

**CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
Youth Advisory Group Terms of Reference (ToR)
November 2012**

About CIVICUS

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (www.civicus.org) is an international alliance of civil society organisations and individuals dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society. Established in 1993, the CIVICUS network currently includes over 1,000 members from more than 100 countries. CIVICUS works in partnership with this wide range of organisations and citizens to implement global, participatory actions aimed at strengthening civil society.

Strengthening youth participation through the CIVICUS alliance

Throughout its existence, CIVICUS has had a long standing commitment to promoting the role of youth participation in the decisions which affect their lives – not only through engaging with youth organisations but also through promoting young people’s participation in global civil society. In particular, by hosting the CIVICUS Youth Assembly since 2007, CIVICUS has been able to bring together some of the world’s most dynamic young activists to network and collaborate, while at the same time strengthening their involvement in the core work of the CIVICUS alliance to strengthen civil society.

In 2010, the CIVICUS Board of Directors decided to start exploring options for a new CIVICUS youth initiative which would further strengthen meaningful youth participation in civil society. At the CIVICUS Youth Assembly in September 2012, momentum to explore the development of a new youth initiative gathered within the CIVICUS alliance. Suggestions included a strong call for the creation of a representative Youth Advisory Group to help guide CIVICUS’ work on youth participation.

Objectives

CIVICUS is now seeking to form a Youth Advisory Group through an open selection process, initiated with a call for applications.

The primary objective of the Youth Advisory Group is to provide strategic, informed advice on how youth participation issues can be better mainstreamed in CIVICUS’ programmes, and on how CIVICUS can develop new activities aimed specifically at strengthening youth participation in civil society.

A secondary objective of the Youth Advisory Group is to support CIVICUS in its outreach, by building new partnerships, securing new resources for scaling up initiatives on youth participation, and recruiting new young members to the CIVICUS alliance.

The expected duration of the Youth Advisory Group’s work is from January 2013 to December 2013, after which its role will be reviewed. During this period, the Youth Advisory Group is expected to play a

key role in establishing, securing resourcing for and ensuring the implementation of a new CIVICUS youth initiative.

Composition

The Youth Advisory Group will be composed of between six and eight youth representatives selected according to criteria provided in the open call for applications.

These criteria will include consideration of (1) gender balance (2) regional and linguistic balance and (3) balance of thematic expertise and networks on issues related to youth participation and civil society.

Should a member of the Youth Advisory Group resign or leave the Group, the secretariat may seek to replace him/her through a similar selection process.

Mandate, roles and responsibilities of the Youth Advisory Group

The primary role of members of the Youth Advisory Group is to provide strategic, informed advice on how youth participation issues can be better mainstreamed in CIVICUS' programmes, and on how CIVICUS can develop new activities aimed specifically at strengthening youth participation in civil society.

The Youth Advisory Group does not therefore hold any decision-making or oversight power, and should be considered an *ad hoc* advisory group convened by the CIVICUS secretariat to strengthen the quality and reach of the alliance's youth programming. All final decisions on youth programming issues will be taken by the CIVICUS secretariat in line with the existing decision-making structures and processes.

The secondary role of members of the Youth Advisory Group is to support CIVICUS in an ambassadorial role, by building new partnerships, securing new resources for scaling up initiatives on youth participation, and recruiting new young members to the CIVICUS alliance.

Aside from such ambassadorial work, members of the Youth Advisory Group will not be expected within the Group's mandate to execute or implement any of CIVICUS' activities.

Early in its work, the Advisory Group members will select a Chairperson for the Youth Advisory Group. The Chairperson will have the additional responsibility of chairing the discussions and monitoring progress of the Youth Advisory Group between discussions.

The Youth Advisory Group will be supported by the CIVICUS secretariat in its work. The CIVICUS secretariat will designate a staff focal point, will provide information and background documents to the Group, and will support the Group's Chair (1) to shape the agenda for each meeting of the Group and (2) monitor progress between meetings. The secretariat will advise on operational issues, be available as a resource, and seek the Group's feedback on specific issues in meetings and by email between meetings. The secretariat will take responsibility for ensuring that the Youth Advisory Group is

sufficiently informed and briefed on CIVICUS programmes to be able to play their advisory and ambassadorial roles properly.

As outlined above, the expected initial duration of the Youth Advisory Group's work is from January to December 2013. During this period, the Youth Advisory Group is expected to play a key role in establishing, resourcing and ensuring the implementation of a new CIVICUS youth initiative. In October to November 2013, the Youth Advisory Group will review the extent to which it has achieved its objectives during the year. The default expectation is that the Youth Advisory Group will conclude its work by the end of December 2013; based on this review, the CIVICUS secretariat will make a decision on any future youth structure beyond December 2013.

Meetings and attendance

- The Youth Advisory Group will ordinarily meet once a month, on the second Tuesday of the month.
- Meetings will take place by phone/Skype.
- The CIVICUS secretariat and Chair of the Youth Advisory Group will be responsible for circulating advance notice of these meetings, along with an agenda and background documents.
- The secretariat will take and circulate short notes of each meeting.
- Meetings will ordinarily last for between 60 and 90 minutes.
- Members of the Youth Advisory Group will be expected to attend all ordinary meetings. In the event that a member does not participate for more than two meetings in a row, the expectation will be that the member should resign and offer his/her place to another applicant.
- Depending on the nature and content of the work as it develops, the Chair may call extraordinary meetings of the Youth Advisory Group.

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