

European Youth For Action

EYFA

***STRATEGIC
APPROACH
2024***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. About EYFA.....	4
a) What is EYFA?.....	4
b) What does EYFA do?.....	5
c) Who does EYFA support?.....	8
2. EYFA's vision.....	10
3. EYFA's objectives.....	12
a) Capacity Building.....	12
b) Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes.....	13
c) Cross-Regional Cooperation.....	13
d) Intersectionality.....	13
4. EYFA's priorities.....	16
a) Non-formal Education.....	16
b) Revitalising democracy: Youth access to rights through Social and Environmental Justice organizing.....	17
c) Inclusion, Accessibility and Empowerment.....	18

1. About EYFA

a) What is EYFA?

EYFA developed from a tour that was initiated by a Swedish/German group in 1986 to save the old-growth forests in Europe: then named European Youth Forest Action. From these beginnings, EYFA has developed into a network of individuals, grassroots organisations and collectives working to transform local and international communities in their approach to environmental and social, political and economic positions. EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential.

Today, EYFA is dedicated to creating and holding spaces that empower youth in Europe to initiate and lead projects aimed at achieving socio-ecological justice and equality. We specifically cater to the needs of intersectionally marginalized youth across Europe, providing them with opportunities to engage and take action at both local and international levels. EYFA's initiatives prioritize access for diverse groups to participate in grassroots movements, especially the ones that are less represented in political and democratic processes, such as gendered and racialized minorities, and groups facing discriminations based on their socioeconomic backgrounds or disability. EYFA is structured as a Europe-wide network of grassroots groups, supported by a central office and an advisory board that guides our mission. Through our collective efforts, we strive to uplift marginalized perspectives and catalyze meaningful change in communities throughout the continent.

b) What does EYFA do?

EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential. The international office based in Berlin oversees and executes EYFA's projects and activities, coordinating essential administrative, financial and communication tasks. Additionally, it serves as the network's primary contact point for disseminating local information.

EYFA supports and encourages grassroots projects and initiatives in the following ways:

- Organizing various spaces for exchange, forums, trainings, network gatherings, projects and activities.
- Promoting innovative ways of working in the field of social and environmental activism, such as non-formal participatory education, consensus-based decision-making, art and activism, free and open source software.
- Sharing knowledge on essential topics such as meeting facilitation, fundraising, civil society strategizing, conflict management, campaigning, mental health in civil society organizing.
- Networking with and supporting grassroots movements and civil society organizations across Europe committed to similar broad objectives and political priorities.
- Communicating information on environmental and social justice issues, and amplifying the work of groups, communities, movements, and NGOs within our networks, by disseminating their events, publications and call outs.

- Addressing and challenging the structures of systemic inequalities such as racism, colonialism, classism, ableism or anthropocentrism, that our European societies reproduce even within environmental justice and grassroots movements.

20TH- 25TH
AUGUST
2024

NEAR
AMSTERDAM
NETHERLANDS



DECOLONIAL CLIMATE JUSTICE GATHERING RIGHT TO COME! RIGHT TO STAY!

An international gathering by and for BIPOC/
migrants/refugees/activists. In those 6 days we
will have workshops on the topics of climate
justice and forced migration, self-organisation,
sustainable activism and empowerment.

Funded by



In Partnership with
Papaya Kuir



Illustrations: Eyfa's 2024 International Gathering on Decolonial Climate Justice: Right to Come! Right to Stay! - **Above:** Poster – First announcement of the gathering – **Below:** Picture at the end of the workshop on grassroots organising in Europe for Climate Justice in the DRC.



c) Who does EYFA support?

EYFA is dedicated to supporting the following grassroots groups:

1. **Youth:** We aim to empower youth organizing who are often at the forefront of social change. Our initiatives focus on providing them with the tools, knowledge, and resources to become active participants in social and environmental justice movements.

2. **BIPoC Communities:** We prioritize the engagement and support of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPoC) communities in Europe. This includes recognizing their unique experiences and challenges within the broader context of social, environmental and climate justice.

3. **Queer and Gendered Minorities:** We actively seek to support Queer grassroots groups or groups organized by and for gendered minorities, acknowledging their diverse experiences, challenges, but also their unique knowledge, in community organizing for socio-ecological justice.

4. **Marginalized Communities:** Our efforts are directed towards all communities that face societal or institutional barriers to access resources, formal education, and democratic institutions. Those include, but are not limited to, communities in mobility (e.g. migrants, refugees, or forcibly displaced communities), communities subjected to class discrimination, or groups organized by and for disabled communities. We strive to amplify these groups and communities' perspectives, and to ensure they have the necessary support to engage in socio-ecological advocacy.

