

# Implementation Guidelines of the 2nd cycle

2023

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## **Foreword**

RYCO Superschools is a program for school exchanges in the Western Balkans that supports peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, intercultural learning and dialogue among schools, students and their communities. The scheme aims at providing the ground for creating strong and sustainable bonds between secondary schools within the region and building long-term partnerships. In the first cycle of implementation, RYCO supported 30 exchanges.

For better implementation of the exchanges, the Implementation Guidelines document is tailored to support and provide clear direction to schools and teachers. The Guidelines consist of three chapters which clarify contractual obligations of supported secondary schools towards RYCO and give guidelines for a successful implementation of the supported exchanges.

The three chapters are:

- Program Implementation Guidelines
- Visibility Guidelines
- Financial 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 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.

## **Guidelines for implementation of the youth exchanges**

While we are striving for quality work with our partners, we understand the complexity of organizing qualitative exchanges and addressing our thematic areas. The purpose of these guidelines is to support you by providing tips and hints of successful implementation, to make sure that there is a shared understanding of standards and quality and also to provide you with information that you can use to ensure a sound implementation of your exchanges.

Throughout the document you will find information on how to design and carry out your exchanges. Specifically, details on setting the objectives of the activities and the exchanges, reaching out to the target group, incorporating RYCO's thematic areas, measuring success of the exchanges, usage of different digital tools, etc.

### **Definition of youth exchanges**

We define youth exchanges as activities that allow groups of young people coming from RYCO's Contracting Parties<sup>1</sup> of the Western Balkan 6 to meet, live together and work on shared projects for short periods. Under the Superschools program, these youth exchanges take the form of school exchanges among secondary school students who have the opportunity to participate in non-formal education activities such as workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, outdoor activities and more. Furthermore, apart from the opportunity to meet, students experience regional mobility, enhance their cooperation and strengthen their intercultural competence, and thus contribute to the overall process of peacebuilding, reconciliation, intercultural learning, and dialogue, among young people in the region.

### **Designing your youth exchange**

The design process of school exchanges starts with the application process during which the engaged schools work for the first time on their project idea. Once the schools are selected to be part of the RYCO Superschools program, the team composed of teachers, RYCO Local Program Officers and external experts when deemed necessary collaborate on the agenda design. The design process takes place online, via Zoom (online platform) meetings. In this joint process of designing the exchanges' agendas, there are some essential steps to be followed when developing youth exchange activities.

1. Set the objectives of the exchange, what are you trying to achieve by organizing this exchange;
2. Think about the impact on the participants, but also on the local community;
3. Decide on the dates and suitable month of the exchange, based on both of your schools' schedules;
4. Think about the venue(s) where the exchange can take place, think if these venue(s) are easily accessible, or do you need to take extra steps to ensure that your participants and colleagues can access them;
5. Think about the number of participants and their profiles - who is most suitable to participate and why are their participation and inclusion important for the program;
6. Please, think about the agenda of the exchange - creating it, listing activities that are foreseen, timing, responsible person, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia are the Contracting Parties of RYCO.

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

7. Think about the materials that you and the participants need during the exchange (participants package) - make sure they are prepared and shared with them well in advance;
8. Make sure that you have a clear and active non-formal learning methodology for the exchange activities- one that also allows participants to share and learn from their own experiences and the experience of others in the group;
9. When identifying the activities, make sure that you pay attention to the external expertise you would need for tackling the complex and/or sensitive topics;
10. Try to design activities that are inclusive, accessible, and open to participants with diverse backgrounds and abilities;
11. Please, create a space where participants can engage in open and meaningful communication, increase their knowledge, and acquire new skills;

#### Things you should consider before implementing your exchange:

1. If you are using online digital tools, please make sure they are known and everyone is able to use them;
2. Take into consideration any risks and barriers you might encounter and how to mitigate them - e.g. language can be a barrier that you might need to overcome, your participants or school team might need to obtain a passport, you might need to provide visas to your participants, you will need to plan your travel depending on the rules set by relevant authorities at that very moment;
3. Conduct an evaluation of participants' experience and satisfaction with the exchange. Ensure time for reflection and briefing for each day, so participants can consolidate their learning;
4. Think of the follow-up activities that you can implement with the participants - so you ensure an impact beyond the exchange;

#### How to set achievable objectives within the set timeframe?

In the context of the Superschools exchanges, the objectives or goals can be defined as what you wish to achieve by organizing and implementing the exchanges, what would you like to reach by the end of it. Objectives should be clear and understandable and most of all should be achieved through the activities planned for the exchanges. For example, an objective of youth exchanges can be *“to help young people to become aware of socially relevant topics/thematic areas of RYCO”* and the activities of the exchange should contribute to this objective.

