YSI STANDARD OF OPERATIONS

Effective 15 April, 2019

Young Scholars Initiative

An initiative of the
Institute for
New Economic Thinking

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Preamble

The YSI Standard of Operations outlines the operational structures, as well as roles and responsibilities within the Young Scholars Initiative in order to ensure its continued growth as a volunteer community.[1]

The YSI Standard of Operations is to be read in conjunction with the Guiding Principles of the YSI Community [here].

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[1] The YSI Standard of Operation are the outcome of a consolidation process of deliberation within the YSI community initialized and led by the Community Report Committee ("CRC") over the course of 2017 and 2018. The CRC delivered a first draft of the Standard of Operations and a set of recommendations and open questions to YSI Management in March 2018. In the following months YSI Management finalized the draft and INET approved the YSI Standards of Operations as laid out in this document.

Overview of Operational Structures and Roles

Anyone who adheres to the YSI guiding principles can attain YSI membership. Membership can be held by individuals and not organizations or other entities. There are no membership fees.

YSI members may join **YSI working groups**. Each working group consists of members and has a topical focus on a particular field of research. Any YSI member who is interested in the stated topics, themes and methodologies may join the working group.

The activities of the working groups are termed **projects**. Projects are time-limited activities centered around specific question(s) and employ one or more formats and/or outputs, such as webinars, workshops, reading groups, conferences, working papers, e-books, etc.

Projects can contain **events**. An event is any activity that takes place at a specific point in time, either 'in-person' or 'online', and allows for active participation by YSI members. Some projects consist of a single event, other projects are a collection of multiple events, and some projects do not have any events at all.

There are three different roles and responsibilities within a working group**:** Working Group **Members** receive all relevant updates and are invited to participate in the working group's activities. Working Group **Organizers** attend planning meetings and take organizational responsibility for specific projects. Working Group **Coordinators** have overall responsibility for coordinating the working group initiatives and to represent the working group to new members and external partners. These roles within the working groups are voluntary.

YSI is administered by **YSI Management**. YSI managers are employees of the Institute for New Economic Thinking. YSI Management has overall responsibility for the community. The **Community Report Committee** (CRC) is an elected body of YSI members that advises the working groups and YSI Management on broad community developments and the health of the community. CRC Advisory Teams can be formed to help address identified issues and develop recommendations. Furthermore, the CRC assists in the resolution of conflicts and functions as an ombudsman. The CRC drafts a periodical community report.

The YSI Management Team offers support to the working groups and their projects:

Working Groups

Management may support Working Groups in the following ways:

- Drafting Working Group Mandate
- Preparing and disseminating the Community newsletter
- Assisting to restart dormant Working Groups
- Establishing formal strategic partnerships with other organizations

Working Group Projects

Management will support projects in the following ways:

- Develop and support YSI's technical and administrative infrastructure made available to the YSI community to conduct projects
- Facilitate payments and bookings when requested
- Provide contacts for speakers and/or external partners if requested
- Review and approve project-related funding requests in line with the below funding guidelines
- Facilitate the resolution of problems, disputes and/or conflicts.

Working Groups

YSI Working Groups contain all members who share an interest in a particular field or subfield of research. Membership to a working group is registered on the YSI online platform (link). YSI members may freely choose to join or leave any working groups of their choosing at any time.

Purpose of Working Groups

The main purpose of a working group is to:

- Provide an environment conducive to rich intellectual engagement and cooperative exploration of research interests within the scope of the working group.
- Develop relationships between young scholars interested in a particular field or subfield of research related to the working group.
- Foster academic discussion between the members of the working group interested in that particular field or subfield of research.
- Expose members to new ways of thinking about issues in that particular field or subfield of research.
- Complement and support of members' research activities/interests in their programs, Ph.D. and/or jobs.

Working Group Activity

A working group is expected to maintain a consistent level of activity and engage its members by:

- Conducting projects (See project section below).
- Participating in management-led events/projects such as the YSI Plenary and/or the YSI Regional Convenings (see events section below)
- Hosting at least one in-person meeting per year (see events section below), which may coincide with the YSI Plenary and/or the YSI Regional Convenings or another conference relevant to the working group.

