



YPFP @ 10

Strategy through 2014

Letter from the President

Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YFPF) has grown from a small, Washington DC-based start-up in late 2004 to a global community of nearly 10,000 people in 2012. YFPF has created thriving communities in New York, Brussels, and London, counts members in more than 70 countries, and has bold and ambitious plans – as this strategy outlines – to expand its global presence further to become a movement of future leaders across the world. Our growth is the result of the dedication of hundreds of volunteer staff who have given tens of thousands of hours to YFPF in the past seven years. YFPF's volunteers are the bedrock of who we are and what we do, and their passion and commitment to our mission is what will carry us forward.

Our generation is coming of age in a world more complex than ever before. We face global challenges that evolve rapidly, move quickly, and interact in novel ways, continually surprising leaders. From traditional geopolitics to the rise of non-state actors, from the accelerating velocity of information flows to the technological empowerment of individuals and small groups, and from the erosion of borders to the spread of transnational threats, our generation lives in a more crowded, more uncertain, and more complicated international environment.

This world needs new ideas, new partnerships, and new approaches to solving problems. Most important, it requires a new type of leader – the foreign policy leader of the future.

YFPF's mission, *to foster the next generation of foreign policy leaders by providing young professionals the knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships to tackle critical global challenges over the course of their careers*, is ultimately about building the foreign policy leader of the future – the leader who will succeed in a complex, connected century. We believe our generation has a responsibility to become effective global leaders and we believe that we must start preparing now, early in our careers, so we are ready for the future. As YFPF drives toward its tenth anniversary at the end of 2014, we will focus all of our time, energy, and resources on building our members into leaders who will successfully tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow.

YFPF is thriving. We are poised to grow our membership, enhance our influence across the foreign policy community, and have deeper impact on the people in and around our community. Our staff is dedicated and motivated. Outside organizations – from think-tanks to corporations to other non-profits to government agencies – see us as the partner of choice when seeking to reach the next generation of foreign policy leaders or draw on the ideas and energy of young people.

YFPF asks its members every day: “will you be ready?” This is the strategy to ensure YFPF is ready. I am proud and humbled to lead the most remarkable foreign policy organization I know and excited and determined to affect how our generation will lead.

Gary Barnabo
President

Executive Summary

YPFP@10 is the strategy that establishes measurable strategic goals and supporting objectives that YPFP will accomplish between October 2012 and December 2014, when our organization reaches its 10th anniversary. YPFP@10, which builds on and updates YPFP's *Long Range Strategic Plan* (2010), focuses exclusively on two strategic goals: building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future and expanding YPFP's global influence in pursuit of its mission. These goals are the departure point for any action, activity, or initiative YPFP undertakes.

Mission – The Foundation of YPFP's Strategy:

YPFP's mission is the foundation of our organization. The mission is to ***foster the next generation of foreign policy leaders by providing young professionals the knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships to tackle critical global challenges over the course of their careers.***

The mission has five elements:

- ***What:*** foster the next generation of foreign policy leaders
- ***Who:*** young professionals
- ***How:*** knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships
- ***Why:*** tackle critical global challenges
- ***When:*** over the course of their careers

YPFP's Strategic Goals:

YPFP's strategic goals focus our efforts to achieve the mission. The strategic goals are to:

1. Build YPFP's members into the Foreign Policy Leaders of the Future. YPFP will orient everything it does to building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future, which is the individualization of our organization's mission. YPFP will define the traits, characteristics, and experiences of the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future, develop a curriculum that lays out a roadmap for how YPFP members can become this type of leader, and create a pipeline of members who will participate in the curriculum and become proof of impact of YPFP on our generation.

2. Expand YPFP's global influence. YPFP will create opportunities for young professionals to become the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future by expanding our global presence to build communities in new cities around the world. Our organization will become the premier organization recognized for building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future by designing a vision of that leader and a curriculum for building him or her. YPFP will build strategic partnerships and produce thought leadership that help us refine, promote, and implement our work to build the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future.

A series of priority objectives accompany each strategic goal. These objectives provide detailed, measurable direction for achieving the strategic goals.

Additionally, YPFP@10 prioritizes three internal enablers that are core operational requirements for achieving the strategic goals: financial sustainability, workforce professionalization, and infrastructure development.

Strategic Goal 1: Build YFPF members into the foreign policy leaders of the future

YFPF will orient everything it does to building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future. The concept of “building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future” is the application of YFPF’s mission to the individual and a direct extension of the mission. That is, as we seek to foster the next generation of foreign policy leaders, we aim to build our members into the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future. YFPF will define the traits, characteristics, and experiences of the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future and develop a cutting-edge “curriculum” that provides a roadmap for YFPF’s members to become future leaders. The curriculum will be constructed around the four pillars of YFPF’s mission: knowledge, skills exposure, and relationships. It will be evolutionary, changing as we refine and expand our vision of who the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future is.

Building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future depends on YFPF members participating actively in our community. Developing the knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships needed to tackle critical global challenges over the course of a career requires that each member see the value of YFPF in preparing leaders for the future and make a decision and commitment to participate in and contribute to the YFPF community. YFPF strives to make each member’s experience in our community transformative; as such, the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future curriculum will emphasize unique opportunities for members to engage actively in the organization.

YFPF will align its events, programs, discussion groups, small groups, public service, JobLink services, and other member-focused opportunities around building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future. YFPF will maintain 12-20 discussion groups that meet at least eight times a year and convene small groups of members as a way to implement the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future curriculum. Our organization will provide members opportunities to write, publish, and present to build knowledge and skills, as well as to give back to their community. JobLink – our suite of career development offerings – will be calibrated to support the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future curriculum.