As stated above, it is highly important that we set realistic objectives of the exchange while planning it. Equally important, is to set the learning needs and outcomes and to actually match them with the resources of your team, expertise available and the timeframe in which you are going to implement the exchange.

Some objectives cannot be reached within 7 days therefore you need to be aware of what objectives can be achieved within the timeframe of your exchange and rest assured that these first steps will establish the ground for future cooperation when properly taken.

#### How to target and reach out to your participants?

In order for you to reach out to your target group and ensure their participation, you should have a good outreach strategy. This outreach is the bridge between you and your targeted audience and ensures that the program and the exchanges reach them.

Outreach can be done using both classic promotion methods such as flyers, posters, info sessions, etc., but also through more innovative ways such as social media, newsletter, Facebook groups, etc. - ways that are popular among people of the specific target group.

When reaching out to the participants of your RYCO Superschools exchange, please factor in the capacities of the participants you are engaging - starting from thematic knowledge, if relevant, their language skills, their socializing capacities, and their profiles. This assessment would help you in order to adapt the different tools you might be deciding to use during the exchange to their needs and potential.

Please, make sure that these aspects are taken into account, and based on this, prepare the materials you will share with participants - in order to facilitate this process accordingly. Keep in mind to make a diverse selection of participants, taking into consideration gender, ethnicity, physical ability, rural/urban area, sexual orientation, socio-economic background etc.

### What human resources and expertise do you need to organize the exchange?

Another important aspect to focus on while implementing your exchange, is being aware of the human resources needed to successfully implement your exchange. When preparing the "Program Agenda" with the support of the Local Program Officers, be aware of the capacities you have both in terms of human and material resources.

Since the Superschools exchanges involve more than twenty participants (usually 10 to 12 students per school), a minimum of two school teachers have to be engaged in accompanying students and in the overall coordination of the exchange program. A very crucial aspect of this is the good coordination of teachers. A fruitful cooperation among the two coordinating teachers of each school but also among the teachers within the partnership, is the key to a successful implementation - you need to establish good relationships, support each other and share tasks and responsibilities.

In line with a good coordination goes the external expertise you might need to successfully implement the exchanges. We are aware that you might need additional support for some aspects of the implementation, therefore we suggest that you assess the needs for external expertise properly and then communicate this information as early as possible to the respective RYCO Local Program Officer.

Considering the sensitivity of the topics RYCO Superschools works on, external expertise might be needed in order to ensure a successful and meaningful implementation of the foreseen activities. An external expert with the appropriate knowledge undertakes to give a specialized service as part of a team or alone and is not an internal employee of the schools and RYCO. If there is a need for specialized expertise that the school may provide internally and cannot be offered by external experts, exceptions can be made. In that case, the Local Program Officers may decide to allow it, after assessing the needs and the school's resources. RYCO will manage the costs of external expertise entirely by contracting experts/trainers/facilitators and paying them directly.

### What materials do you need to develop and share with your team and with the participants?

Usually, when organizing an event there are certain documents that you need to prepare and share with participants to ensure good and active participation. In general, you need to have:

- **Info pack** - before the exchange starts, it is important that participants are aware of a few general things about it such as location, accommodation, places to visit, weather conditions, agenda of the exchange activities, useful tips, currency exchange etc.
- **Presentations and reading materials** - it is important that some materials are shared with the participants in advance so they get informed about the experience they will go through and also learn more about the hosting community and school. In this way, you ensure active and constructive participation

### How will you know your exchange was successful?

In any kind of activity, it is important to plan a session where participants can reflect on their experience and provide feedback on what worked, what can be improved, what are the lessons learned, etc. When your exchanges are multi-day activities, we would suggest that each day you dedicate some time in the agenda for group reflection, or for the sessions dealing with highly sensitive topics and are emotionally engaging, some reflection or debriefing time after the session, is strongly recommended.

Debriefing or reviewing is a process that helps participants to make sense of an experience and enables them to reflect individually or/and in groups on what happened during a learning session and why it happened. It includes counseling with the teachers or experts involved and exchanging of information which aims at preventing tension among participants but also potential emotional stress. Debriefing takes place soon after the activity, so that the events are still fresh in mind.

In principle, the evaluation is important - it will help you understand better what you can improve for other activities or show you what worked well and what can be used in the future as a good practice. By having young people fill out the survey, while they are still together, you will ensure that (almost) everyone has provided their feedback. For the purpose of "Monitoring and Evaluation" of the exchanges under the RYCO Superschools program, such anonymous surveys to be filled out during the last day of the second exchange and will be provided by RYCO.

