

# PROGRAM MANUAL

# YOUTH LEADING DEBATE

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE  
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## Background

There are 3.5 billion people under the age of 30 living in the world today, comprising the largest youth population in history. This unprecedentedly large generation makes up more than half of the global population, and more than 70 percent of the population in many countries where the National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) works. Despite being disproportionately affected by some of the world's toughest development challenges, young people's **imagination, enthusiasm and aspirations** can contribute to more stable, democratic and prosperous societies. In order for young people to fulfill their potential, they need to be active participants in political life and given real opportunities to influence policies and processes. This participation is essential in helping young people develop a sense of purpose and belonging.

Young people are often eager to get involved in public decisions to improve the welfare of their societies, however, they often struggle against barriers, including sociocultural norms and institutional practices, which prevent them from influencing mainstream politics and decision-making. As a result of these barriers, young people have few avenues or opportunities to learn about civic and political life, engage in political discourse or access circles of power. Young people are also discouraged from building important knowledge, skills and confidence for political activism and leadership, which hinders their willingness and ability to take political action to shape their societies. In order to eliminate barriers and improve practices of youth political participation, young people need to strengthen their agency and engage with power holders to foster a more supportive environment for youth participation. To meet this need, NDI developed the "Youth Leading Debate" program to provide young people with an opportunity to learn the art of competitive debate and develop practical political leadership skills. This manual aims to serve as a resource for developing youth debate programs and supporting young people as they work within their communities to contribute to lasting change.

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## **Program Overview**

Youth Leading Debate (YLD) is a dialogue and debate program for politically active young people, during which participants learn the rules of competitive policy debate. Participants also develop valuable interpersonal skills and debate pressing political issues. YLD is a multi-component program that draws from different styles of debate, such as public forum and parliamentary debate, and includes policy dialogues, debate training camps, and regional and national tournaments.

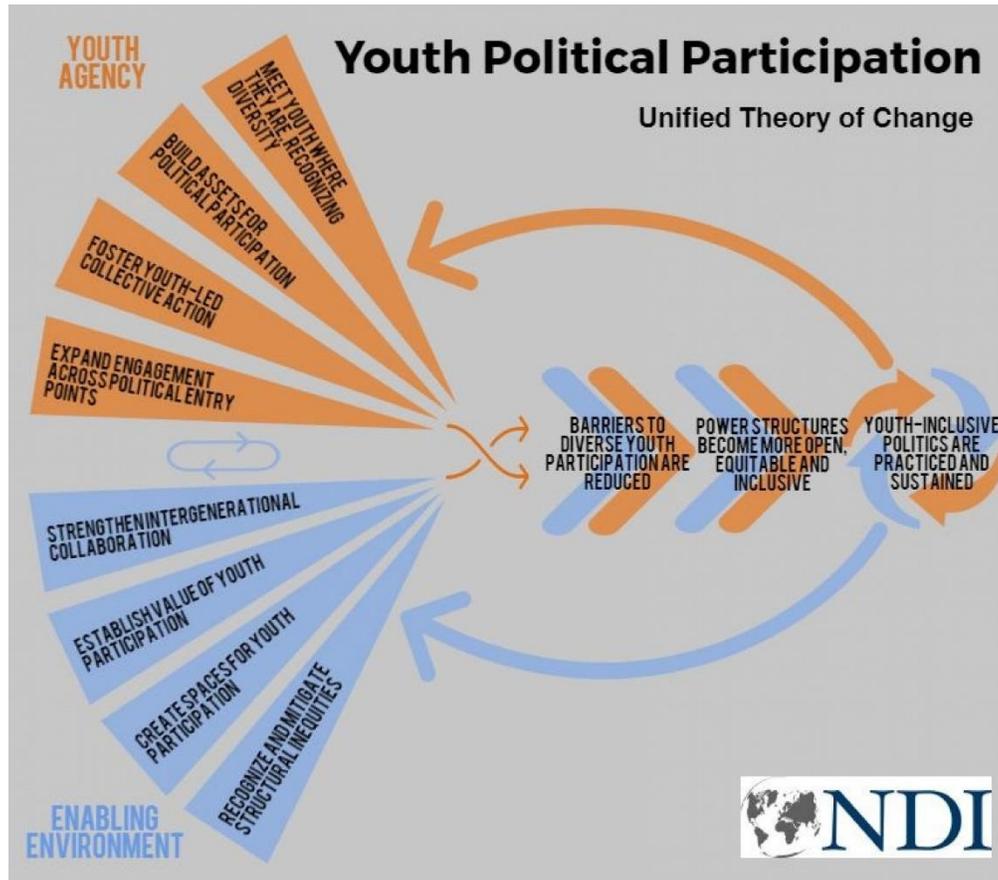
### **Why Competitive Debate?**

Engaging in competitive debate helps young people cultivate and sharpen important interpersonal skills for use in many aspects of daily life. These skills include public speaking, communication, critical thinking and self-confidence. The structured environment of competitive debate also provides participants with an opportunity to explore and display constructive political discourse, which is fundamental to a healthy democracy. Participating in debate helps young people develop a better understanding of perspectives on both sides of the complex decisions that have a wide reaching impact on society. This practice contributes to minimizing political polarization and helps participants build empathy for others. Since debates often revolve around topics of local or national importance, participants deepen their knowledge of the research and gathering evidence process that is necessary in order to prepare for a debate. The goal of competitive debate is not only to compete, but also to help participants better understand their peers and improve the level of civil discourse, which paves the way for the productive exchange of ideas and increased collaboration.

