"cherry on the cake"

ADVICE FOR QUALITY PLANNING OF **YOUTH EXCHANGES**

salto|youth

Erasmus+

YOUTH IN ACTION

Erasmus+

The Erasmus+ Programme incorporates the achievements of more than 25-years of history of EU programmes in the field of education, vocational training and youth. It aims at encouraging new synergy and cooperation among different fields with the goal of making the EU the biggest knowledge-based, sustainable and inclusive economy. The new Programme combines, within its broad framework, various EU programmes from the fields of education, training and youth, with the addition of sport.

The Programme is divided into three large areas, according to content and the possibilities they offer:
• Education and Training, including the Jean Monnet Programme
• Youth
• Sport

As one of two National Agencies of the Erasmus+ Programme in Slovenia, Zavod MOVIT manages the area of youth, which is promoted in the Programme under the trademark 'Erasmus+: Youth in Action'. Zavod MOVIT hosts the SALTO-YOUTH South East Europe Resource Centre, which promotes cooperation with the Western Balkan region in the frame of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. Along with the general objectives of the Programme, the youth chapter pursues in particular the objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010–2018). The Programme encourages learning mobility of young people in the context of youth work, contributes to quality development in youth work and the development of youth policies on all levels. Within this framework, it supports in particular the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Along with other general competences, it underlines the expectation of language learning for participants and that the experiences acquired will be duly registered and assessed with a Youthpass – the Programme's instrument for recognising and evaluating the benefits of non-formal learning within Programme activities.

The measures of the Programme in the field of youth are arranged in the following three key actions:
• Key Action 1: Learning mobility of individuals
• Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
• Key Action 3: Support for policy reform

Information about application deadlines, application forms and instructions are available on the website of the European Commission and with the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ Programme.

"cherry on the cake"
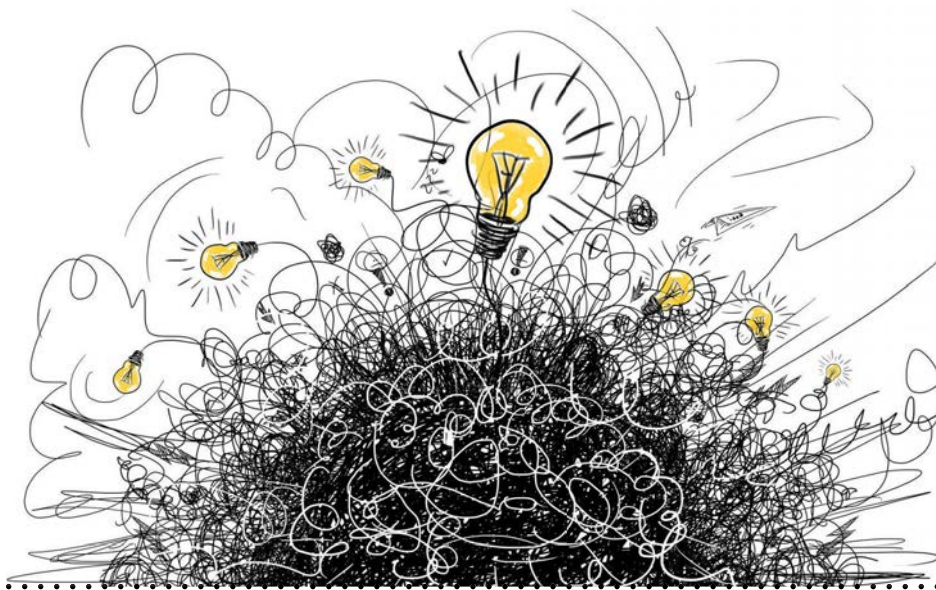
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foreword

The Erasmus+ Programme sets its objectives on a high level. This is with respect to the expected number of participants in the Programme and – maybe even more so – to the expected outcomes of cooperation in the different opportunities offered to young people by the Programme. This is defined by different EU area policies and, of course, one of the EU's key documents – the Europe 2020 strategy.

The youth field – or rather the youth sector – in particular pursues the objectives set forth by the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field 2010–2018, adopted in November 2009. Through its financial capacity, which increases every year, the Programme will provide an ever greater number of opportunities for young people's participation in learning mobility projects, especially in youth exchanges and the European Voluntary Service.

YOUTH EXCHANGES AS A FORM OF NON-FORMAL LEARNING
IN YOUTH WORK

Youth exchanges are a unique exception among learning mobility activities supported by the Erasmus+ Programme. In most learning activities, the period of learning normally corresponds to the duration of the participant's stay abroad for the learning process. This is the principle followed by the European Voluntary Service (EVS). The individual visits a host organisation outside their home country and most of the learning offered by EVS is limited to the stay and work with the host organisation.

With youth exchanges, the learning period extends much further than just the youth exchange activity itself where all the participating groups of young people meet. The period of learning opportunities within a youth exchange span from the early drafts of the exchange application and last until the very end of the project. Moreover, one of the youth groups – the host group – does not even leave their country.

This is why youth exchanges are an exceptional form of youth work. The activities of an individual youth group in its local environment are linked with the international space for several months. The youth exchange is a cooperation of different youth groups from different countries for the purpose of the project, including the main event – a week or more spent living and working together.

Youth exchanges are considered a traditional form of group youth work. In a way, it can be compared to the work of Scout groups, where the start of the season corresponds with the start of the school year, while the season ends with a camp in the summer of the next year.

Youth exchanges offer many moments that help the informal learning of the participating young people. Their true value as a learning instrument, however, only comes to light when they are set in the context of non-formal education. Youth exchanges in themselves offer structured space for the learning process. Establishing such a learning process, in the context of non-formal learning, requires the setting of clear learning objectives since it is hard to plan the learning path through the whole process without them.

The reason why the Erasmus+ Programme continues to support youth exchanges lies exactly in their capacity to enable the process of non-formal and informal learning to take place.

The learning should contribute to the boosting of the different competences of the participants, as well as to the fostering of European citizenship, and the strengthening of social inclusion for all young people.

THE BROADER FRAMEWORK
OF YOUTH EXCHANGES

The Erasmus+ Programme also supports youth exchanges because they offer an opportunity for learning about the different realities in different parts of the European Union and for learning about the reasons for our similarities and differences. Furthermore, they offer young people an opportunity to discuss about the future of the European Union and their expectations of it. This includes the possibility for exploration of the possible and necessary contributions of young people to creating a European Union that will really be seen by the citizens as their own community. This is why the Erasmus+ Programme primarily supports exchanges with groups from Programme countries, although it remains open for cooperation with partners from neighbouring partner countries.

The dimension of 'youth exchanges' in previous European Union programmes was one of the key roots for the creation of the first European Union programme for youth in 1987. Under the name 'Youth for Europe', it linked the youth exchanges within the Programme to the political goals of the then European Community.

Youth exchanges also offer an opportunity of impact on the development of the local community. The topic and content of a youth exchange can be related to current challenges of young people in a local community or to challenges of that particular community as a whole. Youth exchanges can potentially offer answers to such challenges. The young people who are from other communities who are participating in the youth exchange may bring with them examples of good practice from their environment. These examples could support new responses to any challenges being faced in that community and at the same time raise the awareness and recognition of youth work in that community.

Moreover, a youth exchange can also serve as an opportunity to integrate the activities of a youth group within the broader framework of its local community. Cooperation of groups of young people from twinned towns is an excellent example of such incorporation that can be supported by the local community. With this approach, the relevance of a youth exchange in all participating local communities can easily be assured, since – if recognised by the local authorities – they can also count on better placement of the activities in local policies.

BETTER VISIBILITY FOR THE
RESULTS OF YOUTH EXCHANGES

Sadly the results of young people's participation in a youth exchange often remains unseen. Whether we are talking about the acquired or strengthened personal competences of participants or the impact of activities on the broader environment of the participating youth groups. An important reason for this is insufficient focus on the visibility of results.

A good example can be seen in the impact of non-formal learning on the participants. On the one hand, we all know there has been an impact, but on the other, rarely anyone outside the circle of those directly involved is aware of this. There is much talk about the necessity of recognising the results of non-formal education and about the importance of the impact of non-formal learning on an individual. However we rarely make any steps toward greater recognition and the valuing of these effects. On a very basic level it can be enough if the participants simply become aware of the benefits they have received, and that they speak of them and be them in their regular activities.

Thus, youth exchanges are also placed in a broader framework of efforts for the recognition of non-formal education in youth work. This is also one of the key objectives in the new framework of European cooperation in the youth field, also called European youth policy.

Janez Škulj
MOVIT

This publication is a result of a series of training courses carried out by Zavod MOVIT as the National Agency for the 'Youth in Action' and 'Erasmus+ Youth in Action' Programmes from 2012 to 2014 under the brand "Cherry on the Cake". The trainings – first national, then international – were aimed at improving the quality of youth exchange projects and highlighting the role of youth exchanges as a traditional and widespread form of learning mobility in youth work. The focus of the national training courses was slightly different every year, for example: support for developing the competences of youth workers and organisations for quality work with young people; and increasing the participation of young people and improving support for their learning throughout the process of the exchange.

In 2014 the training course was held in cooperation with SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre and was opened to participants from the Western Balkan region as well as the other Erasmus+ Programme Countries. The international training course aimed at tackling the quality elements of all phases of a Youth Exchange (planning, compilation, preparation, implementation, closing and dissemination). The publication you are reading is a synthesis of the most useful information from the past trainings on this topic. It is targeting youth workers and youth leaders interested in implementing a Youth Exchange within the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme.

YOUTH EXCHANGE
AS A TOOL OF YOUTH WORK

Youth exchanges are one of the tools of youth work. They draw motivation and energy for engagement from young people's need to meet their peers in other countries and their wish to explore their broader environment.

Youth is a period of intensive re-evaluation of one's attitude to the world. Young people are reviewing the image they have built up in their family and begin to shape their own world view. Such questioning of world views often takes place in peer groups. Youth work contributes to personal development by supporting young individuals in exploring the world, re-evaluating their assumptions and at the same time learning and gathering experience for their future transition into full social inclusion. One of the key processes in young people's growth is the development of independence and a critical approach to their surroundings. This is why youth workers often set up structures from which young people can gather experience in independent decision-making and independent project management, while also offering them a chance to confront their own mistakes.

Youth exchanges are a tool for allowing young people to draft ideas as independently as possible, to coordinate them with groups from other countries, plan and carry out projects, and evaluate the participation and learning processes. In this framework, youth leaders (the ones who accompany the young people throughout their youth exchange journey) support them and ensure their basic safety and security.

Ensuring safety and letting young people take responsibility can put youth leaders in unpredictable situations. The unpredictability factor grows with the amount of the unknown in the relationship between the group and the youth leader. But if youth leaders wish young people to learn how to be independent, they must allow them independence. If they wish them to learn from their mistakes, they must be allowed to make them. At the same time, it is the youth leaders job to limit the possible impact of the mistakes so that a poor performance will not cause damage.

Such work offers little security to a youth leader. This is why it requires all the more motivation, dedication to the cause of supporting young people, and to trust in them. When these three are lacking, you get projects where young people are only consumers of the services of youth exchanges organised for them by others. Although young people do get the experience of a short-term stay in an intercultural environment, they learn to a much lesser extent about active participation in society and about realising their interests. Moreover, it is more likely that they will not learn about the intercultural differences due to the lack of cooperation with the other groups, so the exchange may only result in strengthened prejudice and stereotypes. If we accept the paradigm of including young people in ready-made projects, we are raising consumers, not active citizens.

Regardless of how you approach youth exchanges, the group should build on what it has within itself. Only in this way can it be genuine and address topics it really relates to. This goes for the topics being chosen, as well as the way the work methods are adapted. In every youth exchange, reflection on the relations among group members needs to be made, this can be done using a picture of a group of people climbing a tree – a 'Blob Tree'. If the exchange is related to sports, it might be better, for example, to use a picture of people on a football field. If you are working with visually impaired young people, most visual material is redundant and information on the cooperation within the group is obtained using other tools.

WHAT DOES THIS PUBLICATION OFFER?

If you are entering into this world for the first time, perhaps these considerations about youth exchanges are enough to overwhelm you. However, youth exchanges are not the only short-term mobility projects that are available for enriching work with young people. To name just a few, there are: work camps, short-term EVS projects, summer schools, etc. They all include groups of young people, interaction in an international context, have a specific aim and objectives, and are excellent educational tools for working with young people. If you have had experience with one or more of these, you already have significant capital to bring into organising a youth exchange. And even if you haven't, it is the understanding of how to work with young people, in order to empower them to take an active role and (co)create their own reality that is at the core of everything youth exchanges stand for. This publication brings information on different ways to work with and to encourage young people within youth exchange projects. Since supporting young people in drawing up, implementing and evaluating a youth exchange is a process of cooperation among people, it is impossible to give a recipe that would work with every individual, every group, every social and cultural background or under every condition. The aim of this publication is to provide some tips that can help young people and youth leaders deal with certain predicaments they may face in the process, and offer a few questions for further exploration in this field.

The publication is conceived as contemplation on frequently asked questions young people and youth leaders face in the period from the conception of an idea to the conclusion of the youth exchange. It is arranged in sections according to the periods of project work, highlighting the concepts that we believe form the key framework for international youth work within exchanges.

The introduction and information about the framework and formal conditions for youth exchanges in the Erasmus+ Programme are followed by descriptions of individual phases of a youth exchange project. Drafting, where ideas are being developed; Planning, where groups arrange their ideas into a consistent plan and apply for funding from the Erasmus+ Programme; Preparation for the Exchange, when the groups work on ensuring the material, technical and personal conditions for the activities; Implementation Phase, when the actual short-term youth mobility takes place; Evaluation, through which everyone involved recognises the value of the exchange activities from different perspectives; and Dissemination and Exploitation of Results, through which they try to make sure that the ideas, knowledge, skills and values that have been developed during the project live on and are also transferred into other environments and new projects. Every chapter contains information on what tasks need to be accomplished in each phase as well as insight on how young people can be included, what they can learn and how the learning process can be facilitated.

At the end you can find a short glossary of terms related to youth exchanges in youth work.

WHAT IS **YOUTH WORK?**

Youth work is an environment where young people and adults work with young people and for young people in an organised and goal-oriented way. In this setting, young people contribute with their own efforts to their own social inclusion, strengthen their competences and contribute to the development of the community. There are many definitions of youth work but they all stress the following:

- Learning experience of young people: Every young individual learns something within youth work since this is what it is meant for. This learning experience can serve as a springboard for independence and engagement in society.
- Active participation of young people: People learn the most when they are working on something. This is why young people (co-)shape the activities, which helps them learn how social processes work and how they themselves can contribute to life in society.
- Planned process: Youth work is planned to achieve its purpose, and it is best if young people take part in the planning. Nevertheless, it is also open to unplanned learning experiences. It should also support young people in recognising what they have learnt and help them in using it in everyday life.
- Comprehensive development of young people: Young people can develop integrally as a part of youth work.
- Safety and security of participants should also be added as a necessary condition.

How much of this is actually reflected in our work?

WHY VIEW **YOUTH EXCHANGES** FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE?

To understand why we should view youth exchanges from the perspective used in this publication, let us take a look at the broader framework of youth work.

What is our attitude towards youth work and how does it reflect in our lives? This is related to many factors. As a result it is up to each individual or organisation to decide on which framework they will choose as their own and what they will want to change in it. This makes awareness of the different frameworks all the more important. This awareness will help us understand why we do what we do and so help make changes if and when they are needed.

THE ACTIVITIES IN YOUTH WORK SHOULD BE SHAPED BY YOUNG PEOPLE OR AT THE LEAST, THEY SHOULD ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THIS.
SO WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER/WORKER?

A youth leader/worker can set the objectives, but if young people are to be truly integrated in the process, they can also change them. The leader can plan the content, but the youth group can choose other content. They can think of ways to work, but the young people may prefer something else.

If you take active participation seriously, then the role of the youth leader or worker will lie in ensuring the activities are in line with their framework (legislation, values, mission and purpose of the project). A young person may join in with youth work at any point they wish, the youth leader/worker must offer the support this person needs to advance in the desired direction, making sure all is kept within the set framework. If young people go beyond the set framework, the leader can ask them to get back or warn them. But in some cases this is an opportunity to reconsider whether the framework still makes sense or the young people have just made it clear that it can be adapted. This is why planning is mostly about process objectives.

HOW SHOULD WE WORK THEN? **WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL OF A YOUTH LEADER/WORKER?**

It often seems that working in a particular way and using particular methods makes you a very good youth leader or worker, but there is no such recipe.

Youth work is there to support young people in their development. The main question is what are the needs of the young people? What attracts them to take part in activities? What keeps them coming back to the activities? The answer is 'relationships'.

The most effective tool of a youth leader/worker is their relationship with the youth group. Once you have built a genuine relationship with someone, you can achieve cooperation that will contribute to development on both sides. If in this relationship young people are accepted, respected, and recognised as unique and responsible people who are trusted, this will contribute the most to the quality of work. Specific skills can be learnt and developed together with the young people. With no relationships built or only superficial ones, your work will only reach superficial results, regardless of what you have studied to prepare, and the young people will only be users and consumers. Within a relationship, you get to know a person and can shape activities to suit their needs.

Under some circumstances, a relationship with young people can seem difficult. For example, for a public official who is expected to stay within certain lines, or for someone in an organisation, who usually has more formal relationship approach towards young people. It could be the worker is simply not ready to let young people close because this requires a lot of energy, or maybe this would mean they could not keep to their work schedule, etc. The constraints under which a worker operates will remain there unless they change them themselves.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION IN YOUTH WORK

The international dimension in youth work allows the horizons to be expanded even further. It can take place in the home community (e.g. different young people in an activity, hosting an international event or long-distance cooperation) or by going somewhere else to another community.

A relationship can only be developed with someone if that person is known. Meeting different people and learning about their environments is one of the main purposes of the international dimension. Youth leaders/workers learn the most when they are part of something and experience it themselves – things often remain just theory unless they are experienced. Experiencing things touches us the most and allows us to better understand people and events, which is why international activities are so important in youth work. This is often the first opportunity for young people to experience diversity if they themselves do not live in a diverse environment. Furthermore, the international dimension allows young people to learn about themselves from new perspectives – how they can view different possibilities or different ways of life, how to cooperate, how to behave in an unfamiliar environment where old patterns do not work? How do choices of values and the way of someone's life reflect in different environments and how does this affect other people?

Cooperation in an international environment can have a deepening and broadening effect in youth work. Young people may be deeply affected and may have difficulties finding their way in a setting where the answers they have known up to now no longer work. Youth leaders/workers can help them not to give up when looking for new answers. They also support them in finding the right words to describe unknown experiences. This way, their learning experience will be even greater, it will mean more to them and have a greater impact on their choice of lifestyle.

> "The field of youth work is a field of exploration, both for young people and all those who enter it as volunteers or as employed support for young people. People and groups are never the same and this is what allows constant learning, which is one of the charms of youth work."

Youth exchanges allow groups of young people from different countries to spend up to 21 days together, exploring topics that connect them. During an exchange, participants carry out a programme that they had planned and prepared in advance, usually consisting of a mix of workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, simulations, outdoor activities, etc. Youth exchanges allow young people to develop their competences, become aware of socially relevant topics/thematic areas, discover new cultures, habits and lifestyles through peer learning, and strengthen values like solidarity, democracy, friendship, etc.

The learning process in youth exchanges is triggered by methods of non-formal education. Youth exchanges are based on trans-national cooperation between two or more participating organisations from different countries within and outside the European Union.

However, it is important to understand that youth exchanges are NOT academic study trips, tourist trips, tours or profit-oriented activities.

youth exchanges
IN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

PARTICIPANTS:
Young people aged between 13 and 30; minimum 16 and maximum 60 participants – group leaders not included; minimum 4 participants per group – group leaders not included.

DURATION
OF PROJECT ACTIVITY:
From 5 to 21 days, excluding travel time.

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME GRANT:
If the application is successful, the applicant of the youth exchange project is awarded the following from the Erasmus+ Programme:
- a grant for organisational support (unit costs per day of activity per participant)
- an amount of unit costs for travel (based on the travel distance per participant between their place of origin and the venue of the activity. Travel distances need to be calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission.)
- optionally, the applicant can request funding for exceptional costs (accommodation during an Advance Planning Visit, visa-related costs, costs to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities, etc.)
- support for special needs (in case the project includes young people with disabilities).

