

YUFE

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Impact Report of ED&I Strategy, Policies and Measures

Impact report of ED&I strategy, policies and measures, Version 1.0

D9.1 Impact report of ED&I strategy, policies and measures

University of Rijeka, on behalf of YUFE Work Package 9 partners

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AY	Academic year
APS	Access, Participation and Success
ASF	YUFE Annual Strategic Forum
D	Deliverable
D&I	Diversity and Inclusion
DoA	Description of Action (YUFE 2030 Grant Agreement)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ED&I	Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity
FOREU4ALL	Community of Practice of European University Alliances
KPI	Key performance indicator
M	Milestone
O	Objective
S1–S10	Statements of the pre- and post-course confidence questionnaire (Annex 1)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
T	Task
THE	Times Higher Education
UC3M	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
UEF	University of Eastern Finland
UNIGEM	University and Gender Mainstreaming
UNIRI	University of Rijeka
WP	Work Package
YUFE	Young Universities for the Future of Europe

The Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) is one of the dynamic European University Alliances, selected by the European Commission. YUFE aims to shape a holistic and inclusive future for students and learners, and their society in Europe. The YUFE Alliance strives to be the front-running Alliance of European Higher Education in which students, learners, and staff are co-leaders, co-dreamers, and co-creators. YUFE's mission is to become a successful model of a socially responsible European University.

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1. Executive Summary

D9.1 Impact report of ED&I strategy, policies and measures is a deliverable of Work Package 9 Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity of the YUFE 2030 project. It presents the efforts of the YUFE Alliance to embed ED&I principles at its core between December 2022 and October 2026 and examines their effects on students, staff, leaders and decision-makers, and partner universities.

In the reporting period, seven ED&I documents were developed or revised, including the YUFE ED&I Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2030, the YUFE Gender Equity Plan 2024–2030, the YUFE Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, the YUFE Access, Participation and Success (APS) Plan and the YUFE Declaration of Commitment to Anti-Racism. Seven of ten partner universities reported actions informed or inspired by the YUFE ED&I Strategy 2024–2030.

By October 2026, 2264 students and staff had participated in at least one YUFE ED&I course or workshop (90.6% of the target of 2500); for the project KPI for WP9, the YUFE 2030 progress report (January 2025) recorded that 98% of YUFE students had engaged in at least one ED&I activity. 1290 learners completed the YUFE ED&I online course, and pre- and post-course questionnaires showed increased self-reported confidence on all ten measured statements. In a YUFE staff survey, 68% of staff who had attended ED&I training reported having taken concrete actions as a result. The YUFE ED&I Ambassador role was piloted with nine students, and its format and recognition were adjusted for 2026/27 on the basis of the pilot. Diversity monitoring was introduced in the YUFE Bachelor application process.

The results show that ED&I has the greatest impact where it becomes part of the structures, programmes and processes of the Alliance and its partner universities. ED&I is increasingly part of the work of other Work Packages and Alliance processes, such as staff development, the YUFE Ideas Lab, the YUFE Kick-Start Fund and the YUFE Innovation Action Plan.

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Annex 1

The Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) is one of the dynamic European University Alliances, selected by the European Commission. YUFE aims to shape a holistic and inclusive future for students and learners, and their society in Europe. The YUFE Alliance strives to be the front-running Alliance of European Higher Education in which students, learners, and staff are co-leaders, co-dreamers, and co-creators. YUFE's mission is to become a successful model of a socially responsible European University.

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2. Introduction & Objective

This document aims to provide a clear insight into YUFE Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity activities in the period from December 2022 to October 2026 and to assess their impact. The purpose of this document is to make the transformation of YUFE universities and the embedding of ED&I principles in the YUFE Alliance visible and, transparent. It is aimed for all stakeholders connected with ED&I and education to get inspired, to understand possibilities but also challenges or limitations in achieving desired impact of YUFE ED&I activities.

This report is Deliverable D9.1 of Work Package 9 Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity of the YUFE 2030 project. It covers the period from December 2022 to October 2026.

This report is aligned with the YUFE Impact Assessment approach (YUFE, 2025), which defines YUFE impact as "evidenced, sustainable and desired effects and changes our Alliance brings to learners, institutions, and communities, in and beyond academia". The approach uses a Pathway of Change that links activities and their outputs to short-term outcomes and long-term impact. Progress is measured through quantitative and qualitative indicators. Impact is assessed in four areas: Culture, Talent, Society, and Research and Innovation.

ED&I activities contribute to the Culture impact area. This area covers institutional transformation, policy change, governance structures and the Alliance's core values, including equity, diversity and inclusivity. Within this area, the desired ED&I impact is meaningful and lasting institutional transformation at partner universities, with ED&I principles strengthened in all YUFE structures. Two outcomes contribute to this impact: (1) institutions embed ED&I learnings into policy and governance structures, and (2) staff and learners develop inclusive mindsets and practices through targeted training. Section 4 reports the results for both outcomes at Alliance level and at the level of individual partner universities, and Section 5 interprets them.

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3. Methodology

3.1. Data Sources

To achieve the predefined desired ED&I impact, the YUFE Alliance worked on four main activities with outputs which led to multiple outcomes. To measure desired impact of ED&I activities, different indicators and multiple data sources were used. Collected quantitative evidence were ED&I training and awareness raising participation rates, number of adopted ED&I policies and documents and number of recruited ED&I Ambassadors.

