



The Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe

Youth Programme Proposal 2024-2025

Engaging, Connecting and Empowering Youth Through Participation

Overview:

Youth participation and active citizenship are essential for democratic societies. Engaging young people in political and social processes enriches decision-making with their unique perspectives.

However, challenges such as socio-economic barriers and varying cultural contexts must be addressed to ensure genuine involvement. The CINGO Youth Program aims to engage, connect, and empower young people, fostering active citizenship and democratic participation.

Youth involvement strengthens democratic institutions, promotes human rights, and contributes to a vibrant civil society. It ensures diverse perspectives in governance, enhances the legitimacy of democratic processes, and keeps legal frameworks responsive to societal issues. Empowering young people does foster a sense of belonging and commitment to democratic values. Thus, the CINGO Youth Program is crucial in promoting active citizenship, enhancing democratic engagement, and safeguarding human rights by meaningfully including youth in societal development.

Why Does CINGO Need a Youth Program?

The Council of Europe INGO Conference (CINGO) needs a Youth Program to foster active citizenship and democratic engagement among young people. Youth participation is essential for vibrant democratic societies as it ensures diverse perspectives in decision-making, enhances the legitimacy of democratic institutions, and promotes human rights.

Engaging young people in civic activities and decision-making processes not only strengthens democratic institutions but also fosters a culture of active citizenship. The CINGO Youth Program aims to overcome challenges such as socio-economic barriers and varying cultural contexts to ensure genuine youth involvement in decision-making processes.

What Does the CINGO Youth Program Aim to Achieve?

The CINGO Youth Program aims to engage, connect, and empower young people across Europe and beyond, fostering active citizenship and participation in the digital era. The program includes a series of panels and initiatives designed to bring youth together, enhance their skills, and promote civic engagement.

The CINGO Youth program consists of 3 main sessions: Engage, Connect and Empower the young people through civil society to increase the active citizenship participation in young people.

- Enable young people to be architects of their own lives, build their resilience and equip them with life skills to cope in a changing world.

- Encourage young people to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change for communities across Europe, inspired by EU values and a European identity.
- Help prevent youth social exclusion.
- Improve the impact of policy decisions on young people through dialogue and addressing their needs across sectors.

How Can CINGO Members Contribute to the Youth Program?

By fulfilling these responsibilities and actively contributing to the program, CINGO members will play a vital role in enhancing youth participation, promoting democratic engagement, and supporting human rights. This structured engagement will help bridge the gap between young people and policymakers, fostering a culture of active citizenship and social justice. CINGO members can contribute to the Youth Program through the following ways:

A. Committees Focus:

- *Youth Integration:* Committees should focus on how to work with youth and how young people are affected by various headlines.
- *Inclusive Policies:* Include youth perspectives in policymaking, ensuring that the voices of young people are considered in all thematic areas.

B. INGO Engagement:

- *Youth Representation:* Emphasize the importance of having young people among their ranks to ensure that their perspectives and needs are represented.
- *Capacity Building:* Provide support and capacity-building opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles within NGOs.

C. Awareness and Advocacy:

- *Skill Sharing:* Utilize the know-how of young people to raise awareness about important issues across Europe.
- *Digital Advocacy:* Equip youth with digital skills and foster critical thinking and media literacy to enhance their advocacy efforts.

D. Intergenerational Participation and Solidarity:

- *Dialogue:* Promote intergenerational dialogue to ensure that diverse perspectives are included in decision-making processes.
- *Solidarity:* Foster solidarity between younger and older generations, creating a collaborative environment for addressing societal challenges.

Conclusion:

Youth participation is indispensable for the vitality of democracy, the robustness of the rule of law, and the promotion of human rights. As outlined by the Council of Europe, involving young people in civic and political processes ensures that governance is inclusive and reflective of diverse societal needs. By empowering youth to actively engage in decision-making, we not only enhance the legitimacy and responsiveness of democratic institutions but also cultivate a generation of informed and committed citizens.

The CINGO Youth Program exemplifies the potential of structured youth engagement to foster active citizenship, bridge the gap between young people and policymakers, and address contemporary challenges through innovative solutions. Such initiatives are crucial in creating a culture where young

people are not merely future leaders but active participants in shaping the present and future societal landscape. The Youth Program seeks to empower and engage young people, providing them with the tools, support, and platform needed to contribute meaningfully to society. Through workshops, training sessions, and collaborations, the program aims to create a diverse and inclusive network, fostering dialogue and youth-led initiatives. Consequently, promoting youth participation is essential for the continuous development and reinforcement of democratic values, legal integrity, and human rights protections.