

Contracting Authority:



Regional Youth Cooperation Office

Call for Project Proposals 2019

“A Better Region Starts with Youth”

Guidelines for Grantees



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Foreword

This document is consisted of three chapters which clarify contractual obligations of a supported organization or secondary school towards RYCO and give guidelines for a successful implementation of the supported project proposals.

The three chapters are:

- Visibility Guidelines
- Financial Guidelines
- Safety and Protection Guidelines

Please consult this document before you start implementing your activities and regularly consult it throughout the implementation phase. If you have any question that is not covered in this document and it is related to the implementation of the supported project or you need clarification on your obligations towards RYCO, please do not hesitate to contact RYCO team members for the input.

Visibility Guidelines

(Practical guidelines for RYCO grantees and their partners for a proper and successful communication of their activities supported by RYCO)

1. Introduction

The RYCO Visibility Guidelines sets out the minimum requirements for a convenient communication regarding the RYCO supported projects and their activities. It also contains rules and regulations for the acknowledgement of the provided support by RYCO through its open calls for project proposals.

Visibility is highly important for RYCO because of at least two reasons: firstly, RYCO aims to make a change in the region and it is crucial to assure that the success stories of the awarded projects are well spread; secondly, the visibility is also a question of transparency – as RYCO is a governments-funded organization, all interested stakeholders have a right to be informed about its activities and given support. Moreover, keep in mind that the visibility is a contractual obligation.

We want to highlight the fact that the requirements specified in this document are the minimum that should be followed in all the cases, but that there can also be specific cases which can be handled on a case by case basis, having in mind the given circumstances and the aim of such visibility actions. If you are implementing a project in a special context, please contact RYCO to agree on proper visibility measures.

Visibility is also a question of balance and common sense. Please assure that you avoid the two unacceptable practices in communicating the RYCO support. The first is insufficient visibility where the interested stakeholders cannot get any information about the RYCO support and the second where there is too much visibility, e.g. presenting the RYCO logo on each page of printed materials.

We encourage you to promote your work supported by RYCO through all available channels thus contributing to the promotion of our cooperation but also to the transparency and accountability of our organization. Furthermore, we want to spur on the regular communication with our Communication Officer and Local Branch Officers in order to maximize our communication efforts.

Finally, we highly recommend the use of local language(s) for communication and visibility purposes. It is not mandatory, but it is recommended when possible, the communication and visibility materials should be followed with an English language version.

In case you doubt any part of the Visibility Guidelines, please feel free to contact the RYCO Communication Officer for assistance.

2. Visibility in a Nutshell

- Always indicate the RYCO support to your organization/institution by displaying RYCO logo and/or the text that explains the support
- Present RYCO to the participants of the supported activities
- Get in contact with RYCO Communication Officer for inputs and comments
- Keep in mind the difference between different communication and visibility tools that you are using (official documents, printed, electronic and audio-visual materials, websites, posters, roll-ups, billboards)
- When organizing a public event, use it as a powerful tool for visibility
- Use social media and always mention/tag RYCO in your posts
- Invite media to promote your activities
- Make high quality photographs that tell a story

3. General Rules for Visual Identification

The RYCO logo is an integral part of the organization's visual identity. RYCO uses two versions of its logo with primary and secondary signature. The both versions are to be treated equally. The logo and the Visual Guidelines for its usage are available for download on the [RYCO website](#) and it is mandatory to consult them before preparing and publishing materials that contain the logo.

All the materials (e.g. printed, online, video, etc.) produced within a project supported by RYCO must contain when it is possible and appropriate, the RYCO logo and text describing the support by our organization.

The visual identity of RYCO must enjoy at least an equally prominent place and size as the logo(s) of a supported grantee and partners.

All equipment purchased for the project must be appropriately branded and should indicate "Funded by the Regional Youth Cooperation Office" next or below the RYCO logo. Please assure that you have consulted the Visual Guidelines for a proper use of the RYCO logo.

RYCO pays a special focus on the quality of materials produced with the support of the organization. For the best quality of the materials, grantees and partners, when developing them, should contact RYCO for inputs on design, photo selection, layout and use of logos of RYCO and other partners. Draft materials should be sent by e-mail for comments or input to the RYCO Communication Officer before publishing.

Visibility materials produced, such as banners roll-ups and posters, should be displayed at public events organized by grantees while fliers, brochures, newsletters and other publications, produced within the project, should be handed out to the participants, media and public.