Qualitative and quantitative data are both collected with YUFE ED&I monitoring, confidence rates from pre- and post-questionnaire for YUFE ED&I online course and surveys for ED&I training activities created by YUFE Quality Assurance team.

Qualitative evidence was gathered through YUFE Ambassadors reverse mentoring staff, Feedback of YUFE WP 9 staff members on effects of ED&I efforts within their institution and feedback questionnaire for YUFE Institutional coordinators.

Table 1 lists the data sources used in this report.

Table 1 - Data sources

Data collection source	Number of respondents	Targeted respondents	Explanation
Pre- and post-course questionnaires for YUFE ED&I online course	249	Students, staff, citizens (alumni and lifelong learners)	Explores confidence rates in the ED&I topics from pre- and post-online course survey.
Surveys for ED&I training activities (provided by YUFE Quality assurance team)	26	Staff, students	Explores satisfaction of learners who participated in ED&I educational activities (not including YUFE ED&I online course)
YUFE ED&I monitoring	44	YUFE Bachelor eligible applicants	Collects diversity data of students and gives insight into possibilities of implementing common framework for monitoring diversity groups and their needs to create diverse and inclusive universities
Questionnaire to Institutional Coordinators	10	Institutional Coordinators	Exploring how YUFE policies, strategies, and shared best practices have influenced institutional change within partner universities.

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Data collection source	Number of respondents	Targeted respondents	Explanation
YUFE Ambassadors reverse mentoring staff feedback	5	Staff members from YUFE ED&I taskforce	Examining effects of ED&I Ambassadors activities on YUFE staff.
Feedback of YUFE WP 9 staff members on effects of ED&I efforts within their institution	2	Staff members from YUFE ED&I taskforce	Examining effects of YUFE ED&I effects on YUFE universities.
Staff survey on ED&I training (YUFE Impact Assessment, Q3 2025)	63	Staff who attended YUFE ED&I training in the previous two years	Explores whether participants took concrete actions following the training

The key performance indicator (KPI) is the number of students and staff participating in at least one YUFE ED&I course or workshop between December 2022 and November 2026. The baseline is 0 and the target is 2500. Results are reported in Section 4.3.

The activities targeted students, staff, YUFE bodies and partner universities. Activities with external stakeholders were smaller in scale and are not assessed in this report.

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4. Results

4.1. Overview of ED&I activities

Table 2 gives an overview of the ED&I activities implemented in the reporting period from December 2022 to October 2026 their outputs and status. Sections 4.2–4.7 report the results of each activity.

Table 2 – ED&I activities, outputs and status

Activity	Period	Target group	Output	Status
Raising awareness of existing ED&I policies and developing further ED&I policies	December 2022 – October 2026	YUFE community, YUFE bodies	7 new or revised YUFE ED&I documents; Code of Conduct translated into local languages (Section 4.2)	Ongoing
YUFE ED&I online course	October 2023 – October 2026	Students, staff, external learners	1290 learners completed the course (Section 4.3.1)	Ongoing
YUFE induction course with ED&I element	January 2026 - October 2026	YUFE students	115 learners (Section 4.3.1)	Ongoing
ED&I training for staff	December 2022 – October 2026	Professional service staff, academic staff	9 trainings, 134 participants (Section 4.3.2)	Ongoing
ED&I training for leadership and decision-makers	December 2022 – October 2026	Strategic Council, Executive Committee, Central Office, WP leads	5 trainings, 56 participants (Section 4.3.3)	Ongoing
ED&I training for students	December 2022 – October 2026	YUFE students	15 trainings, 211 participants (Section 4.3.4)	Ongoing
ED&I training open to all	December 2022 – October 2026	Students, professional service staff, academic staff, citizens, Strategic Council, Executive Committee, Central Office, WP leads	3 trainings, 177 participants and 281 video views (Section 4.3.5)	Ongoing
ED&I diversity monitoring	December 2022 – October 2026	YUFE Bachelor applicants	Diversity monitoring framework; YUFE Bachelor application (Section 4.4)	Ongoing
YUFE ED&I Ambassadors	December 2022 – October 2026	YUFE Student Forum members, WP9 members	9 recruited student ambassadors	Ongoing

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Activity	Period	Target group	Output	Status
ED&I in funding schemes	September 2026	YUFE community	ED&I input to the evaluation criteria of the YUFE Kick-Start Fund (Section 4.6)	Ongoing
Cooperation with other European University Alliances	December 2022 – October 2026	ED&I network of alliances	Participation in the D&I Hub of the FOREU4ALL Community of Practice; presentations in the UNIGEM network (Section 6)	Ongoing

4.2. ED&I policies and documents

In the reporting period, seven ED&I documents were developed or revised, and the YUFE Community Code of Conduct was translated into the local languages of YUFE universities. They include the three types of policy named as examples for T9.1 in the DoA: an anti-harassment and bullying policy, an anti-racist policy and a gender equality plan. The review of the YUFE D&I Strategy and the development of new policies were documented in the report for Milestone M9.1 Suite of new YUFE ED&I policies developed and approved for implementation (November 2024) (link). The need for new or revised documents was identified through a survey of YUFE Work Package Leads and Task Owners (15 September to 13 October 2023; 44 invited, response rate 52%), bilateral consultations with other Work Packages and the YUFE Student Forum, and a review by the WP9 ED&I taskforce (October to December 2023).

