

Global Young Academy – Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

The Global Young Academy (GYA) is an independent academy of young leaders, elected on the basis of research excellence and on their commitment to use their expertise for the benefit of society. Together GYA members build consensus on science policy topics, address societal issues through interdisciplinary discourse, foster intercultural dialogue, create an international network, and develop leadership skills.

The GYA defines science as any inquiry-based, knowledge-generating research, including natural, physical and social sciences, as well as engineering, medicine, the arts and humanities. With the term "scientists", the GYA refers to all scholars, irrespective of their research area or occupation.

Vision and mission

Society is confronted with increasingly complex and shared challenges at local, regional, and global scales. These mutual challenges range from climate change to gender inequality, from digital vulnerabilities to continuing conflicts and poverty. Scientists have a key role to play in developing solutions to these issues. To effectively confront these myriad and shared challenges, scientists with different backgrounds and areas of expertise must draw upon their unique strengths and knowledge bases in regional and global collaborations. In addition to research and analyses, scientists have a role to play in the coordination of policies from diverse sectors, countries, and regions.

The vision of the Global Young Academy (GYA) is to be the voice of young scientists. The mission of the GYA is to empower outstanding early-career researchers to lead international, interdisciplinary and intergenerational dialogue – both with each other and with external stakeholders – by developing, connecting and mobilizing young talent from six continents. The GYA's purpose is to promote reason and inclusiveness in global decision-making. Academy members share a passion for the role of science in creating a better world.

The GYA works towards closing the gaps between science and scientists in every part of the world. The Academy aims to make scientific systems around the world more effective in developing knowledge and communicating it to society. GYA creates alumni who will be empowered to change the world. It seeks to ensure that global decision-making incorporates scholarly knowledge and is inclusive, with a focus on how today's decisions will affect future generations.

Guiding principles

The GYA believes that early career scientists are optimally positioned to think in new ways and to innovate solutions to societal challenges. We also believe that bringing together outstanding young scientists from around the world creates new opportunities for tackling global issues. The exchange of ideas across disciplines/research areas, cultures and nationalities will expand opportunities for scientists, increase global scientific capacity and contribute to improving the state of the world.

The strategic targets of the GYA are guided by the following principles:

Excellence

Our members are selected based upon a proven track record for outstanding contributions to science and their commitment to public service. We strive for the highest quality in our activities: excellence is an imperative.

Diversity

We are an Academy of early career scientists whose membership draws from across all disciplines and research areas. We aim to include scientists from every geographical region around the world and for inclusive representation by gender and scientific disciplines.

Responsibility

Concerned with global challenges, we take special responsibility for our actions and work towards cooperative solutions, considering the social, ethical and moral issues involved, and being aware of dilemmas created by the interactions of science and society.

Evidence

As scientists, we expect solutions to society's problems to incorporate scholarly knowledge. We seek to contribute innovative science-based policy ideas to the debates of concern to both scientists and the wider community.

Independence

The Academy fosters early career independence for young scientists. It operates independently from governments, other academies, funding sources, and businesses. We exist as a non-profit organization.

Impact

GYA focuses on activities of concern to young scientists, supports career development of young scientists, and is committed to addressing global challenges. GYA supports the formation of National Young Academies that empower these scientists to contribute to national improvement.

Strategic targets

To realize its vision and mission, the GYA has established five strategic targets for the period of 2016 – 2020. The Academy's strategic targets are to:

1. Contribute to efforts to address societal challenges.

To achieve this goal, the GYA will:

- a. Step forward as an idea generator to expand the range of options available to decision makers.
- b. Regularly produce statements and vision documents on societal challenges to disseminate progress.
- c. Strengthen its connections with global stakeholders, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the International Council for Science (ICSU), and the World Economic Forum (WEF).

- d. Strengthen its role as nexus for global stakeholders and excellent scientists worldwide.
- e. Initiate a searchable database of 1000 Young Academy members and alumni to facilitate inclusion of young scientists in the committees and events of global stakeholders.

2. Identify, develop, and nurture global science leaders.

To achieve this goal, the GYA will:

- a. Systematically reach out to more young scientists around the world. The Academy will actively engage with young scientists irrespective of geographical region.
- b. Identify high potential global science leaders through membership selections, the annual meeting and workshops, GYA speaking opportunities, and leadership roles within the GYA. The Academy focuses on identifying leadership potential in young scientists from all backgrounds and countries.
- c. Provide structured and tailored training and development opportunities to its members on science diplomacy, education, communication, and policy. Unique to the GYA's activities is its natural focus on interdisciplinarity and cross-cultural engagement.
- d. Develop new *Science Leadership Programs (SLPs)*. An SLP provides in-depth training and empowerment of young scientists with regard to collective leadership in science, including skills training in creative facilitation, peer mentorship, and stakeholder engagement. The GYA is already a partner in the successful Africa Science Leadership Program, and it aims to partner in, and facilitate the establishment of, other local, regional, and global Science Leadership Programs.
- e. Stimulate collaboration between young scientists, policy makers, industry representatives, artists, journalists, and the general public through joint events and projects to build bridges between science, policy, industry, and society that will continue to grow subsequent career stages.