By focusing on the intersections of these identities and experiences, we aim to create a holistic approach that recognizes and addresses the multifaceted nature of structural inequalities. This intersectional lens is crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable participation in social and environmental justice movements.



Illustration: Eyfa's 2022 Community Guide 'Decolonial Perspectives on Climate Justice and Accessibility'

2. EYFA's vision

EYFA's main aim is to encourage young people's initiative and autonomy. We strive for a world where youth from all backgrounds have access to resources that allow them to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to raise their voices to advocate for change in their communities. A just world where they are empowered to exercise their activism and rights, while developing new ways of organizing communities around socio-ecological justice.

We believe that only through an intersectional and decolonial approach can we achieve social justice for all. This approach to organizing recognizes how oppressive systems of power affect different groups differently. To identify solutions, we find it important to understand the historical factors from which problems arose.

We dream of and act on changing the current society we live in, into a society based on social, environmental, racial and economic justice, advocating for lasting political changes in all its shapes and levels, including disabled youth, Black youth, Queer&Trans&Inter* youth, Indigenous youth, neurodiverse youth & all the marginalized youth European-wide.

Towards this we have four core objectives (Capacity Building; Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes; Cross-regional cooperation; Intersectionality) and two priority areas (Non-formal education; Revitalising democracy through Social and Environmental Justice organizing; Inclusion, Accessibility & Empowerment) to guide us.

