

09-018 EA

Gothenburg Educational Strategy

As adopted by the EEE-YFU General Assembly, 21 June 2009, Brussels

I. Introduction

One of EEE-YFU's principal missions is to "assist its Member Organisations with planning and conducting of international training measures for YFU staff and volunteers."¹ In the past, EEE-YFU has conducted two to four educational activities a year, the target group being mostly volunteers of European YFU organisations. However, there has been a growing concern about the relevance of the educational activities for the Member Organisations of EEE-YFU and their volunteers. Many Members felt that the activities did not comply with the needs that existed in the Member Organisations. Hence, in 2007 EEE-YFU started to re-think its educational activities. The first step was to adopt a "Framework on Educational Activities," its aim being to define the framework and the conditions under which EEE-YFU educational activities take place. The Framework calls for, inter alia, the development of a long-term strategy for educational activities (see chapter 1.6).

In order to work on the long-term strategy, EEE-YFU called for a meeting inviting all its European member organisations to Gothenburg, Sweden from 20 to 22 March 2009. Representatives of 15 EEE-YFU Member Organisations got together to discuss new priorities for educational activities at the European level. The present "Gothenburg Educational Strategy" is the outcome of this meeting and will be an important guiding line for planning future educational activities.

The process of defining the priorities was complex and was based on the interest and needs of the member organisations. When developing this strategy, past educational activities were evaluated and the needs of the Member Organisations were taken into account. The result is three main areas of focus – *three pillars* – which are subdivided in smaller aims. The following sections outline the structure and aims of the strategy as well as the approach EEE-YFU will take in implementing it.

¹ *EEE-YFU Charter* (2007 General Meeting, Munich), Article 3

II. Three areas of focus

The educational activities are based on three areas of focus:

Enhance European Level co-operation and visibility

Pillar 1 seeks to enhance co-operation among European YFU organisations and among EEE-YFU and other organisations. Furthermore, this pillar will aim to enhance organisations' capacity to promote visibility of YFU on the national and European levels.

Support Programme Quality, Sustainability and Growth

Pillar 2 seeks to support Member Organisations in their quest to improve their programmes and therefore focuses on activities that enhance the quality of YFU programmes.

Support Organisation and Volunteer Development

Pillar 3 aims at providing support to Member Organisations in the organisation and development of their organisation and their volunteer network.

Each area of focus is subdivided into aims for each area of focus (pillar).

| Pillar 1 Enhance European Level co-operation and visibility | Pillar 3 Support Programme Quality, Sustainability and Growth | Pillar 4 Support Organisation and Volunteer Development |
|--|---|---|
| 1.1. Contribute to the visibility and the advocacy work of EEE-YFU and its Members 1.2. Support Member Organisations in achieving more recognition of the educational value of YFU exchange programmes 1.3. Facilitate the sharing and exchange of experiences, best practices and tools between Member Organisations 1.4. Create and promote networking opportunities for Member Organisations | 2.1. Support Member Organisations in designing programme oriented activities 2.2. Provide training opportunities to Member Organisations on core programme related issues 2.3. Support Member Organisations in promoting intra-European programmes 2.4. Help the Member Organisations develop adequate responses to the challenges and opportunities of new information and communication technologies | 3.1. Train key multipliers and create opportunities for the development of competences which contribute to the development of Member Organisations and volunteers 3.2. Support Member Organisations in volunteer network coordination, sustainability and development 3.3. Support Member Organisations in developing training schemes and training volunteers 3.4. Promote professionalism and responsibility among volunteers 3.5. Support MOs in the development of intergenerational volunteer networks |
| 1. Increase know-how and efficiently use YFU resources by creating, identifying and building upon synergies 2. Maintain quality activities through regular evaluation and feedback from Member Organisations | | |

III. The aims laid out

Pillar 1: Enhance European Level co-operation and visibility

As YFU organisations are often faced with similar external challenges (e.g. lack of recognition of exchanges, funding challenges, etc.) which are often influenced by policies made at the European and national levels, visibility and advocacy work in YFU is needed to create an external environment which is more favourable to exchanges. Similarly, YFU organisations everywhere are increasing efforts to become more visible, not just to attract more exchange programme participants, but also to become more widely recognised as quality educational organisations in intercultural learning. So, YFU needs representatives and leaders with the competence and knowledge to promote and advocate for YFU at the national and European levels. Educational activities should therefore **contribute to the visibility and advocacy work of EEE-YFU and its Members all the while supporting Member Organisations in achieving more recognition of the educational value of YFU exchange programmes.** Work in this direction already began in 2008 in the form of the Advocacy, Learning and External Representation Training (ALERT). Future activities may be similar trainings or smaller meetings for key leaders from MOs working on advocacy issues at the national level, or other kinds of tools/handbooks in this area.

At the same time, YFU organisations find innovative approaches to their common challenges and create tools which are often unique, yet are too sometimes isolated within their organisation. EEE-YFU, as an umbrella organisation, is able to recognise to the strengths of its Members and, through its educational content, **facilitate the sharing and exchange of experiences, best practices and tools between Member Organisations.** Whether this happens in the form of meetings between staff and/or volunteers, seminars or virtual exchanges of tools, this pillar underlines the benefits of working together.

