



H2O

ONE WATER SYSTEM. ONE JUST WORLD.



AP PHOTO/MARK LENNIHAN

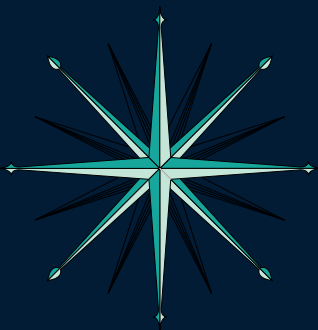


2021
2030 United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

HEIRS TO OUR OCEAN'S GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE

NAVIGATE ENGAGING THE GREATEST STAKEHOLDERS IN THE UN OCEAN DECADE

This toolkit was designed by Heirs To Our Ocean (H2OO) to support those seeking to instill **authentic** youth leadership in the Ocean Decade. In the following pages, you will find tips and tools to build and maintain a Youth Advisory Council for the United Nations Ocean Decade (YAC for UNOD) from the ground up.



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"Being a member of the U.S. Youth Advisory Council has given me a new mission: to spread the good news about what the UN Ocean Decade hopes to accomplish and to engage fellow youth in American Samoa. This is an amazing opportunity to be actively involved in securing a brighter, safer future for ourselves and all who come after us."

SAMUELA LAFITAGA
AMERICAN SAMOA, 18

HEIRS TO OUR OCEAN'S COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVITY



About H2OO

Heirs To Our Ocean is a nonprofit based in California, US, and is a US federally recognized 501c3 organization.



Our Vision

All youth understand the world they are inheriting and are capable of creating a healthier, safer world for themselves and future generations.

Our Mission

Inspire the next generation of leaders by connecting them in purpose, educating them on the environmental and humanitarian crises they are inheriting and cultivating the necessary skills to make real-world change. We support youth in realizing solutions to today's global challenges.

Our Pillars

1 Real-world, action-based education for ALL youth

Engaging youth, the Decade's greatest stakeholders, in a meaningful way through the development of a YAC provides real-world, action-based education that will help the next generation contribute to the priorities of the Decade and sustain its accomplishments well into the future.

2 Empowerment opportunities for ALL youth

By putting inclusion and diversity at the core of this effort to establish a global network of YACs, H2OO ensures that youth of various backgrounds and communities, including those situated most vulnerably and traditionally marginalized, have a voice, or a seat at the table, in this critical Decade period.

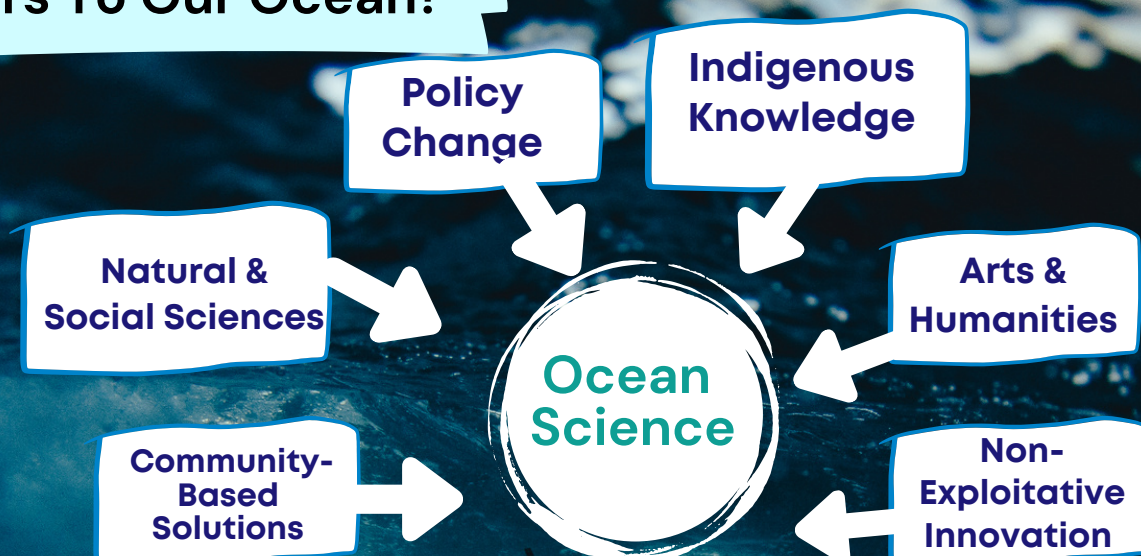
3 Develop a generation of empathetic leaders

By providing training in empathetic leadership, H2OO is supporting the development of valuable skills that redefine what leadership means on an international platform.

