

Action Plan 6/2024-5/2025

Introduction

As an organisation, ESN Finland has developed to be a national supervisor and supporter of international students' interests. ESN Finland is currently composed of 15 local sections and one candidate section.

There is a growing demand for services that ESN Finland provides to its members and stakeholders. On the national level, there is a need for ESN Finland's competence to function with issues concerning international students and international higher education policies. The need for ESN Finland to adapt to the needs of its sections justifies the creation of a new role to work on HR and network related issues.

To perform all of the functions of ESN Finland, more resources are needed. This is one of the main focal points ESN Finland should attempt to tackle during not just next academic year but the following years in a strategic systematic way. For example, on the international level the practicalities regarding representation to ESN International still require fine-tuning.

The structure of ESN Finland should continuously be improved as has been attempted over the past board term. In the longer term, a new support structure, a secretariat, is needed to lift administrative tasks from the National Board (NB) to focus instead on strategic topics.

1. Members

Section Support

ESN Finland provides support to its members, also known as ESN local sections in Finland. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Provide support in administrative issues, for example founding a registered association (ry), financial counselling and meeting protocols.
- Provide financial support through the General Fund.
- Provide support on IT-related issues.
- Provide each local section with the opportunity to host a website sponsored by ESN Finland.
- Provide information on events, projects and opportunities available on the national and international levels of ESN.
- Provide support in organising national and international level events.

Member Development

There is still a potential to increase the number of member associations of ESN Finland. There exist several organisations similar to ESN in a number of higher education institutions that function independently. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Aid existing members in reaching high-level quality in organised activities and visibility among stakeholders.
- Assist the interested student unions or international clubs in becoming members of ESN.
- Inform the interested clubs of the advantages of becoming a member of ESN.
- Keep looking for new associations by following the statistics of the Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus) and comparing those to the cities of ESN sections.

2. Partnerships

Commercial Partners

ESN Finland has three national partnership agreements: the telecommunication company DNA, the travel agency Timetravels Ltd. and the bar owner Rekom group. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Try to give ESNcard a boost by onboarding at least one new national partner, and encouraging all sections to promote ESNcard among their students.
- Work to increase the employability of its volunteers by partnering with potential employers and polishing the professional image of ESN Finland as a supplier of skilled human resources.
- Attempt to find new national partners and sponsors, especially looking into buses, ferries or other similar transportation services, as well as accommodation partners.
- Ensure that the national partnership agreements are the most competitive.
- Participate actively in the discussion on deals of ESN International that concern ESN Finland and its members.

3. Finances

In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Apply for grants, for instance, the Opetushallitus travel grant and the general grant by the Ministry of Education and Culture or any other grant, provided that ESN Finland fulfils the requirements set for the said grant.
- Maintain the funding for ESN Finland General Fund.
- Evaluate better ways to utilise the General Fund and establish a bottoms-up working group to modernise the General Fund guidelines.
- Keep ESN Finland's accounting transparent and feasible.
- Ensure steady finances and proper budgeting that allow ESN Finland to keep up with the regrowing network in the post-COVID situation.

4. National Events

Pirates of the Baltic Sea

ESN Finland organises a national cruise event called Pirates of the Baltic Sea (PoBS) twice a year. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Continue developing the national events and organizing PoBS twice a year.
- Look for new partners to help further develop the event and continue cooperation with current partners.
- Look into different possibilities to make the event stable and ensure its continuation.
- Establishing the PoBS governance structure under NEvCo guidelines.

Training

ESN Finland has its own well-established training series called the FInsight. The aim of this training series is to provide important and useful soft and hard skills to the members of ESN Finland's sections, using the methods of non-formal education. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Provide training opportunities to its members to improve the quality of their actions and activities through the FInsight training series.
- Encourage and support its members to attend international training, e.g. the ones organised by Eduk8.
- Further develop the concept and quality of the FInsight training series.
- Collaborate with other NOs on organisation of various training events to better support sections' needs.
- Look into organising different types of training such as training aimed at developing certain types of soft skills (e.g. Communication, Leadership, Project Management) as well as position-specific training (e.g. IT, Partnerships, HR).
- Appoint a National Training Coordinator to manage the organisation of the training events.

5. Causes and Projects

Projects of ESN Finland

ESN Finland organises and takes part in different projects nationally. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Continue coordinating the annual order of ESN overalls and attempt to increase the number of sections participating in the order.
- Continue making the ESN Finland brand product family larger by considering ordering new products such as t-shirts, sweaters, patches, and other products, given that sections are interested in ordering them.

