



INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL  
YOUTH EXCHANGE



# #YEC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

March 2025  
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 01

# #YEC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE



**MARCH 2025**  
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 01

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# MESSAGE



**ANJA STUCKERT**  
Secretary General,  
ICYE Federation

I am very happy that ICYE has launched the Youth Engagement Committee in 2024. It is an important step to strengthen meaningful youth engagement in the Federation and give young people the space to contribute to the discussions we are having at different levels.

Being a youth organisation, young people's voices are vital to shape the future of international volunteering, as they have the power to reimagine the world and the passion to promote change. They bring a unique perspective to our discussions as well as a specific skill set that we need to tackle the challenges international volunteering is facing. The YEC's commitment and engagement has already been exceptional. For the future, I hope that it will be possible to involve the YEC also more actively in the governance structures and decision-making processes.



Africa



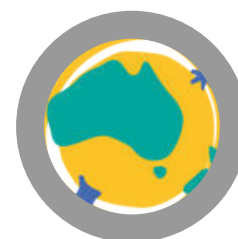
Americas



Asia



Europe



Oceania





# **WHO ARE WE?**

**Youth Engagement Committee is:**



# ICYE

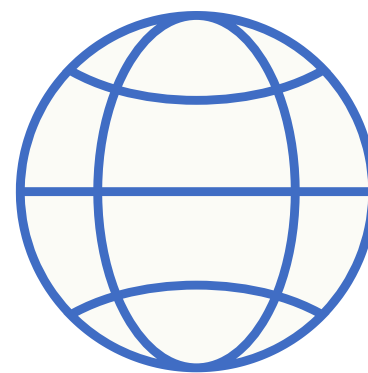
• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE



**a team composed of young people from different regions who...**



**...have strong interests in the fields of volunteering, youth empowerment, and intercultural work...**



**...promote reflection and action on anti-racism, gender equality, and decolonisation....**



**...empower diverse youth voices...**



**...and provide young people with new opportunities for engagement in IVS.**

# #YEC



ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

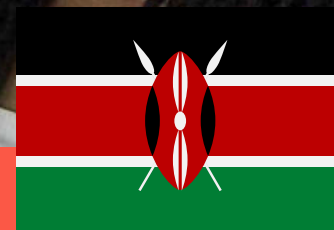
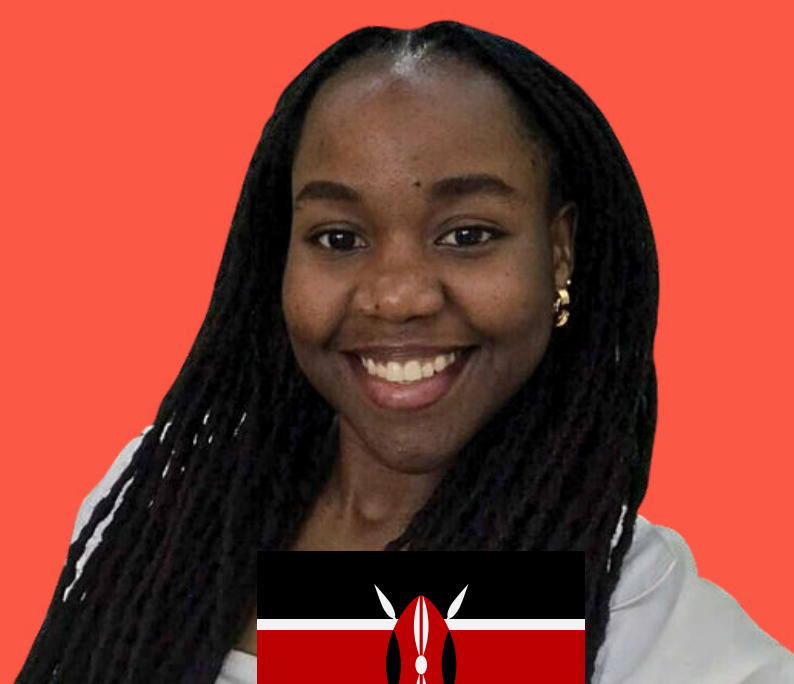
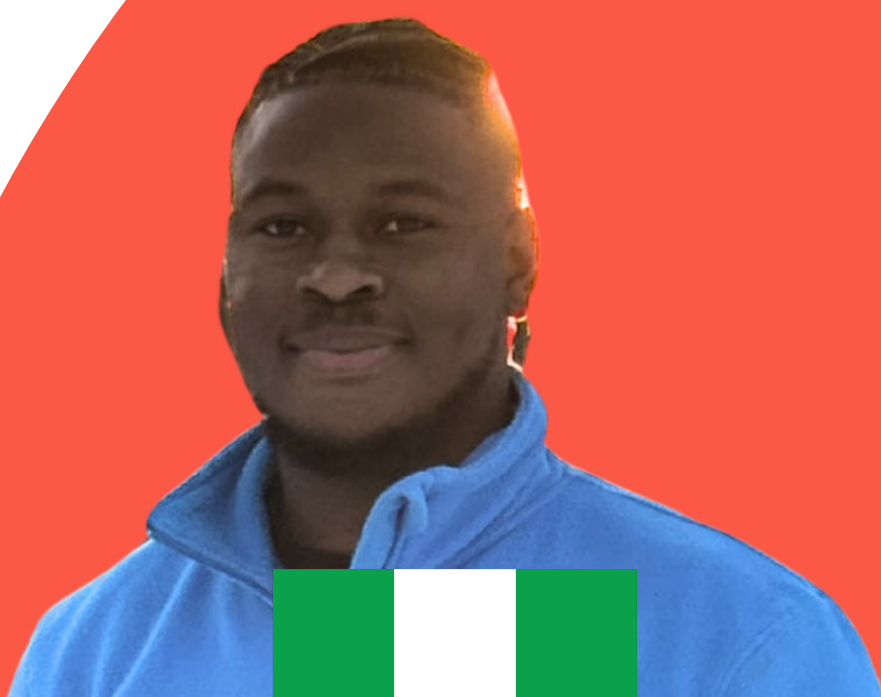
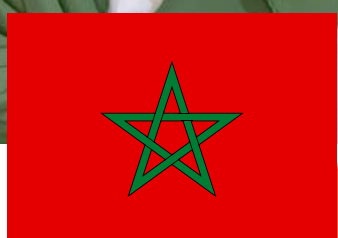
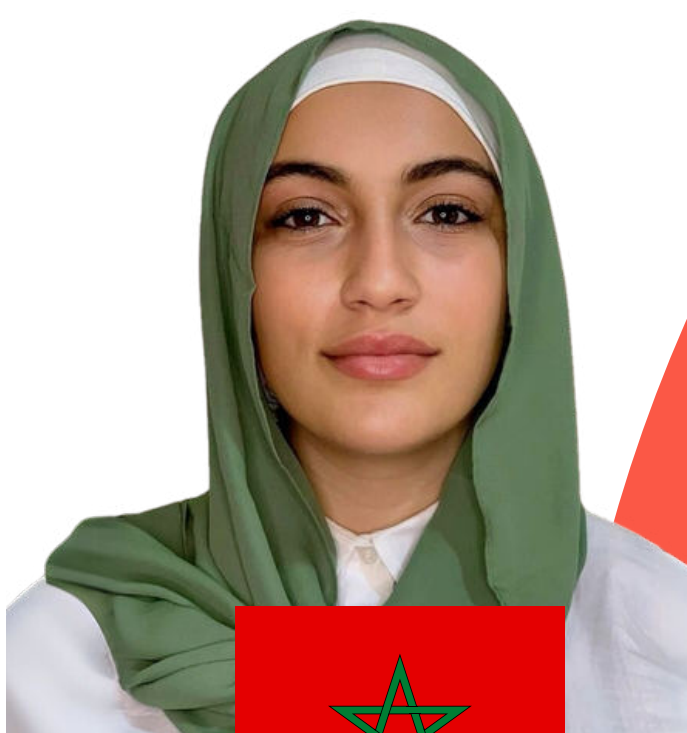