4 Youth inspire youth

The UN Ocean Decade Global Youth Action Network is led by youth for youth. Youth inspire youth. The youth leaders of a YAC for UNOD will inspire other youth to actively engage in the priorities of the Decade and connect with one another as global youth leaders in doing so.

What is Ocean Science To Heirs To Our Ocean?



HEIRS TO OUR OCEAN'S CORE PRINCIPLES FOR NEXT GEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE OCEAN DECADE



CONNECTION

Youth are connected in purpose as they process the greatest challenges their generation faces with ocean and water health and commit to allyship for those whose voices have traditionally been excluded.

COLLABORATION & SHARED LEARNING

A commitment to working together and learning from one another engaging in active listening and clear communication.

INTERSECTIONAL PROCESSING

Identifying the ways in which injustices that have affected frontline communities + the ocean are intertwined and taking action to address their root causes.

INCLUSIVITY

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities offered to all youth in organization, leadership, presentation & public speaking, policy advocacy, and storytelling.

COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

Engage local community and community-based solutions to further an ocean-protecting and climate-action movement in the Decade.

EMPATHETIC LEADERSHIP

Demonstrating the ability to see complex situations from another's perspective and being open to embracing new viewpoints and processes.



WHY ESTABLISH A YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE?



Stay connected to the UN Ocean Decade Youth Action Network through H200!



What do youth want to see during the 2021-2030 Ocean Decade?



Click to hear from some of the engaged international youth!



**Youth will inherit the actions taken
— or not taken —
over the course of the next Decade.**

The state of the world today reveals that youth are not being prepared to grow into leaders who make healthy decisions for the well-being of the world and for future generations. By providing real-world learning, through a global network of **Youth Advisory Councils for the UN Ocean Decade (YACs for UNOD)**, we are inspiring and preparing the next generation to be both the leaders and legacy of this Ocean Decade as the fourteen-year-olds today will be professionals into their careers by 2030.

WHAT DOES A **UN OCEAN DECADE** YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL **DO**?

ORGANIZE to establish annual goals and objectives.

REVIEW key documentation of the National Committee*, including the Decade agenda, national committee proposals & priorities, and strategy and implementation.

COLLABORATE with the National Committee holding an equal seat at the table as the greatest stakeholders.

FACILITATE workshops and trainings for youth.

PRESENT at national and international conferences, panels, webinars, schools, and more.

ACTIVATE their communities to implement local and community based solutions.

ADVOCATE for policy reform for the ocean's health, climate action, and a healthy future.

ENGAGE in critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative thinking as they process solutions to the challenges faced by the next generation.

COMMUNICATE through activism and creative storytelling to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers.

CONNECT with youth leaders around the world in purpose.

The U.S. YAC for UNOD has been an incredible opportunity to connect with youth across the states and from other U.S. territories. As a Puerto Rican I have appreciated the ability to share what matters to me and my community and to be heard by a broader group.

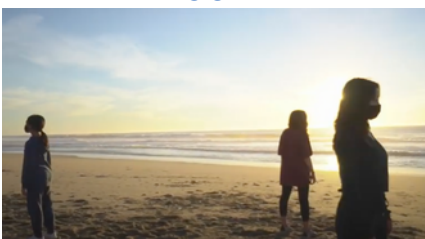
-Andrea Contreras, 25, U.S. YAC, Puerto Rico



