

Concept Note: OCIC Youth Policy-Makers Hub Cohort II

July 2021

Background

Young people have been at the helm of environmental and social justice movements, advocating for those at risk of being left behind in our communities. Thousands of youth across Canada are mobilizing to secure a positive future for all. OCIC recognizes the wealth of knowledge, experience and leadership that youth leaders bring to the international cooperation sector in Ontario, and beyond. We want to help enable the active participation of diverse youth at local, national and international policy-making tables to inform decisions that concern their lives, future and the planet.

OCIC's Youth Policy-Makers Hub (YPH) is a dynamic space for youth ages 18-35 from across Ontario to meaningfully engage and make an impact on policy-making and advocacy efforts towards achieving gender equality and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

OCIC's Youth Policy-Makers Hub program goals are to:

- increase the awareness and interest of Ontarians, especially youth, in international cooperation and key global issues, including gender equality and the SDGs
- offer opportunities for meaningful youth participation in advocacy and policy-making processes, and in sub-national, national and international programs, meetings, delegations

The YPH goals are aligned with our Global Affairs Canada-funded project Inspiring Global Citizenship Initiative (2019-23) and the following guiding principles:

- OCIC's gender transformative approach, which emphasizes intersectionality and policies on [women's rights and gender equality](#), [anti-oppression](#), and [public engagement](#)
- Canada's [Feminist International Assistance Policy's \(FIAP\)](#) feminist and integrated approach to development, which sees gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in a manner that is both targeted and cross-cutting
- The [Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness](#)

Selection Process

Youth Policy-Makers will be selected by a committee composed of OCIC staff, YPH Alumni and members, policy and advocacy partners (youth will comprise 50% of the selection committee).

Youth Policy-Maker applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

- **be between 18-35 years of age and residents of Ontario** by the start of the program, and
- able to attend regular online meetings and participate in the Hub's activities, including engaging with other Ontario youth online (including Slack, Zoom and on social media), over the course of 6-months starting in September 2021 (approximately 10 hours per month).

While OCIC members are encouraged to apply, OCIC membership is not a requirement at the time of application. Other than the above minimum requirements, the following selection criteria will be considered:

Selection criteria for Youth Policy-Makers :

- Have some interest in building skills for policy development with an international cooperation focus in relation to SDGs and gender equality.
- Committed to learning about and actively participating in advocacy and policy-making.
- Intend to pursue or are pursuing a career in a relevant field such as international development, where participation in the YPH is a pertinent learning opportunity.
- Offer unique perspectives informed by lived experiences to develop nuanced and inclusive policy-making approaches.

Mentors are integral elements of the hub, as they offer their experience and expertise to guide YPH members in projects and career development. We are seeking mentors who are involved in policy-focused programs and processes at the local, subnational, or international level, and who are interested in helping to strengthen the capacity of diverse youth leaders to take part in policy-making arenas.

Selection criteria for Mentors :

- Collaboratively create and execute training sessions to complement the OCIC programmed training series (e.g. developing soft skills such as goal setting and relationship building).
- Act as role models and connections for YPH members to develop careers in policy-making.
- Facilitate discussions and contribute to making a productive and supportive learning environment that encourages innovative risk-taking

Timeline

This is a 6-month program with participants expected to engage approximately 2 hours per week / 10 hours per month in YPH meetings; knowledge exchange and skills building sessions on community engagement, advocacy and policy processes; and key Council public engagement activities. Participants are also expected to collaborate with peers and co-develop and implement relevant projects of interest.

July 2021

- Open call for Youth Policy-Makers – July 9-23
- Selection of YPH members – Week of July 26

September 2021

- Policy Matters Training Series begins (monthly sessions ending in December)
- OCIC Annual General Meeting – Sept. 21-24

October 2021 - November 2021

- Policy Matters Training sessions (3)

December 2021

- OCIC Global Citizens Forum
- Policy Matters Training lessons learned focus group meeting

January 2022 – February 2022

- YPH Monthly Meetings for mentor-led training and project brainstorming (4)
- Participation in International Development Week 2022

March 2022 – April 2022

- YPH Monthly Meetings (2)
- Participation in International Women’s Day
- Project/campaign development and implementation

May 2022

- Evaluation, Learning & Wrap Up

Key Terms

Advocacy are interventions such as speaking, writing or acting in favour of a particular issue or cause, policy or group of people (Government of Canada [Glossary of Terms](#)). All advocacy efforts undertaken and supported by OCIC will be non-partisan.

Allies are policy and advocacy-oriented professionals at different stages in their careers: young leaders, mid-career professionals and senior leaders.

Intersectionality is a framework that recognizes the multiple aspects of social categorization and identity that combine, overlap and intersect in our lives and experiences, such as class, race and gender, and that compound and exacerbate oppression and marginalization of an individual or a group. It also challenges us to expand our understanding of gender beyond binaries (woman/man, femininity/masculinity). Adopting an intersectional approach allows us to identify and address complex contexts and formulate strategies to best meet the needs of those intended to benefit from initiatives. [Adapted from the definition of intersectionality in A Feminist Approach to Canada’s International Assistance, Inter Pares, 2 Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights and Oxfam Canada, July 2016.]” ([OCIC’s Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Policy](#))

Public policy are the laws, policies, or decisions of a government, in Canada or a foreign country ([CRA](#))

Policy-making refers to the formulation of ideas or plans that are used by an organization or government as a basis for making decisions ([Collins Dictionary](#)) “Policy-making must be understood as a political process as much as an analytical or problem solving one.” (Sutton, R. [The Policy Process in Review](#))

Youth are those aged 18-35. Youth must reside in Ontario during program duration. A special focus will be given to those from historically marginalized communities and those who are mis- or under-represented in policy and advocacy spaces.