

## ESN Mission, Vision and Strategic Priorities 2019-2025

Following the extensive consultations carried out at all levels of the network in 2018-2019, the Board puts forward a new Vision to be accomplished in the coming six years, until 2025. While the mission and values of an organisation are the core of its existence, their vision may and should vary throughout the years, according to the evolution of its place in society. A vision describes the desired, preferred future state of an organisation (The Strategic Planning Kit, WOSM<sup>1</sup>, 2004), and therefore should present attainable goals and be time-bound.

Our current Vision, “the enrichment of society through international students”, is neither time-bound nor measurable, and is consequently unattainable. The proposed Vision builds on the existing one, adding specific goals and a time frame, as well as taking into account the input from consultations:

**By 2025, ESN will be the global network of the Erasmus Generation, committed to improving international education and providing self-development opportunities to two million young people, fostering intercultural understanding and creating positive change in society.**

### The Scope - ‘What’ & ‘Where’

*“The global network of the Erasmus Generation”*

The most important element of this segment is the reference to ESN as a network of people. By being a network of people, we become the leaders of a movement of a whole new generation of humans, composed mainly of international students and ESN volunteers, who share the same values of love for diversity. This is a generation that will become the leaders of the world of tomorrow. The word ‘global’ can, but does not have to, refer to ESN organisations around the world.

### The ‘How’

*“committed to improving international education and providing self-development opportunities”*

How will we become *the* global network of the Erasmus Generation? We will do so by supporting the internationalisation of education with our work at all levels of ESN, from the work of local sections on thousands of campuses to the advocacy efforts of ESN in Brussels. By providing a space for personal and professional development of both international students and ESN volunteers, we foster the acquisition of a certain set of skills that define the Erasmus Generation: leadership, intercultural understanding, active citizenship, and critical thinking, among others.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) is the organisation that gathers all the Scout organisations around the world. When reflecting on the strategy of strategy, the Board looked for many examples and that of the WOSM is one of the most complete.

## The 'Who'

*"two million young people"*

According to the Section Questionnaire of 2018, ESN currently numbers around 13,000 volunteers, who are in turn working with about 300,000 students. Even though higher education must remain the focus of our activity, we believe that ESN can continue following the trend of expanding our service beyond this sector, further supporting other groups of exchange students such as VET learners, ultimately reaching all young people. The number stated refers to international students and ESN volunteers combined, and is the total goal for the whole cycle, meaning that it should be reached by 2025. By having an attainable goal such as this in our Vision statement, we are sure to be able to measure our progress from both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

## The 'Why'

*"fostering intercultural understanding and creating positive change in society"*

Why would we develop a global movement, and work to improve international education, and provide opportunities for development, for 2 million young people? We believe that ultimately, by achieving all of the above, ESN will help to create a better world, truly united in diversity.

## ESN Strategic Priorities 2019-2025

According to WOSM "strategic priorities are broad statements that define the areas of work needed to bridge the gap between the present and the preferred future states of the organisation". These strategic priorities should have the same timeframe as the vision, and they should help achieve the vision, while also outlining what needs to be the focus for the next six years. This does not mean that tasks outside of this framework are not important, it just means that the network as a whole agrees to focus on these specific points. Following the consultations of 2018-2019, below are the proposed Strategic Priorities for ESN for the period 2019-2025:

### 1. Students

ESN will empower future, alumni, and current international students to be ambassadors of intercultural understanding and active citizenship, sharing the value of unity in diversity. ESN will provide opportunities to share these values through volunteering activities while on exchange, spreading the positive impact of international student mobility among local communities.

### 2. Exchange programmes

ESN will work to increase the quantity and quality of study abroad programmes around the world, advocating for an equitable provision of opportunities to all young people. A focus will be placed on their personal and professional development through increasingly internationalised curricula with a stronger relevance of non-formal and informal learning.

### 3. Activity and services

ESN's activities and services at all levels will increase in quality, becoming more inclusive and achieving measurable impact in society. They will be available to students from all

backgrounds, fostering their local integration and reintegration upon return, increasing the impact of the experience before, during, and after mobility.

#### **4. Visibility and outreach**

ESN will build a globally recognisable brand, increasing its visibility and outreach, and fostering a positive image of international exchange. By doing so, ESN will connect with a more diverse set of stakeholders, further supporting the internationalisation of education.

#### **5. Volunteers**

ESN volunteers and alumni will be the recognised leaders of the Erasmus Generation, sharing the common mission of enriching society through international students. ESN will provide its volunteers with transferable skills and competences, acquired through self-development opportunities, and empower them to actively engage in the organisation.

#### **6. Governance**

ESN will be a more interconnected and self-sustainable network with a strong membership and an efficient structure. All internal processes will be transparent and open to all members, generating the needed flexibility and adaptability for ESN to cope with constant change in society.

### **Mission**

A mission is the core reason for the existence of the organisation and therefore has no expiration date. The mission of ESN has been the same since the beginning and will likely remain the same for many years to come. When reflecting on the current Mission, Vision, and Values, it became clear that ESN's mission is equal to the current vision statement. For this reason, the “new” proposed mission of ESN is exactly the same sentence as today's vision:

**Enrichment of society through international students.**

The values of ESN are not tackled in this proposal.

### **Final considerations**

The proposed priorities and vision statement are the result of a lengthy reflection process that the Board conducted throughout the network in 2018-2019. They aim to inspire the next generations of ESN members while providing the organisation with a more strategic structure that all levels can contribute to. The Board truly wishes to see them all fully accomplished by 2025, if not before. We are certain that the network can successfully achieve all of them.