



1 INTRODUCTION TO CYC MEMBERSHIPS

As one of the largest and most diverse youth-led organizations in the world, the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) is committed to engaging, involving and advocating for young people within the Commonwealth.

The CYC facilitates and supports the work of youth-led initiatives across the Commonwealth. We partner with relevant stakeholders, organisations and individuals to represent and empower young people in the Commonwealth.

In accordance with Article 7 of the CYC Constitution, membership in the Council is open to representative and democratic youth-led organisations from Commonwealth member countries, with a broad-based membership and wide coverage, consisting of young people (15 to 29 years of age), regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion, unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the CYC General Assembly.

Membership of CYC provides a wide array of benefits, focused on empowering all young people across the Commonwealth to have a say and be heard. Joining CYC as a member provides organisations with various opportunities such as:

1. Voting rights in electing country and regional delegation to the CYC General Assembly;
2. Access to CYC financial and programme support;
3. Opportunity to partner with CYC in achieving your objectives;
4. Endorsement or recommendation from the CYC;
5. Stand the opportunity to be elected to represent your region or country to the Commonwealth Youth General Assembly; and
6. Opportunity to be involved and network with all youth-led initiatives in the Commonwealth and beyond.

2 ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

2.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF CYC MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

In accordance with Article 17 of the Constitution, the Commonwealth Youth Council established the Membership Committee in early 2014. As noted in Article 9 of the Constitution, the Membership Committee is responsible for approving Members and Affiliate Observers of the Council. The initial Committee was selected based on merit through an open call for applications. Importantly, the Executive selected Committee members from all Commonwealth regions to ensure equal representation.

Since formation, the Committee has met regularly through online mediums to discuss progress and to revise the membership strategy. Based on availability and levels of involvement, the following Committee members agreed to continue on after the initial 18 months:

1. Mohamed Husni (Chair)
2. Vanessa Picker (Secretary/ Australia)
3. Komezusenge Daniel (Coordinator/ Rwanda)
4. Hussen Riyas (Maldives)
5. Christina J K Giwe (Papua New Guinea)
6. Senel Wanniarachchi (Sri Lanka)
7. Wendell Bertrane (St. Lucia)
8. Karl Bugeja (Malta)

2.2 PROGRESS OF CYC MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

2.2.1 Categories of Membership

Firstly, the Membership Committee decided upon the two membership types. This involved extensive analysis of the Constitution in order to define important details such as eligibility and benefits of each membership type. The Committee confirmed that there are two possible tiers of CYC membership:

- **Full Membership:**

Members shall:

- be represented at official CYC sessions and events by National and Regional Delegations, with clearly specified voting rights¹.
- recommend and support candidates for, and vote in elections for the various offices of the Council, through their Delegation to the Council².
- have full speaking rights at Council events³.
- network and lobby to expand their contacts and knowledge base and
- explore possible partnerships and joint ventures with various stakeholders

- **Affiliated Observers:**

Affiliated Observers shall have the opportunity to:

- attend the Council's General Assembly and other international conferences and events as observers⁴,
- make written and oral statements at these events by invitation⁵,
- organise side events by invitation⁶ and
- network and lobby to expand their contacts and knowledge base⁷ and
- explore possible partnerships and joint ventures with various stakeholders
- recommend and support candidates from Member organisations for election to the various offices of the Council, but shall have no voting rights⁸.

¹ As per Article 7.2 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

² As per Article 7.4 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ As per Article 8.3 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ As per Article 8.4 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

2.2.2 Eligibility Criteria for Each Category

The Membership Committee then defined the eligibility criteria for each membership type as follows:

FULL MEMBERS:

Membership in the Council shall be open to *representative and democratic youth-led organisations from Commonwealth member countries*, with a broad-based membership and wide coverage, *consisting of young people (15 to 29 years of age)*, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion, unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the CYC General Assembly⁹.

As per *Article 7.3 of the CYC Constitution*, the requirements for obtaining Member status in the Council shall include but are shall not be limited to the following:

- a) the organisation's objectives and activities shall be relevant to the work of the Council;
- b) the organisation shall have been in existence (officially registered) for at least one year before the General Assembly at which it shall be considered for member status;
- c) the organisation shall have democratic and transparent governance and decision-making mechanisms, where young people have a majority voice in the organisation's decision-making; and
- d) the members of the organisation shall agree to support or participate in the work of the Council.

