



## UNYSA Youth Council

Leading the youth wing of the United Nations Association of the UK

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### What is UNYSA?

The UN Youth & Students Association (UNYSA) is the youth wing of UNA-UK. UNYSA brings together young people (university, college and school students) from across the UK who are passionate about the need for a strong, credible and effective United Nations. Our aim is to build better understanding of the UN and its work, and to equip young people to play a prominent role in international affairs.

UNYSA's activities focus on engaging young people in the UN's work to promote international peace and security, development and human rights for all. We run nationwide campaigns on issues such as the Millennium Development Goals, climate change and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. We also support career development through resources and networking events, and place a strong emphasis on teaching and learning about the UN.

*"UNYSA is not only a way into UNA-UK and its Young Professionals Network. Nor is it just a first step to embarking on an exciting international career. Because UNA-UK work is shaped by its members, it is also a way for young people to acquire tangible leadership skills they can use throughout their lives."*

**Marco Moraes, 2008-09 President  
UNYSA Youth Council**

### Who are our members?

UNYSA has over 10,000 youth and student supporters across the UK. Our membership is incredibly diverse. It includes a large proportion of international students as well as young people who are not in full-time education. But the majority belong to one of our 40 university and school groups. These UNYSA branches receive support (financial, material and advisory) from UNA-UK, and regularly run their own events and campaigns. UNA-UK supplies UNYSA activists with free copies of its magazine, freshers' fair resources and advice on event organisation.

### What is UNA-UK?

UNA-UK, UNYSA's parent organisation, is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the UN and a vibrant grassroots network. We advocate government support for the UN and demonstrate why the UN matters to people everywhere. We push for action on peace, development and human rights, and stimulates thought and debate on how the UN can fulfill its mandate more effectively. With over 10,000 student supporters, 3,000 young professionals and 70 local branches in the country, as well as links to UN associations in nearly 100 nations, UNA-UK is a gateway to a global movement for the UN.

UNYSA has formal status in UNA-UK's constitution and is an integral component of UNA-UK's structure. It has a seat on the UNA-UK Board of Directors, and accredited UNYSA groups have voting rights at UNA-UK's policy-making conferences.

### What is the Youth Council?

UNYSA is student-led. Its yearly agenda is set by a volunteer Youth Council, elected annually. The Youth Council is responsible for leading UNYSA's work nationally. Collectively, its members carry out activities in support of UNYSA's aims:

- promoting a stronger, more credible and more effective UN
- helping UNA-UK achieve policy and campaign goals
- strengthening youth participation at the UN
- fostering awareness of global issues and understanding between people and cultures

Youth Council members act as the 'public face' of UNA-UK's youth wing. Being on the Youth Council is not only great for your CV; you also get:

- to be an ambassador for development, human rights and international peace
- priority invitations to UNA-UK's high-level events (for example, the Youth Council was invited to a private reception with the UN Secretary-General when he delivered his first major public speech in the UK in 2008)
- to play a key role in the governance of UNA-UK through UNYSA's seat on the UNA-UK Board of Directors
- the opportunity to work closely with UNA-UK staff, its Board of Directors and its Young Professionals Network

## Youth Council roles

All members of the Youth Council are responsible for planning national UNYSA activities, including the UNYSA Annual Conference. But there is some division of labour, with different members assigned core tasks.

The core tasks per officer are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list. In practice, the Youth Council is heavily shaped by those who are elected to it.

### President

- Organising and chairing regular Youth Council meetings (including Skype)
- Building relationships with external organisations to further the aims of UNYSA
- Representing UNYSA on the UNA-UK Board of Directors

### Vice-President

- Deputising for the President
- Ensuring information-sharing between the Youth Council, UNYSA branches and UNYSA's partner organisations, including working with UNA-UK on the UNYSA website
- Leading on the governance of UNYSA, including by ensuring that all agendas, minutes and key documents are recorded and disseminated as appropriate

### Regional Development Officers (up to 2 positions)

- Running the UNYSA Regional Development Programme
- Building branch capacity by liaising with the Regional Chairs and branch
- Developing and leading collaborative projects between UNYSA groups

### Campaigns and Policy Officer (up to 2 positions)

- Devising and delivering campaigns and events in consultation with the rest of the Youth Council
- Liaising with UNA-UK to distribute to branches the latest information on UNA-UK campaigns
- Advising branches, together with the Regional Development Coordinators, on how to successfully run events and campaigns

### Model UN and Education Officer (up to 2 positions)

- Leading UNYSA's Model UN activities, including advising branches on how to run MUNs and promoting UK MUN conferences and activities nationally and internationally
- Developing UNYSA's Schools Outreach Project and resources
- Promoting UNYSA among MUN societies and in secondary schools and sixth form colleges, including by providing information on how to set up a UNYSA branch

### Regional Chairs, 1 x North and 1 x South (ex officio)

- Increasing communication and collaboration between branches in their respective regions
- Driving forward UNYSA priorities at the regional level, including through organising regular (online) meetings with branch and independent representatives
- Regional Chairs **are not required to participate in meetings** of the Youth Council but serve as a vital link between the Youth Council and the branches in their regions

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## Why stand for election? Current officers describe what being on the Youth Council has meant for them.

Luke Harman (Regional Development Coordinator, 2009/10): *UNYSA-UK has presented me with countless opportunities to explore my interests in international affairs, to meet and engage with high-level experts and to develop important project management skills.*

Hao Chen (Campaigns & Policy Officer, 2009/10): *This role has enriched my knowledge about the UN. I have been inspired by our students involvement and my great teammates in the Youth Council. I encourage more young people to get involved in UNYSA!*

Chris Day (Campaigns & Policy Officer, 2009/10): *I've really enjoyed organising our campaigns on climate change and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I've had excellent opportunities to attend conferences, work with outside campaigning groups and get people enthusiastic about our campaigns.*

Pranav Sawhney (Vice-President, 2009/10): *Sometimes 'making a difference' can seem a very daunting task. But with a Youth Council as enthusiastic as this one, the ride is much smoother. Such an opportunity is a brilliant learning curve and an amazing chance to work for what you believe in.*

Morris Marah (Model UN & Education Officer, 2009/10): *Being part of the Youth Council has given me the opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge that has complemented my studies and helped me lay a solid foundation for the future. It has given me an insight into the complex world of the UN and helped me better understand the vital work it does in making the world more secure. It has also given me the opportunity to meet like-minded people from every corner of the world.*