Table 3 – YUFE ED&I policies and documents created, revised or translated

Document	Action	Status	Year of approval
YUFE ED&I Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2030	Revision	Approved at YUFE level	2024
YUFE Gender Equity Plan 2024 - 2030	New document	Approved at YUFE level	2024
YUFE Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy	New document	Approved at YUFE level	2024
YUFE Access, Participation and Success (APS) Plan	New document	Approved at YUFE level	2026
YUFE Declaration of Commitment to Anti-Racism	New document	Approved at YUFE level	2026
YUFE ED&I Diversity Monitoring Framework	New document	Approved at YUFE level	2024

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Document	Action	Status	Year of approval
YUFE Bachelor (Urban Sustainability Studies): Open YUFE Support Plan communication flowchart	New document	In use in the YUFE Bachelor	2024
YUFE Community Code of Conduct	Translation into local languages	Incorporated at YUFE universities	n/a

Monitoring of implementation

The M9.1 report (November 2024) foresaw that progress on the YUFE ED&I Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2030 (11 actions, 43 activities), the YUFE Gender Equity Plan 2024–2030 and the effectiveness of the YUFE Community Code of Conduct would be reported in this impact report. Evidence on the institutional uptake of the ED&I Strategy is available from the questionnaire to Institutional Coordinators (Section 4.7). The Code of Conduct was translated into the local languages of all partner universities and embedded in YUFE ED&I policies, onboarding and induction processes and workshops. In response to a survey of Work Packages in September 2023, guidance on using the Code in practice was developed and published. A systematic review of progress against the Action Plan and the Gender Equity Plan, and a follow-up survey on the application of the Code of Conduct, will be carried out in the next project period.

4.3 Training and development activities

4.3.1 YUFE ED&I online course

The YUFE ED&I online course was launched in October 2023 with six core knowledge sections. Five in-depth knowledge sections were added in October 2024. Completing the core sections was a mandatory part of induction for all YUFE students until end of 2025. Since January 2026 it has been voluntary, and students are encouraged to take it by watching the new YUFE induction course with ED&I element which is mandatory for YUFE students. The course is also open to staff and other learners within and beyond the YUFE community.

Between October 2023 and October 2026, 1290 learners completed the course.

Pre- and post-course confidence questionnaire

Learners complete the same confidence questionnaire before and after the course. They rate their confidence in 10 statements (S1–S10) on a scale from 1 (“I cannot do it”) to 10 (“I am certain I can do it”). The statements are listed in Annex 1. Data for YUFE students and for all other learners were collected separately. For YUFE students, data are available only for 2023/24, as later data could not be extracted from the online platform due to technical difficulties.

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Confidence increased for all 10 statements in every year for which data are available. The average increase across all statements was 0.69 points in 2023/24, 1.58 points in 2024/25 and 1.40 points in 2025/26 for learners outside the YUFE student programmes, and 0.30 points in 2023/24 for YUFE students (Table 4).

Table 4 – Average increase in confidence across all statements (scale 1–10)

Group	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
All learners (non-YUFE students, staff, other learners)	0.69	1.58	1.40
YUFE students (YUFE Student Journey / Open YUFE)	0.30	No data	No data

The largest increases were recorded for S1 (explain the difference between equality and equity), S6 (give an example of victimisation) and S8 (explain what unconscious bias is).

Qualitative feedback

In AY 2025/26, learners described the course as informative, interesting, well organised and useful. Several stated that they had gained a better understanding of equity, unconscious bias and victimisation. One participant noted that although they had encountered several concepts before, the course showed them they had overestimated their understanding.

4.3.2 Training for staff

Between December 2022 and October 2026, WP9 delivered 9 face-to-face and online ED&I trainings for staff, attended by 134 participants (Table 5).

Table 5 – ED&I trainings for staff

Year	Title	Number of participants
2023	ED&I Train-the-trainer workshop: Day 1	15
2023	ED&I Train-the-trainer workshop: Day 2	13
2024	Early pregnancy endings in the workplace	14
2024	Being courageous	14
2024	From policies to action: Bringing the YUFE ED&I Strategy to life	26
2024	Bringing the YUFE values to life: A workshop for PhDs and Postdocs (collaboration with WP6)	8
2025	Embedding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (ED&I) in Staff Development (WP4)	17
2025	Workshop on racism (part of WP 9 task force members, Brussels)	14
2026	Conflict transformation at the University	13
Total		**134**

Participant feedback

Written feedback from face-to-face workshops in 2024 included:

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- "It was so helpful and interesting" (*Early pregnancy endings in the workplace*)

In the survey for the workshop *Conflict transformation at the University* (10 respondents), 70% considered it likely or very likely that they would use conflict transformation techniques in their future interactions at the university.

In a YUFE staff survey in Q3 2025 (63 respondents), 68% of staff who had attended ED&I training in the previous two years reported having taken concrete actions as a result, such as speaking up or adjusting their practices.