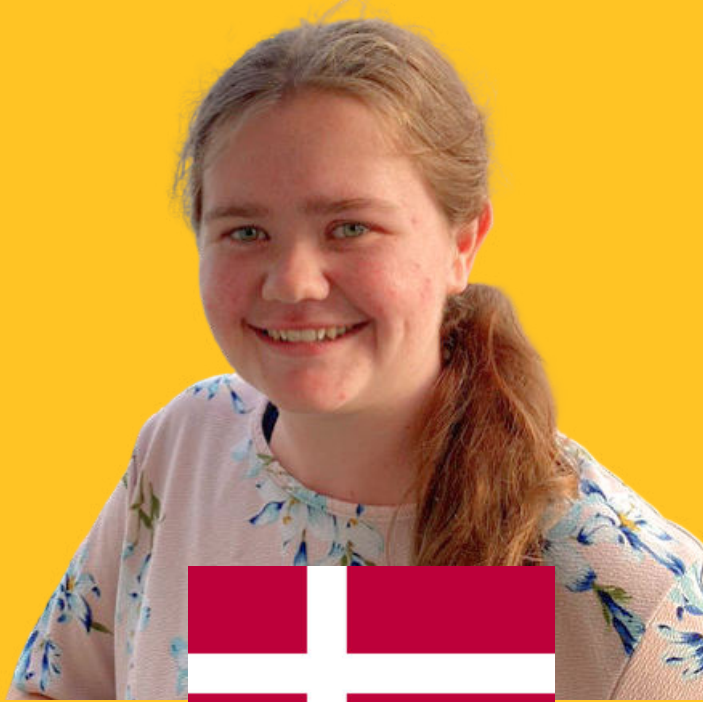
#YEC



# AMERICAS

# AFRICA





EUROPE

ASIA-PACIFIC





# **WHAT MAKES US EXCITED**

**about being in YEC?**



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(she/her) **ALI**  
🇵🇭 Philippines  
Asia-Pacific representative

I am so excited about working with the youths around the globe because we all have different perspectives on making solutions toward problems. I am also excited to generate ideas, discuss and deliberate, work and execute on our action plan, and to give youth voices in the Federation.

@celestinism



**CAMILA** (she/her)  
Brazil 🇧🇷  
Americas representative

My YEC experience began before I was part of the YEC. The experience of flying to a foreign country and being able to learn about the culture, be part of the community, grow and become mature, and be an ambassador of my country was incredible. This is what makes me excited about being in the YEC, because through our work we are able to advocate and guarantee that young people have the same opportunities as we did. And these opportunities are not defined by where the person comes from, instead are available for everyone. Which will also create and bring a sense of community and union between different countries and contexts.