### What kind of follow up would be good to have after your school exchange - both for the organizing team and for the participants?

Depending on the type of the exchange, you can foresee different types of follow-up actions. It is always a good idea to send a "Thank you" email to the participants, share the materials from the exchange (presentations, readings, graphics from joint work, photos, links), invite them to follow your social media accounts, start an intercultural club within the school, etc.

Since you will be working with this group of participants in two exchanges, try to schedule an informal catch-up online and/or start an informal communication channel (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber group, etc.) - so they stay connected and maintain communication with each other. This for sure helps bring them closer with each other.

The follow-up activities may be presentation of the activities that took place during the exchange to the rest of the school once you get back, testimonials from the participants sharing their experience, reflection session on the thematic areas of RYCO and those touched upon in your exchange and many more. You may consult the Local Program Officers on this when designing your Program Agendas.

### Tips and hints for choosing the right activities to ensure meaningful participation

Getting participants to participate in the exchange is one thing, keeping them engaged and actively participating throughout the whole exchange is the second. In order for you to maintain a high engagement level, make sure you create the agenda in a way that allows participants to have enough breaks during the exchange and design the sessions so that there is a balanced time for theoretical, practical work, and free time. In this line, think of participatory, learner-centered, and innovative approaches that foster individual and group learning methods enabling them to express themselves and build trust with each other. Additionally, using online tools is highly recommended - since young people are usually prone to using such tools which keep their interest alive.

### Which digital tools can be used?

Depending on your different needs, some digital tools for collaborative work online and increased interactivity which can be used are the following:

- [Miro](#)
- [Mural](#)
- [Google docs](#)
- [Fun retro](#)
- [Padlet](#)
- [Mentimeter](#)

### **Facilitating sensitive sessions on RYCO thematic areas: (i) peacebuilding, (ii) reconciliation (iii) intercultural learning and dialogue.**

We are aware that working with RYCO topics can be demanding and requires a certain level of preparation and knowledge on these topics - for this reason, RYCO provides its ongoing support and training for teachers to develop their thematic knowledge and improve their facilitation skills.

Additionally, to support you with the facilitation of these sessions, we kindly ask you to keep in mind the below:

- a) Start the sessions with a good energizer and a social activity that helps young people get energized but also get to know each other;
- b) Make sure that the atmosphere in the room is good and everybody is relaxed and present;
- c) Open these discussions in a smooth way - step by step - always being aware of the reactions of the young people and ensuring they understand the topics being taught/discussed;
- d) Ask them if they feel comfortable talking about certain topics;
- e) After you mention the topic, please make sure that you identify if someone is reluctant to participate and if so ask about their concern or objection and try to address it - this is more effective than being pushy;
- f) Make sure that everybody is heard and if there is a difference of opinions, explain that this is normal and we should respect others' opinions;
- g) Make sure that young people are not being negatively impacted by the topic and if so, try to address it and let them know that they are understood;
- h) Try to avoid young people going into conversations that do not necessarily contribute to the overall objective of the discussion;

### Tips and hints for inclusive approach and outreach to target groups

It is important that there is a variety in the groups of young people have the opportunity to get involved in the activities and that these activities are accessible.

- **Opportunity for youth with different backgrounds.** When activities are implemented in secondary schools, it is very important for you to ensure equal access to youth with different backgrounds and profiles. During the selection of participants, make sure you provide opportunities to youth with fewer opportunities. It is very important to think carefully about the selection process of the participants in order to ensure that the experience is transformational for them. You should keep in mind that not only excellent students shall be selected but as mentioned, you should have an inclusive approach.



