

## Working with and for Youth in Insecurity and Conflict – Implementation Phase

# Youth Rights Academy

Geneva, 7-11 July 2025

## Terms of Reference

### Background

In 2021, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Education Above All (EAA), and Silatech initiated a project focused on the human rights of youth: '[Working with and for youth in vulnerable situations including conflict, violence, and insecurity](#)'. This project is aimed at empowering and mobilizing young people to stand up for their human rights by developing and disseminating a toolkit on human rights knowledge, skills, and advocacy.

In the framework of the project, a [Youth Advisory Board](#) composed of 10 young people from different regions was set up. The Youth Advisory Board designed and led a series of online consultations with young people worldwide, which resulted in the development of the [Youth Rights Advocacy Toolkit](#). This toolkit, launched in September 2023 as the [YES: Youth Empowerment System](#) (YES), is currently available in English, Arabic, French, and Spanish.

In February 2024, EAA and OHCHR signed an agreement for the continuation of the project, which is focused on building the capacities of young people, including those in vulnerable situations, using YES. The capacity building activities with youth are carried out in three target countries: Colombia, South Africa and Palestine. YES is also being used by OHCHR Youth Officers working in the regional offices in Central Asia, MENA, the Pacific, West Africa, and the country office in Guatemala in their activities with young people. The project also involves the further development of the YES microsite and the establishment of a [new cohort of the Youth Advisory Board](#) that works in partnership with EAA and OHCHR to guide the implementation of the project.

The final component of the project will be a Youth Rights Academy organized in Geneva in July 2025, aimed at training young advocates and practitioners working on human rights, particularly in the contexts of conflict and insecurity. It would involve recognized experts, including UN entities and mandate-holders and leading civil society organizations as trainers and keynote speakers, as well as peer-to-peer learning. It would explore definitions, concepts, and frameworks related to the human rights of young people while placing the topic in the broader context of related contemporary issues, allowing for capacity-building and knowledge exchange. Furthermore, the academy would empower participants to leverage international human rights mechanisms and processes for their advocacy efforts and equip them with tools to promote human rights in their communities.

## Scope of work

The participants of the Youth Rights Academy will be expected to:

- Actively cooperate with OHCHR and EAA on the logistical aspects related to the organization of travel to Geneva and participation in the academy, including by providing all requested information and documents in an accurate and timely manner.
- Commit to attend all academy sessions, complete given assignments, actively participate in the discussions and extra curricular activities.
- Use knowledge and skills acquired through the academy to design human rights initiatives to be implemented in their communities.
- Stay in touch with EAA and OHCHR to provide reports and updates on the implementation of the said initiatives after completing the academy.

## Composition

The Youth Rights Academy will include young human rights advocates selected based on the criteria outlined below.

Selection criteria:

1. 18-30 years old (as of 7 July 2025).
2. Minimum 2 years of experience in advocating for human rights, including the rights of young people, at local, national, regional, or international level.
3. Provision of a reference letter from a professional or personal contact attesting to the candidate's advocacy and human rights work (template [here](#)).
4. English language proficiency (working level). The Academy will be held exclusively in English, with no interpretation provided.

The organizers are committed to selecting and convening a diverse group of young people with consideration of gender and age balance and from a diverse geographical, ethnic, cultural and educational background. Young people with lived experience of conflict or insecurity and with no or minimal exposure to United Nations and global platforms are particularly encouraged to apply.

In addition to the selected participants, OHCHR-EAA Youth Advisory Board and EAA Youth Advocates will participate in the academy.

## Selection process

OHCHR will release a call to civil society and youth organizations on the OHCHR website and promote it via the social media channels of OHCHR, EAA and partner entities.

In the call, young human rights advocates will be invited to submit their applications using an online form, including general information, a CV, a reference letter, and responses to substantive questions.

From the list of applicants, EAA and OHCHR will select long-listed candidates, and ask them to perform a task (e.g. record a short video or respond in writing to a substantive question). Based on the task performance, EAA and OHCHR will select shortlisted candidates and conduct short interviews with them to select the final participants.

## **Conditions of participation**

The Youth Rights Academy will take place in Geneva from 7 to 11 July 2025 (5 days). The participants will be expected to devote 5 full days (in average, 10-11 hours per day) to the in-person participation in the academy, including the training sessions and the extra curricular activities.

The academy will include youth from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and will be conducted in a spirit of intercultural exchange, cooperation and mutual respect. The participants are expected to think critically about social issues, human rights, and the role of youth in societal change and demonstrate a clear understanding and respect for human rights, diversity, and inclusion, especially for marginalized groups.

Organizers will cover expenses of participants related to their travel and stay in Geneva during the Academy.