



EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT FINLAND - EYP FINLAND RY

Strategy 2022-2025



Introduction

Celebrating its 20th year in its current form, EYP Finland ry is concluding its second strategy cycle from a position never before experienced in its history. After the Covid-19 pandemic forced a complete stop to in-person events in 2020, work on a new strategy in 2021 had to begin from radically different starting points. What kinds of activities are important for our members and our organisation? How can we adapt to rapidly changing situations and regulations? Where do we want to take EYP from here?

Thanks to the great resilience of our board, staff and volunteers, EYP Finland kept involving hundreds of young people from all across Europe throughout the pandemic in digital, hybrid and in-person formats. Looking forward to 2025, this strategy lays out the roadmap for a National Committee that remains highly innovative, renowned within and outside of EYP, and a major provider of informal education for young people aged 16-25. The first strategy of EYP Finland was already implemented in 2015, one of the first in the EYP network. This third strategy will incorporate lessons from the previous two, ensuring the transfer of knowledge between generations of EYPers while building from the unique status quo of 2021.

In brief, we want EYP Finland in 2025 to be approachable, dynamic, professional, and educational. Although these aims already describe the work of EYP Finland to a large extent, this strategy will lay out further rationales for focusing on them, and call upcoming boards and volunteers to action in order to make our organisation even stronger and more welcoming for all members and stakeholders. Without strategic direction, it is easy to get lost in the day-to-day running of a large volunteer organisation. This strategy encompasses what we find important as we move into the third decade of EYP Finland.

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Mission, vision and values

The mission of EYP is: 'to inspire and empower a young generation of informed, open-minded, responsible, and active citizens that shape society and drive impact.'

The vision of EYP is: 'a democratic, peaceful, sustainable, and open society where every young person is informed and empowered to play an active role in the shaping of their own lives and society at large.'

The values of EYP are: independence, inclusion, democracy, synergy, intercultural understanding, and contribution.

The mission, vision and values of an organisation are their showcase to the outside world, briefly and effectively describing what they do, why and how. EYP Finland stands by these statements in all its activities. Our main target group is young people aged 16-25 living in Finland who are interested in social affairs, European affairs or event organisation and collaboration. The main working language at our events is English followed by Finnish and Swedish.

Our activities are coordinated by a board of 6-9 volunteers, elected annually by the members. Every year we involve approximately 250 members from Finland and abroad as volunteers who put together our events, by young people for young people. It is safe to say that EYP Finland would not exist without this massive input from volunteers.



Main Pillars

The strategy is built around four main pillars, each one representing a core component of our work and an objective for all our daily activities. Everything done by our volunteers and staff should reflect the vision statements: by 2025, EYP Finland should be approachable, dynamic, professional, and educational.

The realisation of these pillars is evaluated with a list of specific measures and success indicators that are set with reference to past performance, the status quo in 2021, and upcoming priorities. Annual action plans and other strategic documents of EYP Finland should also be structured around these main pillars.

Approachable

Rationale: EYP Finland, like the European Youth Parliament in general, faces the issue that our activities are sometimes difficult to explain to external audiences or first-time participants, and this can raise the barrier to entry. This issue has been compounded during the Covid-19 pandemic, when most participants rate our digital events highly but the number of participants has been low. Despite the name “European Youth Parliament”, we are not an institution of the European Union, and our activities are not party political simulations but discussions on European affairs above and beyond the EU Member States.

With this pillar, we want to focus on making our events more approachable to new members. This can be achieved with good and clear communications including the minimal use of jargon, practical support for first-time participants, and a culture of openness and non-discrimination.

Vision statement: *EYP Finland is a multilingual and multicultural organisation that has a strong presence across Finland and abroad. Participating in our activities is easy and welcoming regardless of education, place of living, or time of year.*

We organise events with a good geographical coverage across Finland. Remote participation opportunities are maintained wherever possible.

We are a discrimination-free organisation with a comprehensive outreach and inclusion strategy. Our volunteers and participants receive training for making our events safe spaces.