@camilamanique.f

# #YEC



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

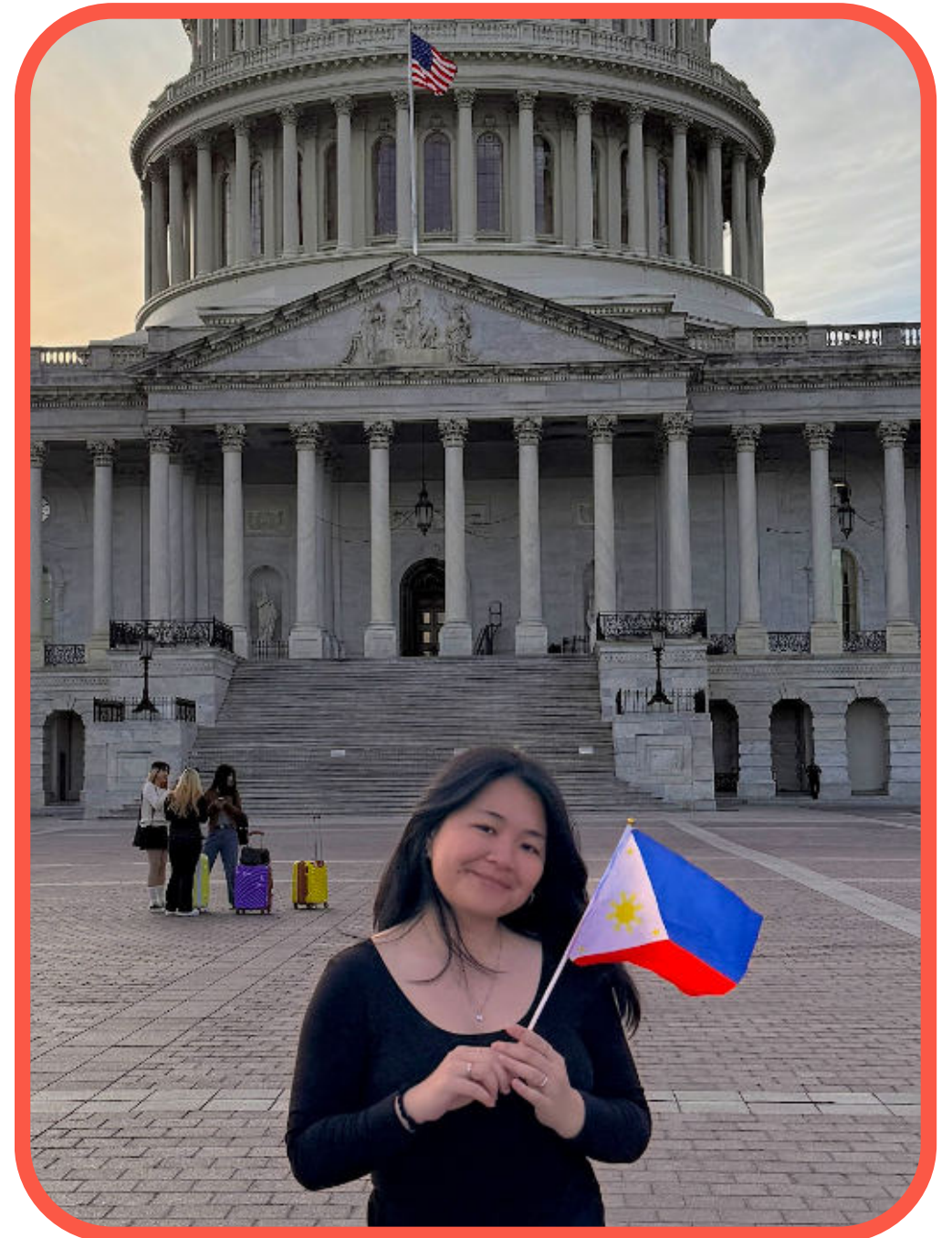
(she/her) **COR**

 **Philippines**

Asia-Pacific representative

I look forward to utilizing IVS to further Youth Engagement, Empowerment, and Development throughout the Asia-Pacific region. I also look forward to working with all ICYE organizations and institutes to promote Volunteer Service for global solidarity and peace.

@ccoorrrrr  
@cor.encabo



**HEIDI** (she/her)

**Mozambique** 

Africa representative

The first time was that I got involved with ICYE it was because I had a chance to do my volunteer year in the north of Germany and I got this opportunity to meet many different cultures. The exciting part is that it is so wonderful to meet new people new friends even new family. So for me YEC is a big international family that I have

# #YEC



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(she/her) **LUCIE**  
🇨🇭 **Switzerland**  
Europe representative

I find the youth committee approach very interesting. We discussed this during GA 2023. It's a great opportunity and a helping hand to take part in this kind of committee, which gives you a direct entry into the international world. Finally, I think that my investment, however small, in the YEC allows me to stay connected with the Federation, to better understand the issues facing the world and, thus, do my job as sending coordinator more effectively.



**MARCELA** (she/her)  
**Costa Rica** 🇨🇷  
Americas representative

I am excited about the possibility of amplifying the voices of volunteers from all over the world to enhance the volunteer experience for generations to come, always promoting a decolonizing discourse.



@marce\_fallas

# #YEC



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(she/her) **MELANIE**  
 **Mozambique**  
Africa representative

My YEC experience began before I was part of the YEC. The experience of flying to a foreign country and being able to learn about the culture, be part of the community, grow and become mature, and be an ambassador of my country was incredible. This is what makes me excited about being in the YEC because through our work we are able to advocate and guarantee that young people have the same opportunities as we did. These opportunities are not defined by where the person comes from, instead are available for everyone, which will also create and bring a sense of community and union between different countries and contexts.



**METTE** (she/her)  
**Denmark**   
Europe representative

I'm really excited to be part of the Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) because it allows young people like us to influence and shape the future of the ICYE organization.

