

Human Rights Education for Youth Programme (HEY)

Introducing HEY

HEY (Human Rights Education for Youth) is a Programme by the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe, commonly known as the North South Centre (NSC). HEY is designed to strengthen young people's capacities to act for human rights, by raising their knowledge and understanding of European standards and other international legal frameworks for human rights protection, such as specific United Nations, League of Arab States and African Union treaties, conventions, protocols and charters.

The programme comprises a series of online courses on human rights and the rule of law, covering topics that have been identified as relevant and emerging issues for young people. The courses are thematically linked to Council of Europe legal instruments, particularly conventions, and are delivered internationally to young tutors, who then build the capacity of other young people in their regions or countries. The programme includes a dedicated training process for tutors to ensure national courses are translated and adapted to regional and national realities. The online courses are specifically targeted at young people (18–30 years old) from the geographical areas in which the NSC is active: NSC member states, Africa and the Middle East. ¹

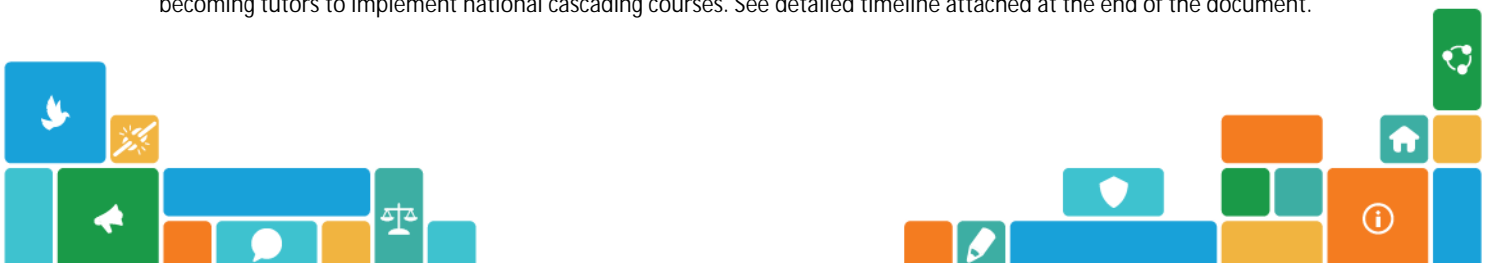
HEY courses draw upon existing [HELP \(Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals\)](#) courses, which are adapted to the target audience, translated and contextualised as needed. The selection of HEY themes results from consultations with young people involved in the work of the NSC, as well as the regular collaboration with national authorities and civil society representatives in the regions where the Centre operates, as well as with its partners.

The diversity of themes covered by HEY, combined with the adaptability offered by this Programme to target specific regions or countries, makes it an instrument flexible enough to address the NSC priorities, as well as the needs and demands of partners in those regions. HEY also aligns with the priorities of other relevant stakeholders and potential donors in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, facilitating meaningful collaborations and mutual support to maximise impact.

With the potential to train a substantial number of young people with the appropriate resources, HEY aims to reach at least 4,500 young people in its first phase². The availability of funding will determine the development path and calendar of specific HEY courses, their implementation in specific regions or countries, and the final outreach.

¹ As some of the content of the courses exists already in Spanish, a future development towards implementation in Latin America can also be envisaged.

² Between 2025-2027 at least 300 young people will be trained in a series of tutored courses, with at least 200 of which becoming tutors to implement national cascading courses. See detailed timeline attached at the end of the document.



HEY is for youth

HEY is designed for young people from Africa, the Middle East, and Europe of very diverse profiles.

NSC partner youth organisations in the target countries will be instrumental in identifying and promoting potential participants and future tutors.

This initiative will enable young people to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to integrate human rights into their actions, thereby strengthening their protection within their communities. The programme will also support civil society in addressing concrete and emerging issues in the youth sector, such as data protection, fighting corruption, and tackling climate change. These issues are among the priorities of young Africans, according to a [survey on African youth](#) conducted in 2024. A consultation with civil society representatives from the Southern Mediterranean region³ also highlighted interest in data protection and the fight against corruption, which will be addressed by HEY.

In the future, HEY also has the potential to align more closely with formal education institutions, particularly universities.

Why HEY?

To accompany the implementation of the [Reykjavik Declaration](#), the [NSC's Strategy 2024-2027](#) supports the strengthening of the Council of Europe's external projection, with a focus on raising young people's knowledge of European and international standards in the areas of human rights and the rule of law. The Reykjavik Declaration also calls for a youth perspective in the work of the Council of Europe.

