



CONCEPT NOTE



LAND YOUTH NEGOTIATOR PROGRAMME



2024

"Young people must be at the table – as designers of their own future, not as recipients of decisions of elders who have, let's be honest, failed them in so many key respects."

– António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, 2021



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CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE

Effective multilateral negotiations are pivotal for achieving sustainable land management and combating desertification, land degradation, and drought, which are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These negotiations aim to empower communities and nations by fostering an environment conducive to sustainable land management, thereby facilitating wealth creation, economic growth, and ensuring access to essential resources such as food, clean water, and energy. However, effective and trustworthy negotiators with extensive knowledge, experience, and intuition are essential for navigating the complexity of the negotiations within the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In short – becoming an effective negotiator takes time (which we are running out of) and money (a problem that perpetuates existing systemic inequities). Truly equitable and sustainable action actively involves all generations in the decision-making processes.

WE NEED TRUSTED, EFFECTIVE LEADERS FROM ALL GENERATIONS TO TRANSFORM LAND NEGOTIATIONS TO ACHIEVE LAND JUSTICE



Of the world's over **8 billion people**, **about 1.2 billion are below the age of 25 years.**

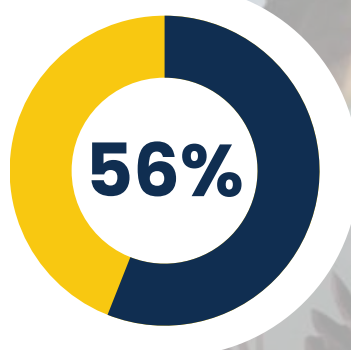
1 billion of these young people live in developing countries, in regions that are directly dependent on land and natural resources for sustenance.

WE PROPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GLOBAL PROCESS AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE TO EMPOWER YOUNG LEADERSHIP IN DECISION-MAKING, ADDRESSING THE CURRENT VOID IN THIS CRITICAL AREA

56%

of the world's population are below 35 years.

Yet they are drastically under-represented in decision-making.



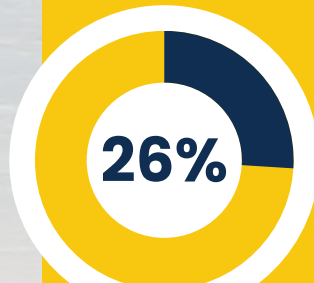
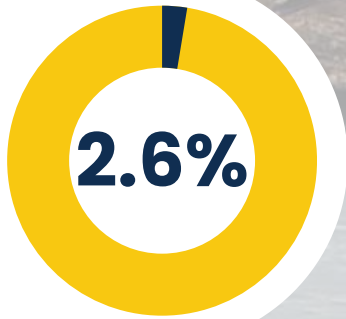
Youth Representation at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26)

Sister convention, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),

Even this limited participation was dominated by passive advisory and secretary roles rather than active participation in decision-making.

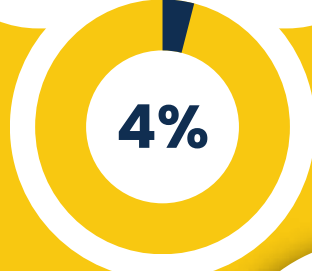
2,6%

Is the tiny fraction of the world's elected representatives are under the age of 30, and a third of all governments have no young representatives at all



YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER UNDER 35 YEARS

HEADS AND DEPUTY HEADS OF DELEGATION UNDER 35



4%



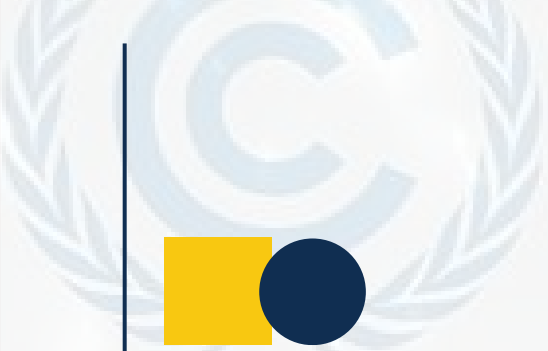
Initiatives exist within the UN and UNCCD scope of work to engage young people, for example the UNCCD Youth Caucus, Land Heroes campaign, The Goodwill and Land Ambassadors, Capacity Building Marketplace, Decent Jobs for Youth initiative and the Youth Engagement Strategy (decision 5/COP15).