# #YEC



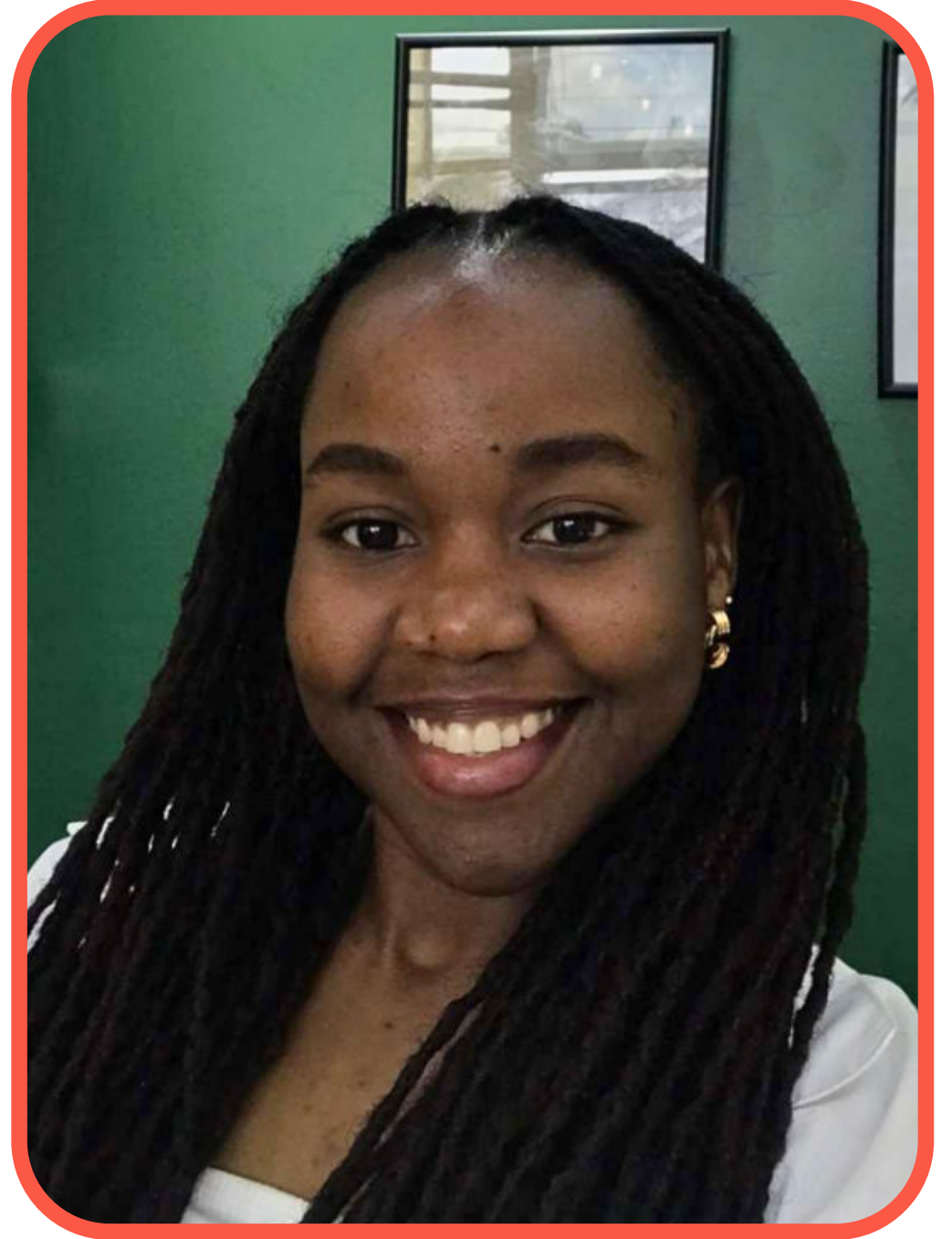
# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(she/her) **MYRA**  
🇰🇪 Kenya  
Africa representative

The young, vibrant, creative, and outgoing people I work with inspire me. Together, we have the incredible opportunity to be a driving force for change and make a meaningful impact.

@Myra\_dorcile



**NICOLE** (she/her)  
Ecuador 🇪🇨  
Americas representative

Being part of YEC has been an opportunity for personal growth. Working with this multicultural and multidisciplinary team fills me with different ways of thinking and working.



@nicolat98

# #YEC



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(she/her) **NOUR**  
Morocco  
Africa representative

My favorite aspect of being in the Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) is the chance to collaborate with youth from diverse backgrounds who share similar values, as we work together to drive meaningful change. It's also really important for me to share my own experiences and learn from others, as we work to uplift youth voices and promote inclusivity in the international volunteering community.

I'm motivated to join the Volunteer Impact Goal because I want to help make volunteering more meaningful for both volunteers and the communities they work with. I also care deeply about the Decolonise Goal, as it's important to me to challenge old power dynamics and ensure that volunteering is based on equal and respectful partnerships.

@hodafares\_nour



**OMAR** (he/him)  
Mexico  
Americas representative

It will always make me excited to connect with people and see they have same ideals as me and push for a change with the age not being a factor of matter



@ommarommi

# #YEC



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

## SOPHIE

 Germany

Europe representative

Especially us – we are young adults coming from completely different backgrounds, each one of us bringing in their very own experiences, perspectives, points of criticism, creative ideas...

We are having quite a great group dynamic as we all follow the same goal and are motivated to make a change together, not leaving anyone behind. At the same time, it is so important to never stop challenging your own worldview and perspectives and instead staying open to challenging ideas. Being surrounded by other young volunteers who are experiencing the world from a completely different perspective and discussing those views makes me excited to keep broadening my own horizons.

