**EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS**

**FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS**

**INITIATIVE PROPOSAL**

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| Title of the initiative: Empowering Youth Workers: Advancing Human Rights and Equal Treatment through Estonian-Icelandic Cooperation |  |
| Implementing entity *(beneficiary state entity):*  Estonian Human Rights Centre |  |
| Partner(s) *(minimum one donor state entity)*:  Samtökin '78 – Iceland  The Estonian Association of Youth Workers |  |
| Bilateral priority area identified by the JCBF beyond the programmes:  X promotion of core European values, such as  respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights for all people, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity;   * E-governance (digitalization) * eastern partnership   x equality and equal treatment   * competitive business environment, sustainable and adaptive governance (based on “Competitiveness Plan for 2020” approved by the Government of Estonia) |  |
| Allocation *(total sum)*: 67 117 EUR  *(A more detailed project budget description in the activity plan)* |  |

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| Short description of the initiative:  *(background, aim, participants, activity plan, budget outline, communication and dissemination)*  Aim of the project  The project aims to enhance youth workers' knowledge of human rights, with a particular focus on equal treatment, to foster better understanding and create safe spaces for youth belonging to minorities or those who are particularly vulnerable, such as queer youth.  Background and need for the project  This project focuses on fostering Estonian-Icelandic cooperation in human rights education for youth workers, building on the successful partnerships previously developed by the Estonian Association of Youth Workers (EAYW), the Estonian Human Rights Centre (EHRC), and Samtökin '78. EAYW and EHRC have already collaborated extensively on human rights education initiatives, including efforts to combat hate speech. Meanwhile, EHRC and Samtökin '78 are currently working together on a pan-Baltic human rights project. This new proposal aims to further strengthen these relationships and broaden the impact of our work within the youth work community.  All three organizations are dedicated to ensuring that respect for human rights and equal treatment becomes a reality in our countries. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. For example, while Estonia is proud of its PISA results, less attention has been paid to the [International Civic and Citizenship Education Study](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2023-11/ICCS%202022%20Eesti%20raport%2028.11.pdf?fbclid=IwAR27LxugTUrvSEz-hUEk0GrPAoQ7LDJ1TYy97SIRDKjkENPUqTaUsxZh9sk) (ICCS), which examines knowledge of society and democracy. The ICCS reveals that Estonian boys' attitudes towards gender equality have significantly regressed since 2016. For instance, a quarter of boys believe women should stay out of politics, and half think men are better suited to politics than women. Additionally, several hate speech monitoring projects and studies show that hate speech in Estonia is primarily directed at the LGBT+ community, comprising up to 80% of all reported cases. This is evidenced for example by a [study](https://humanrights.ee/app/uploads/2022/11/Uuring-vaenu-leviku-kohta-Eesti-sotsiaalmeedias.pdf) conducted by the EHRC in 2022, which was based on detailed social media monitoring of hate speech.  These findings underscore the critical importance of human rights-based youth work, which must be continuously promoted among youth workers—perhaps more urgently in Estonia than ever before. The Estonian Association of Youth Workers unites youth workers across the country, and the Estonian Human Rights Centre brings extensive experience in both protecting and promoting human rights. Together, this collaboration has the potential to strengthen the role of human rights-based youth work in Estonia. Samtökin '78's participation is also crucial and highly anticipated, as it brings invaluable Icelandic expertise, hands-on experience with vulnerable youth, and broadens the perspectives on future possibilities for all parties involved in the project.  Participants  The Estonian Association of Youth Workers (EAYW) is a professional non-governmental organization representing both paid and volunteer youth workers. EAYW is dedicated to promoting youth work rooted in human rights values, emphasizing the importance of young people as active participants and equal partners in their youth work experiences. Additionally, organisation strives to foster the professional development of our members. Estonian youth work is guided by the Estonian Code of Occupational Ethics in Youth Work, which emphasizes that youth workers must be tolerant and respectful of, avoiding any form of discrimination. |  |

**The Estonian Human Rights Centre** is a non-governmental organization that works to protect and promote human rights in Estonia. EHRC focuses on various areas of human rights, including non-discrimination, equality, freedom of speech, and privacy. The organization plays a vital role in raising awareness, advocating for policy changes, and providing legal support in cases related to human rights violations. The EHRC has also organized training sessions, workshops, and awareness campaigns specifically relevant to youth workers, focusing on fostering inclusive environments and ensuring that the rights of young people are respected and upheld.

**Samtökin '78**, the National Queer Association of Iceland, is an organization established in 1978, from which the name derives. The organization's purpose is to ensure that lesbians, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, intersex, trans people, and other queer individuals are visible, acknowledged, and enjoy full rights in Icelandic society. To achieve this goal, the mission is to engage with politicians, influence public opinion, and support members of the queer community. The organization pays special attention to youth community work, aiming to create and maintain safe havens for teens and young adults—a place where they can be themselves, connect with peers, and feel a sense of belonging. In recent years, significant growth in queer community initiatives for adolescents and young adults has been noted, with more queer gatherings and community centers emerging across the country.

