

HYVÄRILÄ

HYVÄRILÄ YOUTH CENTRE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH WORK REPORT 2025

 [hyvarilainternational](https://www.instagram.com/hyvarilainternational/)

International internships, volunteering projects, youth exchanges,
training courses for professionals, strategic development projects



Overview of international activities of 2025

Thematic focus on sustainability, cultural heritage and creativity, digital development, mental health and wellbeing.
Main target groups came from rural areas of Finland and EU.

This year we focused on bringing newcomers to international cooperation field, and building capacities of youth and youth workers to initiate and implement international projects.

250+ IN 15 FROM 24

PARTICIPANTS

MOBILITIES

COUNTRIES



Co-funded by
the European Union

International activities of 2025 were co-funded by the European Union within European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ programmes (including KA1 and KA2).

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Youth exchange participant about an unexpected learning outcome:

“

I stopped being afraid before speaking in English, because I realised that I improved a lot, and even if I make a mistake it is completely okay.



International youth club launched in 2025!

Thanks to Accreditation within Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, Hyvärilä youth centre is able to plan international activities ahead, and thus international youth club "KV-klubi" opened its doors to youth from Nurmes.

Face-to-face meetings

International youth club is open for free to all youngsters from Nurmes and Valtimo area, aged 13 to 29 years old.

Meetings take place every second Thursday of the month in Nuorten Kulma space at 16:00.

Whatsapp community

Youngsters can join a Whatsapp community to stay updated about international opportunities - such as calls for applications within Discover EU program, grants and projects across Europe and projects of Hyvärilä youth centre.

Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter comes to inbox of those who sign up for it. It features results of projects, implemented by Hyvärilä youth centre, announcements of upcoming international events in Nurmes and Valtimo, and calls for applications to join new international projects of Hyvärilä.

Come as you are

We welcome everyone, regardless of their English language level or background. Young people are invited to join even if just to listen. If they wish to join international initiatives -they can do that when and if they feel ready to take on this step.

International youth work strategy till 2030 is published

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIVITIES TILL 2030



Capacity building for youth workers

Artificial intelligence and Virtual reality in youth work

Organized in Hyvärilä youth centre in January 2025, training inspired youth workers from Finland and Slovenia to discover new methods of working with youth, and gave an overview of safety and responsibility when using digital technology in youth work. During four days youth workers tested a variety of AI tools and VR glasses.



The art of storytelling

Training course took place in Tenerife, Spain, in October 2025. Together with youth workers from all over Europe, two representatives of Hyvärilä team learned how to use storytelling for impactful youth work.



Six Handshakes 2.0.

Partnership building activity for youth workers from EU and Eastern Partnership countries took place in November 2025. Over the course of 4 days, new partnerships were formed and ten new project ideas were born and developed,

Hyvärilä youth centre aims to develop internationality in Eastern Finland. In 2025 local youth workers of Nurmes, Polvijärvi, Rauravaara, Lieksa, Lapinlahti and Pieksämäki took part in international capacity building activities.

Youth exchanges

Embarking on a youth exchange for many is a great challenge in itself. Organizing activities for peers and acting as activity leaders poses even a greater challenge. But at the same time, it gives space for growth and learning.

◆ Over the garden wall

Done in Hyvärilä in February, 2025.

Main theme of this youth exchange was proposed by youth from Pieksämäki. Together with peers from Malta, Spain, Poland and Croatia they exchanged tips and methods of finding balance and taking care of their mental health and wellbeing.

Together, they planned a new project, that should take place in Tenerife, Spain in 2026.



◆ Together towards wellbeing

Youth exchange devoted to wellbeing was designed and implemented by youth from Lieksa, Hungary, Armenia and Georgia. They explored how hobbies, connection with others, physical exercise, learning and giving back to community can contribute to their wellbeing.

Activity took place in Hyvärilä youth centre in April, 2025.



◆ Let's talk about the money

A group of youth from Rautavaara set off in September to take part in this youth exchange in Lublin, Poland.

They dove into topics of financial literacy, investment, sustainability in money use, and implemented workshops in local schools for children, presenting their findings.

“

It takes time and effort to organize a youth exchange. Team leaders did a great job, and participants were very creative and serious in the workshops.

“

I learned that unexpected challenges can lead to the most valuable lessons, especially when working in diverse environments.

“

I learned that I can be really good at projects. I can be motivated for people and for me.



“

...where every moment became a memory and every friend felt like family.

Why youth exchanges matter?

Participants of youth exchanges benefit most from seeing how their idea comes to life - by ensuring participation of young people in project planning from the idea development and to final evaluation after implementation, young people see how they can participate and affect decision-making.

As an extra step - going abroad in a team of peers under supervision of a team-leader nurtures independence and develops self-esteem.

International internships

In 2025 we continue cooperation with Sezana vocational school named after Srezko Kosovel and hosted interns from Slovenia. Students of interior design came for individual and team internships in spring and summer to implement creative projects.

Mural paintings

Students started phase 1 of a two-phase project in July 2025 by developing a design concept for Rantatupa hostel walls. They brought together their impressions of the Finnish nature and Hyvärilä youth centre activities in a series of murals, bringing a feel of train travel into the Finnish nature into rooms and corridors of the hostel. Murals depict Nurmes in different seasons of the year and forest animals in their habitat.