LOCATION
OF THE ACTIVITY:
In the country of one of the participating organisations.

WHERE AND WHEN
TO APPLY:
The applicant from one of the Programme countries applies with the project to its National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme. Applications can be made on one of the three annual deadlines. More information about the application procedure can be found in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide under Key Action 1.

The organisations from the Western Balkan countries[1] apply to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Applications can be made on one of the two annual deadlines. More information about the application procedure can be found in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide under Key Action 2.

ADVANCE PLANNING VISIT (APV)
If the project foresees an Advance Planning Visit (APV), the following criteria must also be respected:

Duration of the APV:
Maximum 2 days (travel days excluded).

Number of participants in the APV:
At least 1 participant per country. The APV can be attended by 2 people per country if at least 1 of them is a young person who is taking part in the project.

ELIGIBLE
PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS:
A non-profit/non-governmental organisation, a European youth NGO, a social enterprise, a public body at local level, an informal group of young people. Also: a public body at regional or national level, an association of regions, a European grouping of territorial cooperation, a company active in corporate social responsibility (CSR).

MINIMUM NUMBER
OF PARTNERS:
2 from two different countries.

ORIGIN OF PARTNERS:
Partners (participating youth groups) can come from Programme countries (28 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey) and partner countries neighbouring the EU. Every project must have at least one partner from a Programme country.

PROJECT DURATION:
Minimum 3 months, maximum 2 years.

WESTERN BALKAN YOUTH WINDOW[1]
Since 2015 organisations from the Western Balkan countries[2] have a chance to submit applications within the Erasmus+ Youth in Programme's Key Action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practise) under the action "Capacity building in the field of youth". The successful applications are funded with additional EU funds, referred to as Western Balkan Youth Window, made available through the Erasmus+ Programme to promote cooperation with organisations from the Western Balkan region in the field of youth. The projects within this framework can consist of different mobility activities, including Youth Exchanges, possibly complemented by other capacity building activities.

drafting

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

- IT ALL STARTS WITH THE FIRST IDEA – WHO SHOULD PROPOSE THE IDEA?
- WHO SHOULD WE INCLUDE IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?
- FROM IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS TO DOABLE IDEAS?
- TURNING AN IDEA INTO CONCRETE ACTIVITIES
- WHAT TO EXPECT AND WISH FOR IN A YOUTH EXCHANGE?
- OVERCOMING FEARS
- HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH IDEA IS GOOD?
- IS IT AN EXCHANGE OR SOMETHING ELSE?
- HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER IF WE HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE EXCHANGE?
- HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS?
- WHO ELSE FROM OUR ENVIRONMENT TO INCLUDE?
- CAN WE GET SOME OTHER FUNDING AND WHERE? DO WE NEED TO CHANGE ANYTHING BECAUSE OF THAT?

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE DRAFTING PHASE?

- WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW TO SUPPORT THIS LEARNING PROCESS?
- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE DRAFTING PHASE?
- HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW DO WE FACILITATE THE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

IT ALL STARTS WITH THE FIRST IDEA – WHO SHOULD PROPOSE THE IDEA?

The idea for a youth exchange can surface from an interest in folk music, from curiosity about why they have siesta in Sicily, how eco villages work in different countries, etc. It can come from the young people or a youth leader, they can come up with it together, or it could come from participants of last year's youth exchange wishing to organise another. The spark can also be ignited by a youth leader who accompanies a group of young people and knows their wishes and ideas, and challenges them or tries to bring their experience to a higher level.

If young people do not know what youth exchanges are, a youth leader can present the concept to them; for example by showing them a video of an exchange, by inviting a young participant or a whole group who took part in one. It is good to let young people have some time to think about the idea. If they are interested, they will continue to talk and wonder about it.

If the idea comes from the youth group itself or if young people develop it from the start, they are more likely to embrace it as their own and they will be much more motivated in the preparation, the exchange itself and the follow-up. Learning outcomes will come in different phases of the project and can be planned for each participant.

If the idea is drawn up and developed by a youth leader or a group of youth leaders, while participants are only sought later on, then a lot of energy and time will be spent looking for participants and motivating them. This also increases the risk that participants will have different views of the youth exchange and will not connect as a group, only taking part in the programme without co-shaping it, which in turn will probably result in them being unwilling to continue working together after the exchange. It also reduces the learning outcomes since the participants have not shaped the idea from the start and have no investment in it.

An example:
Participants met on their way to the exchange. They spent quite some time to get to know each other and connect, so they were left with little time to socialise with other participants and they had no programme ready. The leader also had quite a different perspective on how the work should be done so they had to solve a number of divergences instead of working on the quality of the programme and on the participants.

Is it true they drink more tea than Turkish coffee in Turkey?

WHO SHOULD WE INCLUDE **IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?**

A youth exchange can be prepared with an existing group of young people. For them, it will be an upgrade of their work and a desirable challenge. But you can also gather different young people together and create a new group. In this case, it is best to choose participants among young people you already work with, so that the exchange will be a chance for personal growth for each of them.

If the group is new, it should be brought together soon after the idea for an exchange has first surfaced. This will allow the participants to be engaged from the beginning when the idea is still being developed, which in turn will help you support their motivation and group formation. Moreover, make sure that the youth group gets to know each other and the youth leaders, and that the leaders get to know the group.

FROM IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS TO **DOABLE IDEAS?**

Some ideas may seem completely unrealistic until you start to work on them. You can help young people develop the idea with creative methods (e.g. brainstorming, reverse question, reverse brainstorming, and mind maps) and should not limit them too much in the initial stage. This way, you will probably get even more ideas from which the group can choose the ones they like.

You may not agree with the young people on how realisable some of the ideas are. But as a youth leader you will likely need to step out of your comfort zone and also support ideas that might not be as close to you.

TURNING AN IDEA INTO **CONCRETE ACTIVITIES**

Some ideas may seem quite abstract until you start translating them into activities. Here, once again, invite young people to propose activities themselves since this means they will relate to them more easily. If the young people have never been on a youth exchange or a camp or any residential experience lasting several days, it will be harder for them to come up with ideas. In this case, you can present an example of an exchange and help them explore what they might want and what needs to be done in order to carry out an exchange. A leader can also make suggestions, but the decisions should be taken together with the young people. Sometimes they might think a new thing you propose is rubbish. Through talking about it, you can help them to understand why an activity should be carried out and what they can gain from it. Sometimes they need some time to think. You should consider in advance which activities should be part of an exchange and explain to the young people why it is so. But at the same time, you should be ready that they may refuse some of your proposals. If you really want to support the learning process, you will also allow the young people to make mistakes if they might learn more that way.

By the end of this phase, you together with the young people will have shaped an idea that you can approach partners with and invite them to join the project. At the same time, the idea should not be defined in too much detail since the same process will need to take place with the partners and many things may still need to be changed.

Among the necessary considerations, you should also think carefully who you want as partners in the exchange and how many participants the exchange should have.

WHAT TO EXPECT AND WISH FOR IN A YOUTH EXCHANGE?

Young people come with their own expectations about the youth exchange and shape them according to what you present to them. The later they join the process, the lower the chance of them being able to adjust their expectations and plans for the youth exchange. Make sure the expectations of everyone are heard by all – so that you can work to meet them or establish why they cannot be met. This way, you support the motivation of the group and establish whether a participant is really appropriate for the youth exchange.

The expectations of the participants should be checked at the beginning and also later on, since they tend to change. You can ask them what (in comparison to their peers not taking part) might change after the youth exchange and how they think they will be viewed by others.

Based on the wishes of the participants, you can also plan the learning process of the youth exchange to include a particular wish that a participant may have.

OVERCOMING FEARS

Young people will always have fears, but you can address them so they realise the fears are not that terrible or that they can help each other in fighting them. Some of the fears may remain or may surface later in the project. The time to talk about fears is appropriate when the participants already feel safe in the group because this means they will be ready to express their fears and hear the fears of others, and try to look for strategies to support each other.

Depending on the age of the participants, you might also need to face the fears of parents. For the younger ones (those under the age of legal consent – this may vary in different countries), you will need the approval of their parents so that they can take part in the youth exchange, whereas it may not be necessary to talk to the parents of those over the age of legal consent. The youth leader should consider when it is important to tell parents about the progress of preparations to keep them informed and to maintain dialogue with them. You should also encourage the young people to talk to their parents themselves.

HOW DO YOU KNOW **WHICH IDEA IS GOOD?**

An idea for an exchange is good if it is realisable and interesting for the participants, if participants will learn from it, if it has a clear need for an international dimension and might also contribute to the local environment. A good idea has a clear answer as to why it should be carried out.

If the exchange idea poses an appropriate challenge, young people will hopefully embrace and develop it, and at the same time they will learn from it. Exchange ideas that are too simple will produce limited ideas for activities. On the other hand, an exchange idea that is too challenging will probably see young people give up. If the exchange activities can be only be carried out with young people from the local environment or if most of the activities would be focussed on time spent at computers, then the exchange concept is not going to work.

IS IT AN EXCHANGE OR **SOMETHING ELSE?**

To qualify as a youth exchange, the meeting of young people from different countries must offer an opportunity for them to learn and explore the realities of each other. If it contributes to the local environment, all the better.

- If you only wish for young people to learn a language or spend part of their holiday abroad, this is not a youth exchange.
- If you invite young people just before the exchange to visit Turkey for ten days with you and take part in a two-week programme, it is a vacation and not a youth exchange.
- If you need the help of a group of young people mainly for work (e.g. watching over turtles in a zoo, building a theatre stage in an organisation's yard, preparing a festival, etc.), it is a work camp or a volunteering project, not a youth exchange.
- If you wish young adults to learn something new that will help them with their work in the organisation, it is a project for mobility of youth workers (e.g. a training course).

HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER IF WE HAVE **DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE EXCHANGE?**

Someone may prefer one idea and someone else may prefer another; one wants to work one way and the other one wants something else. Since it is about the learning process, it makes sense to try out different things so that the young people get to explore and receive diverse experiences. Make sure that everyone does what they prefer and that you do not force anyone into activities.

Some people are open to new things and others are not – solving these situations is a learning process that is sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. Young people should be supported in this process – sometimes you need to make certain things easier for them and at other times you need to let them get the experience of facing a difficult situation.

Already in the drafting phase, they will see little or no sense in some of the things you do. This will be less likely if you explain to them the broader framework of youth exchanges and if they know what needs to be done to organise one. If you prepare for group meetings, it will be easier to work together.

Nevertheless, if it turns out already at the beginning that your views are simply too divergent, it is better not to take on the project together, since unnecessary disagreements would constantly arise.

HOW TO **MAKE DECISIONS?**

Everything in an exchange should be decided by the participants together with the youth leaders, participating as equals. When young people are part of the decision making process, they are more likely to stand behind their decisions and will take responsibility for the realisation of those decisions. What is theirs will mean more to them than what is given or even forced on them from the outside. The way decisions are made is also the result of the character of the Erasmus+ Programme, which underlines democratic processes and the active participation of young people.

Decisions can be taken by a single person, they can be voted on, and they can be made by the whole group or not taken at all. Every option has its consequences.

When one person makes the decisions, they will only be embraced by those who agree with them or are positively inclined towards the decision-maker. In the long run, this means the group does not work together. However, quick decisions by a single person are important and necessary in matters of safety or in critical situations.

When different arguments are confronted and a decision needs to be made, you can choose to take a vote. This is appropriate for less crucial decisions with no major impact on the programme. Sometimes it is important to acknowledge the view of a minority or the needs of an individual, so in those cases voting would be inappropriate. Voting also brings the danger of someone feeling left out. Moreover, it is not as appropriate when it comes to comprehensive decisions. In this case, it is more appropriate to search for a common decision of the entire group. This is why the group should discuss things in a way that will give everyone a chance to be heard without undermining the views of others. If the participants really listen to each other, the group will find a solution that everyone can agree with. When this moment comes, everyone will feel it and the atmosphere will calm down or the group will overcome the disagreement with enthusiasm and everyone will embrace the decision as their own. This sometimes requires more time, but the quality of cooperation increases substantially.

When taking decisions, you can use different techniques that facilitate the decision-making process.

WHO ELSE FROM OUR ENVIRONMENT **TO INCLUDE?**

As part of the exchange, you will work with different people who are not your project partners. You should consider who you will need to work with (e.g. parents, co-workers, friends, neighbours), who you should work with (e.g. owner of the venue, webmaster), who you wish to work with (e.g. local speleology club, the mayor) and who you could work with because they would benefit from the project or you wish to strengthen your ties (e.g. student club, high school teachers).

These are stakeholders in the project, those who have a stake in its implementation. They will affect the project or benefit from it. Stakeholders can help you in the realisation of the project or hold you down; you may know them already or not yet. It is good to consider this aspect early on in the project, as it can affect the projects implementation and content. For each of the stakeholders, you should consider how important they are for the project and what is their attitude and interest (do they wish to cooperate or really want something from the project). If a stakeholder is averse to the project, you should try to think of something that would draw them closer. All these considerations will make it easier to decide who to work with and how. Make a plan of how to approach and cooperate with each stakeholder.

CAN WE GET SOME OTHER FUNDING AND WHERE?
DO WE NEED TO CHANGE ANYTHING BECAUSE OF THAT?

By seeking co-funding, you also accept the expectations or framework of those providing the funds.

- You can get the money through different types of fundraisers (e.g. selling products or making music in the street), you can look for donations and sponsorships or try crowdfunding like 'Kickstarter' if it is an innovation project, or apply to funding programmes, etc.
- At the local level, you can request funding from local authorities – it will be easier to get if the project is about the cooperation of young people from twin towns or about a field supported by the city. It is also helpful to present to them how the local community will benefit from hosting young people from another country or how their young citizens can contribute to the local community when they return.
- At the national level, you can apply for funding within programmes for international cooperation of young people (e.g. secondary school students) or development cooperation, etc.
- Funding can also be obtained from different national or international foundations that support projects in different fields and different regions

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE DRAFTING PHASE?

WHAT DO THEY LEARN
IN THIS PHASE?

Drafting is where a youth exchange starts – the initial idea starts being developed into something concrete and a group of people who want to join in starts forming. The group starts refining its ideas and shaping them into a common image of the exchange.

Young people learn and strengthen:

GROUP COMMUNICATION
A youth exchange takes place in a group, which means that young people learn how to listen to the group and be heard, to express their own ideas, wishes and needs, to explore different opinions and form a common idea. In doing so, they use and learn active participation and different ways of communicating, which can boost their self-image and confidence, while also improving their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES
A youth exchange is a place for learning, active participation and democratic processes because the group works and makes decisions together. Young people learn to express themselves and allow different opinions, they learn to coordinate, to look for common ground and make decisions individually and as a team. This is why the leader must allow them freedom when different views conflict, and allow them to make mistakes, while making sure they remain within an appropriate framework. Cooperating in a group is also an opportunity for learning how to agree on joint work and how you wish to work together, which contributes to social and civic competences and skills that improve employability.

CREATIVITY AND IDEA DEVELOPMENT
Exploring and developing ideas are the main activities in the drafting phase. Young people often lack experience in independently exploring and developing ideas in the direction they want. You can help the group with creative methods to give them enough time to explore different ideas and come up with new ones. This way, they also see that ideas are refined in the next step, when you have already explored the new possibilities. This also gives more freedom in the first step to explore new things and work together on the 'crazy' ideas. Young people learn to develop ideas together, identify what helps them do this and what steps contribute to the quality of the process. Through these processes, they also boost their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

TEAM WORK
Team work always means learning about yourself and learning to work with others. Young people join the group with different expectations, which they will need to adjust – and this requires respect for each individual. They have a chance to experience different roles and get feedback about themselves. They learn how to achieve more together than they could on their own, and how to overcome difficulties. These skills help young people both in their professional life and private sphere.

HOW TO SUPPORT THIS **LEARNING PROCESS?**

One of the main emphases in the drafting phase is the formation and exploration of ideas. You can support the group in the creative stage so they really stick to coming up with ideas before going deeper to explore what a particular idea means. If you start to analyse too quickly why a particular idea is good or not, you stop the creative process and the exploration of uncharted waters. When the group finds their common idea, they will feel it.

Support is offered with creative techniques and methods that allow thinking openly about how group members see the future. This allows individuals in the group to recognise in which direction they want to go. You can use visual material like the method of speaking through pictures. Invite group members to select the photo that is closest to their perception of a youth exchange. The participants should explain their choices. You can also try visualisations of the future. Invite group members to imagine how they see themselves in ten years and how the youth exchange would be presented in a film or book about their life. They can draw a picture, write a blog, etc., and present it to each other.

The second main emphasis in this phase is group formation. You can help group members to get to know each other if they have not done so yet, and help the group to form. Allow participants to exchange views and take on their first tasks together, and encourage them to spend time together outside of the preparations for the exchange. It is helpful for the group to socialise in their free time and even do unusual activities together. This way, the members get to know each other in different roles and refine their relationships, it is also good if their leader joins them as many times as possible. In this process of learning about each other and about working together, the group can also be supported by being given a chance to talk about it. This way, they will reflect on how they work together, how they see themselves and others, how they are developing the idea, etc. You can use pictures of several people doing different things , e.g. on a tree, on a ship, in a store, building a house or on a football field. You can ask the participants to answer your questions by each choosing the person on the picture they feel best represents their answer. You should only ask one or two questions to allow them to focus – less is more. You can ask them for example: "Where do you see yourself in this project/group? How do you see others? What illustrates your cooperation best? How do you wish the cooperation of the group to be?" Group members present and explain their choices and then the group can discuss them.

The more energy and time you invest in teambuilding, the better the team's cooperation will be in the subsequent stages of the project.

Source: Blazinšek, A., Cepin, M., Mikac, M. (2009): Orodja za vrednotenje v mladinskem delu, Zveza Škis, Ljubljana.

WHAT IS THE **ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER** IN THE DRAFTING PHASE?

A youth leader helps the group find the right idea and presents different options for youth exchanges. They support the group in their creative search for different possibilities and in exploring them. They present unknown work methods, activities and the necessary elements of a youth exchange.

The leader helps the group decide as an equal member. If possible, they let the group decide on their own, but at the same time make sure that the group remains within the agreed framework (agreements on work, actual possibilities, etc.). If the group decides to seek funding, the leader helps them identify what this means for adapting the content of work methods.

The leader makes sure the group members know each other and allows exchanges of views. They encourage the group to spend time together outside their work. They can also organise an unusual activity for the group to connect better. The leader is with the group most of the time, so that everyone can get to know everyone.

Exploring the expectations and wishes of group members is the responsibility of the leader, who can also use this to test whether a person is appropriate for a youth exchange. If the leader sees the expectations do not match the concept of the youth exchange, they need to talk to the particular group member or help this person adapt to the views of the rest of the group. If someone does not wish to adapt, it is the responsibility of the youth leader to tell the individual and the group that they will not be able to take part in the exchange.

Already at the beginning, the youth leader helps create an environment where everyone is heard, presents the organisational needs and informs the parents if needed.

HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?

The time of drafting is also the time when to think about who to include in the youth exchange. The youth leader can invite young people to join the process and so try to include those the project will be beneficial to. If a youth exchange is seen as the next step in the development of a young person there needs to be careful selecting. At the same time it is important to be aware that it is not possible to be able to include all the young people. Maybe this will happen due to a lack of motivation, maybe because it is hard to synchronize schedules or maybe because the youth leader does not have the competencies to work with a certain group (youth from rural areas, drug users, migrants...)

The most important part of inclusion in this phase is giving the young people the license to dream.

The environment we live in is presenting us with limitations. Some of the limitations are set in order to protect us and others (very often in legislation), to glue the community together (patterns of behaviour in community/culture) while some are set as a result of understanding the reality (attitude towards illness, youth, women...). Youth work as a polygon for new practices in the life of young people is always the place of testing new realities, the place in which we step out of the everyday reality and can co-create a different setting.

