



## Gwangju Youth Democracy Forum (Y-GDF) 2024

### Concept Note

*14 to 15 May 2024*

### Introduction

Every May, the spirit of the people's struggle for democracy and human rights against martial law in May 1980 is commemorated in Gwangju and nationwide through programs to remember and sustain the democracy movement. During this occasion, the **May 18 Foundation** and the **Asia Democracy Network** are implementing a joint initiative, the **Gwangju Youth Democracy Forum (Y-GDF)**, to cultivate youth leadership in the democracy movement, strengthen youth engagement in civic participation, and provide a space to network among like-minded actors.

The Y-GDF will take place in Gwangju, Korea, from 14-15 May, 2024, before the Gwangju Democracy Forum (GDF). The GDF is an annual international forum organized by the May 18 Foundation in cooperation with partner organizations to envision more excellent prospects for democracy in the world, according to the May 18 spirit. The GDF will bring prominent democracy and human rights stakeholders from across Asia, and the participants of the Y-GDF will have an opportunity to network and engage.

### Objectives

- Sustain and maintain the democratic movement in memorial of the May 18 democracy struggle spirit
- Develop youth leadership in activism
- Provide space for pro-democracy advocate youth to network and connect

### Themes/Topics

This year, the theme of the Gwangju Democracy Forum(GDF) is 'Crisis of Freedom – The Future We Want'. The Forum aims to examine the evolution of how freedom is defined and its varied perceptions, with the goal of gaining insight into the contemporary understanding of freedom in today's world.

In line with the GDF theme, the Y-GDF will also explore three thematic clusters from the GDF under the overarching theme, "We Are The Future."

#### a) Global Crisis

Discuss ways to deepen international solidarity and the necessity of global leadership to create a peaceful Earth without war.

#### b) We are the Future

Discuss mobilizing and leading movements as youth activists as a response to challenges regarding democracy, human rights, and freedom. (ie: Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution, Taiwan's Sunflower Movement, Milk Tea Alliance, and Myanmar's Civil Disobedience Movement)

c) Election vs Democracy?

Discuss how elections are conducted in respective countries, the factors that impact the electoral process and as a means to strengthen democracy.

### **Methodology**

The two-day program will include lectures, on-site study tours, group work, and group discussions. There will also be opportunities for participants to present their thoughts on their vision for the future of democracy and civic space as well as strengthening international solidarity.

The participants will also attend the Gwangju Democracy Forum from 16-18 May 2024 learning and engaging pro-democracy advocates and experts. In addition, participants will also participate in the National May 18 Ceremony organized by the Korean government on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Eligible Participants**

- 22-35 years of age (born 1989-2002)
- Korean & Foreign student of any nationality
- Must reside in Korea and be enrolled in a South Korean institution of higher education
- Currently studying topics on peace, democracy, human rights, civil society
- Interested in learning more about the May 18<sup>th</sup> Democratic Uprising
- Must be able to attend in full the Y-GDF and GDF for the duration of 14-18 May 2024

### **Accommodations/Meals/Transportation**

Accommodation will be provided (two people will be paired in one room in a modest hotel)

Meals will be provided for 5 nights and 6 days from dinner 14 to breakfast 19 May 2024.

Transportation - The participant is responsible for arranging and funding transportation to Gwangju, Korea.

### **Main Venue:**

May 18 Foundation - 61965 Gwangju Seogu Naebangro 152 May 18 Memorial Culture Center

## Program

[Gwangju Democracy Forum Schedule]

	May 14 (Tues.)	May 15(Wed.)	May 16(Thur.)	May 17(Fri.)		May 18 (Sat.)
AM	Y-GDF Participants Arrival	Session I	GDF Opening Keynote Speech I	Thematic Session III-1	Thematic Session II	44th Anniversary of the May 18 Democratic Uprising National Ceremony
				Thematic Session III-2	Special Session	
			Lunch	Lunch		
PM	Orientation and Introduction	Lunch	Thematic Session I-1	Special Session	Special Session	Cultural Exploration
		Session II				
		Study Tour	The Foundation's Reflection on International Project and the way Forward	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
	Thematic Session I-2		Closing Session			
			May 18 Eve March			
	Event	- Screening of Myanmar Documentary: 7 PM. May 16(Venue: Minjoo Hall)				
- May 18 Eve March & Eve Festival: 5:30 PM. May 17(Venue: Geumnam-ro)						
	- 2024 Gwangju Prize for Human Rights(GPHR) Award Ceremony: 7 PM, May 18 (Venue: To Be Confirmed)					

[Y-GDF Schedule]

Time	May 14	May 15
9:00~12:00		Session I Group Discussion: Under the three thematic Cluster Discussion Theme:
12:00~13:00	Participants Arrive, and Enrollment (May 18 Archives)	- Global Crisis - We are the Future - Election VS Democracy?
13:00~15:00	Orientation and Introduction	Lunch
15:00~18:00	Study Tour: Mission – Finding the M 15:00~15:30 Move to Gumnamro 15:30~16:00 Strategic Planning 16:00 Game Start (The May 18 Historical Sites nearby Gumnamro)	Session II: Presentation & Discussion:
		Break (15:30~16:00)
		The Foundation's Reflection on International Project and the Way Forward

\*\*The program is subject to change. A final program will be provided before the event.

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