

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Regional Youth Leadership Mobility Programme 2025/26

#### 1. What is the Regional Youth Leadership Mobility Programme (RYLMP), when did it start, and what have been its key outcomes and impacts to date?

The **Regional Youth Leadership Mobility Programme (RYLMP)** is a regional youth advocacy programme built to increase **the advocacy, leadership, and research competencies of young professionals**, researchers, and activists through structured training, targeted mentorship, and high-level policy exposure.

The programme is implemented by [Center for Science and Innovation for Development \(SCiDEV\)](#) in Albania, the [Youth Education Forum \(YEF\)](#) in North Macedonia, and the [Youth Initiative for Human Rights \(YIHR\)](#) in Serbia with the financial support of the [Open Society Foundation in Western Balkans](#). 2025/2026 fellow intake will be the programme's **fourth cycle of this initiative**.

During the previous intakes (2022/2023 and 2023/2024), around **40 young people** from the three countries benefited from capacity building and continuous mentorship by experts, took part in study visits tailored to their advocacy goals, and prepared policy papers as part of their advocacy efforts. Policy papers produced by the 2023/2024 RYLMP fellows [can be found here](#).

#### 2. What are data-driven advocacy actions?

Data-driven advocacy refers to the strategic use of data, evidence, and research to influence policy and drive a specific desired change at the local, national, or regional levels.

*Example: Using data from case studies that illustrate the positive impact of digital rights education in schools, to support a recommendation sent to the Ministry of Education to include digital rights within the curriculum.*

As part of the program, fellows will receive capacity-building support in research methods such as desk research, secondary data analysis, and stakeholder interviews, as well as gain a deeper understanding of advocacy, how it works in practice, which strategies are most effective, and how it can be tailored to different contexts through continuous mentorship by experts.

### 3. What is the Policy paper & advocacy plan template? Where can I find it?

Policy paper & advocacy plan template is one of the documents that all interested individuals should submit as part of their RYLMP application. The data-driven advocacy action aims to test the applicant's skills in problem framing and advocacy planning.

The document can be downloaded (select file, then download) [here](#).

### 4. How will the fellows be selected?

An evaluation committee composed of three assessors (one assessor per country, plus one Alumni member as an external observer) will score every file against published criteria. The evaluation form template can be accessed [here](#).

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview throughout the last week of October until mid November that tests commitment and availability for the full 9-month cycle.

The process concludes with a ranked list, formal acceptance letters, and the signing of participation agreements.

### 5. What level of English proficiency is required?

Participants are expected to have a strong command of both spoken and written English, as the entire program will be conducted in English. Your proficiency should correspond to at least the B2 level. The participant **won't need** a standardized test to prove their proficiency. However, all the outputs of the programme, such as papers, reports, advocacy, presentations in events and meetings, will be in English, so we expect fellows to be completely comfortable with English.

### 6. How will the teams be formed?

Each theme topic team will comprise a multinational team, with members from each state participating in the project. The teams will be formed based on the first preference of each applicant. If there are high requests for a specific topic, the applications with the highest points awarded for that topic will be selected in their first preference. The other applicants shortlisted by the evaluation committee that performed slightly lower than these applicants

will be appointed in their second theme of choice. Once a group is formed, with the assistance of mentors who have expertise in your common topic, you will perform joint research and an advocacy plan.

### 7. Will participants be able to select their own team mates?

No, the members of the formed groups will be selected solely based on their common topic of interest. When matching the participants, the project team will also consider that the groups should consist of participants from all three countries.

### 8. What can we expect from the mentors and the mentoring process?

The role of the mentor is primarily to provide continuous support and feedback to the fellows on their research and advocacy work, and secondarily to ensure the quality of the policy paper. Mentors will provide continuous guidance throughout the entire process, supporting the team members to decide on a specific topic within their thematic area and to design the research plan. Further into the programme, they will monitor the progress of the fellows with the stages of their research (desk research, collecting and analysing data, etc). They will provide support to participants to ease the process of collecting and analyzing data, as well as provide feedback on the progress. Mentors will revise the first draft of the policy paper and approve the final policy paper to be published. Regarding the advocacy plans, the mentors will offer advice to their fellows on the type of activities to conduct, which stakeholders to engage, and how to maximize the effectiveness of their campaign plan.

