

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA YOUTH COLLECTIVE

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA Youth Collective, AGREED July 19, 2022.

INTRODUCTION

AIUSA seeks to support the goals of the International Youth Strategy by centering youth perspectives, engaging young people at all levels, and growing the supporter base of young people, including both activist supporters and dues-paying members. The Youth Collective (YoCo) is the membership body for youth leadership at AIUSA, made up of 12-15 members from across AIUSA's regions; members are between the ages of 15-24 at the beginning of their term. The composition of the Youth Collective need not be exact in terms of total number or regional representation.

PURPOSE AND MANDATE

The Youth Collective provides thought leadership, consultation, and guidance to Amnesty International USA (the U.S.-section of Amnesty International globally). In 2018, AIUSA youth members, staff, and board members developed a national Youth Strategy to set key directions for the section and provide a basis for implementation at the national, regional, and local level. The Youth Collective is responsible for implementation of the Youth Strategy and development of future strategies. In addition, the group guides AIUSA in exploring different leadership and consultation models related to youth activism, in order to inform future youth leadership structures and ways in which young people are able to engage in meaningful discussions and decision-making within the organization. Youth Collective members bring the thought leadership that is needed to reach the goals of the AIUSA Youth Strategy. They serve as spokespersons on issues affecting youth and raise youth perspectives, both internally and externally, to help support and expand the space for greater youth(-led) engagement and participation.

➤ YOUTH STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Youth Collective is tasked with development and implementation of the Youth Strategy for AIUSA. This process is facilitated by the Youth and Student Program, but sits under the leadership of the Collective. The Youth Strategy is aligned with the Amnesty International Youth Strategy at the global level, as well as with AIUSA's strategic plan.

➤ YOUTH CONSULTATION

In addition, the Youth Collective provides consultation to AIUSA committees, structures, and staff on matters pertaining to youth. The Youth Collective will explore what works best in order to build an organization that is equitable, accessible, diverse, and inclusive for youth activism, making recommendations on process, structure and engagement. Members of the Youth Collective may have the opportunity to serve on organizational committees such as the National Resolutions Committee, Nominations Committee, Annual General Meeting (AGM) Planning Committee, or other groups, with the backing of the Collective to guide consultation and feedback on each committee. The Youth Collective is the place for AIUSA structures, including staff, to seek and receive broader youth perspectives.

➤ SERVE AS YOUTH AMBASSADORS

The Youth Collective will serve as youth ambassadors by actively participating in organizational opportunities to represent youth on committees, to the Board of Directors, in working groups, and in consultation. Where possible, members will project youth voices and provide youth representation at Amnesty events such as regional conferences, state meetings and AGM. Additionally, members will be active in Amnesty governance activities by voting in working groups, plenaries, and elections.

The above mandate will be operationalized in a variety of ways and different members might have different roles within the group, including, but not limited to:

- Leading on specific youth initiatives to advance implementation of the AIUSA Youth Strategy
- Participating in initiatives led by Youth Collective and other segments of AIUSA

- Speaking on behalf of AIUSA at external youth related events
- Representing AIUSA youth in decision-making spaces and other organizational events and meetings
- Engaging in the monitoring, evaluation and learning processes of the Youth Strategy

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Members of the Youth Collective have an active affiliation with AIUSA and should meet the following criteria:

- Minimum one year of involvement with an AIUSA chapter (student group or local group), one academic year is sufficient
- Current or recent (within past 3 years) involvement with AIUSA in some capacity
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, show leadership and take initiative (inside or outside of Amnesty)
- Experience working with a team or group over a period of time
- Vision and passion for youth engagement in human rights
- Commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, and demonstrated ability to apply these concepts to one's own identities, activism, and group practice
- Under age of 25 by the start of the term
- Able to attend in-person retreat (limited exceptions to in-person attendance will be considered on a case by case basis)
- Become a dues-paying (or dues waived) member of AIUSA before beginning their term

Amnesty International USA deeply values inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in our human rights work, our team culture, and practices. We recognize that this is not only necessary to ensure that our rich diversity of members and staff can thrive, but that we can simply not accomplish our mission without it. We have a comprehensive strategy and take shared responsibility for fostering an inclusive environment for all. People of all backgrounds and identities are welcome on the Youth Collective. We seek a variety of identities, perspectives and ideas, and prohibit discrimination of any kind based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, indigenous status, immigration status, genetics, disability, age, veteran status or any other legally protected and non-merit factors.

