

# YOUTH ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

# REPORT



# Introduction

The Youth Advocacy Alliance program is a timely and important initiative that brings together young people, youth organizations, and Nordic-Baltic region decision-makers to combat joint challenges young people face today. The program's focus on sustainability is particularly noteworthy, as it ensures that the network and the skills and knowledge gained by participants will continue to benefit young people in the region for years to come.

The target group of the program are youth leaders, civil society organisations, experts, and youth workers who want to improve their skills and knowledge in youth advocacy. The target group represents a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, which will enrich the program and help to ensure that the network is truly inclusive and representative of the young people in the region.

The program's goal was to create a sustainable youth advocacy network and raise awareness of the benefits of youth advocacy, which are ambitious but achievable. By bringing together young people, youth organizations, and decision-makers, the program created a platform for young people to have their voices heard and to advocate for their needs and concerns. The program also helped to build the capacity of youth organizations and youth workers to support young people in their advocacy efforts.

Overall, the Youth Advocacy Alliance program was a valuable initiative that has the potential to significantly contribute to the advancement of youth advocacy in the Nordic-Baltic region, and that will benefit young people in the region for many years to come.

# Project Timeline

02-05. February 2023,  
Narva, Estonia

International training  
Youth Advocacy and  
Leadership capacity building

29th of March – 1st of April 2023  
Göteborg, Sweden

International training  
Youth Advocacy on local  
level

12 – 15. April 2023  
Copenhagen, Denmark

International training  
Youth Advocacy on regional  
level

3 – 6. May 2023  
Helsinki, Finland

International training  
Youth Advocacy on  
international level

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
“Youth Advocay Alliance “YOUTH NOT AS A PROBLEM, BUT THE SOLUTION!”  
1-4 June 2023, Porskrun, Norway

# Local Workshop

February - April 2023 Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Estonia

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<https://youthadvocacy.eu/workshops/>

The workshop promoted awareness among young people in the everyday social context of youth participation, engagement needs, and existing problems. It included experts to create educational tools to empower young people to become community leaders and protect their interests in different fields.

The workshop promoted the discussion about the importance of youth advocacy, which helped us to find constructive solutions. It provided constructive knowledge and skills on youth work, engagement and participation to ensure youth interests and promote active participation, social cohesion and collaboration between all stakeholders.

Each partner in the programme has conducted local workshops (at least 20 participants per country).

The workshop was tailored to the participant's specific needs and safety considerations, ensuring a sensitive and inclusive environment for discussion.

While the workshop may not strictly follow a proposed agenda or use predefined methods and tools, they provided a basic overview of the themes and were designed to meet the target group's specific needs.





# International training

2nd – 5th of February 2023 Tallinn/Narva, Estonia

<https://youthadvocacy.eu/estonia/>

1 training in youth advocacy and leadership, “Youth Advocacy and Leadership capacity building” happened on the 2-5th February 2023 in Narva, Estonia, where Nordic and Estonian participants learned the concept of youth advocacy, the necessary knowledge in the field and also gained practical experience through four key areas that have proven to be key challenges in the process of promoting youth advocacy: youth leadership development, advocacy education, strengthening youth associations and civil society, and youth involvement and participation in decision-making processes.

The first part of the training was a skills session covering the basics of leadership and advocacy concepts. The second part of the training has been dedicated to gaining practical experience by conducting practical exercises and visiting different institutions that promote/support and help with youth advocacy on behalf of young people. The final part of the training session addressed the issues facing young people in each partner country, the common challenges that could be addressed through joint efforts, and how to link and use advocacy methods to promote awareness of these issues. The headliners of the training session were Triin Roos, Head of the Estonian National Youth Council, Anneli Ohvril, Head of Let's do It World Foundation (promoting sustainability, clean and healthy planet) and Anna Liza Starova, a researcher at Tartu University.

As a result, the 1 training participants have generated the first draft of a youth advocacy document on youth participation and dialogue, which will serve as a basis for further youth participation policies and related activities, which we will disseminate among partners to make their adjustments and changes to ensure the sustainability of the project. The results of the work of all four training sessions have been compiled in the final version of a single Youth Advocacy Statement, which will be disseminated among youth associations and partner organisations/agencies.



