

Structures and Procedures Working Group

Semestrial Report June - December 2017



Written by: Travis Cristal, Layna Droz, Alice Hubbard, Tariq Khan, Sandy Kouame, Julius Rupprecht, Ashim Sigdel, Ian Soutar, Lesley Tam, Hussayn Toure

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1. Introduction

Global Young Greens (GYG) is a youth organisation that has significant potential in the growing global green movement. It is recognised, however, that structural and procedural development needs to take place in order to continue, strengthen and expand the work of GYG.

At the GYG Congress in Liverpool, March 2017, delegates passed an amendment mandating the GYG Steering Committee (SC) to set up a Structures and Procedures Working Group (SPWG). This proposal was put forward to investigate GYG structures and procedures to propose better ways of working across a variety of levels.

After announcing a call out for applications, the following members were co-opted by the GYG SC to form the SPWG:

- Africa – Sandy Kouame, Hussayn Toure and Lesley Tam
- Asia – Laÿna Droz and Ashim Sigdel
- Americas – Travis Cristal
- Europe – Tariq Khan and Julius Rupprecht

Alice Hubbard and Ian Soutar were the Steering Committee members responsible for overseeing the work of the SPWG.

This report will explain how the SPWG approached the investigation, the areas for reform that they identified, and the details of their findings. It will conclude by suggesting key areas and proposals for improvement.

2. Challenges and Objectives

In their first meeting, the SPWG identified key areas in need of reform. These areas were identified in accordance with the results of the GYG survey, organised by the GYG SC following Congress (results of the survey can be found [here](#)) The following areas for investigation were identified:

1. Self-perception of GYG

How can GYG be a functioning network that is attractive to its members?

2. Transfer of knowledge from stronger to weaker parties

How can GYG share knowledge across the network?

3. Tools to keep people committed

How can GYG ensure volunteers and members are committed?

4. Online voting

How does GYG establish an online voting platform?

5. New committees and working groups

What committees and working groups can GYG introduce to expand its network and increase its productivity?

The following sections of this report will examine the areas mentioned above in more depth, detailing the SPWG's findings and suggestions for reform. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all areas in need of reform. In 2018, the SPWG will progress to examine further areas to continue to contribute to the reform of GYG structures and procedures.

3. Self-perception of GYG and the role of the SPWG

Following the GYG Congress in Liverpool (2017), it became clear that there was a diversity of opinions with regards to the function of GYG and what it will do in future. Given this, the SPWG decided to explore the topic of the self-perception of GYG and its future role in the global green movement.

The resulting proposal of the SPWG is the following:

- Currently, the task of GYG and its members is to build a network that functions and that is attractive to its members. The process of building up the organisation is a task for years, needs lots of patience, and probably won't be completed by any of GYG's current representatives. Therefore, their mission is to lay the cornerstones.
- Despite all the struggling, GYG has a huge potential of growing to an organisation that politicises, empowers and supports tens of thousands of young greens all over the world.
- Both the SC and the SPWG should receive consultation on how to build up an organisation. Possible advisors are people who were involved in building up the [Cooperation and Development Network Eastern Europe](#), the regional federations of Global Greens, and other green youth organisations around the world.
- The SPWG's duty over the next months is to design structures and procedures that make GYG function and to redraft GYG's Organisational Principles. One part of this process involves investigating well-functioning young green organisations and discussing which elements of them are suitable for GYG. This could also lead to the proposal of new committees and procedures (though this should always be the second step). Another part is working through the Organisational Principles to identify areas in need of reform (old, non-functioning concepts, contradictions, etc.). As both the SC and the SPWG were assigned this task by Liverpool Congress, the two committees found an agreement to delegate responsibilities between them:

- As the SC is often busy with daily politics, the SPWG is responsible for the initial design of structures and procedures, which is then discussed between SC and SPWG until a consensus is reached. This means that the SPWG will propose reforms and broadly investigate the potential ways of implementing them, providing a variety of options where possible.
- The SC has the responsibility to implement the adopted changes. This also means that SPWG can propose long-term tasks (such as long-term fundraising) to the SC.

