



PIF Youth Academy – Nuorten Akatemia

PARTNER ORGANISATION	
PIC	<i>Ask when needed</i>
OID	<i>Ask when needed</i>
Full legal name (National Language)	Nuorten Akatemia (Youth Academy)
Full legal name (Latin characters)	
Acronym	NA
National ID (if applicable)	
Department (if applicable)	
Address (Street and number)	Toinen linja 17, 3. kerros
Country	Finland
Region	Helsinki-Uusimaa
P.O. Box	
Post Code	00530
CEDEX	
City	Helsinki
Website	www.nuortenakatemia.fi
Email	
Telephone 1	+358400413833
Telephone 2	
Fax	

PROFILE	
Type of organisation	Non-governmental organisation/association
Is the partner organisation a public body?	No
Is the partner organisation a non-profit?	Yes

ACCREDITATION	
Has the organisation received any type of accreditation before submitting this application?	<i>Ask when needed</i>
Has the organisation received/applied for any EU grants?	Yes

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE	
Please briefly present the partner organisation.	<p>Youth Academy is a non-profit organisation that supports and strengthens young people's involvement in society. It promotes youth participation and youth inclusion in both formal and non-formal education. Youth Academy's projects are firmly based on the needs and trends of today's society. Topics include e.g. climate change, sports, intellectual property rights, sexual health, youth unemployment and personal economy. In all its projects, Youth Academy emphasises participatory processes and youth engagement. Currently the organisation employs 20 people (2022).</p> <p>Youth Academy's member organisations include the largest Finnish youth and sport associations. Among the most important partners are the Ministry of Education and Culture and Finland's Slot Machine Association. Youth Academy also cooperates with several other public institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Transport Agency, and the European Union. Additionally, the organisation receives funding from private trusts and companies. Youth Academy has also a broad network of partner schools and teachers all over Finland and holds a good reputation in reaching young people in schools and other learning institutes.</p> <p>Collaborating with partner organisations in Finland and internationally, Youth Academy focuses on facilitating young people's participation, learning, and own projects. It also provides useful materials, tools, and training for adults working with young people. In 2021 approximately 30 000 young people from 13 to 29 years old were involved in various projects implemented by the organisation. In addition, over 4500 adults (youth workers, teachers etc) took part in training, events and fairs and acted as members of advisory boards.</p>
What are the activities and experience of the organisation?	<p>Youth Academy has carried out multiple successful projects and provided services in cooperation with a diverse range of organisations. The organisation's focus and expertise rely on participatory processes and co-creation, where perspectives of young people are heard and valued. With the aim of providing young people important skills and experiences of success, Youth Academy supports both their school life and leisure.</p> <p>Youth Academy implements projects on various topics and as a result young people are included in a group meaningful to themselves, they have access to learning opportunities and can accomplish their own goals. Empowering young people to become active citizens and participate in society, the organisation supports their growth and life management skills. Youth Academy helps increase interactive and conversational encounters between youth and adults working with young people.</p> <p>Currently, some of the active projects include:</p> <p><i>Mahis</i> – For 20 years, this programme has trained mentors that can apply for funding for youth-initiated projects. Its primary focus is on supporting young people from 13 to 17 years of age at risk of becoming marginalised. The grant enables young people to realise their own ideas and improve their opportunities for equal participation. Along with training mentors, this programme has also produced an extensive collection of material focused on participatory methods freely available for adults to use when working with young people.</p> <p><i>Inclusion is On</i> – The project is an international partnership project that handles the accessibility and inclusion at youth free-time activities. The goal is to develop and share good practices with partner organisations. The project is funded by Erasmus+ KA2 -programme.</p> <p><i>Sports as an Equal Playground (SPED)</i> – This project is focused on inclusion, social accessibility, and equality in sports activities. The project is an international partnership project, funded with Erasmus+ Sport –programme. The aim of the project is to share and utilize the good practices of the partners, to compile the good practices into a guide and to train members of organisations and volunteers.</p> <p><i>Harrastaen tutuksi</i> – This project is focused on making leisure activities equally accessible for youngster with diverse immigrant backgrounds. A nation-wide project works at a grassroots</p>

level in several locations to bring together young people and leisure activity providers. Targeting issues and challenges in integration, the project empowers young people to recognise their own skills and get their voices heard in an open discussion across sectors. The aim is to identify obstacles for accessibility and improve opportunities for all with concrete solutions.

