



Youth, Peace & Security (YPS) Local Champions Awards

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Recognising Municipal Leadership in Advancing the Youth, Peace & Security Agenda

1. Background

Young people are essential partners in building peaceful, inclusive and resilient communities. The United Nations Youth, Peace & Security (YPS) Agenda, established through **United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015)** and strengthened by subsequent resolutions (2419, 2535 and 2558), recognises the positive role of young people in preventing conflict, promoting peace, fostering social cohesion and contributing to sustainable development.

As the level of institutional decision making closest to citizens, municipalities play a pivotal role in translating the Youth, Peace & Security Agenda into tangible local action. Through inclusive governance, meaningful youth participation, community engagement, partnerships and innovative local initiatives, municipalities can create environments where young people are empowered to contribute to safer, more peaceful and more resilient communities.

The **Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality & Trust** project is a regional initiative implemented by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, **UN Women** and **UNESCO**, with the support of the **United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)**. The project aims to strengthen youth participation, foster social cohesion, and enhance trust and cooperation among young people, local institutions and communities across the Western Balkans.

As the project partner responsible for advancing the localisation of the YPS Agenda at the local level, the Network of Association of Local Authorities in South East Europe - **NALAS** is implementing the **Youth, Peace & Security (YPS) Local Champions**. The initiative recognises municipalities that demonstrate outstanding leadership in promoting meaningful youth participation, strengthening peaceful and inclusive communities, and developing innovative local initiatives that contribute to the objectives of the YPS Agenda.

The award aims to recognise and celebrate municipalities that demonstrate outstanding leadership in localising the YPS Agenda through innovative policies, programmes and partnerships that empower young people and strengthen peaceful communities.





Five municipalities—from the region —will be recognised as **YPS Local Champions**, each receiving one of the five YPS Champion Awards. Each municipality may submit **one application only**, under the Champion Award that best reflects the initiative. Selected municipalities will be recognised as **YPS Local Champions**, showcasing inspiring local practices that contribute to meaningful youth participation, safer and more inclusive communities, peacebuilding, partnerships and inclusive opportunities for young people. Regional balance will be ensured for the selection of the YPS Local Champions.

2. Objectives

The YPS Local Champions Initiative seeks to:

- Recognise municipalities demonstrating outstanding leadership in advancing the YPS Agenda at the local level;
- Showcase innovative and impactful municipal initiatives that contribute to peaceful, inclusive and resilient communities;
- Promote peer learning and the exchange of good practices among municipalities across the Western Balkans;
- Strengthen partnerships between local authorities, young people, civil society organisations, educational institutions and other local stakeholders;
- Inspire municipalities to further integrate YPS principles into local policies, programmes and decision-making processes.

3. Champion Awards

Each municipality may submit one application under one Champion Award. Applicants should select the Champion Award that best reflects the objectives, approach and results of the initiative presented in their application.

4. Thematic Categories

Applications may be submitted under one of the following categories:

Youth Voice Champion

This award recognises municipalities that actively empower young people to participate in local decision-making, civic engagement and community development.



The municipality demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that young people's voices are heard, valued and translated into meaningful local action.

Examples of initiatives include (the list is not exclusive):

- Municipal youth councils;
- Youth advisory bodies;
- Participatory budgeting involving young people;
- Youth consultations on municipal policies;
- Youth-led community initiatives;
- Civic engagement and volunteer programmes;
- Innovative mechanisms for youth participation.

Safe Communities Champion

This award recognises municipalities creating safe, inclusive and supportive environments where young people can thrive and feel protected.

Initiatives should contribute to strengthening safety, wellbeing, equality and social inclusion for all young people.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Violence prevention programmes;
- Prevention of discrimination and hate speech;
- Mental health and psychosocial support;
- Gender equality initiatives;
- Safe public spaces for young people;
- Community safety initiatives;
- Support services for vulnerable youth.



Peacebuilding Champion

This award recognises municipalities that strengthen dialogue, social cohesion, resilience and peaceful coexistence within their communities.

Successful initiatives contribute to preventing divisions, promoting understanding and building stronger relationships among diverse communities.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Peace education programmes;
- Intercultural and intergenerational dialogue;
- Community cohesion initiatives;
- Conflict prevention activities;
- Prevention of radicalisation and polarisation;
- Activities promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.

Partnerships Champion

This award recognises municipalities that build strong partnerships with young people, civil society organisations, educational institutions, local authorities and other stakeholders to advance peaceful and inclusive communities.

Successful initiatives demonstrate collaboration and shared ownership in advancing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Cooperation with youth organisations;
- Partnerships with schools and universities;
- Collaboration with civil society organisations;
- Multi-stakeholder local platforms;
- Cross-municipal cooperation;
- Decentralized cooperation;



- Regional partnerships promoting youth participation and peacebuilding.

Inclusive Futures Champion

This award recognises municipalities supporting the inclusion, empowerment and future opportunities of young people facing vulnerability, exclusion or marginalisation.

The award highlights initiatives that ensure no young person is left behind by expanding opportunities for participation, education, employment and community engagement.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Skills development programmes;
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship initiatives;
- Mentoring and coaching programmes;
- Social inclusion initiatives;
- Support for marginalised or vulnerable young people;
- Programmes promoting equal opportunities and active citizenship.

5. Eligibility

Applications are open to municipalities from the Western Balkans. Municipalities from Montenegro are not eligible, as Montenegro is not a participating economy in the project.

Each municipality may submit **one application only**. The submitted initiative should:

- Have already been implemented or be currently under implementation;
- Demonstrate tangible results and positive impact;
- Meaningfully involve young people;
- Clearly relate to one of the five Champion Awards;
- Have the potential to inspire or be replicated by other municipalities.

6. Benefits of Becoming a YPS Local Champion

Selected municipalities will:

- Receive official recognition as a **Youth, Peace & Security Local Champion**;
- Receive a YPS Local Champion Award certificate;
- Present their initiative during a regional recognition event;
- Be featured in NALAS publications, website and social media channels;
- Join the regional network of YPS Local Champions;
- Share their experience through peer-learning and knowledge exchange activities;
- Inspire and support municipalities across the Western Balkans in localising the YPS Agenda.

7. Application Package

Interested municipalities should submit:

- A completed application form;
- Supporting materials (maximum 5 attachments);

Applications should be submitted by email to info@nalas.eu, with the subject line:

“YPS Local Champions Awards – [Municipality Name]”

Deadline for applications: 11 September 2026.

Each municipality may submit **one application only**, under one of the five YPS Local Champions Awards.

Incomplete applications may not be considered.

8. Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by an independent Evaluation Committee composed of representatives of NALAS, project partners and experts in youth participation, local governance and peacebuilding.

Each application will be evaluated independently according to the published evaluation criteria.

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Results and impact	30%
Youth participation and leadership	25%
Relevance to the selected Champion Award	20%
Innovation	15%
Sustainability and replication potential	10%
TOTAL	100%

The Evaluation Committee may request additional information or clarification from applicants where necessary.

The Committee's decision shall be final.

9. Timeline

Activity	Date
Launch of the Call	26 August 2026
Deadline for Applications	11 September 2026
Evaluation of Applications	14 – 17 September 2026
Notification of Selected Municipalities	18 September 2026
Recognition Ceremony	30 September 2026



9. Contact Information

For further information regarding this Call for Applications, please contact:

NALAS Secretariat

Email: info@nalas.eu

Website: www.nalas.eu