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Engaging Young Professionals in UNAP Membership Toolkit

UNAP Young Professionals (UNAP-YP) is a program that engages UNAP-YP members, typically between 16 and 28 years old, in discussions of international affairs, emphasizing the importance of multilateral cooperation and the United Nations. UNAP-YP distinguishes itself from other young professional programs for international affairs, by focusing on supporting the United Nations through community education and by outreach to legislative representatives. UNAP-YP members work with UNAP chapters and benefit from learning by doing -- managing local events, soliciting speakers, designing fundraising initiatives, introducing chapters to emerging new technologies and social media, and recruiting and engaging volunteer teams.

Introduction

Engaging young professionals can be a challenging task for many organizations. Young professional members can be an asset to UNAP chapters, as they bring enthusiasm, energy, and excitement to our work. They can also be a difficult demographic to recruit and build long term working relationships with. This toolkit offers some helpful tips for creating and sustaining a Young Professional program in your local UNAP chapter.

Benefits of a Young Professionals Program

Develop future leaders for UNAP chapters;

Engage a diverse grassroots membership base and expand UNAP's outreach;

Create opportunities for young professionals to learn about careers and volunteer opportunities in international affairs;

Share experience and knowledge and help the next generation develop leadership, organizational management, and event planning skills;

Network with young professionals, experienced members, and experts in international affairs to achieve common goals, raise awareness, educate, advocate and raise funds for the UN and UNAP's educational and advocacy programs and campaigns.



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UNAP-YP Models

UNAP recommends **two different models** of UNAP-YP organization at the chapter level. **Chapters may opt to follow either model or combine features from both in ways that best suit their local circumstances.**

Model 1

One model that may be followed by chapters is to create a **Young Professionals committee within the chapter structure**. The chapter may elect or designate one or more younger members to serve on the chapter board of directors, whose responsibility is to organize events and programs geared towards young professionals to help attract younger members to the chapter. This model does not have a separate organizational structure and leaves chapters the flexibility to design their own program.

Model 2

Another model that may be followed by large chapters is to develop a more structured Young Professionals program with designated officers, specific responsibilities, and standard procedures. In this model, the UNAP-YP group chair is also a member of the chapter board of directors and coordinates young professional activities, communications and programs in full alignment with the chapter's programming, with content specifically tailored to the goals and interests of the young professionals that comprise the chapter's membership.

The Council of Chapters and Regions Steering Committee Young Professional Representatives

The Council of Chapters and Regions (CCR) operates as part of UNAP, and serves as an advisory council to UNAP staff members. **The CCR Steering Committee's** purpose is to lead and execute the functions of the CCR. UNAP chapters are organized into 11 regions, and each region elects between two and four regional representatives in accordance with the size of the region's membership.

If a region has two representatives, it is recommended that one be a young professional (between the ages of 21 and 40). **If the region has more than two representatives, it is required that at least one be a young professional (between the ages of 21 and 40).**

The CCR Steering Committee regional representatives are the leaders in organizing the chapters of that region. The young professional representative from each region shall be additionally responsible for



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engaging young professionals in the important work of UNAP chapters and for strengthening young professional members' participation in the chapter network. 3

How to Build a UNAP Young Professionals Program

UNAP Young Professionals is an integral part of local UNAP chapters, developing the next generation of UNAP leaders. Through careful and constructive guidance from UNAP chapter leaders, young professionals are able to build practical skills that will enhance their professional development as well as contribute to U.S. leadership in the important work of the UN.

Building the right team

A core group of three to five people is a great starting point. Find a few interested people, either within the chapter or externally. Finding the right people for the Young Professionals committee (YP committee) is a crucial step in the process of building a Young Professionals program.

Develop a structure within the committee that delegates roles and responsibilities, for example, the chair, treasurer and secretary.

Make sure that the members of the YP committee are dedicated to the success of the committee (i.e., they are dependable, trustworthy and will volunteer time to the committee/chapter.)

Recruit people with varying skill-sets, (e.g. communications, event planning and advocacy.)

Determine each committee member's individual interests and use it to benefit the committee. Make sure to cultivate an open and encouraging environment for members to express and develop ideas and programs.

Use UNAP's mission to shape the identity and activities of the YP program.

Schedule regular meetings with the team members.

Building Young Professional Leadership and Character

A strong Young Professionals program must motivate, recognize, inspire and reward. Always reward individuals for taking initiative, going the extra mile and or being a team player, etc.

Create a system that simultaneously promotes professional and personal development.



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Make sure to cultivate individual strengths and provide a platform for individuals to obtain skills.

Provide opportunities for young professionals to own projects and/or tasks and celebrate successes.

Publicly recognize success. Write an article about the person/team in the chapter's newsletter and or other publications.

Create programs to develop and strengthen leadership skills. Have specific workshops for the young professionals within the chapter.

Experienced professionals should engage young professionals in a mentorship capacity.

Building Programs for the Young Professionals

In consultation with chapter leadership, the YP Committee should develop programs that are in line with UNAP's mission and the chapter's agenda. An excellent place to start is with UNA/UNF campaigns such as Girl Up, Nothing But Nets, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves and Global Classrooms. Tools and information on how to engage in these campaigns can be found on the UN Foundation's website under campaigns.

YP programs should focus on one or all of the following: the mission of UNAP, a membership building strategy, chapter visibility and or viability. Young professionals should create blogs as part of an aggressive public relations strategy for the campaign. Utilizing the internet in such forums as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Idealist and other social networking sites, young professionals can advance their chapter's scope and reach to communicate the message and grow membership.

A concerted effort should be made to attract young professionals in the community. One way of doing this is by hosting events that are geared toward their interests, such as career fairs. Also, plan events around young professionals' interests. Details on event planning can be found on UNAP's website under membership tools.

Young professionals should partner with like minded organizations and young professionals groups.

Through the chapter, the YP Committee should work with the Membership Team to implement various campaigns and advocacy initiatives. Developing an advocacy agenda from the young professional's perspective is a great way of connecting the youth demographic with UNAP's national Advocacy Agenda.

The YP Committee should ask young professional members how they want to be engaged and what types of programs and activities interest them.



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With support from the Membership Team, YP Committees should coordinate regionally to share best practices and obtain resources that will strengthen individual committees and chapters.

For additional resources on advocacy, best practice exercises, comprehensive tools and guides on implementation of projects and an in-depth instructions on how the strengthen young professionals activities and branding, please visit www.una.org.pk.

