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Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# DARE DIGITAL STORYTELLING HANDBOOK OF EMPOWERMENT



Kreisau-Initiative



## **DISABLE THE BARRIERS**

Project Reference: 2018-3-DE04-KA205-017203



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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## Introduction

Welcome to the DARE Digital Storytelling Handbook of Empowerment!

Do you want to learn more about the Erasmus+ Programme and international youth exchanges? Or maybe you never thought these activities were meant for you, because you can't speak a foreign language or you have a disability?

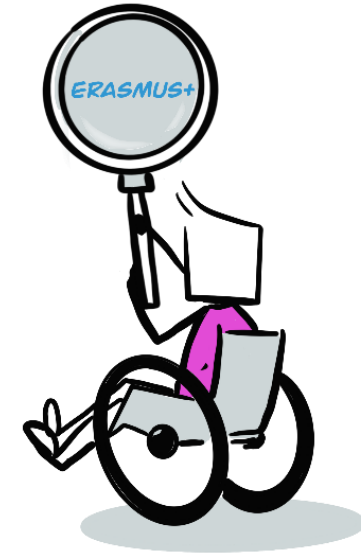
We designed this handbook for you, because we firmly believe that everybody can and should participate in an international youth exchange at least once in their lives... However, let us warn you, it's difficult to stop once you've started!

In the following story, "EUth in Action", you can learn about different kinds of international youth exchanges, and you'll see that it's not difficult to participate in one!

But there's more!

Have you already participated in an inclusive international youth exchange and you would love for others to experience the same, life changing moments? Then you are the right person to become a [DARE Ambassador](#)! This Digital Storytelling Handbook is meant to be a supportive tool for you. The [DARE Youth Peer Support Model](#) will show you how you can use your voice and your experiences to motivate and support other young people to join Erasmus+ mobility projects.

Enjoy!



## DARE Project

The DARE Digital Storytelling Handbook was developed as part of [DARE: Disable the Barriers Project](#). It includes accessible multimedia resources to accommodate the needs of people with and without impairments.

The aims of the Digital Storytelling Handbook and DARE Project are to:

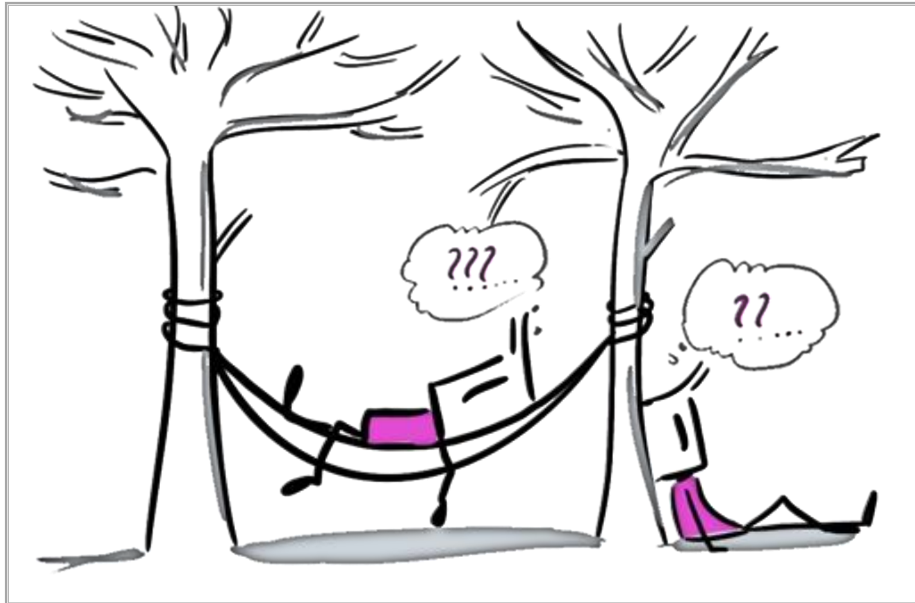
- Foster volunteering and increase peer support for young people with visual, hearing and physical impairments (PwHVPI).
- Increase the level of active participation of young PwVHPI at the local and EU levels by raising awareness about Erasmus+ Youth Mobility Projects and encouraging them to participate in international youth exchanges.