Please assure that you present RYCO to the participants of the supported activities, especially to the young people. Try to highlight the importance of regional cooperation when presenting RYCO. We will provide you with a one-pager on RYCO that can be distributed.

We discourage use of a project logo only. However, in case your project has a visual identity separated of a grantee's visual identity, and it is required by the grantee and partners, the logo should be treated the same way as other logos. The project logo cannot be a replacement for visibility requirements stated in this document.

If a project supported by RYCO has sponsors, please be aware that the sponsors' logos may not have an equally prominent place and size as the RYCO logo and logos of the grantee and its partners.

4. Rules for Specific Visibility Materials

General visibility rules stated in the previous chapter should always be respected. Anyhow, if the rules for specific visibility materials conflict the general rules, the specific ones should be followed.

Publications, reports, websites, videos and all materials that contain enough space, besides the general rules stated above, should contain the following disclaimer (the exact place of the disclaimer should be decided on a case by case basis):

This publication/report/website/video is produced with the support of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office – RYCO. Its content is the sole responsibility of <name of the grantee> and its partners and does not necessarily present the views of RYCO.

Do not forget that all the materials made for the distribution towards participants, third parties and the general public must be sent to the RYCO Communication Officer for approval before their publishing.

a) Official Documents

All the official documents produced within the supported project should respect the general rules, containing the RYCO logo. These documents are mainly made for external use towards third parties.

b) Printed, Electronic and Audio-Visual Materials

Printed materials (e.g. publications, brochures, folders, leaflets, etc.) published within the project shall include at least the RYCO logo on the front page. Additionally, the printed publications must contain the above-mentioned disclaimer that may be put on the backside (for leaflets) or the second cover page (publications, brochures).

The same rules shall be applied in the same manner to electronic and audio-visual materials.

We encourage grantees to include the link to the RYCO website (www.rycowb.org) whenever possible on all the printed, electronic and audio-visual materials.

c) Websites

If a grantee and its partner(s) have their own websites the websites may present the support of RYCO by including at least the RYCO logo and direct link to the RYCO website (www.rycowb.org). The representation of RYCO should not be made in a manner that it reflects the support of the entire organization/institution's work. When possible, the following disclaimer should be present:

<Name of the grantee/partner> is supported by RYCO. The content of this website is the sole responsibility of <name of the grantee/partner> and does not necessarily present the views of RYCO.

We encourage the grantees and their partners to present the latest information on the supported project in the local language(s) and if possible in English. The information should be accurately updated.

If there is a website designed for the project purposes, it should follow the guidelines stated at the beginning of this chapter.

d) Posters, Roll-Ups and Billboards

The grantees may use posters, roll-ups and billboards to promote their activities supported by RYCO and to brand the rooms where the activities are held. The content of these materials should follow the general rules.

5. Seminars and Conferences

All the events organized within the supported project must be properly branded. The general and specific rules should be applied to all the event's materials.

For all the events organized within the supported projects, RYCO Local Branch Officer in charge for the supported project should always be informed well in advance and, depending on the scope and level of the event, invited.

Besides the seminars and conferences, the same rules should be applied to cultural, educational, sporting or other events.

6. Social Media

RYCO is paying a special focus on being present and active on social media. In case your organization/institution and your partner(s) have social media accounts, please always mention or tag RYCO in the posts related to the supported project's activities.

RYCO is present on the following social media with the following account names:

- Facebook: Regional Youth Cooperation Office – RYCO (www.facebook.com/RYCOWB)
- Twitter: RYCO Western Balkans (www.twitter.com/RYCOWb)
- Instagram: RYCO Western Balkans (www.instagram.com/rycowb)
- LinkedIn: Regional Youth Cooperation Office – RYCO (www.linkedin.com/company/rycowb)

As we are aiming to spread the word about the change we want to make together with your organization/institution, we highly recommend sharing the content made by RYCO about its activities and success stories of its grantees and partners.

7. Media Relations

The media is an exceptionally important stakeholder for RYCO. It cannot and should not be avoided in conducting a strong image building. The RYCO grantees and their partners should focus on the local media and invite them to cover important project events. Because of these reasons, we encourage you to build strong connections with them and make a list of media that can support you in your efforts of spreading the word about your project.

Usually, the media relations are maintained in the two directions – press releases and press visits.

a) Press Releases

A press release is a written communication sent to the media representatives in order to announce an important event or news. In order to make a good press release, it should contain information that is worth publishing – it has to be new and of interest for a broader group of people.

