

ESTONIAN NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL (EESTI NOORTEÜHENDUSTE LIIT)

STRATEGY FROM 2009 TO 2012

MISSION

The Estonian National Youth Council (ENL) is a recognised organisation protecting the interests of youth associations and enhancing all forms of cooperation between them, so that youth participation and youth initiative would be valued in the society.

VISION

Each journey begins with a dream. We dream of strong and competent youth associations. We see many active young people who influence the society and change it for the better. We know that the decisions concerning youth are not made for them but with the contribution of young people. We want to guarantee that not a single good idea that young people have would be lost due to lack of funds, interest or skills. We want the voice of our young people to be heard far beyond Estonia. We dream that there would always be dreams.

UNIQUENESS

ENL is...

- the only Estonian umbrella organisation uniting and representing youth associations;
- the primary partner for the public sector in the communication of young people's opinions;
- the most representative association with its 53 very diverse member organisations;
- the undisputed competence centre and talent magnet in its field.

ENL has established its objectives in four main areas:

1. The voice of youth in the society
2. Active members
3. International dimension
4. A strong organisation

Objective No 1: The voice of youth in society

ENL participates successfully in the shaping of policies concerning young people and youth associations, both on the state and local government levels.

In order to do that, ENL will ...

- develop the model of an effective competence centre, by improving knowledge of the field in general and the expertise in the organisation as well as communicating the opinions and positions of its members and young people to the decision-makers;
- get to know the ins and outs of the needs of youth organisations and young people, the opportunities for youth participation and the policy-making procedure in this area of activity;
- make actual contributions to improving the life of young people, using its energy and expertise and making proposals reflecting young people's opinions;
- work towards increasing the financing for youth associations;
- create and develop opportunities for youth participation in order to have a say in social matters;
- train and counsel all parties in the area of youth policies.

The achievement of the objective will be assessed based on the following factors:

- The involvement of ENL in the legislative processes;
- The participation of ENL's representatives in the committees and working groups set up by state authorities, local governments and the third sector;
- The amount and nature of the proposals made by ENL for the laws and regulations concerning young people and youth associations;
- The consideration of ENL's proposals in the legislative process and the preparation of regulations;
- The number of youth associations involved in the shaping of positions on youth issues and matters concerning youth associations (the proposals made; comments; approvals);
- The existence of highly competent experts (in various fields) in the ENL team.

How far we are from achieving the objective:

- ENL is involved in several working groups and committees, including the Youth Policy Council and the working group for drafting the Act amending the Youth Work Act (at the Ministry of Education and Research);
- ENL has set up working groups for the preparation of its proposals; the working groups discuss the issues and arrive at a joint position. Special attention is paid to issues concerning financing for youth associations. The member organisations are included in the preparation of proposals, using both email and round-table meetings. Youth associations should be more interested in having a say in the development of the society;
- The responsible member of the board and the youth policy specialist are in charge of the field of youth policies. In 2007, ENL prepared its positions on youth participation and on the informing and counselling of

youth.

Objective No 2: Active members

Youth associations benefit significantly from being members of ENL. The members need and benefit from the added value for the development of youth associations, which is offered by ENL.

In order to do that, ENL will ...

- keep close contact with its members, knowing their wishes and needs and suggesting, for them and with them, the necessary activities;
- organise versatile and high-quality training courses on the basis of an attractive programme;
- prepare and implement development programmes to improve the competitiveness of youth associations, including programmes intended to improve the quality, mentoring and strategic management capacities of youth associations;
- organise events where members will (want to) participate and where everyone will feel the benefit in terms of the knowledge and contacts;
- inform others of the activities of its members and coordinate cooperation between members;
- act as an incubator where good ideas, bold initiatives and new organisations can receive vitality and support;
- support the brilliant ideas and exciting initiatives of young people through the Good Thoughts Fund (Heade Mõtete Fond). This fund would be set up at ENL and would be a set of funds distributed by young people to support youth projects with great potential;
- find the best practices applied in its member organisations and share these with other youth associations.

The achievement of the objective will be assessed based on the following factors:

- The number of members in ENL;
- The number and versatility of the events and training programmes organised by ENL; the number of members who attend these and benefit from these;
- The number of youth associations who have implemented the development programmes created and developed by ENL;
- The number and diversity of the new initiatives carried out with the support and counsel of ENL;
- The number of cooperation projects started between ENL's members;
- The rate of satisfaction of ENL's members with the programmes offered by ENL and with the events organised by ENL.

How far we are from achieving the objective:

- As of 2008, ENL has 53 member organisations which include associations operating in very diverse areas of activity, making ENL the biggest and most representative umbrella organisation in Estonia;
- ENL has several traditional events, such as the summer school, the winter camp, the anniversary, the Youth Day and the Christmas party. In addition to that, ENL conducts training courses on specific topics; the number and conduct of the training courses depends greatly on the projects being carried out;
- ENL has initiated the development of quality criteria and assessment models for youth associations; the outcome will be descriptions of the criteria for high-quality youth associations and projects, based on which the youth organisations can make their operation more efficient;
- "AKEN" itself has gradually become more professional, but the financing is unstable;
- ENL meets its members regularly and all year round, thus receiving both positive and constructive feedback.