If you're interested in the topic of inclusion in youth work and inclusive youth support, please check out [other resources](#) developed by the DARE Project team.



## Story “EUth in Action”

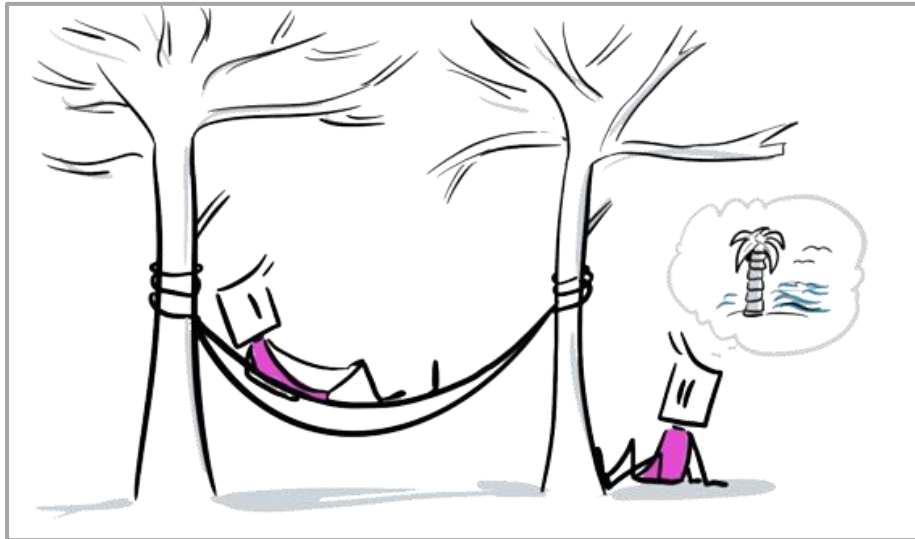
*Towards the end of May, on a Sunday, Oli and Efe are relaxing in Oli’s garden.*



**Oli:** What are your plans for the summer holidays?  
Any ideas what to do?

**Efe:** No clue yet, I just hope we don't get stuck here.

**Oli:** Yeah, but luckily we still have time to figure something out.



**Oli:** Wait, didn't you go to Malta last summer?

**Efe:** Don't remind me! The place was amazing but I went with my parents and I ended up just spending time with them and their friends. It was super boring. I'd rather stay here!

**Oli:** Right, that doesn't sound like fun at all!

**Efe:** It was so awful! I didn't get to do anything cool or meet anyone new either – same food, same people, same activities for 15 days!

*Oli and Efe's friend, Billie, joins in.*



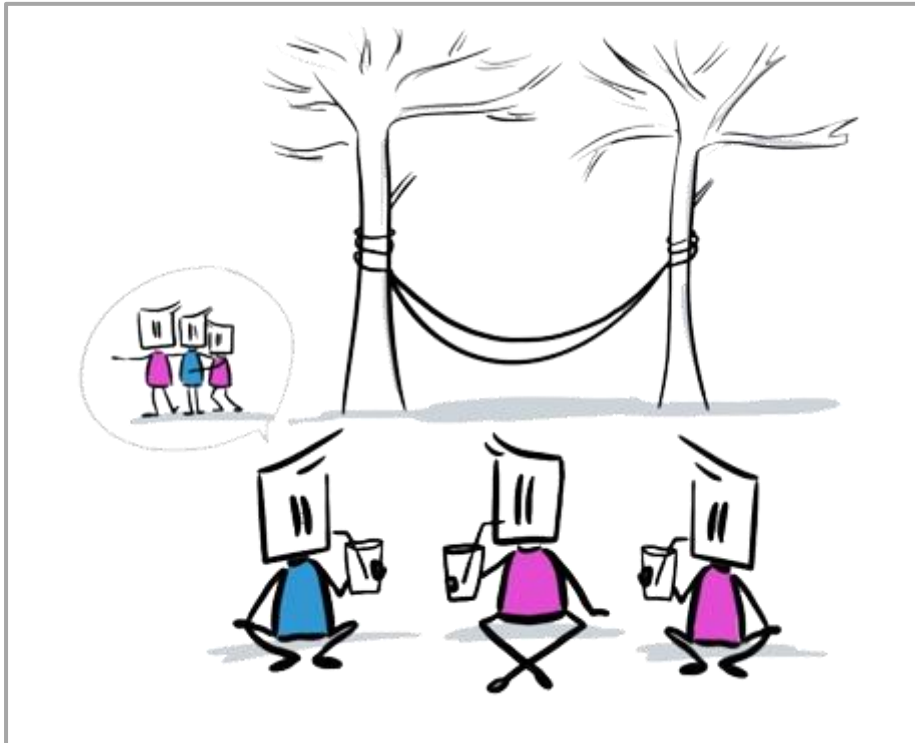
**Oli:** Hi Billie! What's up?