While these initiatives are excellent to meaningfully engage youth, none of them is tailored to involve young people in decision-making processes or equip young change-makers with the skills, experience, and networks necessary to negotiate, design, and implement multilateral environmental agreements.

Within the UNCCD negotiations, several barriers impede effective youth engagement in decision-making processes. There is a lack of specific mandates enabling young people to effectively participate in the negotiation process. Meaningful involvement requires youth to engage as negotiators and active agents within institutionalised decision-making frameworks, which are currently absent.

Additionally, limited engagement with national focal points exacerbates this issue, hindering the integration of youth perspectives. Moreover, the scarcity of financial resources and the complexity of technical language used in UNCCD discussions further marginalises young voices.

The fragmented nature of engagement poses another challenge, with insufficient connections to UNCCD programs on all levels. Critically, there is currently no global process to enhance the capacity and representation of youth negotiators within UNCCD processes.



United Nations
Climate Change Conference
Bonn, Germany

CONCEPT NOTE

OUR SOLUTION



The **Youth Negotiators Academy (YNA)** launched in 2022, with its first flagship initiative, the **Climate Youth Negotiator Programme (CYNP)**. The program has witnessed significant growth and impact, becoming a vital platform fostering the development of young negotiators within the **UNFCCC** processes. Since its inception:

On 2022 it engaged **26** countries, equipping **60** young negotiators with essential skills. This cohort made substantial contributions, with 50 representatives actively participating in negotiations at COP27. Building on this momentum, the program expanded its reach in **2023**, involving 54 countries and training **175** youth negotiators. Their amplified presence at COP28, with 125 negotiators present, underscored the program's efficacy in cultivating young climate negotiators.

The CYNP continues its efforts in 2024 and is guided by its mission to foster youth leadership, promote intergenerational and environmental justice, reinstall trust in democratic multilateral institutions, and ultimately contribute to better negotiated outcomes for both people and the planet.



CLIMATE YOUTH NEGOTIATOR PROGRAMME

THE CHAMPION COUNTRIES

In 2022 we worked together with 26 countries from all over the world.



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Albania | 10 Indonesia | 19 Panama |
| 2 Argentina | 11 Jordan | 20 Paraguay |
| 3 Bhutan | 12 Lebanon | 21 Peru |
| 4 Chad | 13 Liberia | 22 Solomon Islands |
| 5 Dominican Republic | 14 Marshall Islands | 23 Sweden |
| 6 Federated States of Micronesia | 15 Nepal | 24 Switzerland |
| 7 Fiji | 16 Nigeria | 25 United Kingdom |
| 8 The Gambia | 17 Niue | 26 Vanuatu |
| 9 Ghana | 18 Palau | |

CYNP Countries 2023

In 2023 we worked together with 54 countries from all over the world.



- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Albania | 20. Ecuador | 39. Palau |
| 2. Antigua and Barbuda | 21. Fiji | 40. Panama |
| 3. Argentina | 22. Gambia | 41. Paraguay |
| 4. Bahamas | 23. Ghana | 42. Peru |
| 5. Belize | 24. Grenada | 43. Saint Lucia |
| 6. Benin | 25. Indonesia | 44. Sierra Leone |
| 7. Bhutan | 26. Ireland | 45. Suriname |
| 8. Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 27. Jordan | 46. Switzerland |
| 9. Botswana | 28. Kenya | 47. Timor-Leste |
| 10. Brazil | 29. Lebanon | 48. Tonga |
| 11. Burkina Faso | 30. Liberia | 49. Tuvalu |
| 12. Burundi | 31. Marshall Islands | 50. Uganda |
| 13. Chad | 32. Mexico | 51. United Kingdom of
Great Britain &
Northern Ireland |
| 14. Chile | 33. Micronesia (Federated States of) | 52. Vanuatu |
| 15. Colombia | 34. Mongolia | 53. Yemen |
| 16. Cook Islands | 35. Nauru | 54. Zimbabwe |
| 17. Costa Rica | 36. Niger | |
| 18. Dominica | 37. Nigeria | |
| 19. Dominican Republic | 38. Niue | |