- **Try to make inclusive groups.** You should set up groups that include both young people from vulnerable groups and young people of the advantaged youth/groups". Working in these kinds of groups encourages mutual interaction, peer learning, acceptance of diversity through joint experience and getting to know each other. Within this kind of group composition, young people gain new experiences and learn to provide and receive mutual support.
- **Inclusive communication as a tool.** Provide clear and direct messages to young people, on the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion on which the program's activities are based. Try to provide information relevant for young people in a language familiar to them, in an accessible way through customized communication channels (available websites, audio recordings, simplified texts and information for people with intellectual disabilities, information on in Braille, translation into sign language, use of photographs, images, and videos, use of national minority languages).
- Try to use **adequate terminology** and language that is in line with respect for human rights, which includes the use of gender-sensitive language.
- **Use adequate communication channels** that reach vulnerable groups of young people as well as support services that meet their needs. We encourage you to promote open calls for activities among different groups and use different channels of communication.
- **Don't make assumptions about what young people want.** Young people are the best judges of what they can or cannot do. Don't decide for them based on your experiences and assumptions. As an organizer and facilitator, you can, of course, be part of the decision-making process by listing the available options or offering accessible activities. In the end, every individual should decide by her/himself. This is why it is crucial to include your students in all phases of the exchanges.
- **Ensure a safe space for youth.** When organizing activities and working with young people, they may desire to express some private thoughts or express themselves in a more open way . Advise all engaged persons who work directly with young people to provide a safe space for these young people. This is especially challenging in an online environment. Always allow the young person to talk to you after group work and share their thoughts with you.
- **Support.** Try to provide support services to young people from vulnerable groups that are based on the principles of equality and equal opportunities and in accordance with the needs and desires of a particular person. This means that:
  - young people from vulnerable groups are asked what kind of support they need and how the support service should be designed;
  - the support is focused on the young person and not on the program, activity, or institution and the people in them.
- Try to **promote inclusive activities** and emphasize that the activities are adapted to young people from different groups. Clearly and unequivocally send a message to young people from vulnerable groups that call is open to young people from vulnerable groups and that they will be provided with additional support measures for equal participation.

## Useful links

1. Thematic resources:
  - a. [“Educating for Intercultural Dialogue, Peacebuilding, Constructive Remembrance and Reconciliation: A Toolkit for Teachers & Trainers in the Western Balkans”](#) - This Toolkit is designed for teachers and trainers who work with adolescents (14-18 years) in formal and non-formal education settings and focuses on education for intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding, constructive remembrance, and reconciliation.
  - b. [“Handbook for International School Projects”](#), Academy of Central European Schools - this is a handbook with good instructions and guidelines to implement school projects - tips and tricks you might find helpful for your work with projects at your schools.

## **Reporting**

As per usual practice, a narrative report should be submitted to RYCO after the implementation of the exchange. In the case of the RYCO Superschools program, the narrative report will be done in two phases:

- a) The First Narrative report should be submitted to our Local Program Officers up to 10 working days after the implementation of the first exchange.
- b) The Second Narrative Report should be submitted to our Local Program Officers up to 10 working days after the implementation of the second exchange.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

During the implementation of the exchanges, it will be requested from the participants to support RYCO in its monitoring and evaluation processes.

The beneficiaries will be required to use online evaluation forms (for both participants and organizers) for their activities. The online forms and additional information regarding this will be provided by RYCO and will be anonymous.

Participation in the activities organized within a project shall be recorded through participants lists. These lists need to have at least the following info: name and surname of the participant, ethnicity (optional), Contracting Party, gender, email address, and signature (if it is a physical meeting) including the date, name and venue of the activity. The beneficiaries will need to insert logos and a disclaimer in both participant and staff lists stating that participants allow and agree that these data can be used by the donor of the activity and RYCO.

The coordinating teachers will also document all visibility activities (e.g. newspaper articles, TV appearances, campaigns, etc.) and be obliged to send information about visibility activities implemented throughout the project implementation to RYCO on a regular basis, including any communication products produced in the project: leaflets, posters, publications, photos, testimonials, etc.

## **Visibility Guidelines**

Visibility is highly important for RYCO because we aim to make a change in the region and it is crucial to assure that the success stories are well spread. Secondly, visibility is also a question of transparency – as RYCO is a government-funded organization, all interested stakeholders have a right to be informed about its activities and beneficiaries.

The RYCO Visibility Guidelines present how selected schools should communicate their activities during the Superschools program, including minimum requirements and rules on how to present support by RYCO and donors. Promoting the program is a contractual obligation and RYCO and its partners reserve the right to use all the materials created within a supported program for promotion.

We encourage you to promote your work through all available communication channels and highly recommend the use of local language(s). When possible, the communication and visibility materials should also be followed with an English language version. Schools are encouraged to take photographs and videos during the exchanges. RYCO and its partners should have photo rights to use those photographs/videos.

Please, have in mind that written and visual materials have to be approved by RYCO before publishing. For approval, comments, and advice regarding your project exchange, please reach out to RYCO's Communication Officer, Judoris Merkaj, at [judoris.merkaj@rycowb.org](mailto:judoris.merkaj@rycowb.org) at least 5 working days prior to publishing. It is recommended that you also include your project's respective Local Program Officer on cc of your email communication. It is mandatory to obtain approval. Schools are required to abide by the social media criteria stated below in this document, with the exception of the text and caption for social media posts, which do not require official permission.