**Billie:** Hey y'all! I was looking for Sam. Have you seen her yet? I heard she just got back from a youth exchange.

**Oli:** Oh that's true, she wasn't at school this past week.

**Efe:** Wait, what the heck is a [youth exchange](#)?

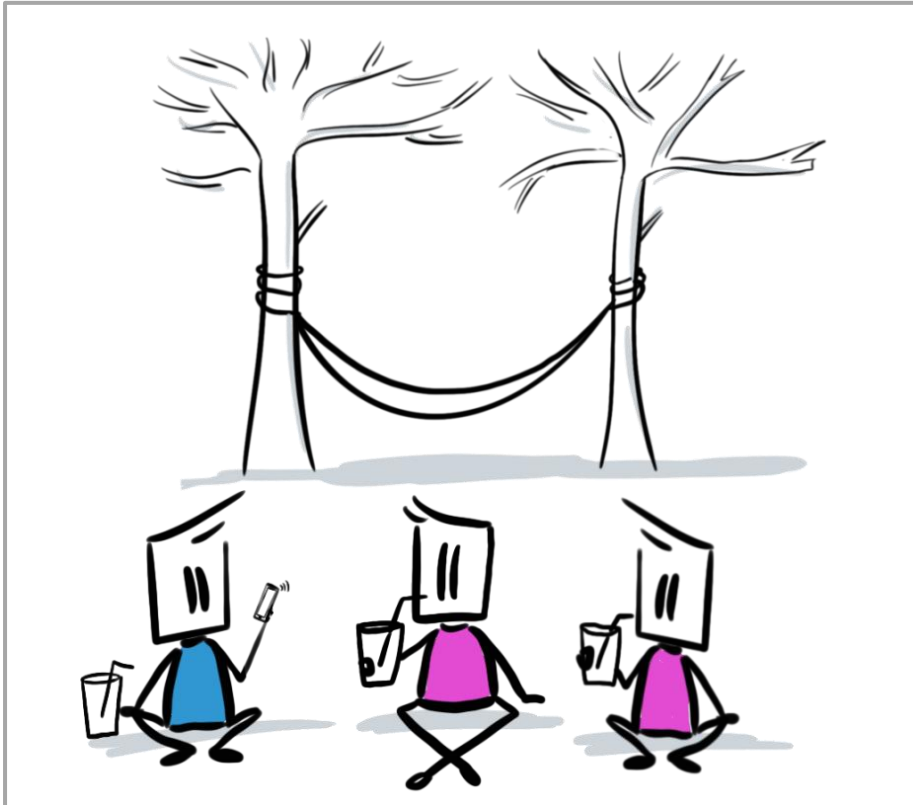




**Billie:** I'm not sure. My mom talked to her mom and found out that she went abroad for a week or so, and she met a lot of new people from other countries. It was super cool, apparently!