The four pillars and Foreign Policy Leader of the Future:

YFPF emphasizes providing critical **knowledge** of key regions of the world, including strategic regions as well as areas that are understudied and underappreciated in foreign policy. We also seek to provide members with deep functional knowledge on critical topics and issues that are changing the course of global affairs. Finally, we work to provide knowledge around different global paradigms, underdeveloped ideas, and outside-the-box arguments, all of which contribute to shaping how young professionals understand the nature and character of the world our generation is inheriting.

The twenty-first century world requires the foreign policy leader of the future to possess unique **skills**. A central part of building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future is providing tangible opportunities for YFPF members to acquire these skills, which include but are not limited to: language training, strategy creation, cultural understanding, prediction and foresight, risk management, and diplomacy. YFPF will also continue to provide avenues to develop core professional competencies, including public speaking and presenting, op-ed writing, social media use, leadership and management techniques, and budgeting and financial management. Finally, we will help members advance their careers by providing services that prepare young professionals for their next job, such as resume workshops, mock interview panels, and discussions on navigating particular segments of the foreign policy job market.

YFPF provides **exposure** in three key areas. First, to people: luminaries and established foreign policy experts, thought leaders across sectors, organizations, and cultures, and talented young leaders from

around the world. Second, to ideas: disruptive and non-conventional ideas, and diverse global perspectives on critical foreign policy issues. And third, to institutions and organizations across business, government, and civil society with which young professionals might not regularly engage.

YFPF aims to enable its members to form professional and personal *relationships* with each other that will last a lifetime. YFPF believes the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future will need deep relationships across sectors, countries, and cultures, and our programs and initiatives will thus emphasize providing sustained opportunities for members to form and grow these relationships. We will also emphasize learning, professional growth, and giving back through mentor and mentee relationships.

Priority Objectives

- A. Define the traits, characteristics, and experiences of the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future and promulgate those findings to the public as the foundation of YFPF's worldview.
- B. Develop a curriculum for building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future based on the four pillars of YFPF's mission: knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships.
- C. Align YFPF's events, programs, and initiatives to the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future vision and curriculum.
- D. Emphasize training seminars, workshops, and programs that provide members with tangible skills that align to the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future vision and curriculum.
- E. Improve the fidelity of information on member participation and create innovative incentives to foster a culture of active membership.

Strategic Goal 2: Expand YFPF's global influence

YFPF will expand its influence and presence around the world and become recognized as the premier organization building the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future. YFPF's expanding global presence will reflect the demographic and geographic diversity of the next generation of leaders and align with shifts in international power and influence. Our organization will build a network of communities worldwide, seeking to establish 10 new communities by 2014, that will engage the next generation of leaders and provide those individuals with knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships.

YFPF will also build strategic partnerships that support our efforts to build the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future, help us increase brand and name recognition, and allow us to reach new members. To contribute to the foreign policy discourse, YFPF will increase the amount of intellectual capital it prepares and will seek to publish articles, essays, and other written work on leadership and the future of foreign policy that are authored by staff and members in well-respected publications.

Priority Objectives

- A. Build YFPF communities in 10 new cities around the world that cultivate the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future.

- B. Expand the amount of intellectual capital YFPF produces, focusing on thought leadership on the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future.
- C. Synchronize YFPF programs globally to create unity of effort around the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future. Execute 2 global events or initiatives per year that invite the participation of all YFPF members and multiple YFPF communities, and explore opportunities to facilitate visits or exchanges for YFPF members.
- D. Provide greater content, such as event recordings, podcasts, articles, and blog posts to YFPF’s global membership and enable members anywhere in the world to participate in discussions, events, and initiatives via enhanced digital platforms, including the website and social media.
- E. Identify external conferences and seminars that focus on leadership and foreign policy and consider benefits to YFPF from engagement or partnerships with these external platforms.

Internal Enablers

Increasing Financial Sustainability, Investing in the Workforce, and Improving Infrastructure

Three key “internal enablers” will be the focus of our operations through 2014. Strengthening these key areas is vital to enable YFPF to achieve its strategic goals.

Enabler 1: Increasing Financial Sustainability

The Foreign Policy Leader of the Future curriculum and all associated YFPF programs will require significant resources to operate at maximum potential. As such, YFPF will seek to raise the amount of money needed to implement the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future curriculum and ensure everything that supports it is resourced. We will emphasize the alignment of budget to strategy and build systems to professionalize our financial management further. In addition to seeking out strategic partnerships to support efforts to build the Foreign Policy Leader of the Future and enhance our global presence and influence, we will prioritize relationships with entities that will support YFPF financially.

Enabler 2: Investing in the Workforce

At the heart of YFPF is the paid and volunteer staff that serve our members, run our programs, and manage our operations. Developing the leadership, management, and execution skills of our volunteers are vital to providing the best service possible to our members. As a leadership laboratory – a place in which young professionals have unprecedented opportunities to develop leadership and management skills at a young age that will prepare them for success in their careers – YFPF seeks not only to foster an environment of experiential learning, but to provide structured opportunities for our members to mature as leaders. YFPF’s success depends on a motivated, empowered, and supported volunteer workforce. We will invest in our volunteers as a signal of our commitment to their individual growth, and because our future depends on doing so.

Enabler 3: Improving Physical and Virtual Infrastructure

Infrastructure – physical and virtual – is vital to the sustainability and growth of any organization. While YFPF has, to date, succeeded without its own physical space to operate and without a full range of professional technology platforms, we have reached a size and scope where stronger infrastructure is a vital requirement for future success.