

how to set up a youth section



Young
Humanists
INTERNATIONAL

**one day
or day one?**
you decide.

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Foreword



How do we get more young people to join our organization?

This is a question frequently asked by Humanists International member organizations all over the world.

It's vital for us to create spaces where youth feel not only included, but feel that there is room for them to grow and influence the organization as a whole. The future of humanism will not look as it does today – we are on the path to creating a more diverse movement that young people will confidently carry forth.

We hope this guide helps provide the practical information you need to carve out your own youth section.



Anya Overmann
President
Young Humanists International



Young humanist representatives during the Young Humanists International General Assembly in Reykjavik, Iceland in 2019.



01 Why establish a youth section?

Establishing a youth section inside an organization has numerous benefits for both the youth and the entire organization. Of course, the most obvious benefit is that it allows young people to discuss issues that are particularly important to them, such as youth violence or activism, comprehensively and effectively. Youth groups, on the other hand, have a slew of other benefits. Some of these benefits are listed here.

Advantages for young humanists

Being a part of a group can help develop essential personal and interpersonal skills in young people. These skills include the ability to think critically and solve problems as well as ensure individual and group accountability.

It can help young people develop self-esteem and confidence. Contributing to a community will make them see themselves as capable of helping others and having something worthwhile to offer.

Organizations also provide young humanists with a “safe space” that they would not otherwise have—a place where they can express themselves or simply be able to communicate freely with peers and supportive adults.

Adding a youth section in your organization offers opportunities for leadership that young people might not get usually. It provides a platform for them to hone their leadership skills until they are ready to take on more significant responsibilities.