## General Rules for Visual Identification

When promoting activities within the Superschools program, schools must **use 5 logos and ready-prepared text about the program and RYCO in all communication formats and channels**, according to the specific needs. Please, make sure 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. In the link [HERE](#) you can find a one-pager on RYCO and [HERE](#) the ready prepared text about RYCO and SUPERSCHOOLS translated in all local languages that can be distributed to the participants of the event. All the necessary logos, templates, and other relevant documents can be accessed in the folder [HERE](#).

### PLACEMENT OF LOGOS:

- Superschools (upper left corner of the document; school can choose to use the pink or green, primary or secondary logo of the program listed below)
- School logo (upper right corner of the document, in the same size as Superschools logo)
- The European Union, the German Cooperation, GIZ, and RYCO (at the bottom of the document, always together in this order)



Logos must be displayed in the following order:

*EU emblem*



*German Cooperation*



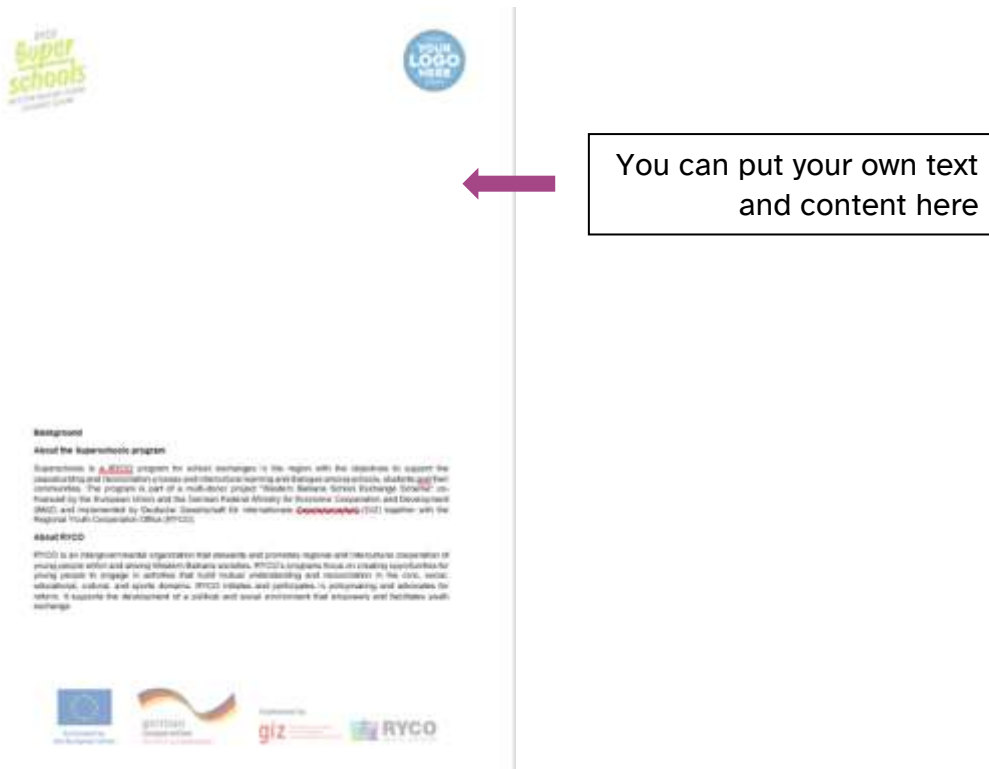
*GIZ*



*RYCO*



## Example of a Press Release:



### To Further Note

We kindly ask you to take into consideration that RYCO operates in a politically sensitive region and that we aim to transmit neutral and positive messages about the region as a whole. Thus, in our communication materials, both internally and externally, we follow some specific rules as per below:

- We do not use the map of the region with internal borders;
- We do not use flags or national symbols of the RYCO Contracting Parties in official events, publications, on photos, videos, etc.;
- We do not use terms “state/s”, “republic/s”, “country/ies”.
- We write the name of Kosovo with an asterisk (\*) and footnote.

