) Study the bible to explore and understand Christian identity (what is unique and particular about our faith) and what the bible says about how we should treat and accept others. Reflect on the question, “who is my neighbour” from theological and social perspectives.
- j) Promote respectful coexistence and integration by including youth in dialogues between religious leaders and between youth themselves in local communities.
- k) Share and create resources based on experiences of youth in interfaith encounters to help explore important issues such as conflict, communication, conversion, inter-cultural/inter-religious understanding, coexistence and community.

## 5. Migration

Out of 191 million migrants worldwide, 63 million are aged 15-25 years. Migration has always been a fact of life, but today it raises new economic, political, cultural and ecclesial concerns in today’s globalized world. Migration also raises questions about identity, sense of place and belonging, security and human rights. Youth are forced to migrate through human trafficking, political, economic and ecological insecurity. Youth also migrate in search of education and employment opportunities. As young people migrate, they are also targeted by racism and xenophobia. WYP encourages youth to:



- a) Raise awareness and education among youth about the root causes and issues surrounding migration and the effects on individuals, families, churches and whole countries. Organize activities to address connections between xenophobia and racism and plan concrete steps to confront these challenges such as advocacy at local and national government levels.
- b) Involve migrant youth in church activities. Engage other youth in the churches to work with migrants, including refugees, internally displaced people and victims of trafficking through prayer, awareness-raising campaigns, personal interactions and testimonies. Plan community events and bible studies together.
- c) Create links and contact between youth in different communities including those who have left the country (in the Diaspora). Organize inter-cultural encounters between youth from different backgrounds to promote understanding and community building. Examine the bible together on such themes as migration, identity, hospitality, foreigners, being a neighbour, sense of home, belonging and human dignity.
- d) Encourage training in peer-counselling for youth to educate and support each other on questions of identity, human rights, community, legal advice and where to find church resources. Train youth in international advocacy on issues of migration.

## 6. Gender

Gender is an important aspect that governs our lives by shaping our identities, relationships and roles in the church and society. Societies have different expectations of what it means to be men and women. Young people are at an important phase of life when confronting many complex questions about gender. WYP encourages young people to consider issues of gender inequity, stereotypes, gender roles, sexuality, relationships, marriage and family from Christian and ecumenical perspectives. The WYP aims to:



- a) Raise the awareness of young people on issues related to gender by analyzing their own experiences. Reflect biblically and theologically on what it means to be men or women.
- b) Empower young women often oppressed by systemic gender related discrimination, sexualized violence and exclusion by providing secure places for them to discuss their experiences and ensuring them opportunities to develop their leadership. Encourage young men and women to work together to challenge structural and cultural gender discrimination and injustice in the churches and societies.
- c) Create opportunities for youth to speak openly about gender through bible study, discussion groups, film study, role plays, pastoral counselling and develop theological resources to respond to the complex questions about gender



- d) Increase the sensitivity of youth groups and organizations on issues of inclusion, gender and power. Strengthen and connect youth movements at all levels around gender issues. Encourage youth networks and church groups to develop policies against exclusions or harassment that promote gender justice and empowerment.

## 7. Climate Change & Ecology

Young people have inherited life on an earth that is becoming more and more fragile and unable to sustain the bad habits of humankind. Climate change is a major consequence of human's carelessness towards the environment and has therefore been identified by ecumenical youth leaders around the world as a key concern for youth activism in the ecumenical movement. Climate change affects people all around the world, but violent storms, droughts, floods and rising sea levels have especially devastating consequences on poor and thus more vulnerable communities. Climate change also aggravates the water crisis increasingly felt in many places around the world. The WYP encourages youth to:

- a) Take personal responsibility to reduce the effects and development of climate change by encouraging youth networks and churches to adopt policies to reduce carbon emissions and find alternative ways to live and work that are more ecologically sustainable.
- b) Raise awareness among youth from different churches of the links between ecological and social concerns, natural disasters and development, poverty and environmental protection and how global threats translate into local experiences.
- c) Encourage personal and inter-regional (rural-urban) encounters between young people to understand the effects of environmental degradation on all forms of life. Organize exposure trips for young people appreciate and enjoy nature and see for themselves what is happening to the earth.
- d) Lobby governments to take measures that go beyond the targets of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.
- e) Organize prayer services among youth from different churches that focus on ecology and study what the bible says about God's creation, stewardship, responsibility, biodiversity, caring for and sharing natural resources.

## 8. Globalization

Globalization is understood as the process that integrates national economies by eliminating trade barriers to create a borderless economy. Globalization affects relationships, employment opportunities, cultures, media, democracy, identity, faith, ethics, human rights and the environment. Through economic globalization, the structures of trade and finance are increasingly widening the gap between people rich and poor and posing threats to global peace and the well-being of the earth. Globalization often allows uncontrolled materialistic growth and competes with our ecumenical vision of sustainable life together in solidarity and caring. However, Globalization can also present a possibility for contact, learning and sharing. The benefit of a worldwide approach to these issues will build solidarity and understanding among youth and the ecumenical family. Support from the WYP promotes youth to:

- a) Interact and build bridges of solidarity around the challenges related to globalization across regions and church denominations.
- b) Raise awareness among youth to better understand their contexts and situations through an analysis of globalization
- c) Reflect on the implications of globalization from biblical and theological perspectives for youth to envision and offer alternative models of development.
- d) Gather, share and create resources to help youth confront globalization.

## 9. Citizenship & Human Rights

Throughout history, young people have often been those who create political and social change in their countries. From struggles for decolonization, independence, human rights, peace and

### Understanding the AGAPE Process and Content

responding to the question  
'How do we live our faith  
in the context of  
Globalization?'