Please note:

National Youth Councils from Commonwealth member countries that meet membership requirements shall be granted automatic Member status in the Council, and shall take part in the consultations and decisions of the Council¹⁰.

Furthermore, the Council shall admit member delegations from Commonwealth Overseas Territories and other countries interested in the values and objectives of the Commonwealth, or with ties, or affiliated, to the Commonwealth¹¹;

AFFILIATED OBSERVERS:

This status in the Council shall be open to *all persons and organisations of all nations of the world*, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the General Assembly¹².

As per *Article 8.2 of the CYC Constitution*, the requirements for obtaining Member status in the Council shall include but are shall not be limited to the following:

- a) the observer organisation's objectives and activities shall be relevant to the work of the Council;
- b) the organisation shall have been in existence (officially registered) for at least two years before the General Assembly at which they shall be considered for Observer status;

⁹ As per Article 7.1 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013. Emphasis added.

¹⁰ As per Article 7.5 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

¹¹ As per Article 7.6 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

¹² As per Article 8.1 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013. Emphasis added.

c) the organisation shall have democratic and transparent governance and decision making mechanisms, where young people have a majority voice in the organisation's decision-making; and

d) the members of the organisation shall agree to support or participate in the work of the Council.

Please note:

The Commonwealth Youth Development Stakeholders Panel (referred to as the 'Stakeholders Panel'), will be accorded the status of 'Affiliated Observer', for the purpose of enabling the Council or its committees and subsidiary bodies to secure expert information or opinions from persons having special competence on youth development issues.¹³

2.2.3 Application Process

Next, the CYC Membership Committee agreed upon the membership application process and created the relevant online systems and web forms for applications. Organisations wishing to join the Council as either Members or Affiliated Observers may apply using the official Membership Application Form, which is available online via a webform and the CYC website.

The Membership Application Form comprises of:

- A questionnaire
- A statement of intent
- A summary, and
- Supporting documents:
 - Copy of constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and amendments to those documents (in accordance with *Articles 7.3* and *8.2* of the CYC Constitution).
 - Copy of certificate of registration (in accordance with *Article 7.3* and *8.2* of the CYC Constitution). If your country does not require registration, please provide other proof of existence.
 - Organisational structure/chart, detailing the governance and decision-making structures of the organisation.
 - Copy of most recent financial statement and annual report.
 - Copies of recent publications, articles, reports and other material to showcase the relevance of the organisation's activities/programmes.

The complete Membership Application Form can only be accepted in English. All required documents submitted should also be legally certified translations in English, if the originals were in a language other than English.

Completed applications must be received by **December 1st of the year before** the organisation wishes to be considered for recommendation to the CYC General Assembly in the following year by the Membership Committee. Please note that the CYC General Assembly is held once in two years. For example, complete applications (which include a completed questionnaire and all the required supporting documentation) submitted to the CYC Secretariat by 1 December 2014 will be taken up by the Membership Committee in the year 2015, for General Assembly approval in November 2015. Applications received between 2 December 2014 and 1 December 2015 will be taken up in the year 2016, for consideration at the 2017 General Assembly.

¹³ Article 19.1 of the CYC Constitution adopted at the First CYC General Assembly 2013.

2.2.4 Creation of Membership promotional materials

In addition to defining the criteria and creating the relevant online processes/ systems, the CYC Membership Committee also designed and created various marketing materials, including flyers for each membership type. These marketing materials have assisted with raising awareness about CYC memberships and promoting the benefits of each membership category.