If a working group does not live up to the basic expectations stipulated above, it may receive direct support from management to re-engage and restructure activity. Upon review, it may be relegated to the state of 'dormant' and subsequent closure.

Working Group Mandate

The working group mandate defines and specifies the academic priorities and general strategic direction of the working group over a period of 12 months. A new working group mandate is jointly developed annually by the working group coordinators, organizers, and YSI Management.

The mandate provides a basic reference to coordinating the working group efforts and thus intends to provide transparency on the working group's aims to its members, in particular to those entrusted with positions of responsibility.

The mandate typically includes:

- A set of key projects to be conducted over the course of the mandate term;
- A strategic plan for developing partnerships with conferences, summer schools, journals, etc;
- A plan/outline for how to grow the working group and develop capacity for ongoing work in the area of interest;
- A plan/outline for how to deepen relationships in the field of study;
- A plan/outline for how to create synergies with other YSI working groups.

Annual Working Group Governance Meeting

Working groups conduct an annual meeting with YSI Management to:

- Review past initiatives and their implications for moving forward.
- Develop and formalize the working group mandate for the coming year in writing
- Formally introduce a newly appointed coordinator (see coordinator section below)
- Assign and clarify the responsibilities and projects of the coordinators and/or organizers.

All coordinators and organizers of the working group are expected to attend this meeting.

Creation of New Working Groups

YSI working groups are based on a strong, long-term intellectual and organizational commitment of the YSI community to certain research areas and questions. New working groups are created by YSI Management. A new working group may be created from a successful project in an existing working group.

YSI Management may create a new working group once the following requirements are fulfilled:

- An explicit, large-scale interest in the creation of this working group in the community can be demonstrated
- The working group is deemed to advance concepts and frameworks in the spirit of new economic thinking
- Community members to serve as coordinators have been identified and a preliminary working plan for the future working group has been submitted
- Mentors to support the working group have been identified
- The topical focus of the working group to be created does not significantly overlap with the topical focus of an existing working group.

Projects

A project is a specified activity organized on behalf of one or more working groups to pursue research questions in the spirit of new economic thinking. Projects may employ many different formats such as webinars, workshops, reading groups and publications. Projects are defined by a start date and prospective end date. Projects may be extended or a follow-up project may be organized.

Organizers assume responsibility for undertaking a project from its inception to its conclusion (see organizers section below). A coordinator may also assume the role of an organizer when conducting a project.

The responsibility for the project content, design, curation and output lie with the organizers and do not necessarily reflect the views or any position of the working group or the community as a whole. A working group may run multiple projects on overlapping content, but with different intellectual commitments.

Project Characteristics
- Projects may involve one or multiple working groups and/or external partners (i.e. conferences, associations, journals).

- In order to involve a working group, at least one organizer from the working group must join as an organizer.
- A project can when applicable include tangible output (e.g. reports, webinar recordings, meeting minutes, and/or working papers)
- The project is concluded by the organizers submitting a report outlining its contributions and outcomes. The project report should be issued no later than one month after the end date of the project. The report is accessible on the YSI online platform. The project is then archived.

Creation of a New Project

Projects are initiated by submitting a project proposal. Proposals are submitted for review via the YSI online platform. Any organizer may submit project proposals. It is encouraged to discuss a project idea with the working group coordinators prior to submission.

All projects are subject to approval by the working group coordinator and YSI Management. If a project requires funding, a separate funding request should be submitted with the project proposal for YSI Management.

Each proposal will be evaluated on its own merit. There are no limits to how many active (general) projects a working group can have at any given time.

Events

Most projects include 'events'. Some projects simply consist of creating one specific event (e.g. a workshop), while other projects consist of a series of connected events (e.g. a webinar series) and some projects do not contain events (e.g. drafting a working paper). Events may be either 'in-person' or 'online'.