**Oli:** Sounds fun, but a whole week abroad? That seems too expensive.

**Billie:** Here comes the best part! I heard that most of [the costs for the youth exchange](#) were covered.



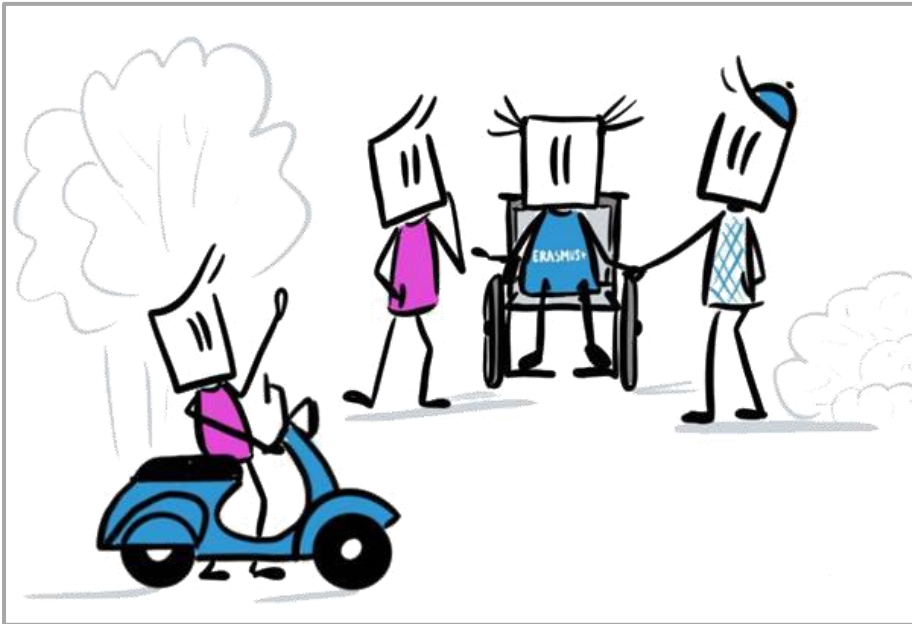
**Efe:** That's cool and everything, but how would I talk to people from other countries? I don't speak any other language.

**Billie:** That's not a problem either. There were translators and they also played [some language learning games](#). Sam's mom said that she even got better at English.

**Oli:** Should we just meet up with her? I want to hear all about this holid...-

**Billie:** It's called youth exchange! And yeah, I'll text her right now.

*Later that day, in the main town square, the three friends meet up with Sam.*



**Oli:** Hey Sam! We heard you just got back from something called a youth exchange. Can you tell us more?

**Sam:** It was so cool, y'all! I went to Poland for a week and met so many amazing people. Some were from our town, but a lot of them were from other countries. We had so much fun and got to learn so many things!

**Efe:** Learning during the holidays? And you call that fun?

**Sam:** I swear it didn't feel like school at all! It's something called [non-formal learning](#).



**Billie:** How did you even find out about this?

**Sam:** Remember that conference at school with all those youth associations? They were talking about active participation and youth engagement and presented some opportunities - including the possibility to go on a youth exchange abroad.

**Oli** (whispering): I'm sorry I missed this, I must have been sleeping in my chair during this conference...

**Sam:** Well, I got in touch with one of these youth associations to understand if I could participate - being in a wheelchair and everything. They told me it was not a problem at all. This exchange was designed to be [inclusive](#), so everybody could participate.