The Youth Collective is supported by and accountable to the Youth & Student Program staff (Sara Goldschmidt and Katie Davos). The Youth & Student Program Manager is the staff liaison to the Youth Collective.

COMPOSITION AND TERM

The full membership of the Youth Collective consists of 12-15 members, unless a smaller group is deemed necessary by returning members and Youth and Student Program staff. Each member commits for one year. The term begins and ends in the summer, spanning an academic school year. Renewal for subsequent terms is dependent on successful completion of the term, including results of peer and staff evaluations. Members can serve a maximum of three terms (spanning three academic years); terms do not need to be consecutive, but if a year is taken off the member must reapply. If the overall number of members drops below 10 during the term, the group will determine if and how they will fill vacant positions.

The Youth Collective develops and fills internal roles as needs are identified. This may include internal leadership structures (steering body) or task-specific roles (managing email).

Current Youth Collective members and Youth & Student Program are responsible for the application process and review of candidates for the upcoming term. Every effort is made to have a balanced overall group, taking into consideration geography and region, age, and type of experience. A balanced group is more important than an exact size or regional representation.

COMMITMENT

Youth Collective members commit to:

- Attend bi-weekly online Youth Collective meetings as well as project and small group meetings; the times are determined each semester based on member schedules
- Attend annual Youth Collective face-to-face meetings (budget permitting)
- Dedicate an average of 15-20 hours per month to the Youth Collective
- Lead on sub-groups and teams to advance the Youth Strategy
- Represent Youth Collective and AIUSA on committees, steering bodies, working groups, consultations and at in person gatherings
- Contribute to a minimum of two AIUSA consultation opportunities during the term
- Report back to staff and other youth leaders in their regional, statewide and local entities (as well as any relevant regional forums, as appropriate) about the work of Youth Collective
- Gather input from staff and youth leaders on key topics that the Youth Collective is discussing to feed into the conversations
- Facilitate conversations with other stakeholders in the movement or externally

SELECTION PROCESS FOR YOUTH COLLECTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

A record will be kept of which members have been selected for opportunities throughout the year, and on joining the Youth Collective, members will also be asked to express their areas of interest. Both factors will be taken into consideration in the decision-making process. Members who are selected to represent AIUSA and the Youth Collective in different activities (internal and external) will be asked to report back to the wider Youth Collective in the form of a written report, a debrief presentation at the next Youth Collective virtual meeting, or in another format, depending on the opportunity. Efforts will be made to ensure opportunities are balanced across individual members.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Youth Collective members share accountability for meeting the goals of the group, and staff provides support in ensuring the group is on track to meet goals. The following measures are in place to support accountability of all members:

- Attendance is taken for large group and project calls and meetings, and tracked in a document visible to the group. Missing calls (planned or last minute cancellations), arriving late, and leaving early are documented. Members may miss up to four calls per term (one year); this includes biweekly calls for the entire group as well as last-minute cancellations for small group / project calls. Frequent tardiness or leaving early will be addressed by staff.
- Project teams carry out a debrief at the completion of a project; the format will vary depending on the project, but may include an evaluation, review of individual contributions, and overall areas for group and individual improvement.
- Staff carry out check-ins with project leads throughout the project term to assess productivity and provide support in staying on track.
- Records are kept of which members are on which projects, and staff are responsible for assessing workload and balance among members.
- Staff carry out performance-related conversations throughout the year as needed.
- Team evaluations are carried out twice per year. All members complete self, peer and staff evaluations. Staff then hold scheduled one-on-one meetings to discuss the evaluations with individuals; the evaluations will serve as opportunities to recognize strengths and contributions as well as areas for growth and improvement.
- End of year evaluations will determine if a member continues with subsequent terms on Youth Collective, and will take into account performance throughout the year.