4.3.3 Training for leadership and decision-makers

Between December 2022 and October 2026, WP9 delivered five ED&I trainings for YUFE leadership and decision-makers (Strategic Council, Executive Committee, Central Office and Work Package Leads), attended by 56 participants (Table 6).

Table 6 – ED&I trainings for leadership and decision-makers

Year	Title	Number of participants
2023	Kind and Inclusive Leadership workshop for YUFE Strategic Council	13
2024	Creating a culture of inclusion workshop (as part of Annual Strategic Forum meetings in Torun)	14
2024	Creating a culture of inclusion workshop (as part of Executive Committee meetings in Rijeka)	10
2025	Kind and Inclusive Leadership workshop for YUFE Strategic Council (as part of ASF meetings in UEF)	9
2026	Green dot Bystander Training at YUFE Annual Strategic Forum	10
Total		**56**

Written feedback from the workshops included:

"I now feel even more empowered to really trust in my leadership style even when it is challenged. And to work even further on my leadership style and make it more kind and inclusive." (Kind and inclusive leadership)

"I think that the workshop really helps to reflect and think about how society has biases and privileges. It was quite refreshing and also very comfortable" (*Creating a Culture of Inclusion*)

4.3.4 Training for students

Between December 2022 and October 2026, WP9 delivered 15 ED&I trainings for YUFE students, attended by 211 participants (Table 7).

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Table 7 – ED&I trainings for students

Year	Title	Number of participants
December 2022	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	19
December 2022	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	15
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	11
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	4
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	7
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	12
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	7
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	25
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	21
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	12
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	14
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	17
2023	Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity: What's it got to do with me? (Induction workshop for students)	15
2024	YUFE ED&I Ambassador (Support Liaison) training	12
2026	Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity in Entrepreneurship & Innovation (YUFE Ideas lab students)	20
Total		**211**

The workshop Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity in Entrepreneurship & Innovation was held on 2 June 2026 in Madrid as part of the YUFE Ideas Lab Blended Intensive Programme. Of the 16 survey respondents, 100% reported an improved understanding of how to integrate ED&I elements into innovative projects, and 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they would feel more confident applying the ED&I principles and tools in their current or future projects. Participants' comments included:

"Every business idea has ED&I aspect. You just have to put yourself in the shoes of all its potential users!"

"This should be a mandatory class at university"

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4.3.5 ED&I training open to all

Three ED&I activities were open to all interested learners, including students, staff, leaders and decision-makers, and citizens:

- This is me: An overview of LGBTQ+ identities, lived experiences, and inclusion: 47 participants; the recording had 281 views by October 2026.
- Inclusive Leadership Requires Strategic Courage, a round table at the Universities with Purpose conference in Brussels (November 2025): 105 participants.
- Reimagining Feminism: Building New Alliances With Care, Together, Across Differences (YUFE Academy): 25 participants.

In total, these activities reached 177 participants and 281 viewers of the recording.

Written feedback included:

- “wonderfully insightful and inspiring” (*This is me: An overview of LGBTQ+ identities, lived experiences, and inclusion*)

4.3.6 Participation rates and KPI

By October 2026, 2264 students and staff had participated in at least one YUFE ED&I course or workshop, against a target of 2500 (90.6%) (Table 8). "Participated" means that a learner took part in or completed an educational activity covering ED&I topics, including viewing the recording of an ED&I session (281 views of "This is me", October 2026). The target applies to the full project duration (December 2022 to November 2026); the value reported reflects data available in October 2026, and ED&I activities continue until the end of the project. This reach indicator complements the project KPI for WP9 reported to the European Commission, the percentage of YUFE students engaged in at least one ED&I activity (target: 100%), for which the YUFE 2030 progress report (January 2025) recorded a value of 98%. Since January 2026, a short YUFE induction video with an ED&I element has been mandatory for all YUFE students, replacing the YUFE ED&I online course as the mandatory ED&I component; the online course remains available on a voluntary basis.

Table 8 – Key performance indicator

KPI	Time frame	Baseline	Target	Value reached (October 2026)	% of target
Number of students and staff participating in at least one YUFE ED&I course or workshop	December 2022 – November 2026	0	2500	2264	90.6%

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4.4 Diversity monitoring: results and actions taken

WP9 introduced ED&I monitoring to build an evidence base about the people YUFE reaches and to identify groups that may be under-represented, disadvantaged or in need of specific support. Monitoring was developed in two steps: a survey of current practice at partner universities, and implementation in the YUFE Bachelor application process. The approach is set out in the YUFE ED&I Diversity Monitoring Framework (Section 4.2).

Current practice at partner universities

A survey of YUFE partner universities showed that most collect only basic information about their students, such as name, age, sex, nationality and place of residence. Some collect data on up to 17 categories: gender, disability, ethnicity, migration background, refugee status or war-affected area, natural-disaster-affected area, race, first in family, caring responsibilities, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, care experience, part-time study, working student, remote or rural area, and first language.

Implementation: YUFE Bachelor in Urban Sustainability Studies

The WP9 monitoring subgroup developed a set of monitoring questions for YUFE Bachelor applicants, including at a workshop at the University of Essex in December 2023. The questions cover socio-economic status, gender, disability, additional responsibilities and minority ethnic background, plus an open question on aspects of identity not covered by the categories. The form was implemented in Qualtrics for prospective students who were eligible to apply through the Virtual Campus in AY 2025/26.