4. Tools to keep people committed

The question of how to keep people committed was identified as another focus area that is crucial for the development of GYG. Long-lasting commitment is related to:

- 1) the efficiency of task-completion;
- 2) the internal communication and mutual support (including specialized skills), and;
- 3) the attractiveness of GYG and the acquisition of new active people.

4.1. Task-completion

In order to encourage productivity and a satisfying performance level across all of GYG's committees and working groups, a number of best practices should be implemented:

Tools:

- a. **To-do list** of tasks, estimation of the time it will take and timeline.
 - Set **deadlines** for each action point, ensuring people have regular but manageable tasks (i.e. they have sufficient time and capabilities to fulfill them).
- b. Clear delegation of task to the **person-in-charge**.
- c. Whenever possible, work should be delegated to volunteers to keep people engaged and to **distribute workload**.
- d. **Regular calls** with well-kept minute taking including information about each member's life situation and their available time.
- e. **Regular reporting** of
 - New assignments (including timeline and person in charge)
 - Difficulties so that competent support can be found in the network (see point 4.2.)
 - Completed tasks to ensure accountability and record the achievements (which could prove useful in yearly reports, and for attractiveness (see point 4.3.).

4.2. Internal communication and mutual support

Communication of achievements and difficulties can help to keep people committed by giving a feeling of belonging, mutual support and empowerment. Thus, it is essential to built an internal support network and to *encourage people to ask for help/provide support networks*. For example, the SC currently lacks someone with website management skills.

Tools:

- a. **Internal support network and database of volunteer “specialists”** organised by skills (translation, design, website management, law...) so that it is easier for the volunteers to find each other.
- b. **Call out to young greens** asking if someone with needed skills would be willing to help.
- c. “Specialists” could provide short **tutorial sessions**.
- d. **Mentoring system** for the first months of newly arrived active members to ensure smooth integration and encourage participation and responsabilisation (catch the motivation and transform it into a “I can do it!” feeling).
- e. Create **more working groups and committees**, e.g. Oversight Committee (see point 7)
- f. Assign each working group a clear “**chair**” who is also in charge of external communication (possibly a person from the SC).
- g. Create a **participation channel** on Slack for each SC member to report their activities on a weekly basis.

4.3. Attractiveness and empowerment

Tools:

- a. Co-write, publish and spread a **positive storyline** for GYG around young green organisations.
- b. Raise **attractiveness of positions** by raising funds to finance committee meetings.
- c. Shorten the **election periods** to give the opportunity for committees to promote themselves and find new members (e.g. Annual online voting (point 6) and a restructuring of the SC (point 7)).
- d. **Clear delegation of tasks** within each committee in order to ensure a **manageable workload** for everyone.

5. Skills sharing and knowledge transfer

To find out how GYG can support environmental activists around the world and potential or underdeveloped Young Greens (YGs)/Young Green Organisations, it is necessary to identify:

- 1) the “external” challenges they face;
- 2) the “internal” challenges they face (lack of know-how) and;
- 3) the strategies they develop.

GYG can contribute and support environmental activists and potential or underdeveloped YGs/YG Organisations by providing (1) global visibility and access to international medias, (2) toolkits, (3) a platform of regional exchange of information. The SPWG decided that the priority should be to first **collect and make already existing toolkits easily accessible** to the groups in need (task of the SC), and second to create a **working group** (see point 7) to develop and foster the exchange of toolkits.

5.1. Global visibility and international medias

Small and new YG groups face external challenges including: official governmental restrictions and limited **freedom of speech**, cultural mindsets critical towards people speaking out, **stigmatisation** and ostracism of activists, social exclusion, difficulties to find a job and to marry, danger to their lives. GYG can contribute by offering **global visibility** that can **protect activists** by speaking out against public abuses, and help them get press coverage (when the information is taken by global media, regional media often feel the need to write about it). In case of disappearance or abuses, GYG can **increase the threat of global media mobilisation**.