3. Maximize the potential of National Young Academies

To achieve this goal, the GYA will:

- a. Encourage and facilitate the establishment of new National Young Academies (NYAs) in any country that has a critical mass of young scientists, and helping to build critical mass in countries where there is not yet any. The GYA's experience with NYAs and relation with senior academies puts the organization in an excellent position to connect local young scientists, garner support from senior academies and other stakeholders, as well as to provide blueprints and practical support regarding constitutions, coordination, and projects/activities.
- b. Encourage and facilitate regional and inter-regional activities of NYAs. Based on the successful initial examples of our African and Asian regional meetings, the GYA will facilitate (inter-)regional meetings and activities that will strengthen the connections and collaborations between both young and senior scientists, as well as with the wider community.
- c. Encourage and facilitate communication & collaboration among NYAs. The GYA is in a good position to provide an online platform for all NYAs to share their activities,

agendas of events, and calls for experts. The GYA will promote NYA activities through its networks and social media connections. The GYA will continue to co-organize and facilitate worldwide meetings of NYAs on a bi-annual basis, and facilitate the production of collaborative statements on topics that are close to the hearts of young scientists (e.g. Open Science, mentoring) or where young scientists can provide innovative support for policy issues.

4. Provide benchmark reports on science policy topics relevant for young scientists

To achieve this goal, the GYA will:

- a. Issue statements and reports regarding developments and practices in science across the globe, including equality, mentoring, and merit-based academic reward systems with the aim of improving the scientific enterprise internationally. The GYA will empower young scientists to propose and promote the development and implementation of novel approaches in science and policy development with a particular focus on inclusive decision-making.
- b. Build and maintain a global database of quantitative and qualitative information regarding the state of young scientists around the world. The Global State of Young Scientists (GloSYS) project collects qualitative and quantitative information on the situation and environment of young scientists. The GloSYS database will contain information from all major regions in a standardized format.
- c. Encourage and facilitate GloSYS projects focusing on the state of young scientists in specific countries or regions. GloSYS reports can empower local young scientists to demand attention for and improve local conditions.
- d. Develop and foster opportunities for GYA and NYA members and alumni to participate in global committees, speaking engagements, and other opportunities that move the state of science forward.

5. Serve as an outstanding example for interdisciplinary, intergenerational, collaborative, and cross-cultural dialogue in science

To achieve this goal, the GYA will:

- a. Continue to hold the International Conference of Young Scientists on a yearly basis and use innovative meeting and outreach formats to stimulate interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and intercultural dialogue and collaboration.
- b. Actively seek opportunities to further understand, develop and contribute best practices regarding interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and intercultural collaborations in science policy, policy for society, science education, and innovation.
- c. Make its data, reports, and templates as much as possible freely accessible, in order to support and promote Open Science and Open Source movements.

Supporting actions

To succeed in its strategic targets, the GYA has formulated three supporting actions. The GYA's supporting actions are to:

1. Improve internal and external communications

In the next five years, the GYA will:

- a. Develop and execute a professional public relations (PR) strategy regarding GYA activities, publications, and engagements.
- b. Have all its reports peer-reviewed before publication, and move to a process of the development of a GYA publication (with or without the involvement of external experts) that is signed off by the Executive Committee before the start of the project.
- c. Develop an internal website to encourage and facilitate communication and collaboration between members and alumni, as well as the effective functioning of Working Groups.
- d. Develop an Induction program for new members that involves an information pack, mentoring by an experienced member and an introduction to the first annual meeting.

2. Diversify and expand fundraising

In the next five years, the GYA will:

- a. Develop and expand on the Academy's public presentation of its niche, and how it can achieve the most impact.
- b. Develop and nurture relationships with (potential) funders in countries other than Germany, the source of the GYA's current core funding. The GYA attracted about 140,000 Euro from non-German donors in 2015, and aims to triple this amount by 2020 to allow regional projects and meetings as well as international travel for GYA activities.
- c. Aim to increase its funding for core staff. The GYA will need the following full-time staff to serve the current activities and demands of the membership and GYA leadership: one media officer, one project officer, one development officer, one accountant/administrative assistant, and one Managing Director.
- d. Secure sustainable funding for its annual International Conference of Young Scientists and Annual General Meeting.

3. Strengthen internal governance and the managing office

In the next five years, the GYA will:

- a. Further develop simple and effective guidelines for review and selection processes, activities, and annual meetings.
- b. Consider the introduction of a probationary period of membership in the constitution to ensure a high activity level of all members.
- c. Consider the introduction of a 2-year Executive Committee (EC) term in the constitution, with e.g. a probationary period and rotating entrances to ensure good functioning of the EC.

- d. Evaluate the structure, roles/responsibilities, and job titles of the managing office to ensure that it meets the developing demands of the organization.
- e. Develop standard communication and support 'best practices' by the managing office. Because GYA members are young scientists under substantial pressure to move forward in their careers (and often have a young family), the efficient and effective support by managing office staff is crucial if members are to contribute effectively to the organization's activities.