Press releases should answer the “Five Ws” (Who? Why? What? Where? When?) that are the prerequisite for a good communication. Moreover, they should be enriched with the quotes of the key participants of an event (usually speakers) that can be extracted from their speeches or statements during or after the event.

A newsworthy press release has a clear heading and a strong leading paragraph that summarize the important facts and answers to the “Five Ws”. Moreover, the body should contain the developed answers expressed in the leading paragraph accompanied by the quotes and concluded with the background information and contact persons for more information. The press release should be written on the official memorandum of the organization/institution and send to the journalists.

When issuing a press release, it is recommended to attach a few photographs of the event/activity. For more information about the photographs, please see the next chapter.

We highly recommend contacting our Communication Officer for inputs and comments before issuing a press release. We can also help you in reaching media in your Contracting Party.

b) Press Visits

Press visits are a great opportunity to meet journalists in person and create a well-built relationship between your organization/institution and them. They also offer an opportunity for raising the visibility of project activities. They should be well planned and prepared.

The press visits are a powerful tool and they should not be used if the event where the journalists are invited has not to offer a good story worth sharing. Keep in mind that media are usually willing to report on the activities that have a direct impact on people's lives and contain human stories. Project milestones, results and impacts are a powerful tool to attract media, too.

When issuing a press release or organizing a press visit, you must include information that RYCO supported the project. Moreover, we recommend including the standardize text about RYCO for these purposes, too:

On Regional Youth Cooperation Office

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an international organization, founded by the Western Balkans governments: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs.

The Agreement on Establishment of RYCO was signed by the WB6 Prime Ministers during the Western Balkan Summit held on 4 July 2016 in Paris.

For further information, please visit the RYCO website www.rycowb.org

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

8. Photographs

Good photographs are a prerequisite for communicating a good story and create a connection with the audience. As it is usually said, a picture is worth a thousand words. The photos taken during the project activities should be of a high quality so that they can be used by the media, but also by your organization/institution and RYCO for further promotional activities.

The photographs that you are using should reflect the results of your activities and tell a positive and human story behind the project. That means that you should focus on your participants and their experiences, not on the organization/institution's staff implementing the project.

9. Reporting and Communication with RYCO

You are obliged to send a copy of each of the produced visibility and communication materials that you produced within the project supported by RYCO for the reporting purposes. Moreover, we will appreciate if you take care of press clipping and send it to us together with the final reports.

The RYCO Communication Officer remains available for assistance in conducting successful communication and visibility activities. We invite you to use this opportunity whenever needed.

Financial Guidelines

1. Introduction

The purpose of these financial guidelines are to provide guidance to secondary schools and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) implementing the projects granted under RYCO's 2019 Call for Proposals. .

Any financial issue that arises during contracting, implementing or reporting on these grants that is not covered in these guidelines and/or in the Grant Contract needs to be addressed in written (email), through the Local Branch Officer, explaining the issue, and guidance will be provided in written within 30 days by the RYCO Secretariat.

2. Budget of the Project

Grant applications must include a detailed estimated budget presented in Euros. The total income (budget request to RYCO and co-funding) must be equal to the total planned expenditure for project activities.

3. Expenditure

Expenditure must include the estimated costs exclusively for the implementation of the project.

3.1. General Criteria on Eligible Costs

Eligible costs are costs incurred by the Grantee and/or Partner(s) which meet the following criteria:

- a. they are incurred during the implementation of the project;
- b. they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the project;
- c. they are necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d. they are identifiable and verifiable, and recorded in the accounting records of the Grantee and according to the accounting standards in the respective Contracting Party and applicable legislation;;
- e. they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding cost efficiency

3.2. Eligible Direct Costs

The following direct costs of the Grantee and/or Partner(s):

- a. Costs of staff assigned to the project, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and excluding performance-based bonuses. Salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the Grantee and/or Partner(s) unless it is justified by stating that is essential to carry out the action. RYCO may request timesheets of the staff involved per each month when submitting the monthly and final report (slips, timesheets, basis for calculation of daily rates and working days)
- b. Travel and subsistence costs for staff and other people taking part in the project, which are in line with the Grantee's/Partner's travel rules and regulations.
- c. Purchase, or rental costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies dedicated to the purpose of the project, provided that it is purchased, rented or written off in accordance with the applicable legislation and beneficiary's usual accounting practices.
- d. Rental costs related to the project office.
- e. Costs of consumables

- f. Costs of service, supply and work contracts awarded by the Grantee/Partner serving the purposes of the project;
- g. Costs deriving directly from RYCO's contractual requirements such as visibility and dissemination of information, monitoring and evaluation, accounting, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.) including financial service costs;
- h. Duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, paid and not recoverable by the Grantee/Partner.