### **Why Politically Active Youth?**

Competitive debate helps also young people build important knowledge and skills that are particularly good training for activism and political participation. Politically active young people who are able to comprehend the policy process can better insert themselves in public policy deliberations and propose constructive and realistic policy solutions. Competitive debate also builds on young people's current levels of activism by strengthening their political analysis skills and challenging them to refine their advocacy, while providing an intellectually challenging laboratory to test their ideas. Debates provide an entry point for political participation where young people can express their views, demonstrate their competence to adult leaders and engage in practical, policy-related discourse. Moreover, for young activists already engaged in organizing efforts, competitive debate helps create a platform to increase public awareness of their priorities, build relationships with political actors and inform direct action that shapes the development of the country.

# NDI Youth Theory of Change



To make politics more inclusive of young people, NDI's theory envisions programs that address the development of both young people's agency and an environment that is supportive of their participation. This requires a holistic approach and interventions that emphasize the role young people themselves should play in driving change. Rather than being passive recipients of assistance, young women and men can be active in developing their agency and promoting a more supportive environment. The use of public debate in the YLD program serves as a uniquely democratic platform to develop young people's agency and foster a supportive political environment.

**Agency** refers to the willingness and ability of young people to act individually and collectively. Agency entails a blend of knowledge, skills and attitudes that develop and are reinforced through political action. This blend will look different from one context to the next, depending on a variety of factors, including the needs and interests of the young people involved.

**Key approaches for developing the agency of young people include:**

- meet youth where they are, recognizing that diversity determines different starting points and needs based on identity, location, cultural and other contextual circumstances;
- build their assets through experiential forms of learning that increase knowledge, technical skills, “soft skills”, and practical political know-how;
- foster youth-led collective actions to address self-selected issues and causes that motivate their political participation; and
- expand engagement across various political entry points so that youth are actively occupying available space and seen as playing multiple political roles.

This program supports **youth agency** by **meeting the participants where they are**, which can include recruiting a diverse pool of participants from different regions of the country, adjusting the curriculum and workshops based on participants’ education level and political exposure, and developing a flexible schedule for program events and trainings to accommodate as many participants as possible. This program manual includes program guidance to ensure that the implementation of the program is inclusive. This program **builds young people’s assets** using the policy debate model and corresponding workshops as an experiential form of learning, which incorporates young people's diverse personal experiences and increases their technical skills and practical political knowledge. This program also intentionally emphasizes and evaluates “**soft skills**” development, such as high-order thinking and communication.

A **supportive environment** refers to political avenues and opportunities that encourage young people to express themselves, engage power holders and demonstrate their competence. In many instances, however, politics is either closed to young women and men, or their involvement is only tokenistic. The lack of support severely limits participation, even in situations where some amount of agency exists. To change this reality, a political strategy is required, which relies on relationship building. This involves interactions where understanding, trust, respect and appreciation can emerge, along with space for participation in policy decisions, and avenues for young people to collaborate with adult-led structures.

**Approaches to foster a supportive environment for youth participation include:**

- recognize and address structural inequities that disadvantage youth based on gender and other identities;
- create spaces for youth to interact with power holders and build relationships;

- establish the value of youth participation through demonstrations of leadership and constructive engagement; and
- strengthen intergenerational relationships through collaboration;

Public debate can be used as an opportunity to build a supportive environment for youth participation. Debates can provide an **entry point for political participation** where young people can gain confidence expressing their views, engage political experts and decision-makers, demonstrate their competence to adult leaders, and engage in practical, policy-related discourse. Throughout the program, participants have access to new spaces to interact with elected officials and begin building political, **intergenerational relationships**. Participants also have the opportunity to develop strengthened peer networks, and engage with facilitators and debate experts who can **act as mentors** throughout the program. Facilitators and experts can also provide guidance on using debate skills as a tool to participate more meaningfully in politics. The debate program **establishes the value** of young people's contribution by providing participants with a public platform and the opportunity to take a constructive, solutions-oriented approach. The participants can use public debate to knowledgeably detail their positions on policy reform and demonstrate their desire to collaborate with decision-makers on a variety of public issues.

## **Program Components**

The YLD program consists of four main components:

- 1) Outreach and Recruitment
- 2) Policy Dialogues
- 3) Debate Instruction Camps (Bootcamps)
- 4) Debate Tournaments

### **Outreach and Recruitment**

An outreach and recruitment strategy is critical to ensuring sustained engagement throughout the program. The policy dialogues, debate camps and debate tournaments begin in different regions, culminating in a final tournament that brings participants from those regions together. Prior to conducting outreach, program staff should determine the profile of young people they want to target. The criteria for choosing participants should include politically active young people who have limited access to opportunities to build political knowledge and skills. The program should also aim to recruit a diverse, gender-balanced applicant pool. YLD seeks to bridge gaps between young people in different regions of the country and promote increased collaboration amongst the program participants. This program aim should also be considered when determining each location for the initial phases of the program. Once each location has been selected, program staff should utilize existing partnerships with local organizations, universities and political parties to identify program participants. Program staff should conduct an outreach and recruitment trip to each location and provide partners with an overview of the program, including details about the first event. During this phase, it is also important to identify venues for the program events, which can be youth centers, universities, conference centers or other accessible locations.