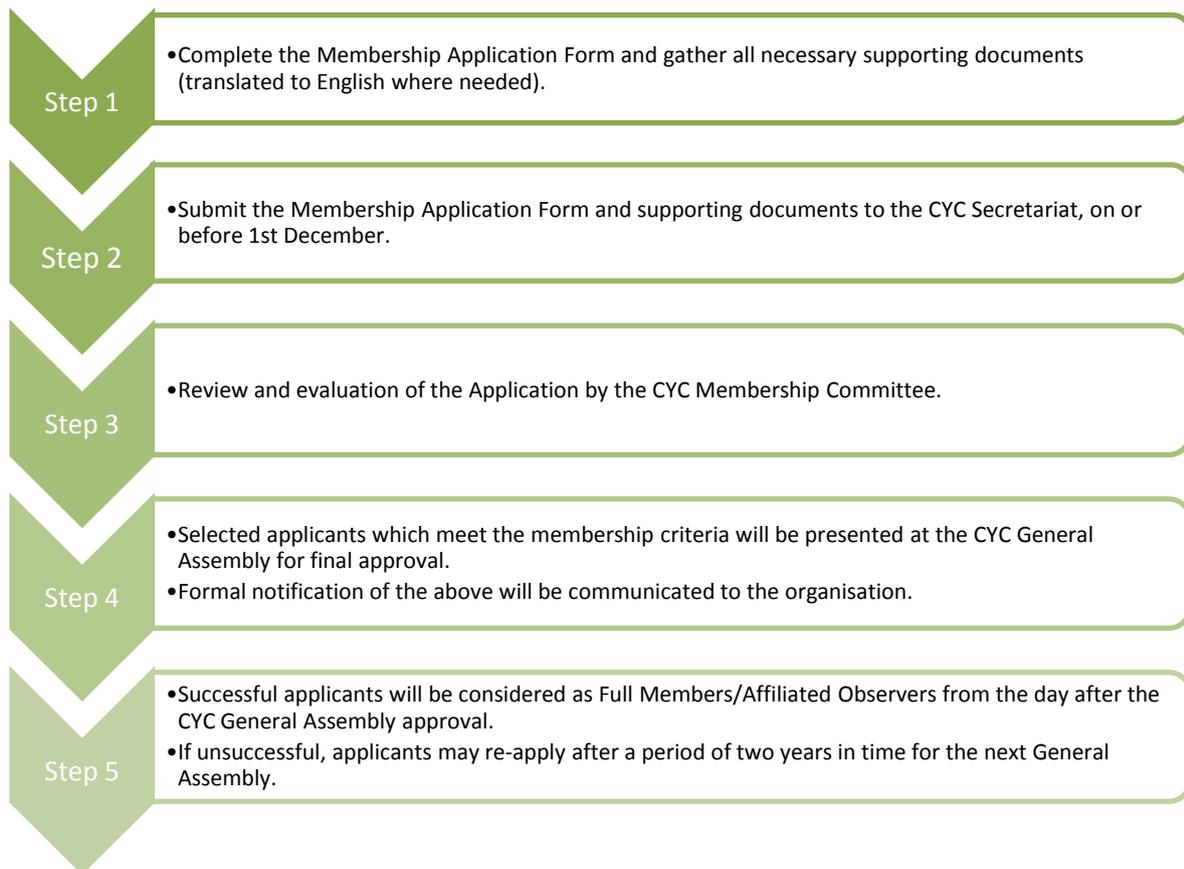
2.3 DISSEMINATION MECHANISMS

Importantly, the CYC membership committee has also created an overarching strategy to raise awareness about memberships and to continuously grow the membership base. To date, this has largely involved online mediums such as email campaigns, social media campaigns, regular newsletters and flyers. As a result of the implementation of the promotional campaigns, we have received 535 membership applications to date. Ultimately, we have received continuous interest regarding memberships and regular applications.

2.4 APPROVAL PROCESS

The chart below clearly outlines the approval process, which has been created and implemented by the CYC Membership Committee. Importantly, the approval process involves careful consideration and verification of each membership application. The verification process is incredibly important, given that members receive several rights, upon membership approval. Thus, due to the large number of applications received, the practical difficulties (e.g relying on small committee of volunteers) and the importance of proper verification, the membership committee is still verifying the 535 applications received.

An overview of the Membership Application Process



2.5 NEXT STEPS

Given the importance of thorough verification, the membership committee is currently in the process of receiving supporting documentation from each of the applications. With the support of regional representatives, the Committee will assess the supporting documents alongside applications, in order to ensure that each approved organization meets the requirements set out in the CYC Constitution. Once we have verified the organisations, we will forward a list to the General Assembly.

We recommend the following:

1. That a Resolution should be passed at the General Assembly in Malta, to allow applicants to become provisional members if they are assessed as meeting the membership requirements in-between General Assembly's. This will allow them to benefit from certain rights within a more reasonable timeframe.
2. The following members of the Membership Committee should continue on in the work of CYC membership Committee, in order to ensure continuity.
 - Ms Vanessa Picker (Secretary)
 - Mr Komezusenge Daniel (Rwanda)