3.3. Indirect Costs

Indirect project costs are those which may not be identified as specific costs related directly to project implementation but are related to the running costs of the Grantee/Partner.

7% of the direct eligible costs of the project can be claimed to cover all indirect overhead costs towards the Grantee/Partner's running costs such as stationary, photocopying, mailing, telephone, internet, fax, heating, electricity, use of office furniture, rent of office. This overhead contribution is a flat rate, meaning it does not need to be supported by proof of payment in the financial report. However, if this 7% overhead contribution is claimed, no such costs can be claimed in addition to the flat rate.

3.4. Profit

If the budgeted costs exceed the costs incurred, RYCO has the right to reduce the final installment accordingly, since Grantees/Partners are not allowed to financially benefit from RYCO Grants (=make profit).

3.5. Non Eligible Costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- a. customs and import duties, or any other charges;
- b. purchases of land or buildings;
- c. fines, financial penalties and expenses related to litigation;
- d. contribution in kind;
- e. debts and debt service charges (interest);
- f. provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- g. currency exchange losses;
- h. leasing costs;
- i. depreciation costs;
- j. credit to third parties;
- k. performance based staff bonuses

4. Income and Budget Request

The total budget request and co-financing needs to correspond with the total of the expected expenditure related to the project. The income side of the budget must show:

1. The financial request to RYCO
2. The beneficiary contribution: the direct monetary contribution from the Grantee's and partners' own resources.
3. Any other financial contribution given by third parties to the project.

The following contributions are not accepted as co-funding:

- a. Financial contribution by third parties outside of what is considered eligible costs under the grant contract.

- b. Financial contribution by third parties with no obligation to reimburse unused funding at the end of the implementation period.
- c. Potential revenue generated by the project: if any income is expected to be generated by the implementation of the project, it needs to be specified in the budget, but cannot be used towards co-funding.

5. Budget Variation

If the budget requires amendments in course of project implementation, RYCO has the following procedures:

Variation up to 5% - The Beneficiary may amend the Budget unilaterally and inform RYCO accordingly, in writing and at the latest in the next report for any transfer between items *within the same main budget heading including cancellation or introduction of an item* involving a variation of 5% or less of the amount originally entered (or as modified by addendum) in relation to each concerned main heading for eligible costs.

Variation from 5 to 25% -The Beneficiary may amend the Budget only after prior approval by RYCO for any transfer between items *within the same main budget heading* including cancellation or introduction of an item involving a variation of 25% or less of the amount originally entered to the main heading for eligible costs.

Variation up to 10% - The Beneficiary may amend the Budget only after prior approval by RYCO for any transfer *between different main budget headings* involving a variation of 10% or less of the amount originally entered in relation to each concerned main heading for eligible costs.

6. Procurement Principles

If the implementation of an action requires procurement by the Grantee, the contract must be awarded to the tender offering best value for money (i.e. the tender offering the best price-quality ratio or to the tender offering the lowest price). In doing so, the grantee shall avoid any conflict of interest and respect the following principles:

- Transparency
- Equal treatment and non-discrimination
- Competition
- Proportionality
- Sound financial management

Note: Procurements by the Grantee shall be in compliance with applicable legislation in the respective WB6 Contracting Party.

7. Payment Procedure

RYCO will pay its grants according to the following procedure:

An initial instalment of 80% of the grant will be released within 30 days of receipt of the signed grant contract.

The balance (20% of the grant, or the remaining amount according the actual budget spent/co-financing provided in case of underspending) will be released within 60 days after receiving the final narrative and financial reports, including all additional documents RYCO may request to substantiate these reports.

If the actual expenditure is higher than budgeted, the RYCO grant cannot be increased.

In cases of income generated by the project, such income must be declared in the financial report and deducted from the budget request to RYCO.

8. Transfer of Funds

Funds can be transferred to partner organizations/schools as required for the implementation of the project, but the Grantee retains the full responsibility towards RYCO for implementation of the project as envisaged under the Grant Contract, including financial reporting.

The rights and obligations deriving from such financial transfers should be regulated by a **Partnership Agreement** between the parties involved.