### **Policy Dialogues**

The policy dialogues provide an opportunity for young people in each location to identify issues that matter to them, including issues that are shared across different populations; gain more information about each topic through engagement with topical experts; and participate in a practical workshop to think through policy proposals for one of the identified issues. Each policy dialogue includes an expert panel, which can be comprised of community leaders, current or past elected officials, policy experts or academics who can provide information about policy reform and discuss social issues that are of local or national importance. Engaging in a facilitated dialogue introduces participants to the skills they will further develop and apply through debates, such as civil discourse, active listening, and public speaking. During the dialogue participants have an opportunity to

meet local issue experts working to impact national policies, gather research from credible sources, and think through complex issues affecting the country. The policy dialogues are also an opportunity to gauge participants' interest in continuing the program and skill level, as well as their familiarity of the policy topics. The debate topics for the subsequent competitions should reflect timely issues within the country and will result from the policy dialogues. Following the dialogues, participants are invited to submit an application to take part in a bootcamp-style debate training. When choosing participants to continue in the program, consider their participation in the policy dialogues as well as the content of their application. A sample program application is located in the appendix.

## Debate Instruction Camps

The debate instruction camps utilize a bootcamp-style debate training, which includes full-day trainings and evening activities. This format allows the facilitator to cover a significant amount of the curriculum in a short period. The length of the instruction camp should be determined in coordination with the participants, however, a minimum of three days of instruction is necessary to cover the entire curriculum. The instruction camp, facilitated by an experienced debate instructor and youth facilitators, introduces young people to the fundamentals of debate such as researching a topic, constructing arguments, writing and delivering debate speeches, forming teams of two and the necessary preparation to compete in debate competitions. There should be one youth facilitator for every six participants and program staff should ensure gender balance and diversity when recruiting instructors and facilitators. This will ensure that every debate team receives personalized instruction and support throughout the bootcamp. During the bootcamp, participants should also take part in activities that create a supportive group dynamic and safe environment. This can be achieved through reflection circles, small group exercises, and teambuilding activities. During the bootcamp, participants will also continue to build their skills for activism and deepen their understanding of participation in debate and civic engagement. This exchange of ideas and experiences, as well as the development of debate skills and interpersonal skills, is key to developing and empowering young people as political actors. The YLD: Instruction & Curriculum Manual provides the content for the debate instruction camp and all corresponding activities.

The period between each debate bootcamp and regional competition allows debate teams, made up of two participants, to continue their preparation for the competition. Each team is also paired with a youth facilitator who will serve as a coach and provide additional resources, answer questions and provide ongoing technical guidance while teams meet periodically to refine their speeches and presentations.

## Competitions

### Regionals

Following the debate instruction camps, a debate tournament will take place in each region. Regional competitions can take place in each location or participations from neighboring regions can come together to compete against one another. For example, if there are four cities chosen as the primary locations for the program, pair two cities and hold two regional competitions. Bringing participants from different regions together at this stage in the program provides participants with additional opportunities to develop their skills and strengthen their peer networks.

Program staff and participants should work together and utilize existing networks to publicize the competitions, including inviting local youth organizations and Universities to the competition. Holding the competition in partnership with a local University is one option for increasing community participation. Local elected officials, topical experts and community leaders should also be invited to the regional debates as moderators or audience members. Following the regional competitions, all teams from each region will compete in the final competition.

### Nationals

The national competition is the final event of the program, during which all teams will compete against each other, culminating in one winning team. This event can take place over two to three days, depending on a variety of factors such as participant availability and program budget. The debate competition requires one full day, and the additional days can be used for pre-nationals activities. Nationals are an opportunity for young people from different regions to meet and pre-nationals activities should help the participants bond and build on their capacity to form collaborative networks. During Nationals, young people participate in workshops to get to know one another, share their experiences in the program, and discuss their work as activists.

The national competition should be recorded for widespread media dissemination including radio broadcast and posted on YouTube and Facebook. National and local elected officials, youth organization representatives, topical experts and other community leaders will be invited to attend the debates. To incentivize their participation and raise the profile of the debates, they will be offered various roles. Journalists will also be invited to cover the competition and interview the debate teams. Teams that are eliminated from the national competition will assume supporting roles, such as timekeeper or become audience members. Following the national competition, debates teams will participate in

media appearances (radio shows, television shows, etc.) to discuss current policy issues and their ideas for policy reform.

## **Social Media**

A social media and communications strategy should be developed at the outset of the program and utilized throughout each program phase. Strategic use of media highlights young people's capacity and skill development, provides multiple avenues for sharing timely information and encourages sustained engagement among participants. This strategy should include program specific branding, which gives the program a unique identity and promotes a sense of ownership amongst participants, who are also able to identify with participants from other regions. This strategy should include regular promotion of program events, an open invitation to the public for the debate tournaments, and the distribution of videos, interviews and pictures on various social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. These posts should also be shared through the participants' social media platforms to promote the events in their communities and through their existing networks. Live stories on platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, also stimulate engagement from an outside audience and provide a way for young people from different cities to know what is happening in each location. Developing content and prioritizing the use of media also provides an opportunity to interact with local media outlets, including radio, television, and newspaper, and encourages them to take an interest in broadcasting or publicizing the program.

## **Program Materials**

### Youth Leading Debate: Instruction Manual

This manual serves as a technical reference for the program facilitator and the participants. It contains detailed information about policy debate and a curriculum for the debate instruction camp, including activities and links to corresponding handouts.

## **Program Timeline**

YDL was designed to take place over the course of one year and should complement existing youth programs and initiatives. In order to sufficiently build young people's agency and a supportive environment for their political participation, this program should not serve as a standalone initiative. The program timeline should provide enough flexibility to meet participant's diverse needs as well as sustain their motivation to complete the program. The program timeline and curriculum are also adaptable and should fully consider the current political climate and the expressed needs of young people. This

program should be positioned strategically to expand youth engagement across political entry points and ensure that young people are actively occupying available political space.