ABOUT

Land Youth Negotiator Programme (LYNP)

A transformative approach for **Intergenerational Land Justice** and leadership in UN Land & Desertification Negotiations

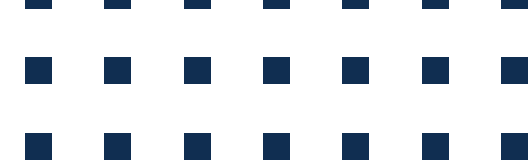
SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1 Countries sign the Memorandum of Understanding with LYNP
- 2 Countries nominate up to 2 youth to participate in the LYNP according to the Selection Guide
- 3 Participants benefit from a holistic, intensive six months programme to boost their capacity, confidence and connections to become young negotiators
- 4 Young negotiators negotiate on behalf of their country at UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- ✓ Aged 18 - 35 years of age as of 2024
- ✓ Eligible: authorised and confirmed to negotiate in country's Party Delegation at COP16
- ✓ Able to participate fully in trainings ahead of COP16, starting in June 2024
- ✓ Able to attend and negotiate at COP16 in full
- ✓ Should have a good command of English both verbally and in writing.
- ✓ Should have a basic understanding of the UNCCD and LDN landscape (national and global context)
- ✓ Ability to represent the respective country (recognising the comprehensive support and guidance from the LYNP team).
- ✓ Willingness to engage with other young people and ensure that marginalised voices are heard in decision making.
- ✓ Confidence in the youth negotiator's leadership potential.



GOAL FOR 2024:
60 trained youth negotiators from 30 countries at UNCCD COP16



HOW IT WORKS

At the 21 session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 21) to the UNCCD, YNA announced its second programme, the Land Youth Negotiator Programme (LYNP), intending to replicate the successful structure of CYNP within UNFCCC in the past 2 years.

Empowering and equipping young people to become impactful and effective negotiators by

Developing their negotiation and leadership knowledge, skills and understanding through an intense, tailored capacity-building training, recognizing that investing in youth professional capabilities is essential. Creating a supportive safe space and connecting them through community building and embedding into the wider ecosystem, recognizing that global networks and productive professional relationships are crucial.

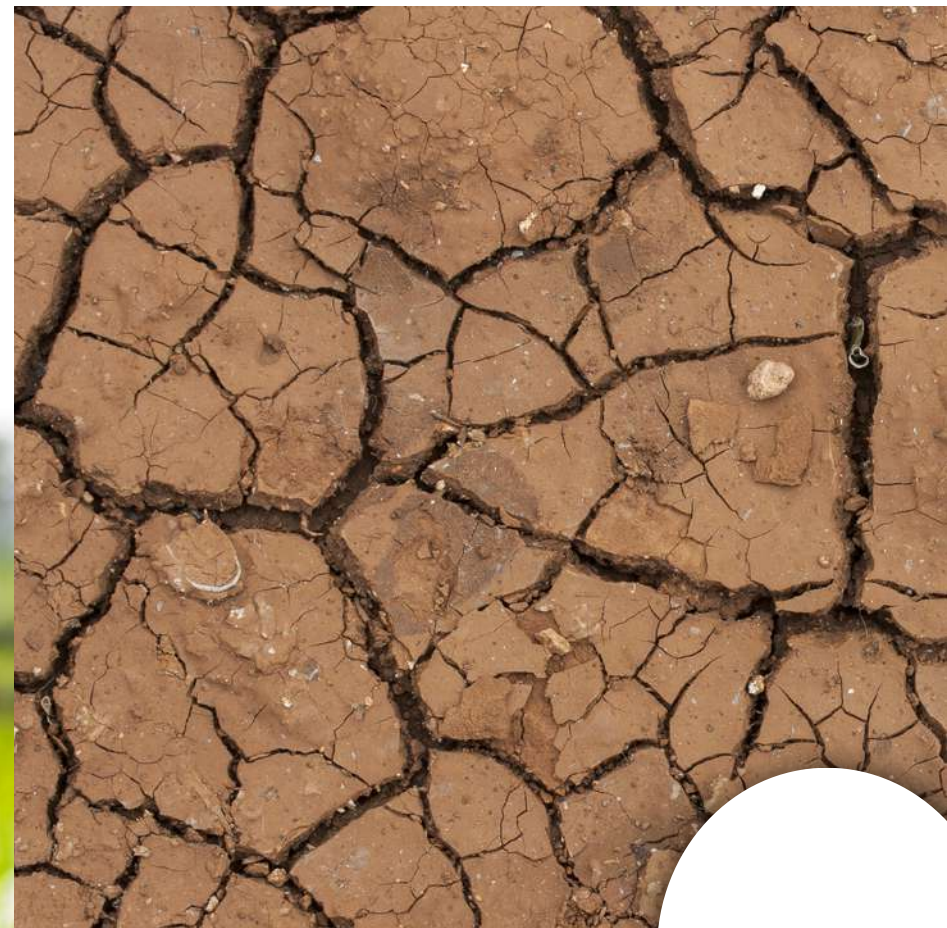
Driving systemic change to ensure long-term meaningful youth leadership by

