



## TERMS OF REFERENCES EXTERNAL EVALUATION

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<b>Project Name:</b>	Generation Next
<b>Project Reference #:</b>	S-ASL-2024-0072
<b>Project Period:</b>	Since January the 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024
<b>Project Target Regions:</b>	Armenia and Georgia
<b>Implementing Organization:</b>	European Alliance of YMCAs (YMCA Europe)
<b>Funding Partner:</b>	Bread for the World <sup>1</sup> Germany

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### 1. Introduction

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European Alliance of YMCAs (YMCA Europe) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation, with its seat in Brussels. It was founded in 1973 as the area alliance uniting all the National YMCAs in Europe as member or cooperating Movements. Currently under the YMCA Europe constituency are 32 member and 5 co-operating National YMCA Movements, operating in 37 European countries through 4'100 local associations, more than 95'000 volunteers, almost 21'000 staff, and providing services to around 2 million beneficiaries annually.

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of YMCA Europe Generation Next<sup>2</sup> project was implemented during 2020 – 2023. The project started amidst the global Covid-19 pandemic and heightened tensions in and around the South Caucasus region, with the pandemic causing massive loss of life, closures and restrictions. The full-out war between Armenia & Azerbaijan, that started in September 2020 in its turn brought devastating results for all involved sides and resulted to a major humanitarian crisis, especially for people of Karabakh.

Despite certain delays and/or postponements due to the above-mentioned obstacles the project remained on course and in accordance with the set objectives. Meanwhile, YMCA Europe could not but immediately react to the drastic change of the context its GN project operated in, the ethnic cleansing in Karabakh and the exodus of over 150'000 people into Armenia, amongst them volunteers and members of the YMCA. Since October 2024 the main commitment for all the scholarship holders in Armenia became their participation to the YMCA Europe activities within the response to that Exodus.

During the internal Evaluation Workshop (Yerevan, November 2023), it was identified that the Georgian and Armenian students' experiences varied as the internships they were engaged in were different. However, their development, growth and impact stories were very similar and

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter BfdW

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter GN

most of them expressed very positive feedback about the project. Prior to the Workshop an online survey was conducted amongst the YMCA Scholarship holders both from Armenia and Georgia, which was used as a baseline both for structuring the discussion at the Evaluation Workshop, as well as for conceptualizing the continuation phase of the project.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024 – 2027 phase of the project continues to enable socially disadvantaged young people in Armenia and Georgia to complete their studies. However, beyond creating professional opportunities, the project seeks to strengthen the resilience of young people in the face of existential societal problems and encourage them to shape the future of their countries. Through an extensive support programme and internships at YMCA and other civil society organizations, the scholarship recipients will be involved in building and strengthening local civil society leadership. The combination of academic education with civic engagement is intended to contribute to overcoming frustration and restoring trust in fundamental values and principles of participation.

All the scholarship holders in Armenia come from the same American University of Armenia, with the university itself pre-selecting them. In case of Georgia, it's the YMCA selects the scholarship holders, and they come from various universities. Notably, all the scholarship holders both in Armenia and in Georgia are involved in internships related to conflict transformation projects and programme, whereby these are bridgebuilding camps bringing together Armenia and Azeri ethnic minorities in Georgia, or hubs helping war affected people to stay resilient and agile through life-skill development initiatives.

The first Generation Next cross-border Summer School was held at YMCA Camp Orange in Ureki, Georgia from 25 to 31 July 2025. The Summer School served as a central induction activity for scholarship beneficiaries from Armenia and Georgia, offering them the opportunity to meet, learn together, and exchange experiences from their participation in the programme. It created a structured environment for reflection on their academic and civic journeys while introducing them more deeply to the mission and service ethos of YMCA.

The Summer School was not the only induction activity, as scholarship holders continue to be regularly engaged in a range of international YMCA initiatives. These include capacity-building and service development programmes such as the Leadership Academy, Advocacy Training, and the Peace Work Institute, which collectively strengthen their skills in leadership, advocacy, and peacebuilding. In Armenia, the establishment of a Y Service Club as part of the global Y's Men International Movement has further consolidated alumni involvement. By enrolling graduates of the scholarship programme as members, the club ensures continuity of engagement and provides a platform for sustained civic service beyond the scholarship period.

Taken together, the Summer School, international initiatives, and alumni structures demonstrate that the project is not only supporting academic achievement but also embedding scholarship holders into a wider ecosystem of leadership and service. This approach reinforces cross-border cooperation, nurtures resilience, and ensures that the values of YMCA are carried forward by a new generation of socially engaged young leaders.