The work with young people in the drafting phase is focused on recognizing the obstacles the individual and or group faces in everyday life that limits their active participation in both society and in youth projects. It is a time of challenging the beliefs (of the young people and youth leaders alike) of what is possible and inviting the young people to dream 'out of the box' of the limitations set on them by the ideologies, institutions, interpersonal relations and internalized happenings.[3]

At the same time it is the time to look at the other side of the inclusion coin and research the attitudes of other young people when faced with diversity and explore their general view of inclusion since this will be one of the key elements of the work throughout the project duration.

Drafting is also the phase in which to try to recognize the 'zones of learning' of the individual. The questions to ask to the participants and to ourselves are, for example:
- When do I feel comfortable?
- How do I feel about this task?
- How do I feel when I receive a challenge? How do I react in challenging situations?
- How do I react when something is too big a challenge for me?

It is also the time when the relationships in the group and with the youth leaders needs to be solidified enough to be able to provide appropriate support in the challenging and 'too demanding' situations.

[3] For more information please consult the concept 4I's of oppression by John Bell
https://youthbuild.org/sites/youthbuild.org/files/Four%20Is.pdf.

HOW DO WE FACILITATE THE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

Intercultural learning,
as understood in this publication:

01 **Regards culture as a dynamic rather than a static concept** (cultures change over time, people change over time and one of the important factors of change comes from interaction with other cultures)

02 **Does not equate culture automatically with country, nation or ethnicity** (countries, nations and ethnic groups are traditionally viewed as having their own culture, but that is too narrow and there are more (sub)cultures that influence the lives of young people)

03 **Sees identities of young people,** among other things, **as complex interactions of different cultural frameworks**

04 **Believes that every culture has a set of behaviours, values and beliefs**

05 **Is a long-term process of increasing one's intercultural sensitivity,** through questioning inherent behaviours, values and beliefs

06 **Does not happen automatically in every interaction of people from different cultures**

07 **Encourages learning and growing from diversity.**

Having said all that, youth exchanges are one of the pedagogical tools in youth work that offer a lot of possibilities for intercultural learning to happen. This is mainly due to their long-term character of being implemented through different phases, which makes them different from other short-term mobility projects. Even if nothing is being done, interactions that will involve cultural perceptions will happen among the young people in all the phases of a youth exchange. And yes, learning will be happening as well. However, if not facilitated, these interactions and the learning stays either on the superficial level or leads to tensions and clashes. On the other hand, if facilitated properly, intercultural learning is very likely to open a space for significant changes with the young people. In order for that to happen, facilitation of intercultural learning needs to start already from the drafting phase.

For a lot of people, the idea of intercultural learning starts when they meet people from different countries. Translated into the language of youth exchanges, it starts on the very first day of its implementation phase. However, it can and should start much sooner than that. The first thing that should be utilised is the diversity of the young people that are developing an idea of a youth exchange. It is that diversity (regardless of them coming from the same country) that will inspire creativity and allow young people to learn from each other. So this diversity needs to be nurtured from the very start of the process and pointed out as an opportunity rather than a threat. Dreaming through diversity is a challenging, but rewarding process.

When working on the idea with young people, regardless of the topic, some of the cultural elements will almost always appear (e.g. I would like to know how they live in Iceland. I would like to know what people eat for breakfast in Romania. I am very interested in the architecture of Latvia. I would really like to know how the Portuguese like to spend their free time, etc.). However, when thinking how to include intercultural learning in a youth exchange, it is important to encompass different elements of culture: behaviours, beliefs and values.[4] By their nature, behaviours are very likely to be included and discovered, but in order to maximise the experience of all the young people involved, thought needs to put into understanding how to include beliefs and values in the equation as well.

[4] For more information please consult the concept Iceberg of Culture, source: AFS Orientation Handbook Vol.4.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?
- WHERE DO WE FIND POTENTIAL PARTNERS?
- WHAT DOES A PROJECT PLAN HAVE TO INCLUDE?
- WHAT NEEDS TO BE AGREED ON FOR GOOD COOPERATION?
- WHO WRITES THE APPLICATION?
- IF EVERYTHING IS DONE BY YOUNG PEOPLE, WHAT IS MY JOB THEN?
- WHAT IF WE DO NOT MATCH WITH POTENTIAL PARTNERS OR IF THEY WITHDRAW?
- HOW TO LEARN WHAT YOUR PARTNERS ARE LIKE?
- WHAT KIND OF PARTNERS DO WE WANT?
- HOW TO BUILD/UPGRADE COOPERATION BETWEEN PARTNERS?
- HOW TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND FIND A COMMON DENOMINATOR?
- IS THE PROJECT IDEA APPROPRIATE FOR THE ERAMUS+ PROGRAMME? IS IT A YOUTH EXCHANGE OR A TRAINING COURSE OR SOMETHING ELSE?
- HOW WILL THE GROUP DEVELOP DURING THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?
- HOW TO PREPARE A TIMETABLE FOR A YOUTH EXCHANGE?
- HOW TO PREPARE A FINANCIAL PLAN?

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE PLANNING PHASE?
- WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW TO SUPPORT THIS LEARNING PROCESS?
- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE PLANNING PHASE?
- HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

planning

WHERE DO WE FIND **POTENTIAL PARTNERS?**

Partnership is one of the basic conditions for most of the projects in the Erasmus+ Programme. The search for potential partners is the moment when a group starts to open to the outside. The group's own interests and needs are to be coupled with the interests and needs of others.

The search can be approached in different ways. You can look for new partners with which you have not worked together before, or ask existing or past partners to join the project.

The most common way of looking for new partners is to search in different databases of potential partner organisations. The most widely used database in the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme is Otlas[5]. You can also find support in the Eurodesk network, the database of EVS accredited organisations and partner search tools set up by individual National Agencies of the Erasmus+ Programme (e.g. Turkey, Italy, Germany, the Euro-Mediterranean Region).

Another common way is to look at your organisation's previous projects and check if your partners from these projects are ready to work with you again. Working with partners you already know makes the process of setting up cooperation and getting to know an organisation much easier.

It is also common to look for partners within an organisation's network. Some organisations are part of larger networks dedicated to different topics (e.g. volunteering, fighting poverty, inclusion of the Roma community) or part of an international organisation.

Within Erasmus+:Youth in Action, different organisations also prepare Partnership Building Activities[6]. These events are attended by representatives of different organisations that want to expand their networks of potential partners and recognise possible fields of cooperation.

[5] *https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/*

[6] *Such events are published in the European Training Calendar, available at https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/.*

WHAT DOES A **PROJECT PLAN** HAVE TO INCLUDE?

A project plan is the step where you expand the idea you have formed and put it in the wider setting. It also defines how the change it foresees will be achieved in your environment and what is needed before you start filling in the electronic application form.

When all the partners agree on the idea, you start gathering additional information about the possibilities for implementation. By collecting this information, the participating groups deepen their awareness that the same idea can be realised in different ways. This is followed by the process of making a decision on the form (framework) of the activity you plan to carry out.[7]

Once you have selected the framework for the project, you plan it together. You must clearly define what the project will contribute to (general orientation/purpose), what exactly you expect to achieve (concrete goals) and how you expect to achieve it (project activities). Already during the planning phase you should be considering how you will check whether you are meeting the set goals (you should also plan the evaluation process). You can read more about these processes in different project planning manuals[8].

[7] Read more about this under the next question.

[8] For example: http://youth-partnership-eu. coe.int/youth-partnership/publica- tions/T-kits/3/Tkit_3_EN.

For a youth exchange, this means that the plan needs to describe what will be its long-term contribution, what the youth exchange will achieve, what activities will be undertaken as part of the project to achieve the objectives and how the implementation process will be monitored to evaluate the results.

A timeframe must be set for all the activities to make clear what happens when in the project. Moreover, all the activities must also be described with respect to their material needs (how much material, equipment, tools, food, space, etc. is needed and how much they will cost).

WHAT NEEDS TO BE AGREED ON FOR GOOD COOPERATION?

For good cooperation, it is necessary to agree on the common rules, a division of work and responsibilities, and other important factors that can affect your work.

You can never work out too many things with partners. It is good to talk about all the aspects of cooperation, as this offers a chance to learn from each other and see how the group on the other side understands a particular aspect of cooperation. You should not forget that you are discussing activities and rules in an intercultural environment where each of you has their own perception of punctuality, interpersonal relations, responsibility, etc. These views will largely stem from the culture of which the group is a part of.

WHO WRITES THE APPLICATION?

In ideal conditions, it is the participants who write the application. They are the ones who, through the process of its preparation, need to think about the different aspects of the project. When it is time to prepare the application, this can also be one of the challenges (and learning opportunities) for them, but it is good if they get support from someone with more experience.

IF EVERYTHING IS DONE BY YOUNG PEOPLE , **WHAT IS MY JOB THEN?**

Youth leaders often wonder what their role is when young people are really engaged in taking over the tasks. The role of the youth leader in such cases is to monitor the group's work and step in when the group needs assistance. The youth leader should also be setting up the appropriate level of structure that will, on the one hand, be open to ambiguity and on the other, offer support and structure to those who need it.

WHAT IF WE DO NOT MATCH **WITH POTENTIAL PARTNERS** OR IF THEY WITHDRAW?

If a partner withdraws its cooperation in the planning phase, this means you will have to go through the same process again with a new partner. The only damage suffered by the group is that they will have to repeat the partner search process. If it happens later, just before the planned exchange when you have already bought tickets and project costs have already been incurred, then other solutions will need to be found.

HOW TO LEARN **WHAT YOUR PARTNERS ARE LIKE?**
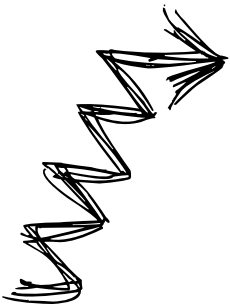
Getting to know each other is a key step in the formation of a stable partnership. The groups (organisations) must recognise their interests, values and organisational cultures. If the groups find enough common key points, their partnership can be successful. On the other hand, if there are too many differences between them, the partnership can prove to be very challenging. In reality, no group is the same as another, and this diversity can also serve as an aspect of possible enrichment for projects and the development of learning opportunities.

Partners learn about each other in different ways, most commonly in the form of presentations and the asking of questions. It is important to have personal contact, since information is transferred differently in personal communication than in written form. Using modern technology, it is possible to set up long-distance personal contact at relatively low cost with direct voice and video transmission services such as Skype or Viber.

It is good to have members of the participating groups prepare their own presentations of their group or organisation. In doing so, they should focus on the relevant information they wish to share. They can explore through dialogue with the other group their inter-group relationships and their respective values, missions and culture.

WHAT KIND OF PARTNERS DO WE WANT?

When groups consider potential partners, they should also think about the qualities that a potential partner should possess. If the location of the partner organisation, for example; in the Netherlands, at the coast, in an urban centre, is the only condition for choosing a partner, the project will quite possibly be difficult to implement.

The groups may address similar challenges or have a similar purpose (e.g. preventing alcohol-related undesirable behaviour among young people), but their different values can make them unsuitable as partners (e.g. one group's key value is sober youth and the other's is responsible youth not causing damage when drinking). Significantly different goals and key values lead groups to approach key activities differently. The first group in the above example would prohibit alcohol among participants altogether and introduce strict supervision, while the other would allow participants to drink occasionally and focus on preventing undesirable behaviour.

It is crucial to agree on the values relevant for the project and not on all values. But remember also that the values of the groups will affect the entire implementation of the project. In a youth exchange, values can also affect accommodation, food, emphasis in the programme, organising and work methods, etc. Imagine, for example, the cooperation between a group deriving from do-it-yourself principles and a mostly consumerist group. Even if the groups wish to cooperate in the field of sport, they will face greater challenges than groups with similar values.

The decision not to take on a project with another group when you are still getting to know each other is just as constructive as deciding for cooperation. However, you must make sure that you inform the rejected potential partner in an appropriate manner, and on time, in order to avoid unnecessary costs and misunderstandings.

Groups often maintain existing partnerships that have worked in the past to avoid a great amount of work with additional adapting. Another common decision is to work with groups from related organisations (e.g. organisations within the scout movement, environmental organisations, youth wings of political organisations, youth councils), which increases the probability that their values will match.

HOW TO BUILD/UPGRADE COOPERATION BETWEEN PARTNERS?

Cooperation with partners and maintaining long-term relationships require a certain input. If partners really wish to work together, the partnership will survive. Good partnership is based on clear relationships built through time and joint activities strengthen the bond.

Evaluation is also important for maintaining partner relations. Through the process of reflecting and evaluating events and work, you define the common field of clear relationships. The more that is clear in a partner relationship, the less risky the decisions for the next steps will be.

After a joint project is over, the relations between partners can continue on different levels. They can grow into a long-term partnerships between organisations or groups, but even more common are the interpersonal relationships between group members that are kept alive according to their wishes and arrangements. It is these personal relationships that often serve as a pool of energy for the development of new group activities between partners.

HOW TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND FIND A COMMON DENOMINATOR?

The group with a ready set of ideas should prepare a presentation of its views for the other group(s). The process of preparing a presentation is important because it helps in the formation of key focus points so that the idea crystallises and gets an ever clearer message.

When presenting ideas, it is important that the groups are in dialogue, allowing room for drawing up possible ideas together, since this is the only way to ensure that all groups participate in the process.

When the groups are all familiar with the initial ideas, it is time for all the groups to then reflect on these and come up with any additional or alternative ideas in a similar process to the one that took place in the original group during the drafting phase. The methods and techniques for finding the best ideas can be the same, but they should be adapted to the different communication channels in the process.

Groups that know each other, recognise each other's potential and manage to agree on a common idea for cooperation, have a much greater chance of bonding into a cohesive group. The communication will flow more smoothly, there will be a greater focus on the common goal, and if the participants are really allowed to participate, it will happen with experience-based learning.

Shaping a clear common idea that all the members of all the participating groups will relate to is a key step in the whole process. This is why this stage requires enough time and enough energy. Views that have not been harmonised at this stage will be reflected negatively throughout the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the project.

IS THE PROJECT IDEA APPROPRIATE FOR THE ERAMUS+ PROGRAMME? IS IT A YOUTH EXCHANGE OR A TRAINING COURSE OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Once the partners have defined the idea together or outlined the purpose, objectives and work plan for the common project, they need to decide on the form it should take. Different questions can help the decision process:

- Are we eligible as partners for funding from the Erasmus+ Youth in Action? Are all our partners eligible in the same way?
- Can the idea be realised within Erasmus+ Youth in Action?
- Is the idea in line with the conditions and priorities of the Programme?
- Do we agree with the values underlying Erasmus+ Youth in Action?
- Can we realise it as a youth exchange? Could another form of activity be more appropriate?

HOW WILL THE GROUP DEVELOP DURING THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?

Groups change through time and this needs to be considered in the planning of the work throughout the youth exchange project. Group members learn about each other, then tensions may arise within the group, once these tensions are resolved, group members connect with each other into a stronger whole, complementing each other. When the project is being concluded, they start saying goodbye and at the end of the process the group is dissolved.

Special attention to what is happening in the group should be paid during the actual youth exchange, since everything is more strongly expressed in the time intensively spent together.

Within the group, the young people will at first be getting to know each other and so seek security in their relationships with one another. This is a time when agreements are forged that will offer the participants security throughout the entire period of the group's life. This is followed by a period of tensions, during which roles within the group are shaped. In this period, complications may also arise among group members. Participants may feel uncomfortable during this stage and some may even wish to go home because they feel they do not get along with the others. When the group overcomes tensions, it connects into a whole. At this stage, excitement takes over in the group, they wish they could do everything together and they see themselves as the best. Through time, this infatuation fades away, but group members recognise each other as important and are highly motivated and ready to work together even in the time they are given to relax. When the end draws near, the group feels it. The participants do not wish to part and they try to complete their relationships, extending them beyond the time the group spends together. There are many goodbyes at this stage and a strong need to exchange views about what they have experienced together and to set up possibilities to stay in contact (exchange of e-mail addresses, phone numbers, social network profiles, creating social network groups, etc.).

Group dynamics is a topic thoroughly studied by social psychology, so you are welcome to explore this field further.

HOW TO PREPARE A TIMETABLE FOR A YOUTH EXCHANGE?

Preparing a timetable for a youth exchange is one of the steps in the planning of the project's final shape. It is the moment when you try to fit all the ideas for activities into a consistent whole that will have its internal logic and will offer participants opportunities to learn. You also want to ensure that there will be a chance for the participants to socialise and have fun, and that there is enough structure so that they will feel safe.

A common challenge when first drafting a schedule is finding a way to fit in all the envisaged activities and arranging them to give the programme a logical flow. There needs to be enough time dedicated to each activity and incorporate all the necessary breaks, meals and free time. In all this, you must not forget the developments within the group that will probably follow the expected group dynamics.

Timetables are often approached by first defining the activities related to the biological needs of participants (rest, meals and free time). In the same manner, you then schedule the process-related activities (arrivals, departures, socialising, concluding, reflection and evaluation processes, etc.).

The content is arranged in terms of what should come first and what should follow what. And then the content blocks are fitted into the available frames in the timetable.

MAKING A TIMETABLE:

1. First, mark the arrivals and departures of groups

2. Add the timeframe for the basic needs (sleeping, food, breaks etc.)

3. Add the activities needed for the groups to connect

4. At the end, fill in the content of the exchange

HOW TO PREPARE
A FINANCIAL PLAN?

The amounts in the table do not represent the actual grant within the Erasmus+ Programme. Please check the correct amounts in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide for the relevant year.

A financial plan is like the exchange timetable, one of the last steps in planning the project's framework. A financial plan is based on a detailed list of costs for the required people, material, tools, travel, accommodation, etc. When the expected concrete expenses are detailed, a complete overview of costs can be made from the list.

EXAMPLE: Table of preparation expenses
The overview is broken into aggregate data (e.g. travel, accommodation, food, and material costs).

	PRICE	UNITS	DAYS	SUM
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD COSTS				
Accommodation	22,00 €	24	12	6.336,00 €
Breakfasts, lunches, dinners (own preparation)				2.612,53 €
Lunch at excursion	9,00 €	24	1	216,00 €
Juice, coffee and snacks				288,16 €
Total accommodation and food				9.452,69 €

	PRICE	KM	DAYS	SUM
TRANSFERS DURING EXCHANGE				
Postojna–Koper and back	1,12 €	118	1	132,16 €
Postojna – Cerknica and back	1,12 €	32	1	35,84 €
Postojna – Ljubljana and back	1,12 €	108	2	241,92 €
Total transfers				409,92 €

Along with the expenses, you should also plan the income from the project. Calculating the highest possible financial contribution from the Erasmus+ Programme for a youth exchange is relatively simple, since it is based on prescribed unit cost co-financing.

EXAMPLE: Table of project income
The plan is finalised with a review of the balance between the income and expenses. These two must be balanced since you cannot spend more money than you raise through co-financing and cannot request more money than you expect to spend.

	CENA	UNIT			SUM
	Unit costl	No. of participants	No. of units	Unit	Sum
Programme grant – organisational support	34,00 €	24	12	dni	9.792,00 €
Travel costs Lithuania (Klaipeda)	275,00 €	8	1206	km	2.200,00 €
Travel costs Romania (Constanta)	275,00 €	8	1146	km	2.200,00 €
Contribution of the Postojna municipality					3.000,00 €
Participants' fundraising					175,00 €
Value of materials					218,00 €
Total					17.585,00 €

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE PLANNING PHASE?

WHAT DO THEY LEARN
IN THIS PHASE?

The planning phase is the period from when the idea of one group is shaped to when the application of the joint project of several partners is submitted for funding to the Programme.

This means that at least two partners first intensively coordinate their ideas in an intercultural environment. This is followed by translating the ideas agreed upon into a form of a project that will not only be understandable to the participating youth groups but also to the broader public, and will at the same time serve the interests of the community.

During the process of coordinating their ideas, young people learn or strengthen:

DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AT THE INTERCULTURAL LEVEL
Through the coordination process, youth groups compare and supplement their ideas. Young people shape the final idea through dialogue. During this stage, decisions need be taken by all partner organisations together. If they wish to finalise the common idea, young people need to discuss in a democratic and inclusive way, all the doubts they may have and find a common path that will be suitable for all of them.

