



Youth Commission (UNIMAYC)

President: Anastasiia Mashtakova (Russia)

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Vision

The UNIMA Youth Commission (UNIMA YC) was created in 2016 at the 22nd Congress of UNIMA Tolosa, Spain.

UNIMA YC was established for the development of young, new, and yet-to-be UNIMA members. At the time of YC's formation, there was a lack of information about the burgeoning, young active members in UNIMA and no statistics or research about a new generation of puppeteers around the world. Today we see more young, new, and active members in the union, the EC, and the world's National Centres. The commission continues its work not only to explore a new generation of puppeteers, but also to support new members and help them to convey their views and positions in the UNIMA community.

Goals

UNIMA YC's vision is to keep puppetry relevant to humanity's present and future generations. Their goals are:

- To create and develop a community of the younger generation of puppeteers from around the world
- Develop a sense of belonging in UNIMA for its younger and newer members
- Introduce members with potential in UNIMA's future leadership
- Support development of young and new puppeteers globally.

Our objectives for the term are:

- Build communicative and artistic bridges between generations
- Develop policies in the Executive Committee for the young, youth-focused and new UNIMA members
- Develop a repository of data for funds and support for young puppeteers

All young members of UNIMA who are interested in the association's growth and development are welcome to join the YC's events, to make proposals, and to join their project teams. They may contact us by YC's email, youth@unima.org. By doing so, we help new and aspiring UNIMA members find acceptance and integration into their National Centres and UNIMA International. At the same time, we accumulate the views and ideas from the younger generation of professionals and those who work with young people to represent their voices during official occasions. We also learn from younger members their ways of working and artistic expression for the next generations.



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Highlights

During the congress, many new young members had an opportunity to take part in the events of UNIMA and actively used this chance to share their views and ideas within the sessions. We saw that many centres and commissions have attracted young puppeteers to their work during the past years.

At the same time the previous commission presented some exciting results in a report, including the “Youth In Progress” residency program and some participants of this project attended the congress as well that year. Some participants of YC’s previous term didn’t have the opportunity to continue while other new members joined the YC (which we see as a good sign as well), and we, the members of the new YC, were happy to meet each other at the congress. We believe it was a good platform for exchanging, speaking, supporting, building connections, and uniting more and more young puppeteers.

Many YC open sessions have been held since the recent online Congress, and their outcomes were highly positive.

Activities and principles

Open Meetings.

All of YC’s meetings have been open for UNIMA members with the same aims and goals, or who were interested in a particular topic of the meetings.

However, to provide a platform for broader discussion, and to bring more young professionals and puppet fans - including those not yet involved with UNIMA - together, we intend to hold 2 to 3 open online meetings a year.

In early 2022, we tried a format where every participant could propose psychological, creative, team-building, or another kind of exercise that could be done together with the group during an online zoom conference. The exercise was very successful, and we were about to use this format for the next open session intended for April, but it has been postponed because of the current political climate.

Voice of a new generation.

One of the important principles of the commission is to support the voice of a younger generation of UNIMA members. In return, they collect the voices of many others, proving that age is not a factor. On 28th February 2022, YC member Shoshana Bass initiated a letter to the Executives of UNIMA as a reminder to uplift “why an international puppetry community is vital”.

Approximately 420 fellow UNIMA members co-signed this letter advocating for peace with puppetry, including the entire centres of UNIMA Korea and ABTB UNIMA-Brasil, the Board of UNIMA Germany, and several Executive members.

Proposals for YC-in Conference Events

We intend to collect, investigate, and share ideas for special convocations, creative meetings and projects during the official meetings of UNIMA. These should utilise the latest formats of networking, exchange and training.

For the congress in Korea 2025, an idea to hold a residency program for an international creative exchange for young puppeteers was presented and briefly discussed during Congress 2021. We are looking forward to continuing the conversation, either working with our initial ideas or taking on ideas for alternatives.



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As for the council meeting in Bali 2023, we hope to prepare and host a networking session for the members of UNIMA, similar to “Fishing Fresh”. If there are other needs in UNIMA, we are open to developing working groups sessions as well. We look forward to receiving information about the organisational resources of the hosts for 2023, as soon as possible.

Looking ahead: opportunities & resources and community

We would like to create a platform for the YC (in general) to have an opportunity for permanent exchange, communication and sharing the information about useful resources, international projects, and opportunities for young professionals and puppetry students. At our most recent open sessions, we spoke about different online resources, apart from Zoom, to begin our search for the most available, applicable, and engaging platforms for our goals, conditions, and needs.

In 2022 YC initiated a meeting of Presidents and Secretaries of the National centers of UNIMA. The first meeting happened by the hands of Terence Tan, Anastasiya Mashtakova and Dimitri Jageneau in October 2022.

Young and New UNIMA Member Induction

The YC aims to help young members and new National Centres understand UNIMA-International, such as its international projects, cooperation, statutes, aims, and schedules. This includes support for various UNIMA councillors in their tasks of working with National Centres and other independent puppeteers. By 2025, the YC aims to provide a platform for young and new UNIMA members to understand “How to UNIMA”. This is so members of the General Assembly in Chuncheon may better participate in the democratic process of UNIMA. We are certain the best way to fulfil this mission is to create opportunities for new members to explore UNIMA and “How to UNIMA” in every project the YC provides.