The project external evaluation now is important because it adds credibility, accountability, and learning value that internal reviews alone cannot provide. It is about strengthening trust, improving quality, and ensuring that the project's ambitious goals (education, resilience, and conflict transformation) are truly being met.

## **2. Cause & Objective of the Evaluation**

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The current phase of the project was designed and implemented based on the lessons learnt during the previous phase. In line with the World YMCA Vision 2030 and YMCA Europe Strategy 2021 - 2026, the GN project continuation aims at contributing to all the 5 objective indicators of that strategy, namely:

- Relevance: that need-based assistance is offered to young people, including those emerging from social, gender, ethnic backgrounds.
- Representation: that the YMCA values and service open to the academia, where most of the young people are present.
- Relationship: that Armenia-Georgia cross-border cooperation is in place fostering collaborative learning turning into collaborative action.
- Resilience: that the project helps war affected young people and communities to stay strong and hopeful.
- Response: that it directly contributes to the YMCA Europe response to Artsakh Exodus – i.e. deportation of the entire ethnic Armenian population of Karabakh to Armenia proper.

There are 2 specific project objectives set:

1. Academically educated young people from disadvantaged backgrounds become opinion leaders in social change parallel to their professional development, with objective indicators:
  - 1.1. 85 % of scholarship holders successfully complete their studies (at least 50 % female).
  - 1.2. 90 % of the scholarship holders complete an internship (at least 80 hours) in various non-profit programmes that serve the social development of their country.
2. The scholarship holders contribute to overcoming social and economical challenges in their communities in Armenia and Georgia during their studies, with objective indicators:
  - 2.1. 90% of scholarship holders successfully initiate and run up to 4 initiative projects in small groups in areas such as community service, philanthropy, social entrepreneurship and digital activism in their communities.
  - 2.2. Minimum 300 community members benefit from local initiatives and projects carried out by scholarship holders. The community members interviewed confirm that the initiatives have contributed to solving relevant community problems.

To this end, pre and post event surveys within each key project activity are used to get evidence-based data on the above indicators. The evaluation of the key project components are carried out based on the learning framework assuming four different levels of participants' feedback:

1. Reaction level, to be conducted on the spot upon the closure of each key activity;
2. Learning level, to be conducted a month after the completion of the key activity;
3. Behaviour level, to be conducted six month after the completion of the key activity;
4. Impact level, to be conducted after the completion of the Scholarship.

We believe that an external evaluation of the Generation Next project so far is vital in providing an independent and impartial perspective on whether the above objectives of the initiative are being achieved. While internal reviews and workshops have already offered valuable insights, they remain limited by proximity to the project and potential bias. An external evaluation adds credibility to the findings, ensuring that donors, partners, and communities can trust the evidence presented. It strengthens accountability by showing transparently how resources are being used and whether the scholarship program is truly enabling disadvantaged young people to complete their studies, engage in civic life, and contribute to conflict transformation.

Beyond accountability, an external evaluation brings learning value. Independent evaluators can highlight strengths and weaknesses that internal teams may overlook, offering fresh recommendations for improving the quality of the program. This is particularly important given the sensitive context in which the project operates—post-pandemic recovery, displacement due to the Artsakh Exodus, ongoing regional tensions, and the degrading political situations in the targeted countries, shrinking civil society space especially considered. By validating the impact of internships, community initiatives, and resilience-building activities, the evaluation ensures that the project is not only meeting its indicators but also genuinely empowering young people to become leaders of social change.

Finally, external evaluation is a strategic necessity. It confirms alignment with YMCA Europe's 2021–2026 Strategy and the World YMCA Vision 2030, demonstrating that the project contributes to relevance, representation, relationship, resilience, and response. It verifies whether scholarship holders are becoming opinion leaders, whether community members are benefiting from initiatives, and whether trust in civic participation is being restored. In this way, the evaluation strengthens the project's credibility, improves its quality, and ensures that its lessons can be shared and replicated across other contexts where young people face existential societal challenges.

### **3. Key Questions**

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YMCA Europe wants to have the GN project assessed, collecting and collating evidence-based data on the above-mentioned strategic priority and project objective indicators, cross-cutting with the DAC<sup>3</sup> criteria, including:

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<sup>3</sup> Development Assistance Committee of OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)

**Relevance – Doing the right things**

- Are project objectives aligned with target group needs?
- Has the project adapted to the context changes?
- Are the selection criteria appropriate for the target group and project goals?