COMMUNICATION IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
Communication about the common project idea usually takes place in a language chosen by partners as the working language. This is a foreign language for many of the participants. This means they will have the opportunity to expand their vocabulary through the activities, strengthen their oral and writing communication skills and overcome fears related to communication in foreign languages.

TURNING AN IDEA INTO AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
The process of creating an implementation plan based on an idea is one of the competences related to the development of entrepreneurship among young people. It is about mastering implementation-related skills, as well as changing their attitude towards planning, which is crucial for future use of acquired skills.

PLANNING FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF ACTIVITIES
By planning the project, young people learn about the potential income for a project and foresee the costs for activities. These skills are also important for encouraging entrepreneurship among young people.

SEARCHING FOR AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS
Connecting, setting up and strengthening partnerships are skills that can help young people both in their private lives and later in their jobs.

AND MUCH MORE

HOW TO SUPPORT THIS **LEARNING PROCESS**?

In the planning phase, much stress is put on communication. Participants learn to communicate in an international setting and meet different culture-specific approaches, but also learn about their own ability to get a message across. Activities helpful for this period include communication skill training, reflection on successful transfer of messages between group members and researching how different words are understood, as they can get different meanings in an intercultural setting.

Another important aspect in this phase is maintaining the team spirit. It can be helpful for the group if you set it a mirror, using any projection method that helps participants express their feelings during group processes with visual or text-based material. Two popular methods are sentences completion and book titles. The sentence completion method challenges participants to complete an unfinished sentences like "In our group, I like it the most that..." or "I get along best with..." In the book title method, you show participants a set of titles and ask them to describe what a book with a selected title would say about their group. Both methods use text but you can also use other visual or motion based projection methods.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE PLANNING PHASE?

In this phase, when the group is already working together, a youth leader mainly supports group members with questions, by opening new learning opportunities and helping them monitor their learning.

Youth leaders support groups in the planning phase in their search for partners. They help their groups make the first contact and support them in setting up the criteria for choosing potential partners, while also ensuring that all group members are included in the decision-making process as far as possible. The youth leader helps in the preparation of the presentation of the idea, particularly by posing questions about the content and key focus points. When partners are searching for a common idea, the youth leaders use their intercultural competences to help translate the concepts between the languages of the participating groups. They are also responsible for ensuring that their respective groups understand the information correctly.

During the project planning, the youth leader can help as a reference point to check the consistency of the project plan, make sure the information is written down understandably, help estimate project costs and form a timetable. Here, it is important not to forget the needs of each group and the group dynamics.

HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?

The planning phase is the time of learning to find the common interest and to put it into words. From the inclusion point of view the emphasis in this phase is on the empowerment of young people to be able to express their needs and wishes. It is also to support them in the development of assertive communication practices that will enable them to develop and plan the project in line with their needs while taking into account the needs of others.

Assertive communication patterns enable the groups to develop their partnership based on mutual respect and recognition of the needs of all sides in which all the actors are of equal value.

The phase of planning also brings another challenge in inclusion. The obstacles for inclusion vary according to the attitudes of the communities where the partner groups come from and the cultures the groups live in. Therefore the reaction to different people might be different, for example; according to ability/disability, gender, minority group, etc. The relationship between the groups provides the opportunity to learn about the situation of others on one hand and to find diverse solutions on the other.

HOW DO WE FACILITATE **INTERCULTURAL LEARNING** IN THIS PHASE?

9 For more information please consult the concept Zones of Learning, one of the sources: "Processing the Experience: Enhancing and Generalizing Learning" by John L. Luckner and Reldan S. Nadler.

Planning takes dreaming onto the next step: connecting to potential partners and their young people. It is the time when diversity spreads beyond the original small group of young people.

The planning phase is the moment when the young people start to be challenged by different views and perceptions. A lot of those will come from different cultural lenses. For some young people this will be the first opportunity to communicate with someone from another country and this can bring a lot of (unexpected) challenges. For example, young people will start recognising their stereotypes and prejudices and for some of them, that will come as a total surprise.

Planning is the time to start thinking about the comfort, stretch and panic zones of the young people involved[9]:
- How do I face diversity? How do I react? Do I find it exciting or am I scared?
- Am I able to learn from diversity or it overwhelms me?
- What are some behaviours and views that are surprising or unacceptable for me?
- Do I seek comfort within my cultural group, or am I happy to keep stretching my views?
- What am I learning about myself? What are the things that are important to me and are being put into question through encounters with different cultures?

Finally, planning is the moment to think about how to include intercultural learning in the whole project. How to plan different aspects of the project, so they support intercultural learning on different levels? Furthermore, how to create learning opportunities that will go beyond what is seen and done (behaviours) and tackle what is good, true and real (values, beliefs and worldviews)[10]. This can be done in relation to the topic, but also in relation to different parts of everyday lives of young people. It is important to make sure that there is enough space in the project to reflect on these aspects.
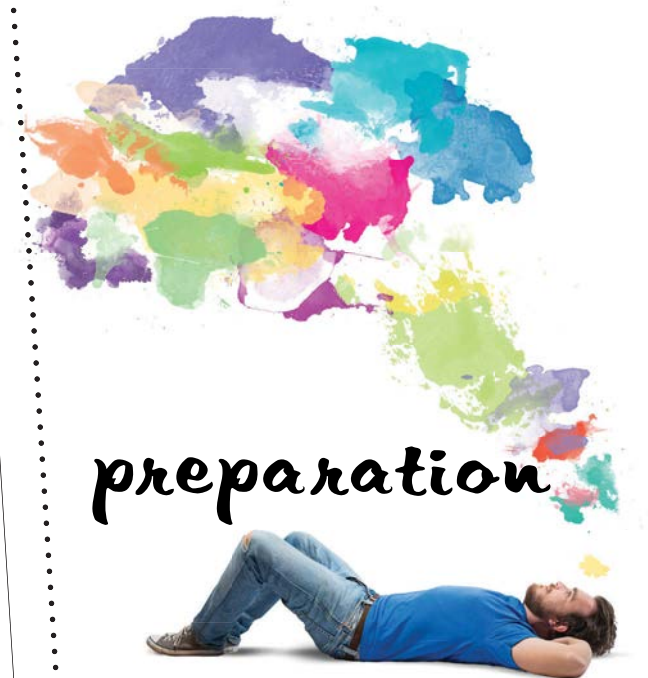
10 For more information please consult the concept Onion Model of Culture by Gerard Hendrik (Geert) Hofstede.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

- • WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE GROUP WHILE WAITING FOR THE APPLICATION RESULTS?
- • WHAT DO WE NEED TO ARRANGE WITH OUR PARTNERS?
- • WHAT DO WE DO AT AN ADVANCE PLANNING VISIT (APV)?
- • WHAT ABOUT OUR LOCAL PARTNERS?
- • WHAT LOGISTIC PREPARATIONS ARE NEEDED AHEAD OF THE EXCHANGE?
- • DO WE HAVE ENOUGH MONEY?
- • WHAT IF SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENS?
- • HOW TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE MOTIVATED WHILE WAITING FOR THE RESULTS?
- • WE WOULD RATHER INVITE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE ONCE THE RESULTS ARE OUT
- • WHAT IF THE PROJECT GETS REJECTED?
- • HOW CAN WE TRANSFER RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCES TO YOUNG PEOPLE IF THEY CAN MESS THINGS UP?
- • HOW DO WE DIVIDE THE ROLES AND TASKS?
- • HOW TO AVOID HAVING A YOUTH EXCHANGE TURN INTO TOURISM?
- • WHAT ARE THE FREQUENT RISKS FOR PHYSICAL SAFETY IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?
- • HOW DO WE CHECK THE SEVERITY OF THE RISKS?

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE PREPARATION PHASE?

- • WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- • HOW TO SUPPORT THIS LEARNING PROCESS?
- • WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE PREPARATION PHASE?
- • HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?
- • HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

preparation

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE GROUP **WHILE WAITING FOR THE APPLICATION RESULTS?**

While waiting for the application results, the group should meet regularly in order to keep up their motivation – if the project is approved, intensive preparations will start, and if not, the group will need to reach a common view on the next steps. This is a time for the group to strengthen their bonds. The group can do something challenging or something that will open it outwards and link it to the community (e.g. participating in a group volunteering project like '72 Hours', or a 2-day camping trip in the wilderness, or some volunteer work in an asylum centre, etc.). It is not appropriate just to lay back and joke around in this time. The group is also strengthened by talking about the group – how its members see each other and their group as a whole (see; *'How to support this learning process', page 46)*. You can prepare for the exchange regardless of whether it is taking place in the next weeks or in half a year's time. For example, the group could be preparing the presentation of their country and group/organisation, they could be preparing fun activities or learning new ways to break the ice. They could be learning about the countries of the partners, communicating with partner groups, setting up a website, sharing profiles in social media or creating a joint platform, etc.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO ARRANGE WITH OUR PARTNERS?

You should arrange as many details as possible with your partners. Regardless of whether the project is approved or not, some of the issues can be closed early. When the project is approved, the final preparations can begin: the final programme design, delegation of tasks and responsibilities (for programme implementation, materials, role division among leaders, necessary preparations before the exchange, etc.), arrival and departure times, confirming agreements on how invoices are to be collected, etc. Participants from each country can make a list of what they think should be prepared and then they can synchronise the lists in a Skype meeting and agree on what should be done, by whom and by what date.

WHAT DO WE DO AT AN ADVANCE PLANNING VISIT (APV)?

You should prepare well for this visit, since only representatives take part in it and not whole groups. Each group should work out before the meeting what they wish to be included in the exchange. They should consider what they believe to be necessary and where they can adapt.

The programme of the visit is coordinated by all the partners together, taking into consideration the timeline and also whether translation will be needed. Since some of the APV participants will meet for the first time during the visit, some time should also be dedicated for socialising. As far as possible, the APV should result in the final version of the programme, and it is also an opportunity to visit the venue(s) to have a picture of where particular activities will take place. You should also talk about work methods. An APV should result in you being able to return to your group with work based proposals so that they can make the final decision on these and prepare the relevant activities. If this has not been done before, you should also agree on the timeline for preparations – who does what and by what date. You should also talk about a safety plan.

WHAT ABOUT **OUR LOCAL PARTNERS?**

An analysis of stakeholders was already made during the drafting phase and you know who you wish to include in the project. With the final programme ready, this is the time to start communicating with these stakeholders if you have not done so yet. You should also contact the ones that might be interested only in the results and not the exchange itself. You should not wait to approach them until after the exchange, since your conversation with them might affect what you will do as part of the exchange (e.g. prepare a film about outdoor activities for young people, a photo exhibition about a segment of the exchange). All these discussions are up to the participants, but their youth leader should support them.

WHAT **LOGISTIC PREPARATIONS** ARE NEEDED AHEAD OF THE EXCHANGE?

Prepare everything in detail. The group can make a checklist of the necessary tasks, to which you can also add more as you go along if needed:

TO DO LIST

technical equipment

exchange venue – reservation; which rooms can be used and when; check whether everything needed is available (e.g. number of showers and toilets, hot water, playgrounds, nature in the vicinity, the condition of sleeping quarters); when do we pay, etc.

each group takes care of its insurance

meals and snacks

buy/prepare all the necessary materials

list of participants

arrivals and departures of groups; local transportation for arrivals and departures at the beginning and end of the exchange

materials for participants

media and public relations

procedure for refunds and handing over invoices

cooperation with local partners during the exchange, etc.

DO WE HAVE **ENOUGH MONEY?**

The financial plan is already prepared and when the project is approved you will need to start looking for additional funding, it should now be clear how much money is already provided. The financial plan is amended and the latest changes in the programme are considered. Co-funding and donors have already been foreseen in the analysis of stakeholders, so you can now start negotiations and fundraising. If needed, you can look for additional sources. Here, the participants should be as strongly engaged as possible, but when leaders need to use their existing connections, they should consult with the group beforehand.

WHAT IF SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENS?

Unexpected things always happen on exchanges, which is why you should prepare an assessment of unpredictable situations, safety mechanisms and measures. You should also consider possible problems with the venue (e.g. what to do in case of rain if you are camping in tents) and any potential problems will affect the programme. Make a list of possible safety and accident-related scenarios (illnesses, accidents on the road, alcohol use, inappropriate behaviour from participants and or leaders, someone getting lost, etc.), and agree on what to do in such cases. A dynamic approach to this can be used so that the participants understand why this is necessary.[11] It is important that everyone knows who makes the decisions in critical situations.
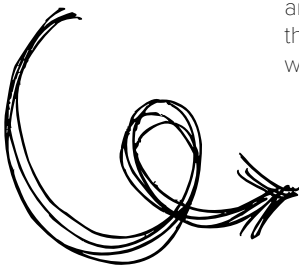
[11] Source: Oblak, A. (2013). Priprave prostovoljcev na globalno prostovoljsko delo, Sloga, Ljubljana, page 30. http://www.tuditi.si/data/useruploads/files/1389713019.pdf

HOW TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE MOTIVATED WHILE WAITING FOR THE RESULTS?

Quite some time can pass from the drafting of the idea to when the application results are announced and young people can lose motivation in the meantime. Everyone has ups and downs in their motivation, not just the young people. However, if the participants are actively involved in shaping the exchange, the loss of motivation will probably be much smaller.

You should tell the group in advance how much time the process will take and try to divide the preparation time evenly over that period. Meetings during the waiting period should be prepared dynamically. The group can also get involved in activities that are not related to the project. You can encourage them to think about what activities they relate to and do them together so that they will bond further and feel pride in their achievements. Partners can use the time to get to know each other better and create things together (e.g. on the internet).

WE WOULD RATHER INVITE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE ONCE THE RESULTS ARE OUT.

This, of course, is possible but it is also risky. By that time, the idea is already clearly defined and you are looking for young people to relate to this idea and fit the profile of the exchange. The probability of finding them is low. You can quickly end up with young people who are not as motivated as you expected – they are only interested in a particular segment of the exchange. They may not be interested in the learning process but rather the relaxed and dynamic time, they will probably be attracted by the opportunity to go abroad (which is fine, but only if they also take interest in the other aspects of the exchange as well).

It also increases the probability that major misunderstandings will arise during the exchange due to different perceptions and that the participants will not be as ready to engage in the follow-up of the exchange. Furthermore, participants will not contribute to the preparation of the programme, which is not in line with the guidelines of the Erasmus+ Programme – which stands for active participation as the way for young people to learn the most. If part of the group is active from the start and some of the participants join in later, teambuilding and harmonisation of views will be very important. Moreover, the new team members will not be able to change what has already been prepared, which can cause additional tensions.

WHAT IF THE PROJECT GETS REJECTED?

If funding for the project is not approved, you will have to decide whether to carry it out anyway, postpone it or discard it. If you have enough funding and would only need a relatively small amount of additional means, you could implement the project anyway. If the youth group has designed the project on its own, they will mostly be motivated to at least postpone it and apply again.

In any case, you should make sure the group members do not take this as a defeat, but rather a lesson. Help them recognise all they have achieved so far and celebrate it – celebrate the joint effort.

HOW CAN WE TRANSFER RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCES TO YOUNG PEOPLE IF THEY CAN MESS THINGS UP?

The question is who the project belongs to – is it the leader's project or a project of the youth group, in which the leader takes part? A youth exchange is a learning mobility. The learning process takes place all the time – the more the participants are included, the more they can learn, and the leader should support them in this. They will learn the most if they are given the responsibility to carry out something. If you have a back-up plan all the time and or do not give them a chance to take part in the main aspects and decisions, they will feel this and it will be reflected in their motivation. This is exactly what youth work is meant for – to give young people a chance to try and a chance to learn directly by doing. This includes making mistakes and learning how to deal with them. You should not forget that leaders also make mistakes – and the world keeps turning. And what is the worst that can happen if they make a mistake concerning the finances?

HOW DO WE DIVIDE THE ROLES AND TASKS?

You divide them according to who feels close to something and what needs to be done. Encourage the participants to choose a task they are interested in but do not yet know how to approach, since this is how they will learn the most. And they can always turn to the leader with questions. Some tasks will not be attractive to anyone, but they still need to be done. The group should talk about these tasks and find a way to distribute them, making sure that this is done evenly. You can encourage them with a new or humorous approach to a task to illustrate how important each task is for the whole.

No one from the group may be willing to take some of the tasks. The leader can choose to leave them unaddressed even if this means trouble, since the group will learn more from this than if the leader were to clean up after them. It is up to the leader's judgement if any of these tasks are necessary for the safety of the participants and on these they must insist.

HOW TO AVOID HAVING A YOUTH EXCHANGE **TURN INTO TOURISM?**
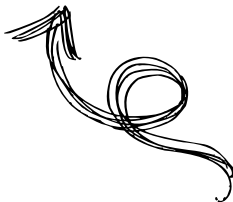
Given that youth exchanges are a type of mobility project where one of the main aims is to get to know the host community and that they include a significant portion of informal moments, this question naturally appears in most of the conversations about youth exchanges. The answer is not straightforward. It depends on a lot of factors and only when the overall picture is taken into consideration, can you make a decision for yourself.

These are some of the elements that could help you understand what is sometimes, a very thin line between a youth exchange and a touristic excursion:

THE TOPIC
The topic of the youth exchange will influence the number and types of visits/excursions you will have in your programme. If your topic is connected to, for example, cultural heritage, architecture or environment, etc. going to field trips and/or visiting different places will be a necessity and will probably take a significant amount of time in your schedule. This does not mean that visits/excursion should not be a part of your programme if the subject is not specific to these areas listed. What is important is that the learning is present in all moments and that the visit is not just for the visit's sake.

GETTING TO KNOW THE HOST COMMUNITY VS. GETTING TO KNOW THE REST OF THE COMMUNITIES
One of the things that can help you determine whether there is potentially going to be too much tourism, is the ratio between getting to know the host community and getting to know the communities of the other young people present. There is a clear advantage to visiting and learning about the different aspects of the host community and this advantage should be taken, but it is also important to involve and learn from the other communities as well. This dialogue is essential for a thorough exploration of the topic, for facilitation of intercultural learning and for empowering and involving all the young people in the process of sharing.

ORGANISED WORKSHOPS VS. INFORMAL MOMENTS
The difference between youth exchanges and some other educational projects (e.g. training courses) is in the unique pedagogical approach that combines non-formal and informal learning. Once again depending on the topic, the programme of a youth exchange should include planned (preferably organised or co-organised by the young people) non-formal educational sessions that ensure; group development, inclusion of all young people in the process of learning, allow facilitation of intercultural learning, and set the foundations for exploring the topic from different perspectives. At the same time, the programme should also include a significant amount of free time, which is a very important element of any youth exchange. The informal time should be understood as providing space for young people to get together and learn from each other through informal learning. In order to achieve this, it is important to have a number of possibilities on offer to the young people, such as: place and requisites for sport activities, board and card games, common meeting points, etc.

WHAT ARE THE FREQUENT RISKS FOR PHYSICAL SAFETY IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?

The protection and safety of participants involved are important aspects of every activity. Next to obligatory insurance of all participants (each of the involved partners is responsible for the insurance of their group of young people) it is advisable to also consider other possible risks young people might face during the youth exchange in order to discuss beforehand how to deal with them. This way they might find themselves in less completely unexpected situations.

RISKY BEHAVIOURS	HEALTH ISSUES	MOBILITY	OTHER SITUATIONS
• alcohol / drugs • accidents during activities • sexual harassment • unsafe sex • lost documents • lost luggage • ...	• water/food poisoning • allergies • getting ill • attacks (panic, epilepsy) • dietary needs • toxic infections • asthma • blisters • diarrhoea • cuts and bruises • twisted joints • sun stroke • forgotten medication • burning • disabilities • ...	• stairs/elevator • lack of access to security and medical care • traffic accidents • motion sickness • getting lost • ...	• weather conditions • safe area of the venue • machines/electricity • attacks and robberies • specific status rule in the countries • overall attitude in the country • terrorism • war, fights, protests • natural disasters • bad hygienic conditions • broken property • ...

HOW DO WE CHECK THE SEVERITY OF THE RISKS?