9. Documentation/Record Keeping

- Grantees must offer sufficient proof for the expenditures declared in the financial report, including the one related to partners' expenditures. Moreover, they are obliged to obtain, compile and safely store proof of expenditures of the applicant and of the partners'.
- Grantees are obliged to submit copies of proof (contracts, invoices, receipts) to RYCO, together with the financial report, and in a clear order (serial numbers) assigning such documents to specific expenditures.
- RYCO staff can request to see the originals of these documents or ask an audit company to review them.
- The Grantee shall use an appropriate accounting and double-entry book-keeping system to keep track of the spending related to the project, and to provide RYCO with accurate financial information at any time of implementation.
- The accounts shall comply with the accounting and bookkeeping rules that apply to the Grantee in the respective WB6 Contracting Party;
- The financial report should properly and easily be reconciled to the accounting and bookkeeping system and to the underlying accounting and other relevant records.

10. Submission of Documentation

- The Grantee shall submit the financial report no later than 30 day after the implementation period, 1 in original submitted to the Local Branch Officer and 1 copy via email. Electronic versions must be submitted via email.
- Attached to the financial report the Grantee is expected to submit copies of proof of payment regarding all expenses listed in the detailed breakdown of expenses.
- The financial report need to be dated, signed by the authorized person of the organization and stamped.
- A final payment request as presented in the Annex VIII of the Grant Contract should be filled and presented together with the above mentioned financial documentation.

11. Breakdown list of expenditures template (Annex VIII)

Be aware that you will have to submit the Annex IX – Breakdown List of Expenditures together with your Financial Report when submitting the final report for your project.

Please find as following examples of supporting documentations on some main cost categories which you should retain during the implementation of the action and attach to financial report. This list is indicative only and non – exhaustive.

Copies of these documents must be readable and clearly must show the signatures, dates, names, stamps etc. Copies in the form of unsigned computer printouts or in illegible hand-writing, will not be accepted. It is recommended to write a short description in English in the copies of invoices.

According to **Article 2.4** of General Conditions in the Grant Contract, RYCO may request additional information at any time.

Appendix I List of supporting documents for Reporting

No	Cost Category	Supporting Documents	Notes
1.	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment contract • Job profile/description • Salary calculations (gross salary, payroll taxes, social & health contributions) • Timesheets • Payment of taxes as according to local tax legislation rules • Payment confirmation • Any other relevant document 	<p>Staff who are involved in the implementation of the project on a part-time basis are only eligible for the equivalent percentage of the time worked.</p> <p>Timesheets should have the name of employee, dates of working, holidays, etc. Should be signed by both, employee and supervisor/project coordinator.</p>
2.	Travel and accommodation costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices/ transport tickets • Boarding passes • Pay tolls • List of passengers/List of participants • Agendas of the activities • Any relevant procurement document if applicable • Reimbursement vouchers/Expenses claim vouchers • Payment confirmation • Any other relevant document 	<p>The list of invoices relating to travel and subsistence costs should include: the name of the person travelling, the departure place, the destination place and the number of days.</p> <p>For travel by plane we will only reimburse economy-class tickets.</p>
3.	Communication & Visibility costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices • Contract if any • Any relevant procurement document if applicable • Delivery slip, goods received notes • Payment confirmation • Any other relevant document 	<p>Samples of printed and published materials containing RYCO's logo etc like: brochures, booklets, digital works etc should be provided as well.</p>
4.	Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection method • Invoices • Contract of service • Terms of reference • Timesheets • CV-s • Payment confirmation <p>Any other relevant document</p>	<p>Deliverables of expert work can be provided as well such as: presentations, research outcomes, videos, training modules, etc</p>

Safety and Protection Guidelines

1. Introduction

RYCO is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the Western Balkans 6 participants (WB6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs. All signed and ratified conventions and national laws, by WB6, regarding children's safety and protection, are what RYCO fully respects and stand for within its work. With this, we invite everyone to fully commit, follow and advocate the legal principles for enabling safety for youth in each activity in the region.

The RYCO Safety and Protection Guidelines document is binding for all grantees and partners of RYCO, especially to those implementing and organizing youth exchanges and mobility processes within the RYCO projects. This document defines a set of rules, procedures and standards, which are to be followed when planning and conducting activities with young people (age of 15 to 30) that involve situations where they need legal and safety protection.

Based on this policy paper, each beneficiary/associate shall follow defined rules and will be responsible for safety of youth and their own approach of bringing safety rules to life, as well as on local and on regional levels.

Each situation has a potential risk of jeopardizing the safety of participants. RYCO strongly believes that with clear and high quality safety procedures and a responsible planning and organization of activities, risks can be mitigated and even avoided. Also, it is important to emphasize on the core values of safety and protection for youth involved in any kind of processes. Young people are particularly vulnerable to marginalization and discrimination on a wide range of grounds, such as: *sex, race, color, language, religion, sexual orientation, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status*.