sophie\_bdr04



## STEPHAN (he/him)

Austria 

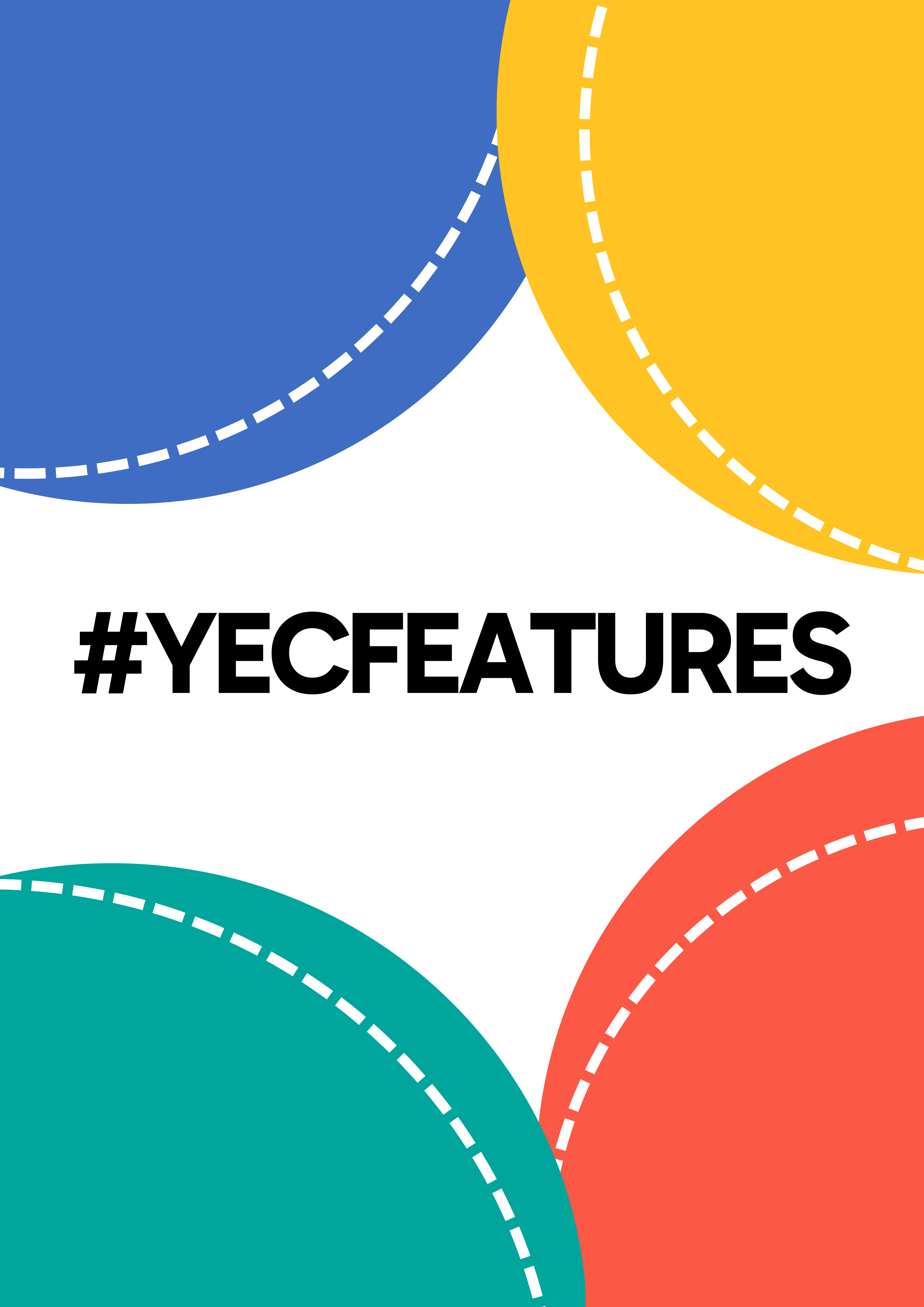
Europe representative

I'm excited to see how the Federation is going to incorporate us and the voice of the Youth in the ICYE process, and I'm ready to help along the way.



@stephanjgruber

# #YEC



**#YECFEATURES**

## The YEC Charter – A Milestone for Youth Empowerment

*Defining a New Era of Youth Leadership*

**T**he Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) is thrilled to announce the completion of its very first Charter—a monumental step in our journey to strengthen youth engagement within the ICYE Federation! Our Charter stands as a testament to the values, aspirations, and shared vision that unite us as a committee and as changemakers.

Our Charter represents more than just a set of guidelines. It is a powerful declaration of our belief in the transformative power of young voices to shape a better world. It provides a solid foundation for the YEC's work, offering clarity and transparency in how we operate, make decisions, and achieve our goals. With its focus on inclusivity, diversity, and collaboration, the Charter ensures that every member has a voice, and every idea has a chance to flourish.

Our core values—equality, respect, and mutual support—are woven throughout this Charter. These principles are not just ideals; they are the very heartbeat of the YEC. They guide us in creating a space where young leaders from all walks of life can work together to create meaningful and lasting change.

For future members, the creation of a Charter is an enduring gift. It provides direction, preserves the successes of the past, and opens doors for innovation. It's a beacon of continuity and an invitation to dream bigger, act bolder, and build a future where youth leadership knows no limits.

The YEC Charter is not just a milestone—it's the beginning of an exciting new chapter. We look forward to sharing more details about the YEC Charter as soon as it is ready for public release, ensuring everyone can engage with and benefit from this exciting milestone.