ADVOCATE



COLLABORATE



COMMUNICATE



ACTIVATE



PRESENT

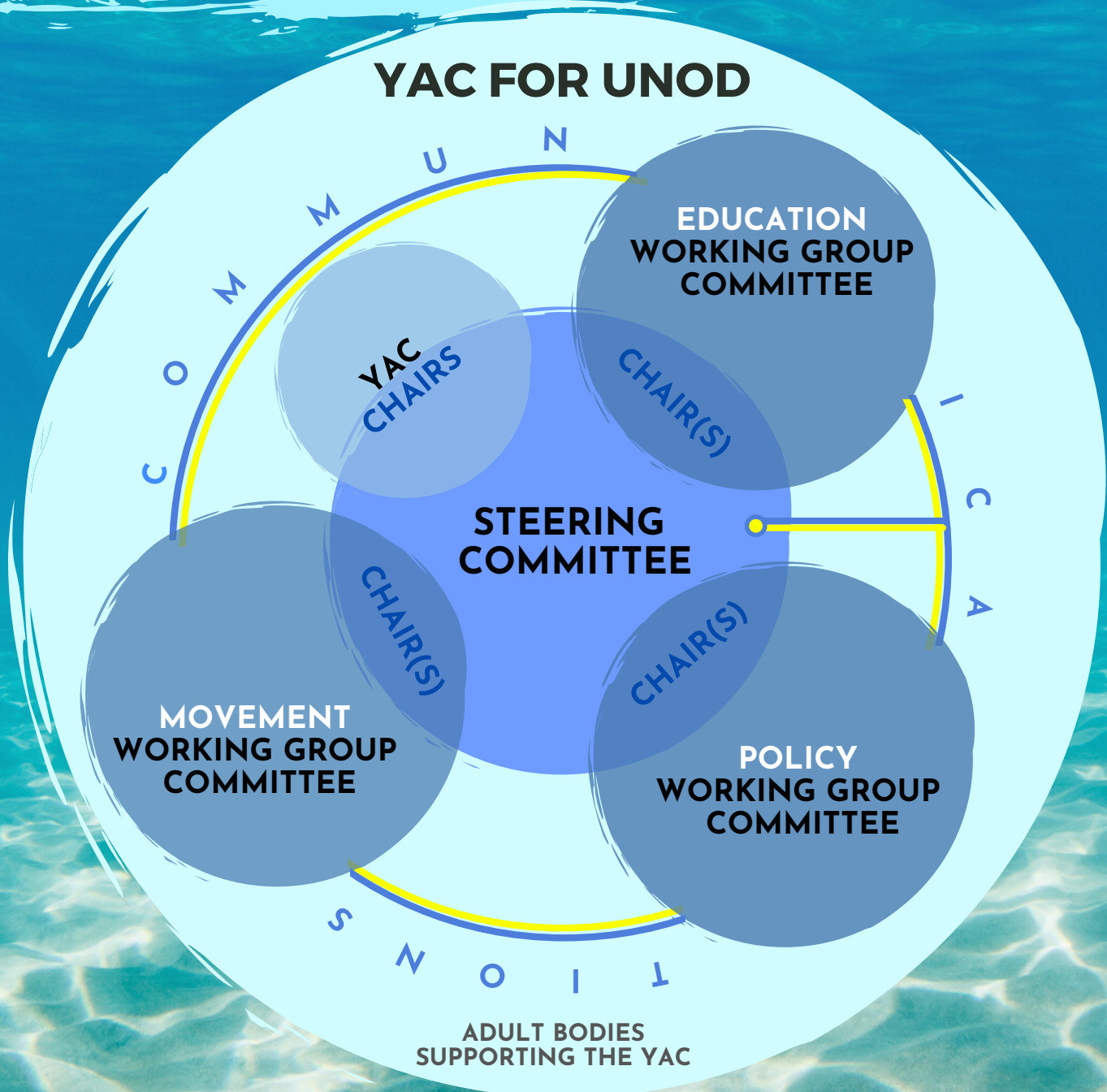
* While there are differences in terminology and organization of UN Member States' leadership for the UN Ocean Decade, we use the term "National Committees" to refer to the body responsible for making a nation's decisions around the Decade and its priorities.

GETTING ORGANIZED WITHIN THE YAC

ROLES OF YAC MEMBERS & YAC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Working Group Committees (WGCs) in the diagram are those established by the U.S. YAC for UNOD for purpose of furthering their mission.

For YAC member role descriptions
click here to read
recommended YAC for UNOD
Guidelines Handbook.



National Committee (NC) for UNOD

Read more about how the NC engages with and supports the YAC on **pages 13-14**

H200 or Other YAC-Supporting Organization

Read more about how H200 supports the YAC on **page 16**

HOW TO START A YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE?

1

Are You Ready? Are you excited to include the voice of the next generation of leaders in the UN Ocean Decade? If an enthusiastic YES, then take the next step!

2

Preliminary Meeting: Representative of Member States' UNOD National Committee (NC) meet with H2OO (or other supporting org) and an interested youth leader(s) for initial development purposes, including strategy in establishing a diverse YAC to ensure as many communities and demographics as possible are represented.

3

Recruitment of Youth: Recruitment steps taken, including distribution of application form and preparation of YAC for UNOD webpage with support of H2OO or another supporting org.