- Online events
  In the spirit of an open and global community, the majority of YSI events take place using online conferencing software and are therefore accessible to any YSI member. The conferencing software can be accessed by scheduling an online event on the YSI online platform. Online events include webinars, planning meetings, reading group meetings, discussions, and other activities.

- In-person events
  Working groups may organize a range of different in-person events, such as workshops, and other meetings. In-person events can be organized in collaboration with an existing conference or summer school. These events should be not too challenging to organize logistically in order not to strain the organizers' time and efforts.

- Community events
  In order to bring the many initiatives together, YSI will periodically organize large-scale community event. The YSI plenary and the YSI regional convenings bring together the YSI community within and across working groups, to provide a baseline presence across the world, and to reinforce the community identity and its priorities. The logistics of these types of large-scale events are handled by YSI Management.

Roles and Responsibilities in YSI Working Groups

Working Group Members

Any registered member of the Young Scholars Initiative may join one or more working groups, which subscribes them to updates from the working group.

Working Group Organizers

Working group members who take an active part in the organization of the working group or the working group's projects are eligible to become organizers of that working group. The appointment of organizers takes place at the discretion of the working group coordinator. An organizer should actively participate in the working group's activities. Organizers assume all stipulated responsibilities associated with organizing their project.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a working group organizer are to:

- Adhere to the YSI values laid out in the YSI Guiding Principles
- Organize working group projects
- Participate in Working Group Planning Meetings related to projects they are organizing

When undertaking a project, the organizer(s) are responsible for the following (if applicable):

- Prepare and submit a project proposal to the coordinator and management, and, where necessary, a funding request to management (see project proposal section above)
- Design the program/agenda (if the project is one that requires it)
- Draft a call for participation (if the project is one that requires it)
- Invite and communicate with internal and external presenters and speakers.
- Identify, connect and communicate with potential partners and/or collaborators
- Notify and update the working group coordinator of all projects and their status that they are working on
- Oversee travel, accommodation, and visa needs of project participants, if applicable, and liaison with YSI Management where necessary
- Oversee other logistical aspects of planning and executing the project
- Promote the project through appropriate channels

- Collect and report feedback from project participants on their overall experience to coordinators and management (See Template for Feedback Collection Form)

Appointment

When a member of a working group demonstrates willingness and ability to undertake the responsibilities of a project organizer as listed above, the working group coordinator(s) may appoint that member to be an organizer.

There is no limit to the number of organizers in a working group. If an organizer remains inactive in terms of planning and executing projects for a prolonged period of time, their status may be changed to that of a regular member by a coordinator and/or management.

Term

There are no term limits for organizers, as long as the organizer takes an active part in the working group and continues to organize projects in line with their responsibilities outlined above.

If under unforeseen circumstances, an organizer is removed from/ no longer active in their role during the course of a project, the responsibility of delegating the share of duties of the outgoing organizer falls upon the working group coordinator(s).

Working Group Coordinators

Each working group should have three coordinators who take overall responsibility for the working group.

Responsibilities

The coordinators of a working group share the following responsibilities:

- Represent the working group, and serve as the primary point of contact towards the community, in particular new members, as well as external partners and YSI management.
- Coordinate, support and facilitate intellectual exchange amongst all projects happening within the working group; review and approve new project proposals submitted to them.
- Involve interested members and appoint new organizers who are interested in taking up organizational responsibilities.
- Build and maintain relationships with mentors, external partners, and other stakeholders.
- Take the lead on drafting the working group mandate, set the overall direction and strategic plans for the working group and develop new project ideas with working group organizers.
- Maintain an environment and culture in the working group that is open, welcoming and productive as outlined in the YSI Guiding Principles.
- Ensure continuity by sharing their experiences, expertise, and best practices with incoming coordinators and organizers.

- Manage the working group email account.
- Maintain the working group's pages on the YSI online platform.
- Work with the Community Report Committee (CRC).
- Work with YSI Management.

The coordinators are collectively responsible for these responsibilities.

