



out of COVID-19, the Youth Action Lab followed a somehow similar approach. The CIVICUS Secretariat reviewed and identified the longlisted candidates. The [co-design team](#) met in person to review, shortlist, and then select the first cohort of the YAL. However, in 2021 the conditions were very different, and a new approach was tested:

- The co-design team and the 2020 cohort of the YAL were invited to review and select the 2021 YAL activists from the very beginning. Due to the large number of applications, CIVICUS staff members under 30 were invited to support the longlisting process. The selection committee consisted of 16 people (4 Youth Action Lab 2020 participants, 8 CIVICUS staff, and 4 Co-Design team members).
- Because of the diversity in the selection committee, the CIVICUS youth team ran two orientation meetings over Zoom – one in English and one in Spanish. The purpose was to ensure everyone understood the criteria, asked questions, and minimized individual bias when scoring applications.
- Using the learnings from this experience, the team contributed to the [Guidance note on Volunteerism and Compensation for Young People](#).

Traditionally, in CIVICUS application processes, the Secretariat reviews and selects the best candidates that match the criteria for the respective grant, event, campaign, or project. Since 2018, the CIVICUS Youth team has tried a hybrid approach which involves inviting 3 members of the YAT to, jointly with the Secretariat, review and shortlist the applications. Then, in a 3-day in-person workshop, 2 other YAT members and 6 young activists from other networks made the final selection. This was the case for the [Goalkeepers Youth Action Accelerator](#). In 2020, before the break-

## SURPRISES

- For the first time, the YAT and the YAL did not receive robust applications from the Middle East and North Africa region and very few from Asia. Due to this, the recruitment process had to be extended. The CIVICUS Youth team had to reach out to personal networks, partners, and other youth organisations outside the membership for additional candidates in order to have a representative and diverse cohort.
- 92% of the selected YAT members for the 2021-2022 term had an existing relationship with a CIVICUS member or partner, directly or indirectly.
- The age diversity of applications for the YAT increased, with a significant number of applicants under 25 years old.



## LEARNINGS

- Sustaining the relationships with alumni networks of CIVICUS youth initiatives like YAL 2020, the co-design team, Goalkeepers, and previous YAT has helped the recruitment process to reach outside the CIVICUS membership.
- Online selection processes require more time than in-person meetings because it is impossible to have 6-7 hours straight with the same group of people online deliberating. A 3-day in-person process took 2 weeks to conclude via video calls.
- **Offering a stipend to the members of the Selection Committee was vital** as it indicated that the participatory approach towards selecting Lab participants was not just a tick box exercise. Instead, the stipend suggests that the selection committee members' time is valued and respected.



In the second part of the series, we will dive into what it takes to carry out a successful onboarding process.