

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION FOR YOUTH



North South Centre's HEY Programme

Human Rights Education for Youth

Introducing HEY

HEY (Human Rights Education for Youth) is a new Programme by the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, commonly known as the North South Centre of the Council of Europe (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 is structured around a series of online courses, on topics related to human rights and rule of law that have been identified as needed, relevant, or emerging for young people. The courses are thematically linked to Council of Europe legal instruments, notably conventions, and will be delivered at international level to young tutors who in turn will build capacity of other young people in their regions or countries.

The thematic courses will be hosted online. They will be catered and promoted specifically to young people from the geographical areas where the NSC is active, namely NSC member states, Africa, and the Middle East. As some of the content of the courses exists already in Spanish, a future development towards implementation in Latin America can also be envisaged.

HEY courses are based on pre-existing HELP courses, which are adapted to the target audience, translated and contextualised as needed. [HELP \(Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals\)](#) is a successful Programme of the Council of Europe that has been building capacity of judges, lawyers and prosecutors for over 20 years on Human Rights standards.

The selection of HEY themes is an evolving list that results from consultations with young people directly 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.

The diversity of themes covered by HEY, combined with the adaptability offered by this Programme to target specific regions or countries, results in an instrument flexible enough to address the NSC priorities, as well as the needs and demand from partners in those regions. HEY is also in line with the priorities set by other relevant stakeholders and potential donors active in Africa and Middle East, leading to meaningful collaborations and mutual support for further 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 phase¹. The funding available will determine the path of development of specific HEY courses, their implementation in specific regions or countries and the final outreach.

HEY is for youth

HEY is designed with young people in mind. It is a capacity-building tool developed to support youth from Africa, Middle East, and Europe, to address human rights and rule of law-related issues affecting their communities.

The Programme is expected to appeal to a wide variety of profiles, with NSC partner youth organisations in the target countries being instrumental in identifying and promoting potential participants and future tutors.

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

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. The Reykjavik Declaration also calls for a youth perspective in the work of the Council of Europe.

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 population², 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 growth³,

¹ 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.

² People under the age of 30, according to data from IEMed, available [here](#)

³ According to data from the [UN World Population Prospects in 2024](#)



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

This initiative provides young people with knowledge and skills that will not only equip them with new tools and approaches to strengthen human rights protection in their communities, but also supports youth civil society in addressing tangible and emerging issues, such as addressing data protection or fighting corruption and climate change, which are high on the priorities of young Africans, according to a 2024 [African Youth Survey](#). A consultation with youth civil society representatives from the Southern Mediterranean region⁴ also highlighted concrete issues being addressed by HEY, notably data protection, and combatting corruption.

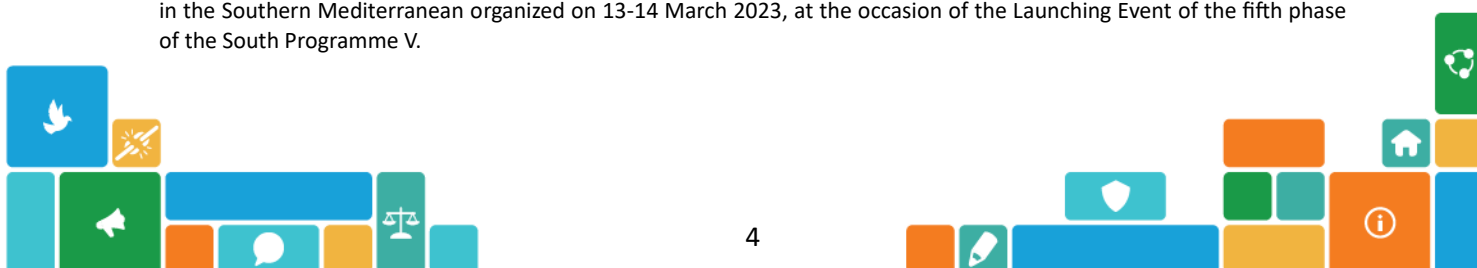
The HEY Programme aligns with the African Union's [Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want](#) and its aspiration for *An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law*, as well as the [1 Million Next Level initiative](#), particularly through its efforts to promote 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 that for over 20 years has been contributing to enhancing the capacity of judges, lawyers, and prosecutors, in all 46 Council of Europe member states and beyond, to apply the European human rights standards in their daily work. This is done through the HELP online courses that cover a wide range of human rights topics. The HELP Programme has already produced meaningful results in the Southern

⁴ Consultation with the participants of the Euro-Med Civil Society Lab to support youth participation in democratic reforms in the Southern Mediterranean organized on 13-14 March 2023, at the occasion of the Launching Event of the fifth phase of the South Programme V.



Mediterranean region, as shown by the very significant increase in users and tutors, which will also contribute to the recognition of the HEY project in the region. Several courses are also available in Arabic, which benefits the development of the HEY adaptations.

- ❖ The long and successful history of Council of Europe of 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 African legal frameworks for human rights protection.

Expected Result 1.1. Enhanced knowledge and skills: Young people will acquire specific knowledge and skills related to human rights and the rule of law through accessible, youth-oriented online courses, empowering them to engage with and promote human rights and the rule of law.

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.

Expected Result 2.1. Sustainable youth leadership: A consolidated network of young tutors will emerge, equipped with the knowledge and ability to act as educators among their peers and as advocates, spreading awareness of European and other international and African standards on 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.