Term

The term of a working group coordinator is **2 years**. Each member may serve one term. A coordinator may receive a term extension of **6-12 months** to facilitate the handover of responsibilities to new coordinators or if a new coordinator has not been appointed prior to the end of the current coordinator's term. After the end of the term, the coordinator can continue to function as an organizer of the group.

Appointment

Coordinators are appointed by YSI Management.

An open call for nominations will be published on the YSI online platform to all working group members three months preceding the end of a coordinator's term. Members or organizers who are interested in becoming a coordinator may nominate themselves. YSI Management may solicit nominations and recommendations from outgoing coordinators, organizers, mentors and/or other invested individuals. Nominations can be made formally or informally.

YSI Management may conduct interviews with nominees in order to determine their fit, their academic situation, to identify their prior engagement and contribution within YSI, to inquire about prospective projects the nominee is organizing/wishes to organize over the coming term, and the strategic direction the nominee envisions for the working group.

At least one week prior to the annual working group meeting, management will contact the coordinator to confirm their appointment. The formal appointment of coordinators takes place at the annual working group meeting.

In case an appointment is contested or presents a conflict of interest, management will consult the Community Report Committee to reach a final decision on the appointment in line with what presents itself as the best way forward for the working group and the community overall.

Decision Making in YSI Working Groups

The following section outlines the decision making authority associated with the roles in the YSI community.

As a **general guiding principle** individuals holding roles are strongly encouraged to consult other invested individuals when making decisions within their sphere of responsibility. All decisions should be made with the best interest of the working group and YSI community as a whole in mind, and where feasible should be done in consensus.

Decisions on Appointments

Appointment of coordinators
Coordinators are appointed by YSI Management, subject to the process for appointment listed under the section on coordinators above.

Appointment of organizers
Organizers are appointed by the coordinator(s), subject to the process for appointment listed under the section on organizers above.

Decisions on Mandate

Adoption of Mandate
The working group mandate is jointly developed by organizers, coordinators and YSI Management in consultation with mentors and the CRC. It is adopted by consensus. After adoption, subsequent decisions made by coordinators and management should reflect the goals expressed and plans set forth in the mandate, unless the mandate is explicitly changed by the relevant organizers, coordinators, and YSI management.

Decisions on Projects

Approval of Projects
Project proposals are developed and submitted by organizers; they are reviewed and approved by one of the working group coordinators and YSI Management in accordance with the terms and conditions listed in the project proposals sub-section and the responsibilities of coordinators above.

<u>Project logistics and program</u>
Once the project is approved, the organizers are responsible for programming and logistical decisions related to the project.

<u>Participant selection decisions</u>
YSI projects frequently call for contributions, which require a selection of participants and the allocation of travel stipends from an applicant pool. If this is the case, a credible selection process must be in place. This process should account for fair decisions that account for the expected quality of the participant contributions, the openness and inclusiveness of the community, potential conflicts of interests and the overall development of the working group.

By default YSI follows a two-tier process for participant selection and awarding travel stipends:

1. Project organizers / academic committee make preliminary selections
2. YSI Management review nominations and issue travel stipends

A project proposal ideally includes a selection process and an academic committee, which involves mentors or senior scholars. If this is not provided in the project proposal, YSI Management may work with the organizers to form an academic committee, and to develop a selection process that reflects the values of the YSI community, as laid out in the YSI Guiding Principles.

YSI Management is responsible to ensure that appropriate and credible selection processes are provided for all YSI projects and events. YSI Management where appropriate will draw on senior mentors for academic advice in its review.

Funding of Working Group Projects

Funding requests are limited to projects organized within the scope of YSI Working Groups. YSI does not provide any type of Ph.D. stipends, living support funds for individuals, or ongoing research grants.

Typically, funding will be provided for in-person meetings, in which YSI may cover the cost of speaker travel and accommodation, participant accommodation, catering, venue costs, etc. A project budget is expected to be cost-effective, and all in-kind contributions, synergies and cost-saving measures reflect positively on a proposed budget.

Wherever funding is needed for non-YSI events, and the organizer does not act on behalf of a YSI working group, applications should be directed towards the YSI Event Grant.