Objective No 3: International dimension

ENL is a prominent organisation in international youth work; ENL has a large network of international partners and cooperates closely with the most important umbrella organisations.

In order to do that, ENL will ...

- be seen and heard as a participant in the activities and initiatives of international organisations, including the European Youth Forum;
- create and enhance bilateral and tripartite relationships of cooperation with the national umbrella organisations (of youth associations) in our nearby countries;
- make additions, which are well-thought-out and take into account the interests of Estonian youth, to the international documents concerning youth policies;
- involve its members in the shaping of Estonia's positions by creating an efficient working group for international relations;
- use the experience and international training opportunities acquired from international relations for the development of its members and ENL as an organisation.

The achievement of the objective will be assessed based on the following factors:

- The participation of ENL in international organisations and cooperative networks;
- Cooperation projects with the national/umbrella youth associations of other countries;
- The number of proposals made and forwarded by ENL and the consideration of these in the international documents shaping youth policies;
- The number of international cooperation projects;
- The number of associations included in the proposal-making process through ENL's working group for internal relations.

How far we are from achieving the objective:

- Since November 2007, the Estonian National Youth Council (ENL) is a full member of the European Youth Forum and a member of the network of Scandinavian and Baltic national youth councils;
- ENL cooperates closely with the national youth councils of Finland (Allianssi) and the German state of Schleswig-Holstein;
- Via the European Youth Forum, ENL participates in the shaping of European youth policies; at the same time, thus far the contribution has been more of a reactive nature (commenting on proposals) but should be more proactive (making proposals and raising important issues);
- The operation of the working group for internal relations had ceased for a while; now the working group has become more active again. Its members have not demonstrated a great interest in participating in international youth discussions and in commenting the proposals. At the same time, there is still great interest in having international contracts.

Objective No 4: A strong organisation

ENL is a professionally functioning and strategically managed umbrella organisation of youth associations having stable financing and a clear vision of the future.

In order to do that, ENL will ...

- involve and value talents, future players and initiators;
- include true experts and genuine enthusiasts in its management bodies and team, so that these people can together move the organisation forward on the basis of the agreed development directions;
- work towards stable financing that would guarantee a sense of security in the implementation of new initiatives;
- have office premises providing contemporary facilities to guarantee the sustainability of the organisation;
- create trusting relationships with various media publications;
- further develop its communication channels, including the home page and the Youth Work Newspaper "AKEN", so that these become widely used and acknowledged information sources;
- be a strategically thinking and development-minded contemporary organisation where great ideas are conceived and the future leaders of Estonia emerge;
- be a place for people to meet and create contacts, where it is always exciting and useful to be and where people will always want to come back to.

The achievement of the objective will be assessed based on the following factors:

- There are qualified management and team members working in all the major areas of activity;
- The financing of ENL guarantees the achievement of the objectives established in this strategy;
- ENL has the premises and facilities necessary for the smooth organisation of its operation;
- The activities and events of ENL and its members are reported/publicised in the media;
- The number of visitors to ENL's web site and the readership of the Youth Work Newspaper "AKEN"; their feedback;
- ENL is managed strategically; a quality programme has been implemented.

How far we are from achieving the objective:

- The ENL team consists of the board and the bureau. There are six members on the board of ENL and they are in charge of youth policies, finances, international relations, members and public relations. The executive director is in charge of the ENL bureau; the bureau staff also includes an assistant, six project managers (participation campaign, "AKEN", quality project, county youth councils, Youth Day) and experts in specific fields (youth policies, public relations). ENL currently lacks employees who would be in charge of such important areas as project proposals and financing. All the bureau staff and the chairman of the board are paid employees. Most of the bureau staff are paid from project financing. Four projects are going to end in the year 2008;
- Since the members of our board often hold the job for only one term of office, the consistency of the performance of tasks and the strategic development of the organisation are not always guaranteed;
- The financing of ENL is unstable; ENL does not have a steady source of financing. Each year, ENL applies for an annual grant from the Ministry of Education and Research, competing for the same resources as its member organisations. Many of the activities are carried out as individual projects which offer no security for the organisation or the staff, as their work and remuneration depend on the financing decisions. It is especially difficult to use projects to finance operating costs (incl. the wages) and the events and training courses intended for ENL's members;
- ENL has office premises in the centre of Tallinn. There are workstations for five people and a meeting room. At the moment, ENL has two desktop computers and one laptop; the rest of the employees use their own personal computers/laptops;
- The media reports on ENL and its activities/events are extremely few, because the topics concerning youth work are rarely newsworthy and ENL has lacked sufficient competence for the promotion of ENL;
- ENL has begun to implement strategic management; the organisation is advised by a strategy consultant. Performance reviews are conducted with the employees and training courses are organised.

Wishing that we would never stop dreaming...