Of 226 eligible applicants, 44 responded (19.47%). Among respondents:

- 63% identified as being from a middle, 15% from a low and 22% from a high socio-economic background.
- 42% reported additional responsibilities alongside their studies: 60% of these referred to work, 20% to caring responsibilities and 20% to other responsibilities, which comments identified as parenting.
- 29% reported a minority ethnic background.
- 21% reported living with a health condition, disability, learning difficulty or another circumstance that may affect their daily life or studies.
- 8% reported that their gender identity did not match the sex assigned to them at birth.

Answers to the open question identified further groups not covered by the predefined categories: applicants from war-affected countries, applicants with an expatriate background and older applicants.

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Actions taken as a result of the analysis

Following the first round of monitoring, WP9 discussed whether diversity monitoring in YUFE application processes should become mandatory. Partners expressed differing views, and monitoring therefore remains voluntary, anonymous and separate from selection procedures. The DoA identified legislative and cultural barriers to introducing ED&I monitoring as a risk, and these considerations remain relevant to further decisions. The 2025/26 results serve as a baseline for the next project period.

The next phase will consider how ED&I monitoring can be integrated into relevant processes across the Alliance, while respecting legal and ethical requirements, ensuring that participation remains voluntary and that data are collected for clearly defined purposes.

4.5 YUFE ED&I Ambassadors: numbers and experiences

The YUFE ED&I Ambassador role was developed from October 2023, with the role profile defined in April 2024, and piloted in 2024/25: nine members of the YUFE Student Forum were recruited between September and December 2024 and trained between January and July 2025, supported by ED&I experts. The pilot consisted of a training series for the Ambassadors and reverse mentoring, in which each Ambassador acted as a mentor to a member of the WP9 ED&I taskforce. Ambassadors did not yet act as contact points for reports of behaviour not upholding the YUFE values, and no such contacts were recorded. In November 2025, as scheduled in the DoA, WP9 completed the document YUFE ED&I Ambassador Role Profile and Training Programme Developed and Ready for Delivery (Milestone M9.2). It defines the Ambassador role and provides training materials and guidance for reverse mentoring. The M9.2 report identified recognition as the main constraint: integration into staff volunteering policies was not possible, and awarding ECTS credits to students proved difficult due to differing institutional regulations.

Experiences of staff (reverse mentoring)

In September 2026, five WP9 members who took part in reverse mentoring gave written feedback. All reported only one meeting with their Ambassador, in several cases because the student was completing their studies and leaving the university. Given that each pair met only once, no changes to day-to-day work were reported. All described the exchange as interesting and valuable for understanding students' perspectives. They identified the conditions students need to take on the role effectively: sufficient time, a clear structure and tasks, continuity and a sense of belonging to a group. One respondent discussed the issues raised with WP9 and the Institutional Coordinator at their university.

Discussion with YUFE student forum members

In April 2026, WP9 held an online session with 18 Student Forum members on the Ambassador role. Students identified the following needs: formal recognition such as certificate, a realistic time commitment, a clear and flexible timeframe, a clear structure and expectations, and opportunities to

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meet in person. According to staff feedback, students also reported competing obligations, such as Student Forum work, paid work and differing academic calendars across universities.

Changes for the 2026/27 call

The second iteration was prepared in 2026 on the basis of the pilot. Following a WP9 discussion on student engagement in Brussels in December 2025 and the Student Forum session in April 2026, WP9 compared student and institutional perspectives at its meeting in Rijeka in May 2026, in a workshop led by Université Sorbonne Nouvelle. As a result, eligibility was extended from Student Forum members to all YUFE students, with recruitment open until 15 June 2026. The 2026/27 programme, published on the YUFE Virtual Campus in October 2026, consists of an online training series of eight monthly sessions (December 2026 to June 2027) with a defined time commitment and a requirement that applicants do not plan to graduate before June 2028, and a Blended Intensive Programme (3 ECTS) with an in-person week at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle in June 2027. These features address the needs identified in the pilot: a defined workload, continuity, formal recognition and in-person meetings. Their implementation falls outside the reporting period.

4.6 ED&I in funding schemes

In the YUFE pilot phase, ED&I was supported through dedicated YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Grants, which funded thirteen student-staff projects completed by January 2023. In the reporting period, the focus moved from a separate ED&I fund to embedding ED&I in YUFE's general funding instruments and in partner universities' own schemes. This is consistent with the goal of the YUFE Innovation Action Plan, to embed sustainability and ED&I into all project and activity selection processes.

ED&I in the YUFE Kick-Start Fund

In September 2026, the WP9 Lead and a WP9 team member from UNIRI provided written feedback on the draft evaluation criteria for the new YUFE Kick-Start Fund, whose first call is scheduled to open in January 2027. The suggestions included an additional ED&I point under the criterion "Community and inclusiveness", an open ED&I question in the application form, a short explanation in the guidelines, an encouraging line for applicants from under-represented groups in the call text, and ED&I cues in the criteria of both the Educational and the Scientific stream. The YUFE Central Office confirmed that most of the suggestions would be incorporated.