The following tool might help the youth leaders to assess the levels of risk of the activities and develop the measures that mitigate the risks. The transformation of the potential risks in formulas and assessing their potential, is providing grounds for less biased decisions by the group leaders.

Location: Event: Date: Activity: Person responsible:

Date of assessment:		Risk for people /resources		Risk analysis	-Comments/thoughts -Reasons to be unacceptable -Possible changes to mitigate risks	
		Probability	Severity	Risk assessment	Level of risk	
getting lost	people	likely	1	5	5	Maps of the town for participants, emergency numbers, numbers of contact people in Hosting Organisation

Definitions – Probability
1 = Very unlikely
2 = Unlikely
3 = Likely
4 = Very likely
5 = Almost certain

Definitions – Severity
1 = Minor injury
2 = Injury requiring first aid
3 = Severe injury (takes more than 3 days to heal)
4 = Severe injury that needs hospital attention
5 = Death

Risk assessment is calculated:
Probability X Severity
Level of risk:
1 – 5 = low risk
6 – 10 = moderate risk
12 – 25 = high risk

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE PREPARATION PHASE?

WHAT DO THEY LEARN
IN THIS PHASE?

In the preparation phase, you wait for the application results, finalise the programme in cooperation with your partners, search for additional funding, prepare a plan for the safety and protection of participants, and prepare the final logistics details.

Young people learn or strengthen:

USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Different tools are used in communication with partners and young people learn their different features. They see what works well and what does not. If you do a reflection on this experience, it will also be easier for them to reach an opinion on what is more efficient and what contributes to better communication. Moreover, they will be able to use ICT as support tools in planning and in follow-up activities (e.g. a checklist for tasks that is available to all participants, co-shaping social networks).

ORGANISATION SKILLS

Before the actual exchange, organisational work is most intensive. This includes logistical support for the project, final arrangements, coordination of partners and communication with them. It is necessary for the young people to learn to be adaptable and to take care in accomplishing the tasks they have taken. These abilities strengthen employability and coordination skills.

COMMUNICATION IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

In this phase, the group communicates with different stakeholders and learns how to communicate appropriately with different people – a partner group of young people, financial supporters, the mayor, the owner of the venue, etc. They learn how to translate notions into different contexts so that everyone gets the message – talking about the youth exchange in different ways to different parties; parents, local officials, etc. This strengthens the competence of communicating in different languages, entrepreneurship and confidence.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

During the preparation, disagreements will arise because the work is intensive. It could be because you cannot always clear things up, because you may be bothered by the level of a partner's cooperation, you do not always understand what is going on, or because people are not doing the tasks they agreed to do, etc. In all this, the young people learn how to deal with such situations and how to continue. They learn to recognise and express their feelings and different behavioural patterns, they learn to listen to others and look for common ground for continuing the work. They learn what facing conflicts means and what it means to avoid facing them, while also learning about how to talk to people in such situations. This contributes to communication competences, confidence, self-esteem, and maturity.

MOTIVATION

Young people face motivation swings which impacts on their work. You can support them in learning how to keep motivation high and how they also need to take some time off to be able to get back to work with more zeal afterwards. A lack of motivation can be a reminder to take a look at whether you are still treading the path you want to.

RESPONSIBILITY

In this phase, the young people take responsibility for carrying out different tasks. They are often interrelated or necessary for the exchange. They learn to take on and carry out tasks responsibly, ask for help on time and through all of this also learn to work with the team. They learn to accept the consequences of their (non)actions. Thereby, they strengthen their confidence, skills for better employability and the competence of entrepreneurship.

INTEGRATION IN THE COMMUNITY

By working more closely with the local community, young people learn about the importance of internal integration in the local community and how differently people see young people and their activities. They can learn to better recognise the needs of local environments, about the importance of cooperation and the need for synergies. They can get a broader picture of the role of youth activities in the local environment. This adds to their social and civic competences.

HOW TO SUPPORT
THIS LEARNING PROCESS?

To improve a young person's overview of the organisational work as a whole, you can show them how to develop and use to-do lists, to which the whole group has access. Together, you can create a table of what needs to be done before the exchange. Assign who will be responsible for checking the list and decide how often you should all discuss it together.

Example: To-do list

WHAT?	WHO?	DEADLINE	PREPARATIONS NEEDED	MATERIAL	WHO HELPS
Transport to venue of exchange					
Accommodation					

Many different arrangements need to be made with different people before the exchange can take place – owner of the venue, shops, partners, mayor, etc. If the youth group has no experience with such arrangements, you can practice with simulations of telephone calls with the relevant people. After each simulation, make a reflection and discuss possible improvements.

Unless the team is engaged in another activity, they will first have a more laid-back period while waiting for the results. When the project is approved, more intense preparations for the exchange will start, so the team might run out of time for communication within the group and might start feeling some fatigue. This is the time to pay special attention to the bond within the team, since it will help face conflicts and misunderstandings. Here, it is helpful for the group to discuss about how they see themselves and how they are working together. To help you start, you could use the Belbin team roles model[12]. After explaining the different roles in the team, ask the group members to consider who plays which role. They should present their views to each other and discuss what would help them improve their communication. Do not forget to tell the group that all the roles are needed and that they can also change through time.

Moreover, communication improves with feedback – what people think of an idea, how they see their cooperation, what bothers them, etc. Discuss when team members find feedback useful, what is the easiest way to accept it and how they usually give it. Together, you should take a look at what makes feedback comprehensive and good. They can also practice providing feedback and then reflect on it to improve.

[12] See http://www.belbin.com/rte.asp?id=8.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE PREPARATION PHASE?

A youth leader knows best what the main tasks in this period are. They guide the group in figuring out what needs to be done and what should be done, but leave them the freedom of discovering this themselves as much as possible.

While waiting for the results, leaders can encourage their groups to take on different activities that will strengthen their bonds and to take time to communicate with the partner groups. They can also help their groups with activities that include discussions about each other.

Once the results are out, the leader guides the group in distributing the tasks for this period and supports them in formulating the final programme. If there is an Advance Planning Visit, the leader also attends, ensuring that the young representative of the group they accompany is as active as possible. If the representative has certain fears, the leader helps them overcome them.

Leaders help their groups look for appropriate methods for their exchange, supporting them in preparing the programme and activating them as much as possible. They make sure that tasks and roles are assigned, and show them how to monitor the progress of a project.

They work with the young people on different ways of communicating with different people and enable them to reflect on the experience, so that they can make the most of their learning.

Youth leaders should not carry out the tasks of the participants and should be patient when progress is difficult and slow. The biggest challenge is seeing mistakes coming – will they manage to restrain themselves in the tension and allow young people to make the mistakes that will bring greater learning outcomes or will they break the tension and resolve a situation themselves? Regardless of the decision, youth leaders are responsible for the safety of their groups and must intervene if a situation calls for it.

HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?

An important part of the preparation phase is preparing the safe and secure environment in which the learning process will take place.

Safety and security include several dimensions. One part is the general security of the participants in order to be able to learn. Another level is the intercultural safety. Participants need to feel safe and have the feeling of support when encountering cultural differences. Cooperation in an intercultural environment challenges the basic beliefs of individuals and groups. In order to process them young people need additional support. What is safe is also defined differently in different cultures. The groups need to have the common agreement on what safety means to them in order for all the future participants to feel good.

When working with young people with fewer opportunities, additional elements of security are often put in place in order to provide additional clarifications or space of security (for example when working with young people that have bad experiences with alcoholism in the family, the measure of creating a space in which no alcohol is used is an additional element of safety or when there is a participant in the group who has a chronic disease, the proximity of a health centre is an element of additional safety).

It is important that young people are invited to co-create the elements of security for the future common space based on their needs.

One more thing connected with inclusion and is happening in this phase of the project can be some of the young people testing the group and youth leaders to see if the inclusion is for real. Young people (especially those who have been excluded from activities due to various reasons) might join the process with a disbelief that the invitation to active participation and inclusion is genuine. Therefore they might test the reactions of the group and the youth leader in order to see their reaction (do they walk the talk). It is often a very energy consuming part of the process for all the actors involved but is more than worth the result when clear boundaries of behaviour are set and the message of inclusion is reaffirmed.

This phase is happening before the implementation of the activity. In line with the envisaged programme of the youth exchange, during this phase it is crucial to create a common understanding among the participants in the national groups. This is important because it is only possible for a group to cooperate with other groups when they have a clear distribution of roles among the members.

HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

13 For inspiration on methods and activities to be used in this phase, please check: "T-kit no. 4 Intercultural Learning" by the Council of Europe and European Commission and the "All Different All Equal Education Pack" by the Council of Europe.

The preparation phase is perhaps the most important phase when it comes to the facilitation of intercultural learning in youth exchanges. Although the great majority of learning will happen in the implementation phase, it is during the preparation that foundations are being set for this process to happen!

It is essential that there is a good portion of preparation dedicated to intercultural learning happening with all the groups of young people that are participating in the exchange. The approach and methods used will differ depending on the competencies of the leaders experience of the group.[13] The level of work dedicated to intercultural learning in this phase will also depend on the topic of a youth exchange. Different topics for discussion among partners in the preparation phase will also lean on the cultural perceptions:

- How do we approach the topic?
- How do we perceive safety and support depending on our backgrounds?
- What is acceptable accommodation for the young people?
- What kind of food will we be prepared?
- What kind of interaction is appropriate for young people? Etc.

In this phase and the latter, self-reflection and critical thinking are the best friends of intercultural learning. It is important to try and motivate young people to reflect and critically review different situations and not to stick to their own cultural lenses and the patterns they grew up with.

No matter how insignificant they seem all elements of living and working together in the youth exchange can present an opportunity for intercultural learning, if approached carefully.

Some of the things that should be covered in this phase are:
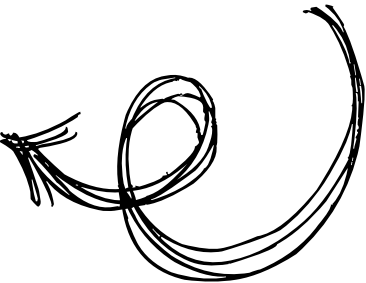
IDENTITY

In order for young people to engage more confidently in living and working together with people from different backgrounds, it helps if they reflect on who they are and understand what are the different cultures incorporated into their identity. When faced with difference, especially values and beliefs, it is then easier for them to process the impact on their identity.

STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES

In the preparation phase, it is important to help young people become aware of the stereotypes and prejudices they have. It is also important to develop understanding that stereotypes and prejudices are something that our brains operate with and that will always be there. What young people should think about is how to continuously challenge them and not allow them to impact upon themselves. Youth exchanges alone are not enough to break the stereotypes, but are enough for significant questions to be raised.

ZONES OF LEARNING

Although mentioned in the previous phases, in the preparation there should be a focus on understanding the comfort, stretch and panic zones of the young people, particularly in relation to diversity. Developing that understanding helps in planning the programme of activities for the youth exchange in order to stretch the participants but to also understand how to create a comfort zone for them to come back to and in this state reflect on their learning.

CULTURAL SHOCK

Although it is not that usual in youth exchanges, it can still happen and it is good to prepare participants for it. Especially if this is their first time going abroad and/or the diversity of participants involved will be significant. For more information about the cultural shock, please check Cultural Shock Curve[14].

14 For more information please consult the concept U-Curve of Cultural Adjustment, first introduced by Sverre Lysgaard.

implementation

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

- HOW IS A YOUTH EXCHANGE CARRIED OUT?
- HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE WITH PARTNERS?
- HOW TO ORGANISE THE TRAVEL AND WHAT NEEDS SPECIAL ATTENTION?
- HOW DO WE SOLVE UNPREDICTED SITUATIONS?
- WHAT RULES NEED TO BE DISCUSSED BEFORE AND DURING THE EXCHANGE?
- HOW TO MAKE EVALUATIONS AT AN EXCHANGE?
- WHAT IS YOUTHPASS AND HOW DO WE PREPARE IT?
- IS AN 'INTERCULTURAL EVENING' A TRUE EXAMPLE OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING?
- WHO DO THE RULES APPLY TO?
- HOW GROUP DYNAMICS AFFECT THE YOUTH EXCHANGE?
- WHAT IS THE POINT OF CONCLUSION ACTIVITIES IF WE WILL ALL BE FACEBOOK FRIENDS?
- SHOULD WE START OUR ACTIVITIES EVEN IF ONE OF THE GROUPS IS ARRIVING A DAY LATER?
- HOW TO PRESENT AND PREPARE YOUTHPASS CERTIFICATES?

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE?

- WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW TO SUPPORT THIS LEARNING PROCESS?
- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IF THE PROGRAMME WAS PREPARED BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE?
- HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

HOW IS A **YOUTH EXCHANGE** CARRIED OUT?

A youth exchange is a short-term group learning mobility that is the peak of a project. The exchange can last between 5 and 21 days, excluding travel days.

The youth exchange itself starts with the travel of groups and final preparations of the venue. Participating groups gather and carry out the planned activities. The implementation is always a bit different from the plans, since you need to adapt as you go along to the groups' needs and on-site conditions; the weather, traffic jams and other factors that can change your plans.

During the exchange, it is necessary to document and monitor the progress of activities, as this will allow you to evaluate results afterwards. Usually, groups take a look back at the end of the exchange, reflecting on their work, evaluating the process they went through and defining the outcomes and results.

The exchange concludes with the return of the participating groups to their homes, which is followed by an evaluation of the activities and the whole project, and by the dissemination of the results.

HOW DO WE **COMMUNICATE WITH PARTNERS?**

Communication with partners is most lively in the implementation phase. Groups need to; coordinate the logistics of arrivals and departures, make various arrangements before the start of activities, coordinate details within different content segments, transfer individuals' feedback to the group, monitor and evaluate the activities, take care of unexpected situations, and much more.

It is necessary to use a clear common language and to be ready to check how people understood something. In an intercultural environment, the same words do not always bear the same meaning. Another important aspect is to be ready to communicate openly and honestly, as this is the only way to overcome cultural barriers.

HOW TO ORGANISE THE TRAVEL AND WHAT NEEDS SPECIAL ATTENTION?

The travel to the exchange can be a major challenge both for the group and the supporting youth leader. One of the main points during the travel is the safety of everyone. This makes public transportation the most appropriate choice. It makes travel costs lower and most of the responsibility for safety is entrusted to the transfer companies, which have the appropriately trained staff and appropriate insurance.

The travel can also serve as an excellent opportunity for learning experiences for the participants. They can take different responsibilities for organising the trip ("What kind of travel will take the least amount of time and will be comfortable?"), make sure to achieve the set goals ("We must be on Platform 3 by 12:25."), take care of each other in the group ("Peter, are you alright? You look a little pale.") and mind the finances of the group ("your website says we can get a group discount for the tickets."). Through this experience young people can have a relatively quick try at managing a project with clear, measurable objectives.

HOW DO WE SOLVE
UNPREDICTED SITUATIONS?

[15] *For more information about important features of the Programme and the principles of non-formal learning that need to be followed in all project phases, please read the Programme Guide Erasmus+ (year 2015, Important features of the Programme on page 11, and non-formal and informal learning principles in Part C of the Programme Guide).*

WHAT RULES NEED TO BE DISCUSSED BEFORE AND
DURING THE EXCHANGE?

[16] *Programme Guide Erasmus+, year 2015, page 11.*

HOW
TO MAKE EVALUATIONS
AT AN EXCHANGE?

Unpredictable situations always have been and always will be, part of the work with other people. When facing something unexpected, it is best to follow the principles you accepted when the project was approved for funding within the Programme. Erasmus+ envisages that you will need to take care of the learning opportunities of the young people, encourage their active participation and ensure equal inclusion and the safety of all participants. What does this mean specifically for addressing unexpected situations? Encouraging active participation means looking for solutions together with the participants.[15] In doing so, you need to make sure to include everyone; otherwise the solutions will not suit the needs of the entire group. However, this process can only take place if safety is ensured. In case of threatening situations, you must first take care of everyone's safety, and look for learning experiences based on the events later.

If you follow the principles of the Programme, you will be consistent and will also help turn situations into learning experiences for all those involved.

Rules can always be divided into two groups: the non-negotiable ones and the ones that are up for discussion. Some rules are related to laws (e.g. smoking ban in closed public spaces or no alcohol for minors) or rules of organisations (e.g. house rules envisage cleaning your own table after meals; rooms must be vacated by 10am on the day of departure or an extra day is charged), so they must be followed regardless of what kind of group you are working with. Other rules may be negotiable (e.g. our exchange is a no-alcohol activity so no one will drink; we speak one person at a time). Everyone should take part when defining rules, since this creates a common space. If the leaders sets the rules on their own, they will have much more work in implementing them, and at the same time the group will miss out on a chance for active participation and a learning opportunity for strengthening the democratic process of reaching agreements.

The rules that are up for discussion must be in line with the important features of the Programme[16], as this improves the environment for young people's learning.

Reflection and evaluation are among the key steps of learning. This makes them a necessary part of youth exchanges. In practice, most often evaluations are designed only as a basic gathering of information from among the participants, this lacks a more thorough insight into the processes that took place during the exchange.

During an exchange, it is good to evaluate the results, the learning experiences and the outcomes, as well as the impressions of everyone involved. It is important to recognise the elements of learning that could potentially contribute to the active participation of young people in their community and those that will better their employability.

Many different methods are available for evaluation, and by using evaluation questions you can guide the evaluation into the direction you wish to know more about. Therefore, it might be helpful for you to explore this area further.

WHAT IS YOUTHPASS AND
HOW DO WE PREPARE IT?

Youthpass is a tool for recognising and presenting the outcomes of the learning processes. The certificate is designed for reflecting on one's own learning in the process of non-formal and informal learning. Participants create it together with their leaders at the end of their exchange project.

Youthpass consists of several parts. The first page includes information about the project (in this case a youth exchange) and the definition of youth exchanges within the Erasmus+ Programme. The second page provides a description of the youth exchange project. The rest of the certificate describes the Youthpass holder's learning outcomes, arranged in sections, according to the 8 key competences of lifelong learning.

The first two pages are filled in by applicant organisations, while participants fill the rest themselves, with the support of their youth leaders.

The document is prepared online. Organisations and individuals enter their information into an online form, and print out and sign the Youthpass at the end.

IS AN
'INTERCULTURAL EVENING'
A TRUE EXAMPLE OF
INTERCULTURAL LEARNING?

Although there is a separate segment in every chapter that follows intercultural learning and its facilitation, based on the practice very often encountered during youth exchanges, there is a need to address this particular question.

What is usually referred to as an 'Intercultural evening' is one or more evenings in a youth exchange where participants present the countries they are coming from, through: tasting different products (food and drinks), listening to traditional music, dancing traditional dances, showing different symbols (e.g. flags), and the presenting of facts about their country through oral or multimedia presentations. The methods used can vary depending on the group and the topic, but the elements are more or less the same.

If the safety of the young people is ensured (regarding for example alcohol consumption), these evenings can be a lot of fun, can contribute to bringing participants closer to each other and can help them learn about each other's countries on a cognitive level.

What is missing from this picture?
• Learning mainly stays on the level of information, which most of the time could be acquired during a touristic visit to a certain country
• There are not too many opportunities for deeper and more meaningful interactions, that would challenge young people's views and perhaps even cultural frameworks
• There is usually no recognition of cultural pluralism within one country
• Since most of the presentations stay on the level of obvious behaviours, there is a strong potential for reinforcing stereotypes
• Some of the symbols or 'facts' can lead to clashes within one country group or with young people from other countries and communities.
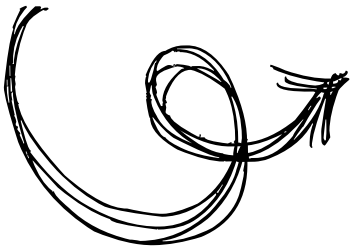
If an 'Intercultural evening' would be placed on Bennett's scale[17] of intercultural sensitivity, most of its elements would fit on the stage of Superiority.

How to make it Intercultural?
- By making it just one of the evenings that will focus on the upper levels of culture, while ensuring that there is an understanding that without other elements, there can be no talk of intercultural learning.
- By complementing it with elements that would go 'under the surface' or by organising different sessions/evenings that follow-it up (e.g. Reading children stories and trying to find educational morals in them).
- By acknowledging diversity and presenting different communities within one country.
- By processing the emotions experienced by the young people when facing diversity.
- By being creative in introducing elements that would go beyond simple perceptions of behaviours.

