



3rd Youth Leadership & Innovation Award for Migration

Context

Young people under the age of 30 make up 31% of international migrants, with in 2020, 15% under the age of 20 (UN DESA Statistics, 2020). Young migrants have challenges and priorities specific to their age and need responsive policies reflective of this. Further, many young people are also experts and leaders working at the forefront of both migration issues in their home and host communities and thus should be included as critical stakeholders and partners in decision-making, design and implementation of global efforts to proactively prepare and respond to continued and future mobility issues.

The Migration Youth & Children Platform have previously demonstrated the great potential impact of the **Youth Innovation Award model** - a global competition designed to empower and support young leaders who are actively driving innovative solutions to migration challenges.

In line with Ambassador Gustavo Gallón, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations' request to innovate the GFMD dialogue through new ways of engaging both State and non-State actors, the Award, organized as part of youth engagement at the Global Forum for Migration and Development Summit, is designed as an innovative approach to focus the conversation on migration through concrete and practical solutions.

In their two first editions, the Youth Leadership and Innovation Award awarded cash prizes totaling \$40,000 to six winning youth initiatives. These were chosen by a high-level jury during a pitching and awards ceremony during the GFMD summit itself.

Building on this success, we are hosting the 3rd Edition of the Youth Innovation Award on Migration during the next Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) 2024-2025, focusing on innovations addressing issues directly related to the main GFMD priorities.

Objectives of YLIA

- Provide seed funding to escalate youth innovative initiatives working on climate mobility, diaspora contributions, and access to services.
- Strengthen the capacities of young leaders, including young migrants, refugees and members of host communities.
- Elevate the voices of young leaders in global scenarios such as the Global Migration Forum on Development (GFMD).
- Serves as a starting point for future partnerships between young leaders and key GFMD stakeholders.

With a steadfast commitment to empowering the next generation of change-makers, this Youth Leadership & Innovation Award for Migration is set to ignite a powerful movement that harnesses the potential of youth-led solutions and drives meaningful progress toward a more inclusive and sustainable future for all



The 3rd Youth Leadership and Innovation Award for Migration invites youth under 31 to submit their innovative existing solutions in the following areas:

1. Championing vulnerable communities on the move

This category highlights projects that empower key vulnerable groups – women, children, youth, and people with disabilities— ensuring their full participation in migration processes and strengthening their contributions to global migration and development.

Guiding questions:

1. *How does your project empower women, children, and youth within migration contexts and enhance their contributions to global migration and development?*
2. *In what ways does your project foster inclusion, resilience, and opportunities such as education, employment, and social inclusion, ensuring they can shape their future?*

Cultural and Digital Innovation for Narrative Transformation

This category celebrates initiatives that leverage the power of culture, media, and digital tools to shape the narrative around migration. Projects in this category should demonstrate how they leverage media, storytelling, or cultural approaches to reshape public perception and promote positive stories about migration.

Guiding questions:

1. *How does your initiative utilize media and digital tools to deconstruct and construct narratives around migration?*
2. *In what ways does your project engage communities or policymakers to drive cultural change and combat misinformation about migration?*

3. Creating Regular Migration Pathways for all

This category welcomes projects that leverage digital tools or technology to facilitate access to sustainable livelihoods and promote safe and regular migration pathways.

Guiding questions:

1. *How does your initiative create, or provide learning and earning opportunities for people on the move facilitating their access to sustainable livelihoods and regular migration pathways?*
2. *In what ways does your project use technology to support the expansion or address the challenges and barriers faced by migrants in accessing regular migration pathways and employment opportunities*



Format and Structure of the Award

YLIA follows a structured competition process, culminating in the Youth Innovation Pitch Contest- a special session at the GFMD Summit where finalists will present their solutions and compete for seed funding to scale and replicate their projects.

The 3rd edition of YLIA invites young leaders under 31 to submit innovative, existing solutions that have already demonstrated impact and are directly linked to the main GFMD priorities.

A rigorous internal and external selection process will assess applications, selecting six finalist initiatives - two per YLIA category - to advance to the next stage. These finalists will also be part of the GFMD Youth Delegation.

In the lead-up to the GFMD and the Youth Innovation Pitch Contest, each finalist will receive individual online coaching sessions to prepare their presentations. The YLIA's mentoring program, which focused on storytelling, public speaking, and presentation techniques, aimed to support the selected finalists in their journey to the pitch contest.