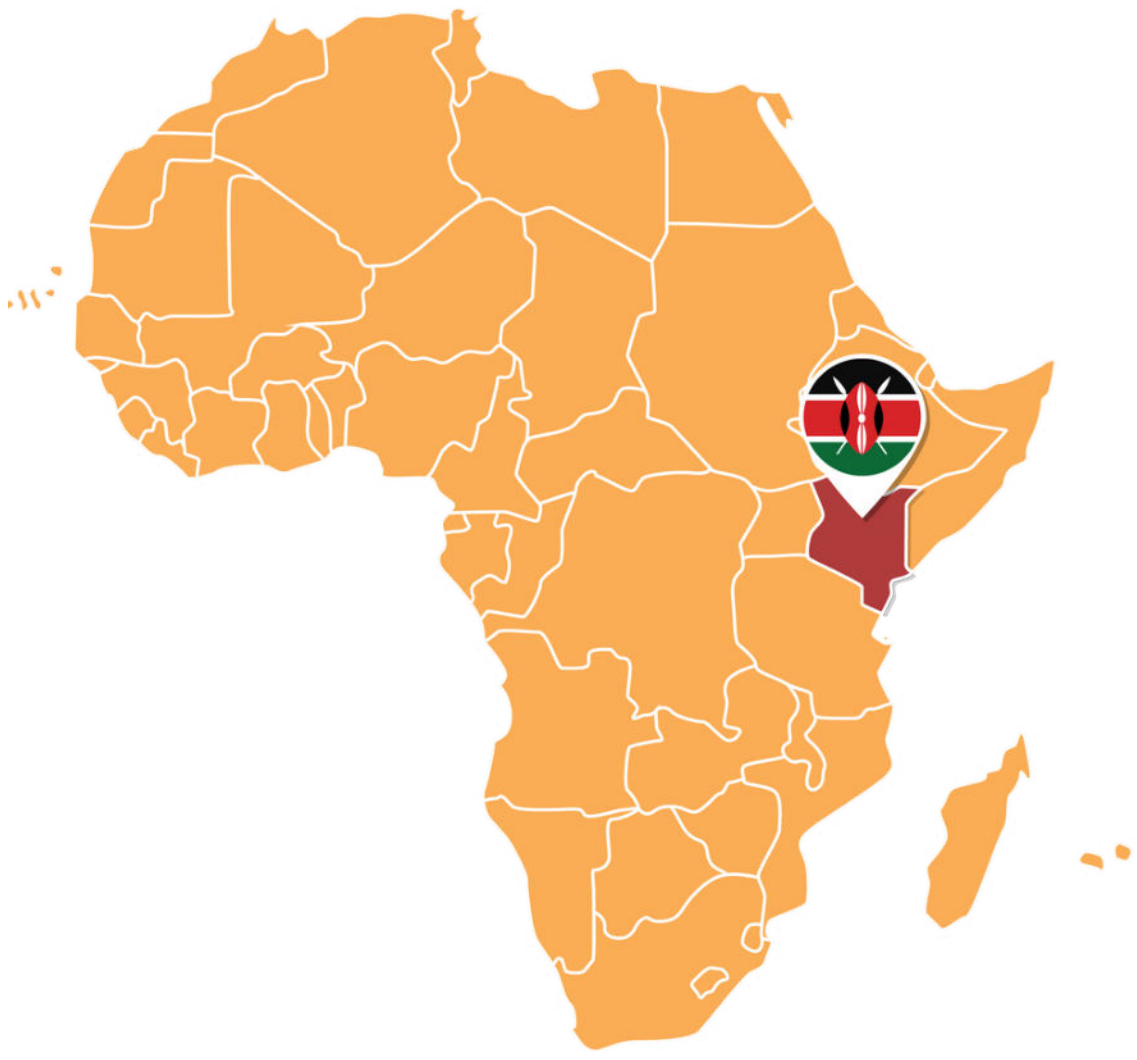
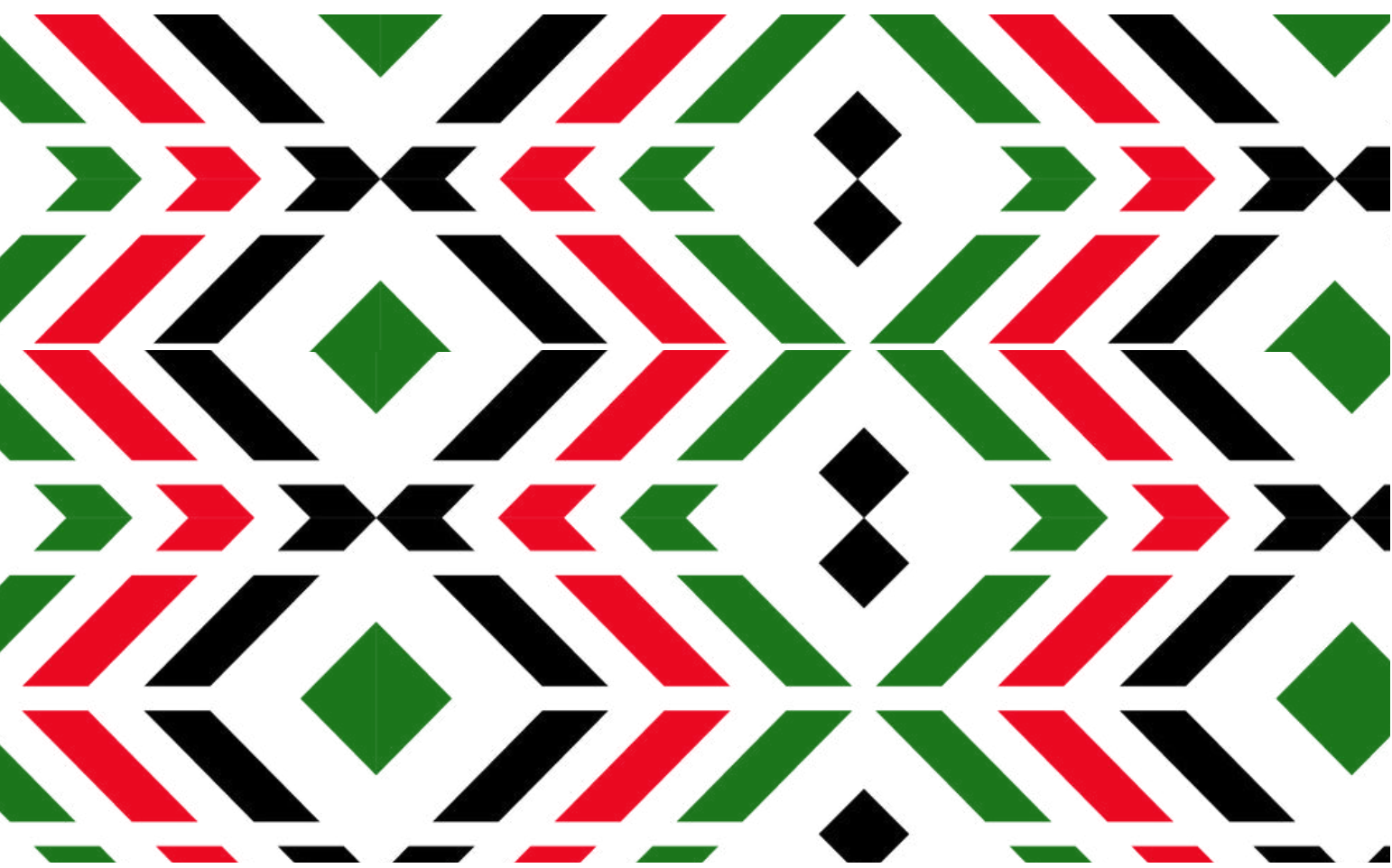
Stay tuned for what's next and together, we're ready to make history!

