

WORLD FEDERATION OF YOUNG THEOSOPHISTS

BACKGROUND

In 1923 the World Federation of Young Theosophists (also called under different names throughout its existence) was formed to organize activities by young members and for the young. Besides the fact that the young should all be working in the Theosophical Society Lodges where they live, the Federation was envisioned as a parallel movement from its parent Society (similar to the Theosophical Order of Service), where the young would link together, so that young newcomers who expressed interest in the Theosophical work could realize that they were not alone in their age group. Since 1999 the Federation remained dormant for two decades. In 2020 a group of young Theosophists, inspired by the former initiatives, started to work towards the revival and strengthening of the Theosophical Movement among young members throughout the world. This constitution shall rule the objects and procedures of the current cycle of this organization.

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the World Federation of Young Theosophists (WFYT), adopt this constitution in order to create a strong and efficient organization that will support the young members of the Theosophical Society to act as workers for the Theosophical Movement. This constitution aims to awaken the spirit of brotherhood & kinship among young theosophists enabling us to live the life of study, meditation and service.

CONSTITUTION

1. The NAME of the organization shall be: World Federation of Young Theosophists (WFYT).
2. The OBJECTS of the WFYT shall be:
 - 2.1. To strengthen the sense of global community, collaboration and practical brotherhood amongst young theosophists.
 - 2.2. To support its mother institution, The Theosophical Society based in Adyar, in the accomplishment of its objects and mission which is stated as follows: "To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life."
 - 2.3. To prepare young theosophists to act as workers for the Theosophical Movement.
3. The HEADQUARTERS of the Federation shall be at The Theosophical Society, Adyar, India. However, such physical headquarters shall constitute the spiritual ground, since most of the day-to-day management and organization shall be carried out online to facilitate communications worldwide between members holding active functions, mostly not living in Adyar.
4. MEMBERSHIP of the WFYT shall be of four kinds:
 - 4.1. **GENERAL MEMBER:** individual membership with voting rights shall be open to young members of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) who are not over the age of 40. Every general member shall be directly connected with the Federation irrespective of the existence of youth groups within national sections, regional associations or lodges attached to Adyar. The WFYT both acknowledges, encourages and supports the creation of such youth groups, without interfering in their local activities and policies or bylaws, while expecting their members to participate within the WFYT in order to connect with young Theosophists worldwide.
 - 4.2. **SYMPATHIZER:** they shall be individuals, not yet members of the Theosophical Society, who are in sympathy with the Objects of the WFYT, and who are not over 40 years of age. They shall have no right to vote or to hold office in the Federation, but they may participate as volunteers.

- 4.3. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP. The Board of Officers (see section 7) may invite members of the Theosophical Society to become Honorary Members of the WFYT in recognition of their special services for, or interest in, the Federation. There shall be no age limit for such membership, but such members shall have no right to vote or to hold office in the Federation, which shall be led and structured by young members. However, honorary members shall have voice and may participate as volunteers.
- 4.4. HONORARY REPRESENTATIVE. In the event that a national section, regional association or lodge attached to Adyar shall have no young members, or none shall be available to be appointed as Representative (see section 8), another member within such section shall be appointed by the Board of Officers, regardless of the age limit, for the purpose of being the contact person between the WFYT and potential young newcomers. The Honorary Representative shall have no right to vote or to hold office, however they shall have voice and may participate in the Council of Representatives.

	<i>Age limit</i>	<i>TS member</i>	<i>Voting right</i>	<i>Hold office right</i>
General Members	40 years old	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sympathizers	40 years old	No	No	No
Honorary Members/Representatives	No limit	Yes	No	No

5. The HONORARY PRESIDENT and Patron of the WFYT shall be the International President of the Theosophical Society based in Adyar.
6. The Federation is structured with THREE BODIES of active young theosophists: the Board of Officers, the Council of Representatives and the Volunteers.

