**UNCT Serbia - Youth Advisory Group - Terms of Reference**

**Background**

According to the latest estimate of the population at the end of 2019, which was published on 1 July 2020, there are 1,141,016 young people (15–30 years old) and they make up 16.47% of the population in Serbia or almost exactly 1/6 of the population.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Based on the findings of [Report on the rights of young people in the Republic of Serbia 2020](http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/eng-lat/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Youth-Rights-in-Serbia-2020.pdf)[[2]](#footnote-2), young people faced numerous challenges in exercising human rights, especially in their rights to employment, education, freedom of movement, information, and especially in exercising the right to health and access to health care in the global virus pandemic. Marked by the COVID-19 crisis, in 2020 discriminatory actions have been pronounced, and stigmatizing young people as the main responsible for spreading epidemics was highly presented and imposed by media and decision makers. The pandemic only deepened the vulnerability of young people, especially of youth from vulnerable groups, young persons with disabilities, Roma, and youth from rural areas. The access to their rights in different life aspects and opportunities for their ideas and views to be expressed have been even more jeopardised. Unfamiliarity with their own rights, limited access to their rights and to express the same, especially for the vulnerable categories, negative images about youth through public life are push effects that should be eliminated in order to ensure a safe, inclusive, and sustainable society for everyone. There are still a small number of young people who are active in citizens' associations.

According to the Alternative Report on the Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia 2021, representation of young people within national and local self-government is very low or in some locations does not exist. When it comes to political participation, “only 0.7% of young participants believe that the political system completely allows the influence of young people on political processes and decisions.” However, the results of the same report, state that young people are more interested in politics and political events than in previous years.

In an effort to strengthen participation of young people and to ensure that their voices are heard, and their needs reflected in the issues that affect their lives directly, the UNCT would like to establish a Youth Advisory Group (YAB). The YAB will assure that the UN and national stakeholders will strengthen engagement of young people and benefit from their views, insights, and ideas in aiming to create a sustainable environment. The role of the YAB is to guide the actions, programming, and implementation of the United Nations Country Team in Serbia in line with the perspective of the young people, their rights, and needs. The creation of the YAB is in line and localises the Youth2030 Strategy, internationally agreed frameworks as well as a central aspect of Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), and 2535 (2020) acknowledging that young people play an important and positive role in the realisation of sustainable development, in the prevention of crises and in the advancement of peace.

**Purpose of Youth Advisory Group**

The UN Serbia Youth Advisory Group isa group of young people representatives who have been nominated / selected to regularly advise the UNCT on key issues of interest to the young people in Serbia and support the mainstreaming of the youth perspectives and the enforcement of their rights. It will also provide opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and be part of the decision making process.

**Objectives & Activities of the YAG:**

1. Support UNCT in bringing in systematically and directly the perspectives of young people in all its internal and external efforts to support the development agenda in Serbia.

Activities:

* Assist in identifying issues relevant to young people at the local level, provide ideas to

UNCT about how these issues can be addressed;

* Advise in shaping youth interventions under the new UNSCDF;
* Assist in developing Joint working plan, Programmes on the continuum of youth engagement and implement activities set in the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Serbia;
* Support more active mobilisation of youth and local organizations in the activities that address their needs.
* Support UNCT in strengthening and systematising the partnership with youth organisations and young people in general.
* Provide support to UN advocacy efforts.
* Strengthen information dissemination, promotion of youth issues and interventions under UN Serbia cooperation programme, including in Annual Results Report.

2. Contribute to strengthening impact of UN activities, programmes and outcomes, to improve the situation of young people in Serbia, in an inclusive manner and in line with the principle of Leaving No One Behind.

Activities:

* Provide the opportunity for young people to have their opinions heard and to contribute to decisions, strategies and plans of UN and national stakeholders;
* Support young people to address issues relevant to them through empowering youth to identify and respond to community needs;
* Assist in promoting and achieving goals of Youth2030, the United Nations’ system-wide Youth Strategy, and the 2030 Agenda.
* Contributing to fostering intergenerational dialogue.

**Youth Advisory Group composition**

**Membership criteria:** The Group should have 10 members. Each member shall be no younger than 18, and no older than 30 years of age at the start of her/his mandate. The Youth Advisory Group does not have fiduciary or supervisory responsibility.