### What we do alternatively:

- If there is a need for including a map of the region, RYCO follows the principle of presenting the Western Balkans 6 region as a whole, without internal borders and lines.
- Following the Agreement on the Establishment of RYCO, the term “Contracting Parties” is used when referring to places of the Western Balkans. We also use their full names, or terms “society”, “place”, “culture”, „government “, “Western Balkans societies”, “Western Balkan governments” etc.
- The standardized footnote for Kosovo is in: **English** \**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with Security Council Resolution 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.* For local languages: **Albanian (Albania/Kosovo)** \*Ky përcaktim nuk paragjykon pozicionet mbi statusin dhe është në përputhje me Rezolutën 1244 të KS-së, të OKB-së dhe Opinionin e GJND-së mbi Deklaratën e Pavarësisë së Kosovës. **Bosnian (BiH)** \*Ovaj naziv ne dovodi u pitanje stavove o statusu i u skladu je sa Rezolucijom Vijeća sigurnosti/Savjeta bezbjednosti Ujedinjenih nacija 1244 i Mišljenjem Međunarodnog suda pravde o proglašenju nezavisnosti Kosova.

**Croatian (BiH)** \*Ovaj naziv ne dovodi u pitanje stavove o statusu i sukladan je Rezoluciji Vijeća sigurnosti Ujedinjenih naroda 1244 i Mišljenjem Međunarodnog suda pravde o proglašenju neovisnosti Kosova. **Serbian (BiH)** \*Oвај назив не доводи у питање ставове о статусу и у складу је са Резолуцијом Савјета безбједности Уједињених народа 1244 и Мишљењем Међународног суда правде о проглашењу независности Косова. **Serbian (Serbia)** \*Ovo određenje ne dovodi u pitanje stavove o statusu i u skladu je sa Rezolucijom Saveta bezbednosti Ujedinjenih nacija 1244 i mišljenjem Međunarodnog suda pravde o proglašenju nezavisnosti Kosova. **Montenegrin** \*Ovaj naziv ne dovodi u pitanje stavove o statusu i u skladu je sa Rezolucijom Savjeta bezbjednosti Ujedinjenih nacija 1244 i mišljenjem Međunarodnog suda pravde o proglašenju nezavisnosti Kosova. **Macedonian** \*Ваквото определување е без оглед на статусот и истото е во согласност со Резолуцијата 1244/1999 на Советот за безбедност на Обединетите нации и мислењето на Меѓународниот суд на правдата во врска со декларацијата за независност на Косово.

Having in mind the context and constraints of RYCO, we kindly invite you to follow these communication guidelines, so we can jointly and successfully share messages about the Superschools project, your interesting activities, and great achievements, to the wider regional public.

### **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 contradict with 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):

#### **1. For publications in print or electronic format:**

*This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) within the RYCO Superschools program implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO). Its contents are the sole responsibility of the supported schools and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU, BMZ, GIZ or RYCO.*

#### **2. For dedicated websites and social media accounts of the program:**

*This <website/account> was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) within the RYCO Superschools program implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO). Its contents are the sole responsibility of the supported schools and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU, BMZ, GIZ or RYCO.*

#### **3. For videos and other audio-visual materials:**

*This <video/film/program/recording> was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) within the RYCO Superschools program implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO). Its contents are the sole responsibility of the supported schools and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU, BMZ, GIZ or RYCO.*

#### 4. Logos and disclaimer for inventory



Implemented by



Provided with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

#### 5. For the presentation of the program to the third parties

RYCO Superschools is a program for school exchanges in the Western Balkans aiming to support the peacebuilding and reconciliation processes and intercultural learning and dialogue among schools, students and their communities. The program is part of a multi-donor project “Western Balkans School Exchange Scheme” co-financed by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) together with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO).

#### 6. For photographing of participants during joint activities - Declaration of consent to the use of quotes/photos/videos

A person with parental responsibility must have the capacity to give consent to the use of quotes/photos/videos of their children up to 16 years of age, and all participants of that age (and above that age) can sign the declaration of consent by themselves. Parental consent will be sought, with the information provided on how and for what purpose images will be used.

The templates for the declarations of consent in local languages will be provided by RYCO’s local branch offices.

#### Social Media

The project is paying special focus on being present and active on social media. In case your schools have social media accounts, please publish at least three posts/stories/reels per school per exchange. In case your schools are not present on social media, please reach out to RYCO.

It is strongly advised that posts are focused on the work and activities realized together by the different institutions and participants (e.g. *Students from school X and school Y have participated together in the workshop today, as a part of the RYCO Superschools exchange program*) while keeping in mind the communication rules stated above. To ensure that your work can be shared and promoted by RYCO, we kindly request that photos that include national symbols such as flags, maps with borders, and other similar symbols be avoided.

Always mention RYCO and donors when posting and use the following hashtags #WesternBalkans, #Superschools, #RYCO, #GIZ, #EU. By doing so, we can monitor your work and activities, and increase their visibility on RYCO’s social media platforms.