7. BOARD OF OFFICERS

- 7.1. The Board of Officers shall be the governing body of the Federation. They are responsible for promoting the Federation's mission and objects, and they are empowered by different means of action which are defined under the officer roles.
- 7.2. An Officer shall be a general member elected for a term of two years.
- 7.3. The Board shall consist of seven officers. Below follows a brief description (not exclusive) of their roles and predefined responsibilities (the officer roles may be adjusted if agreed amongst the officers):
 - 7.3.1. *Executive Officer*; who shall be the link with the parent TS General Secretaries, look for resources, fundraising, contact TS members for collaboration, etc. In addition, the executive officer shall hold a supervision role within the Board in order to ensure that projects (especially those transversals involving several officers) meet deadlines in a timely manner, monitoring with a holistic view the working status, checking that everything runs smoothly according to the Board's instructions, as well as interject when necessary. However, this shall not entail authority over other officers.
 - 7.3.2. *Education Officer*; who shall support young students in their learning process by developing educational objectives via courses with Theosophical content, arranging youth meetings and programs (i.e., mentorship from older young members).
 - 7.3.3. *Secretary Officer*; who shall keep the WFYT archive and records up-to-date, schedule and arrange the Board closed and open meetings, write the minutes, compile yearly reports with the officers' contributions, upload event meeting recordings, etc.
 - 7.3.4. *Media Officer*; who shall devise communication content on behalf of the organization to promote visibility of the Federation activities within Theosophical circles, as well as external communication through social media in order to make the general public aware of the TS and the WFYT. This may include preparing translations, etc.

- 7.3.5. *Event Coordinator Officer*; who shall operate events (on-site, online and hybrid), and be in charge of building a standard process of meetings and events operation, as well as looking for event locations or international venues. The Event Coordinator shall also recruit event participants and follow-up on post-event evaluation to identify improvements and needs. This Officer shall be interrelated with other Officers as they relate to event curation and implementation.
- 7.3.6. *Innovation Officer*; who shall be in charge of finding new projects to develop, search for potential improvements within the Federation, look for and collect new ideas and ways to implement and integrate them.
- 7.3.7. *Community Officer*; who shall keep record of the Federation membership data, maintain communication with members, organize feedback and follow-up consultations, provide due information to members (online newsletters), be the link between the Federation and prospective new members, etc. In addition, the Community Officer shall manage member donations, keep track of the organization record expenses, and present yearly financial reports.
- 7.4. The Board of Officers shall hold closed meetings periodically in order to build strategic and organizational planning, decide which initiatives shall be set in motion, keep track of the activities and programs already on course, to report on the tasks that may have been assigned to officers, and to monitor projects with transversal goals and assignments. The Secretary Officer shall prepare the minutes to distribute among the Council of Representatives (see section 8) after each closed meeting.
- 7.5. An Officer may call for an extraordinary closed meeting if required due to urgent reasons. Such meeting is suggested to be held at least within a period of one month.
- 7.6. The Board shall hold open meetings with the Council of Representatives, which are suggested to be held every six months and at least once a year. General members may attend as observers. The Board shall present yearly reports including the status of activities, programs, newsletters, financial accounts, membership changes, as well as a draft of the planning for next year taking into account the feedback provided by the Representatives.
- 7.7. The Board shall appoint one of its members as Delegate Officer, who shall observe and have voice to participate at the Council of Representatives meetings (without decision-making authority), and shall inform the rest of the Board.
- 7.8. In the event that an Officer shall resign (or be removed) from their position, within six months prior the termination of their term, the remaining Board Officers shall take over such vacant officer role until the next elections. However, if the remaining period of the current term exceeds six months, the next top voted member in the previous elections shall be offered the vacant position. If that member is not available, the same procedure should be followed successively with the next top voted member.
- 7.9. An Officer may be removed from their position in case of ethical problems or repetitive disregard of their responsibilities with unjustified reasons. Such a motion shall be presented at an open meeting with the Council of Representatives. A minimum quorum of 75% shall be required by the Council, with at least the endorsement of two thirds of the Council members present.

8. COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

- 8.1. The second body of the Federation shall be the Council of Representatives.
- 8.2. A Representative shall be the two-way link or contact person between the Board of Officers, and general members. Each National Section, Regional Association, Lodge Attached to Adyar or youth group attached to the WFYT shall have one Representative.
- 8.3. A Representative shall be informed of the day-to-day activities of their youth groups in order to promote local young involvement, assess potential needs, and work with the Board in helping to

meet those needs. Moreover, the representative shall be responsible for reporting their events and activities to the Board, and to officers of the parent TS national sections.