[Click for example application](#)

YAC Co-Chairs + Steering Committee Members: In applying the youth applicants may nominate themselves to serve as a YAC Co-Chair or Co-Chair of a Working Group Committee. **The YAC Co-Chairs and the Working Group Committee Chairs make up the Steering Committee.**

RECRUITING YOUTH LEADERS



Photo Credit: Michael Rubenstein for Earthjustice

The process of forming a YAC is built upon ensuring the inclusion of the voices of the greatest stakeholders – those most vulnerably situated, impacted first and worse by the devastation of our natural environment, must be positioned to lead to ensure an equitable future.

A good candidate for a YAC for UNOD:

- Has demonstrated leadership skills;
- Is between the ages of 16–23;
- Can commit to the one-year high-level engagement proactively meeting attendance requirement; and
- Understands that their voice will represent youth in their community and communities situated like theirs.

HOW TO START A YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE

4

Confirm YAC Members: H2OO or other supporting org (and National Committee's Representative(s) if desired) reviews applications and conducts 1:1 interviews of candidates determined to be good fits in forming a YAC cohort of 20-35 members. Selected applicants are informed of the news via email and they receive the YAC for UNOD Guidelines Handbook to review with an agreement to prepare.

See example of
YAC for UNOD
Guidelines Handbook
here



5

YAC's First Meeting: H2OO or other supporting org organizes a preliminary meeting with the new YAC cohort in which members will:

- Meet the team
- Learn about/review the UN Ocean Decade
- Workshop working agreement terms to propose to NC
- Establish a group of YAC members to prepare to present to the NC

6

YAC and NC Begin Engagement: YAC members present to NC regarding what they want to see during the Decade; share draft Working Agreement with the NC; seek establishment of a liaison from the NC to the YAC; and the NC briefs the YAC on their meetings and events on calendar.



HOW TO START A YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE?

7

YAC Goal-Setting and Calendar Setting Meeting (2+ hrs): The YAC's first meeting is facilitated by YAC Co-Chairs after a preliminary instructional meeting with H2OO (or other supporting org) regarding how to effectively and inclusively lead a group to determine **SMART goals**. Meeting dates for the term are also calendared during this meeting.



8

Steering Committee Meets to Finalize Goals (2 hrs): Shortly after YAC goal-setting meeting, the Steering Committee meets to finalize 1-3 goals per Working Group Committee for the cohort term.

9

Monthly Meetings:

- **Working Group Committees** meet twice each month for 1 hr minimum each meeting.
- **Steering Committee** (YAC Co-Chairs + WGC Chairs) meet at least once monthly for 1-2 hrs.
- **YAC Co-Chairs** meet with H2OO (or supporting organization) at least once monthly for check-ins.
- **YAC General Meetings**, or all-hands, are held once a month for approximately 1.5-2 hrs.

10

Final YAC Meeting of the Year: Members debrief their term including successes and challenges related to their goals and objectives.

YAC PRIORITIZES INCLUSIVITY IN GOAL SETTING

A YAC for UNOD collaborates to establish goals to benefit their generation in their Member State or community. The process to set goals is intentionally inclusive to ensure all voices are heard, and all contribute.



Photo Credit: Michael Rubenstein for Earthjustice

THE FIRST ESTABLISHED AND MODEL YAC FOR UNOD IS IN THE UNITED STATES

Formation and Support of U.S. YAC for UNOD

The U.S. YAC for UNOD was organized by Heirs To Our Ocean to ensure youth have a *meaningful* "seat at the table" during the Ocean Decade, 2021-2030, because when the Decade concludes, they will be the next generation of decision-makers inheriting today's challenges on our Blue Planet. The U.S. YAC for UNOD is an officially endorsed decade activity.

H2OO supports the U.S. YAC for UNOD through organization of the YAC, including recruitment, development of Guidelines Handbook and organization structure, and through offering facilitation and leadership guidance, including supporting the development of working agreement between the YAC and NC, organizing skill-development workshops, guiding in empathetic leadership and professional skill building such as goals setting and project management.

U.S. YAC for UNOD Mission

The U.S. YAC for UNOD's mission is to engage a diverse group of youth of the United States and U.S.-occupied lands to further the UN Ocean Decade goals in a way that best serves the generation of the youth in each of their communities with a commitment to encouraging and supporting action, agency, inclusion, and skill building of YAC members.



What is the U.S. YAC for UNOD Alumni Program?

Heirs To Our Ocean has established an Alumni Program for the U.S. YAC for UNOD allowing members to expand their connections with youth who align in purpose during the Decade and beyond. Program members will sit on the Alumni Board for at least 3 years through which they will commit to supporting current cohort members on an as-need basis.