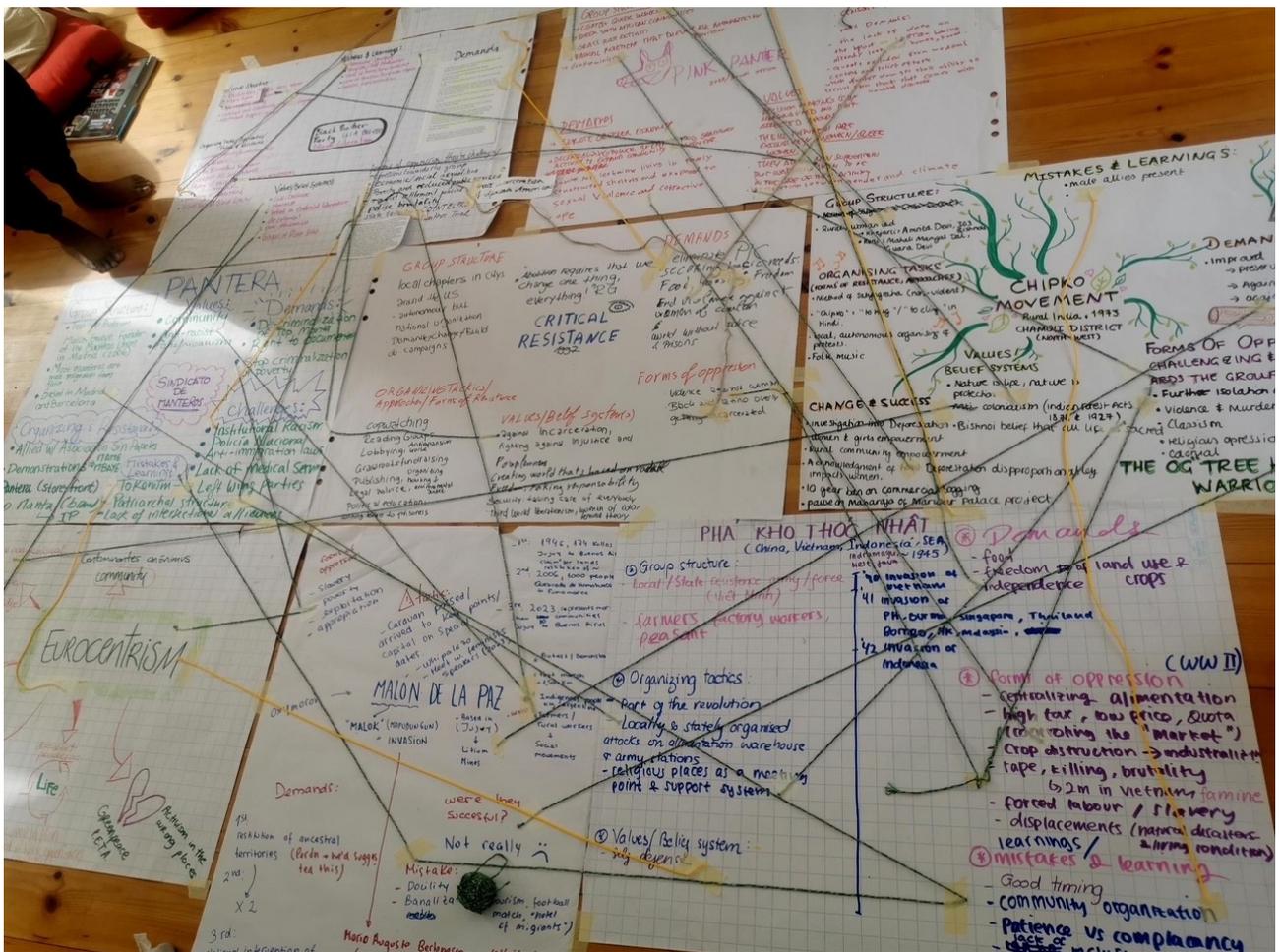


Illustration: Picture - Eyfa's International Gathering (2023) on Decolonial Climate Justice. (The picture shows workshop posters each centering a resistance movement across the world. The posters are connected with colour coded ropes.)

3. EYFA's objectives

In this section, we outline the key objectives that underpin EYFA's strategic approach, guiding our efforts to foster social justice and empower youth. Our approach is anchored in four core objectives: firstly, *Capacity Building*, where we equip individuals and grassroots initiatives with the necessary skills and resources to confront injustice and structural inequality; secondly, *Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes*, which focus on establishing horizontal structures that promote community-driven educational resources and address systemic inequalities; thirdly, *Cross-Regional Cooperation*, where we facilitate collaboration among grassroots groups across Europe to share diverse experiences and perspectives; and finally, *Intersectionality*, which emphasizes the ways in which various forms of oppression intertwine, informs our holistic approach to socio-ecological challenges and civic engagement. Together, these objectives reflect our commitment to nurturing a reflective and empowered youth movement capable of driving meaningful change in society.

a) Capacity Building

EYFA strives to empower individuals and grassroots initiatives to organize against injustice and structural inequality at multiple levels, by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to access funding and optimize the use of our common resources. Additionally, EYFA encourages and supports movement-level solidarity initiative among youth initiatives that share common goals.

b) Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes

EYFA supports grassroots movements in creating horizontal and participatory structures, enabling communities to develop and share their own educational resources. Thanks to its long experience in civil engagement paired with the diversity of its staff and board members, EYFA also facilitates critical engagement with issues of systemic inequalities within environmental and social justice movements, such as racism, classism or ableism.

c) Cross-Regional Cooperation

EYFA promotes collaboration among grassroots groups across Europe by initiating joint projects and encouraging the exchange of ideas, histories, and experiences, tailored to diverse political and social contexts.

d) Intersectionality

Recognizing the inherent interconnectedness of structural injustices is central to EYFA's logical frameworks. Therefore, we adopt an intersectional approach in every aspect of our work, because we believe to be a fundamental framework through which to approach socio-ecological issues as well as community civic engagement. By addressing the multiple axes of power and oppression, EYFA aims to foster transformative social justice and inclusivity within our initiatives.



Illustration: Picture - Eyfa's Black Farming Weekend (2022) co-organised with Aloti Farm, Black Earth Collective, and Black Wendland. (The picture shows participants warming up in a circle for a group activity in the middle of the farm.)

4. EYFA's priorities

In this section, we delineate EYFA's core priorities that guide our mission and activities in empowering youth across diverse backgrounds. We emphasize Non-Formal Education (NFE) as a crucial tool for political education and community organizing, ensuring that young individuals engage actively in their learning and decision-making processes. Additionally, we advocate for social and environmental justice, recognizing the intertwined struggles faced by marginalized communities and prioritizing their perspectives in addressing systemic injustices. Lastly, we are committed to fostering inclusion, accessibility, and empowerment through an intersectional lens, ensuring that every participant can navigate and contribute to our collective work regardless of their identity, ability, or socioeconomic status. Together, these priorities reflect EYFA's dedication to nurturing a more equitable, inclusive, and engaged youth grassroots organising.

a) Non-formal Education

At EYFA, we prioritise Non-Formal Education (NFE) in Youth Work as an approach to political education and community organising among the youth, an approach emphasised throughout our activities, publications and communication. Throughout the years of organising these youth initiatives, we have gained significant experience in NFE that informs the planning of our activities. The pillars of NFE that EYFA has always followed and will continue to follow are active participation and cooperative learning processes, processes that centre non-hierarchical experiential and interactive learning. In order to foster active participation and encourage young participants from marginalized backgrounds to take ownership over the learning process, EYFA's activities are always

accompanied by the continuous facilitation of sessions for self-reflection to insure the creation of safer spaces where the participants are empowered to give as well as receive feedback in a constructive manner throughout the gathering.