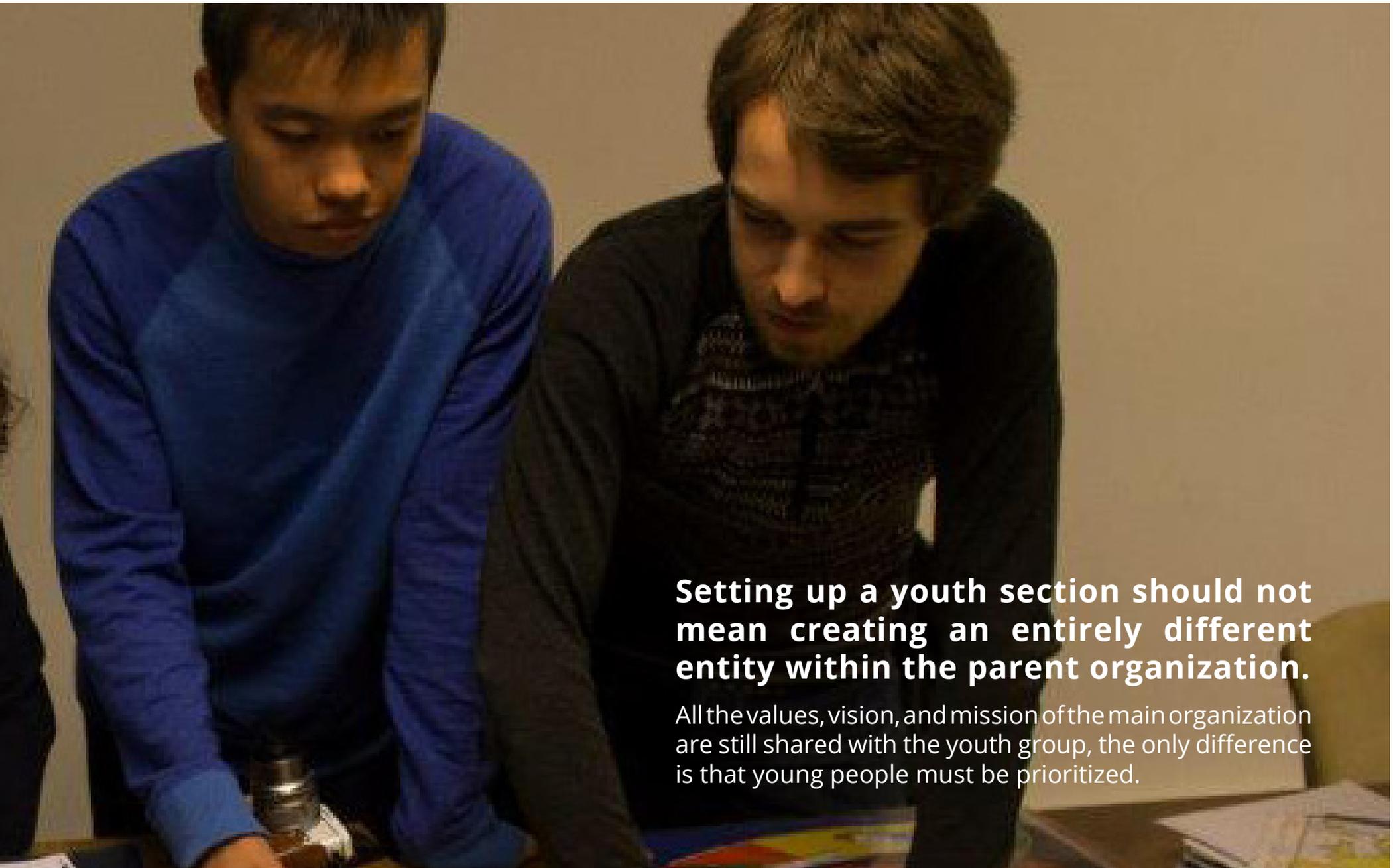
Advantages for the organization

By involving young people, the organization is allowing them to develop their leadership potential carefully. They will become proactive and prepared leaders who can stand alongside adults in the organization as they develop and learn.

Young people can breathe new life into an organization; their energy, excitement, imagination, and insight are also priceless to members of broader community initiatives that choose to engage them actively.

And for sustainability, it will be the young members of the organization who will carry on the vision and goals in years to come.





Setting up a youth section should not mean creating an entirely different entity within the parent organization.

All the values, vision, and mission of the main organization are still shared with the youth group, the only difference is that young people must be prioritized.

02 Getting started



What you need to know

Many organizations are so enthused about beginning a new youth section that they overlook one of the most difficult challenges— getting your organization ready first. So, before taking the steps to start a new young working group, organizations should consider:

- Do we have enough young members to start one?
- If not, can we recruit enough young members in our community?
- Do we have enough resources to share?
- Can we commit to supervise them for at least the early stages?
- Can we commit ourselves to make this sustainable?

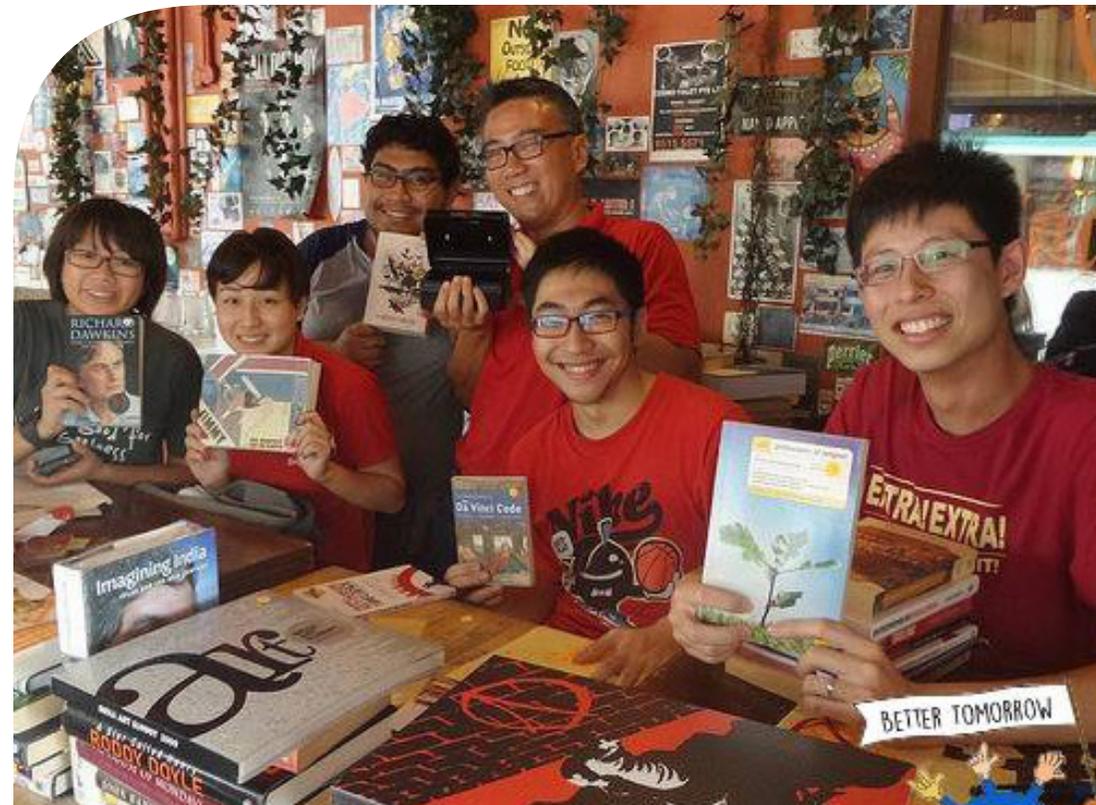
What makes a good youth group is the visibility and voice in their campaigns. They shouldn't be treated as mere echoes and duplicates of their senior counterparts, but instead be allowed their own space that contributes to the organization as a whole.