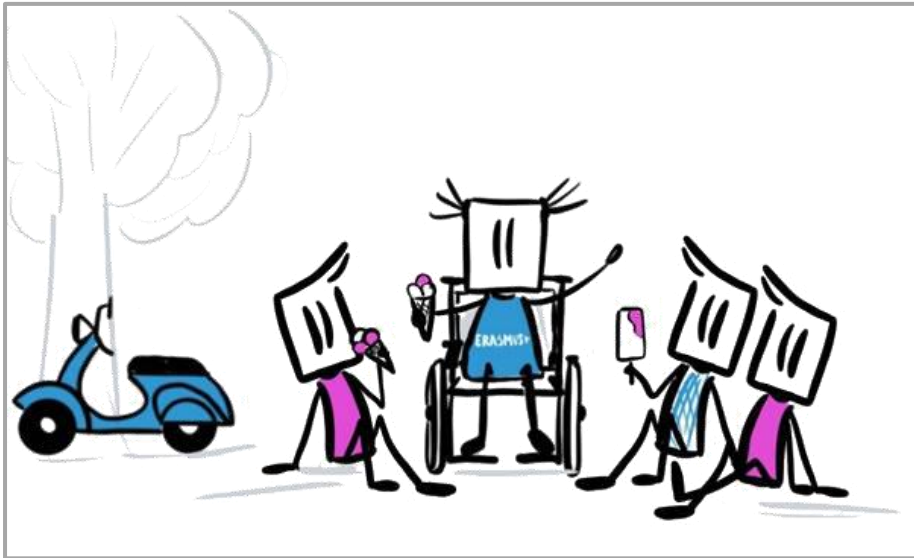
**Efe:** But wasn't it expensive?

**Sam:** I know it sounds too good to be true, but the organisation paid for everything – travel, accommodation, food ... thanks to a European Union Programme called [Erasmus+](#). And I stayed there [for a whole week!](#)

**Oli:** Did you go alone?

**Sam:** No, I actually had an [assistant](#) who was traveling and staying with us all the time to support me in case I needed it. There were also some deaf participants who had a sign language translator. And before you ask, the [costs for the assistant and the translator](#) were also covered.

**Billie:** Wow that sounds amazing!



**Efe:** Are you still in contact with this youth association?

**Sam:** Yes! As soon as I returned from Poland, I started [volunteering](#) there. Right now, we are working on another youth exchange project. We will host 30 young people from 5 different countries here, in our city, in September. The exchange is about [active participation](#) and youth engagement: we want to encourage young people to express their needs and opinions and to be more engaged within their local communities.

**Oli:** That sounds so cool. Can we join in?

**Sam:** Of course, I'll text you the information this evening!

*That evening, Oli and Efe decide to look up information about Erasmus+ online.*



**Oli:** There are so many opportunities for young people to go abroad!

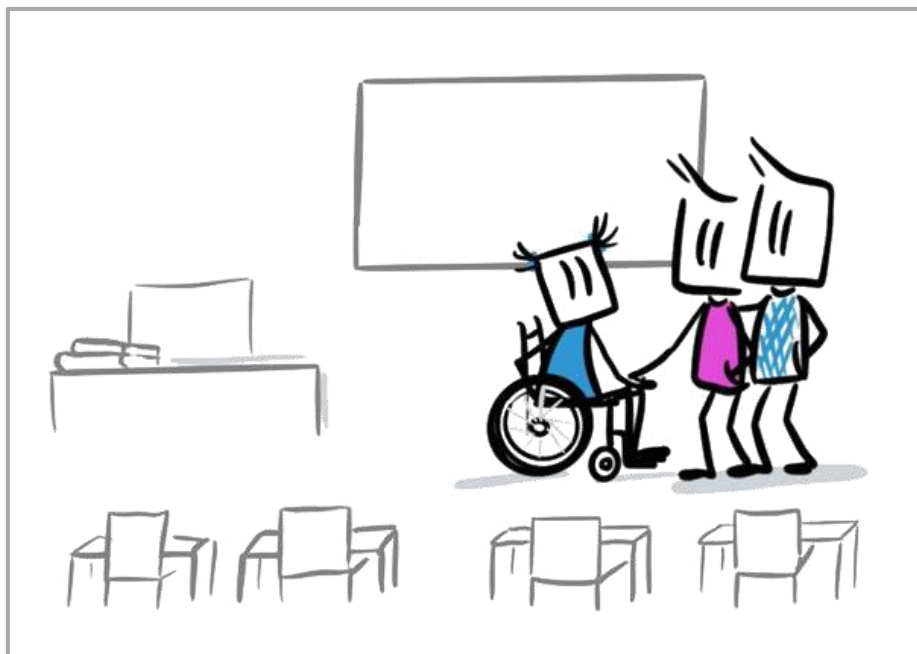
**Efe:** I can't believe we didn't know anything about this. There are so many interesting possibilities.