**Timeline Considerations:**

Political Climate

Election Cycle

Existing Youth Programs & Networks

Potential Partners (Example: youth organizations; political parties; community centers)

University Calendar

**Sample Program Timeline**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Location</b>
Month 1 – 2	Program Preparation - Outreach & Recruitment - Promotional Materials	1 - 2 months	3 - 5 cities
Month 3 – 4	Policy Dialogues	1 - 2 days	3 - 5 cities
Month 4	Invite Applications	3 - 4 wks	3 - 5 cities
Month 5 – 6	Debate Instruction Camps	3 - 5 days	3 - 5 cities
Month 6	Competition Preparation Sessions	3 - 5 days	3 - 5 cities
Month 7	Regional Debate Competitions	1 day	2 - 3 cities
Month 8	Competition Preparation Sessions	3 - 5 days	3 - 5 cities
Month 9	National Debate Competition	1 day	1 city

**Program Considerations**

**Inclusion**

Public debate can be an effective platform for challenging societal norms regarding young people’s ability to participate politically. Environments that are structured to explore, encourage and display political discourse create a vital opportunity for young people to develop their confidence, advocacy skills and political knowledge while developing norms of greater inclusion and respect among their peers and political elites. As young people participate in the debate program and prepare to compete in debate competitions, they are also able to develop confidence, peer support and improve their ability to collaborate. The

guidance outlined below underscores the need to meet all participants where they are and create a safe environment that supports equitable learning and contribution.

1. When choosing participants for the program, it is important to select young people who demonstrate active political engagement and a commitment to completing the program, while continuing to ensure the cohort is gender-balanced and diverse.
  - a. It is important to consider that young women may have time constraints that are different than their male peers and that some young people may have less experience participating politically due to increased barriers.
2. Recognizing the structural inequities that exist amongst youth, the debate instructor(s) should provide additional training for participants as necessary. This can include, but is not limited to one-on-one speech coaching, writing, or research support. The instructor should also provide participants with opportunities to voice their needs and ensure that the curriculum content and program structure does not perpetuate existing inequalities.
  - a. Some participants may have less experience communicating with political leaders, elected officials or other authority figures. It is important to gauge whether participants need additional support to prepare for the competition and supporting events.
3. Traditional gender norms may manifest into different parts of the program, which can influence which roles debate participants choose. Ensure that all debate roles, whether speaking or non-speaking, are available to all participants and that each participant has the opportunity to hone their skills. The debate instructor should monitor workload distribution during the debate instruction camp and ensure that the division of responsibilities provides equitable practice for all participants.
4. The debate instructor should consider participant preference, ability and personality when partnering participants for debate teams. Teams with two women may work better for some participants, while mixed gender teams might work better for other participants. Consider all options when partnering debaters.
5. When choosing debate camp instructors, ensure gender balance. Instructors serve in a vital, dual role as mentor and coach during the program.
6. When choosing political leaders, civil society leaders, prominent activists, or topical experts as judges, moderators, or panelists, ensure that the cohort is gender-balanced and diverse. A judge-training guide is located in the annex that

prepares individuals to judge the competition fairly and reminds judges to deliver feedback based solely on the content of the debater's performance.

- a. Female debaters can face harassment or receive a lower score than male counterparts based on factors unrelated to the content of their proposal, such as physical appearance, tone of voice, disposition or perceived authority regarding the topic.
7. While the subject of debate can focus on controversial or polarizing topics, debate should never become a personal attack. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to set the tone for appropriateness and challenge any behavior that discriminates against a participant based on their identity or appearance.
- a. Debate can be used as a medium for participants to better understand one another and build strong support networks. Although the local and national debates should focus specifically on policy reform, activities during the instruction camp can focus on a variety of topics that increase understanding and empathy.

## **Intergenerational Collaboration**

In addition to developing relationships and networks amongst their peers, participants will have the opportunity to interact with political and civil society leaders, prominent activists, and topical experts. These interactions provide participants with an opportunity to engage with power holders or decision makers and contribute to raising their political profile and the profile of the debate events. Over time, intergenerational collaboration can provide opportunities for youth to contribute to policy discussions and share decision-making power. This collaboration strengthens relationships by establishing mutual understanding, trust, and respect, and contributes to developing norms of greater openness and inclusion of young people. This is especially true for young women and young people from specific groups who otherwise may have less access to political elites and formal political institutions.

Participants will also have an opportunity to establish relationships with program instructors who support the facilitation of the curriculum and serve as informal mentors. Instructors should be chosen based on their technical expertise and experience in debate and civic engagement. Mentors can provide inspiration and encouragement for young people to continue their development and can be particularly impactful if they are young themselves or otherwise reflect the identities of the youth in the program.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation plan for the YLD program incorporates NDI's youth theory of change and positive youth development principles. The table below lists program outcomes alongside illustrative indicators that can be used to measure program progress. The illustrative indicators should be adapted as needed to reflect the program focus, the program participants and the context.

### Data Collection

In addition to traditional methods of data collection, such as written surveys, it is important to incorporate other forms of data collection as well, such as round table discussions, video interviews, blogs, writing prompts, or games. While it is necessary to measure participant progress and demonstrate whether the program is having the intended impact, it is also important to keep participants engaged and ensure, whenever possible, that data collection has a mutual benefit for the participants. It is also important to remember that there are limitations to self-reporting such as reporter bias. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data ensures that the evaluation is more accurate and comprehensive. Collect data from other program stakeholders, such as the program facilitators or judges. While young people are the focus of the program, they should not be the only source of information.