ED&I grants at partner universities

At partner university level, the University of Eastern Finland introduced an ED&I grant scheme inspired by the exchange within WP9; the scheme ran its third cycle in 2026.

4.7 Changes at partner universities

Changes at partner universities were documented through the questionnaire to Institutional Coordinators (Q3 2025) and complemented by a feedback round among WP9 members (September 2026).

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Questionnaire to Institutional Coordinators

In Q3 2025, the Institutional Coordinators of the ten partner universities (members of the YUFE Executive Committee) completed a questionnaire with closed and open questions. It asked whether six YUFE policies, including the YUFE ED&I Strategy 2024–2030, had informed or inspired new or revised policies, structures or practices at their institution.

Of the six policies, the YUFE ED&I Strategy 2024–2030 was the one most often reported as having informed or inspired institutional changes. Seven of ten universities reported implementation actions: Maastricht University, University of Cyprus, University of Antwerp, University of Eastern Finland, University of Rijeka, University of Essex and Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The other three, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, University of Bremen and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, reported no specific actions because a similar policy was already in place.

The changes reported in the open answers were:

- Training and awareness: offering the YUFE ED&I online course as an internal resource (Maastricht University); training on unconscious bias, inclusive language and menopause (University of Eastern Finland).
- Structures and roles: an ED&I Office and an Equality Committee (University of Cyprus); a Head Diversity Officer position (University of Rijeka).
- Internal documents: an institutional Code of Conduct, an ED&I glossary and an Inclusive Communication Reflection Tool based on YUFE documents (University of Antwerp); an inclusive gender language guide and ED&I policies and codes (University of Cyprus).
- Environment: improved access to quiet rooms (University of Eastern Finland).
- Recognition: ED&I staff received an Excellence in Education Award in spring 2025 (University of Essex).

The University of Bremen reported that it had co-led ED&I work in the YUFE pilot phase and contributed to the content of the YUFE ED&I Strategy, that the YUFE Code of Conduct and values informed a values compass for its administration, and that YUFE ED&I work informed the State of Bremen Anti-Discrimination Policy adopted in 2024. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid reported that its 2026 objectives include raising awareness of YUFE ED&I documents among its university community and supporting the YUFE ED&I Ambassadors initiative.

Examples of responses:

"We have adapted YUFE-level actions to align with the specific needs and priorities of our institution. […] The Strategy and action plan have served as valuable enablers by providing a clear framework and concrete starting points, making it easier to initiate and advance ED&I initiatives within our institutional context." (University of Antwerp)

"This partnership has increased awareness of diverse ED&I topics and inspired several initiatives, including unconscious bias training, inclusive language guidance, staff training on menopause, and improved access to quiet rooms." (University of Eastern Finland)

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Reported challenges included limited resources (staff, time and funding), differing views among partners on the collection of diversity data, and, at the University of Rijeka, a non-integrated structure in which faculties are separate legal entities, which makes consistent implementation across the university more difficult.

Feedback round among WP9 members

In September 2026, WP9 launched a feedback round among its members to complement the questionnaire with information on changes at their universities. The University of Cyprus reported an ED&I Office, an Inclusive Gender Language Guide, an Inclusive People with Disability Guide and events such as the We Belong Festival and the Rainbow Festival, and the University of Eastern Finland ran the third cycle of its ED&I grant scheme in 2026 (Section 4.6). At the University of Rijeka, the Quality Assurance Guidelines on Diversity and Inclusivity (2025), which draw on YUFE ED&I policies, are intended as a self-evaluation tool for constituent units, covering practices such as adjustments in teaching and staff ED&I training, while the Gender Equality Plan 2030, proposed in July 2026, refers to the University's role in developing ED&I at YUFE level.

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5. Analysis – What does the data show?

Individuals: learners, staff and leaders

Across all formats for which data are available, ED&I activities increased participants' understanding and self-reported confidence. In the YUFE ED&I online course (1290 completions), confidence increased for all 10 statements in every year with available data, with average increases of 0.69 (2023/24), 1.58 (2024/25) and 1.40 (2025/26) points among learners outside the YUFE student programmes. The largest increases were for foundational concepts (equity versus equality, victimisation, unconscious bias), which indicates that the course mainly fills basic knowledge gaps. YUFE students showed a lower increase (0.30 in 2023/24), in the period when the course was a mandatory part of induction.

Face-to-face workshops show a consistent pattern: understanding is reported more often than readiness to apply. In the Ideas Lab workshop, 100% of respondents reported improved understanding and 81% greater confidence in application; in the Conflict transformation workshop, 70% considered it likely or very likely that they would use the techniques. Evidence for leaders is limited to qualitative feedback, which points to reflection on one's own leadership style rather than measurable change in practice.

The number of participants for the online course shows that it is the main channel of reach, while face-to-face formats reach smaller groups with more in-depth engagement.

Partner universities

Seven of ten Institutional Coordinators reported implementation actions informed or inspired by the YUFE ED&I Strategy 2024–2030, making it the most frequently cited of the six YUFE policies. The remaining three reported no action because a comparable policy was already in place. Reported changes cover training, structures (an ED&I Office, an Equality Committee, a Head Diversity Officer position), internal documents and the physical environment. The responses indicate that YUFE documents function as frameworks that institutions adapt to their own priorities rather than adopt unchanged, and that their uptake depends on the existing institutional baseline.