Get organized

Before you start coming up with your vision or goals, first identify who will be involved in the creation and operation of your youth section. It's essential for young

people to be consulted and included in the decision making process.

Scout for young humanists in your organization that show a willing participation, skill, and potential that could be part of this initiative. They could even be members of the core group in your future youth section. The benefit to having them involved in the early phases is that they'll feel more accountable and take ownership of the cause.





Know your vision

In the beginning of this guide, we presented why you should consider making a youth section for your organization. But this time, as you gather your people around for a meeting, you need to pin down your aims or your purpose of setting up a youth section.

Your answers to your 'whys' will be key to guiding you through the following steps.

Here are some examples from our Members



A way for young humanists between 15-25 in Norway to connect with like minded youth to learn, discuss and just have fun together. A lot of our members see us primarily as a valuable community.



We hope to reach young people during their teenage skepticism, to see their ideas, energy and potential and to carry those things inside the organization. We aim to build a bridge among generations, to connect the youngsters with the organization and the organization with the future.



We aim to:

- Grow our youth membership
- Connect young humanists from different parts of Scotland
- Help them to grow and develop themselves as humanists
- Enable them to have a voice and inform our work
- Involve them in campaigns, and raising awareness of our work

03 **Start with an action plan**

This action plan must be tailored to the needs of your youth section, so it's important to have youth weigh in on the action plan.

Target audience

This is the demographic for which the youth section is designed. You may even write them according to priority, for example:

1. 18-35 young humanists within the organization
2. All young humanists in the country
3. All young nonreligious people

Scope of your advocacy

The good thing about the humanist movement is that there's a wide range of topics that interest youth that you can venture into. However, proper communication and consensus is needed to ensure that the areas of work selected are not exact copies to the parent organization.

For example

- Instead of 'working with LGBTI+ rights', say, 'young LGBTI+ rights'
- Instead of 'climate change campaign', say, 'youth-led climate change campaign'
- Instead of 'humanism conference', say, 'young humanism conference'