# International training

29th of March – 1st of April 2023 Göteborg, Sweden

<https://youthadvocacy.eu/sweden>

II training in youth advocacy and leadership, “Youth Advocacy on the local level” happened on 29.03 – 01.04.2023 in Göteborg, Sweden, where Nordic and Estonian participants provided constructive knowledge and skills about the concept and practice of advocacy training from public speaking, presentation, advocacy strategies and other such skills.

The training was conducted by highly professional experts and young people who shared their own experience and knowledge with young people. Training themes were delivered by Vassili Golikov (Sillamäe Society for Child Welfare, Estonia), Susanne Kallanvaara (Burgårdens Gymnasium, Sweden), GermanMorris (Ehte HG), Laura Maria Rajala (Femina RY), Adele Mathisen and Karina Gullberg-Vinje (Sosialistisk Ungdom).

The Second section of the training session was dedicated to gaining practical experience by visiting various institutions that promote/help and contribute to the Youth Work and work in Youth interests.

The Final section of the training session covers the issues facing young people in each of the partner countries, what joint problems exist that could be resolved through collaborative effort and how to relate and use advocacy methods to advance awareness of these issues. This was supplemented through strategic dialogue discussions with experts, exercises, and group work to use the Nordic cooperation angle to exchange experiences and best practices on initiating change (organising campaigns, etc.) and creating a comparative perspective on developing solutions for the future. Each training session follows the same structure but addresses the core topics on the different levels of operation detailed above to ensure a comprehensive review of the issue.



# International training

12th – 15th of April 2023 Copenhagen, Denmark

<https://youthadvocacy.eu/denmark>

III training in youth advocacy and leadership, “Youth Advocacy on regional level” happened on 12 – 15.04.2023 in Copenhagen, Denmark, where Nordic and Estonian participants provided young people with knowledge and skills related to youth advocacy on a regional level.

The training was conducted by highly professional experts and young people who shared their own experience and knowledge with young people. Training themes have been delivered by German Morris (Peace Child Estonia, Estonia), Iulia Halangescu (IKF Malmö, Sweden), Nilofar Nori (Changemaker, Norway), Terhi Korkiamäki (Luksia, Finland), Julian Lo Curlo (Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd, Denmark), Christian Hansen (Copenhagen Business Academy, Denmark).

Young people become involved in youth advocacy and developed their skills and understanding of the discussed theme. By engaging with decision-makers and providing feedback, young people had a tangible impact on policies that affect their lives and the lives of their peers.

The training sessions focused on teaching participants about the concept and practice of youth advocacy on a regional level and skills related to public speaking, presentation, and advocacy strategy management.

Developing a Youth advocacy toolkit was another important aspect of advocacy work. This toolkit provides young people with practical tools and resources to help them advocate effectively for youth issues. It includes tips on communication strategies, building relationships with decision-makers, and organizing grassroots campaigns.

Young people can make their voices heard and have their views taken into account by decision-makers. The Youth Advocacy Statement, Child and Youth participation strategies during crisis and recommendations for decision-makers in the Nordic region are also significant resources for young advocates.





# International training

03th – 6th of May 2023 Helsinki, Finland

<https://youthadvocacy.eu/finland>

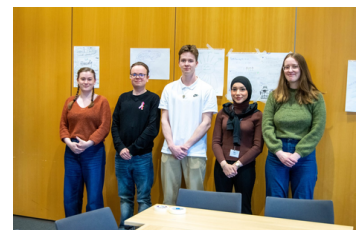
IV training in youth advocacy and leadership, “Youth Advocacy on international level” happened on 03 – 06.05.2023 in Helsinki, Finland, where Nordic and Estonian participants provided young people with knowledge and skills related to youth advocacy on an international level.

The training was conducted by highly professional experts and young people who shared their own experience and knowledge with young people. Training themes have been delivered by Vassili Golikov from the Sillamäe Society for Child Welfare (Estonia), German Morris from Peace Child Estonia, Balqis Khattab from IKF M’älmo (Sweden), Susanne Kallanvaara from Burgårdens Gymnasium (Sweden), Aram Karim and Adéle Johanne Mathisen from Socialist Youth (Norway), Jenni Kauppila from UNA Finland, Emilia Runeberg from Finnish Development NGOs – Fingo, Ivan Vasilevkih from Folkevirke (Denmark), and Christian Hansen from Copenhagen Business Academy (Denmark).

Young people developed their skills and increased their capacity. By engaging with decision-makers and providing feedback, young people can have a tangible impact on policies that affect their lives and the lives of their peers. The training sessions focused on teaching participants about the concept and practice of youth advocacy on an international level and skills related to public speaking, presentation, and advocacy strategy management.