- Providing funding for participation through dedicated travel and subsistence grants, recognizing the global financial inequalities and barriers;
- Gaining public support for the aimed impact through advocacy and outreach, recognizing and valuing the contributions of young negotiators in decision-making processes as essential for inclusive and effective governance



To take part, UNCCD member states sign an agreement with YNA to confirm that the young person is selected fairly according to the YNA selection guidelines and will have a meaningful, dedicated role as active negotiator in their country's delegation.

Young people can only be nominated by their UNCCD Country Focal Point, after signing the bespoke agreement.





STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

LYNP builds on the mandate and aim of the UNCCD as the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The mandate of the Convention and its 197 Parties is to support a future that avoids, and reverses desertification/land degradation and minimizes effects of drought (DLDD) in affected areas at all levels – and to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During COP15 to the UNCCD in May 2022, a request was made to the UNCCD Secretariat, which entailed the design of a Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) aimed at developing a strategy and the necessary modalities for implementation. The objective is to ensure a more robust, effective, and meaningful involvement of youth in the meetings and processes of the Convention (as per decision 5/COP15). The goal is to integrate youth into UNCCD decision-making processes, acknowledging them as vital stakeholders in the UNCCD's work and empowering them to foster continual engagement opportunities.

The LYNP aligns with the SDGs, particularly:



THE GLOBAL GOALS



PRINCIPLES

The LYNP delivers in line with the following principles:

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PIONEERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAND NEGOTIATORS, ARMING THEM WITH VITAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNITY, NETWORKS, AND RESOURCES FOR UNPARALLELED SUCCESS.



YOUTH-LEADERSHIP GUIDED BY INTERGENERATIONAL WISDOM

LYNP is for youth, led by youth, and driven by inter- and intragenerational leadership to drive the institutional changes we want to see.



INFORMED BY GOOD PRACTICE

LYNP builds on proven good practices such as the CYNP and is in line with UNCCD's Youth Engagement Strategy



COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

LYNP works closely with relevant existing programmes and initiatives by collaborating and partnering with over 50 relevant organisations and institutions.



OUR SALIENT FEATURES

LED BY YOUTH

who understand the uniqueness of this space and are motivated to find the meaningful and impactful solutions



UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM

with diverse individuals creating powerful synergies with widerecosystem



WISDOM COUNCIL

for strategic alignment and to bring in intergenerational wisdom and expertise

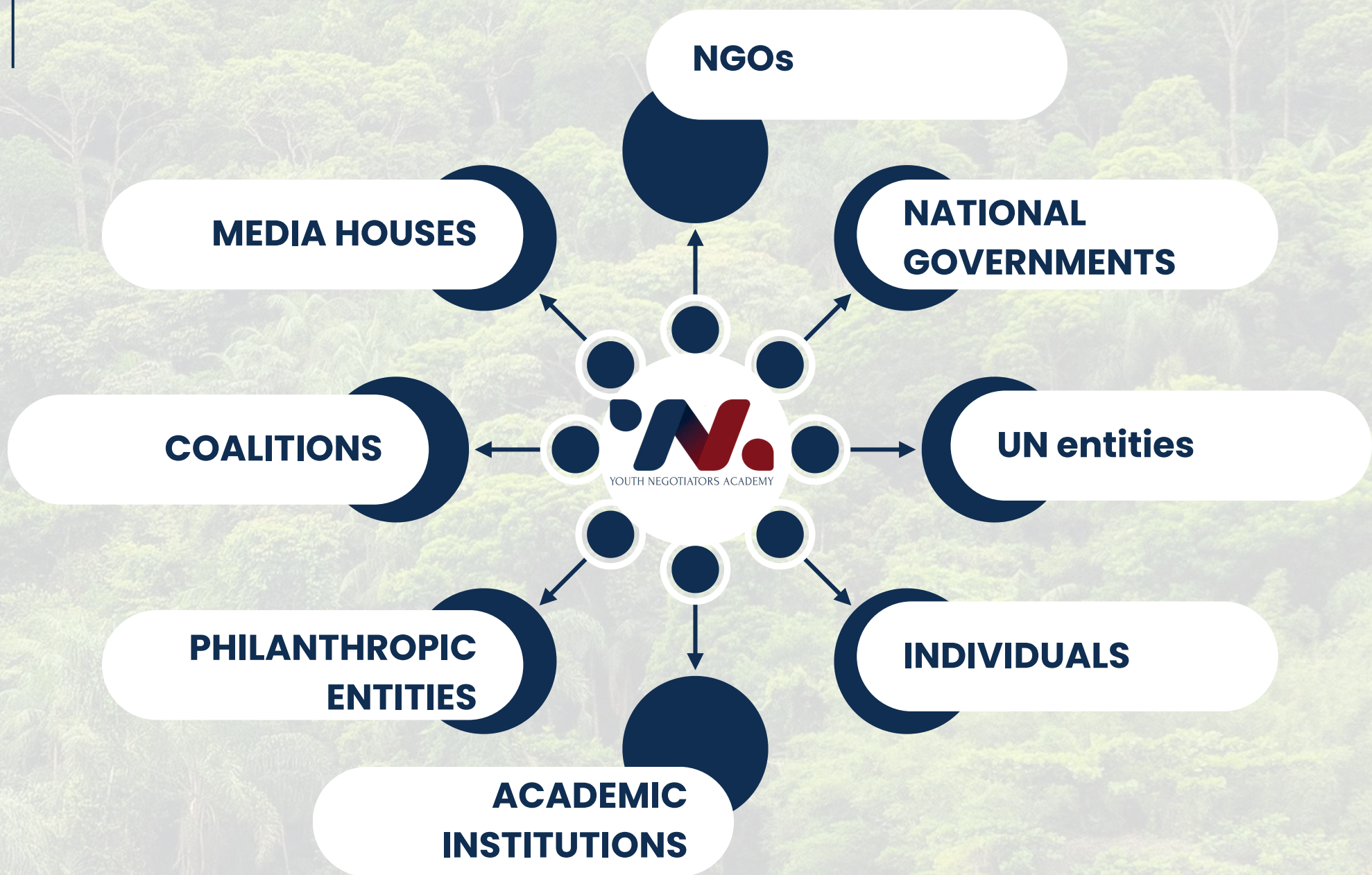


INDEPENDENT AND INTERRELATED

we have strong connections to the system but are unencumbered by bureaucracy and hierarchies



OUR ECOSYSTEM AND ALLIES





OBJECTIVES FOR 2024/25

CONCEPT NOTE

OVERALL PROGRAMMING

- Establish the LYNP and set up relevant partnerships
- Sign agreements with 30 Parties to train 60 youth negotiators, who will be supported to attend one or more of the UNCCD negotiations, including but not limited to UNCCD COP16 in 2024 and CRIC22 in 2025.