<b>Program Objective: Increase the political skills and profile of young people working to influence political reforms through a dialogue and policy debate program.</b>	
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Illustrative Indicator</b>
Young people are better informed about national public-sector reform efforts.	Number of young people attending the policy dialogues.
	Number of young people demonstrating greater knowledge of public-sector reform efforts.
Young people have improved debate skills and political leadership skills.	Number of young people participating in the debate instruction camp.
	Number of young people who report increased higher-order thinking, speech and listening skills.
	Number of young people who report increased self-confidence, greater willingness to discuss new ideas, and increased empathy.
Young people develop a peer network of support.	Number of young people participating in the debate instruction camp and number of follow-up training sessions with their teammate.
	Number of young people participating in the regional and national debate tournaments.

	Number of young people that report increased support amongst peers.
Young people have a greater political profile and increased platform locally and nationally.	Number of young people participating in the policy dialogues, debate bootcamps and competitions, and the number of political and community leaders that attend or participate in those activities.
<i>Platform definition:</i> Physical space where young leaders, activists, politicians, judges and others, interested in political reform issues, participate, interact, dialogue and debate.	Number of young people that report increased opportunities to discuss policy reform with politicians and community leaders.
	Number of opportunities for young people and political and community leaders to interact meaningfully during the program activities.
	The amount of coverage for the debate competitions, including viewership and interactions on various media streams.
Young people are better able to insert themselves in policy reform efforts at the local and national level.	Number of young people who report having the necessary skills to contribute to policy reform efforts at the local and national level.
	Number of young people that take part in policy reform efforts following the program.

# Organizing a Youth Debate Tournament

## Introduction

This section of the manual provides practical guidance for organizing a debate tournament, which is an event that brings debate teams together in one location to compete against each other. Tournaments are often intense debating events with teams competing in several rounds throughout the day. Debate tournaments are also exciting events where participants are able to exchange ideas with their peers and enhance their debate skills. Providing structure and ensuring fairness helps everyone have a great experience.

## Tournament Checklist

	Create Tournament Budget
	Select Event Date
	Select Event Venue
	Arrange for Lodging
	Arrange for Food
	Create Tournament Itinerary
	Determine Participation Criteria
	Extend Invitations to Competing Teams
	Arrange for Tournament Staff
	Acquire Tabulation Software
	Recruit Judges
	Recruit Volunteers
	Order a Trophy or Certificates
	Contact Media
	Arrange for Videotaping and Recording
	Invite Audience Members

## Tournament Invitation

Participants that are competing in the tournament should receive an information packet that includes the information detailed below. Use the blank lines to list any additional information.

	Tournament Schedule
	Tournament Expectations
	Lodging Information
	Necessary Materials (Writing Materials, Paper, etc.)

Formal invitations should also be extended to:

- Judges
- Moderator
- Volunteers
- Media
- General Public

## Budget

The cost of organizing a debate tournament varies widely depending on the location. It is important to identify partners in the early phases of planning who may be able to offer services, such as videography, in-kind or pro bono or free of charge. Community support and the utilization of existing networks are crucial to the success of the tournament.

Common debate costs include:

- Venue Rental (e.g. university, hotel)
- Food and catering (e.g. day of debate)
- Transportation (e.g. air travel, vehicle rental, taxis)
- Printing and graphics (e.g. programs, posters)
- Television and radio airtime
- Television production (e.g. labor, equipment, set)
- Publicity (e.g. website, streaming video, TV and radio spots)
- Awards

## Venue

The location for the debate tournament has two physical space requirements, a large central gathering space and smaller rooms for competitions.

## **Central Gathering Space**

This is where debaters and other attendees will eat and congregate between rounds. This is also where team pairings will be posted. This space should be large enough to accommodate all attendees. This space can be a ballroom, cafeteria, courtyard or auditorium.

## **Debate Spaces**

Debaters work in teams of two, so each round will involve at least five people (2 teams of 2 and at least 1 judge). The facility needs to have smaller spaces such as classrooms or conference rooms for preliminary debates. This makes universities an ideal location to host competitions. The two other suggested requirements for the tournament space are internet access and a printer.

## **Time and Schedule**

A debate tournaments' timing depends on the number of rounds in the competition. Add up the speech times, then add 20 minutes per round. This gives debaters time to receive feedback from the judges and return to the central gathering area. It also provides preparation time for both teams before the next round starts. A five round tournament will take most of the day including a break for lunch. Having more rounds ensures that participants will have more time to practice, receive more feedback, compete against several teams and face a diverse audience. Inexperienced teams and judges will need more time. Time should be added for breakfast, judge training, lunch and awards. A sample schedule is included in the Tournament Schedule Chapter.

## **Awards**

On the ballot judges, and, if applicable, audience members determine which team won the round. Judges also rank the debaters individually. Awards will be given to the team that wins the tournament and individual speakers who have the highest rank. After the final round of competition, awards are presented at an awards ceremony. This ceremony could culminate in a reception with competitors, judges and other invitees that provides competitors with an opportunity to meet the tournament attendees.