- 8.4. A Representative shall be a general member of the Federation, who is appointed for every term by the young members from their respective national section, or regional association, or lodge attached to Adyar, who shall be encouraged to decide amongst themselves. In the event they do not reach consent or due to any other problem, the Election Committee (see section 11) shall search for the best solution. The General Secretaries may be called to share their opinion.
- 8.5. A Representative cannot be a Board Officer simultaneously.
- 8.6. The Council of Representatives shall be in charge of monitoring the overall activities and initiatives carried out by the Board of Officers, which shall take place at the Board open meetings. Additionally, the Council shall provide feedback from their respective sections/youth groups on the effect of the WFYT activities, as well as suggestions and/or recommendations for future events or strategic planning.
- 8.7. The Council of Representatives shall vote to appoint a Delegate Representative, who shall observe and have voice to participate in the Board's closed meetings (without decision-making authority), and shall inform the rest of the Council. Additionally, the Secretary Officer shall distribute the minutes among the Council after each closed meeting. The Delegate Representative may be changed by the Council when necessary (irrespective of the election term).
- 8.8. The Council of Representatives shall have the authority to raise a motion for removing a Board member in case of ethical problems or repetitive disregard of their responsibilities with unjustified reasons.

9. VOLUNTEERS

- 9.1. The third body of the Federation shall be the Volunteers.
- 9.2. A volunteer shall be a general member, a sympathizer, a representative or an honorary member, who is keen to participate actively within the organization with their own talents, skills and time availability.
- 9.3. Volunteers shall be able to join working groups according to their interests, with the opportunity to cooperate with other members of the Federation, to get involved and support the Theosophical Movement, while gaining experience and developing a deeper sense of community and responsibility.

10. GOVERNANCE METHOD

The Federation shall adopt its own circle organizing method inspired by sociocracy, which is based on dialogue and inclusion of all people in the decision-making process, in a way that all voices are equally heard. This model is an alternative to majority rule decision-making, which may generate exclusion of minorities. The following principles define how the organization shall operate and the interrelationships between circles:

10.1. CONSENT governs decision-making

- 10.1.1 Decisions are made by consent, which is the primary decision-making method at all levels of the Federation. Consent is defined as an agreement from all informed participants when there are no (more) objections.
- 10.1.2 An objection is defined as an argument that may hinder or interfere with the aim of the WFYT or with shared goals at each decision-domain. Personal preferences or concerns without a reasoned argument to introduce improvement shall not be considered as objections. In this context, objections are welcome to come up with more effective proposals that meet more needs and allow for exploration.

- 10.1.3 The process of decision-making takes place within small groups (circles), which enable a culture of collaboration, while engaging and fostering taking responsibility for the course of the organization. When a decision needs to be made, a series of rounds are allowed for presenting a proposal, and to hear in turn each circle member, so that wisdom and information may be integrated to improve iteratively the proposal, until there are no more objections. (See Appendix A1)
 - 10.1.4 The consent method is bound by the principles of equality, trust, dedication, commitment towards a common aim, brotherliness, self-awareness and capacity for listening, among others.
 - 10.1.5 There are several instances when decisions are made by voting: (1) elections for every term, (2) to appoint the Delegate Representative, (3) to approve constitution amendments, (4) to approve a motion for removing a Board Officer or (5) when the facilitator (see Appendix A2) deems it necessary (for instance to make decisions with urgent deadlines).
- 10.2. Organizing in CIRCLES
- 10.2.1. The WFYT is organized in a hierarchy of semi-autonomous and interdependent circles, thereby resembling a horizontal association since the domain of each circle is bounded by a group decision-making. A circle is a group or committee with the purpose to carry out particular tasks within the Federation, therefore the work is distributed in a structure of working circles.
 - 10.2.2. There shall be two main permanent circles: (1) the Board of Officers is responsible for setting in motion the mission initiatives of the Federation, (2) the Council of Representatives is responsible for monitoring the activities of the Federation at local scale (youth groups from national sections, regional associations and lodges attached to Adyar). Additionally, each section of the Federation shall be autonomous regarding the governing method chosen to rule their local activities.
 - 10.2.3. There shall be additional small working circles which shall be created by the Board Officers in order to perform specific tasks to help achieve particular projects and objectives which the Board decides to pursue. Therefore, each new circle shall be task-oriented and carries a piece of the larger aim of the Board circle.
 - 10.2.4. Circles are recommended to be small (up to 7 members) in order to be agile in decision-making. They shall be composed of volunteers, thereby opening the possibility for active members to join specific circles according to their interests and skills.
 - 10.2.5. Each circle works with autonomy and is responsible for their own development and the execution of their task. Moreover, a Board Officer is responsible for the effectiveness of the circles under their supervision.
 - 10.2.6. A few basic guidelines regarding circle structure, formation and operations are presented in the Appendix (A2-A5). Moreover, an introduction to the sociocratic method is recommended for new members who join the Federation, in order to better understand the dynamics and principles within circles.