Expected Result 3.1. Strengthened regional and cross-regional cooperation: North-South and South-South youth networks will facilitate greater mutual understanding, shared learning, and collaboration on addressing common challenges related to human rights and the rule of law.



Expected Result 3.2. Collaborative communities: links will be created between youth civil society and legal practitioners experienced with the HELP Programme, supporting synergies and meaningful exchanges around issues of common interest at regional and national level.

Methodology

Selected HELP courses will be adapted to a young audience, with new approaches and interactive pedagogy, based on the NSC expertise on Global Education and the NSC and Council of Europe's experience in youth cooperation. Young people successfully completing the training courses will receive an official certificate of accomplishment. The Programme also includes a dedicated training process for tutors, ensuring a cascading of national courses which will be translated and adapted to regional and national realities. Young people who follow the complete training and implement cascading courses will become certified HEY tutors.

HEY is built upon the strong base of the HELP Programme, benefiting from quality pedagogical content developed over more than 20 years, as well as the knowledge and know-how of experts and certified tutors who will also be involved in adapting and delivering HEY courses. Most of the existing courses cover areas of interest to young people and can be adapted to youth as the target audience. The HEY methodology combines the tried and tested resources, methods and know-how used with legal professionals in HELP with the experience, outreach and sensitivity that characterises the work of the NSC, after decades of developing youth capacity-building initiatives promoting Council of Europe standards and global citizenship. HEY courses are hosted and accessible in the HELP platform, allowing for flexibility to cater for specific needs of member states and particular communities, especially as the number of available courses increases, and new content is added.

The HEY courses are designed to be mainly delivered online and face-to-face, according to relevance and needs. The HEY tutors are trained to deliver the courses using the HEY/HELP methodology, having completed themselves one or more online courses. Trained tutors then develop and implement the courses in their national or regional context, upon translation and adaptation of the sessions.

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 organizations, partners, and/or national authorities.
2. The course is created, by adapting a pre-existing HELP course with an international/regional perspective and making it accessible and attractive to young



people. This is done by a diverse expert task force, to ensure quality results and balanced perspectives.

3. A call for participants is launched for youth organisations in the targeted countries.
4. Participants successfully completing the online course on a specific subject 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, focusing on the HEY/HELP methodology and technical delivery, becoming certified HEY tutors. The trainings of tutors will take place in the framework of the Youth Universities of the NSC.
6. Each tutored course is translated and adapted for national delivery, including relevant local documentation like national or regional convention⁵.
7. Certified HEY tutors implement the adapted courses at national level, supported by HELP experts 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.

Launch of the Programme

The Programme will begin with the online courses “**intercultural and interfaith dialogue**” and “**media literacy for global citizenship**” and will develop four additional courses in its first year. More courses will be developed during phase I depending on resources available.

The following themes have been identified as relevant for HEY phase I, in accordance with the needs expressed by young people and NSC partners, as well as the adaptability of existing HELP courses to a youth audience:

- ❖ Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue
- ❖ Media Literacy for Global Citizenship⁶
- ❖ Introduction to Corruption Prevention
- ❖ Data Protection and privacy rights
- ❖ Human Rights and the Environment
- ❖ Human Rights in Sport
- ❖ Abolition of the death penalty (module)
- ❖ AI and Human Rights
- ❖ Business and Human Rights
- ❖ Combating Hate Speech

⁵ Regional or sub-regional courses may also be implemented, if relevant and needed.

⁶ The online training courses on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue and Media Literacy for Global Citizenship were developed in the framework of [iLEGEND III: a Joint Programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe: co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe](#)



- ❖ Gender equality and gender mainstreaming
- ❖ Violence against Women and domestic violence
- ❖ Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings
- ❖ International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

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.

In order to maximise the dissemination and implementation of the Programme, HEY is also open to partnerships with regional and international organisations, regional youth platforms such as the Pan African Youth Union or the Network of International Youth Organizations in Africa, NGOs, national cooperation initiatives and other relevant actors sharing the same values and pursuing similar objectives. Partnerships will optimise the efficiency and outreach of HEY and can be created for the whole Programme or for concrete courses. Partnerships and contributions to HEY will be made clearly visible and agreed case-by-case.

The HEY Programme operates in close interaction with the national and regional realities where it is implemented, always in complementarity with 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 training 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.



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. The possibility to develop further capacity-building to support the follow-up by participants is also envisaged and can be considered. The concrete 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 2 tutored online courses already finalised and available in the HELP platform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue⁷ o Media Literacy for Global Citizenship - Development and delivery of the following HEY courses (adaptation from pre-existing HELP courses, optimising existing modules as much as possible): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Introduction to Corruption Prevention o Data Protection and privacy rights o Human Rights and the Environment o Human Rights in Sport o Abolition of the death penalty (module) - Implementation of the two Training of Tutors (June and September 2025) - Adaptation and translation of the existing courses, as needed. - Delivery of at least 15 national tutored courses, following the Training of Tutors (with more to follow from early 2026).
2026 and 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptation and translation of the existing courses, as needed; - Delivery of 135 national tutored courses, following the Training of Tutors from September 2025 - Implementation of 4 training of tutors⁸

⁷ The online training courses on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue and Media Literacy for Global Citizenship were developed in the framework of [iLEGEND III: a Joint Programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe: co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. The "Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue" training course is developed and implemented in partnership with the UN Alliance of Civilisations \(UNAOC\), KAICIID Dialogue Centre, the AKDN network and the Universidad Católica de Valencia.](#)

⁸ In the framework of the Youth Universities organised by the NSC.



ANNEX II