*For the YEC –  
Stephan J. Gruber (MEC)*



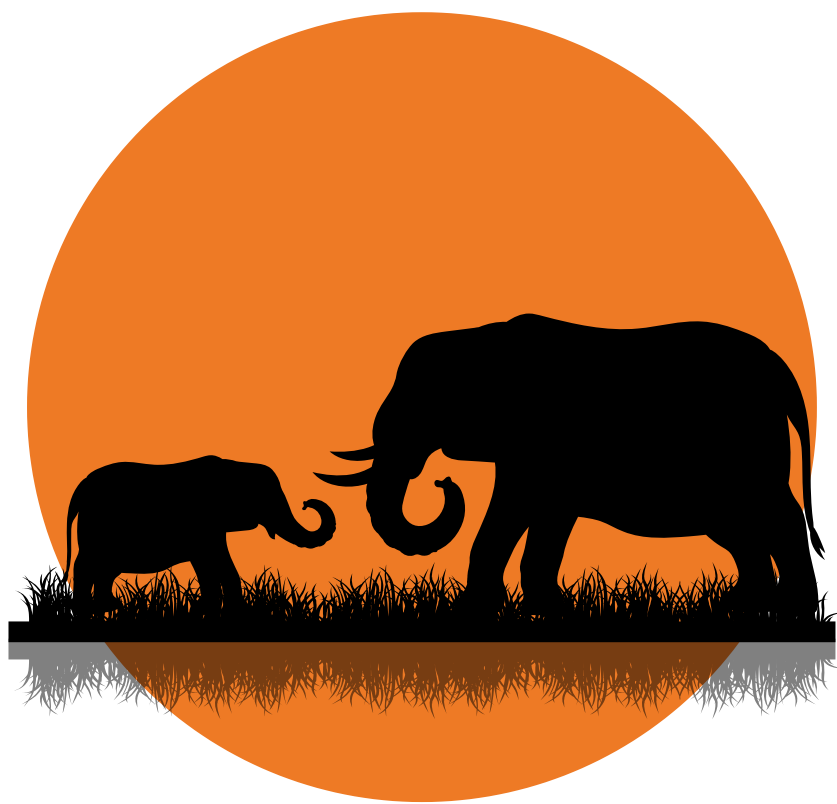
# Nairobi, Kenya

#YECfeatures



# Nairobi, Kenya

#YECfeatures



## ICYE's Historic Nairobi Meeting:

*A Bold Step Toward Decolonizing Volunteerism and Shaping  
an Inclusive, Global Future*

Last August 26-30, 2024, the Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) of the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) convened in Nairobi, Kenya, for a groundbreaking and historic face-to-face meeting. This was the first time youth representatives from ICYE's global network gathered in person, marking a significant moment in fostering intercultural dialogue, collaboration, and action. The meeting provided a unique opportunity to reflect on the organization's goals and challenges, particularly regarding decolonizing volunteerism, creating a more inclusive and sustainable volunteering framework, and creating a global action plan that could shape the future of volunteering worldwide.

A significant outcome of the in-person meeting was the development of YEC's action plan. This plan, which will guide the work of the committee in the coming years, is not just a list of objectives; it is a roadmap for future action. It outlines the key goals the YEC hopes to achieve, including improving youth engagement, increasing diversity in volunteering, addressing global inequality in the sector, and decolonizing the volunteering narrative. The action plan emphasizes collaboration across national committees and commits to ongoing efforts in making volunteering more inclusive and equitable. This initiative was particularly important for ensuring that the ICYE Federation remains a progressive and dynamic force in global volunteering.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the networking event, which brought together a variety of NGOs and organizations based in Kenya. This was an opportunity for the YEC members to meet local leaders and learn firsthand about the community-driven efforts in Nairobi. The Kenyan leaders also refined the YEC's Action Plan. Attendees actively contributed through discussions and feedback, ensuring inclusivity. Suggestions were incorporated, and YEC engaged with specific working groups on the action plan goals.

The key takeaway from the networking event was the value of international cooperation. It was clear that while the challenges may be global, the solutions are often local. The exchange of knowledge between the global YEC network and local Kenyan organizations demonstrated the power of collaboration across borders. It also highlighted the mutual benefits of volunteering—not just for the volunteers, but also for the communities they serve.

# #YECfeatures

## ICYE'S HISTORIC NAIROBI MEETING:

In almost a week of meetings, YEC evaluated that assessing the current state of volunteering within the ICYE network is needed for an inclusive approach. The discussions on gender inequality in volunteering were particularly eye-opening, with volunteers identifying how gendered expectations and biases affect the types of volunteering roles and experiences available. This, combined with reflections on colonialism's lingering effects, pushed the YEC to rethink how the narrative of volunteering should be presented and experienced.

The meeting in Nairobi was a powerful and transformative experience for the YEC. It was not just an opportunity for dialogue, but a chance to build stronger connections, share best practices, and develop an action plan that will drive positive change in the global volunteering landscape. By combining reflection, discussion, and collaboration, the YEC took a major step toward shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable future for volunteerism worldwide. YEC was able to lay the foundation for a forward-thinking and inclusive action plan, ready to inspire positive change within the ICYE Federation and beyond.

*Ali, ICYE Philippines/GIED*

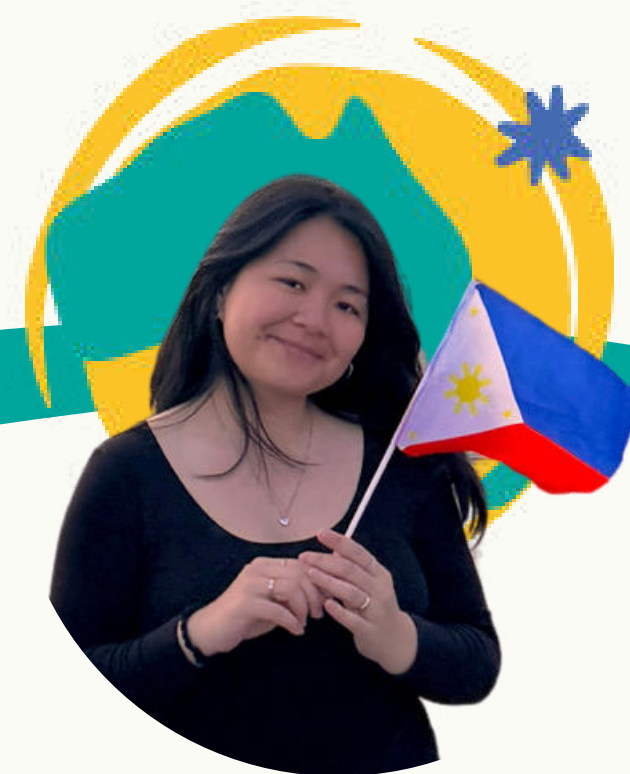




# **YEC VOICES**

# Confronting Colonial Shadows for Global Solidarity

Cor, ICYE Philippines/GIED



Have you ever wondered what it meant when volunteering programs (which foster global solidarity) reflect underlying colonial hierarchies? How about the unintentional creation of absurd generalizations and stereotypes?