EYFA also encourages horizontal decision-making as well as dissemination of information and knowledge. As a result of their experience with EYFA, groups and individuals participating in our activities should feel empowered to organize and facilitate their own workshops, mobilize consensus-based organizational tools, and share their new acquired skills with their peers, encouraging and supporting them to do the same.

It is particularly important for youth groups positioning at the intersection of various marginalized identities (Queerness, racialization, disability, mobility, etc.) to take active roles in teaching, facilitating and mentoring, in order for our societies to become increasingly inclusive and peaceful.

b) Revitalising democracy: Youth access to rights through Social and Environmental Justice organizing

In a world where social and environmental injustices are increasingly prevalent, it is crucial to focus on young people's access to rights as a central theme in our efforts. At EYFA, we recognize that communities are diverse, shaped by various backgrounds, experiences, and needs related to class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and race. To advance social justice, we prioritize racial justice as a vital component of our approach, emphasizing the need to confront systemic and internalized racism within our movements. Furthermore, as environmental injustices disproportionately impact marginalized

communities, their access to essential resources and basic needs becomes increasingly challenging in the face of worsening climate and environmental crises.

We therefore prioritize the perspectives of marginalized communities in engaging with environmental justice, as they possess a unique perspective on the interconnectedness of various socio-ecological struggles the world is facing today, highlighting the wide gaps in social inequalities that influence the global fight against climate change and environmental destruction. By fostering an intersectional perspective, we aim to highlight the connections between social and environmental issues, advocating for the rights of those most affected. Through our various projects, we strive to illuminate the links between economic exploitation and the denial of fundamental rights. Ultimately, we empower young people to take action, aiming for a future where all individuals can enjoy safety and abundance.

c) Inclusion, Accessibility and Empowerment

It is important to highlight and acknowledge how different gender identities navigate the world and how systems of oppression are meant to enforce gendered, racialized or ableist biases. It is just as important to center the knowledge of these intersectional experiences in order to rethink our global structures through systems that benefit the most to the least privileged positionalities among us.

In this respect, EYFA embraces an intersectional feminist approach to acknowledge and address the complexities of gender and racial dynamics throughout all our projects and activities, where we see gender as a transversal category. While several EYFA projects

focus on empowering young Women, Lesbian, Trans*, Intersex, Non-Binary & Gender Non-Confirming activists and groups in particular, we strongly believe that when it comes to the intersection of migration and race, it is particularly important to include the perspectives of masculine (be those trans*, cis or non-binary) identities as well. Therefore, Queer migrant youth of all genders are centered in our collaborations, as a way to create inclusive, aware, strong and respectful and free societies.

In addition to these positionalities, we also acknowledge the impacts of various other layers of discrimination, such as legal status, access to basic needs, language barriers, access to formal education, etc. We are therefore always striving to find inovative ways to address these structural inequalities within our structure and our activities. Examples of such effots include centering methods of "Non-Formal Education in Youth Work" as one of our priorities, providing interpretation and translation in as many languages as possible, making our events as accessible as we can (financially, physically, sensorily) or collaborating with facilitators, moderators and trainers which backgrounds and experiences align with the topics they address. Bringing special attention to these processes represents a crucial aspect in EYFA's work in order to facilitate effective and fruitful intersectional, cross-regional and intercultural learning exchange.



Illustration: Poster - Eyfa's International Gathering (2021) on Accessible and Inclusive Event Organising: Collaborative Tools and Tactics in Practice.

In conclusion, EYFA's priorities and objectives work synergistically to create a holistic approach to empowering youth and addressing systemic injustices. Through our commitment to Non-Formal Education, social and environmental justice, and intersectional inclusion, we set the stage for active participation and community engagement among marginalized groups. Our strategic objectives—Capacity Building, Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes, Cross-Regional Cooperation, and Intersectionality—serve as the foundation for our initiatives, equipping young people with the skills, knowledge, and collaborative opportunities necessary to navigate and challenge the complex socio-political landscape. Together, they help materialise our vision of a future with more justice, where all youth have the tools and support to advocate for themselves and their communities, ultimately fostering transformative change within society.