**Coherence – Fit with wider efforts**

- Does the project align with YMCA Global and European strategies?
- Is it consistent with human rights, gender equality and inclusion?

**Effectiveness – Achieving objectives**

- Are the project objectives being achieved?
- How did direct target groups benefit?
- Are the current selection criteria and procedures effective in identifying candidates with the highest potential to benefit from and contribute to the objectives of the scholarship program?

**Efficiency – Using resources well**

- Were resources used economically?
- Is the input-output balance optimal?

**Impact – Making a difference**

- What intended or unintended effects occurred?
- Has it been exemplary or broadly influential?

**Sustainability – Lasting effects**

- Will the skills and networks built endure beyond the scholarship?
- What risks or potentials exist for long-term effectiveness?

**4. Evaluation Design & Methods**

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To answer the above evaluation questions (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability), the evaluator(s) is to secure that both quantitative evidence and qualitative insights are captured.

It is up to the hired expert(s) to suggest the most appropriate evaluation methodology. We foresee a complex methodology which will involve questionnaires, descriptions of projects initiated and implemented by the beneficiaries, individual and group interviews, testimonials, social media content analysis, etc. The methodology of evaluation should tackle all levels of change:

**Outputs** - activities which took place, spaces and conditions created, intellectual deliverables produced, numbers reached, etc.

**Outcomes** - change in attitude, in level of awareness, in new skills developed, in motivation towards social activism, in values perception, etc.

**Impact** - examples of behaviour change, new initiatives which appeared, how lives of indirect beneficiaries were changed, changes in CSOs, how the project contributed to civil society development in the countries, etc.

To ensure that perspectives from all relevant actors are gathered and the findings are based on solid evidence, the following project stakeholders are to be considered.

- **Target groups:** participants of project key beneficiaries, i.e. the scholarship holders.
- **Local partners:** YMCA associations or other community organizations where the scholarship holders were involved in internships.
- **Academia:** institutions where the scholarship holders carried out their studies, American University of Armenia especially considered.
- **YMCA Europe leadership:** organisation and project managers, and staff overseeing the implementation.
- **Donors and external partners:** Bread for the World especially considered.

## 5. Evaluation Process, Time Frame & Expected Products

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A rough process of the evaluation process assumes:

- Studying GN baseline information, including previous and current project phase evaluation data.
- During the GN Summer School (August 19 – 25, 2026, Dresden, Germany) conduct the Outcome Evaluation and Impact Assessment Workshop, with all the current phase Scholarship holders as the focus group.
- Facilitating structured questionnaires (incl. testimonials) and online interviews with project participants, alumni and key stakeholders.

The following outputs / products are expected throughout the assessment process. All documents should be in English.

- **Inception Report:** is expected at the very start of the evaluation process (within the first 4–6 weeks after the contracting). This should ensure the agreed methodology, scope, and work plan before data collection begins.
- **Draft Report:** this mid-term output of the evaluation process is expected to be at YMCA Europe's disposal by December the 31st, 2026.
- **Final Report:** the final output of the evaluation process is expected to be at the disposal of YMCA Europe for external use and of the project key stakeholders by March the 31<sup>st</sup>, 2027.

## 6. Key Qualifications of the Evaluator(s) & Content of the Evaluator(s)' Offer

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Through due consultation with the GN key stakeholders, YMCA Europe plans to extend a tender and commission competent external expertise to facilitate this assessment process and deliver the Evaluation Report as its output, specifically assuming:

YMCA Europe estimates 25 working days to accomplish the task, this includes partaking into the above-mentioned Workshop and deskwork. The interested experts should be able to demonstrate quality know-how and relevant experience in both project assessment and conflict transformation work. Being able to go along well with young people is another quality sought. All the communication and outputs are to be in affluent English.

**Deadlines: YMCA Europe expects proposals from interested experts by June the 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

Please contact YMCA Europe Executive Secretary Vardan Hambardzumyan at: [vardan@ymcaeurope.com](mailto:vardan@ymcaeurope.com). Then through June 2026 the selected expert(s) will be shortlisted, interviewed, contracted and this Terms of References finalised by June the 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

The applicant evaluator(s)' offer should contain CVs of all involved and Technical/specific proposal, including;

- short explanation and justification of the methods to be deployed;
- cost estimate that includes both, the fee as well as any ancillary costs to be incurred, such as transport, accommodation, taxes, fees and costs of workshops in the scope of the evaluation etc.