Winning the Youth Leadership and Innovation Award (YLIA) is just the beginning. Our objective is to ensure that the journey of the YLIA finalists does not conclude at the pitch contest. Following the Award presentation, we will engage the finalists in various opportunities to ensure they continue to develop their skills, strengthen their projects, and promote youth action:

Mentorship, Capacity-Building & Training – Awardees participate in specialized workshops and training to strengthen their leadership, project management, and innovation skills.

Recognition and Visibility – Winners gain recognition in global migration policy spaces, including at the GFMD 2025, where they present their projects and have the opportunity to influence international conversations on migration governance.

Networking & Collaboration Opportunities – Winners are introduced to key GFMD stakeholders, opening doors to partnerships, funding opportunities, and policy engagement.

More details on the achievements of previous editions of the YLIA are presented in Annex 1

Activities and Workflow

We will launch an open call for applications for the Youth Leadership & Innovation Award with three main categories.

Stage 1: After a selection process, we will select 6 finalists, 2 per category. Each finalist will receive mentorship and training in public speaking, pitching framing, and storytelling to develop and prepare their initiative presentation for the final pitch competition and Award Ceremony.

Stage 2: The selected 6 will be able to present their solutions to a high level jury in an event that will be part of the GFMD official programme. The jury will select three winners who will



receive seed funding to support their initiatives (amount TBC) and further mentoring to develop and scale their projects following the Innovation Award journey.

The six finalists will be invited to the GFMD Youth Forum and the GFMD Summit in Baranquilla 2025. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage with all GFMD stakeholders, including governments, mayors, and representatives of the private sector and civil society.

Who can apply

→ Young people under 31 years of age and/or groups of people can apply, as long as one person is nominated as the primary applicant for the award. Only 1 person will be the main spokesperson for each initiative.

→ The project needs to be led by the youth or have a significant leadership component of young people

→ The project must address one or more areas, answering the award questions mentioned above.

→ The project should have been implemented/tested with a concrete level of success or impact, AND have possibilities for replication and/or scaling on regional, national, or international level.

→ Primary users should be relevant actors around the issue of migration: migrants and diaspora themselves, governments and their services, employers, civil society organizations, and/or the host community.

Awards

The six finalists will be invited to the GFMD 5th Migration Youth Forum, GFMD Summit, **and have the chance to present their ideas**. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage with all GFMD stakeholders, including governments, mayors, and representatives of the private sector and civil society.

The final **winner** per category will receive **seed funding** and **further mentorship support** in the implementation or the refinement of their projects.

Indicative Timeline:

April – April 20, 2025: Launch and outreach. Submission period – receiving applications.

April 20 – April 28, 2025: Review and shortlisting by the internal selection committee.



April 28 – May 5, 2025: Final selection of finalists. Review by the external selection committee.

May 2025: Capacity building, public speaking training, and mentorship by EUDiF.

June 2025: Pitching competition. Participation in the GFMD Youth Forum & GFMD Summit in Barranquilla; winners of the Innovation Award announced.

Leading Organizations:

[The Migration Youth and Children Platform \(MYCP\)](#) is one of the main mechanisms for policy engagement of young people at the United Nations and beyond. It's a self-organized space for youth to participate in high level migration advocacy and a global network of thousands of individuals and youth-led organizations (up to 30 years old) that represent all regions of the world. At MYCP, we realize our collective right to meaningful youth engagement as enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and other UN compacts.

We focus on policy, advocacy, action, and capacity building of youth and children in migration-related issues and the SDGs, with particular tracks in engagement with the Global Compact for Migration and an official mandate at the Global Forum for Migration and Development. Our work so far with our key allies – IOM and UNICEF – has shown the potential of young people's participation in decision-making.

Annex 1

Impact of the 2nd Edition of the Youth Innovation Award:

The 2nd Edition of the Youth Leadership and Innovation Award Youth was granted to three organizations: No Taka Tanzania (1st place), Peace Therapist (2nd place), and Por Ser Niña Movement (3rd place), representing three different regions.

Careen Joel Mwakitalu is the founder of No Taka Tanzania - Geospatial Data for Resilient Climate Mobility, winner of the "Climate Mobility" category, and recipient of the 1st place prize of EUR 4,000. No Taka Tanzania is a mobile climate action Eco Hub that uses technology to co-create climate solutions with the most vulnerable communities, with a specific focus on data and climate mobility innovation.