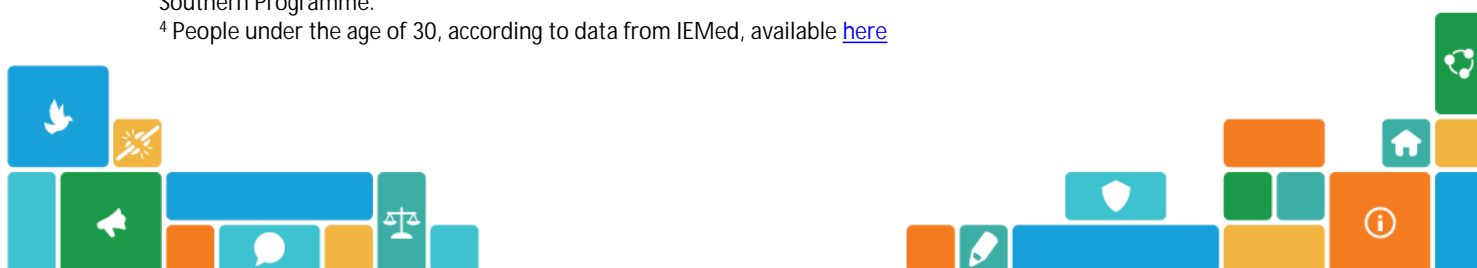
Furthermore, the [report on the implementation of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship \(EDC\) and Human Rights Education \(HRE\)](#), published in 2022, highlights the need for European and international organisations to work in cooperation with national bodies on the local dimension of EDC/HRE through partnerships with local authorities and organisations.

Since 2011, the [Policy of the Council of Europe towards neighbouring regions](#) has succeeded in extending the common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region. HEY reinforces this work by engaging youth from this region, which represents 50% of the population⁴, in the promotion of universal values. The latter is a pre-requisite to ensure the impact and sustainability of the achievements of the Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy and to guarantee democratic reforms in the longer term.

Engaging young people is also crucial in Africa. Africa, with the world's youngest population—over 60% of its citizens are under 25— and where the young population is in constant

³ Consultation with participants in the Euro-Med Civil Society Laboratory to support youth participation in democratic reforms in the Southern Mediterranean, held on 13 and 14 March 2023, during the launch event for the fifth phase of the Southern Programme.

⁴ People under the age of 30, according to data from IEMed, available [here](#)



growth⁵, is a continent of immense potential. By 2035, the continent's youth will make up the majority of the world's workforce.

The HEY Programme aligns with the African Union's [Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want](#) and its aspiration for *An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law*, as well as the [1 Million Next Level initiative](#), particularly through its efforts to promote youth leadership. It also aligns with the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals](#) and their strong focus on young people.

A combination of strengths

HEY is a unique offer that establishes the needed synergies between the expertise of the Council of Europe, based on its conventions and standards and:

- ❖ **The North-South approach of the NSC and its experience with young people and Global Education.** As a North-South platform for dialogue with a mission to promote the universal values of the Council of Europe beyond the European continent, the NSC has developed expertise in Global Education and relies on a solid network of youth organisations active in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The non-formal education activities carried out by the NSC, through initiatives such as the Mediterranean and African Youth Universities, and more recently the [Rule of Law Youth Network \(RoLYN\)](#), help to build the capacities of young people in different parts of the world of the universal values and principles of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.
- ❖ **The proven and successful HELP methodology** has been enhancing the capacity of judges, lawyers and prosecutors to apply European human rights standards in their daily work in all 46 Council of Europe member states and beyond for over 20 years. This is achieved through HELP's online courses, which cover a wide range of human rights topics. The HELP Programme has already produced meaningful results in the Southern Mediterranean region, as evidenced by the significant increase in users and tutors. This will also contribute to raising awareness of the HEY project in the region. Several courses are also available in Arabic, which will benefit the development of the HEY adaptations.
- ❖ **The long and successful history of the Council of Europe in building capacity of young people and organised civil society on Human Rights** in its member states, notably through the work of the Youth Sector, particularly through their [Human Rights Education Youth Programme](#), with renowned tools such as Compass.

HEY objectives

HEY aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

Objective 1 -To empower young people with knowledge and skills to promote human rights and rule of law: to provide accessible, youth-oriented online courses that equip young people with the knowledge to engage with human rights and rule of law, having as reference European standards and other international and regional legal frameworks for human rights protection.