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justice, youth are often at the front of keeping communities and governments accountable to the people. However, when young people are kept in ignorance of their rights or of wider political issues they are also manipulated by those in power, religious and political extremists, paramilitary groups and gangs and used to keep oppressive systems in place. When provided with education and opportunities to express their experiences and concerns, young people have the potential to be well-informed, active citizens and leaders that promote human rights and good governance. When youth are able to engage these issues in church, the Christian faith takes on other dimensions of relevance and meaning as the faith experience and theology can inform their experience of society, politics and human rights. The WYP encourages youth to:

- a) Engage youth from different churches in reflection and education on civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights integrated in a holistic way. Build awareness among youth about what their human rights and responsibilities are. Raise awareness among youth about important political processes, how to access information and participate in important decisions affecting their future.
- b) Access to education and unemployment are major concerns that particularly affect young people. Focus ecumenical activities and advocacy efforts on these and other rights important to young people.
- c) Provide youth with leadership training opportunities. Advocate for youth to participate in church decision-making processes which will enhance the church as an intergenerational and inclusive community and equip youth with important leadership skills. Encourage and train ecumenical youth groups to bring their perspectives into political decision-making processes.
- d) Organize ecumenical prayers and bible studies on themes such as human dignity, power, community, cultural diversity, authority and prophetic witness. Look at what makes good leadership through examples in the bible.

## What WYP does to support youth

- Share global perspectives with youth partners to make the connection between their local issues with regional and global concerns
- Provide contacts of other church groups or organizations who have expertise in relevant topics related to the project
- Facilitate connections between different churches and regions by finding young people from another region/context that could participate in the project or event.
- Identify resource leaders with expertise in topics relevant to your project
- Support the project by sharing the proposal with other churches and ecumenical organizations
- Connect youth to WCC programs and staff working on relevant topics related to the project
- Follow up with youth participants from the project to involve them in the work of WCC
- Give a grant to help fund the implementation of the project
- Help with fundraising ideas to start or sustain the project

## Criteria for WYP funding

WYP can offer funds for projects that are implemented in the same year as the funding is given (i.e. funding must be used in the same calendar year as was sent. It cannot be used for events that took place more than six months previous or saved for use in future years). The following types of activities are *excluded* from WYP funding:

- a) Projects that consist mainly of capital investment or construction;
- b) Projects that consist mainly of ongoing administration or salary and maintenance costs;
- c) Study and any other projects submitted by individuals;
- d) Individual welfare or medical cases;
- e) Long-term development projects;
- f) Response to natural disasters.

## Sending a proposal to WYP

If your proposal meets the basic WYP criteria, then it is eligible for financial support. You can send a detailed project proposal and detailed budget to the WCC (please ask WCC staff for the WYP template for project proposals).

- a) Proposals for WYP funding may be submitted by WCC member churches, national councils and regional conferences of churches, other ecumenical or church-related youth organisations, youth groups and individuals with endorsement from their church or a recognized Christian youth movement/network working in an ecumenical context in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and Pacific regions.
- b) Applications are normally screened four times in the year. Please ask the staff for this schedule.
- c) Applicant organisations should take care to provide full information and detailed budgets in order to facilitate rapid screening.
- d) Grants will not normally exceed CHF 15,000 for each distinct project or phase of a project.
- e) Applications should provide details of the total financial requirements of the project, with indications of other sources of income where appropriate.
- f) Grants may be awarded to the same organization or group for more than one project during a calendar year, but not for the same phase of the same project.
- g) Funding for multiple-year and/or multiple-phase projects will be considered; where possible, this should be signalled in the original application.
- h) The WYP will give preference to applications for financial support that demonstrates personal commitment and involvement by the beneficiary organisation. A financial or in-kind contribution to the project should normally be made by the project implementers.
- i) The WCC may use the report of the project for information, publicity or fundraising purposes.

After the project is screened any questions, comments or clarification needed will be sent to the applicant by email. This is a chance to exchange ideas and help develop the project further (i.e. connecting the partner to other ecumenical youth networks and WCC staff concerned with the topic of the project). After WCC receives a response to these comments and questions, the final grant amount will be assessed. For successful grant proposals, an Ecumenical Partnership Agreement (EPA) will be sent to the partner. This must be filled out with bank details and signed by the partner before the grant can be released from WCC.

## Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

By the end of the year, we will need to receive a comprehensive narrative and financial report for each youth project receiving WYP funds. A template and instructions for reporting will be sent to the youth partners. If a report is not received by the end of the year, the partner organization or church will not be eligible for funds in the future. These reports help WCC to share with the churches and donor organizations the good work young people are doing to advance the cause for Christian unity.

- a) Monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the activities in the regions will be carried out by the implementing organisations.
- b) All activities funded through the WYP will be subject to WCC narrative and financial reporting standards, in accordance with an agreed format and timeline as specified in the partnership agreement. Churches and ecumenical partners which do not submit adequate and timely reports will not be eligible to receive further grants from the WYP. Beneficiary organisations will normally be required to provide a copy of their audited annual financial statements disclosing details of grant receipts and disbursements. In cases where an organisation is not able to fulfil this requirement, the WCC will determine a suitable means of verifying the beneficiary's financial report.
- c) The WCC will prepare an annual summary report, including a synthesis of the individual reports received, photos and stories, to be sent to funding partners and other members of the constituency upon request. Year end reports are normally posted on [www.ecuspace.net](http://www.ecuspace.net).

If a funding request exceeds the amount available in the WYP, potential partners may also want to refer to the WCC's Ecumenical Solidarity Fund (ESF): <http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3497>