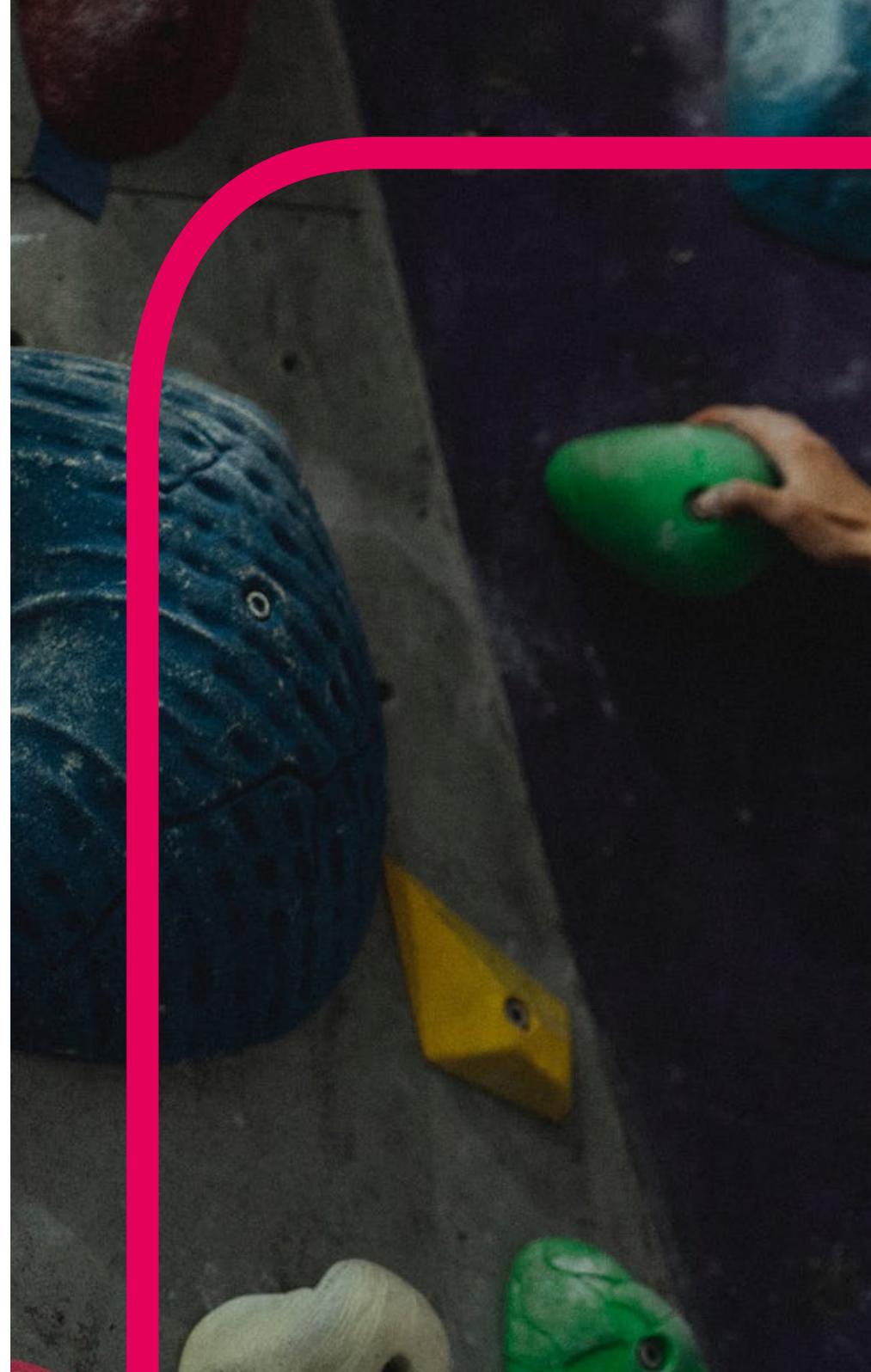
It's those keywords like 'youth' and 'young' that make all the difference. And you may also think about if your campaigns are meant to be at the local, national, or international level.

Long-term and short-term goals

Goals are more milestones for the youth section that help bring you closer to your vision.

Have you ever wondered why some organizations establish goals but never realize them? It's possible that the reason isn't a lack of motivation. Rather, the impediment may be in the language of the goals. There is a simple solution to this problem, and that is to ensure that goals are framed as SMART goals.

S - Specific
M - Measurable
A - Attainable
R - Realistic
T - Time-bound





Next, goals can be broken down into two categories.

A short-term goal is what you desire to accomplish soon. Today, this week, this month, or even this year can all be considered in the near future while long-term goals require time and planning.

A good way to do this is working backwards. Consider what you want to accomplish in the long run, then plan steps back to what you can do right now to build towards achieving it.



04 Management

Here, we discuss how the youth section fits within the organization as a whole and what the roles and responsibilities of your youth core group are.

Youth section structure

Determine how the youth section is structured within the main organization. We recommend that a youth representative is present during Board meetings to ensure that the concerns of the youth are heard and addressed.

For example, the President of Young Humanists International has a seat and voting privileges on the Humanists International Board and other Members and Associate organizations have adopted a similar structure.

Roles and officers

You will need to decide how leaders of your youth group are selected, whether by an election process or by appointment. The number of officers may also be dependent on the size of your youth group. But for a medium sized group of 20 to 30 members, three key positions will suffice.

You may have the positions:

1. Youth Head/President - manages and oversees

the entire youth group

2. Secretary - administrative work and facilitating communications

3. Treasurer - oversees the budget and finances

Larger humanist organizations sometimes have more complex positions. Take a look at some of roles from our Members and Associates.

- Political vice-president - in charge of promoting political causes, head of campaign work, minor general communications work, and also in charge of international involvement.
- Social Media Manager - works cooperatively with researchers and graphic designers for more effective social media presence of the project. Assigned to create captions, schedule the postings, and finalize all necessary announcements for events.
- Young Humanist Ambassador - plays a vital role in representing the organization online and at local events and functions, speaking about the work and the importance of the organization's campaigns.

This will depend entirely on what you need, but as you start, keep it simple first and then expand the team as needed along the way.

05 What is your branding?

Your branding is more than just a visual representation. It's also about how you present yourself to the public; it's that which makes you unique and easily recognizable.