We make the barrier to enter our events as low as possible with minimal use of academic jargon, financial and practical support for participants, and clear pre-event communications.

We expand our visibility to potential new members and external partners through the active use of social media channels, well-maintained school and teacher relationships, and local presence in schools.

Dynamic

Rationale: In recent years we have had a strong focus on optimising the use of our resources and experimenting with new event types, and the Covid-19 pandemic was an unexpected catalyst to push forward innovation as we kept our activities going with digital and hybrid sessions. Coming out of the exceptional circumstances, we want to maintain a level of dynamism and organise events that our members want, in the way that they want them. We want to maintain best practices and inherited

knowledge from our former members – but we do not want to organise things a certain way “because it’s always been like this”.

Vision statement: *Our activities are innovative, member-led, and thoughtfully planned and implemented. We draw on the knowledge of our members to apply the latest methodologies to the way our events are organised.*

We organise our main events in spring, summer, autumn and winter, at suitable times considering the academic calendar in Finnish schools.

We focus on the possibilities to organise small-scale member events throughout Finland, such as picnics, social nights, and excursions.

We are open to innovative event concepts, such as international forums and training events. The board gives concrete support to feasible event plans proposed by members.

We aim to make our communications more innovative and coherent at all levels of the organisation, and look for ways to integrate the media output from sessions with communications from the office.



Professional

Rationale: Despite being a mainly volunteer-run organisation, EYP Finland has achieved a monumental amount throughout its 20-year history. Our volunteers, who are mostly in the age range of 16-25, gain formidable experience in the specific aspects of running a national youth organisation. They are supported in this work by the collective experience of former board members, contained in physical and electronic archives and extensive transition trainings, as well as a full-time, salaried secretary general. We have also gained experience in the use of short-term, paid project workers to increase the scope of our work and our visibility, and will look into ways to make these arrangements more permanent. EYP Finland operates on a major budget

from Finnish ministries, European institutions and public and private donors, and we want to prove ourselves worthy of this funding in the work that we do.

Vision statement: *EYP Finland is a long-established NGO with a rich history within EYP and the Finnish NGO network. We preserve and further innovate our working culture with a full-time paid secretary general, paid project workers who assist with specific tasks, extensive training for board members and other volunteers, and cooperative relationships with long-standing partners.*

We provide extensive training to the Head Organisers and Organisers of our events and support them in all aspects of organising, including fundraising, venues, food and logistics.

We have a professional administrative and office culture in matters such as budgeting, fundraising and event organising, reinforced by trainings for our board members and paid staff.

We actively involve our experienced members and alumni in knowledge-sharing and training events, both within EYP Finland and in external trainings for the network.

We aim to expand our activities by increasing the use of project workers and establishing long-term strategic partnerships with like-minded organisations and programmes, such as Erasmus+.





Educational

Rationale: The EYP is first and foremost an educational organisation, more interested in giving its participants the confidence, experience and tools to shape the world than shaping the world through its own activities. This ideology, which is at the heart of EYP Finland, distinguishes us from other youth organisations in the field of political and social affairs. We believe that the best way to learn is by doing, and our events reflect this. Our events are organised from start to finish by our own members – not everyone has to be (or become) an expert in European affairs, as we also have positions for event organisers, media and communications.

Each team is overseen by more experienced members who provide feedback and support, giving our members an almost endless number of opportunities to learn and experiment with new responsibilities.

Vision statement: *We are a major provider of informal education in Finland, inspiring and empowering young people to discover active citizenship and ways of shaping their own lives and society. Our methods of learning-by-doing and organising events by young people, for young people make social affairs concrete and exciting.*

We involve stakeholders such as the European Parliament Information Office in our sessions, training events, and educational projects to share basic EU knowledge and topical EU affairs with our members.

We provide authentic learning opportunities in academic affairs, event organising, and media and communications, and provide support and feedback for every participant who volunteers in our organisation.

We look into ways to expand the use and impact of EYP resolutions to ensure that the main output of our sessions reaches a wider audience while remaining accessible.

We encourage our members to apply the skills they have learned in EYP in their day-to-day lives, promoting active citizenship.



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