RYCO is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment and positions itself firmly against any discrimination and marginalization, therefore it empowers its employees, associates and partners to speak against it and when noticed to immediately report it to the respective authority. It is very important that every single person connected to RYCO activities and projects understands the risks and possible violations of rights, as well as their role and responsibility in protecting and enabling safety for youth.

2. Goals of RYCO Safety and Protection Guidelines

The guidelines aim to:

- prevent cases of risks and youth's abuse or violence of any kind
- protect and ensure safety for all young people involved in RYCO programmes and activities
- reduce the number of possible incidents within the RYCO projects related to youth exchange activities
- sensitize youth for their rights and their active role in safety and protection during project implementation (especially underage youth)
- inform youth, co-workers, community members, partners (donors, journalists, governmental authorities, third parties, etc.) about the protection legislation and related procedures (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding)
- encourage RYCO staff team and associates to improve their skills needed to contribute to each youth's development and protection
- nurture open and honest discussions with associates/grantees about quality project implementation with focus on enabling the safety and protection of participants - young people
- enhance the frequent, secure and transparent communication channels on safety and protection of participants of RYCO programs

Our Guidelines are based on:

- The European Convention on Human Rights ([ECHR](#))
- The Scout Association UK – [Safeguarding in Scouting](#)
- The standards on child protection as defined by the [Keeping Children Safe Coalition – Training Toolkit](#)
- Children International - [Child protection policy](#)

3. RYCO stands for safety and protection of youth within its programs

RYCO's activities should be planned, organized and executed putting young people's best interests first and benefiting them in the best possible way.

RYCO is committed to:

- Taking into account young person's wellbeing and interests in all our activities.
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of young people we work with.
- Protecting and promoting the human rights of all young people without exception within our activities.
- Denouncing any kind of abuse or violence in any kind of situation.
- Informing the civil society organizations and schools involved in RYCO activities that they are obliged to protect young people with whom and for whom they work during the implementation of activities.

RYCO recommends that:

- All suspicious and unsubstantiated claims of abuse must be taken seriously and answered promptly and adequately.
- All actors involved have the responsibility to submit reports on cases where there is objective suspicion of discrimination, violence or abuse.
- All grantees which conduct program activities with partners are obliged to meet at least the minimum standards of safety and protection of young people involved in joint programs.

4. RYCO Principles

Guiding Principles on Youth Protection:

1. Having zero-tolerance for abuse. (Annex 1 – What is violence and abuse?)
2. Protecting young people's rights and their best interests.
3. Placing the young person's wellbeing as the first priority when dealing with all kind of identified or suspected cases of abuse.
4. Empowering and educating young people for their rights, personal safety and inform them about steps they can take, if there is a problem.
5. Integrating safety and protection (especially for underage youth) into all aspects of our organizational strategy, structures and work practices.

5. Youth protection policy

The Youth Protection Policy of RYCO is one of the obligations for every relevant actor working with youth (especially underage youth) and having them involved in RYCO or other activities. The ultimate goal is to keep youth safe. It includes the above-mentioned principles as a basis for activities that are done within the RYCO projects/funds or in partnership with RYCO. The Youth Protection Policy contains a set of recommended? steps and protocols, instructions on how to report incidents, concrete guidelines to prevent violence/abuse, tools that help to facilitate open communication around this topic as a primary component for enabling safe environment for all actors involved. Finally this policy document provides rules on how safety measures should be integrated in external communication, especially concerning sponsor-beneficiary interactions.

With these guidelines, RYCO is setting the minimum standards of youth protection and safety and emphasizes on the fact that each organizer of activities is obliged to develop their own concrete steps in providing youth protection and safety.

6. Youth protection protocols

Each RYCO Local Branch Office, as well as the RYCO Head Office is obliged to follow these principles and protocols, as well as to communicate them to grantees, stakeholders and beneficiaries. When we refer to “following the guidelines”, we expect actors to fully adhere to the principles of human rights and children rights and safety procedures, but also to respect local legislation and laws on abuse (especially child and youth abuse), including procedures that are required by local laws.

7. Organizing project activities within RYCO programs? – youth exchanges and study visits

For the overall functioning of safety and protection of youth, especially when organizing the youth exchanges (study visits – groups of minors traveling outside of their Contracting party) it is very important to share responsibility and internally define roles of each participant in the planning and organization of the process. Further it is important to establish an internal communication system. Every individual involved in a project team or any activity must be aware of his/her responsibilities and obligations.