As a program of the Institute for New Economic Thinking, all funds provided to YSI Working Groups may be only used for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Funds may never be spent for political activity or activism, to influence political campaigns or elections, or to support unlawful, violent activities or any activity that is not for educational, scientific or charitable purposes. Organizers should contact YSI Management for guidance when in doubt.

Project budgets

Projects in need of funding must apply to YSI Management.

Submitting a budget and requesting travel stipends

If a project requires funding, a budget proposal needs be submitted by the project organizer as part of the project proposal via the YSI website. A proposal requiring funding should include:

- A budget of all local costs needed to hold the event (see limits below)
- The travel needs of all involved organizers (see limits below)
- Any requests for travel stipends for attendees

Approval

A project proposal requiring funding must be approved by YSI Management before any expenses can be incurred.

Types of project grants

General projects

For a project proposal requiring funding, the following applies:

> The budget for all locally incurred expenses for the event to take place, and may not exceed $3000:
>
> - Speaker travel
> - Accommodation
> - Catering
> - Venue costs
> - Other local event costs
>
> Organizer stipends: Up to two organizers may receive a travel stipend equivalent to their travel expenses incurred.
>
> Travel stipends: A project proposal may also request travel stipends. A moderate amount of regional stipends, and a small amount of intercontinental travel may be provided.

YSI Management will approve the budget and organizer travel, and determine travel stipend amount depending on schedule and circumstance.

The number of involved working groups does not alter the above criteria for general projects.

Special projects

Two projects in each working group may be elevated to special status within the term of a yearly mandate. Coordinator approval is required to receive special project status. Ideally, special projects are agreed upon in the annual working group meeting and indicated in the working group mandate. Special projects are deemed especially important for strategic or community building purposes, and thus may receive a higher level financial and logistical support.

All locally incurred costs must be included, and may not exceed $6000:

- Speaker travel
- Accommodation
- Catering
- Venue cost
- Other local event costs

Organizer stipends: Up to three organizers may receive a travel stipend equivalent to their travel expenses incurred.

Travel stipends: A project proposal may also request travel stipends. A moderate amount of regional stipends, and a moderate amount of intercontinental travel may be provided.

If two working groups agree to request a special project, the following applies:

The budget for all locally incurred costs must be included, may not exceed $6000.

Organizer stipends: Up to five organizers may receive a travel stipend equivalent to their travel expenses incurred.

Travel stipends: A project proposal may also request travel stipends. A high amount of regional stipends, and a moderate amount of intercontinental travel may be provided.

Special projects may receive logistical event support from YSI Management, if requested.

Evaluation criteria

YSI Management evaluates each project budget proposal on a case by case basis and on its own merit. The number of existing general projects in a working group has no impact on the evaluation of a submitted proposal; there are however limited amount of special projects each working group can apply for each year.

When reviewing a budget proposal to YSI Management the following criteria are taken into account:

- The contribution of the research question to the working group's theme and to 'new economic thinking'.
- The overall coherence of the proposal in achieving its intended purpose
- How well it builds capacity amongst members of YSI interested in the working group
- How well it creates synergies and cooperation among partner organizations and other working group initiatives
- How reasonable and cost-effective the budget is to deliver the goals of the project and the overall aims of the working group(s).

Changes to an approved budget

YSI Management must be notified about any significant changes to the budget, structure or program as stated in the project and budget proposals. If funds are to be spent in a different way than indicated in the approved budget, prior approval by a YSI manager is required.

Reporting and documentation

For any project in which a budget is awarded, the organizer(s) must submit a budget report together with the final project report outlining how funds have been spent. The budget report should be issued within one month of the last project event. Any unspent funds transferred to the organizer must be returned with one month of the conclusion of the project.

External funding and matching

External funding and non-financial support for YSI projects are welcome and encouraged so long as they do not impact the integrity of the research ideas and benefit the overall development of the working group and/or the project.

Matching funding arrangements are possible on a case-by-case basis, in particular when funding requests exceed the stated funding limits.