Even if all these elements would be in place, an 'Intercultural evening' (we propose it to be called 'Food and Drink Evening', so it would not be misleading for the young people) cannot achieve much in terms of intercultural learning. It is short, it does not allow for meaningful interactions to happen and it still mainly focuses on behaviours. But perhaps it can be utilised for implementing other aspects of intercultural learning.

[17] *For more information please consult Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Milton J. Bennet.*

WHO DO THE RULES APPLY TO?

The rules apply to all!

Equality is a key emphasis in youth work. If you wish participants to truly learn about living in a community, they should be actively engaged in designing the rules. On the other hand, this also means that the youth leaders must also be actively engaged in the designing of the rules. Once the rules are set, they apply equally to all. By following the same rules, leaders serve as an example to their groups. If a group agrees to have an alcohol-free exchange (which is in line with the principles of promoting a healthy lifestyle among young people and helps reduce risks at an exchange), this rule must also be respected also by the youth leaders.

HOW **GROUP DYNAMICS** AFFECT THE YOUTH EXCHANGE ?

Group dynamics, which were already discussed in the chapter on planning, are one of the dimensions that strongly affect how a youth exchange will go.

Each youth exchange has its own dynamics, but since all the participants are members of more than one group at a time during the youth exchange project, these processes will run simultaneously.

A group gathered to organise a youth exchange will have started the process of forming and learning about each other when the ideas were put on the table. This group has hopefully resolved any tensions and formed a bond and level of cooperation while they were preparing for the actual exchange. Having been through this process will allow the group to work with other groups more easily. After the exchange, they will continue to work together through the evaluation phase and will gradually dissolve after the conclusion of the project and the dissemination of results.

Parallel to this process, similar processes of group dynamics are taking place in the other group(s), but groups tend to have different paces and needs. At a given point in time, the readiness in different groups to work with the other groups can be at completely different levels.

The third running process is the group dynamics during the actual youth exchange. This group must also get acquainted on the first day and set the rules, smooth out their relationships by working together. After making it through the initial tensions they must set up a bond for the duration of the exchange.

The fourth parallel process takes place among youth leaders who themselves form another group and who are the team that directs the youth exchange together.

As you can see, group dynamics can vary and can affect each other. It is a special challenge when groups that are meeting have not managed to set up their internal bonds. Tensions in one group can then spark tensions in all the groups, which reflects in reduced quality of the programme and unpleasant feelings among those involved. This is why it is important to make sure the groups headed to a youth exchange have been formed well in advance (or if changes in the groups occur, that they are made as soon as possible), since this can otherwise have a negative impact on the processes of cooperation. This is also one of the reasons why the practice of some organisations to look for additional participants just before the exchange should be discouraged.

- group 1
- group 2
- group 3
- Leaders at the youth exchange
- Participants in the youth exchange

Project duration in weeks
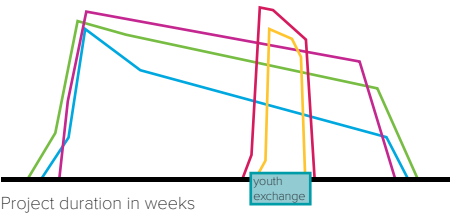
WHAT IS THE POINT OF CONCLUSION ACTIVITIES IF WE WILL ALL BE FACEBOOK FRIENDS?

When a youth exchange is coming to a close, participants are heading in different directions. It is important to make sure in this period that the group can finish its mission, close the open issues and direct its energy into an invitation to new activities. It is also important to motivate the participants to continue their work with the evaluation and the dissemination of results in their home setting.

The activities for the conclusion of an exchange serve to recognise and celebrate the successes of the time together, and to recognise the good practices that could be used again in other groups in the future. If the exchange was not successful, evaluate it together and try to translate the lessons learnt to other projects. At the same time, the activities allow participants to say goodbye to each other properly.

Online social networks make it easier to maintain relationships with a larger number of people and can help everyone to keep in touch after the activities are over. However there is still a need to give participants a chance to say goodbye and to get a sense of closure at the end of the physical part of the youth exchange. Closure in relationships is an important part of learning that can make the future lives and work of participants easier.

SHOULD WE START OUR ACTIVITIES EVEN IF ONE OF THE GROUPS IS ARRIVING A DAY LATER?

When to start with activities is an important question when organising a youth exchange. Participants who have just arrived need some time to rest and settle in, but waiting too long will bring other frustrations.

The arrival times of the different groups should be considered when preparing the programme. Some activities for people to get acquainted can take place even if all of the groups are not yet present; however, decisions that will affect everyone should wait. Likewise, you should wait to do the important activities until everyone is gathered.

With the arrival of every new member, a group is back at the start with the rearranging of relationships and will once again have to go through the processes of meeting, making arrangements and role divisions. Every time the process takes place it goes a bit quicker because most of the group is already in some level of harmony.

HOW TO PRESENT AND PREPARE YOUTHPASS CERTIFICATES?

For young people, Youthpass is an opportunity to present in a structured way their participation and learning from the youth exchange and the entire process of preparing, implementing and evaluating the project. It is useful when looking for a job or for other future trainings and mobility activities.

Youthpass can also be a tool for reflection throughout the project, starting with the drafting phase. In the first phase, the questions relevant for Youthpass could be: What do we expect from the youth exchange? What do we wish to learn and how? In the preparation stage, Youthpass is mainly a tool for achieving learning goals. During the final preparations and implementation, participants can, for example, use Youthpass to recognise their learning in relation to taking responsibility for the group. The implementation phase turns the focus to how they will exchange experience, and what they will learn from others and how. In order to do this you will need to plan time for when the groups can reflect. During the evaluation and conclusion phases, the young people can plan future learning objectives as well as how they plan to utilise their Youthpass.

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE?

WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?

[18] While the concept of being different (and tolerance to those who are different) approaches people in the spirit of the us and not us (those different), the concept of diversity underlines that people are essentially very similar and are only different regarding some things. Differentness is thus based on highlighting differences, while diversity starts from common features.

The implementation phase is the one part of the project when all the participating groups are together. Direct communication among all those involved is most lively in this period, and at the same time the interpersonal relations are most comprehensive, compared to the other periods of the project when communication is usually limited to a single channel.

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

With at least two groups from different environments taking part, youth exchanges are an excellent place to learn about diversity.[18] Approaching a youth exchange from this perspective, their learning of new things will strengthen the belief that they can cooperate with others and learn about differences from them.

An important dimension of intercultural learning is the ability to accept ambiguity. Through cooperation in an intercultural environment, you learn that people can have different answers to the same question, which makes you more open to a greater number of possibilities for decisions and actions. However, bear in mind that opening up to more possibilities can often seriously undermine one's basic beliefs about how the world works. This is why a time of lively intercultural learning must be accompanied by appropriate reflection and support, if possible from someone who already has such experience.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication is the ability to get your thoughts across to others. This is particularly put to the test during a youth exchange when you work closely together with others. Group members need to coordinate things with each other, they explore the different topics that brought them together, and at the same time try to fit all this into their existing knowledge and views of the world.

Usually, communication does not take place in the mother tongue but rather in a chosen working language. This sets new challenges to participants (and leaders), since they need to translate their thoughts into words in a different language, which may not have all the concepts they know from their mother tongue. Moreover, recognising and interpreting the concepts behind the words develops communication competences in foreign languages and helps face the diversity of concept definitions in an intercultural environment.

Another essential element of communication is respect. Respect towards diversity has already been mentioned under intercultural learning, however it is important to stress here that communication is impossible without respect.

A specific aspect is communication between the group taking part in an exchange and the outside world. The hosting environment often needs an explanation, who you are and why you are there – partly for the environment to better understand the needs of the group and partly because you wish to spread the news and outcomes of your common endeavours as you go along.

COOPERATION IN AN INTERCULTURAL SETTING

Cooperation can be a challenge in any group, and an intercultural setting only increases this challenge. By working together, participants learn empathy to be able to understand the needs of others. Taking care of understanding and communication is already mentioned above.

Furthermore, everyone involved learns to be responsible, as this is the only way to achieve (together) the goals you have set.

SUBJECT-RELATED COMPETENCES

Youth exchanges are always designed around a particular topic. A large part of the learning is related to the subject of the exchange, be it environment, youth work, theatre or food.

LEARNING ABOUT THEIR OWN LEARNING

Learning, as a key element in the whole project, is very intensive in this phase. People are often pushed in the learning zone already by leaving home. Everything that goes on during the youth exchange only intensifies the learning experience. Participants need enough support – both in the form of different methods for group or individual reflection – as well as enough space for a retreat from the group if needed.

The first independent trip abroad is often a major challenge for young people. It is quite common that fear makes them cancel their participation just before the exchange. Nevertheless, their overall experience with the project can be positive, since only thinking about going may already have helped them start making changes that will show over time.

HOW TO SUPPORT THEIR LEARNING PROCESS?

It would be hard to overemphasize the role of monitoring and reflection of an individual's experience in youth exchanges, as this is the only way to translate experience into abstract concepts as you go along and relate them to other known things. Here are a few methods that can help in this process.

ECHOING THE DAY IN 6 SENSES

The method is based on six unfinished sentences, based on the five senses and intuition. Ask the participants to finish the sentences with how they experienced the day.
I saw...
I heard...
I felt...
I smelled...
I tasted...
I felt intuitively...

The sentences can be used in individual or group reflection. However, you must ensure your participants the space for presenting the fruit of their contemplation and support if they need it.
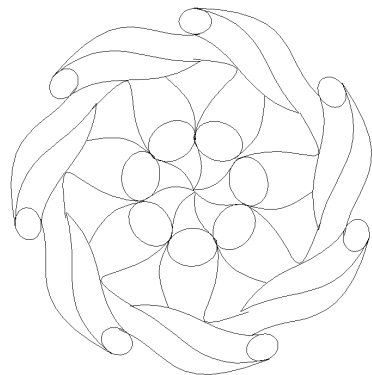
MANDALA

Mandalas can be used both for starting and for reflection because their open structure enables the thinking process. Participants can write in them, colour them, see new structures in them, etc.

At the beginning of an event or at the start of the day, you can use them to look for challenges, objectives or areas where you wish to make progress. Participants write these into their mandalas, connect them and so on.

For reflection, you can pose different questions or give instructions: "In the inner leaves, write how you saw yourself today, in the circles how you saw the group and in the outer leaves how you perceived what was going on." or "Use the mandala to present how you view this day. (You can colour them, add things, write in them and so on.)" or "In small groups, create a mandala to present what you have learnt."

COLLAGE OF IMPRESSIONS

This method can also be used for individuals or groups. Ask the participants to present their view on an issue with a collage of pictures. This way, they transform their thoughts into images, which can convey more than words. Making a collage is also a motor activity, as it involves cutting, gluing and (if this is the concept) moving around the room. Working with images helps people who mainly think visually, but it will also help you avoid resistance like: "I don't want to, I can't draw."

LEARNING JOURNAL

A learning journal is a tool for an individual. Throughout the youth exchange (or throughout the project), participants can use it to write down, draw or mark in any way their findings, the challenges they mastered and other learning moments. At the end of the process, this can be a great tool for reflection and for testing whether the learning objectives set at the beginning of the process have been achieved.

A learning journal can also include some pre-prepared questions to give reflections more structure.

BLOG

A blog can also serve as a learning journal, just that it is in digital form and can be shared with a larger group of people. Participants can use it to post photos, thoughts, reflections, insights and other pieces of information related to the whole process.

An interesting example was a blog by a volunteer, who did her European Voluntary Service with an organisation in Slovenia. She chose the country's tourism promotion slogan "I feel Slovenia" as the motto for her reflections. Every day, she started her post with "I feel…" to present her overall impression of the day.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IF THE PROGRAMME WAS PREPARED BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE?

The role of a youth leader at a youth exchange is to ensure the framework is followed so that the young people can use their time together to experience, perceive and learn as much as possible. If the youth exchange was really designed as a participative process from idea to implementation, the role of the youth leader is to serve as a catalyst for the processes, to hold a mirror for the young people to help their learning, and to ensure their safety as the more experienced person.

HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?

In the implementation phase, creating the environment of mutual acceptance and understanding is vital in order to get the best possible results out of the learning process and ensure the genuine participation of the young people. Support in assertive communication, having a meta view of the situation, and overcoming the individual and group challenges is often welcomed by the participants.

Usually in the implementation phase it is time to recheck the exclusion elements of the group members and so monitor and adapt the environment in order to provide the possibilities to change patterns of living.

During the implementation phase exclusion of certain individuals or groups might happen. Although they might be an integral part of their national group, in the big group their inclusion might regress. The measures to facilitate their inclusion need to be prepared and implemented. In terms of methods and tools used it often means a lot of effort is invested into the group building in order to ensure that everyone feels a part of the group.

While in the previous phase the safety and security of the process was planned and prepared, it is now time to implement the measures in order to invite the participants to exit their comfort zones but at the same time feel secure enough to be able to learn.

An important element of support for inclusion when working with young people with fewer opportunities is having an attitude that their need is a reality and accommodating it is not a 'drama' or special effort but is the same as catering for all the other needs (like food, rest, learning and fun).

HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

[19] For more information please consult Experiential Learning Cycle by David A. Kolb.

Intercultural learning is learning through and not (just) about. It means living an encounter with people from different cultures and through personally engaging and challenging oneself.

Having this in mind, the main experiences related to intercultural learning will happen during the implementation of the youth exchange. It is at this time of engaging and learning together that the young people will put faces to the names of those from different countries.

While the young people's experiences will be intensified during the implementation, the whole process through all 6 phases will help them really embrace intercultural learning and go through all the steps of the experiential learning cycle.[19] However, facilitation of intercultural learning is perhaps the most challenging in the implementation phase.

CHALLENGING NATURE OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Intercultural learning, if not facilitated can stay on the level of perceived behaviours, which can lead to reinforcing stereotypes. Also if young people go deeper in their exploration of differences, values and behaviours, it can lead to significant tensions or even clashes! Both of these can trigger cultural shock. With good preparation and facilitation, this should not happen, but it is important to have it mind.

Regardless of the topic, intercultural learning needs to be facilitated continuously. Not just through the 'intercultural evenings' where senses are activated through different tastes, smells, sounds, etc. from different cultures, but through specifically designed activities. Bearing in mind that intercultural learning is learning 'through', the programme should contain activities that will allow young people to interact on a deeper level and challenge their own values and beliefs. That means that both young people and their leaders will have to be engaged in supporting intercultural leaning to fulfil its potential.

Another challenge young people might face is that diversity will be present in all aspect of their youth exchange experience: living together, eating together, working together, having fun together, sharing emotions together. And as prepared as they might be, at times that can be overpowering. Hence, it is essential to find a balance between stretching participants and providing them comfort spaces. *One of the examples for this is having daily meetings in the country group with their respective leader.*

Finally, it is important to remember that one of the greatest challenges of engaging in intercultural learning is tackling the cultural patterns that are learnt but not fully understood. When young people resist the diversity and are unable to find arguments for it, some of the sentences that can be expected are: It has always been done like this! It is known! This is (not) normal! Although this shows a defence mechanism in refusing different worldviews, it also represents a window for learning, especially on the level of attitudes (in relation to values and beliefs). Getting participants to face their patters is not always easy, but it is rewarding and can mean a big breakthrough in terms of intercultural learning.

conclusion

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?
- WHY DO WE NEED A FINAL EVALUATION?
- WHO WRITES THE FINAL REPORT?
- WHICH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS NEED TO BE COLLECTED?
- COMMUNICATION WITH PARTNERS AFTER THE PROJECT?
- THE YOUTH GROUP HAS NEW IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE – WHAT TO DO WITH THEM?
- OH, WHAT ABOUT DONORS AND OTHER PARTNERS?
- WHY CELEBRATE? WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK WITH THE CONCLUSION AND THE PROJECT WAS NOT PERFECT.
- HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSFER OF WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE LEARNT INTO THEIR DAILY LIVES?
- WHO DOES THE EVALUATING AND HOW?

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE CONCLUSION PHASE?
- WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW TO SUPPORT THIS LEARNING PROCESS?
- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE CONCLUSION PHASE?
- HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

WHY DO WE NEED A FINAL EVALUATION?

The evaluation at the end of the project is most beneficial to those who carried out the project. When you reflect on an experience after a few days, once the feelings have settled and you can also see it from the perspective of everyday life, you can learn a great deal that will help you improve your future work. Evaluation encompasses several aspects that help create a comprehensive picture of a project.
- Participants can tell each other and their youth leader how they see their common experience, recognising in it potential for the future – both for individuals and the group
- The youth leader can raise awareness about what has been learnt and incorporate the learning outcomes in the vision of future life and work
- The youth leader can recognise what was done well and what could be improved. It also helps in understanding the broader framework – their work as a whole
- It serves as a foundation for planning any next steps, based on the experience and the needs expressed by the participants during the exchange

The final evaluation also provides information for financial supporters. It helps them see whether their money reached the results agreed on and at an appropriate level of quality.

WHO WRITES THE FINAL REPORT?

The final report is prepared by the applicant in cooperation with the partners after finishing the evaluation. Each partner can take a part of the report or they can each write a part of the answer from their perspective. Partners can also hold a Skype conference to discuss what to write under each question. The applicant is responsible for bringing the text to its final form. Before the report is filed, it should be sent to the partners for them to review.

WHICH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS NEED TO BE COLLECTED?

This question should be considered in the preparation phase so that the documents are collected as the project progresses and that all the partners know what they need to collect. If this is postponed until the end, it often happens that things get lost and cannot be found when they are needed. It is advisable that during the actual youth exchange the applicant collects and collates all the documents amassed up to that point.

Necessary documents to be collected: all invoices and receipts of all expenditure, proof of travel, pictures and video material, media reports on the project, participant signature lists, summaries of intermediate reflections and evaluations, records of changes in the programme, participants' evaluations, notes from the evaluation by the leaders before their departure from the exchange.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARTNERS AFTER THE PROJECT?

After the project, each partner organisation decides to what extent and how it will maintain communication and relations with the other project partners. The applicant is responsible for writing the report and collecting the outstanding supporting documents – the better the communication, the easier this will be to do. Good communication can also lead to the development of new ideas – more about this in the chapter on dissemination of results.

What about the communication between participants from different partner countries? The ones that really bonded will keep in touch on their own. If the groups did not get along too well, it makes no sense to force them to maintain communication after the exchange. But if there is an interest to keep in touch, leaders can support participants by helping them to think in what way they can maintain the relationships. Likes and comments in social networks are part of the relationship, but a quality relationships will tend to need more. This can be encouraged by getting them to talk to each other about what they do and to think about whether they wish to do anything else together in the future, etc.

THE YOUTH GROUP HAS NEW IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE – WHAT TO DO WITH THEM?

Drafting new ideas is a similar process to that at the beginning of the exchange project. The difference is that the group now has experience of being together and has learned to build new ideas together. The project has taught them a lot about each other and themselves. If misunderstandings were resolved as the project progressed then they also grew as a group. They have new international experience and all this can be a sound basis for working as a team on new ideas, which they will see as their own. Such ideas bring the most motivation for working together.

Just like at the outset of the project, as the youth leader you can help the youth group with creative methods and encourage them to come up with ideas. They can also be encouraged and supported in having communication with participants from the other countries. It is important to allow them to dream impossible ideas – they already know how to make some of them true – and support them in translating their ideas into concrete activities. This is the beginning of a new project process!

If the members of the group are in a transition period (from primary to secondary school or from secondary school to university), it is OK to develop ideas, but it is important to be aware that their lives can change quite drastically in this period. This could mean that some will be able to follow the plans and others will not. It makes no sense to force them to realise plans that were drawn up under different circumstances, but they can always be invited to take part.

OH, WHAT ABOUT DONORS AND OTHER PARTNERS?

It is important to thank everyone involved in the project and who supported the project. With some, you might have already agreed to do a presentation of results for them, with others there should be at the least a thank-you letter sent. If you wish to build relationships further, you can thank them in person and give them a present to show your appreciation – most appropriate presents are related to the exchange (e.g. project results, a T-shirt of the exchange, etc.).