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

- Delivering a six month fundamental training on UNCCD Negotiations
- Create publicly accessible capacity-building content
- Mentorship Program: Pair young negotiators with experienced professionals in the field
- Conceptualising and delivering a pilot regional training.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

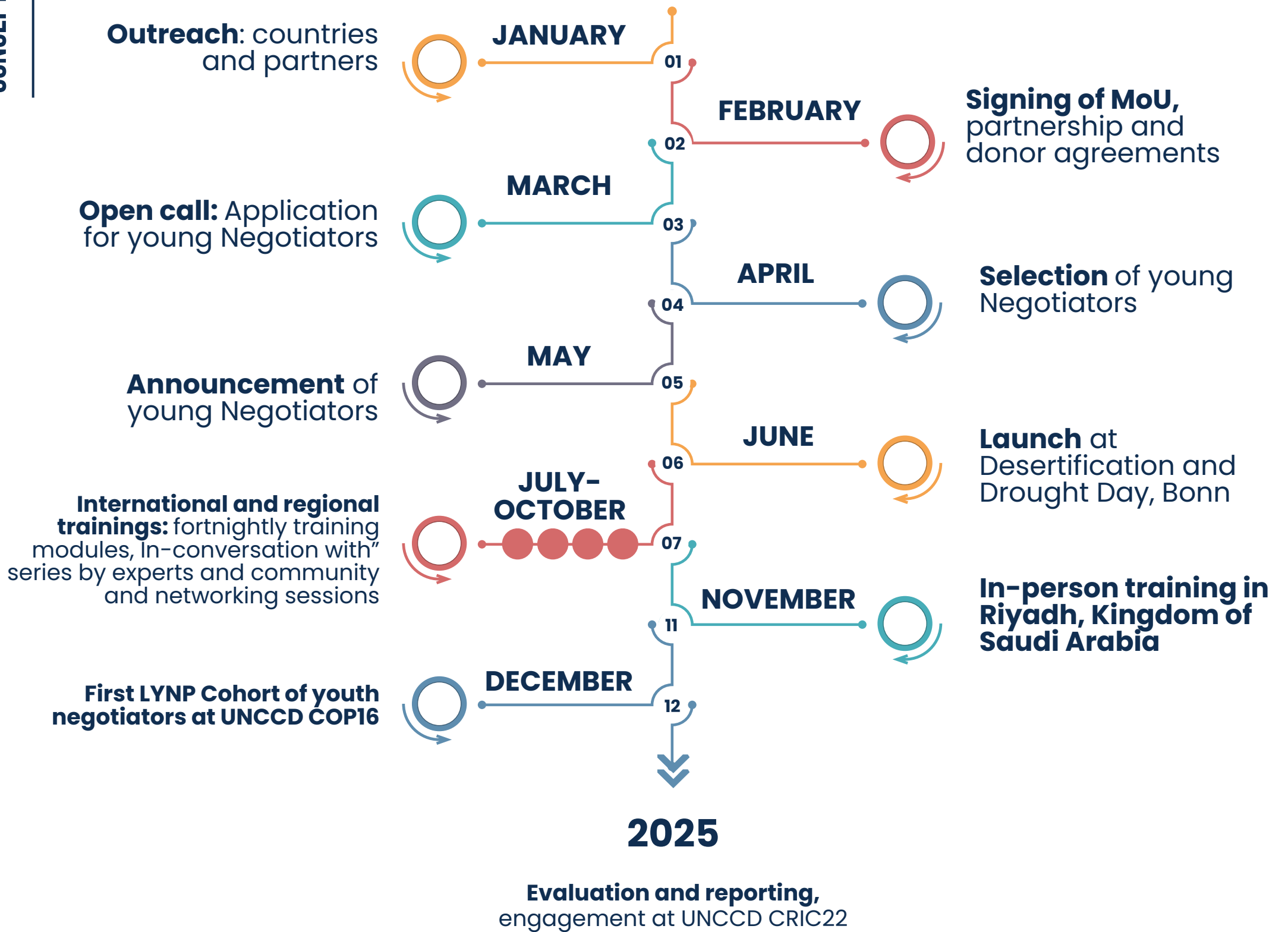
- Fostering a community of negotiators and connecting it in the larger movement
- Create a wisdom council fostering intergenerational equity
- Collaborating with the CYNP by linking negotiators trained by both CYNP and LYNP for discussions on the synergies and outcomes between the UNCCD and UNFCCC negotiation processes.
- Setting up a learning companionship system between LYNP and CYNP.
- “In Conversation with...” sessions to strengthen thematic and practical experience sharing and to widen knowledge on intersectional topics.