5.2. Toolkits

The most important “internal” challenge faced by YGs is the lack of **knowledge about mobilisation of social media** and about **civil society building**. To encourage knowledge transfer, GYG can prepare “tool-kits” about:

- How to conduct an action and present a problem in the streets;
- How to network with other organizations to get mutual protective coverage;
- Calendar of “global events” (such as Climate March, or “internal” GYG events);
- Sample of design of flyers;
- How to write press releases (and samples available before each global common event, so that the group can translate and print by themselves, and hopefully get advantage from the global media coverage);
- Non-violent civil action training (how to react in front of hate-speech and police violence);
- How to manage and increase attractivity of social networking pages and usage (sample of pictures and slogan easily adaptable by each region);
- Proposal of guidelines about internal organisation and procedures for new groups;
- How-to guide regarding emotional and psychological support (to avoid burnouts and depression coming with social exclusion).

Note: Some toolkits are already available in global NGOs (e.g. about non-violence training). GYG could very easily make these readily available to YGs.

5.3. Platform of regional exchange of information (related to point 4.2.)

Neighboring countries may share the same problem but lack of information about what is happening in the other countries (e.g. haze problem, radioactive ocean pollution). Moreover, some data may be available internationally (NGOs), but not nationally because of censorship. GYG can play a key role in putting in contact individual groups from neighboring countries.

For example, activist groups in countries facing strong governmental censorship have already developed strategies to get around it such as children games and festivals, social networking groups sharing “tricks” about recycling or consumption, local urban gardening groups, women (housewives) groups mobilising to “protect their children” from local pollution, green washing (green marketing is profitable, especially in touristic areas). An especially smart strategy is to use English-language (or regional language) groups or journal in schools and universities to translate, discuss and publish environmental reports and information under the cover of “language practice”.

6. Online Voting

At the GYG Congress in Liverpool 2017, delegates passed a resolution to introduce online voting. The SPWG investigated a variety of online platforms to facilitate this and put together a how-to guide to assist with elections in future.

In a discussion, the following platforms were suggested:

- Survey monkey
- Google Forms
- SimplyVote
- Loomio

After investigating further, it was decided that SurveyMonkey was the most accessible and efficient platform for hosting online voting. It is easy to use, includes an anonymous voting setting, can be used for free, and is effective.

It was decided that in early 2018 an official online voting guide is going to be published by the SPWG in order to make a safe and uniform voting process more accessible and less labor-intensive for the SC.

The SPWG also investigated the procedure prior to online voting, given the importance of official voter registration. As MOs are allocated just one vote each (following the GYG Congress, March 2017), there is a need to register an authorised representative from each organisation. This process can take time, which is why it is integral that GYG maintains an up to date contact lists for all its MOs. This prior step will also be explored in more detail in the SPWG's official online voting guide.

7. Proposal of new committees and working groups

The SPWG also explored the introduction of new Committees and Working Groups to help increase GYG activity, expand the GYG network and shape its future. After brainstorming a number of ideas, the SPWG voted on the Committees and Working Groups that should be prioritised. It should be noted that the recommended introduction of these groups is a staggered process (for some groups, the SC has already released a call out e.g. Oversight Committee, others may not be introduced for another year or two).

Ideas for the following Committees and Working Groups were proposed, please note that the following proposals can be expanded upon and, in time, all Committees and Working Groups will have a say in the direction and tasks of their particular group:

Committee/Working Group	Suggested Size and/roles	Tasks
Oversight Committee (OC)	<p>4 members (one person from each region), plus one elected chair.</p> <p>Members should have previous experience sitting on a young green boards/organisations, and be familiar with GYG and its Organisational Principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold the GYG Steering Committee accountable with the consideration of the Organisational Principles; ● Overseeing and ensuring complaints are dealt with fairly; ● The running of GYG elections (as well as overseeing co-options); ● Amending of the Organisational Principles for documental clarity; ● In situations of conflict, the Oversight Committee can be called to moderate between the parties and to decide over practices and procedures.
Capacity Building Working Group (CBWG)	<p>8-12 members (regional and gender balanced)</p> <p>Suggested positions: 2 co-chairs, 6-10 regular members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In cooperation with the respective regional coordinator (from the SC), the CBWG is responsible liaise with regional young green organisations in the constitutional phase/in regions where activism is illegal or difficult to implement/activists who are interested in founding YGO to support their growth by knowledge-sharing, encouragement and consultation; ● There should be a CBWG activity plan for each year to define goals and priorities of

		the working group. Examples for these activities are the creation of info toolkits, fund-raising, webinars.
Congress Committee (CC)	<p>6-8 members, with at least 1 person from each region, gender balanced.</p> <p>Suggested positions: Chair, Vice Chair, Amendment/Statute coordinator (to create tools to submit amendments and organise amendment sessions in the most accessible way possible (e.g. provide translation/translators where possible), Skills Sessions Coordinator, Location and travel coordinator (requirements for visas, accessibility etc.), Outside Speaker coordinator (for workshops and presentations).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning, organisation and fundraising of congresses. ● Time period: 3 years before each Congress. 1.5 years before Congress the Congress Committee will call out for a local prep team and cooperate closely with them.
Climate Working Group (CWG)	<p>1-5 members from each region.</p> <p>Suggested positions: 2 chairs (at least 1 non-cismale)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working out GYG's policy position on climate in the form of congress motions and press releases; ● Responsible for social media content and possibly for conducting activities/debates/campaigns on the topic. ● Potential focus areas: uncovering international corporations that are hurting the climate and collaborating with other YGs around the world to stop them; influence of climate change; finding economically feasible solutions to climate issues, deforestation, plastic.
Gender, Sexuality and Inclusion Working Group (GSIWG)	<p>8 members, including two co-chairs, one non-male.</p> <p>Member requirements: Regional diversity, equal attention to all aspects of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working out GYG's policy position on gender, sexuality and inclusion in the form of congress motions and press releases. ● Responsible for social media content and possibly for conducting activities/debates/campaigns on the topic.

	gender and sexuality. Trans, non-binary, genderfluid, asexual, people of colour, working class, neurodiverse people should all be represented here.	
Freedom of Movement Working Group (FMWG)	1-5 members (at least one from each region) 2 chairs (at least 1 non-cismale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working out GYG’s policy position on migration, flight, and asylum in the form of congress motions and press releases. • Responsible for social media content and possibly for conducting activities/campaigns/debates on the topic.

The SPWG is going to continue the committee planning process in 2018 together with further investigation into the structure of the SC and its positions. This will include a detailed description of tasks and responsibilities for each member, and will be conducted in close cooperation with the SC.

8. Recommendations

This report highlights some of the key areas in which GYG needs to develop, detailing potential challenges, and solutions to overcome them.

In sum, the main recommendations of the SPWG are as follows:

- Encourage SC members to seek training/guidance/shadowing opportunities in the field of organisation building (e.g. with CDN or regional federations);
- Work towards redrafting the GYG Organisational Principles;
- Employ key organisational methods to ensure people remain committed;
- Provide mutual support and maintain clear and regular internal communication to improve efficiency and ensure GYG is attractive to members;
- Use tool kits to facilitate knowledge transfer between stronger and weaker parties;
- Utilise Survey Monkey to facilitate online voting, and work towards putting together a comprehensive guide for use;
- Initiate social media platforms whereby content produced by GYG members and member organisations can be shared;
- Consider the creation of the following new committees and working groups over the coming months to facilitate the expansion and productivity of GYG:
 - Oversight committee
 - Capacity building working group
 - Congress committee
 - Climate working group
 - Gender, sexuality and inclusion working group
 - Freedom of movement working group.

In 2018, the SPWG will continue their research into further focus areas and work closely with the SC in providing support and recommendations to further reform the structures and procedures of GYG.