



UfM Youth Mainstreaming Plan (2026–2030)

Moving youth from the margins to the mainstream

INTRODUCTION

The UfM Youth Mainstreaming Plan (YMP) is a practical institutional roadmap to ensure that youth considerations are systematically embedded across UfM’s work. It covers governance and decision-making, programme and platform design, inclusion and accessibility, staff capacity and tools, and accountability and learning. The YMP translates UfM’s youth commitments into concrete, measurable actions over the period 2026–2030, while remaining feasible within UfM’s institutional setup and operating constraints.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Euro-Mediterranean region faces compounding shocks, including economic pressures, mobility and displacement dynamics, climate risks, and social polarisation, with disproportionate impacts on young people. Youth face persistent barriers in education-to-employment transitions, decent work, participation, and access to opportunities, shaped by gender, location, disability, and socioeconomic status.

Regional agendas and evolving cooperation frameworks call for more inclusive, future-oriented action that delivers tangible results for young people. Youth mainstreaming is therefore imperative to ensure these considerations are embedded systematically in policy, programme design and delivery, partnerships, and results measurement, beyond standalone youth projects.

STRATEGIC ANCHORING

The YMP aligns with and operationalises UfM’s strategic direction and key regional and international frameworks:

New Pact
for the
Mediterranean



UN Youth
2030 Strategy



UfM Strategic
Vision



It translates these commitments into practical mainstreaming actions across policy, programming, partnerships, and accountability.



PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The YMP aims to:

- **Operationalise** youth mainstreaming through clear priorities, minimum standards, and practical tools embedded in core business processes.
- **Institutionalise** meaningful and inclusive youth engagement by establishing consistent mechanisms that shape decision-making, programming, and partnerships.
- **Strengthen** accountability and performance through a results-based MEL framework, indicators, and continuous learning loops to track progress and drive improvement.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Youth mainstreaming at the UfM is governed by six interconnected principles:

- **Rights-based & equity** - placing young people's rights and fair access at the centre of all actions.
- **Meaningful participation** - ensuring youth voices genuinely shape decisions, not merely inform them.
- **Inclusion & intersectionality** - addressing overlapping barriers of gender, location, disability, and socioeconomic background.
- **Do no harm & safeguarding** - protecting youth participants in all engagement processes.
- **Transparency & accountability** - maintaining clear roles, documented processes, and reported results.
- **Evidence-informed & learning** - grounding actions in data and continuously adapting based on findings.





STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The YMP is organised around five Outcome Areas (what success looks like) and Enablers (what makes implementation possible). Each Outcome Area includes a set of priority actions with owners, timelines, and indicators to support consistent delivery and accountability.

OUTCOME AREA 1 - Youth-responsive governance and decision-making

Overall goal: Institutionalise youth-responsive governance and decision-making across the UfM Secretariat to ensure that youth perspectives systematically inform policies, strategies, and institutional processes.

Strategic Action

Youth commitments in strategic and policy documents

Youth-responsive language and commitments are systematically integrated into UfM strategic and policy documents, including ministerial declarations and action plans.

Output

Youth-responsive language integrated into selected UfM strategic and policy documents; guidance note on youth-responsive drafting.

Outcome

Youth considerations are systematically reflected in UfM policy and strategic outputs.

External youth advisory and consultative mechanisms

Formal mandates, scope, and feedback pathways are defined for external youth advisory and consultative mechanisms linked to UfM decision-making processes.

Clear framework for youth advisory and consultative mechanisms; documented feedback pathways.

Shift in youth engagement from tokenistic consultation to decision-shaping participation.





OUTCOME AREA 2 - Meaningful and structured youth participation across UfM platforms

Overall goal: Ensure that youth participation across UfM platforms, initiatives, and policy processes is predictable, inclusive, non-tokenistic, and demonstrably influential.

Strategic Action

Mechanisms for youth inputs to influence outcomes

Agenda co-design procedures, documented responses to youth inputs, and post-engagement feedback notes are introduced across UfM processes.

Cohort and delegate-style youth participation models

Structured youth representation models, adapted to the UfM context and Member State diversity, are piloted across selected platforms and scaled based on learning.

Output

Agenda co-design guidance and a standard feedback note template

Pilot participation models implemented; evaluation and scaling recommendations.

Outcome

Increased transparency and trust in youth engagement processes.

Sustainable youth participation models are operationalised and regularly inform UfM policy processes.





OUTCOME AREA 3 - Inclusion, equity, and representation of diverse youth

Overall goal: Ensure that youth participation across UfM processes is inclusive, equitable, accessible, and representative of the diversity of young people across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Strategic Action

Inclusion and outreach strategies

Tailored outreach strategies are developed to engage underrepresented youth groups, including rural youth, Arabic-speaking youth, young women, youth with disabilities, and vocational learners.

Output

UfM inclusion and outreach strategy; targeted outreach plans for selected processes.

Outcome

Increased participation of underrepresented youth in UfM processes.

Multilingual accessibility

Youth engagement materials and events are made available in Arabic, English, and French at minimum, with interpretation support for key activities.

Youth engagement materials available in three languages; interpretation support provided for selected activities.

Increased accessibility and participation of non-English-speaking youth.





OUTCOME AREA 4 - Institutional capacity, culture, and tools for youth mainstreaming

Overall goal: Equip the UfM Secretariat with the skills, tools, systems, and organisational culture required to mainstream youth meaningfully, consistently, and sustainably across all functions and programmes.

Strategic Action

Youth Mainstreaming Toolkit

A practical toolkit, including standard operating procedures, guidance notes, and checklists, is developed and rolled out across UfM functions.

Output

Youth Mainstreaming Toolkit adopted and disseminated; toolkit orientation materials delivered.

Outcome

Improved consistency and quality of youth mainstreaming across UfM functions.

Youth Engagement Plans in project and programme proposals

A standard Youth Engagement Plan section is integrated into all UfM project and programme proposals, describing how youth will be engaged and how participation links to expected outcomes.

Youth Engagement Plan section integrated into proposal templates; template and guidance note developed.

Youth engagement is systematically planned and aligned with expected outcomes at the project design stage.





OUTCOME AREA 5 - Accountability, learning, and visibility of youth mainstreaming

Overall goal: Ensure that youth mainstreaming at the UfM is measurable, transparent, continuously improved, and visibly embedded in institutional accountability and reporting processes.

Strategic Action

Institutionalised reporting

Youth mainstreaming is integrated into UfM annual reporting, including the Year in Review, with periodic public-facing summaries on progress and results.

Output

Youth mainstreaming section in annual UfM reports; public summaries on progress.

Outcome

Increased transparency and institutional accountability on youth mainstreaming.

Documenting and disseminating good practices

Lessons learned and good practices on youth mainstreaming are systematically identified, documented, and shared across the UfM ecosystem through internal and external channels.

Good practice notes and learning products; knowledge-sharing sessions.

Continuous improvement in youth mainstreaming practice across UfM and its partner network.





THE YMP YOUTH TASKFORCE

The YMP was co-developed with a Youth Taskforce of eight members representing Algeria, Egypt, Italy, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. Constituted through nominations from UfM, partners, and youth councils, the Taskforce served as a strategic sounding board throughout the development process. Members reviewed the methodology, curated focus group discussions with youth-led civil society organisations, facilitated the youth-mainstreaming validation workshop, and provided targeted inputs to finalise the Plan’s architecture, including its outcome areas, indicators, and overall structure.

Taskforce members



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