## **Judge Training**

Ideal judges will have topical knowledge and possibly debate experience, although this is not required. Anyone can serve as a judge; however, teachers, professors, lawyers and other intellectuals are often the best judges. They are more likely to appreciate the intellectual exchange and provide strong feedback. All judges should receive a brief orientation before being given their judge assignments and a copy of the Judge Training Guide. The orientation should include:

**Expectations:** Walk the judges through the expectations of each round. Provide each judge with a Judge Training Guide to reference during the round.

**Role of the Judge:** Judges should listen and take notes. They should not intervene or speak during the round. Once the round concludes, the judge decides who won, fills out the ballot and provides feedback to the debaters.

**The Ballot:** Show the judges what a ballot looks like and how to fill it out correctly. Speaker points are awarded to each individual debater for their performance. Speaker points are used to give out individual awards.

**Decision-making:** Instruct the judges to vote Affirmative if their proposed action is demonstrated to be the better idea at the end of the round or vote Negative if the Affirmative’s proposed idea is proven to be ineffective at the end of the round. Remind judges to remove their personal beliefs and bias from the equation and judge teams on the merits of their performance and their arguments. The judge's decision may be supplemented by an audience vote, however this should not affect the judge’s decision-making process.

**Note Taking:** Encourage judges to take notes. If judges do not take accurate notes, they may judge the match incorrectly.

**Logistics:** Give judges a copy of the itinerary. Judges will attend multiple rounds concurrently. Ensure that judges are familiar with the facility and provide breaks as necessary.

### Tournament Schedule

Debate teams should switch sides every round, debating at least twice on the Affirmative and twice on the Negative. The first few rounds should be random pairings. If utilizing “power pairing”, it should take place in the last few rounds. Power pairing matches teams with similar records against each other. In the high-low power pairing, the undefeated teams debate each other, and the teams that have not won yet debate each other. This ensures appropriate challenges for all teams involved.

<b>Regional Debate Competition</b> 10 Competing Teams		
8:30am	Breakfast + Judge Training	
9am	Round 1	Random Pairing
10:20am	Round 2	Random Pairing
11:40am	Lunch	
12:40pm	Round 3	Random Pairing

2pm	Round 4	High: Low
3pm	Round 5	High: Low
5pm	Awards	

<b>National Debate Competition</b> 6 Competing Teams		
Option One: Round Robin In this option, pairing is done using scores from the regional competitions.		
9 am	Round 1	Team A vs Team B
10:20	Round 2	Team A vs Team C
11:40	Lunch	
12:40	Round 3	Team A vs Team D
2 pm	Round 4	Team A vs Team E
3:20	Round 5	Team A vs Team F
4:40	Break	
5:30	Final Round	Best Teams Compete
7 pm	Awards & Reception	
Option Two: Regional Round Robin In this option, teams compete with teams from a different region.		
9 am	Round 1	Team A vs Team C
10:20	Round 2	Team A vs Team D
11:40	Lunch	
12:40	Round 3	Team A vs Team E

2 pm	Round 4	Team A vs Team F
3:20	Break	
4 pm	Final Round	Best Records
5:30	Awards & Reception	

## Tabulation

Tabulation can be done by hand or using tabulation software. Tabulation software will tabulate scores for each round and pair teams based on their scoring record. Recommended software includes Speechwire or Tab Room (both available online). Once the basics of the software are clear, the checklist below will help the organizers avoid forgetting anything important.

### Checklist:

- Make sure that teams are entered accurately.
- Make sure that teams are entered separately, so they are not blocked from facing each other.
- Make sure that all judges are entered into the tournament.
- Make sure the tournament has the correct number of rounds prepared in the software.
- Double-check these after registration to ensure accuracy.
- Ensure that room numbers are uploaded.
- Check the settings regarding how the rounds are paired—random versus High-Low, High-High, etc.
- Input tie-breakers
- Pair the round—make sure there is a judge, room number, and two competitors in each room.
- Print the pairing, and post it publicly.
- Print ballots and distribute.
- Do not “power pair” rounds before doing all of the data entry for win/lose results and speaker points.
- The software should prevent teams from debating an opponent twice, ensure balance of affirmative and negative and power pair automatically.

## Media

Competitive youth debates are newsworthy events and this must be considered in the planning process. Facilitating media coverage can be a time consuming effort. Organizers should develop a strategy for media outreach and arrange coverage for the national debate competition, concentrating resources on the final debate. It is important to consider the

needs of different types of media. Televising an event requires a different layout than photography. If the debate is televised, it is also important to consider making arrangements for a sign language interpreter. If the decision is made to hire a media company, organizers should consider partnering with a media company that is comprised of young people.

Media coverage also provides an opportunity to incorporate youth who did not advance to the national competition. Young people can assume roles such as journalist or photographer; they can also participate live on different social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook). If young people assume media roles, positions should be created for them under the Staffing Needs section.

## **Staffing Needs**

The staffing needs of a debate tournament vary depending on the size of the competition and the experience of those directing the tournament.

### **Tournament Coordinator**

The Tournament Coordinator should be someone who is very familiar with debate and debate tournaments so they are able to oversee all aspects of the program. Their job is to circulate, make sure that everything is going smoothly and answer questions. They also have the responsibility to watch the clock—debate tournaments tend to run long.

### **Greeter**

The Tournament Director should welcome people to the event and make opening and closing remarks. These should be both cordial and informative (this is where the bathrooms are, this is where we will post the pairings for each round, etc.). The director is also responsible for distributing awards and running the awards ceremony. Between rounds, the director should be available in the main gathering space.

**VIPs:** The Tournament Director is also the default liaison to any external persons of note, ranging from media to VIP judges and other partners. They should greet them and direct them based on their roles.