**Oli:** We have to thank Sam for telling us about this youth exchange thing.

**Efe:** Look, there's another one called [European Solidarity Corps](#), where you can stay abroad for months and volunteer with local organisations ... it looks awesome! And it is still a part of Erasmus+.

**Oli:** Let's check with Sam tomorrow. Maybe she knows about this programme, too.

*The day after, at school.*



- Oli:** Hey Sam! We spent all evening researching Erasmus+ and found so many interesting things! We have also decided to join your youth exchange project in September.
- Sam:** Great! There's an info day next week. I'll put you on the list.
- Efe:** Oh, we also read about the European Solidarity Corps. We're thinking about volunteering for 3 months after we finish school. We actually have a few questions for you...
- Sam:** That's awesome y'all! I don't know much about the European Solidarity Corps, but make sure you talk to the association's youth workers next week during the info day, they know a lot about the programme!

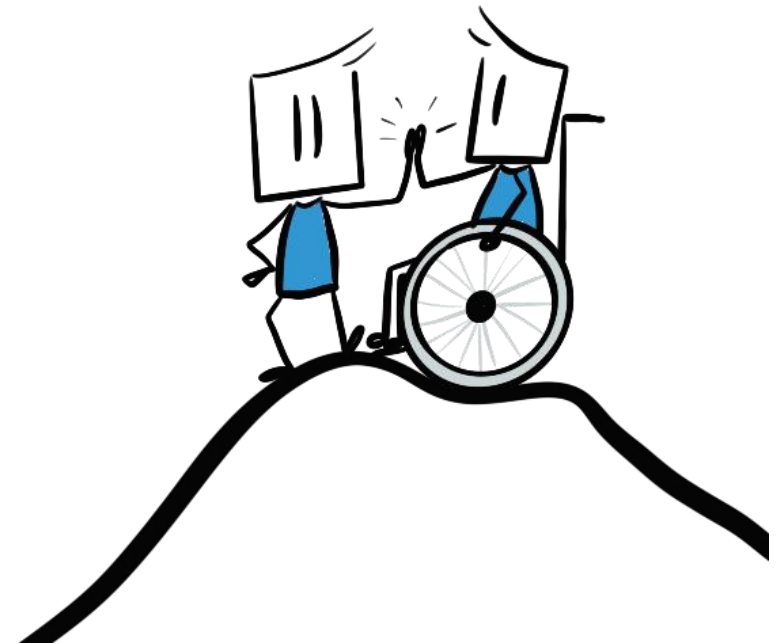


## Introduction to the DARE Youth Peer Support Model

Are you interested in topics such as diversity and inclusion? Would you like to get involved in youth work activities and do you feel inspired to motivate and support other young people to actively participate in international inclusive youth projects?

The following model can help you understand which are the stages of the youth support process and how to organise your future support activities.

To find out more about inclusion in youth work and inclusive youth support, we kindly invite you to explore other resources developed by the [DARE Project](#) team.



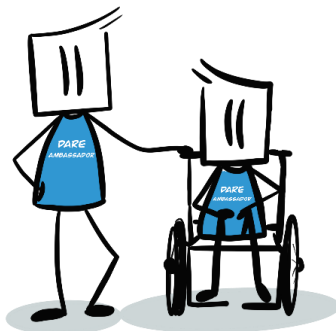
## Who is a DARE Ambassador?

As an Ambassador for this project (DARE: Disable the Barriers), you can contribute to changing many young people's lives.

You can share your own experiences with other young people, and encourage them to engage in local and international youth activities: their involvement can have a significant impact on their life, skills and attitude. By underlining the importance of engagement and active participation, you will empower your peers to gain control over their own lives and increase their capacity to act on issues and topics that they themselves define as important.