Alliance level

The results show a shift from ED&I activities delivered by WP9 alone towards ED&I embedded in the work of other Work Packages and Alliance processes. WP9 contributed ED&I content to the YUFE Staff Development Programme (with WP4), to a workshop for doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers (with WP6), to the YUFE Ideas Lab, to the YUFE induction course and to the application process of the YUFE Bachelor. In September 2026, WP9 provided input to the draft evaluation criteria of the YUFE Kick-Start Fund.

WP9 also contributed to the YUFE Innovation Action Plan developed by WP7 (July 2026). One of the three goals of the plan, ratified by the Executive Committee, is to embed the YUFE values of sustainability and ED&I into all project and activity selection processes. ED&I training for learners is

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part of one of the eight selected actions, and the plan refers to the YUFE ED&I online course as a model for a proposed course on entrepreneurial mindset.

This corresponds to the DoA objective that ED&I cuts across all Work Packages, and indicates that the role of WP9 is increasingly advisory: providing ED&I expertise to other parts of YUFE rather than running parallel activities.

(Un)expected findings

ED&I remains difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, the data indicate a broader understanding across the alliance of the horizontal and interconnected nature of ED&I. The establishment of the ED&I Ambassador role revealed implementation challenges, including differing understandings of the role among students and staff, and limited continuity due to student turnover. The Ideas Lab evaluation also shows a gap between improved understanding (100%) and confidence in application (81%), although the remaining 19% were neutral and no respondent disagreed. As the workshop took place in the final phase of a six-month programme, when participants' projects were close to completion, timing is a plausible factor, although the data do not allow it to be separated from the format of the workshop itself.

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6. Discussion

European context and other alliances

In line with the DoA, which foresaw information sharing through the ED&I network of European University Alliances, WP9 represents YUFE in the Diversity & Inclusion Hub of the FOREU4ALL Community of Practice. The Hub brings together approximately 25 alliances at its bimonthly meetings, and YUFE presented its ED&I practices there. Since December 2025, the Hub has run thematic interest groups, including one on data collection for gender and diversity. In a member survey in June 2026, nine of twelve responding alliances reported that participation in the Hub informed their own activities or documents. The challenges identified in this report, in particular in diversity monitoring and in moving from understanding to practice, are also reflected in the priorities of the Hub. Communication with FOREU4ALL on deepening cooperation is ongoing. WP9 also presented YUFE's ED&I work in the UNIGEM network of universities, in one presentation and two seminars that addressed YUFE as an alliance in the context of gender equality. A Blended Intensive Programme, the YUFE Values Staff Week, has been submitted (UC3M). In November 2025, a substantial part of the programme of the event *Universities with Purpose* was dedicated to inclusive leadership, which indicates growing recognition of ED&I as a leadership competence at European level. At the level of individual partners, external indicators point in the same direction: the University of Rijeka, which has led WP9 since 2025, rose in the THE Impact Rankings for SDG 5 (Gender Equality) from 99th place in 2023 to 37th of 1,559 universities in 2025.

Next steps

At university level, strategic orientation has partly shifted towards other priorities, such as safety and security. The findings suggest that, in this context, ED&I gains rather than loses relevance, as the protection of minimum rights for vulnerable groups becomes more pressing in periods of uncertainty.

At the level of national states, as well as in the broader European context, a shift in paradigm regarding ED&I is observable. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the self-sustainability of ED&I principles so that they do not depend on project funding and remain embedded in the alliance's activities regardless of external factors. This links ED&I to the alliance's core identity, grounded in democratic values and YUFE's orientation as an open, inclusive and student-centred alliance. Accordingly, ED&I as a horizontal principle will remain as strong as its integration with the alliance's core areas of activity (education, culture, talent, academic growth and others). At programme level, ED&I content should be introduced earlier in alliance training and incubation formats, at the stage when participants' projects are still being shaped, rather than only in final phases.

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7. Impact & Dissemination

Impact within YUFE

The DoA set the ambition to make ED&I an indispensable element of YUFE's DNA. As ED&I cuts across all YUFE activities, figures capture only part of its impact; much of it lies in experiences gained, connections built, and challenges and opportunities that emerged along the way, as well as in moments of insight that are not recorded in data. The results nevertheless show two stages of change. First, a policy foundation was established: by November 2024, the YUFE ED&I Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2030, the YUFE Gender Equity Plan 2024–2030 and the YUFE Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy had been developed, and the mid-term report (January 2025) assessed the objective of expanding YUFE ED&I policies, procedures, guidance and training as fully achieved. Second, the focus moved from policies to action: the cumulative number of learners who completed the YUFE ED&I online course rose from 658, as reported in the mid-term report, to 1290 by October 2026, the format and recognition of the Ambassador programme were adjusted on the basis of the pilot, and ED&I became part of the work of other Work Packages and Alliance processes, such as staff development, the YUFE Ideas Lab, the YUFE Kick-Start Fund and the YUFE Innovation Action Plan. In addition, 68% of staff who had attended ED&I training in the previous two years reported having taken concrete actions as a result, such as speaking up or adjusting their practices (Section 4.3.2).