Eligibility

A U.S. YAC for UNOD member is automatically a part of the Alumni Program after they have successfully completed a cohort term according to the Guidelines Handbook.

Benefits



Connection with U.S. YAC for UNOD members of every cohort



Participation opportunities offered by the current cohort



Access to Heirs To Our Ocean's skill-building and empowerment opportunities through its listserve



Inclusion on an Alumni Board to support and add value to a cohort's work



GETTING ORGANIZED

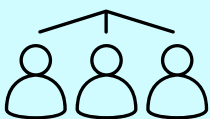
WITHIN THE YAC

ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

Once YAC members are confirmed, it is time to organize!

Here are some suggested steps to ensure a successful year!

1



Develop YAC membership slate depicting members by their role within the YAC

[CLICK HERE FOR TEMPLATE](#)



2



Set up your YAC logo! We can customize this logo with your YAC's name in your language to encourage cohesiveness amongst YACs worldwide.

3



Set up your YAC's document repository in a platform like Google Drive. Here you can share documents with all members of your YAC including: Guidelines Handbook, meeting notes, etc.

4



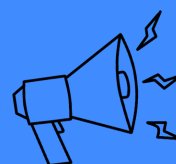
Organize communication channels such as Discord, WhatsApp, and/or Google Group email list.

5



Determine your preferred video conferencing platform that your YAC for UNOD will use for regular meetings.

6



Set up your YAC for UNOD Social Media accounts to stay connected with other communities taking action for protection of our shared oceans.



NEED ASSISTANCE?

Contact H2OO at info@H2OO.org if support needed.

INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

HOW DOES A YAC ENGAGE MEANINGFULLY WITH A UN MEMBER STATE'S NATIONAL COMMITTEE (NC) FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE?

The NC would include YAC Co-Chairs or Reps in:

PLANNING & STRATEGY



Participate in relevant NC meetings where decisions or priorities are determined. **The perspective of the next generation is essential as their future world is processed.**



COMMUNICATIONS

YAC is included in relevant communications about Ocean Decade planning, policies and opportunities.

DOCUMENT REVIEW



YAC participates in review of and commenting on materials that are substantive to the NC's work in the Decade.

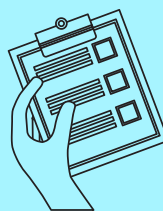
HOW IS A RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE YAC & NATIONAL COMMITTEE (NC)?

1



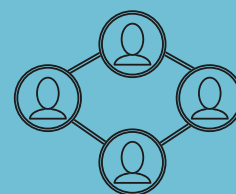
YAC for UNOD presents to the NC what they want to see addressed during the Decade.

2



YAC develops a proposed Working Agreement between the YAC and the NC.

3



YAC Co-Chairs and supporting org rep meet with NC to share proposed working agreement, establish a **LIAISON** from the NC for the YAC, and determine meetings and events to calendar.

INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

HOW DOES A NATIONAL COMMITTEE (NC) SUPPORT A YAC FOR UNOD?



AMPLIFY YAC VOICES

Shares with YAC opportunities for youth to participate in high-level presentations.



MENTORSHIP

Provides mentorship opportunities to YAC members.

INCLUSION



Includes YAC members meaningfully in relevant meetings and UN Ocean Decade events.



BROADCAST YAC ACTIONS

Broadcasts on NC channels and platforms YAC events, work, calls-to-action and successes.



HOW WILL YOUTH IN DIFFERENT YACS FOR UNOD CONNECT GLOBALLY?



UN OCEAN DECADE GLOBAL YOUTH ACTION NETWORK

H2OO will ensure connection of YACs to UNOD around the world so that they may learn from and support one another as the generation inheriting the Decade's outcomes.

Bi-Annual Meetings: Each YAC will select up to 5 key members to attend the UNOD Global Youth Action Network bi-annual meetings where representatives will:

- * share their YAC's goals and priorities for the year including successes and challenges;
- * collaborate in movement building; and
- * share skill-building, action, and opportunities.

YAC can apply to facilitate the Youth Action Network bi-annual meetings.

ATTEND H2OO'S INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SUMMITS

At H2OO's Summits, youth leaders process together the greatest challenges their generation faces and solutions. H2OO supports development of youth in becoming empathetic and informed environmental and humanitarian leaders. Opportunities for youth most vulnerably situated in their communities to build skills and be provided platforms to share their stories is at the heart of H2OO's youth summits. H2OO's vision with YAC for UNOD development is rooted in social and environmental justice understanding the need to listen to and support frontline communities, incorporate traditional knowledge systems, and respect all genders in processing the challenges of the Decades as the YAC seeks equitable and effective long-term solutions.