GRANTS

- Fundraise to provide Travel and Subsistence Grants to all negotiators from countries with insufficient financial resources for one or more UNCCD negotiations.
- In light of the growing momentum and interest in youth leadership and the urgency of the interlinked polycrisis, the LYNP is conceptualised as a multi-year programme.



Our Timeline 2024

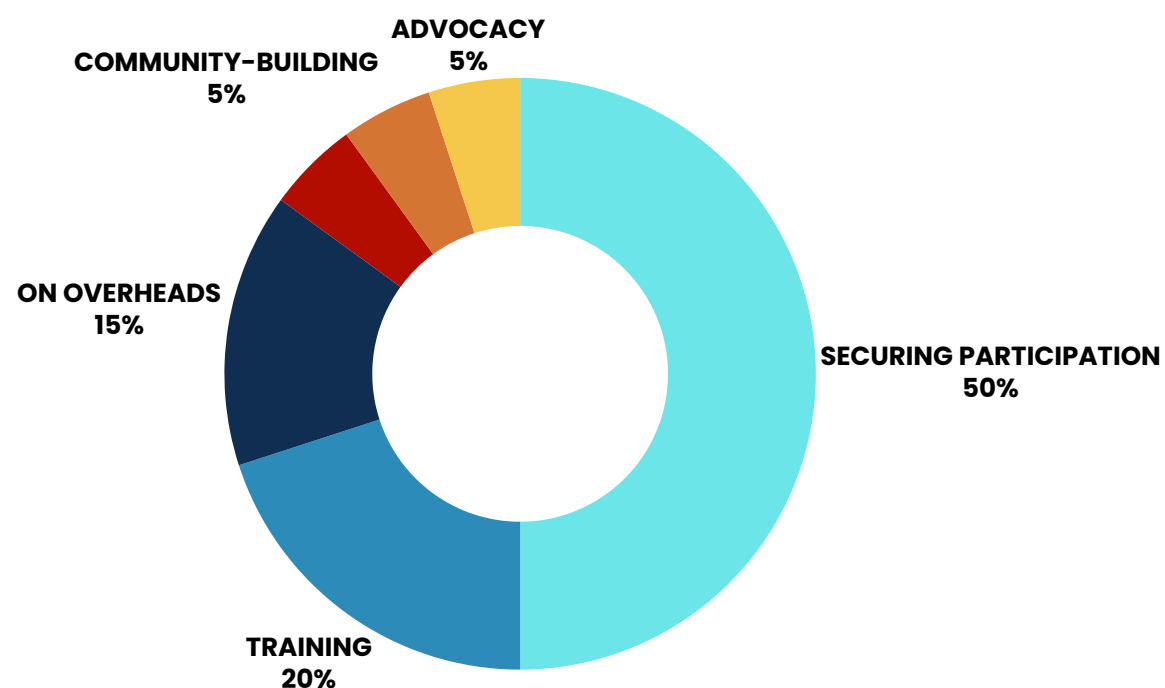




ALLOCATIONS

We are committed to provide transparent insight into the allocation of donations received. We understand the importance of accountability and trust in the donor-academy relationship, which is why we are committed to detailing exactly how we allocate our fundings to make a meaningful impact.

Through this concept, donors gain a clear understanding of the specific projects, programs reflected on our yearly report, describing the initiatives that where possible thanks to their contributions and support, empowering stakeholders to make informed decisions and feel confident in their investment towards creating positive change.



Join us in our mission to maximize the effectiveness and transparency of our impact, ensuring that every donation reaches its intended destination and makes a tangible difference in bridging youth participation in decision-making processes around Land Justice.



CONTACT

This proposal is presented by five young women from Asia, Africa and Europe who have extensive and diverse experiences in UN negotiations as negotiators, activists and advisors, youth leaders and environmental experts. These women co-founded the YNA and lead on the LYNP.



Please get in touch directly with Ms. Marie-Claire Graf, Ms. Veena Balakrishnan and Ms. JulietGrace Luwede or at team@youthnegotiators.org.