Causes and Projects of ESN International

ESN Finland participates in the six causes of ESN International: Culture, Education & Youth, Environmental Sustainability, Health & Wellbeing, Skills & Employability and Social Inclusion. In the following board term, ESN Finland will be advocating for these causes by:

- Promoting the Social Inclusion cause organising events, creating blog posts, campaigns in social media, as well as providing materials to sections and by partnering up with an organisation that also operates within the same cause. The position of the Social Inclusion Coordinator shall remain and be further developed.
- Promoting the Health & Wellbeing cause advocating for a healthy lifestyle and practice of sports. Additionally, participating in the International Erasmus Games as a project of the National Events Committee, and further developing the position of Health & Wellbeing Coordinator.
- Promoting the Culture cause by continuing to organise the national event PoBS, which shares student traditions with international events. Additionally, social media campaigns and cooperation with the sections should be used for the promotion of this cause.
- Promoting the Skills & Employability cause by creating social media campaigns and advocating for the sections to be in contact with Higher Education Institutes and companies in the city to create events where job seekers and companies can network. Additionally, this cause can be also promoted as part of the FInsight training.

- Promoting the Environmental Sustainability cause by releasing a sustainability manual for events and activities, as well as the creation of social media campaigns and sharing of best practices of the sections.
- Appointing an Education Officer to advocate for better and more accessible mobility opportunities among decision-makers in their country, as well as create nation-wide initiatives and hence promote the Education & Youth cause.
- Actively searching for new grants and partnerships to increase the value of ESN Finland by appointing a Partnership Manager to maintain the communication with potential partners.
- Appointing responsible board members for each of the above coordinator positions who stay in contact with the National Events Manager or take care of their duties in case there is no coordinator.

In the following board term, ESN Finland will be advocating for ESN international projects by:

- Promoting the Eduk8 events towards members of ESN Finland to strengthen the skills of ESN volunteers and increase the number of volunteers that are part of the different Eduk8 pools, as well as encouraging the formation of more trainers to conduct training sessions at Finsight and workshops during NAs.
- Promoting other possible ESN International projects, like ESNsurvey, within the ESN Finland network.

Additionally, the advocacy for the six causes of ESN will be aided by active participation as a strategic partner of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform. Such participation includes, but is not limited to:

- Attendance of the partners' meetings.
- Promotion of the camps, training and opportunities available through the platform.
- Participation in the planning and creation of youth events for the Baltic Sea region.

6. Involvement on the International Level

ESN Finland has been active at the international level in the past and current board terms. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Attempt to participate in at least the following international ESN meetings: both General Assemblies (GAs), National Boards' Training (NBT), Northern European Platform (NEP), as well as Erasmus Generation Meeting (EGM) of ESN AISBL.
- Strive to participate in the position-based Community Meetings (CM) of ESN AISBL, including Business and Finance Conference, Education Community Meeting, Communication Summit, IT Community Meeting, and HR and Network Community Meeting.
- Budget a decent amount for the CM so that all national-level members will have a reasonable chance of participating in them.
- Depending on the possibilities, strengthen the cooperation with other NEP countries, for instance in social media campaigns, events or grant projects.
- Provide information from the international level of ESN to local sections in Finland.
- Participate in other European meetings and events that suit the interests of ESN Finland, for example, those of the European Commission, the European Youth Forum, the Council of Europe, and other eligible meetings and seminars.
- Participate actively in the policy-making of ESN International.
- Continue working actively in the GA to monitor and develop ESN International.
- Participate actively in the discussions on the relevant international mailing lists.
- Encourage its members to join ESN Committees and actively provide information about them.
- Encourage its members to organise international ESN events and actively provide information about them.

7. Public Relations and Communication

Public relations are essential to promote visibility and boost the public image of ESN Finland. In order to be a widely-recognised and respectable organisation, ESN Finland needs to be more proactive in communications. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Advise usage of the ESN brand to the local sections in Finland.
- Supervise the member sections of the values and principles of ESN branding and monitor their PR materials.