### 9. What advocacy activities are we supposed to develop and implement?

The advocacy activities must be related to the topic of the policy paper the fellows have been working on. Each fellow will have the opportunity to apply for mini-grants to fund the costs of their advocacy plan. The advocacy plan should include 2-3 activities that contribute to achieving an overall goal in response to one or more recommendations from the policy paper.

**Example:** *The policy paper “Importance of digital education in elementary school” written by your team in the RYLMP Programme recommends incorporating digital rights in the curriculum of ICT in elementary schools. You organize a roundtable with elementary school ICT teachers to garner their support for signing an open letter to the Ministry of Education of your country, which supports this recommendation.*

Other types of activities may include starting and sending petitions to the relevant stakeholders, organizing consultations or awareness-raising trainings to specific targets, engaging with policymakers and members of parliament or local government representatives, writing and publishing op-eds, and running targeted social media campaigns, etc. SCiDEV, YIHR, and YEF will support RYLMP fellows in implementing the advocacy actions, facilitating access to stakeholders, and providing guidance and promoting their efforts.

## 10. How many advocacy plans will be selected, and how will the selection process take place?

Partner organizations will provide additional financial support to **six selected advocacy actions** through mini-grants. The selection will be based on the performance of the fellows and the potential impact of their initiatives, to support **two fellows/two advocacy actions per country**. The process will be conducted transparently, and participants will be informed from the outset about how it works.

## 11. What is the itinerary of the mobility, and when is it planned?

The anticipated dates for the mobilities are:

- Skopje: 09 - 13 March 2026
- Belgrade: April 19-24
- Tirana: 11-16 May 2026

These dates are subject to change due to major objective causes, such as natural disasters and unforeseen political developments that disrupt institutional operations. Selected participants will be informed well in advance of any change to the mobility dates to ensure the necessary time for preparations.

Participants **must commit** to these dates and carry out the mobility in Tirana, Skopje and Belgrade; it is a compulsory part of the programme.

## 12. What will selected participants do during mobility?

The three regional mobility sessions provide intensive, hands-on working retreats for fellows. As part of the mobility RYLMP fellows will meet with relevant stakeholders connected to their policy paper topics and will participate in teambuilding activities designed to help the fellows experience different cultures within the region. Apart from

meeting relevant stakeholders, the fellows will complete some specific policy paper and advocacy milestones.

### **Milestones for each mobility**

**In Skopje,** Teams merge country-level data into a comparative evidence base, refine problem statements with mentor guidance, and test early advocacy ideas through meetings with local stakeholders.

**In Belgrade,** Teams translate refined data into draft advocacy products, including policy briefs, infographics, and media materials, which are validated with Serbian stakeholders.

**In Tirana,** Teams consolidate advocacy efforts into fully developed policy recommendations and strategic campaign plans, rehearse materials, secure commitments through high-level stakeholder meetings, and establish timelines for national advocacy implementation, including the signing of micro-grant agreements.

## **13. Which costs will be covered during the mobility?**

Participants will receive financial support in the form of a mobility grant, covering travel, accommodation, and living costs during their mobility in each country. Additionally, they will receive travel and accommodation expenses, as well as per diems, for the launch event, regional advocacy event, and final conference. The participants will be responsible for arranging their own accommodation and travel using this grant.

## **14. What is the Regional Advocacy Forum?**

A one-day Regional Advocacy Forum will be held in Belgrade as the final event of the programme. This high-level forum will bring together representatives from regional institutions, EU delegations, national ministries, and other key stakeholders. During the event, fellows will formally present their consolidated policy recommendations and showcase the results of their advocacy initiatives developed throughout the programme. RYLMP alumni will facilitate panel discussions, moderate sessions, and ensure meaningful dialogue by leveraging their prior experience. Representatives of relevant stakeholders will provide feedback, highlighting how the fellows' proposals align with ongoing regional priorities and policy frameworks. The forum will conclude with the adoption of a joint communiqué summarizing commitments and follow-up actions agreed upon by the participating institutions and stakeholders.

### **15. Will there be honoraria for the work on policy papers?**

Yes, each selected participant will receive an honorarium of 600 euros for their work on policy papers, provided that all the components of the programme are completed.