11. ELECTIONS

- 11.1. General members shall elect the Board members for a term of two years.
- 11.2. At least three months before the completion of a term, the Board of Officers shall hold an open meeting with the Council of Representatives in order to constitute an Election Committee.
- 11.3. The Election Committee shall be composed of three appointed general members, in addition to the current Community Officer who holds the Federation membership information, and the

Secretary Officer who shall keep record of the WFYT election procedures. Additionally, the President of the Theosophical Society may designate an advisor.

- 11.4. The Election Committee shall organize all procedures needed for the elections such as calling for nominations, receiving nominee applications, handling the election dates, managing the voting procedure, communicating the election results, etc. Additionally, it is suggested that the Election Committee shall support if needed the decision-making process of appointing representatives for the new term, which shall happen immediately after the Board election.
- 11.5. Nominations shall be called by the Election Committee at least eight weeks before the elections, and nominations shall be received at least six weeks before the elections.
- 11.6. A nominee shall be a general member, and may be nominated by any general member, including oneself.
- 11.7. The Election Committee shall collect from each eligible nominee their consent four weeks before the elections, as well as their relevant information, to be distributed among general members at least two weeks before the elections.
- 11.8. The Election Committee shall set the rules and guidelines that define the standard format of what is allowed in terms of what each nominee can do to support her/his nomination, ensuring the process is fair and coherent with a sense of brotherhood. Providing the CV and a proposal of each nominee's interest in leading the Federation projects, is suggested to be the minimum required.
- 11.9. General members shall vote for a maximum of three nominees from different countries and/or TS departments (national sections/regional associations/attached lodge/presidential agency).
- 11.10. In order to allow for a wider and diverse representation across the world sections and youth groups, the seven top voted nominees, with a maximum of one member per country, shall be elected as the Board members. In the event of a tie, priority would be given to members who were not elected during the former term, and next, priority would be given to younger members.
- 11.11. The elected Board members shall assign amongst themselves the officer roles following the decision-making consent method, bearing in mind that they shall support each other collectively regarding the specific skills of each officer role.
- 11.12. An elected Board member who shall turn over 40 years old during their elected term, shall finish their mandate regardless of age.

12. FINANCE

The Federation expenses shall be paid with members' voluntary donations, in order to keep the activities running, to provide financial support for international events, etc. The financial year shall begin on January 1st.

13. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution may be amended at any open meeting of the Board and the Council of Representatives, provided that three months' notice of the proposed amendments has been given to the Secretary Officer who shall transmit it to both the Board and the Council within one month after receiving it. A minimum quorum of 75% shall be required by the Council, with at least the endorsement of two thirds of the Council members present, to give effect to any amendment.

APPENDIX: CIRCLE GUIDELINES

A1. CIRCLE DECISION-MAKING

1. A circle shall be autonomous to manage and decide their task related decisions, such as the following list (not exclusive): distribute roles and tasks, define the work process, allocate resources, evaluate the group and individual performance, plan milestone deadlines, etc. The circle can make adjustments on the suggested guidelines according to their needs.
2. Once a circle member has presented a proposal (with its aim, importance, feature, etc.), the following sequence of rounds are implemented to make a decision by consent. In each round all circle members get their turn to speak:
 - 2.1. *Image round*: this serves to make sure the image of what the presenter meant is clear for everyone, that it makes sense and aligns with the circle aim.
 - 2.2. *Sharing round*: each circle member shares briefly how the proposal feels, their thoughts or reflections. This provides another dimension of information to consider.
 - 2.3. *Opinion round*: each circle member gives their opinions, whether they agree or not, and why; other ideas may be introduced too. During each intervention, other members may raise hands to object with a reasoned argument of how the decision would harm or interfere with the aim of the circle. An objection is qualified if at least some of the group can relate.
 - 2.4. *Discussion round*: when objections are raised, the proposal may evolve building iteratively and incrementally to arrive at a point where there are no more reasons to object.
 - 2.5. *Consent round*: a decision is made when there are no (more) objections.
3. The decision-making round series promote true involvement by giving a voice to every circle member, and a space to find common ground, making an effort to find compromising decisions. Members are encouraged to keep an open mind with an inclusive and collaborative spirit.