This step should be relatively easy assuming that a branding guideline has already been crafted for the entire organization. All you need to do is tweak it a bit to suit the style of your youth section.

Naming your youth section

You have envisioned the campaigns you're going to take, identified the audience you will serve, and even drafted your vision. Now, it's time to choose a name for your youth group!

Take your time when figuring out how you want to be identified. Remember, a youth section is not a separate organization, only a different department. Try adding the words 'youth, young, teens, or junior' or any other words that would immediately tell people that you are a youth group.

Here are youth group names from our Members and Associates.

Parent organization	Youth Section
Humanist Society Scotland	Young Humanist Scotland
Humanist Alliance Philippines, International (HAPI)	HAPI Youth
Humanists UK	Young Humanists UK
Norwegian Humanist Association	Norwegian Humanist Youth
Italian Union of Rationalist Atheists and Agnostics (UAAR)	UAAR Giovani

Visual Identity

Logo

Now that we have a name, let's talk about the logo that comes with it. A logo grabs attention, makes a strong first impression, and is the foundation of your visual identity.

You might want your logo to incorporate similarities to your parent organization's logo design so that people outside your organization can connect that your youth group is still related to it.





Color palette

It is critical to make your primary brand colors well known and consistent in order to maintain high brand awareness, but still aligned with the colors of the organization.

The colors you choose will reflect not just on the logo, but will also include your future public materials and resources.

If the colors are already covered in your branding style guide, well that just made it easy for you!

This is the Norwegian Humanist Youth's color palette according to their branding manual.

Voice and personality

Imagine if your youth group were to be made into a person; what qualities would you give it and how would you describe these qualities? The voice of Young Humanists International is focused on empowering and inspiring the youth to mobilize them in taking action.

You may also even draft a table to give your youth section different voice personalities alongside dos and don'ts.

Here's what we have at Young Humanists International.

Voice Characteristics	Description	Dos	Don'ts
Passionate	We are passionate about building a more humane world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use active verbs • Be champions for young humanists • Be cheerleaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be lukewarm • Use passive voice • Not confident
Youthful	We are able to have an appeal to young humanists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be playful • Use colorful illustrations • Be unconventional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use jargon • Be too stern but not too informal either
Inspiring	We are able to show that it is not impossible to be part of a humanist community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be encouraging • Be inclusive • Have call to action • Use photos with results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be pessimistic • Be dull
Informative	We can share relevant information for young humanists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper citations • Proof-read • Be concise but accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share fake news • Share conspiracies

06 Social media presence

It is highly encouraged that the platform given to your young members should extend to the online community as well.

Take advantage of the free social media channels available on the internet! They can be very helpful in delivering your message, campaigns, publicity, and encourage more people to participate.

If it's hard to manage new social media accounts for now, then it's also an option to just integrate the youth's presence in your main social media channels. But otherwise, continue reading for more information on how to strengthen your virtual presence.

Social media platforms

Let's discuss the differences between social media channels to help you choose which one is best suited for you.



With over 2.7 billion users globally, Facebook is virtually unavoidable when it comes to social media marketing outlets. **Creating a Facebook page** for your youth section is really easy and can be done in a few steps.

Pros: No word limit, can schedule posts, can edit posts, can post longer videos, good for links

Cons: Algorithm(sorting posts in a users' feed based on relevancy instead of publish time) is hard to keep track, a lot of competition, banned in some countries



Instagram is mostly utilized as a smartphone app and is a visually-oriented social networking channel. It allows users to publish images, short films, live streams, and stories – which are deleted at the end of the day.

Pros: User base attracts younger audiences, great use for hashtags, low maintenance – doesn't require you to post everyday to stay active

Cons: Not for texts only posts, long dimensions of posts can be cropped, can't include links on posts



A microblogging social media platform, Twitter has more than 330 million active users, and allows users to post short messages, photos, links and other types of media. A great way for starting conversations with the right audience.