Youth Collective members agree to make every effort to resolve conflict within the group. Members agree to the following steps:

1. Communicate directly with the person with whom they have conflict.
2. Engage in good faith in a facilitated and/or mediated conversation with all relevant parties involved.
3. Engage in good faith in conflict resolution to be facilitated by someone outside of the Youth Collective.

Staff liaisons to the Youth Collective are a resource for navigating and addressing conflict and shall support members in working through interpersonal and group conflict. The following organizational resources will be made available to Youth Collective members: *Code of Conduct*, *Guideline for Appointment or Removal of Volunteer Leaders*, *Ethics Complaint Form*, and *Harassment Policy*.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On occasion, members may require a short leave of absence due to unplanned and extenuating life circumstances. A leave of absence is a full relief of all Youth Collective duties for a specific period of time, agreed upon between the member and the AIUSA Youth & Student Program Manager. To request a leave of absence, the member should discuss their need with staff, and together they will draft and sign terms of the leave. The leave should not exceed three months, and a plan will be made for communication with staff during the leave, or to assess the leave after a set period of time. Upon their return, every effort will be made to onboard the member back into projects and to bring the member up to speed in a supportive and complete manner. One leave is permitted over the duration of a member's term, regardless of how many years they serve as Youth Collective members.

TERMINATING MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Youth Collective have a one-year term from the time they are appointed ahead of the in-person retreat. As Member Leaders at AIUSA, Youth Collective members agree to abide by the AIUSA *Code of Conduct*. Further, they are subject to the AIUSA *Guideline for Appointment or Removal of Volunteer Leaders*. This document includes the following as possible reasons for removal:

- Repeated inability or unwillingness to discharge their responsibilities as a leader and/or to work constructively with AIUSA members or staff;
- Destructive behavior potentially harmful to AI/AIUSA, including but not limited to financial malfeasance;
- Continued failure to abide by the rules and mandated limitations of AI/AIUSA in connection with AI work;
- Misconduct or misrepresentation adversely affecting the reputation of AIUSA;
- Behavior in a manner which clearly violates: (A) AIUSA policies of multiculturalism and non-sexism, including AIUSA's IDEA policies, or (B) the AIUSA Code of Conduct;
- Involvement in the commission or advocacy of human rights violations.

There are additional circumstances where a member's membership will end before the end of the term. These circumstances could include the following:

- The member is no longer a member of or actively involved with Amnesty International USA;
- The member no longer has the time or capacity to commit to time or work required from members of the Youth Collective;
- The member has been inactive (i.e., not attended meetings or contributed in any other way) for a period over one month without any prior arrangement or agreement with the Youth and Student Program Manager;
- The member requires a leave of absence longer than three months;
- The member has not been contributing as agreed (i.e. not carrying their share of work, lack of engagement or active participation, low quality of work) without any prior arrangement or agreement with the Youth and Student Program Manager (i.e. establishing a leave of absence), or if improvements are not seen after evaluation or check-ins with staff about performance;
- The member has repeatedly demonstrated behavior that causes harm to the group or individuals within the group, and has not modified behavior upon receiving feedback and opportunities for change.

Members may be removed from their role in the Youth Collective in accordance with the *Guideline for Appointment or Removal of Volunteer Leaders*. For a member to end their membership before the completion of their term, they need to schedule a phone call with the AIUSA Youth & Student Program Manager, followed by a resignation letter. Once the letter is received, the member is required to complete any pending tasks between one and up to four weeks of that date. In the scenario that the member had already been selected for an opportunity to represent AIUSA, this will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Edited June 2019