*Since receiving the award, Careen Joel Mwakitalu was invited to present her initiative at the webinar **Konnnect - Innovation x Youth x Migration**, organized by the IOM Innovation Unit. The primary objective of this webinar was to foster dialogue and exchange knowledge among stakeholders from diverse backgrounds on how innovation can empower young people and be leveraged to support **young** migrants.*



Furthermore, No Taka Tanzania has been selected to participate in the **2024 Innovator Showcase** at the **9th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals** in New York. Careen's initiative stood out among numerous submissions, showcasing its potential to drive positive change in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Jin Dawod, founder of Peace Therapist, was the winner of the Social, Economic, and Cultural Contributions of Diaspora category and was awarded the 2nd place prize of EUR 2,000.

Peace Therapist is an award-winning platform and social tech initiative that operates both B2B and B2C, providing psychological therapy by matching therapy seekers with expert psychologists according to their specific needs. The platform offers services in multiple languages, including English, Turkish, Arabic, and Kurdish, through its application and website.

After receiving the award, Jin Dawod was invited as a speaker at the **Engineering for Change** webinar at the **STI Forum**, where they had the opportunity to present their project. Additionally, she participated as a speaker in the **1st Global Exchange on Health and Wellbeing** session of the **2025 Global Diaspora Virtual Exchanges**.

Wenndy Verga Garcia, from the Por Ser Niña Movement, was the winner of the Health & Safety: Migrants' Access to Basic Services category and was awarded the 3rd place prize of EUR 1,000.

The Por Ser Niña Movement is founded on the belief that a gender-focused approach to education is essential for creating better conditions for girls and young women. By providing them with the necessary resources, this approach helps prevent situations of violence, ensures their rights, and reduces factors that may lead to social exclusion, including migration.

Access to quality education empowers girls to live free from fear and with autonomy, equipping them with opportunities to meet their basic needs, strengthen their values, foster mutual respect, and confidently choose their own paths in life.

Impact and success of the 1st Youth Innovation Award:

The inaugural Youth Leadership and Innovation Award was granted to three organizations: The Xenophobia Barometer (1st place), A Global Voice for Autism (2nd place) and The Association for the Integration of Women (3rd place),

The **Xenophobia Barometer / El Barómetro de Xenofobia** (Colombia), winner of the 'Shaping Narratives' category and awarded the 1st place prize of \$15,000 USD, is a platform working to



systematize and disseminate public information and social media public opinion analysis on migration communities in different cities in Colombia, with the mission of producing targeted recommendations and programmes to address xenophobia. Since receiving the award, they published the 'Anti-Xenophobia Toolkit', established partnerships with IOM and GIZ in expanding their operations to Ecuador, and have now further extended services to Chile and Peru.

A Global Voice for Autism (headquartered in the United States, with main activities in the Middle East), winner of the 'Leveraging Technologies to Support Migrants' category and the awarded 2nd place prize of \$10,000 USD, works to equip refugee and conflict-affected communities with the skills to support the development and success of children on the autism spectrum and with developmental disabilities across their classrooms, homes and communities. After receiving the award, they enhanced and scaled their Include2020 mobile application with a specialist mobile application UX designer. The application now serves as a virtual center for educators, researchers, learners and inclusivity professionals to share best practices on inclusive education and also offers offline educational content access in English and Arabic. It then went on to be selected for the Social Innovation Challenge programme run by the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U), Verizon and Venturewell. As of 2021, they have served more than 16,000 children, parents and teachers across the world through their capacity-building support and advocacy programmes.

The Association for the Integration of Women (Modena, Italy), winner of the 'Skilling Pathways' category and the 3rd overall place prize of \$8,000 USD, operates programmes working to upskill and support migrant and refugee women in Italy through training and apprenticeship, community building and platforms to showcase their skills. Building on their flagship Culinary Training Programme, after receiving the award, AIW established partnerships with IOM and the Rotary Club Modena, launched a Skill Builders programme with volunteer women professionals, and formally opened their first brick-and-mortar restaurant 'Roots', staffed with graduates of their culinary programme from Ghana, Tunisia, Cameroon and Guinea. The restaurant not only provides employment but now houses the Culinary Training Programme full-time, and serves to showcase migrant women talent to the local community- recently patronised by Michelin representatives of Modena.