Pros: Posts gets seen more with your followers, texts posts are okay, good for links

Cons: 280 character limit, maximum video length is 2 minutes and 20 seconds



Social media tips

Learn about your audience

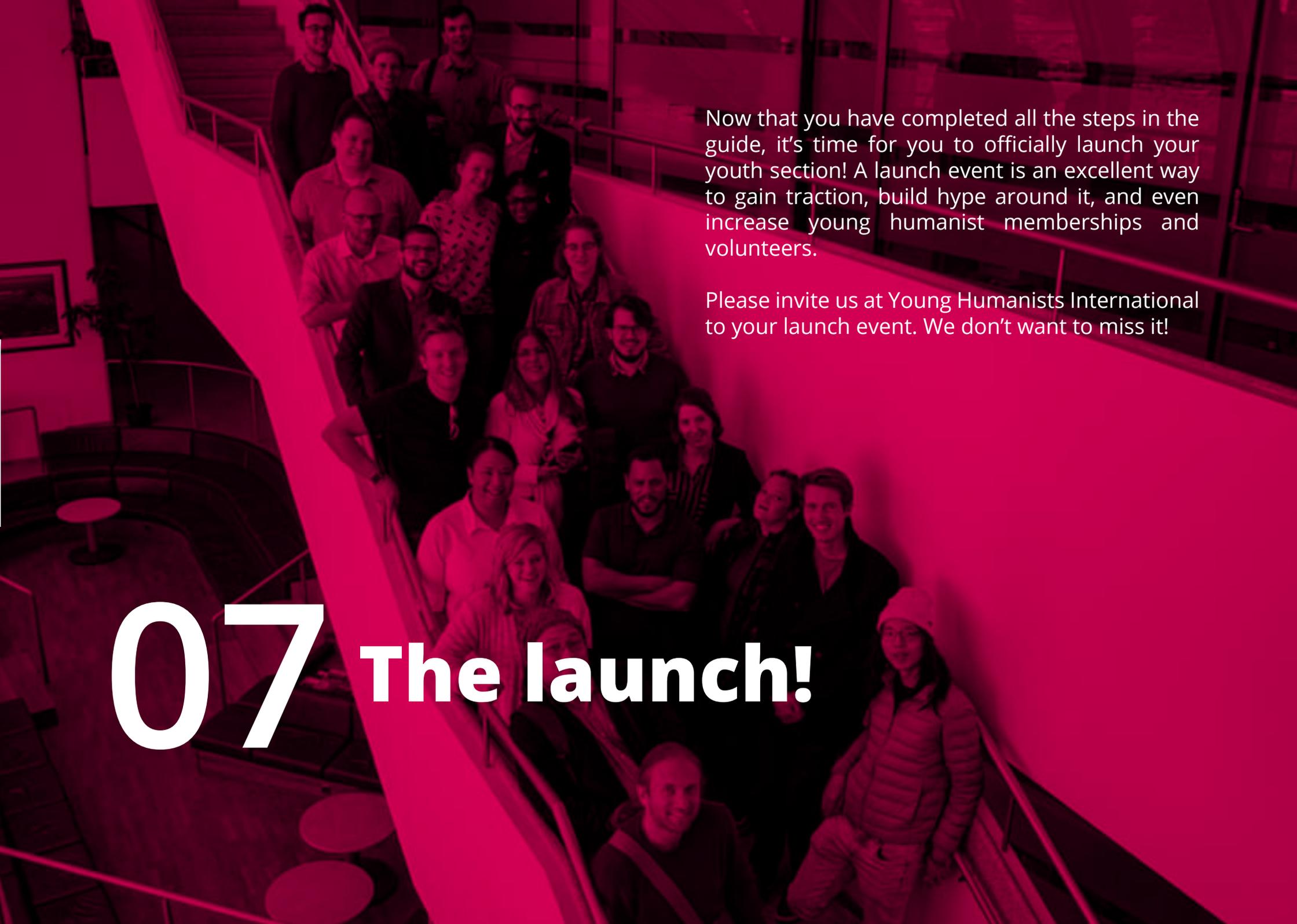
Know what time and day gets a lot of traffic and engagement on your social media, and stick to that schedule.

Credibility

Make sure that all your posts build up your credibility and not the other way around. Double-check every source, captions, and articles before you share or post them.

Consistency

Consistency doesn't always mean you have to be constantly on social media. It just means that you stick to your branding style and messaging to your target audience. By being consistent, this will make you more recognizable and grow your engagement.



Now that you have completed all the steps in the guide, it's time for you to officially launch your youth section! A launch event is an excellent way to gain traction, build hype around it, and even increase young humanist memberships and volunteers.

Please invite us at Young Humanists International to your launch event. We don't want to miss it!

07 The launch!



Young Humanists International is the youth section of Humanists International. We are the connecting link between young people in humanist organizations from around the world.

This guide

We hope that this guide will serve as a helpful tool for our Members and Associates should they decide to create a dedicated youth section in their organization.

This guide is created by Young Humanists International Coordinator Javan Lev Poblador.

Send all concerns and question to javan@humanists.international

Special thanks

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