At partner universities, seven of ten reported actions informed or inspired by the YUFE ED&I Strategy 2024–2030 (Section 4.7). The changes range from new structures, such as an ED&I Office and an Equality Committee at the University of Cyprus and a Head Diversity Officer position at the University of Rijeka, to institutional instruments drawing on YUFE documents, such as the Code of Conduct, ED&I glossary and Inclusive Communication Reflection Tool of the University of Antwerp and the Quality Assurance Guidelines on Diversity and Inclusivity of the University of Rijeka. Diversity monitoring in the YUFE Bachelor (Section 4.4) made visible who YUFE reaches: of the 44 respondents, 42% reported responsibilities alongside their studies, 29% a minority ethnic background and 21% a health condition, disability or other circumstance affecting their studies, while open answers identified groups not covered by existing categories.

Impact beyond YUFE

The YUFE ED&I online course is open to citizens, alumni and lifelong learners. At the University of Bremen, YUFE ED&I work informed the State of Bremen Anti-Discrimination Policy adopted in 2024 (Section 4.7). Through the Diversity & Inclusion Hub of the FOREU4ALL Community of Practice, which brings together approximately 25 European University Alliances, YUFE shares its approaches beyond the Alliance (Section 6).

Ultimately, the added value of YUFE is its ability to connect institutional change, shared European values and individual learning. Without the Alliance, these developments would largely remain separate institutional efforts; through YUFE, they can be jointly developed, tested, shared and further embedded across a European network. Shared commitments, such as the YUFE Declaration of Commitment to Anti-Racism, also create mutual accountability among partner universities.

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Dissemination

Throughout the reporting period, WP9 communicated through the YUFE website, including a dedicated ED&I webpage, where the YUFE ED&I Policy Report (Milestone M9.1) is publicly available and where also the YUFE Diverse Perspectives scheme, launched in February 2023, enables staff and students to share their personal stories. News items on YUFE and partner channels reported on WP9 work, such as the WP9 meetings at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (April 2023) and the University of Essex (January 2024) and the YUFE Gender Equity Plan (November 2024). Partner universities published YUFE ED&I documents and information on their own websites. Beyond the Alliance, YUFE ED&I work was presented at the NAFSA Annual Conference in Washington DC (July 2023), within the Diversity & Inclusion Hub of the FOREU4ALL Community of Practice, and in national networks and university bodies of partner universities. Within YUFE, the recruitment of student Ambassadors was promoted through the website, Student Forum meetings and emails (September–December 2024); WP9 presented its work to members of the YUFE Student Forum and its proposals for the next project phase to the other Work Package Leads at the YUFE Central Office in Brussels (November 2025); WP9 results were presented to the YUFE Strategic Council, Executive Committee and Work Package Leads under the Culture impact area in the poster session on YUFE 2030 achievements at the YUFE Annual Strategic Forum in Maastricht (March 2026); and the next version of the Ambassador programme was introduced at an open meeting with the Student Forum (April 2026). As a form of dissemination, this report is addressed to the wider public, YUFE stakeholders and other European University Alliances.

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8. Conclusion

This report assessed the impact of YUFE ED&I strategy, policies and measures between December 2022 and October 2026 against the three WP9 objectives.

O9.1 (Code of Conduct): The YUFE Community Code of Conduct was translated into the local languages of partner universities, embedded in onboarding, induction and workshops, and complemented by guidance on its use; a follow-up survey on its application is planned.

O9.2 (YUFE ED&I Ambassadors): The YUFE ED&I Ambassador role profile and training programme were piloted with nine students in 2024/25 and completed in November 2025 (Milestone M9.2); the 2026/27 programme, open to all YUFE students and including a Blended Intensive Programme recognised with 3 ECTS, builds on the lessons of the pilot.

O9.3 (policies, training and monitoring): Seven ED&I documents were developed or revised, 2264 students and staff participated in YUFE ED&I courses and workshops (90.6% of the target), and diversity monitoring was introduced in the YUFE Bachelor application process.

The main insight of this report is that ED&I has the greatest impact where it becomes part of the structures, programmes and processes of the Alliance and its partner universities.

Building on these results, the next project phase, starting in December 2026, will review and update the YUFE ED&I policies and develop an implementation suite for partner universities, advance monitoring and reporting on the impact of YUFE ED&I policies, update the YUFE ED&I online training and continue to embed ED&I inputs into the meetings and training activities of other Work Packages, so that the ED&I perspective is available from the design stage rather than added at the end, expand the YUFE ED&I Ambassador network beyond students, and bring ED&I, multilingualism and lifelong learning together in a joint YUFE Values conference.

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Annex 1

The statements from ED&I online course pre- and post-course questionnaire assess learners' confidence in their ability to:

S1: Explain the difference between equality and equity

S2: Explain the meaning of the word 'diversity'

S3: Explain what being inclusive means

S4: Give an example of direct discrimination

S5: Give an example of harassment

S6: Give an example of victimisation

S7: Challenge any behaviour you think is inappropriate

S8: Explain what unconscious bias is

S9: Approach someone who is not like me

S10: Show visible support for people from marginalised groups

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