

The Young Courage Award – international prize for moral courage

Background

The Young Courage Award has since 2015 been given to youth with the aim to ‘highlight young people between the ages of 13 and 20, who with small resources have made a great human difference and shown evidence of moral courage and commitment’. Behind the initiative is the Raoul Wallenberg Academy (RWA).

Now, for the first time, the award goes international. The award, for Swedish and international recipients, consists of a diploma and a trip in Raoul’s footsteps together with other recipients. The official award ceremony takes place in Stockholm in connection with the celebration of Raoul Wallenberg’s day on 27 August, in the presence of representatives from the Swedish government, civil society and business.

The Young Courage Award – along with the Cube Project and Electionville – is part of SI’s range of toolkits that focus on human rights and democracy.

Young Courage ambassadors

To ensure long-sightedness and local anchoring, international recipients will act as a kind of official Young Courage ambassadors, whom Swedish Embassies can invite to organise further activities on the themes of moral courage, human rights and democracy.

Purpose and target audience

The overall purpose of the Young Courage Award is to:

- engage young people;
- give the foreign missions the opportunity to raise issues relating to HR and democracy;
- strengthen the image of and confidence in Sweden as a country that stands for democratic values;
- make the work of the nominees and prize winners visible;
- enable new networks;
- create a new and recurring platform to talk about democracy issues in connection with Raoul Wallenberg Day.

The main target audience of the award is schoolchildren between 13 and 20 years of age. However, anyone is free to submit nominations, whether it is a teacher nominating a student, parents nominating a child, a sports club nominating a club mate, or friends nominating each

other. It is the action and the degree of civil courage that is judged. This means that the target audience for the announcement campaign also includes the general public.

How it works

Nominations for the Young Courage Award are made digitally through a campaign on social media. For this, SI has compiled several easy-to-use communication components, such as social media posts in words and images, as well as film material, which Swedish embassies freely has at its disposal.

The international nomination opens every year on January 27 and coincides with Holocaust Remembrance Day. This is also to make visible the award's affiliation with Raoul Wallenberg's deeds. The call is open just over 6 weeks (up to and including March 15).

Guidelines and restrictions

We recommend that nominations do not exceed 100 words. A maximum of five international recipients are awarded each year. To enable the largest possible geographical spread, a maximum of two recipients per country and year can be appointed.

For practical reasons, we propose that embassies in the selection and assessment process prioritise slightly older youth, for example in the range of 17–20 years, but that younger young people be included in local activities.

Who appoints the recipients?

It is RWA that decides who is awarded both the Swedish and the international award. The selection and assessment process is divided into two main steps. For the first of these steps, the embassy is responsible for making an initial selection (possibly together with a local partner). The assessments must be made on the basis of four criteria: courage, empathy, drive and creativity.

These are in turn graded according to a five-point scale where '1' is the lowest and '5' is the highest. Feel free to use the prepared Excel form that can be downloaded under 'Building blocks'. The embassy decides for itself how many candidates are considered to meet the assessment criteria. However, a maximum of 30 candidates can advance to the next step.

RWA is responsible for the second step, which is the decisive jury work. A final decision is usually made at the end of May (see further under 'Important dates' below).

Travel for recipients

The respective embassy is responsible for booking travel and accommodation for any local award winners. All preparations should take place in close dialogue with RWA. If any recipient is a minor, there is room within the toolkit grant for one accompanying person per recipient, preferably a parent or teacher. It is of course desirable that representatives of the embassy participate on site (not included in the toolkit grant).

Things to keep in mind

Before the campaign

Feel free to encourage local partners (schools, youth organisations, etc.) to retweet the campaign. Local partners can also be asked to assist both in the initial selection process and for subsequent activities together with the Young Courage Ambassador.

Create a special email address that is only used for nominations or look into web platforms that provide simpler form functions and at the same time meet current legal security requirements. Alternatively, you can hire a local partner to take care of the technical aspects of the nomination process.

Choose which social media posts to include in the campaign by downloading the social media posts long and short versions, as well as the images. There are a total of nine prepared scripts for social media posts in the toolkit, but it is of course possible to supplement with your own.

During the campaign

We recommend that you start the campaign with the film 'Young Courage Public' and then upload the other posts evenly distributed during the announcement period (January 27 to March 15).

IMPORTANT! As the collection of nominations involves the handling of personal data, the embassy's GDPR representative should be consulted. We also recommend that a personal data assistant agreement be signed between the embassy and RWA.

After the campaign

Feel free to plan your own events and activities on the theme together with local candidates and partners. This will help generate long-term interest and commitment among the target group.

Possible risks

Risks that embassies may have to take into account include:

- That there are too few or only undesirable nominations, and that the nominations become a public document and may be requested, with any risk to the individual as a result.

Because the examples in the communication material primarily highlight non-controversial actions, both the award and the campaign clearly lack political incentives. The risk of unwanted or otherwise sensitive nominations being received should thus be minimised, albeit not completely averted.

- Negative reactions about winners or nominees.

If embassies see such a risk, it is recommended they maintain a close dialogue with both the recipient and with RWA and SI so that the communication can be adjusted to meet any risk.

Important dates

Below are a number of important dates and key moments. The list is schematic and will possibly be revised or supplemented.

17 January	January 17 1945 was the last day Raoul Wallenberg was seen alive. The date can serve as a possible heads-up for the launch on January 27 and to increase interest in RW.
27 January	Holocaust Remembrance Day = launch day for the nomination campaign.
15 Mars	The nomination campaign closes. The embassy begins a first selection of the nominations received. The embassy decides for itself how many candidates meet the assessment criteria. However, a maximum of 30 candidates can advance to the next step.
23 Mars	A first selection has now been made. UM informs the candidates who have moved on to the next step in the process and asks them to briefly answer four questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) <i>What does moral courage mean to you?</i> (2) <i>How did it feel when you took action?</i> (3) <i>Young Courage Award is given in the spirit of Raoul Wallenberg. What do you know about Raoul Wallenberg? [Feel free to spread SI's fact sheet about Raoul Wallenberg, and also incorporate local people who have stood out in a similar manner.]</i> (4) <i>In the event that you receive the Young Courage Award, you will also be appointed Young Courage Ambassador. What would you</i>

choose to pay special attention to in your role as a Young Courage Ambassador? [Feel free to attach RWA's list of 100 acts to make a difference.]

State that the answers must be received by the embassy no later than xx March in order to be forwarded to the jury in Stockholm on 6 April. Candidates should also be asked to provide two references that can prove the alleged act from both the performer's and recipient's perspectives. The references may not be family members.

6 April	The embassy sends the nominations to RWA in Stockholm for final assessment. The documentation should be provided in either English or Swedish.
30 April–10 May	RWA compiles the received proposals, after which a maximum of 15 international proposals remain. These proposals will be candidates for the jury meeting.
22 May (approx.)	The jury's final meeting. The recipients of this year's award are decided. RWA notifies the embassies, who in turn notify the local recipient. The embassy also announces the candidates who have not progressed. Compilation of joint press release.
1 June–15 June	The embassy books travel and accommodation for the recipient and any accompanying person. RWA uses Clarion Hotel Sign for Swedish recipients, which is why it is appropriate to also place international recipients there.
25 August (approx.)	The recipients arrive in Stockholm.
27 August	Raoul Wallenberg's Day = Award Ceremony
29 August (approx.)	Return journey.

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