Last Nov. 21, 2024, in celebration of ICYE's 75th anniversary, members from the Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) of the ICYE Federation attended an online dialogue on *Volunteering and Intercultural Understanding: Decolonized Approach to Global Engagement*. As a participant and co-facilitator for the first schedule of the online dialogue, I had the opportunity to interact with diverse individuals during the break-out sessions. Assigned in break-out room 2, I co-facilitated dialogues focused on decolonizing volunteer perspectives... and what an interesting AND uncomfortable experience it was!! I got to learn from other people's encounters and thoughts on colonial structures in volunteerism, as well as shared my thoughts and experiences, too. In the end, it was surprising to know that despite our differences in age, gender, nationality, and position, we all have our fair share of experiences on the effects of colonialism.

As I reflect on the event, I realize how colonial legacies have historically defined international volunteering and that dismantling and redefining international

volunteering allows everyone to grasp a future where IVS embodies and reflects genuine global solidarity. This is the part where we, the Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) of ICYE, hope to come into the picture.

Composed of young people from diverse regions around the world, YEC is a wonderful avenue and starting point for young people to challenge traditional narratives, advocate for inclusive practices, and shift the IVS paradigm of dominance and supremacy to that of partnership and solidarity. We firmly believe that young people are crucial in ensuring that IVS remains relevant and responsive to the needs of communities, and we see it as our goal to create an enabling environment for young people to develop their skills, take on leadership roles, and actively participate in decision-making processes that shape the future of international volunteering - such as taking part in this decolonizing advocacy.

Indeed, reimagining IVS requires people (especially the youth) to confront uncomfortable truths about our colonial past; however, it is but a necessary step towards genuine solidarity and a more equitable and inclusive future.

## #YECvoices



# The YEC Action Plan

Melanie, ICYE Mozambique  
Sophie, ICYE Germany

Our YEC action plan is the highlight and result of the first meeting in person in Nairobi - Kenya in, in August 2024. It is a proof of our determination and firm commitment to ensure active participation, representation, and engagement of youth in structures, processes, and decision making.

Our main goal is to influence and inspire more young people to take action, by participating in multiple ways and at different levels in volunteering, decision-making, and taking responsibility for shaping our future, contributing to a more peaceful and sustainable world.

The action plan provides the YEC a guideline, a roadmap for the next year(s) and consists of the very different perspectives coming together in the YEC. But more than this, it is proof of our determination and firm commitment to sustainable, inclusive and diverse volunteering.

In general, it includes three main objectives:

**Engaging more young people before, during and after their volunteering:** As former and current volunteers, we are concerned about the tendency that less young adults decide to volunteer with high-quality programmes abroad, and see the challenge of keeping them engaged in the ICYE federation afterwards. In order to achieve this, we believe

it is important to include young adults' voices when the application formats, expectations and preparation as well as possible homecoming-camps are involved.

What we intend as a long term goal is creating a global ICYE alumni network as a means for promoting global citizenship and integrating volunteers in local structures.

**Ensure the active participation and engagement of youth at different levels of the ICYE Federation:** To us it is crucial to not only develop additional projects, but to be part of the structures of the federation. We believe in the power of mutual learning processes between more experienced members in the Federation and younger volunteers who are still very connected to their experience. Therefore, our aim is to actively participate in sub-committees of the Federation, to have a voice there and to participate in decision-making.

We are convinced that, uniting different perspectives, the vision of ICYE will be carried forward in a powerful way.

**Decolonise the narrative and language on volunteering in the ICYE Federation:** YEC members are participating in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) sub-committee. We are trying to always be

# #YECvoices

# The YEC Action Plan

*Melanie, ICYE Mozambique*  
*Sophie, ICYE Germany*



attentive to the narrative and language in our internal and external communication. As volunteers from different parts of the world, we experience in our daily work, in meeting and travelling opportunities and in requisites for volunteering, the injustices present in volunteering.

This is why this goal matters to us.

# #YECvoices



# **YEC ACTION PLAN**



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

## THE YEC ACTION PLAN

### *Definition & Goals*

**Definition:** An active participation, representation, and engagement of youth in structures, processes and decision making.

**Importance:**

- To give new ideas and perspectives on matters of youth for the development of the Federation.
- To contribute to mutual learning between youth and communities.

**Overarching goals:**

To influence and inspire more young people to take action, by participating in multiple ways and at different levels in volunteering, decision-making, and taking responsibility for shaping our future, contributing to a more peaceful and sustainable world.

### Goal 1: Engage young people before, during, and after their volunteering abroad

- Make international standard format to identify qualified volunteering candidates, including mandatory interviews
- Ensure that high quality host projects are in place
- Inform volunteers on what to expect about host projects and family
- Encourage volunteers to have reasonable expectations and to communicate them.
- Organize a homecoming camp.
- Create an alumni network.

# #YEC



# ICYE

• YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

## Goal 2: Ensure the active participation and engagement of youth at different levels of the ICYE Federation.

- Have an influence on the current work of the Federation Sub-Committees
- International Office: Projects, Communication, Fundraising
- Have an influence on the decision making in the Federation General Assembly 2025
- Motion to give YEC a decision making role

## Goal 3: Decolonise the narrative and language on volunteering in the ICYE Federation

- To actively participate in the ICYE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Sub-Committee with own decolonization interventions
- Be attentive to the narrative and language in our internal and external communication
- Media guidelines
- Social media campaign with decolonize perspective
- Practice awareness

# #YEC



**Special thanks to:**

ICYE Youth Engagement Committee (YEC)  
YEC-Federation Voice subcommittee  
ICYE Federation