⁵ According to data from the [UN World Population Prospects in 2024](#)



Objective 2 – To strengthen youth civil society: to promote youth leadership and develop young people's ability to actively contribute to their communities and support other young people in the fields of human rights and the rule of law.

Objective 3 – To increase collaboration: between young people within and across regions, and between young people and legal practitioners, promoting dialogue and exchanges in issues of common interest related to human rights and rule of law.

Methodology

For each of the selected themes, the available resources (particularly the topical HELP courses) will be adapted for a young audience using engaging, interactive pedagogy based on NSC expertise in global education and NSC and Council of Europe experience in youth cooperation. Participants who successfully complete 80% of the course will receive a certificate that will enable them to apply for the specific training programme for young tutors. This guarantees a cascade of national courses that will be translated and adapted to regional and national realities.

HEY builds upon the strong foundation of the HELP Programme, benefiting from its high-quality pedagogical content, as well as the expertise and experience of certified tutors, who will also be involved in adapting and delivering HEY courses. Most existing courses cover topics of interest to young people and can be adapted for a young audience. The HEY methodology combines the resources, methods and expertise developed with legal professionals in HELP with the experience and working methodology of the NSC. HEY courses are hosted and accessible on the HELP platform, allowing for flexibility in responding to specific needs as the number of courses available increases and new content is added.

The HEY courses are designed for online delivery. Prospective tutors first complete an online course themselves, after which they receive in-person training. Once trained, tutors deliver the courses in their own countries or regions, incorporating translations and making adaptations as necessary to tailor the sessions to local needs.

The HEY methodology is based on the following steps for each course:

1. A need for the course is identified through inclusive and participatory consultations with youth organisations, partners, and/or national authorities.
2. The course is created, by adapting a pre-existing HELP course with an international perspective and making it accessible and attractive to young people. This is done by a diverse expert working group including other international and regional organisations, to ensure quality results and balanced perspectives.
3. A call for participants is launched by the NSC and its partners.
4. Participants successfully completing the online thematic course obtain an official certification and are invited to proceed with a second phase of training to become tutors.
5. The participants attend a training for tutors held in the framework of the Youth Universities of the NSC., focusing on the HEY/HELP methodology and technical delivery, becoming certified HEY tutors.



6. Each tutored course is translated and adapted for national delivery, including relevant local documentation like national or regional convention⁶.
7. Certified HEY tutors implement the adapted courses at national level, supported by senior tutors and the NSC secretariat. An inter-regional network of certified tutors and learners will increasingly become stronger and will be able to engage with other young people and among themselves at NSC activities.

Partnerships and coordination

Partnerships are at the core of the HEY Programme, starting with the collaboration with stakeholders in the target regions, who support the identification of themes and priorities for meaningful courses.

To maximise the Programme's dissemination and implementation, HEY also establishes partnerships with regional and international organisations, regional youth platforms (e.g. the Pan African Youth Union and the Network of International Youth Organisations in Africa), NGOs, national cooperation initiatives, and other relevant actors that share the same values and pursue similar objectives. These partnerships optimise the efficiency and outreach of the HEY programme and can be created at programme level or for specific courses. Partnerships and contributions to the HEY Programme will be clearly visible and agreed on a case-by-case basis.

The HEY Programme is implemented alongside other human rights initiatives.

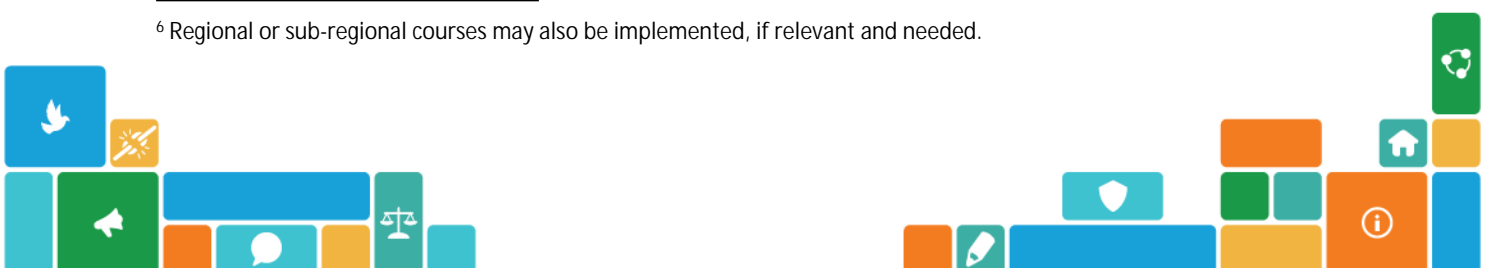
Budget

The estimated budget for phase I of the Programme is around €1.5 million.