Prior to the implementation of a given project, it is important to inform the parents or legal guardian about the involvement of their children in the project and to introduce them to main goals and objectives of it.

PARENTAL LEGAL CONSENT – in written – is requested form/a written statement signed by either a legal representative or one parent. This form needs to include:

1. General information about young person (name, surname, date of birth, place of birth, school of attendance/membership in CSO)
2. Statement by which parents agree on having their child as participant in a given project e.g. youth exchange in the Western Balkans. It will be emphasized that youth exchange programs will be undertaken in one of the Contracting Parties in the Western Balkans, on the basis of a given project concept.
3. General/short information on project and details concerning the project leader, contact person for the activity.

MEDICAL HISTORY INFORMATION/SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUNG PERSONS

We think that it is important to obtain information on the medical history/special requirements for young people involved in project activities to prevent or reduce the possibility of the risk of any health issue. Such information need to be obtained prior to a youth exchange and shared with the host family/peer. The host family should receive prior to the visit the person’s recent medical history or any specific medical information. They should be informed of any special medical needs, such as medications, allergies, dietary requirements and prescription glasses or contact lenses.

Young people-participants are required to have their own medical insurance. The organizer of the activities and host families are entitled to ask for a copy of this policy and any medical documentation to keep on file while the person is living with them. However, host families are not responsible for youth exchange medical expenses. Young people may have special dietary needs related to health, religion, or personal preference. Host families are invited to encourage exchangees to try new foods, but always respect their preferences.

INFO SESSIONS – MEETING WITH PARENTAL COUNCIL/PARENTS OF YOUNG PARTICIPANTS OF THE PROJECTS

We suggest frequent communication between organizers of the activities (CSOs and schools) and parents or legal representatives of young people involved (especially for the underage young people). On these info sessions, Local Branch Offices are at disposal for grantees to participate in this dialogue and if necessary to present RYCO and its policy for safety and protection.

RYCO encourages youth workers, teachers, parents and associates to regularly share experiences with colleagues and with the RYCO team to capture and discuss best practice for ensuring a safe and protected environment for youth in general and within youth exchanges or some other project activities. They are also welcome to suggest any kind of reliable sources and procedures that can upgrade the safety of youth.

- It is advised to establish a cooperation with local institutions responsible for caring and providing various services for youth group.
- In this respect, it is necessary to establish collaboration with the local unit of the police administration, the center for social work, etc., and institutions which obtain information on the treatment in case of violence against youth.
Persons in charge of project implementation should plan their activities in a way that helps to minimize the risks for young people to suffer any possible harm/abuse. It is recommended that every organization nominates a an employee to act as the focal point. Ideally this person is competent and trained in the area of protection of human rights.

Also, it is a good practice to organize trainings and workshops with the rest of the project team, employees, volunteers of CSO/schools, as well as with young people who are beneficiaries of the program.

- There should be an adequate supervision of youth (especially underage young persons) by project team at all times. This can vary depending on the needs of the group, the age of the participants, the vulnerability of young people, the gender and the general nature of the activities involved.
- It is necessary that CSOs or schools during the implementation process nominate at least two people in charge/supervision for each youth group.

8. Reporting incidents

For all reported youth-abuse incidents, RYCO requires that the youth's best interest be the first priority. In addition, all incidents must be dealt with promptly, and they must be handled in a confidential manner that does not harm the victim or the person reporting the abuse. RYCO suggests for persons involved in programs to be proactive and not miss the identification of the signs and symptoms of violence/abuse.

- If you suspect or if you are informed that a young person is experiencing abuse NEVER try to investigate yourself further. Always seek further advice from the person that is legal representative of CSO or school (entity that is in charge of implementing the project) or from social services.

In cases when a young person finds that she/he has been abused or has abused others, do not judge. Try to support a young person. Keep in mind that you are there for them and that you can offer support, but you have to forward the information to the supervisor/legal representatives/authorities.

- In case of violence against young person or by a young person during the project activity organized by CSO/school, the person in charge of project should inform parents and where appropriate, the respective institution/authority.

- In case of suspicion or finding out that a young person is a victim of psychic, physical, sexual or any kind of violence/abuse occurring outside project activities organized by CSO/school, the person in charge of project should inform the police and the Center for social work.
- If the ongoing procedure is against person in charge of project, on basis of suspicion of abuse, that person should be suspended until the end of the procedure.
- If there is a reasonable doubt that the person in charge of project abused his/her role during the study visit/youth exchange (or any activity during project implementation), he/she should be suspended and removed from further contact with participants, until the end of the procedure for determination of responsibility.

