



GUIDE BOOK

“On the Waves of Rhythm”

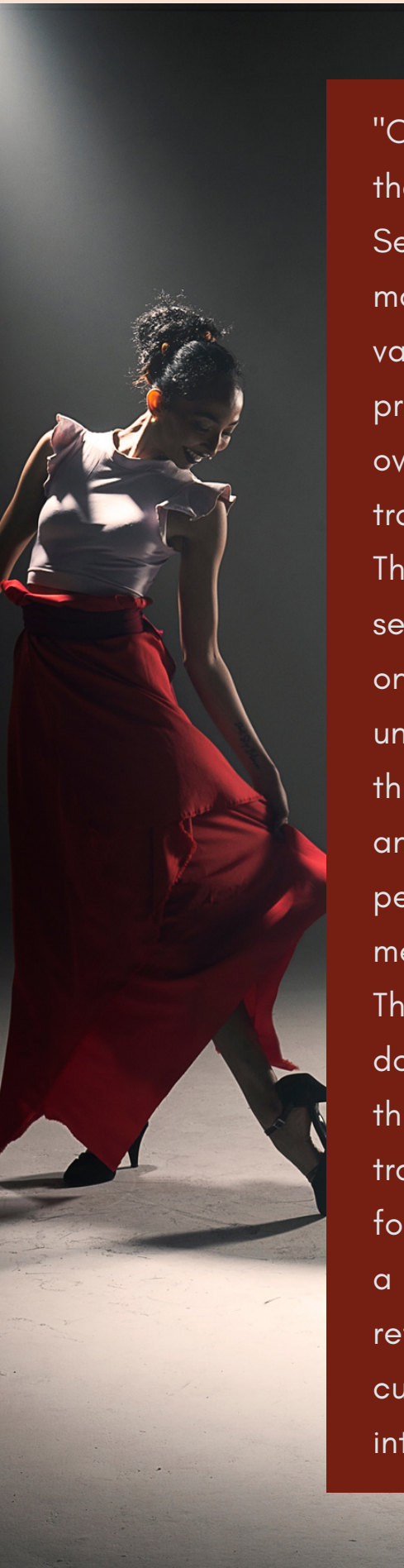


A step-by-step rhythm echoing across
cultures — where heritage moves, and
stories breathe



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Welcome



"On the Waves of Rhythm" is an Erasmus+ youth exchange that brought together young people from Bulgaria, Türkiye, Serbia, and Lithuania through the universal language of movement, tradition, and shared creativity. Rooted in the values of intercultural learning and artistic expression, the project became a space for participants to explore their own identities and celebrate the dances, customs, and traditions that form our collective cultural heritage.

Through a dynamic program of workshops, storytelling sessions, and co-creative experiences, participants not only learned traditional steps and rhythms, but also uncovered the stories, meanings, and values passed down through generations. By engaging with folklore, symbols, and ancestral knowledge, the project invited young people to become both learners and guardians of cultural memory.

This guidebook is the result of our shared journey. It documents the non-formal education methods we used throughout the exchange—methods that helped transform tradition into living experience, and storytelling into a tool for empathy, expression, and connection. Inside, you'll find a collection of activities, facilitation techniques, and reflective practices that promote the preservation of cultural heritage while fostering personal growth, intercultural dialogue, and social inclusion.

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Energizers



What they are and when to use them?

Energizers are short, dynamic activities designed to activate the group, lift the mood, and build a sense of connection among participants. They are typically fun, physical, or playful tasks that bring energy into the room, shake off tiredness, and help participants re-focus or re-engage with the group process.

In the context of youth exchanges and non-formal education, energizers play an essential role in group dynamics. They create space for laughter, movement, and spontaneity, helping to build trust and break down barriers between participants from different cultural backgrounds.

Energizers are especially effective:

- At the start of the day, to awaken attention and motivation
- Between sessions, to refresh and reset focus
- After intense or emotional activities, to lighten the atmosphere
- Whenever the group feels tired, distracted, or disconnected

While energizers may seem simple on the surface, they are powerful tools for inclusion, participation, and group cohesion. In the following pages, you will find a selection of energizers used during our youth exchange “On the Waves of Rhythm,” along with instructions and facilitator tips to help you bring them to life in your own context.

Jump In, Jump Out

Jump In, Jump Out is a fast-paced, rhythmic energizer that challenges participants to follow simple instructions with speed and coordination. It's both fun and mentally engaging, often leading to laughter and mistakes that help break the ice and create a relaxed group atmosphere.

Preparation:

- No materials needed;
- A spacious area where the whole group can form a circle or semi-circle;
- Play upbeat background music to set the rhythm and maintain energy (instrumental or rhythmic tracks work best).