With the potential of achieving more with the appropriate resources, this initial budget would allow to develop at least 10 tutored courses, 6 trainings of tutors and 50 national courses.

The estimated amount for the full adaptation of one training course, including residential Training of Tutors and national cascade courses is 90K with a minimum ultimate outreach of 500 people per edition.

⁶ Regional or sub-regional courses may also be implemented, if relevant and needed.



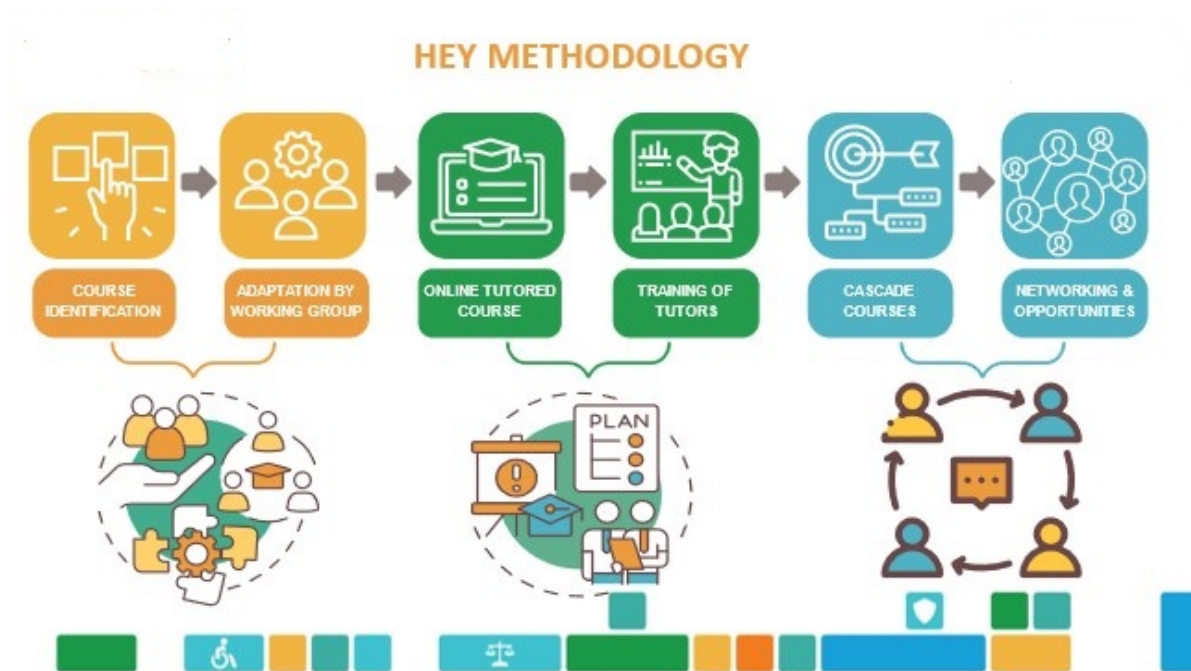
ANNEX I – HEY TIMELINE – phase I (2024-2027)

The schedule presented below is tentative and covers the first phase of implementation of the HEY Programme, corresponding to the implementation period of the NSC medium-term strategy. Developing further capacity-building to support the follow-up by participants is also envisaged at a later stage. The content and development path will depend on resources available. Potential donors' priorities will also contribute to determine the number and themes of courses prepared before the end of 2027.

2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the HEY Programme to the NSC Executive Committee (22 October 2024). - Official launch of the HEY Programme in the context of the Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, in Estoril (November 2024).
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of five online tutored courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Intercultural and interreligious dialogue o Media and information literacy o Values-based sport o Data protection and the right to privacy o Environment Organisation of two tutor training courses (June and September 2025)
2026 and 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of HEY courses developed in 2025 - Development of at least two HEY courses (artificial intelligence and business and human rights) - Organisation of two tutor training courses (June and September 2025) - Launch of the courses by the young tutors



ANNEX 2 – HEY Methodology



ANNEX III – Target outreach per course/per linguistic version

