



Rehabilitation
International

A Global Advocate for Rehabilitation, Inclusion and Human Rights

RI Youth Forum

Terms of Reference

Background

In accordance with the RI Constitution, where it is stated: “shall be to promote the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities; the prevention of causes of disability; the rehabilitation of and the equalization of opportunities within society for people with disabilities and their families throughout the world, and it shall serve as a medium for deliberation, for exchange of ideas, knowledge, skills and experiences, and for compilation and dissemination of information.” Furthermore, RI shall „ensure the participation of people with disabilities in the activities and governance of the organization and within its member organizations and technical commissions. “

The life situation of persons with disabilities is highly dependent on age, gender, income, cultural influences, political situation and –more in general – the attitudes of a society. Young people with disabilities may face specific challenges e.g., development of their own identity, struggling with the attitudes of their peer groups, experiencing discrimination in social media, finding a partner, getting access to education, professional training and job, and many others. Policy making is mainly in the hands of persons with long experience in advocacy and management being in the middle or at the end of a (successful) career. This leads to an inherent risk that the specific perspectives, problems, visions and wishes of the young generation is neglected in the organizations policy and actions. It can be a challenge for young people to raise their voice in international organizations and to get access to decision making processes.

Aims and objectives

Rehabilitation International Youth Forum aims to provide young people with disabilities a platform for communication, exchanging experiences and opinions, developing visions and action plans and helping elected representatives to better understand their perspectives.

To achieve this, a number of concrete activities shall be done:

- Create a platform for young persons with disabilities with the goal to exchange knowledge and experiences as well as towards developing action and solutions.
- To organize a dialogue between young persons with disabilities and members of RI bodies, i.e. president commission chairs and members, regional vice presidents as well as RI Members

- To inform the Members of RI and the public on relevant aspects of young people living with disabilities (*this may include social media*)
- To spread out information about RI, its activities and other relevant information about disability and rehabilitation policies among young people (*this may include modern type of “influencing”*)
- To react to inquiries of RI president and EC Members about arising matters to improve problem solving and decision making
- To prepare cases studies on the real-life situation of young people with disabilities and their perspectives (*this should include formats that will fit into modern communication*)

Of course, the list of activities might be changed during the foundation process; activities shall be appropriate to achieve the above-mentioned global goal.

Mandate

- The RI Youth Forum will identify specific issues of young people living with disabilities e.g. discrimination in communities and social media, barriers of access to education, leisure and sports, trends in societal attitudes, hidden and open violence and others
- The RI Youth will help to develop solutions to fight against discrimination, e.g. by developing public relations initiatives, and policy papers
- The RI Youth Forum will have an advisory role in all parts of RI’s work
- The RI Youth Forum will have the opportunity to take part in and give input to the EC and Commission and can participate on invitation
- The RI Youth Forum has to inform RI’s President when the Forum want to go public (to media) with their view on RI-related activities.
- Participation in the RI Youth Forum will be voluntary and not paid.

Membership and Governance

Members of the RI Youth Forum shall be aged between 18 to 35 years.

Candidates can apply with a CV and motivation letter (in English). The application shall be supported by a Member Organization or an Individual Member, respectively. Support also should be given by the Commission Chairs and Regional Vice Presidents.

Candidates shall be people with disabilities that have shown some activities in activities towards rights of persons with disabilities as well as in the field of inclusion and rehabilitation. Members shall be able to sufficiently communicate in English. Young people without disabilities may also be able to join the Youth Forum if they are experienced in the field and show commitment to contribute to the Forum’s goals,

Applications shall be sent in to RI’s secretary General for Formal check and recommendation for a decision. The decision will be taken by the president or – if he/she is not available – by the

past President or President Elect. In case of conflicts, a decision shall be made by the Managing Board after being informed about the argument from both sides.

The Forum shall consist of about 20-30 people in a gender, disability and region-balanced team. Regional sub-groups may be established but shall communicate only through the main Forum. The Forum shall choose a Chair and Co-Chair by simple majority. The election of Chair and Co-Chair shall be approved by the president or – if he/she is not available – by the past President or President Elect.

The term of office of Chair and Co-Chair of the Forum shall be 2 years. Re-election is possible one time only.

The Forum can give special tasks to Forum members (*e.g. social media, case studies, girls and women with disabilities, advocacy, inclusion into life areas and others*). The responsibilities for such tasks shall rotate every 2 years.

Furthermore, the Forum should nominate liaison-persons to the RI regions. Their task is to stay closely in contact with RI Regional Vice Presidents and Deputy Regional Vice Presidents. *Regional Vice Presidents also can make suggestions or these liaison persons. (to be discussed)*

Members of the RI Youth Forum are welcome to join the RI Commissions. Such membership must be confirmed/accepted by the Commission Chairs.

Meetings

The RI Youth Forum shall meet virtually at least every two months. Depending on allocation of a budget, one face-to-face meeting shall be organized, preferably combined with a RI congress or regional conference. Of course, the Youth Forum is free to invite Members of the Executive committee or other experts to their meetings. The principles of confidentiality must be strictly followed.

All meetings must be conducted following democratic standards.

Reporting

For all meetings of the Youth Forum minutes shall be produced. After approval of the minutes within the Forum, they shall be sent to RI's Secretary General and President for additional review.

The RI Youth Forum shall produce an annual report on its activities and a 1-year workplan to be adopted by reviewed by the president and adopted by the Executive Committee. Even though RI Youth Forum can take its own activities, the workplan shall be aligned with RI's global workplan. Therefore, RI President and EC members shall make suggestions to the Forum's workplan, too.

Official public statements (*in the name of RI Youth Forum*) and signed by Youth Forum Chair and Co-Chair must be adopted by RI President or – if he/she is not available – by the past President or President Elect in advance.

Statements shall not be in favor or against political parties or decision makers and must strictly follow human rights and non-discrimination policies and be based on equal rights and respect for persons with different gender, origin, sexual orientation and other social criteria.

The ToR should be reviewed and adopted by RI's Executive Committee.

Hannover, in February 2025

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RI President