And above all, you would also become an ambassador for inclusion. A lot of young people are unfortunately excluded because of their disability. To promote inclusive and accessible activities and to motivate your peers who feel left out or not welcome in youth mobilities abroad is an essential part of being a DARE Ambassador.

Enjoy exploring your possibilities!



## DARE Youth Peer Support Model

The following **DARE Youth Peer Support Model** will show you how you can reach out to your peers and how to support their active participation; it also includes some examples on how to make youth activities more inclusive and accessible for everyone; the model presents five different stages, based on the attitude and circumstances of the young people you want to reach. It's important to tailor your role to your peers' individual needs and situation.

## Stage 1

### **Situation:**

Your peers are unaware of their possibilities. They are not thinking about active engagement or participation in any youth activities and/or don't see the benefit these might bring to their lives.

### **What you can do:**

- Share your own experiences in youth activities (local and/or international) with your friends and classmates.
- Get actively involved in a local youth club or a youth organisation and invite your friends to do the same.
- Share your ideas and experiences with local youth organisations to inspire accessible and inclusive national and international youth activities.
- Invite local youth associations to organise events in your school, local youth clubs, etc. and connect with peers with similar experiences to expand your reach and involve as many young people as possible.



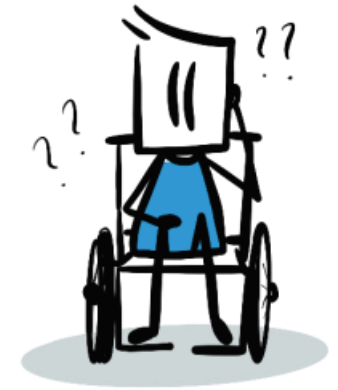
### **When you talk about your experience to your peers, remember to:**

- use pictures and videos;
- promote the topic of inclusion;
- show your peers where and how they can make a difference;
- explain games, methods and characteristics of non-formal education. They are often very convincing!

## Stage 2

### Situation:

Y our peers are thinking about a change in their lives. They want to get more involved but do not know how. They may still feel unsure regarding their motivation and the need for changing their situation and their habits.



### What you can do:

- Explain how active participation in local or international youth activities has impacted your life: what did you learn? What skills have you improved?
- Reflect with peers about their needs (what they want to learn, or doubts about accessibility and the inclusiveness of activities) and where and how they would like to get involved (locally? Internationally?); help them look for opportunities. Ask youth workers to support you if you need some help.
- Explore the areas in which your peers are experiencing difficulties and uncertainties and show them how these gaps can be fulfilled when they join youth activities. Look for solutions together and share positive examples from your experiences.

## Stage 3

### Situation:

Young people are ready to take action. They believe that active participation in youth activities can improve their lives and change their habits. They want to take responsibility for their actions.



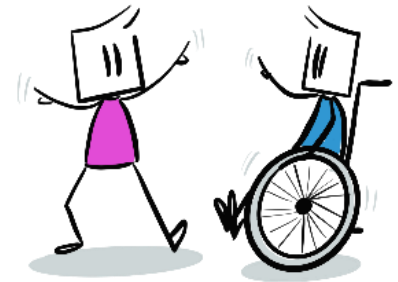
### What you can do:

- Promote Erasmus+ and youth activities actively by sharing information about different programmes, contacts of organisers, informative websites and project calls both to individual peers or collectively, on social media or during local events.
- Start working with youth to address real or perceived barriers and uncertainties (most commonly, language barriers and accessibility issues); encourage them to overcome barriers by talking about how you will support them during the activity and by sharing links and websites where they can research information on their own.
- Start working to design an inclusive learning/voluntary environment. It is important to know that even if two people have the same type of disability, their needs might be different.
- In case your peers have expressed their desire to go abroad, support them in sharing their needs with the activity organisers and ask the hosting organisation to provide information about accessibility.