**Each member should fulfil the following criteria:**

* Experience in youth-related work in advocacy, representation, activism or policy-related actions, in groups of or for young people in Serbia
* The youth member shall serve a mandate of 2 years, with no possibility of extension
* An ability to constructively participate in a fair and open-minded manner.
* An ability to consider a broad range of views that reflect the diversity of the community;
* Good knowledge and understanding of the local issues that are relevant to young people;
* An ability to facilitate communication and engagement with young people;
* A capacity to commit to the Youth Advisory Group for the required duration;

**Selection of Group members**

Member of YAG will be selected through the following parallel tracks:

* The UNCT shall compile nominations for YAG representatives among its entities with track record and knowledge of the youth organizations landscape in Serbia (three seats in total)
* YAG will have one permanent member from the National Umbrella Youth Organization, United Nations Association and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office RYCO (three seats in total)
* The remaining four seats in YAG will be populated through an open call, to ensure a transparent, inclusive and democratic selection based on a set of criteria.
* Representative of the UNICEF Youth Advisory Board will be invited to YAG’s sessions as an observer with participation rights and without voting rights.

In the selection process due attention will be paid to young people belonging to marginalised communities, and those most left behind or hard-to-reach youth, including from rural areas, who will be encouraged to apply for membership. The selection of the members will be guided by principle of gender-balanced membership.

The confirmation of membership, as well as the selection of the open call candidates will be decided upon by a UNCT panel, designated by the Resident Coordinator, and in line with agencies mandate and expertise relevant for youth issues. The selection will be endorsed by the UN Country Team.

**Code of Conduct**

1. **The Youth Advisory Group members will**
* Devote sufficient time to be productive Youth Advisory Group members
* Prepare for the Youth Advisory Group meetings
* Participate actively in the Youth Advisory Group meetings and discussions
* Contribute in good faith
* Maintain independence, objectivity and absolute confidentiality with regard to the protection of UN’s interests
* Maintain awareness of UN’s vision, mission, values and plans, and be guided by these documents in all contributions to the Youth Advisory Group work.
* On some occasions the YAG may deal with items of a confidential nature. Members are to deal with such items and issues with confidentiality, discretion and sensitivity.
1. **Compensation**

Advisory Group members serve on a voluntary basis. No compensation is paid. The UNCT agencies and the RCO will support the travel costs of the selected participants if needed.

1. **Engagement**

The Youth Advisory Group will act at all times with absolute impartiality.

The Youth Advisory Group will not make offers, promises or undertakings of any kind on behalf of UN Serbia.

The Youth Advisory Group members will not engage in staff disputes.

In the interests of consistency, institutional memory and effectiveness, the Youth Advisory Group members participate in all Youth Advisory Group meetings, if possible. They will accept decisions taken during such meetings if they are unable to be present. The Youth Advisory Group members will attend meetings and other support mechanisms, as requested, without the use of proxies or substitutes.

1. **Development the capacities of members**

Members of the YAG will be provided with training in areas that they identify which may include community engagement, media, governance, networking, public speaking. The capacity development will be provided by UN expert agencies.

1. **Meetings management**
* The Youth Advisory Group meets regularly every quarter (four times per year) or ad hoc (based on recognized need) as per request of UNCT or any other YAG member. Invitations for Youth Advisory Group meetings are sent by the Chair of the YAG supported by the UNRCO.
* Regular meetings will be planned at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Meeting logistics (venue, refreshment, printing material) will be provided by the UNRCO.
* Chairperson will be nominated by the YAG members, and the role of chairperson at meetings will be rotated as agreed.
* Members of the Youth Advisory Group may be invited to contribute ideas for the prospective agenda and review proposed agenda content. Agreed agenda will be distributed to all participants before the meeting.
* The YAG and UNRCO on behalf of UNCT may propose the participation of other stakeholders in the Youth Advisory Group meetings in order to enrich the discussion.
* Members will confirm their participation or send apologies for absence by email, no later than two working weeks before the scheduled date of the meeting.
* Members may be invited to make specific inputs to the meeting in line with the agreed Agenda.
* The Youth Advisory Group will prepare a short feedback/update report for consideration by all members and submit to UNCT through the Chair and UNRCO.
* Meetings will be facilitated by the Chair, with the support from UNRCO and UNCT agency representative as relevant.
* Meeting Minutes will be taken by designated YAG member. Minutes are a record of the meeting’s conclusions, not a record of processes.
* A quorum of the group will be “one half plus the chairperson”.
* YAG takes decisions by simple majority of the members present.
* YAG drafts an activity report at the end of a year cycle and submits it to the UNCT.
* UNCT may decide to appoint an agency representative as a liaison between YAG and UNCT.
1. Estimated population at the end of 2019, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/sr-cyrl/oblasti/stanovnistvo/procene-stanovnistva/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/eng-lat/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Youth-Rights-in-Serbia-2020.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)