

Global Young Greens - Past Challenges and Successes

Written by Michaela Prassl, Bernardo Estacio Abreu and Jeroni Vergeer

Michaela:

The first couple of months for the Steering Committee (SC) after being elected in Dakar in 2012 were a bit rough and it took the SC members some time to get into a routine with regard to meetings. The knowledge transfer was a task that the SC tried to take very seriously. However, transferring knowledge is never done easily and also GYG and the SC struggled to fulfill the task.

The SC committed its energy to working on planning, improving, expanding, reconstructing and implementing the action plan that was already worked on in Dakar in which membership was, for example, a crucial point that needed to be tackled. The incoming SC also had to deal with a couple of left-over elements from the congress in Dakar such as the Congress Report (which can be found on the homepage).

In fall 2012 the first action day was implemented by the SC: Global Action Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The organization was well planned and the resonance was quite good. The GYG world car-free day was organized in 2013 and many different events took place around the globe. These are just two examples that prove that GYG has been successful in the past. However, there have been challenges that, most likely, many NGOs face. Some of these obstacles may be home-made and can probably be easily overcome or changed in ways to be less hindering. Some members of the SC have shown extra-ordinary enthusiasm and willingness to get active, they have in collaboration with others published amazing newsletters for example, but were discouraged by systemic obstacles and sometimes the lack of motivation by others.

Bernardo:

As from 2012 the Steering Committee that got elected was very ample as it follows we had 16 members that were at the beginning really active and quickly (after a few months decaying to an inactive status).

American Region: We had four American member, Jaime Carrero (Colombia), Tanya Gutmanis (Canada), Julia Duppre (Brasil) and Bernardo Estacio Abreu (Venezuela). Julia Duppre and Jaime Carrero dropped out in the second year.

There's been intention to found and erect an american young green federation but the same, with little to no financial support, and having obstacles from some Green Parties because parties in Americas in a vast majority of the southern ones are reticent to the voices of NGOs in a federation where the young political Greens vote, and try to cope up with the power role without understanding a Federation of young Greens must be wider than just the Green Party. I was part of the Venezuelan Green Party Delegation for the Global Greens congress, tho I come from being an individual GYG Member who then founded his own country's federation of Young Greens so individual members aren't that much of an obstacle in power if the federations receive and handle individual activism, from within, example could be Venezuela where there's more individual members than NGO members, and still we work as a team and take decisions as an association of Young Greens.

African Region: The four African Region members were : Michel Perlo From Senegal, Rose Wachuka from Kenya, (Forget Chinomona from Zimbabwe and Nassima Guettal from Algeria. In the second year, only Rose was left, the others dropped out.

European Region: This group was very active and strong core, we had Michaela Prassl (Austria), Sarah Bentke (Germany), Teo Abishvili (Georgia), and Bart Dondt (Belgium, previous Treasurer), But After Belgian Elections came, and further Belgian Green Events showed up, Bart began to dwindle and fade out in activity, as of 2013 Teo had resigned, And by 2014 there was only Michaela active in the Steering Committee.

Asia-Pacific Region: In this Group we had Yangki Imade Suara (Indonesia), and 3 people from Australia, (Alex Surace, Robyn Lewys, And Alex a girl that quickly resigned), As of 2013 all of them had resigned. Alex Surace had been active in ICMYO (International Coordination of Youth Organisations). GYG is member of ICMYO and he was a board member as well.

Membership: on this theme, things were very loose to start with as there wasn't a defined rulebook, or a clear statutory definition of what members of GYG were, yes we do respect the Global Greens Charter, yes we look to protect the environment and all our obvious principles yet our statutory definitions were not clear enough to set a boundary to easily accept or process membership applications or not, at the time given there were three people in the membership commission of the SC, which were Rose, Tanya and Teo, they were helped by other SC members, but the task became rather complex and harder with time because of the lack of a clear statutory definition of what is a member so in this I would say we got to define clearly a membership status, when it comes to individual members and such they come from federations and federations themselves can select in their own mechanism within their countries their own delegates, this being truth individual membership doesn't rig the balance of power and decisions because the three delegates of each country must be selected by the whole countries members assembly and not just chosen by themselves.

By the time the ones in charge of relationship with Global Greens were both Michaela and Bernardo, but the link was seemingly lost after april 2015, the arrival of the new European SC members refreshed and rekindled the debate in such theme.

I also can say that GYG is a learning experience, has a way of doing its own quota of life teachings, and gives you valuable friendships around the world.

Jeroni:

In the summer of 2014, FYEG elected three new members from Europe for the Steering Committee, being Onur (Turkey), Antoine (France) and Jeroni (Netherlands). From that moment on, the Steering Committee mostly focused on organising a next congress in Istanbul, Turkey. The original plan was to organise the congress in the summer of 2015. After several funding applications being denied, the SC decided to not go through with the organisation of the congress. Without any financial support, it would not be possible to organise a successful congress with representation from the whole world.

In the end of 2014, Jeroni attended a UN meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan linked to a meeting of ICMYO, they funded their annual meeting through the UN meeting. The years after, there were no possibilities for funding, so GYG did not attend the general meeting (2015: New York, 2016: Marrakesh).

In 2015, APYG elected three new members for the SC, being Mansur (Bangladesh), Zane (New-Zealand) and Daisy (Philippines). FYEG replaces Antoine with Lara (Germany). Members from Africa and Americas have never been replaced by their federations after the last congress in 2011 in Dakar. At the moment of writing, Rose (Kenya) and Bernardo (Venezuela) are still part of the SC.

Although there was some new energy with these new people in the SC, it did not really got to a point where the SC was effective. The fact that most of us never met in real life, and there was little connection to the decisions being made in the congress in Dakar, not so much activity in GYG appeared.

When the Global Greens decided to organise their next congress in Liverpool, GYG decided to use this opportunity to have their own congress at the same time. Global Greens would recommend all delegations to bring one young person, meaning there would be a lot of young people already together. The organisation of the congress will be analysed in the congress report.

General challenges:

- No structural income
- No in-person meetings with the Steering Committee, lack of personal relations makes it more difficult to work together
- No office (legally registered in Belgium, and not having a Belgian person in the SC is very complicated).
- Timezones
- Cultural differences
- Language problems
- Bad internet connections
- Different levels of commitment between SC members
- Different perspectives on GYG
- Political persecution in some countries with repressive regimes (GYG could make your life dangerous)