



EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND GLOBAL YOUTH MOBILIZATION

PRESS RELEASE

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Youth-led action for the Sustainable Development Goals: EU and world's largest youth organisations announce new partnership

The European Commission and the world's largest youth organizations, the "Big Six", announced a partnership today to launch the **EU Youth Empowerment Fund**, to be implemented through the [Global Youth Mobilization \(GYM\)](#). It marks the first anniversary of the [Youth Action Plan for EU External Action](#), the EU's policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future.

As a flagship initiative of the Youth Action Plan, and designed by, with and for young people, the EU Youth Empowerment Fund is a €10 million pilot initiative. It will provide and facilitate access to vital resources for young people to contribute to the sustainable development of their local communities and societies in EU partner countries across the world to reach the objectives of Agenda 2030, in line with the EU's Global Gateway strategy.

The Fund is launched today in Nairobi, Kenya in the presence of the European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta **Urpilainen**, Carlos **Sanvee**, the Chair of the GYM, and young leaders from across the world.

Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta **Urpilainen** said: *"Our Youth Action Plan has three pillars: engage, empower and connect. The Youth Empowerment Fund embodies them in practice and responds to the calls from young people during the consultation process. Together with the Big Six, we will facilitate access for young people to the tools they need to initiate change and mobilise their peers. Our micro-grants will support youth-led projects, contribute to sustainable development and build recognition for young people as change-makers. Through this partnership, we will deliver concrete opportunities in local communities to achieve the SDGs, ensuring that no-one is left behind."*

Global Youth Mobilization Chair and World YMCA Secretary-General Carlos **Sanvee** said: *"Young people are the solution, not the problem. Time and again, they have the solutions to the challenges they and their communities face. The future is theirs. The EU and the GYM will provide them the platform, the funding, and the facilitation to get their ideas off the ground. We in the Big Six are delighted to work together with the EU and would like to thank the Commissioner for her leadership and exceptional commitment to young people all over the world."*

Helga **Mutasingwa**, Youth Representative and Activist, said: *"The launch of the Youth Empowerment Fund through GYM is welcome news for young people around the world. Young people are the experts in their own lives. We know that when given direct access to resources, the opportunity to lead, and the support and networking opportunities*

to connect with one another, they can make a positive difference for themselves and their communities. The EU-Big Six partnership will put young people in the driving seat - with decisions for us, made by us - and we are excited to show the impact we can make towards the SDGs as a result."

The partnership will break down barriers to funding; provide opportunities for mentoring, coaching and capacity strengthening; unlock opportunities for marginalised and under-represented communities; and engage, empower and mobilise young people to create local solutions to the world's biggest challenges from climate change and gender equality to access to education and employment.

Accessible funding for youth-led initiatives to accelerate progress towards the SDGs

Despite facing unparalleled challenges and being disproportionately affected by worsening inequalities in society, young people are a powerful force for change, and youth-led and youth co-created initiatives have enormous potential to contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Yet young people often face barriers in accessing funds and opportunities to scale up successful initiatives.

The EU Youth Empowerment Fund through the Global Youth Mobilization will address this challenge by making low-barrier funding accessible for young people at the grassroots community level, minimising "red tape" and creating accessible opportunities that are relevant to the needs and priorities of young people, including marginalised and under-represented populations.

The Fund will also support mentoring and coaching opportunities, as well as capacity strengthening of young people to build their resilience, and help them lead, take action and advocate for their needs.

Young people will lead on all aspects of the EU Youth Empowerment Fund through the Global Youth Mobilization, from selecting grant beneficiaries, to sitting on the Board of the initiative, to supporting mentoring and capacity strengthening programs, and participating in the design, leadership and implementation of projects in their communities.

The first activities of the Youth Empowerment Fund will start in late 2023, with first grants being disbursed to young people in early 2024.

Background

The European Commission's work [for and with youth](#) is guided by the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in European Union external action for 2022-2027, the first-ever policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people around the world. It focuses on young people as change makers and essential partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international commitments such as the Paris Agreement on climate change. It aims to ensure that EU external action contributes to youth empowerment at political, social and economic levels, and to facilitate young people's meaningful engagement in decision and policy-making.

The [Global Youth Mobilization](#) (GYM) is an initiative of the Big Six, established in 2020. From 2020-2022 it invested more than US\$ 5 million to support 640 youth-led projects which engaged more than 600,000 young people and reached over 3.6 million people in communities across more than 125 countries.

Formed in 1996, the Big Six Youth Organizations are an alliance of leading international youth-serving organizations. The Big Six is comprised of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (World YMCA), the World Alliance of Young Women's Christian Associations (World YWCA), the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (The Award).

Together, the Big Six actively involve and engage more than 250 million young people, contributing to the empowerment of more than one billion young people during the last century.

For More Information

[Youth \(europa.eu\)](http://youth.europa.eu)

[Global Youth Mobilization](#)

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