Meidän projekti! – Facilitating young people's volunteer opportunities in upper secondary and vocational schools, this project is funded by ESF and coordinated by the Finnish Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment. Meidän projekti! also targets especially preparatory education classes which often consist of immigrant youth. During this course, students plan their own volunteer project based on their own interests. This provides them with valuable work life experience in their chosen field. The volunteer projects are implemented locally and improve students' self-confidence, ability to work in teams and manage budgets.

Workshops for schools and other learning institutes – With themes ranging from personal economy, Sámi people, taxes, insurance, solidarity, sexual health, climate change, traffic safety to many more, Youth Academy trains volunteers to visit schools and lead participatory workshops for young people. Visits can be incorporated with e.g., social sciences, natural sciences, or student counselling classes, and provide additional learning in current and relevant topics. Methods utilise digital platforms in engaging young people in active discussions. Workshops are designed around young people's own interests and support their equal participation.

Digital games for schools and other learning institutes – Youth Academy has produced several mobile games on a digital platform (seppo.io) available for schools. Games have been built around themes including e.g., Agenda 2030, climate change, solidarity, and the European Union. The online platform allows for versatile ways of using mobile technology and engaging students in teamwork when completing the exercises. The games adopt a pedagogical approach to addressing diverse topics to make learning a fun and interactive process.

Additional education for officials, teachers, and adults working with young people – Youth Academy provides additional education for teachers in current topics such as conscious consumption. Further, it provides materials, tools, and training in participatory methods and youth involvement for organisations and regional divisions interested in improving their impact on and work with young people. This includes providing consultation and information on how to increase accessibility of youth services. Youth Academy acts as an expert and advisor in the field of youth work with a specific focus on youth participation.

Youth Work Centre of Expertise – Youth Academy administers a Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture approved consortium in the field of participation of young people. The status as a youth work centre of expertise makes the consortium eligible for state aid in 2018–2019. The centres' aims are to develop and promote competence, expertise, and communications in the youth sector in accordance with the Youth Act.

<p>How can the organisation best contribute to the project?</p>	<p>All Youth Academy's actions emphasise social inclusion and are based on providing equal opportunities for young people despite their socio-economic or cultural background. The organisation is known for its diverse projects and innovative approach towards youth work. With an extensive network of teachers, schools, organisations, businesses and government agencies, Youth Academy can ensure the reach and impact of every project.</p> <p>Youth Academy has valuable knowledge on how to offer young people new ways to participate and learn, how to educate adults on enabling young people's participation, and how to motivate young people in various activities. The organisation promotes youth engagement and has extensive practical experience in bringing young people together with various actors across sectors to discuss and find solutions to societal problems. Youth Academy has a strong expertise in executing workshops that include young people and representatives from organisations, businesses, governmental agencies, or experts from diverse fields. The organisation provides opportunities for young people to directly influence their actions and participation based on their own interests. Facilitating interaction and ideation sessions, Youth Academy manages to involve young people from the beginning of each project to work in an inspiring atmosphere.</p> <p>Youth Academy's staff consists of people with diverse educational backgrounds. These include social sciences, youth work, humanities, natural sciences, educational and pedagogic studies, coaching, psychology, communications, design, business, and many more. Having such multitasked personnel offers a unique combination of skills and expertise in tackling the various tasks involved in projects. This also gives the organisation fluidity, which creates opportunities for further development. The innovative mentality to always improve and discover new concepts helps Youth Academy to develop its resilience in taking on new challenges. In addition, project topics follow interests of the staff, which keeps people motivated in their work.</p> <p>Youth Academy has a long-standing and stable status in the field of Finnish youth work and can offer valuable insight into grassroots work and youth participation. It also has a strong online presence and functional social media channels that are actively updated. Project information is typically shared through a variety of communication channels including web page, social media platforms, regularly published newsletter, relevant partner meetings, and blog.</p>
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LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE	
Title	Mr
Gender	M
First Name	Heikki
Family Name	Vuojakoski
Department	
Position	Executive Director
Email	heikki.vuojakoski@nuortenakatemia.fi
Telephone 1	+358400413833
Address	Toinen linja 17, 3. kerros
Country	Finland
Region	Helsinki-Uusimaa
P.O. Box	
Post Code	00530
CEDEX	

City	Helsinki
Telephone 2	

CONTACT PERSON	
Title	Mr
Gender	M
First Name	Heikki
Family Name	Vuojakoski
Department	
Position	Executive Director
Email	heikki.vuojakoski@nuortenakatemia.fi
Telephone 1	+358400413833
Address	Toinen linja 17, 3rd floor
Country	Finland
Region	Helsinki-Uusimaa
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Post Code	00530
CEDEX	
City	Helsinki
Telephone 2	