A2. CIRCLE INTERNAL STRUCTURE

1. Circles have an internal structure in order to ensure their functionality, however no specific role within the circle denotes superiority over the remaining circle members:
 - 1.1. *Coordinator*: who supervises, pays attention to the circle's operation and monitors the progress, oversees what needs to be done, who agreed to do assignments, what happens in the circle, how the circle's work comes together in alignment with the predefined goals, etc. The coordinator shall be the responsible Officer of the circle.
 - 1.2. *Facilitator*: who plans the agenda with the input from the Coordinator and manages the circle's meeting guiding the members through the agenda items according to the decision-making principles (Appendix A1) with a timely and agile manner to meet deadlines. It is recommended that facilitators are familiarized with the Federation consent method, therefore the responsible Officer shall decide whether to appoint the Facilitator or to let circle members to decide amongst themselves, taking into consideration their previous knowledge and experience. Facilitators shall be the link with the responsible Officer when they are not present in the circle.
 - 1.3. *Scribe* (optional): the circle may decide to appoint a member who shall take notes during meetings, prepare the minutes and make them accessible for everyone in the circle.
 - 1.4. *Keeper/Guardian of emotions* (optional): the circle may decide to appoint a member who shall be attentive to the emotions and energies of the group, help to channel ideas in a healthy way, and promote a friendly atmosphere to keep a positive work environment.
2. All roles with defined areas of responsibility and hands-off between roles serve effectiveness. Multiple roles can be held by the same individual.

A3. CIRCLE FORMATION

1. The Community Officer shall keep a record of all existing circles, with their past, on-going and future planned activities.
2. The procedure for registering a new circle shall be defined by the Board, for example by sending an email to the Community Officer using a suggested template.
3. A Board Officer may initiate the formation of a new task circle under the following criteria:
 - 3.1. A specific task needs to be completed, which can be effectively and efficiently performed with its own circle or sub-committee.
 - 3.2. The responsible Officer shall define at least (but not exclusively): the goal or list of tasks to be achieved, the deadline (it may also be indefinite) and specific further requirements to be noted by the circle members.
 - 3.3. The minimum number of required circle members may be indicated if necessary. However, a circle of one member may function as a volunteer with delegated tasks directly from the responsible Officer.
4. A general member may approach an Officer to suggest the creation of a new circle if needed.
5. All new circles shall be approved by the Board of Officers.

A4. CIRCLE MEMBERS

1. A volunteer shall be able to apply/join a new task-oriented circle once it has been approved, having the opportunity to cooperate with other members of the Federation.
2. A volunteer may belong to more than one circle at a time. However, it is not advised to join too many circles at once so that proper dedication can be fulfilled. Volunteers may choose to explore the skills and fields of activity they are interested in within the organization by rotating circles under different Officer roles.
3. A volunteer to whom an assignment has been entrusted within a circle, is expected to report back to the circle members and participate in follow-up circle meetings.
4. A volunteer may ask to resign from a circle with justified reasons.
5. Any member may approach the Board or the Representatives for grievances.

A5. CIRCLE DECORUM

1. The responsible Officer may exclude a member from the circle activities due to any of the following reasons:
 - 1.1. Violent actions towards another circle member.
 - 1.2. Failure to attend more than half of the scheduled meetings.
 - 1.3. Rude and disrespectful behavior towards another circle member.
 - 1.4. Gross negligence relating to the assigned tasks.
 - 1.5. A behavior that goes against the aim and/or the abiding principles of the group.
 - 1.6. Not fulfilling the duty as per the designments.
2. Should a member not agree with the decision to exclude a member from a circle activity, such member may directly address the Board of Officers.

A6. CIRCLE SKETCH