Join H2OOs Discord Server to stay connected to the UN Ocean Decade Global Youth Action Network!

Events, opportunities and announcements are shared with the UN Ocean Decade Youth Action Network through the H2OO Discord Channel.

Click here to join the H2OO Discord Server.



HOW H2OO SUPPORTS YACS FOR UNOD



H2OO supports YACs for UNOD through:

- Educating youth on the United Nations Ocean Decade;
- Connecting members with youth and leaders globally in purpose through supporting outreach and networking;
- Guiding youth in leadership skill development;
- Holding international summits throughout the year focused on empowering the next generation in ocean and climate advocacy;
- Offering voice amplifying platforms and opportunities; and
- Providing individualized support for YACs throughout their development process and assisting them in developing and achieving their goals inclusively.



[Click here to learn more about H2OO](#)



[Click here to read about Operation Global Sweep](#)

International youth summits such as:

- UN Ocean Decade Youth Summit
- Annual Summit for Empowerment, Action, and Leadership (SEAL)

Youth-led global advocacy opportunities such as:

- "Operation Global Sweep"
- Regenerative Agriculture and Indigenous Systems for our Environment (RAISE) Initiative

Skill building retreats including:

- Policy Advocacy
- Empathetic Leadership
- Storytelling & Filmmaking
- Public Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- Cultural Competency

Voice-amplifying opportunities such as:

- High-level presentations
- Featured in media and film
- Civic society speaking opportunities

TOGETHER WE ARE A SOURCE OF HOPE

“As a youth leader, attending the Heirs To Our Ocean 2020 Youth Summit for the UN Ocean Decade was inspiring, moving and full of hope for the future. This summit allowed me a unique opportunity to hear from people from all around the world about significant issues they are facing in their country. It opened my eyes to the interconnectedness of environmental and social problems in a way I never anticipated! I learned so many valuable life lessons and hope to continue to educate myself and make positive change this decade.”

MADYSON MILLER
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, 25



Click here to watch an
Art in Action video
created by a member of the
1st & 2nd cohort of the
U.S. YAC for UN Ocean
Decade.



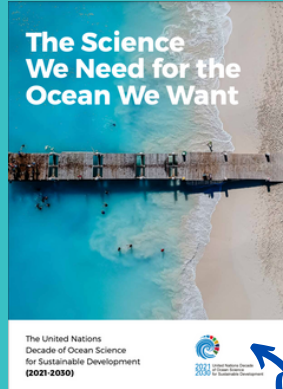
RESOURCES

Click the images and icons below to access each resource.

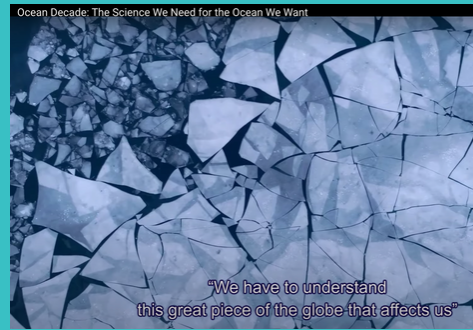


THE GLOBAL GOALS

Learn more about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Read an In-depth summary of the UNOD



Watch a video on the UNOD: *The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want*

Join the Ocean Decade Global Stakeholder Forum



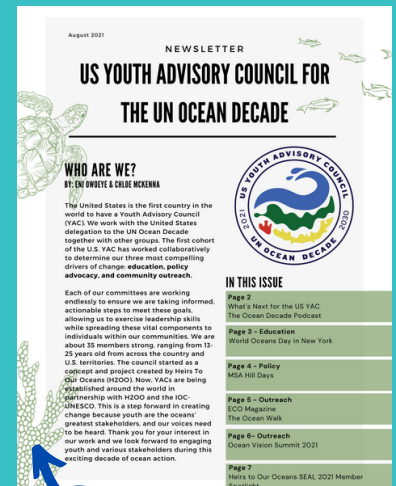
View a webinar on the background of forming YACs for UNOD



Hear what youth want in the Decade! Watch this video made during the 2020 H2OO Youth Summit for the UNOD



Read an article featured in ECO Mag "We Are Generation Rising" written by youth leaders in the UN Ocean Decade from Brazil, Taiwan, U.S., India and more.



Read the U.S. YAC for UNOD's first newsletter

Have questions?
Email H2OO at
info@H2OO.org

Follow H2OO's
Wave of Youth Impact!

