

Secretariat Report 2018

Introduction:

This report is prepared by the Secretariat Members in order to update YEE Member Organizations, Observer Organizations, YEE Funders and Strategic Partners on the well-being of YEE Secretariat, work accomplished in 2018 and is planned for 2019.

The need for the Office Report emerged after serious discussions on the wellbeing and sustainability of YEE Office and we hope that this practice in future will enable YEE Office to grow and improve its conditions.

This report reflects our experiences during employment and working process and includes recommendations for future Office employees of YEE.

Employment Conditions:

Between 2017-2018 with the loss of an admin fund (explained below) the salaries of YEE employees were cut and YEE Office which had then 3.5 employees had to terminate contract of one employee and cut the salaries of the remaining 2 employees.

YEE employees do not receive benefits such as lunch money/ tickets, public transportation or communication contribution.

Work Hours:

According to Czech labour laws where YEE Office is registered, YEE Office should work 40 hours per week and have 25 days of holidays.

Regardless, due to the huge amount of workload, trainings and meetings that overlap with weekends and after work hour meetings, YEE Project Manager who started working in July 2018 worked 82 hours (10 working days) extra and the Secretary General who started working for YEE in March 2018 worked 120 hours extra (15 working days) in 2018.

Project Manager was not able to use any of the official 25 days of holidays and the Secretary General used only 17 days in 2018.

Technology:

YEE Office has been using laptops and computers that are in a bad condition and are slowing their work, causing nerve problems due to technical issues and physical problems from carrying five kilo laptops around at events.

Background:

Overview:

Most certainly almost all of these problems don't root from lack of managerial capacities but from lack of funding. YEE has only one administrative found, that is not a sustainable model for funding an international organisation. One of the main administrative funders of YEE is the European Youth Foundation (EYF). EYF awarded Structural Grant to YEE. In 2017 the organisation failed to get the Structural Grant of European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, as the organisation didn't fulfil the eligibility criteria but applied regardless, of course the response of the foundation was negative. Therefore we lost around 42000 EUR of administrative budget (given for 2 years) which used to be spent on salaries, rent etc. Other administrative fund we get is European Commission's admin grant.

This pushes the Board and the Secretariat to do more projects to gain administrative grants but never gaining enough to increase the well-being of the staff and end up being overworked. However budgeting is also political and it has a lot to do with priorities. Prioritizing the office and allocating more funds to ensure well-being of the Office will in return yield a more sustainable, creative, motivated office. If the Office suffers from overwork and financial problems, it hinders their work within the organization. They are less likely to focus, to follow-up events, bring in more ideas and more people and more likely to make more mistakes, be less motivated and eventually burn out.

The YEE Office organized 1 Annual Meeting, 3 Board Meetings, 3 International Activity, 3 live prep-team meetings, 1 campaign and coordinated 10 Local Actions only in 2018. We also wrote and published a publication, created a new visual identity and a brand new website, as well as worked with the Board and Member Organisations.

There have been days that the YEE Office members worked nonstop for more than 2 weeks. After the very short summer holidays due to transfer of tasks, the YEE Office was not rested enough, in fact burned out.

The state that the Office was in, started a discussion in the Office and with the Board and we took some decisions (of most are not implemented due to financial difficulties and change of Secretary General - transfer period).

Actions/decisions taken:

1. YEE Board decided to create a benefit pack covering lunch, communication and transport support of the employees. (DECISION MADE- no action due to financial restrictions)
2. YEE employees are entitled to take a home office once per week, communicated in advance with the Secretary General. (IN ACTION)
3. Secretary General to budget and buy new office equipment and furniture was approved by the YEE Board. (NOT IN ACTION - due to change of SG, will be bought in the new office)
4. Part-time financial office coordinator hiring process. Remark: the process has been going on for the last 2 months and no candidate profile fitting to the job requirement has been found. The SGs are actively searching the candidates, the problem is that the unemployment is minus in Prague, so there are not so many candidates interested in this for now, we had to pay 120 Euros for an advertisement, now there are some applications. (IN ACTION)

Next Steps and Recommendations:

- To discuss with the next board about the options of hiring temporary project officers in the future if we have financial ability.
- To increase salaries according to our financial boundaries and the cost of living in Prague.
- To have a clear understanding of the division of labor and of decision making process between the board and the secretariat.
- To have board meetings separated from training courses.