**Communication and Dissemination**

For internal communication, the project will utilize a mailing list and a needs-based approach to online meetings.

For external communication and a coordinated dissemination strategy, the project's communication plan will be developed by the communication manager of EHRC in collaboration with team members from all three organizations. The project will have a dedicated subpage on the EHRC website, available in both Estonian and English, to keep the public informed about the project's activities and progress.

To promote the call for participation in the winter school, the project team will primarily use well-established channels of the EAYW, such as their mailing list and monthly newsletter.

For disseminating the toolkit, all partners will leverage their social media channels and other available platforms. For example, EHRC will promote the toolkit through its weekly newsletter in Estonian and its monthly newsletter in English.

**Activity plan:**

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|  | **Activity** | **Time** | **Location** | **Cost** | **Participants** |
| 1. | **Toolkit Development**  A concise, 12 page toolkit on human rights education methods for youth workers in Estonia and Iceland will be developed, with a special emphasis on queer youth where relevant. This toolkit may include both existing and new methods and will serve as the foundation for the upcoming winter school for youth workers. It aims to be a practical resource for implementing human rights practices in youth centers and organizations. The toolkit will be translated into local languages, professionally designed, and made available in PDF format. | November-April 2024 | Estonia and Iceland | **8042 EUR** (includes the following costs: salary of the Estonian and Icelandic experts, design, translation, project management and overhead). | Led by the EHRC but Samtökin '78, EYWA and participants of Winter School will contribute |
| 2. | **Study Visit to Iceland**  A study visit to Iceland will be organized to meet with Samtökin '78 and learn about human rights, equal treatment and queer rights in Iceland. The visit will place special emphasis on understanding the youth community work carried out by Samtökin '78. The visit will last 4 days, excluding travel time, and will include 3 representatives each from EAYW and EHRC.  The study visit aims not only to learn about the situation in Iceland and the work of Samtökin '78 but also to collaboratively prepare the content and agenda for the Estonian Youth Workers Winter School, scheduled for March 2025. The first draft of the toolkit will also be reviewed and amended as needed during this visit. | November or December 2024 | Iceland | **14 224 EUR** (includes the following costs: salary of the Estonian and Icelandic experts, travel for six persons, hotel, per diems, local transport, project management and overhead). | Led by Samtökin '78 but participants are representatives of all three partners |
| 3. | **Estonian Youth Workers Winter School on Human Rights-Based Youth Work**  3-day winter school will be held for Estonian youth workers, focusing on human rights and equal treatment, with particular emphasis on queer youth. The event will feature up to 5 experts and participants from Iceland, who will share Icelandic experiences and encourage mutual reflection and learning beyond the Estonian context.  The winter school aims to provide an overview of the human rights situation in Estonia and Iceland relevant to youth workers, equip participants with key concepts of human rights and equal treatment, and create a supportive environment where participants can explore their knowledge, biases, creativity, and professionalism in human rights-based youth work. The event will include practical, creative activities and workshops led by experts from Estonia and Iceland. Special attention will be paid on queer youth challenges both in Estonia and Iceland. The human rights education toolkit will be used and discussed during the winter school, with feedback collected to further refine it. | March 2025 | Estonia, outside Tallinn | **35 842 EUR** (includes the following costs: salary of the Estonian and Icelandic experts, Icelandic experts trip to Estonia, winter school accommodation, catering, transport, communication, project management and overhead). | Led by EAYW but assisted by EHRC and Samtökin '78. Participans are Estonian youth workers and representatives of all three project partners. |
| 4. | **Follow-Up Meeting and Forward-Looking Seminar for Project Team** The project team will convene immediately after the Winter School in Tallinn for a 2-day seminar focused on reflecting on the outcomes of the Youth Workers Winter School. This seminar will also provide an opportunity to finalize the toolkit, establish the next steps for the project, and explore potential avenues for future cooperation. | March 2025 | Tallinn | **9009 EUR** (includes the following costs: Estonian and Icelandic experts, hotel for the Icelandic experts, project management, catering). | Led by EHRC, complemented by other partners. |
| 5. | **Final Online Closing Meeting** | April 2025 | Online | The cost is included under Activity 4. | All partners |

Planned results[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| OUTPUT | INDICATOR | TARGET |
| Toolkit for youth workers on human rights education methods | Number of toolkits for youth workers distributed (online) | 500 |
| Estonian Youth Workers Winter School on Human Rights-Based Youth Work concluded | Number of participants and their level of satisfaction with content of the summer school | Number of participants: 40-50 participants Level of satisfaction: scale (scale to be agreed between the partners during the project meetings) |
| Enhanced  collaboration  between three partners | Enhanced  collaboration  between the partners and their level of satisfaction with project and partnership | Will be measured qualitatively by feedback form |

1. Please refer to the [Results Guideline](https://eeagrants.org/resources/2014-2021-results-guideline) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)