As EEE-YFU's advocacy work is inherently outward looking, the organisation encounters many possibilities of partnerships with like-minded organisations. Through its educational activities, EEE-YFU will pass on this advantage, when relevant, by **creating and promoting networking opportunities for Member Organisations** between each other as well as with other organisations.

Pillar 2: Support Programme Quality, Sustainability and Growth

One important question inside YFU is how the quality of our YFU exchange programme can be improved and maintained at a high level. This pillar therefore focuses on measures that aim to support the programme quality, sustainability and growth. One key issue are the programme oriented activities that every YFU organisation carries out such as pre-departure, on-arrival, mid-year and homecoming seminars. These activities are of different quality in the different YFU organisations and hence, EEE-YFU should **support Member Organisations in designing programme oriented activities and provide training opportunities to Member Organisations on core programme related issues.**

Intra-European exchanges have a big potential, which is not used to its full extent yet. In order to ensure the programme sustainability and growth, it is of importance to increase the numbers of exchange students going to exchange inside Europe. Therefore EEE-YFU should **support MOs in promoting intra-European programmes** by organising educational activities on the promotion of

intra-European exchanges and collect and distribute tools that can be used when promoting intra-European exchanges.

New technologies are developing quickly nowadays and involve both challenges and opportunities. In YFU we have standard recommendations for communication with the home country but with new technologies, the landscape has changed and hence, it is also time to re-think our recommendations. So, EEE-YFU should **help the MOs to develop adequate responses to the challenges and opportunities of the new information and communication technology** by providing platforms (both online and through physical meetings) where new technologies and adequate responses can be discussed and good examples can be presented.

Pillar 3: Support Organisation and Volunteer Development

YFU is based on the work of hard-working and enthusiastic volunteers and therefore it is very important for any YFU organisation to have a well-organised, educated and functioning volunteer network. However, not all Member Organisations have the capacity to organise trainings for their volunteers, and some only on very basic topics. Hence, EEE-YFU should **train key multipliers and create opportunities for the development of competences which contribute to the development of Member Organisations and volunteers**. Furthermore, EEE-YFU should **support Member Organisations in volunteer network coordination, sustainability and development and in the development of training schemes and training volunteers**.

Many Member Organisations are currently met with the challenge with a decreasing commitment among volunteers, leading to volunteers who embody the professionalism necessary to carry out quality YFU programmes. Therefore EEE-YFU should help MOs to **promote professionalism and responsibility among volunteers** by providing seminars, trainings, workshops and or tools to Member Organisations facing this need.

Most Member Organisations have demographically imbalanced volunteer networks, looking to development either segments of older volunteers or younger ones. Hence, EEE-YFU should **support MOs in the development of intergenerational volunteer networks** by bringing together MOs through educational activities to share best practices in developing intergenerational volunteerism.

IV. Transversal aims and implementation

This Educational Activities strategy is meant to be a working document. It is based upon analyses of past activities and of the current needs of EEE-YFU's Member Organisations. This process of periodically assessing what has been done and current needs should be ensured in order to keep the focus of Educational Activities as much as possible on the most important topics for YFU in Europe. This is reflected in the second transversal aim of the strategy.

At the same time, this strategy represents a new direction for EEE-YFU Educational Activities, shifting from more volunteer centred needs towards Member Organisations' priorities, targeting both their volunteers and staff. Past Educational Activity formulae (ETOT, IRS, ETOV, etc) will not necessarily be abandoned, but will only be taken up if their content is deemed to fit within the new strategy. Consequently, EEE-YFU hopes to contribute more to enhancing the quality of YFU core activities while supporting the development of Member Organisations, especially their volunteer networks. In order to do this, EEE-YFU will need to efficiently use the resources of YFU by creating, identifying and building upon synergies of its Members and of the YFU Academy. More concretely, this means the role Member Organisations play in contributing to the development and implementation of educational activities will remain an active one and a close co-operation with the International Secretariat is necessary to avoid double structures and to work together on topics of common interest.

In implementing this strategy the following should be taken into account: maximum effectiveness of educational activities can only be achieved if Member Organisations have a basic volunteer structure and network in place. Supporting Member Organisations in building such structures will be considered a part of the activities under the third pillar.

As the Educational Activities strategy aims to be long term and cover a broad amount of areas, it will be supplemented by a priority work plan which will outline specific topics and activities to be implemented over a two year span. Consultations with the Member Organisations and the YFU Academy will be held in order to establish the priorities, possibly via surveys, direct contact, individual meetings, consultation meetings, EC/GM workshops etc. Evaluation and feedback of previous years' work plans will be ensured to guarantee the relevance and quality of EEE-YFU educational activities.

There will be at least 3 educational activities per year, one from each pillar of this strategy. During the two-year priority work plan period, each pillar will have two main educational activities, and they should be supported by a strand of related supporting measures, such as the development of tools, short meetings, publications, sharing/networking meetings. EEE-YFU's approach will be to proactively seek out synergies with the priority work plan period among activities of Member Organisations and promote them, helping Members identify new ways to co-operate and learn from each other.