If you prepare a presentation of the exchange, you should invite all the partners to show them the achievements and outcomes. Enthusiastic participants are most likely to get to people, so they should do the talking. Encourage the youth group to talk to the partners also about informal activities – who will talk to whom can be assigned in advance. If needed, the youth leader can be present to represent the entire organisation.

WHY CELEBRATE? WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK WITH THE CONCLUSION AND THE PROJECT WAS NOT PERFECT.

Celebrating is an important part of the project and is a sign of appreciation for the cooperation. Even if you have reasons not to be really satisfied, celebrations are important because they are a recognition of everyone's effort invested in the project. A celebration could take place in the short time spent together following the evaluation or more time could be arranged to look at pictures and relive memories from the exchange. If a celebration is combined with the presentation of the project, you should plan the celebration part towards the end when the group will be alone, since this was their common experience. This also allows every group member to be noticed – and each individual should get some acknowledgement to give them new impetus for the future.

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSFER OF WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE LEARNT INTO THEIR DAILY LIVES?

Real learning mobility takes place when the defined learning outcomes are transferred into the lives of the participants. This requires a process that goes from recognition and turning concepts into words to the transfer and translation of what has been learnt.

Each step is important for the process. Recognition allows the young person to become aware of the experience. Turning it into words gives a name to every particular experience, relating it to what they already know or have experienced before. It helps them put things into place, which leads to the next step – figuring out how to use the experience. Some of the possibilities will be very obvious (use in similar situations), but to get to some ideas it is good to have support to start thinking of different situations. The group can be challenged to think of unfamiliar scenarios, as they are unlikely to come up with situations they do not know. The final step is trying to translate the learning outcomes into the language of those they will talk to. This also helps the young people in the writing of their Youthpass. We will later come back to this topic with more ways to support this process.
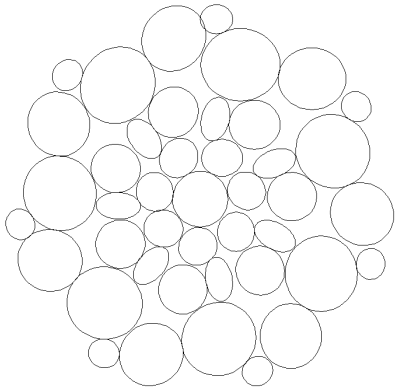
WHO DOES THE EVALUATING AND HOW?

The youth leader should evaluate:
- Project results
- Objectives achieved (what has been achieved and to what extent compared to the plans)
- Methods of work and cooperation
- What the participants and organisations gained with the project
- Financial aspects of the project (how the funds were spent, where you could save or spend more, where could additional funds have come from)

Evaluating is done by everyone involved in the project

Participants – for themselves and as a group

Youth leaders

Participants and youth leaders together in each country group

All partners together – participants and youth leaders

Local partners in the project

Financial supporters/ sponsors (upon receiving a report)

Individuals can make evaluations from their personal perspective; what happened to them, what they achieved, what motivated or kept them back, how they feel about the exchange, etc. A group evaluates; how the cooperation was throughout the project, where were the strong and weak points, how they worked with the partner groups, what they achieved together and how they can use the outcomes, what kind of relationships do they have now, how and where do they wish to work together again and so on. Leaders can evaluate together; the outcomes of the exchange for the participating organisations – future projects, relations with the community, work methods for the future, etc.

HOW WAS THE COOPERATION OF GROUPS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES?

And how can these evaluations be conducted? The most common way is using question-naires – but you should try to make them short. If you know what information you need and how you will use it, you can often use different ways: interviews, symbolic methods (visual material, motion methods, photos, etc.), observation, focus groups, etc. Read more about supporting the recognition of learning under the next questions.

If you wish to get the most out of the evaluation, you should think about how to carry it out. People feel most encouraged if you focus on the strong points and build on positive experiences. Of course, you also need to take a look at what should be improved – here you can either focus on the negative side or ask what could have been done better. Try to avoid being cheesy in exaggerating the positive view, but also don't exaggerate the negative aspects, as they only account for part of the project. Try to have every partici-pant hear something encouraging about them as an individual along with their recogni-tion of learning outcomes.

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THE CONCLUSION PHASE?

WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?

After the youth exchange, the project enters the concluding phase. Upon returning home, you first rest and then start arranging the material and supporting documents, writ-ing thank-you letters to donors and sponsors, and preparing the final report. Evaluation is carried out in the group and with the partners, this evaluation may bring you to proposals for new projects. It is important that in the evaluation the young people cover the whole learning process and celebrate the project.

Usually, this time is also used to prepare presentations of the project, but you can read more about this in the next chapter.

Young people learn or strengthen:
REFLECTION AND EVALUATION
Reflection plays an essential role in the learning process (as we have seen already in the implementation phase), since it helps recognise what has been learnt. In this phase, young people can reflect on themselves throughout the entire process and learn to sum-marise how the whole experience affected them. As part of the evaluation, they practice the same process for the cooperation of the groups and the project as a whole. The more the young people are involved in the creation and implementation of the exchange, the richer the fruit of the learning process they will be able to reap. When evaluating the project, they give each other feedback – if you direct them into encouraging information, they will learn about their strengths, which they can further boost, and they will gain con-fidence. They learn how to evaluate a common experience together, which helps them think about new ideas. Furthermore, this strengthens their social and civic competences, entrepreneurship, confidence and ability to work in a team.

SORTING DOCUMENTS AND WRITING REPORTS
The documents collected during the project are sorted and arranged in this phase, so that the files are clear and orderly, and can be used and understood, even in five years. By doing this, young people learn responsibility, consistency and order. Writing reports helps them in summarising, synthesising and considering different aspects of the same event. They learn to be precise in submitting files, which also contributes to better coor-dination among partners. Since many things in youth exchanges do not go according to plan, this strengthens their responsibility in facing the consequences when presenting this in the report. Although the group already had to face consequences during the ex-change, this also needs to be presented in the report.

RECOGNISING LEARNING OUTCOMES, PUTTING THEM INTO WORDS, TRANSFERRING AND TRANSLATING THEM
The young people are once again engaged in all the steps and carry them out with the support of their youth leader in order for them to learn the most. Furthermore, they can be supported in the reflection of their own learning process in concrete ways so that they recognise what they have learnt, put it into words, translate it into their lives and try to see where they will be able to use it and how they will present it to different people. This helps young people in preparing their Youthpass.

Example:
A participant helped prepare the financial plan for the project, took care of the finances and collection of invoices during the exchange, put the documents in order and helped in preparing the financial section of the report. When talking to parents, friends, a fellow volunteer or a poten-tial employer, the participant will use a slightly different language each time for presenting the learning outcomes.

HOW THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF A YOUTH EXCHANGE PROJECT TAKES PLACE

If they are involved in shaping the entire youth exchange, young people can learn from this experience, how to carry out an entire project from the idea to the conclusion. Individual participants may not have taken part in every step but they all know the whole project because they designed it together. They learnt why particular activities are needed. The first experience may be more superficial, but each new experience reveals new aspects and brings deeper understanding and awareness. To get to a full insight about the entire process, allow the group to go through the process again in the conclusion phase and help them see how the different steps are connected. They can make their own list or a short manual on what needs to be taken care of in each phase.

MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THE NETWORK OF PARTICIPANTS

Everyone has gone home, but the memories are still alive. How to stay in touch? The ones who became close will find a way to stay in touch. But participants can also learn how to maintain contact. You can use social networks, a common website, the group can get in touch with another group each time they meet. If they keep in touch, they are more likely to develop ideas for cooperation again in the future – if this is what they want of course. Participants can learn the difference in various types of contacts – what it means to be connected in a social network or really maintain a relationship. Such an experience can strengthen their sense of entrepreneurship, social, civic and digital competences.
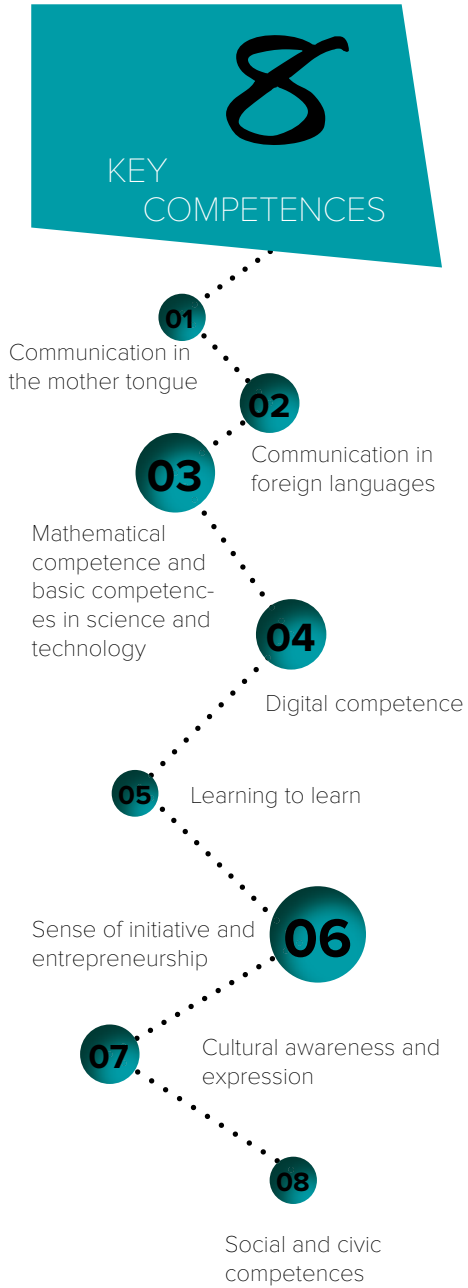
HOW TO SUPPORT
THIS LEARNING PROCESS?

Most of the learning process related to the youth exchange is over by now and you should support the group to take another look at the whole trip. The learning does not stop here but it is essential for all future steps and the use of learning outcomes that the young people stop and look back to where they have come from. Even within the youth exchange project, their learning process may still be lively – with project presentations, cooperation with partners on the exploitation of results, maintaining communication with different partners, and looking for ways to realise new ideas, etc. In a way, the youth exchange can sometimes be only the beginning of a journey.

One of the possible ways of figuring out what has been learnt is the 'confession room' – a room where participants go alone to make a video with their thoughts on the exchange. This allows them to be alone and at the same time use a medium that is often close to them. They can answer different questions like: What will you remember the most from the exchange? What was the biggest challenge for you? Did anything special happen because the other participants in the exchange were from Finland, Armenia and France? What is different for you after the exchange? Is there an experience you would not wish to miss? Give them one or two questions to answer. You can also offer them unfinished sentences like: Now I can…; I surprised myself… If they wish, their video confessions can also be used for promoting the project.

The questions and unfinished sentences above can also be used for young people to make collages, and photo novels, etc. Use the material that will allow them to express the different dimensions and aspects of what they have learnt.

8

KEY COMPETENCES

01 Communication in the mother tongue

02 Communication in foreign languages

03 Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

04 Digital competence

05 Learning to learn

06 Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

07 Cultural awareness and expression

08 Social and civic competences

The group members can make interviews with each other. They can make them in threes: one asking the questions, the second answering them and the third writing down the answers so the interviewee can use them later.

Sample questions:
• What will you remember the most from the exchange?
• What was the biggest challenge for you?
• Did anything special happen because the other participants in the exchange were from Finland, Armenia and France?
• What is different for you after the exchange?
• How do you see yourself now?
• Is there an experience you would not wish to miss?
• Which of the new things for you from the exchange do you wish to/will you continue using?
• In which situations will the insights and experience from the exchange be most useful?
• In which moments did you learn the most? What happened then? What helped you remember?
• What would you tell your friends was most beneficial for you in the exchange?
• What do you like the most in; the group work/holding international events/preparing a plan and finances/exploring ideas, etc.?

You can make groups of three for telling stories. You can ask them: "Tell us about an experience from the exchange when something difficult needed to be done or said and you mustered up the courage and did it. What happened and how is it still part of you?" The first one tells the story, the second one listens as a witness who will later highlight the strengths in the story, and the third one will pick the fruit and list what they all can learn from the story. They rotate through all three roles and at the end pick, for example, three things from the stories that everyone could learn from, and share them with all the others. You can also make interviews with the youth leaders playing different roles and the participants talking to them. The youth leader can play a manager of a company working in the same field as the exchange or an artist who wants to present the results of the exchange, a former teacher, a university professor, a journalist doing an article on the topic of the exchange, a friend, etc. (the topics are chosen based on what will help the young people most to understand and contemplate on the use of what they have learnt).

When young people see what they have learnt, you can also introduce them to the concept of the eight key competences. Make an attractive picture or model of the competences and go through what each of them means. Then, invite them to arrange their learning outcomes in the framework of these competences. Once they are done, you can talk through any misunderstandings or trouble they had. Help them see that the same situation can be viewed from different angles, so they can classify their learning outcomes under more than one competence – if they have not figured this out on their own already. Encourage them to use the framework to think about whether they have learnt anything else they have not thought about.

One of the important parts of using learning outcomes is their transfer into everyday life. Where can I use what I have learnt? The first answer is everywhere. Really. But it is also true that people are concrete beings, so practicing with the concrete examples is helpful when you encounter concrete situations. It is good to let young people translate their learning outcomes into different situations and reconsider what they have really learnt. First, help them figure out what they have really learnt. Then you can give them a large attractive worksheet where they should imagine situations in which to use it.

You can also combine the reflection with a presentation of the project. Participants can write a blog/travelogue, where they also include a chapter 'The changes in me'.

In all these options, note that people reflect in different ways: some wish to talk while others prefer to do it alone in silence and then listen to others. You can combine different methods so that everyone gets what they prefer. You should be careful not to be too short or too long, especially if group members are not used to lengthy reflections. Using symbol-based ways of expression (e.g. pictures, photo novels, movement, etc.) usually helps individuals recognise aspects that would otherwise go unnoticed. An important part of reflection is talking to each other, as you can learn a lot from each other – when listening to each other, making summaries, etc.

I experienced...
Now I know...
Now I can...

I can use this...

Write concrete situations when you can use what you have learnt.

AT WHAT I LIKE TO DO

IN SOCIAL MEDIA

AT HOME

AT WORK

WITH FRIENDS

WITH NEW IDEAS

WITH MY BUSINESS IDEA

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE CONCLUSION PHASE?

The conclusion phase is like giving a present: you thought carefully what to put in the box, you know what each of the contents is there for or related to, you have talked it through if more people have been involved in preparing it, you know how to wrap it and how to give it, and you still have ideas for other presents, which you might realise some other time. The role of a youth leader is to help in the process of preparing and handing over the present. If it were prepared by the leader alone, it would not mean much to everyone else. The same goes for youth exchanges – if leaders work on the evaluations and reports alone and if they are the only ones communicating with partners, the participants do not get much from their youth exchange and they do not recognise the potential of the learning process they experienced.

This is why they must think together about what should go in the box – they do the evaluation together, with the leader enabling them to express their opinions and incorporating these opinions in the big picture, while also including all the partners. The present includes the ideas of everyone, not just the leader. How the evaluation will be carried out and what will be evaluated can be discussed together – the leader can help broaden the horizons of what else is possible. Nevertheless, if the group agrees, the leader can do some of the parts. This will be the basis for the report. The leader may write it alone if this is too difficult for the participants, but the leader can also present the questions and the young people suggest how to answer them. Since the youth leader knows which documents are needed and has been collecting them since the beginning, they can simply organise them at the end and check if anything is missing. This can also be the participants' job. Although you may risk that they miss or lose something (which can also happen to the leader), this will enable them to learn to assume responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

How to communicate after you have handed in the present? If the youth group is unsure how to communicate with the participants from the other countries, their leader can help them explore the possibilities and learn about what each communication method allows.

What do you wish to say with specific parts of the present and what are they related to? Each participant must figure out on their own how the different parts of the exchange are related and what they mean for them, the leader is there to enable the process of self-reflection and for the recognising of the learning outcomes. You wish the recipient to know what the present means – the leader supports the participants to put the learning outcomes into words and translate them into different situations where they can use them. Of course they will not recognise all they have learnt immediately and will only remember some things at a later date. If the leader continues to work with the group, they can also support them in this. If you have prepared the present together – carried out the conclusion together – you will also get ideas for the future. The leader can support the group and provide additional ideas, while letting the group decide on their own.

Giving a present without a celebration? It is important to share the joy, so the leader encourages the group to prepare a celebration in a way they will feel it as their own. The leader makes sure the celebration includes all the parts the young people find important in the group's common experience – for example, the leader can point to things by posing questions.

HOW DO WE INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?

Concluding the project is connected with checking the process, results, learning, inclusion and other envisaged elements. It is necessary to create this process in a way that enables the participants of the project to be involved fully. Too often we see this phase of the project to be focusing only on the written products and analysis of the situation based on written tools (questionnaires, reports...).

Inclusion in this phase can be facilitated through diverse methods of presenting the results, feelings and lessons learnt from visual and artistic presentations to drama, writing, use of unstructured materials (pictures, quotes, puppets, mandalas...) and different kinds of movement.

The following list of questions can help us in understanding the impact of the project:
- What are the strengths we developed?
- What was learnt about inclusion?
- What really worked well?
- What are the models we developed and could be transferred to other realities (situations, organizations)?
- What are the new patterns of behaviour of the individuals and the groups that emerged?
- Can we continue the cooperation with these partners?
- How can we deepen the cooperation between the partners?
- How can we deepen the cooperation among the group?
- What could be the possible challenges for individuals in the group for the future?
- Do we feel more included now?
- How do I see myself now? Has anything changed?

The elements of this phase are also the ending of the relationships and the thanking of the actors who gave support in the development and implementation of the project. For the young members of the group it is also the time to communicate the message of the whole group to the community and provides them with the additional feeling of inclusion because they have to present the results of 'us, the group'.

HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

[20] For more informaiton please consult Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Milton J. Bennett.

In terms of Intercultural learning, the first step of this phase starts at the end of the previous one: by saying goodbye to the group and the intercultural experiences that took place and understanding how to keep them alive when coming back to reality.

The next important thing is to bring young people safely back to their home comfort zone and help them reflect on the different experiences from a safe time distance. *If needed, also facilitate reverse cultural shock.* This reflection should lead into identifying learning insights about oneself and potential changes that occurred through intercultural learning, which can be done through self-reflection, sharing experiences with others, receiving feedback, etc. Having a clear insight about the things learnt can really help with moving forward on the scale of intercultural sensitivity.[20]

Based on the learning insights, the conclusion phase offers the possibility for planning future steps with the young people:
- How do I perceive diversity now?
- Do I want to continue developing my intercultural sensitivity? What will be my next steps?
- What do I still want to learn?
- Which are things that I still find challenging?
- What do I think will still be unacceptable for me?
- How aware am I of my stereotypes and prejudices? How do I handle them now?
- Was there any impact on my identity through this process? How?

dissemination

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?
- WHAT DOES DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS MEAN?
- WHAT EXACTLY CAN WE DISSEMINATE OR EXPLOIT?
- WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS?
- HOW CAN OTHER PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM THE EXCHANGE?
- HOW TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED AFTER THE EXCHANGE?
- WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE OTHER ORGANISATIONS?
- HOW MUST THE PRODUCTS FROM THE PROJECT BE MARKED?

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- WHAT DO THEY LEARN IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW TO SUPPORT THIS LEARNING PROCESS?
- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER IN THE DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS?
- HOW DO WE INCLUDE THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?
- HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

and exploitation of results

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

WHAT DOES DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS MEAN?

Dissemination and exploitation of results are the ways to present the work done as part of the project to the broader public. This is done partly for the public to be able to learn about and benefit from the project that has been supported by the European Union. It is also partly done to present the work in line with the mission of the Erasmus+ Programme and show the connection between the Programme and the European Union's strategies.

In general, this means presenting your work and achievements in different ways within your environment, and trying to transfer the experience gained throughout the project into other environments and into other activities you engage in.