## Stage 4

### Situation:

Your peers are now starting to participate in local and/or international activities. They acknowledge that their active participation can have a significant impact on their lives and their situation. They are at the beginning of a valuable learning process.



### What you can do:

- Ask your youth association to organise short, mid and long term activities like inclusive international youth exchanges, volunteering, internships with local organisations or within international programmes.
- Think of yourself as a mentor and keep supporting your peers, whether you're participating in the activity with them, or coordinating it from home.
- Remember that new needs or doubts can arise once the youth activity has started: it's important to listen and help your peers with finding new solutions.
- Continue to raise awareness about the importance for individual needs to be respected among organisers, so nobody is left behind. Inclusion in youth activities doesn't have to be taken for granted.
- Invite your peers to reflect on their experiences during or after their participation. Their thoughts are fundamental, as they can give you essential insight into what was missing and what can be done to improve accessibility in future youth activities.

## Stage 5

### Situation:

Your peers are ready to move forward independently and to take responsibility for their actions. Some might be engaged in long-term youth activities. They actively promote the need for participation and inclusive approaches in youth work.



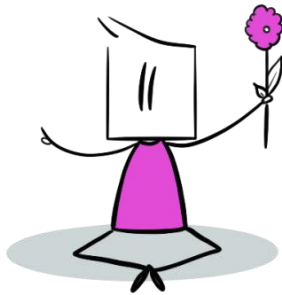
### What you can do:

- Keep being present and supportive to prevent relapse to earlier stages.
- Continue promoting volunteering opportunities, both locally and abroad.
- Appreciate the change in your peer's behaviour and communicate how proud you are of their improvements. It is an important tool for motivation and further engagement.
- Offer workshops on inclusive education, engagement and other related topics.
- Inspire your peers to be vocal about inclusion not only with their families and friends, but also with their communities and local authorities.
- Involve your peers in the organisation of inclusive events for youth or other activities.
- Finally, motivate your peers to become DARE Ambassadors and to raise awareness towards inclusive youth activities.



## Last but not least – our advice for you, dear DARE Ambassador!

In becoming a DARE Ambassador, you take over an important task and responsibility which affects all of your peers' well-being. There are a lot of young people left behind: disabled and disadvantaged youth are often forgotten and do not feel welcome to participate in many activities. Also, organisers are often not aware that they have the power to change the design of their activities to make them more inclusive and diverse. The fact that you want to change this situation is very appreciated.



It is, however, essential to take care of yourself! You will not always be able to convince everybody and to change people's perspectives. Sometimes they need more time, and this is ok: don't get upset or frustrated. Be aware of your possibilities and limitations, and stay positive.

**And remember: your voice is powerful!**

## Before you go!

The DARE Digital Storytelling Handbook of Empowerment was designed with the idea of providing useful information regarding transnational mobility opportunities for young people. We hope you'll recognise it as an important source of information and that you will feel free to use it whenever you might need it.



A youth leader might see its values as a tool to ensure the participation of disabled young people in Erasmus+ mobility programs. Furthermore, the handbook contains the DARE Youth Peer Support Model, which can equip a youth supporter in engaging fellow young people.

We believe that the handbook can also serve as an accessible, illustrative, easy-to-understand and attractive tool to promote the Erasmus+ Programme and particularly, the additional support it offers to young people with visual, hearing and physical impairments to secure their participation in transnational mobilities.

We invite you to use, share and promote the DARE Digital Storytelling Handbook passionately in order to foster volunteering and active participation among young people, to enhance support from young people towards young PwVHPI and to increase the number of young PwVHPI taking part in Erasmus+ Youth Mobility Projects.

The DARE team thanks you for your support and cooperation.

## **Imprint**

The **DARE Digital Storytelling Handbook for Empowerment** is an output of the Strategic Partnership DARE DisAble the barRiErs. Published: 2020



### **DARE DISABLE THE BARRIERS**

Project Reference: 2018-3-DE04-KA205-017203

[www.dare-project.de](http://www.dare-project.de)

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