Actors in charge of acting in case of suspected violence and abuse among which there must be effective communication and cooperation are:

- Police services
- Social services
- Health services
- Judicial organs and
- Educational institutions.

9. Communicating the content with youth involved

RYCO Visibility Guidelines sets out the minimum requirements for a convenient communication regarding the RYCO supported projects and their activities. It contains rules and regulations for the acknowledgement of the provided support by RYCO through its open calls for project proposals.

Visibility is highly important for RYCO because of at least two reasons: firstly, RYCO aims to make a change in the region and it is crucial to assure that the successful stories of the awarded projects are well spread; secondly, the visibility is also a question of transparency – as RYCO is a governments-funded organization, all interested stakeholders have a right to be informed about its activities and given support.

Moreover, keep in mind that the visibility is a contractual obligation. Those specified requirements in Visibility Guidelines are the minimum that should be followed in all the cases, but that there can also be specific cases which can be handled on a case by case basis, having in mind the given circumstances and special context. We do believe that working with youth (especially underage persons) is a relevant fact that partially builds special circumstances of RYCO activities, especially if they are going to be published.

In order to protect young person, even when communicating and publishing web/social media content or printing materials, here are the measures we require:

- Telling the truth of the story. This means never using manipulated or sensationalized text and/or images, and certainly not employing discriminatory or degrading language.
- Never using images of inappropriately clothed young people.
- Not publicly disclosing a person's last name, personal address or other information that could be used to locate a person within a territory.
- Not publishing health information, unless the family or individual has given us written consent.

With all of the above suggestions respected and followed, organizers/implementers of activities with youth (especially underage young persons) and individuals featured in promo materials, must ask and later on send to RYCO, the consent (or their parents or legal guardians) using their image, personal data or story prior to publication.

- RYCO is committed to enable and secure the protective and caring environment with its beneficiaries/associates, which will ensure the main goal of the RYCO existence with full safety and protection of all actors involved.
- RYCO will not support any kind of violent communication or act.
- RYCO will condemn any kind of violence and discrimination towards people on the basis of ethnic, religious or sexual orientation.
- RYCO will not be responsible for organization and implementation of youth exchange programs in the region.
- RYCO is not responsible for health and travel insurance of the children within the implementation of the project and youth exchanges.
- RYCO will not support or justify violation of legal restrains/laws in any of the Contracting parties of WB6 during the implementation of the project activities (youth exchanges, meet ups, conferences, workshops...).
- RYCO is not financing any kind of activity that includes purchase or use of any kind of forbidden substances for participants of RYCO activities.
- RYCO will raise awareness regarding children's and youth's safety and its necessity through work ethic of its staff and through experience and daily work with associates.
- RYCO will encourage grantees – project teams to be responsible and more detailed when it comes to organization of youth exchanges and generally, project activities which include young people (especially underage people) as participants.

10. Clarifications

In case you need additional information on the rules set out in this document or you need to report on any broken rule, please contact the RYCO Local Branch Officer in your Contracting Party. The contact details of the RYCO Local Branch Officer can be found at the RYCO website's [contact page](#).

Appendix II What is violence and abuse?

Definitions of the four main categories of abuse:

Physical abuse is the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. Physical abuse may involve hitting, spanking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating. It can also mean causing physical harm to a person by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a person. The incidents may be single or repeated.

Sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a young person and an adult or another young person who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving person in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging youth to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect and neglected treatment is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the person: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the person's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development. It may involve conveying to the person that he or she is worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or there only to meet the needs of another person; or imposing inappropriate expectations upon him/her. Acts include restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, scape-goating, corrupting, ridiculing, degrading, bullying, humiliating (e.g. asking potentially embarrassing questions, demanding potentially embarrassing action) or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Bullying or Child-to-Child abuse is abuse which should be treated with special sensitivity. To work and to have constructive dialogue with young people which committed violence against his/her peers, needs sensitive and structural approach. This approach needs to enable protection to those young people affected with this abuse – victim, and on the other hand support system to young person - abuser.

Any such approach requires:

- the recognition that a young person who has abused another young person differs significantly from adults who have committed similar offences, as the young person is not fully aware of why he or she has committed abuse and what the consequences are
- keeping in mind that the best interest of the young person is the primary consideration in all decisions made - for both the victim and the abuser.