What kind of activities count as dissemination and exploitation of results?
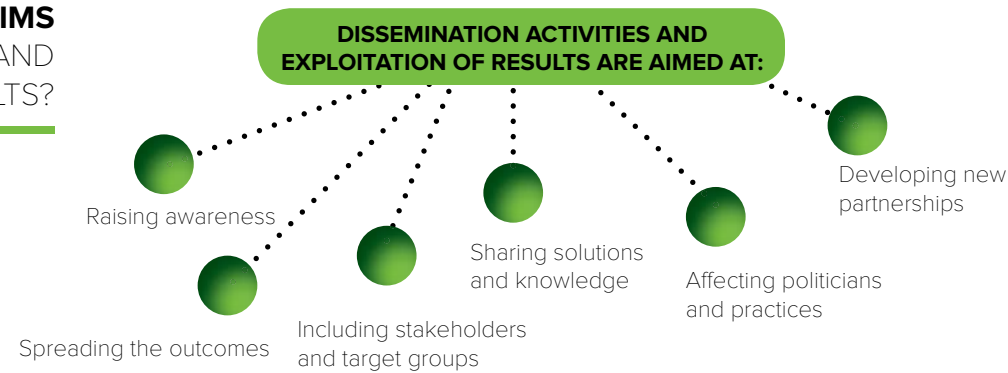
Dissemination activities include various presentations in the form of public addresses, press conferences, exhibitions, documentary films, round table debates, regular activities in the local community, continued activities from the exchange, etc. Project participants often choose to create concrete, tangible (and easily measurable) products that carry the project message to the broader community.

Exploitation of results encompasses mostly exploration and recognition of possibilities for further use of the knowledge and skills obtained and their transfer into organisations (if the group is part of an organisation). This transfer should also be aimed at the groups' local community and among any other groups maintaining partner relations.

WHAT EXACTLY CAN WE DISSEMINATE OR EXPLOIT?

You can disseminate and exploit both tangible and intangible project results:

TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE
• Approaches to solving a challenge • Practical project results like books, websites, documentary films, etc. • Reports • Examples of best practice • Flyers, other printed material, etc.	• Knowledge and experience obtained by participants • Improved competences • Improved intercultural sensitivity • Improved language skills, etc.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS?

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS ARE AIMED AT:

- Raising awareness
- Spreading the outcomes
- Including stakeholders and target groups
- Sharing solutions and knowledge
- Affecting politicians and practices
- Developing new partnerships

HOW CAN OTHER PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM THE EXCHANGE?

A youth exchange always leaves a mark on the local environment. Part of the results can be planned (e.g. restoring a walking path, painting walls, preparing a local festival), while part of them come casually through the interaction of people. These results are often neglected in project documents, but they still leave a deep mark with the people. A local community hosting youth exchanges on a regular basis gets used to groups of young people appearing for short periods of time. Shops and bars adapt to the needs of the groups, and interaction with the local environment during the exchanges becomes less of a challenge.

Organisations can also learn from youth exchanges. The young people and the youth leaders face different work methods from the various participating youth groups. These experiences can be adapted to their own practices and so change the culture within their organisation.

HOW TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED AFTER THE EXCHANGE?

Youth exchange projects are a challenge for everyone involved. For some participants the exchange is their entry point into youth work. Such youth groups usually require a lot of work on motivation, since they may not have grasped the full meaning of youth work.

If the participants are already part of an organisation or already had an informal group before, the experience from the youth exchange can be a great motivational factor for future engagement in the youth field. After a successful project, young people will wish for new challenges to test the competences acquired during the youth exchange.

After the exchange, it is good to encourage the group to take on new challenges or ask them questions in a way that they will find local challenges for themselves. This way, you contribute to spreading the idea of active citizenship and to an even better transfer of the competences gained into practice.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

When talking about maintaining partnerships, we should first distinguish the two main groups of partners. The first main group are foreign project partners and the second are partner organisations in the local environment (e.g. the fire-fighter organisation that lent you folding benches and cooking equipment, the school through which you made contact with the children you worked with). Regardless of where the partners are from, keep in mind that open communication is the key to good cooperation. Therefore, an evaluation with a thorough examination of the cooperation during the project can be a great springboard for forming solid long-term partnerships.

Maintaining partnerships with foreign partners can be a challenge because you only get to know them through the project. Looking for common interests and shared elements in your organisations' missions are key topics in maintaining a partnership. Organisations from twinned towns have a greater chance for long-term cooperation, since their towns have already expressed political will for cooperation. Such international partnerships often serve as generators of change in both local environments and contribute to the transfer of knowledge and skills between the two environments.

Maintaining partnerships developed during the exchange in the local environment also requires thorough reflection on the possible common ground, mutual support of the organisations' missions and the potential for cooperation on both sides. If you recognise common interests and complementary missions, the next step in the partnership can be to organise activities together or work together on advocating a certain change.

HOW MUST THE PRODUCTS FROM THE PROJECT BE MARKED?

Whatever you create in a project financially supported by the Erasmus+ Programme, it must carry the official logo of the Programme. Moreover, texts must state that the project was co-funded by the European Union. Failing to do so may result in the final amount of funding from the Programme being lower than the project was initially granted.

The Programme also envisages an online Dissemination platform for dissemination of results of projects within the Programme.

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN IN THI PHASE?

WHAT DO THEY LEARN
IN THIS PHASE?

The period of dissemination and exploitation of results takes place when the project is being concluded. It draws energy from all that has happened to the participants from the drafting phase up to that particular point in time. The learning focus shifts from the group to cooperation between the group and the community, so there are greater differences in the learning possibilities compared to the previous phases.

PRESENTATION OF ACCOMPLISHED WORK AND RESULTS

Presenting the accomplished work and results is an activity and at the same time a skill. For a good presentation, you need to select the results and aspects of the work done that will also be interesting for the public, as they are the reason for having the presentation. Exploring the needs of a group you will present to and selecting the content that will be of interest to them is a competence relevant for drawing up communication messages. It can be useful to go back to the drafting phase when you were taking a look at the needs of different groups, both your needs and those of the people around you.

Another important aspect along with the content of the presentation is the choice of the communication medium or the 'products' you will use to address the community. Some content is easier to explain with a flyer (e.g. a map of the walking path you restored on a nearby hill), another may call for a public discussion in the local community, so you organise a panel debate (e.g. how local authorities can support the development of innovative jobs for young people), while yet another could be to present to youth workers who are engaged in a study visit to your organisation (e.g. to show how you really incorporated young people in all the processes of the project and what impact it had on the local community).

All these decisions are part of the communication strategy of dissemination and exploitation of results. Developing this strategy is a learning opportunity in itself as it reveals the functioning of the communication space and allows young people to develop critical literacy.

PREPARING A PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Some groups choose to present their work at an event where they invite a large number of people. Such activities enable them to acquire all competences related to the preparation of content, public performance and logistics for such an event. The preparation of invitations is an opportunity to obtain the skills of addressing target groups and graphic design.

Presenting the results to a large number of people can be an exercise in public speaking for many, where they face their own fears, stage fright, and having to form consistent and goal-oriented messages. Formulating the aims is the point on which the quality of the whole public event will depend. Once the group has defined clearly what messages they want to pass on to the target group in their chosen timeframe, these messages will determine what the event will look like. A general rule for such events is that it is better to focus on less information and integrate it well into a wholesome picture, than listing details in a long presentation that will not spark the interest of the audience.

Such presentations can raise media recognisability of both the participating youth group and the organisation that prepared the project, as well as the Erasmus+ Programme. When it comes to the media, it is important to pay attention to the balance between the target public and the media houses you are working with. Certainly, the reach will be greater with nation-wide media, but it is much harder to get coverage from them than from local media, who are interested in what is going on in the local community and environment.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Designing messages that catch people's eye is a task that requires extensive knowledge, skills and motivation. As part of the dissemination of results, it is a common wish to want to present your work in the most attractive way, which will also reflect the message.

In this project phase, participants often need to translate the messages they need to transmit into the language of images and so use image designing tools. Young people explore the use of graphic design tools, learn to use copying and printing technology, and train in exploring the world of the people they want their message to reach.
Along with learning about the technology, technological possibilities and language, you can also encourage the young people to develop critical literacy, which will later make it easier for them to recognise and understand the messages from their environment.

MAKING VIDEOS

In the recent years, technology for filming and editing footage has become extremely accessible. Many devices used daily for communication offer the possibility of capturing sound, pictures and videos. Video editing software is accessible and platforms for publishing videos and films are public.

With a general lack of film and media education, the dissemination period is a perfect opportunity to explore the world of video expression. They can learn about the different ways to tell a story, master the skills of video aesthetics and the skills of editing sound and image, which will be the bearer's message.
Just like with all other media-related skills, working with film media on their own develops critical literacy of the participants.

DRAWING UP WRITTEN MESSAGES

Same as other media, writing has its requirements, laws and skills that need to be mastered. All the more so if you want to persuade different target groups with different writing styles. While a learning journal is aimed mainly at putting a memory down and getting the learning on paper, an article on the project for a local newspaper is a text form with its rules. The same goes for information leaflets, invitations, marketing and other messages.

In the dissemination phase, participants learn the laws of writing, adapting content and messages to the text format and target group, and enrich their eloquence in their mother tongue.

HOW TO SUPPORT
THIS LEARNING PROCESS?

Learning in this period is oriented mainly towards the relationship between the core group of the project and the community. This reflects on the ways the youth leader can support the learning.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE TO PRODUCTS, EVENTS AND THEIR EFFECTS

Reflection and evaluation are often the basis of learning for individuals and groups. During dissemination and exploitation of results, these processes are no longer used only to observe the products or the results for yourself but to observe them in relation to the community you are addressing. Taking a critical look at your products and the events you prepared as part of the presentation of results can reveal both your strengths and the areas that can still be improved.

Some reflection questions for

A) EVENTS

- Was the event attended by the people we wanted to see there?
- Was the number of attendants in line with our plans and expectations?
- Were the date and time appropriate?
- What did the attendants get from the event? What did they learn at the event? Did we reach our (communication) goals?
- Was the location appropriate? Was the venue chosen well?
- How did the event hosts seem? What were their strengths? What could they improve?
- What were the strengths in the programme? What could be improved?

B) TEXTS

- Does the text convey the planned message?
- To what extent does it follow the prescribed formats for its medium?
- Where are the strengths in the clarity of the text and what could be improved?
- Is the text appropriate for all the planned target groups?
- Does the text achieve its (communication) goals?

C) VISUAL MESSAGES

- Do the images convey the planned message? What are the strengths of this translation into images and what could be improved?
- What are the technical strengths in the design and what could be improved?
- What are the strengths in the content and what could be improved?
- What was the response of the target groups?

D) VIDEOS

- What are the strengths of this video?
- What does it give to the viewer?
- What are the strengths in the storyline and what could be improved?
- What are the strengths in editing and what could be improved?
- Does the sound complement the images? Where does the synergy of sound and image capture the viewer and what could be improved?

FILMING AND ANALYSING PERFORMANCES

Performing in front of an audience is another skill that the participants of a youth exchange can exercise in this phase. If you want to kick the training of performing another notch higher, you can agree with the participants to film their performances and later analyse them. By reflecting on the strengths and looking for possibilities for improvement, the participants can acquire new knowledge and skills in the preparation of public appearances and in actual performing.

HOW TO USE WHAT I HAVE IN THE FUTURE?

This is the essential question for the transfer of competences from the project environment to other spheres of an individual's life. Recognising the possibilities for using the acquired competences in other situations and for other challenges is a key aspect of life-long learning and a person's adaptability to the changing demands of the environment.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A YOUTH LEADER
IN THE DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS?

As in all other phases, the role of a youth leader here is mainly in supporting young people in their own exploration and learning of new things, while also serving as a link between the group and the environment.

To be more specific, the leader can support the group in formulating their messages about the finished project, in reviewing plans, exercising for performances and for communication with the community. If needed, the leader empowers the group in establishing dialogue with the local environment.

HOW DO WE INCLUDE THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS PHASE?

The dissemination phase of the youth exchange is the time to promote the achievements of the project and to transfer the new insights to everyday living.

From the inclusion point of view this is the time to support the young people to transfer the experience they gathered into 'real life'. The process requires a lot of personal support in order to assertively present the needs of the young people and to take into the account the needs of other actors in their environment.

In some cases it also means the development of long term support structures that will guard the results of the inclusion process and facilitate the further inclusion of the participants of the project and or other representatives from similar groups, communities and environments…

On the other hand the process can challenge the mechanisms of exclusion, requiring a lot of effort and energy in order to convey the message and to oppose the (likely) measures to discredit the new practice.

The transfer of practices and models developed can take the shape of advocacy in everyday situations and transfer to the policies and conduct of the institutions working with the same target group (young people in general, young people with fewer opportunities). The presentations and or publications about inclusion practices can be made available to relevant public and media outlets. This can lead to the empowerment of other young people in similar situations to the young people of the youth exchange and act as an invitation to others in a similar situation to join in and cooperate in the future.

HOW DO WE FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THIS PHASE?

Dissemination is the phase that requires participants to open-up to their local community. Starting with their families and friends, all the way to different actors in their communities.

By helping young people become aware of what they have learnt and motivating them to speak to others, their learning often gets clearer or even enhanced. This process is very important in order to ensure sustained impact on young people, but also to spread it to the community.

This can be done through exhibitions, talks, intercultural days, workshops, etc. Depending on the size of the community, the young people's experiences can have an impact on challenging attitudes to diversity among others.

However, the young people's return to their home community can also be a challenge to their learning and potential changes. Their close friends and family and even wider community might not be supportive in understanding those changes in them or appreciative towards new attitudes to diversity. This is why it is important to keep the spirit alive and support the young people in understanding the changes. Regular meetings with the group can be helpful in supporting them on that journey.

glossary

EVALUATION
Evaluation is a systematic and ongoing process during the project that includes exploring and gathering information about learning, content, methods, context and results of learning activities. It also includes the organisation and analysis of the information and the assessment of its value in line with the evaluation criteria set in the light of the learning objectives.

INCLUSION
The word can cover many diverse aspects of involvement of the young people in the youth work activities. Inclusion is mostly understood as the invitation and support to the young people with fewer opportunities to actively participate in a project.

Inclusion can also mean the involvement of young people in general in the activities that are co-created. From this point of view the support to the young people to become actively involved in the processes around them is seen as inclusion. Inclusion aims at creating the institutional and relational space in which the young people can actively co-create their futures.

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING
As referred to in this publication, intercultural learning is experiential learning that occurs in the interaction that takes place between different cultures, that is primarily happening on the attitudinal level and that more often than not, involves dynamics connected to different values and beliefs. It encompasses learning about the other but also learning about oneself and questioning cultural perceptions and patterns. Ultimately it leads to the development of intercultural sensitivity and the ability to embrace and learn from diversity and integrate different cultural frameworks.

KEY COMPETENCES OF LIFELONG LEARNING [21]
Key competences are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that people need for personal fulfilment, active citizenship and employment. Key competences are transferable and can be used in different situations. Many of them overlap and interlock. The European Reference Framework sets out the following eight key competences for lifelong learning:
1) Communication in the mother tongue
2) Communication in foreign languages
3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
4) Digital competence
5) Learning to learn
6) Social and civic competences
7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
8) Cultural awareness and expression

NON-FORMAL LEARNING
Non-formal learning is intentional learning with learning objectives and the learning path for achieving them planned in advance. In non-formal learning, learners determine the learning objectives on their own or take part in determining them. This brings non-formal learning closer to the needs of individuals, but unlike formal education it is not verified by broader social (state) structures. Because of this, it is often denied the same value as formal education.

Non-formal learning is a learning process in which the role of the learner fuses into the role of the teacher and vice versa.

PLANNING OF LEARNING
The planning of learning is a process that requires the learners to reflect on themselves and determine the desired state, which will be the objective of the learning process. A vision or clear wish of this allows the learner to determine the learning path that will help them truly master what they wish.

PARTICIPANT IN A YOUTH EXCHANGE
A participant in a youth exchange can be anyone aged from 13 to 30. Groups of participants start forming, drafting ideas and connecting with other groups to develop the youth exchange project.

REFLECTION
Reflection is a process of systematically taking a look at one's own experience and testing its compatibility with the existing mental image of the world. It is through this compatibility check that a person learns.

SHORT-TERM MOBILITY
Short-term mobility is a short stay of an individual abroad with the aim of learning new things, exploring diversity and acquiring competences. The Erasmus+ Programme offers various individual and group mobility opportunities, while the section Erasmus+ Youth in Action covers two kinds of short-term mobility projects: youth exchanges and mobility of youth workers.

[21] *More information about the European reference framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning is available here: https://erasmusplus.org.uk/file/272/download.*

of
key terms

YOUTH EXCHANGE

Youth exchanges in the Erasmus+ Programme are an opportunity for two or more groups of young people from different countries to get together and research topics that connect them. During the time spent together, they also prepare products that they present and offer to the world after the exchange. Certainly, young people are also driven by the wish to meet peers from other – maybe very distant – places, and exchanges also have their fun dimension. However, the Erasmus+ Programme supports youth exchanges first and foremost because they are a strong tool of non-formal and informal learning in youth work.

The process starts with the drafting of ideas in a youth group and coordination of ideas between two or more groups. The planning phase is concluded by applying with a project for funding from the Programme. If the application is approved, the preparation of the project, the implementation of the youth exchange and the subsequent concluding stage of the project and dissemination of results can go on for up to two years. The key activity of the whole project is the youth exchange, as a part of which young people get to spend 5 to 21 days together with their peers in the country of one of the partner groups.

YOUTH LEADER

A youth leader is a person who enables young people to engage in activities that are interesting and beneficial to them and that allow them to develop their potential. In youth exchange projects, youth leaders usually accompany the group of young people through the process from the initial search for ideas to the dissemination of the project results.

YOUTH WORKER

Youth workers are people working in the youth field. Their role is similar to that of youth leaders, usually the difference is in the type of cooperation with the youth organisation. While youth leaders can be volunteers active in youth organisations, youth workers are more experienced and often employed in organisations that work with young people.

YOUTHPASS

www.youthpass.eu

Youthpass is a European recognition tool for projects funded by Erasmus+ Youth in Action for non-formal and informal learning in youth work. While creating their Youthpass Certificate together with a support person, the participants of the projects have the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. Youthpass supports reflection upon the personal non-formal learning processes and outcomes.

Youthpass contributes to strengthening the social recognition of youth work and supports the active European citizenship of young people and of youth workers. It aims at supporting the employability of young people and of youth workers by documenting the acquisition of key competences onto a certificate.

WE ARE READY
TO ORGANIZE
OUR YOUTH EXCHANGE
NOW!

colophon

MOVIT has been performing the tasks of the National Agency for EU programmes in the field of youth since May 1999 when Slovenia entered the Programme Youth for Europe III, which was succeeded by the Youth Programme (2000–2006), the Youth in Action Programme (2007–2013) and ERASMUS+: Youth in Action (2014–2020). In this role, MOVIT manages indirectly centralised EU budget funds and enables support for different forms of learning mobility activities in youth work, while also running activities for the general development of youth work and non-formal education, with special stress on activities contributing with their form or content to the strengthening of European cooperation in the field of youth. Publishing is an important part of MOVIT's activities, which has resulted in several fundamental works for the development of youth work and especially for learning mobility projects in youth work.
www.mva.si

Along with its role as a National Agency, MOVIT also serves as an office of Eurodesk, the European Commission's free-of-charge info service offering EU-related information to young people. It was established both for young people and for those who encounter young people and their questions as part of their regular work – school counsellors, teachers, youth workers, providers of information and others. When you need help in finding information, you can always turn to your national or regional Eurodesk partner for help.
www.eurodesk.si

In 2002, MOVIT also took over as the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre. This section of MOVIT organises trainings, contact seminars and numerous other activities to encourage and support cooperation with partners from Western Balkans within the EU's relevant Programme in the field of youth. To help in these activities, the SALTO SEE Resource Centre has a network of trainers, accreditors and contact points in the Western Balkan countries.
www.salto-youth.net/see

MOViT

SALTO-YOUTH
SOUTH EAST EUROPE
RESOURCE CENTRE
Erasmus+

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**MINISTRSTVO ZA IZOBRAŽEVANJE,
ZNANOST IN ŠPORT**
URAD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE ZA MLADINO