### **Rule Interpretation**

During the competition there will be questions about rules and procedures. The Tournament Director is the final arbiter of these questions and should be available throughout the day to resolve these issues. This is especially important when there are many inexperienced participants and judges.

### **Logistical Support**

The most time-consuming task during a tournament is tabulating rounds. There should be someone assigned specifically to this task. The Tournament Director should collect ballots, support judges in decision-making and return the ballots to the person that is tabulating. This process keeps the tournament on schedule and reduces time in-between rounds.

Someone should also be responsible for coordinating the food. This could range from serving the food on site to managing catering, cooking, or delivery and managing food allergies or dietary preferences. Most tournaments serve breakfast and lunch on site. Allowing participants to leave the tournament site for lunch could result in a delayed start.

### **Tabulation Coordinator**

The Tabulation Coordinator should be organized and trained if they are using the tabulation software. They do not need to be a former debater as long as they are familiar with the basics of the tournament structure and schedule.

The Tabulation Director (and any assistants for large competitions) should stay in a central location where ballots are brought and where the pairings are decided for each round. It is best to restrict access to this area as it might be distracting. The Tabulation Director is busiest during registration and at the beginning and end of each round.

### **Registration**

Someone should sign participants in when they arrive and provide them with the tournament packet and logistical information. This person is often the volunteer or intern coordinator as well.

### **Judge Trainer**

This duty can be done by the Tournament Director. Familiarity with judging debates is necessary and a plan for instructing the judges is also required. Judge training usually takes place during breakfast before the tournament. Use the guidance under the chapter Judge Training to assist with this task.

### **Judge**

Every tournament establishes its own criteria for judges, but they generally have topical knowledge and are more experienced in debate. All judges should attend a brief judge orientation. One judge is needed for two competing teams, and it is necessary to recruit extra judges.

### **Moderator**

A moderator at a debate competition is optional, however moderators are useful during competitions with a live audience and competitions that are recorded for the wider distribution. The moderator acts as a neutral party who maintains the focus of the debate. The moderator also introduces the debaters and keeps track of any time limitations during the competition. Important skills include time management, organization, and the ability to communicate effectively. It is also helpful if the moderator has some knowledge on the debate topic.

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

In addition to having staff assisting with the debate, recruiting volunteers for the day of the competition provides an opportunity to involve students or young people in the community.

Having a coordinator to recruit and manage volunteers helps ensure this support is used effectively and the debate experience is positive for the volunteers.

# Appendix

## Appendix A: YLD Program Application

### Youth Leading Debate Program Application

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#### **About NDI**

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI or Institute) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic processes and institutions worldwide through citizen participation in decision-making processes, their organization in formal and informal groups and promoting principles of inclusive, democratic and accountable governments on all levels.

#### **About the Policy Debate Bootcamp**

NDI has initiated a comprehensive debate bootcamp for young people, age 18-24, on the rules of policy debate and developing proposals for policy reform. Participants will gain skills in public speaking, communication, critical thinking, and self-confidence and an opportunity to engage in constructive discussions about pressing political and social issues. This training would support youth in researching the topic, writing and delivering debate speeches, forming teams and preparing to compete in a regional and national debate competition. The topic for the competition will reflect a timely issue of national importance, thus providing an avenue for participants to think through complex issues. Trainers will also instruct youth participants on soliciting feedback from their community regarding the debate topic, to underscore the value of consultation and research. Participants will learn about the principles underlying organized political debates and the benefit of deliberative dialogue towards establishing a democratic culture. This includes enhancing the level of public awareness of political positions and policy issues, reinforcing civil discourse and tolerance for divergent opinions, and centering political decisions on issues rather than personality, religion or ethnic loyalties.

#### **Who is the program for?**

Young men and women, age 18-24, who demonstrate active political or community engagement and a strong commitment to completing the program. Diverse populations are encouraged to apply, including rural and indigenous communities, youth with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex youth.

#### **Program Details & Expectations**

##### **Bootcamp Learning Outcomes**

- Participants will expand their critical thinking skills.
- Participants will develop argumentation skills.
- Participants will improve their research skills and practice critically analyzing sources of information.

- Participants will develop oratory and active listening skills as a participant and critic.
- Participants will develop interpersonal skills through collaboration with and constructive evaluation of their peers.
- Participants will learn to develop policy recommendations and develop advocacy skills.

### Program Schedule

Program participants must be available to participate for the duration of the program. Please see the program schedule below.

Event	Dates	Location
<b>Debate Bootcamps</b>		
<b>Competition Preparation</b>		
<b>Regional Competitions</b>		
<b>National Competition</b>		

### Application

- 
1. Name
  2. Demographics (program staff should amend this section as necessary)
    1. Age:
    2. Gender:
    3. Occupation:
    4. Organization:
    5. Primary Language:
  3. What is your interest in participating in the debate program?
  4. Have you ever participated in competitive debate?
    1. If so, please provide details about that experience.
  5. How are you currently contributing as a political or social justice activist? This can include mobilizing, advocacy, political party work, etc.
    1. What is your contribution to the organization?
  6. What are your goals for the next five to ten years?

**Essay Question**

Please identify a policy issue of personal importance facing the country or facing your community.

## Appendix B: YLD Judge Training Guide

The graphic below outlines the speech order, speech times and questioning periods for the debates. Each team receives 5 minutes of preparation time to use during the debate.