**RYCO social media accounts:**

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

**Local GIZ office’s social media accounts:**

- Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/GIZAlbania>

<https://www.facebook.com/gizpristina>

<https://www.facebook.com/gizskopje>

- LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/giz-north-macedonia/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/giz-albania/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/giz-kosovo/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/giz-bosnia-herzegovina/about/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/giz-serbia/>

**EU social media accounts:**

- Facebook: EU Neighbourhood & Enlargement: <https://www.facebook.com/EUnear>
- Twitter: EU NEAR: [https://twitter.com/eu\\_near](https://twitter.com/eu_near)
- Instagram: EU Neighbourhood & Enlargement: [https://www.instagram.com/eu\\_near/](https://www.instagram.com/eu_near/)

**Media Relations**

The media is an exceptionally important stakeholder in the RYCO Superschools program. The schools and their partners should focus on the local media and invite them to cover important project events. We encourage you to build strong connections with them and make a list of media that can support you in these efforts. Media relations can be developed through press releases, media visits, and TV/radio appearances.

**Tips:**

- In order for communication to be persuasive, communication shall be focused on human stories and the impact of the Superschools program on young people. Telling how the experience in a regional exchange has changed the life of a youngster offering him a bright future, might have a good chance of engaging the media.[P2]
- When schools are invited for local interviews and media appearances, you can use provided text about the Superschools program and RYCO and address the support in these words: *“The project is funded by EU and German Government and implemented by GIZ and RYCO”*. [P3]

## **Other promotion materials**

For other promotional materials such as (roll-ups, banners, visuals, notebooks, etc.) follow the same rules as listed above.

**Reminder:** For all approvals, comments, inputs or doubts contact Superschools/RYCO Communications Officer [judoris.merkaj@rycowb.org](mailto:judoris.merkaj@rycowb.org) before publishing.

**Kind note:** *In order to help us in accomplishing the RYCO mission dedicated to peacebuilding, reconciliation, and regional cooperation, please share our content connected to other programs, too.*

## **Guidelines on Financial Rules**

The purpose of the guidelines on financial rules is to support your and your partner school in ensuring sound implementation of the exchanges financed by the RYCO Superschools program.

If you have any financial unclarity during the implementation phase of the exchanges that are not covered in these guidelines, you can address them in written (via email) to the respective Local Branch Office, and guidance will be provided to you, in written (via email) within 5 working days.

### **Budget**

The approved Program Agendas include a detailed estimated budget presented in euro, as per Budget Form. This estimated budget includes all the costs planned to incur/occur during the implementation of the activities that you have already planned. It is prepared by you, under the close guidance of RYCO Local Branch Office staff.

If you and your partner school are new to the Superschools Program, the total budget for the partnership/whole exchange can amount up to 15,000 EUR; if your school is part of the long-term partnership scheme, your common budget amounts to 10,000 EUR. Please note that this budget is for both your school and your partner, in other words, for the whole exchange.

### **Expenditures**

Expenditures must include the factual costs made exclusively for the implementation of the exchanges.

#### **Direct and indirect management of expenditures:**

All expenditures related to the school exchanges, fall under one out of the two ways of management, depending on the nature of the cost concerned:

- **Direct management:** RYCO is going to manage the expenditures directly;
- **Indirect management:** You, as representatives of the schools, will handle the expenses and make purchases independently, following the contractual provisions, these guidelines and RYCO's instructions.



Therefore, while RYCO has provided the funding for a specific exchange program, it is not always directly involved in the day-to-day management. However, RYCO is in charge of contracting most of the project activities and is ultimately responsible for executing the payments.

As explained above, the expenditures related to each exchange will be managed partly by RYCO and partly by you, as coordinating teachers. For example, the costs of travel and accommodation, subsistence costs, and external expertise, as disclosed in the Eligible Costs section below, will be managed by RYCO.

For the goods and services under direct management, RYCO will be directly responsible for:

- ensuring the procurement of goods and/or services;
- signing agreements;
- monitoring project implementation;
- assessing the results;
- making payments;
- assisting your school with the planned exchange activities organization.

Indirect management of costs will include activity costs and if deemed necessary, some costs for minor equipment, such as working materials for which you will receive as advance payment in cash upon necessary approvals, in local currency. Subsequently, the purchase of materials and payment for the activities cost necessary for the implementation will be done by you. For this purpose, RYCO will disburse you the money, depending on the situation, as advance payments in tranches. RYCO may also make a direct transfer to suppliers and service providers to each assigned expenditure category as explained in the Eligible Costs section below.