Youth participants had the opportunity to visit Finnish Development NGO Fingo and gain practical skills and tips regarding their valuable work in the advocacy field.

By advocating for policies and actions that reduce inequality and promote human rights, Fingo seeks to bring about positive change in developing countries. They actively influence political decision-making processes at the national, European Union (EU), and international levels. Through their advocacy efforts, Fingo aims to find new and innovative solutions for addressing inequality and promoting human rights. By working with stakeholders at various levels, they contribute to shaping policies and initiatives that promote sustainable development and social justice.



# International conference

02th – 4th of June 2023 Helsinki, Finland

<https://youthadvocacy.eu/conference>

The international conference “Youth Advocacy Alliance “YOUTH NOT AS A PROBLEM, BUT THE SOLUTION!” took place at Porsgrunn Culture School in Porsgrunn, Norway from June 01-04, 2023, aimed to raise awareness among youth organizations in the Nordic-Baltic Region about the benefits of youth advocacy and the youth advocacy network. The event brought together 54 participants from 5 different countries. The project's primary objective was to establish a sustainable “Youth Advocacy Alliance” network that would serve as a platform for collaboration between youth, non-governmental youth organizations, and decision-makers in the Nordic-Baltic region. The network aimed to facilitate sharing experiences and address common challenges faced by young people in these regions.

The Youth Conference was a three-day event and consisted of various activities. It included official discussions held during the international conference, workshops conducted by international partners and local hosts, study visits, and the development of new project proposals. Additionally, one of the significant outcomes of the program was the presentation of the Youth Advocacy toolkit prepared by international partners. This toolkit would serve as a valuable resource for youth advocacy efforts.

Furthermore, the conference aimed to create youth local Citizens’ action plans, which would be submitted to the Nordic Council, as well as various national, international, and governmental organizations and the media. These action plans would outline specific initiatives and strategies to address the needs and concerns of young people in the region.

Overall, the conference provided a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the development of practical tools and strategies to empower youth advocacy and address the challenges faced by young people in the Nordic-Baltic Region.

The overall format of the events was rated 9.1 out of 10. Pre-events information and communications were rated 8.7 out of 10. The overall organisation during the events was rated 8.9 out of 10. The general conference was rated 9.45 out of 10





# Youth statement

A statement made by young people that outlines their aspirations, opinions, and views and presents their perspectives concerning significant social, political, and environmental issues.

We call upon decision-makers:

1. To engage with youth of all backgrounds, communities and social classes.
2. To invest in gender-neutral education to create a present and future that is free from harmful gender stereotypes;
3. To invest in inclusive education that embraces diversity and ensures the full participation of all youngsters in the same learning environment regardless of ability, ethnicity, religion, legal status, gender, psychosocial needs, marital status, sexual orientation, caretaker role, or any other discriminating factor;
4. To invest in education for sustainable development across curricula, particularly climate education, to develop the skills and knowledge needed to build resilience, mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis, and ensure climate justice.
5. To pay special attention to mental health, as well as create the optimal environment and promote recreational activities, and to generate positive complements and ensure equitable education for all youth.
6. To protect and support all youth in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and all other pertinent UN documents.
7. To invest in promoting and nurturing academic freedom, fostering an education that advances critical thinking, imagination, communication, innovation, socioemotional, and interpersonal skills, and investing in effectively combating misinformation;
8. To recognize and invest in non-formal education programs and organizations, particularly those that are youth-led, promoting the development of personal and collective values and civic engagement of youth;
9. To invest strategically in green and digital skills, policies, and strategies to enhance education, research, entrepreneurial opportunities, and decent jobs for youth.
10. To adopt more stringent laws on rape and all sexual assault, as well as more significant protection for victims from any harassment.  
Support from society is also required for rape victims through raising awareness about the stigma, advocating for changes in laws to ensure a better assistance for victims.

Guided by the above principles, purposes, and demands, we – the youth - are committed to:

1. Continue to stand in solidarity with every young person worldwide especially marginalized groups, and support all advocacy efforts towards introducing reforms and positive changes, particularly in education;
2. Promote intergenerational, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue and cooperation in education systems in all communities, countries, and regions to build a better world based on solidarity, diversity, empathy, mutual understanding, and respect.

Done in Porsgrunn On June 3rd 2023