- Share information about ESN Finland's matters through mailing lists, Slack and social media, for example, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X.
- Encourage all sections to add creativity to their local identity while respecting ESN corporate branding.
- Promote the use of ESN Galaxy and Wiki platforms.
- Continue to develop and actively update the ESN Finland related sites: esnfinland.eu, pobs.esnfinland.eu, wiki.esn.org/display/FI, pobsapp.esnfinland.eu
- Resume developing the National Communication Committee (ComFi) and encouraging collaboration with local sections to provide content materials in order to raise awareness among members of ESN Finland.
- Produce blog articles and periodic newsletters with the help of the National Communication Committee (ComFi).
- Create and maintain the ESN Finland's community for local communication managers.
- Collect and create PR materials, such as gadgets, photos and videos, to further increase the visibility of the organisation.
- Support transparent communications between NB and local sections.
- Offer possibilities for communication and interaction training for the local sections.

Social Media Campaigns

Social media plays a big part of ESN Finland visibility as an umbrella organisation to local sections and external stakeholders. Creative campaigns increase visibility and engagement, which is why ESN Finland is planning to work in the following campaigns or activities:

- Encourage youth and students to vote in upcoming EU Parliament elections.
- Promote ESN causes and projects via, among others, themed weeks and international campaigns.
- Promote Finnish culture by providing interesting insights on special days of the year.
- Make a collaborative effort within the NEP region.
- Gather testimonials on various topics, eg. mobility, and promote them on platforms.
- In case of extraordinary and/or unforeseen situations, develop a dedicated strategy to constantly inform the important information regarding the situation.

8. IT Tools and Digital Infrastructure

IT tools and software are invaluable to facilitate smooth operations of ESN Finland. However, ESN Finland has been suffering from a chronic lack of human resources in the IT field for which a more permanent solution, than relying on volunteer efforts, is warranted to prevent loss of work. In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Create a new website that contains up to date functionalities, better UI designs & content relevant to ESN Finland and its sections
- Ensure the ESN Finland Wiki space is well maintained and up to date, and at the same time develop it further by:
 - Collecting information about the sections that the others can benefit from.
 - Sharing international documents and knowledge transfer materials.
 - Collecting good practices from the sections.
- Provide learning materials related to IT needs by creating tutorials and using the existing support network from the IT committee's Helpcenter.
- Establish good IT knowledge transfer practices between sections and the NB through the IT LCM.
- Manage website domains belonging to ESN Finland sections.
- Encourage and help sections to use Slack as the official communication channel.

9. Internal Organisation

Committees

The National Committees support the whole network and work under NB. To keep this support in the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Appoint NB responsible for each existing committee.
- Actively recruit new people to the suitable committees.
- Look into establishing new committees if needed by the network.

National Events Committee (NEvCo)

To help with the organisation of the national events, NEvCo will continue to be a supportive body of ESN Finland. NEvCo is divided into two projects, PoBS and INET (Internal Events Team).

- INET's responsibilities include main communication with the OCs of internal events of ESN Finland, such as NAs and FI Insights. Support sections organizing national events.
- PoBS is responsible for organising PoBS events.

In the following board term, ESN Finland will:

- Establish INET as a functional team of NEvCo.
- Continue supporting NEvCo's growth.
- Consolidate the structure with vice-chairs to establish an efficient task division.
- Promote the committee.
- Planning a new project on participating in the International Erasmus Games.

Communication Committee (ComFi)

One of the top priorities for the next Communication Manager should be developing a strong and recognisable brand guideline for ESN Finland, always respecting the Visual Identity of ESN. For that reason, structuring and bonding the ComFi shall be a goal for the next board. To achieve that goal, ESN Finland will:

- Updating an internal regulation for the committee.
- Establishing medium and long term goals for the committee and next boards to follow.
- Include the local sections in the development of the committee to resonate with the local capability.

National Board Restructuring

To equalise the workload of different national board positions, the task division should be reconsidered.

With the new national HR Manager position, more care should be taken to the sections and its consistent development. Frequent section visits should be organised and new Quality Assurance documents should come in place.

Additionally, ESN Finland removed the old fashioned NR position, together with the CLR and instead established new Local Community Meetings (LCMs) to better support each local board position separately. With the increase of communication between the national and local level, ESN Finland should achieve smoother knowledge sharing.

Arbitration Board

ESN Finland elected its next Arbitration Board for a 2-year-mandate which starts on 1.1.2025. To better serve the duties of the Arbitration Board, ESN Finland may provide a budget for legal consultations. The next Arbitration Board will be elected at the NA Autumn 2024. ESN Finland will work together with the Arbitration Board in order to further develop their position and tasks.