Opening Speeches			
1	1st Speaker	Affirmative Constructive	6 Minutes
2	1st Speaker	Negative Constructive Cross Examination	6 Minutes 3 Minutes
Rebuttal or Clashing Speeches			
3	2nd Speaker	Affirmative Constructive	6 Minutes
4	2nd Speaker	Negative Constructive Cross Examination	6 Minutes 3 minutes
5	1st Speaker	Negative Rebuttal	4 minutes
6	1st Speaker	Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Closing Speeches			
7	2nd Speaker	Negative Rebuttal	4 minutes
8	2nd Speaker	Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes

### Deciding the Debate

This is the key question:

**What is more persuasive – the Affirmative’s arguments to support the plan, or the Negative’s arguments to oppose the plan?**

**Keep the following points in mind:**

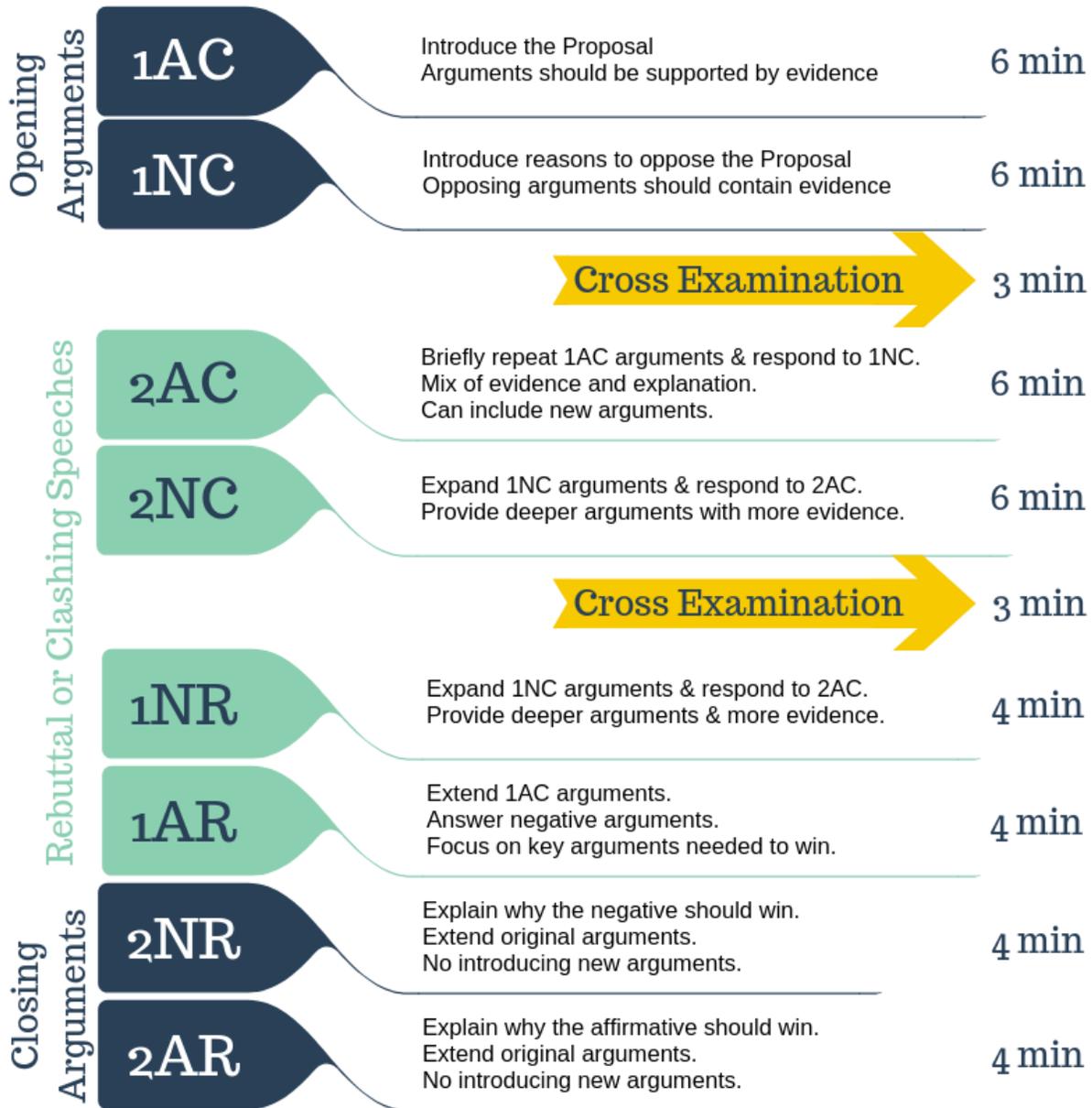
- **Do:** Listen carefully. Debaters cannot win unless they convince the judge.
- **Do:** Take Notes! What will help the judge most when reaching a decision is having great notes from the round.
- **Do:** Weigh the pros and cons of the plan.
- **Don’t:** Inject personal opinions or perspective. Only consider the arguments as the debaters made them.
- **Do:** Give extra weight to arguments that debaters support with evidence and careful explanation.
- **Do:** Judge consistently.

**After the debate:**

- After the judge(s) deliberate, they will pick a winner. Judges should write down their reason for the decision and leave written comments on the ballot for the participants.
- Explain to the debaters how the judges came to their decision, what was done well and what could be improved.

## Appendix C: YLD Match Guide

# YLD: Match Guide



Each team can use a total of 5 minutes at any time during the debate to prepare their speeches. Using this time pauses the debate and the timer.

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The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments, safeguarding elections, and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies. For more information about NDI, please visit [ndi.org](http://ndi.org).

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