Printed booklet

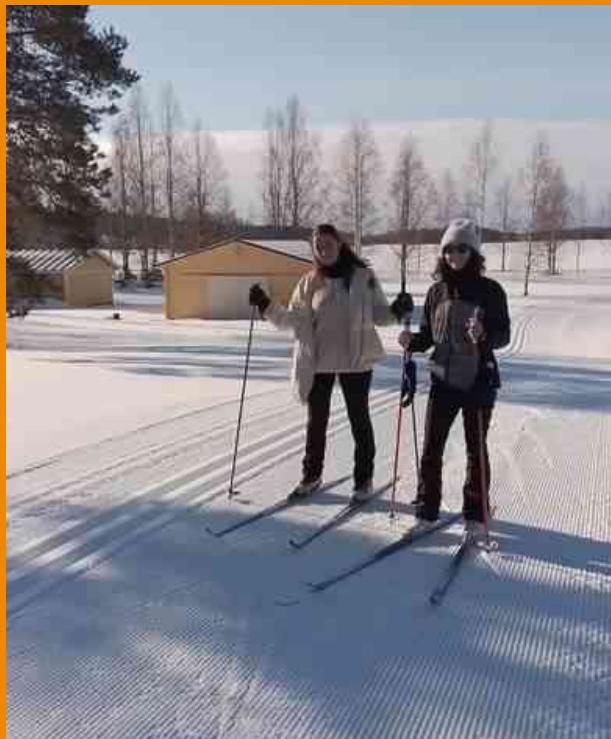
Individual internship of two months made it possible for a design student to create a printed booklet "Adventures of Tina the squirrel in Hyvärilä" which is now available in play room for reading.



Brandbook in use

During internships, students use the brandbook of Finnish Youth Centres to draw inspirations and guidelines for their creations. They get to see in practice the importance of visual identity and its continuity throughout creative production.

International volunteering



Project "Culture and Creativity in North Karelia" brought two volunteers from Italy and France to Hyvärilä youth centre for two months. Volunteers participated in designing visual aids for "Campton" - an online event within "ROIHU" project, which develops creative thinking and new working models in Hyvärilä and Metsäkartano youth centres.

“

I really appreciate how creativity was everywhere and in every task that I did. I am proud of myself for having done this.

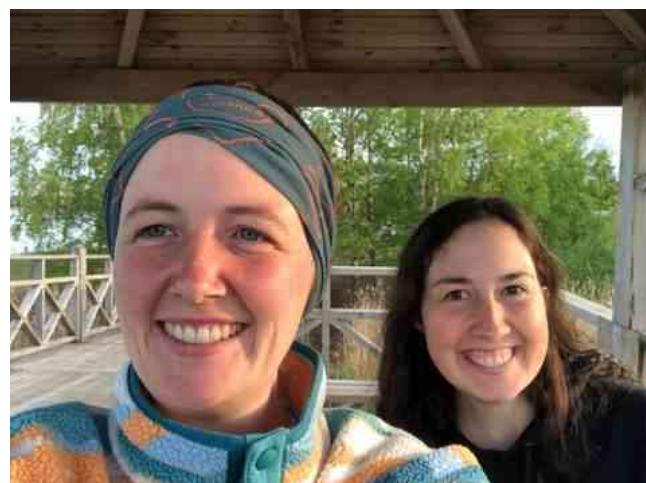
Discover Finland - Discover Yourself

International exposure

Volunteers from Germany and Austria stayed in Hyvärilä youth centre for 8 months to help implement camp school activities, bring international encounters closer to the local youth by visiting schools and taking part in local events, as well as international youth exchanges and mobilities for youth workers.

Learning by doing

Volunteers got to know pedagogical approaches of Finnish youth centres by being actively involved. They learned new digital tools, such as filming and editing 360 videos for virtual reality glasses, and tried content creation for social media. Organizing workshops as leaders, and creating new games for groups was a challenging experience that gave a boost to their personal development.



Team volunteering

A total of 45 young persons from all over the world took part in three regular team volunteering activities in Hyvärilä:

Green Week in April 2025.

Summer Talkoot in July 2025.

Celebrating Kekri in October 2025.

They focused on themes of sustainability and cultural heritage - learning about it themselves and reaching out to the local community to share the knowledge.



over 3000

People
Reached

International teams come out to the local community of Nurmes and Valtimo with workshops and events: in schools, local associations and events in Hyvärilä

BLUEFRONT - youth leading the blue revolution

BLUE SCHOOL workshops were launched this autumn with a pilot group from Pielisjoki school in Joensuu. A group of youngsters take part in participatory research of the water supply system in Joensuu in order to find out challenges and possible solutions to water problems. They continue their work in 2026 to develop a water road map for the local community and present it publicly.



Participatory research training

A group of 25 young people and youth workers tested BLUEFRONT methodology on participatory research methods in Matera, Italy in September 2025. Based on the results, methods were adjusted for use with pilot groups locally.

Training on advocacy and participation

Youth workers from Finland, Hungary, Italy, Malta and Greece spent a week in Budapest, Hungary, to work out advocacy methods to be included in BLUEFRONT methodology in November 2025.



Digital ruralship

Inspired by a training on AI and VR, which took place in Hyvärilä youth centre in January 2025, DIGITAL RURALSHIP project was born.

Project is implemented in 2025-2027 within KA2 partnership with Spain, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Italy.

Youth workers will discover how Virtual Reality technology can enrich their work locally and on international level and share their findings.



According to the project plan, in 2026 partners will start mapping out needs for new digital youth work methods via focus groups with the local youth.

Youth workers will meet for a training mobility in Hungary in autumn 2026, where they will present their VR workshops to each other and come up with a joint plan for international exchange between youth.

They will research available tools in the world of VR and pilot them in a test international youth exchange, which will take place in VR already at the end of 2026.

Professionals from Nuorten Kulma Nurmes takes the lead from the Finnish side in the practical implementation of the project.

Work results will be summarized and presented to youth workers from EU in a free massive online course in 2027.



When good people come together and work as a team, amazing things can happen

Thank you for being with us in 2025!

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