### **General Criteria on Eligible Costs**

Eligible costs are costs incurred by the schools and RYCO respectively and exclusively which meet the following criteria:

- A. they are incurred during the implementation of the exchange program;
- B. they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the exchange program;
- C. they are necessary for the implementation of the exchange program;
- D. they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding cost-efficiency

<b>Types of costs</b>	<b>Description</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Travel costs</b> for the students and teachers are related exclusively to traveling via minibus/bus during the exchanges from and to each location of partnering schools. RYCO will organize logistic aspects in close cooperation with you, in order to organize each trip and the whole exchange plan in due time. RYCO will manage this cost through the service providers contracted throughout the WB6 region for travel and event management services.</li> <li>- <b>Insurance cost:</b> RYCO will cover travel health insurance costs for all participants. It is an eligible cost only for traveling abroad. RYCO will manage this expenditure through the contracted travel and event</li> </ul>

<p><b>Travel and Accommodation</b></p>	<p>management service providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Accommodation and meals:</b> Participants' accommodation will also be covered and organized entirely by RYCO. You are encouraged to keep in close contact with RYCO regarding eventual participants' special needs. We will try to meet them to the best of our possibilities, within the approved budget limits. Meals are organized on a half-board basis for the visiting students and teachers. Joint lunches for all participants during the exchange days (excluding travel days) will be provided either through accommodation/hotel or will be given in cash to the host teacher/coordinator. Maximum limit for lunches is 7.5 EUR per person per day for both host and visiting students and teachers.</li> <li>- <b>Visa and administrative costs</b> for traveling within the region are eligible costs, as long as they are necessary for the implementation of the exchange. Administrative costs include, for example, declarations to the notary for parents' permission for the students to take part in exchanges and PCR tests. Additional administrative costs are likewise eligible, but they need to be identified jointly with RYCO. VISA and PCR tests (if needed) will be managed by RYCO throughout the services of the contracted travel and event management companies. However, costs for declarations to the notary for parents' permission will be managed by you, throughout the reimbursement procedure in cash.</li> </ul>
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### Types of Eligible Costs

The funds for the exchanges, jointly managed by RYCO and you, as school representatives, are described in the following table:

<p><b>Subsistence costs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When visiting the partner school under the exchange program, you, as coordinating teachers, are entitled to receive a lump sum of 300 € each, while accompanying persons for students with non-typical development will also receive 300 €. The students will not receive any subsistence allowance, since food and accommodation will be provided to visiting participants.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity costs</b></p>	<p>Activity/Program costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Tickets</b> to museums, theaters, cultural visits for both students of your school and your partnering one;</li> <li>- <b>Working materials</b>, digital tools, small pieces of equipment or similar items necessary to implement the foreseen agenda/activities;</li> <li>- <b>Refreshments</b> during the workshops, excursions and joint working sessions; you make the purchase and submit the original hard copy of the fiscal invoices to RYCO's Local Branch Office in your respective Contracting Party.</li> <li>- <b>Expert</b> costs that might be needed for the moderation/facilitation of specific topics during the exchange, i.e. intercultural learning, reconciliation, etc. RYCO will manage these costs entirely by contracting experts/trainers/facilitators and paying them directly.</li> <li>- <b>Local transportation</b> for visit to cultural sites. Also local transportation from hotel to school and vice versa (only in specific cases where it is approved by RYCO)</li> </ul>

## **Payment and refunding**

There will be two types of payment to your schools. The first type for covering program costs will need to be justified by fiscal invoices and bills for which you will receive an advance based on the approved budget. The second type is about subsistence and other costs, which will be lump sums that will be justified by filling the templates provided by RYCO. Depending on the expense, justification forms might be required to be signed by each participant. In the case that the costs are not in line with the eligibility criteria or expenses planned did not occur so that the schools will have unspent money, RYCO has the right to be refunded from the schools. **Schools/Partners cannot benefit financially from the RYCO Superschools program.**

**Ineligible activity costs:** individual gifts exceeding 10 EUR per item, fines, parking fees, alcoholic drinks.

## **Financial Reporting**

Your schools are not required to prepare any financial report during the implementation or at the end of the project; RYCO will conduct such a process. However, you must preserve every invoice and proof of payment for the cost, which must be justified against invoices and submitted to RYCO within the set deadline.

## **Annexes**

1. [Template of the List of Participants](#)
2. Templates for Declaration of Consent in Local Languages: [Albanian](#), [Bosnian](#), [Montenegrin](#), [Madeconian](#), [Serbian](#) and [English](#).