Instructions:

1. Ask everyone to stand in a circle and explain that they will follow your verbal instructions—but with a twist: they must do the opposite of what they hear, but only when the word “Jump” is included.
2. Start slowly and explain the rules clearly:
 - "Jump in!" → participants should jump out
 - "Jump out!" → participants should jump in
 - "Jump left!" → jump right
 - "Jump right!" → jump left
3. Use a rhythmic chant or clap to keep the tempo in sync with the background music.

Goals:

- Boost energy and concentration;
- Encourage listening and quick reaction;
- Create laughter and break tension.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Choose fun, rhythmic background music that supports the pace without overpowering your voice;
- Demonstrate the “opposite” rule before starting to avoid confusion;
- You can also let participants take turns leading once they get confident.

Follow the leader

This is a playful and musical energizer based on the classic Follow the Leader game, but with an exciting twist: the leader is secret, and one person in the middle of the circle must figure out who it is. The group copies the leader's movements—usually dancing or rhythmic gestures—while trying not to give away who they're following. It's a brilliant mix of dance, observation, and laughter that keeps everyone engaged and energized.

Preparation:

- No materials needed;
- Music player and upbeat playlist (preferably with a strong rhythm);
- An open space large enough for participants to stand in a circle.

Instructions:

1. Ask the group to form a circle and choose one participant to leave the room (or close their eyes);
2. While that person is away, silently select a Secret Leader. This leader will begin moving/dancing, and everyone else will copy their movements as discreetly as possible;
3. Invite the person back to the center of the circle. Their task is to observe the group and try to identify who the leader is;
4. The Secret Leader should change movements regularly—every 5–10 seconds—and the rest of the group must follow quickly without revealing the source;
5. The game continues until the person in the middle guesses correctly or gives up. Then, rotate roles and play again.

Goals:

- Stimulate concentration and group observation;
- Boost energy and rhythm through music and movement;
- Foster teamwork and silent coordination;
- Encourage playful interaction and group cohesion.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Choose music with a fun, clear beat to support smooth movement transitions;
- Remind participants to avoid staring directly at the leader—use peripheral vision;
- Encourage leaders to use creative but repeatable dance moves (no sudden gestures);
- To make it more inclusive, use culturally inspired movements or steps from the countries involved;
- Adjust the difficulty by speeding up the pace or allowing more than one guess.

Mirrors

Mirrors is a non-verbal movement-based activity that helps participants develop body awareness, coordination, and trust while learning or exploring dance steps. Participants are divided into two lines, facing each other. One line becomes the "dancers" who lead with slow, expressive movements or dance elements, while the other line mirrors their movements as accurately and fluidly as possible. After a few minutes, the roles are switched.

Preparation:

- No materials needed;
- Open space where two lines can face each other;
- Background music with a soft, steady rhythm.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into two equal lines, facing each other—each person should have a partner directly across from them;
2. Explain that one line will begin as the leaders, and the other line will be the "mirrors.";
3. Leaders begin to move slowly and fluidly, incorporating simple dance elements (hand movements, body sways, steps, turns, etc.);
4. The mirrors must try to follow their partner's movements as precisely and synchronously as possible, without speaking;
5. After 2–3 minutes, ask them to switch roles.

Goals:

- Build body awareness and coordination;
- Introduce dance in an inclusive, low-pressure way;
- Develop focus, observation, and non-verbal communication;
- Strengthen connection and trust between participant.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage participants to maintain eye contact and full attention to their partner;
- Debrief after the activity: ask how it felt to lead vs. follow, and what they learned about movement and expression.

Castles and Princesses

Castles and Princesses is a lively physical energizer that combines movement, imagination, and quick reactions. Participants form trios and take on rotating roles: castle and princess. When the facilitator calls out different commands, the group has to act fast and change roles accordingly. With the surprise call of "Earthquake!", everyone must scatter and form new trios with different people. This playful activity boosts energy, encourages creativity, and builds group connection through movement and laughter.

Preparation:

- Open space with enough room for all participants to move freely;
- Optional: upbeat background music to increase the energy.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to form groups of three. Each group will decide roles:
 - Castle: two people face each other and raise their arms to form an arch;
 - Princess: stands under the arch made by the "castle".
2. Once everyone is ready, the facilitator will begin shouting commands:
 - "Princess!" → the princesses must run and find a new castle to stand under;
 - "Castle!" → the castles break their arch and run to find a new princess to protect
3. After a few rounds, the facilitator shouts "Earthquake!" → everyone must run and form entirely new groups of three, choosing new roles in the new trio;
4. Repeat the cycle, keeping the energy high and the transitions fast and fun.

Goals:

- Re-energize the group and boost physical engagement;
- Encourage quick thinking, creativity, and teamwork;
- Strengthen group dynamics through playful interaction.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Demonstrate the castle and princess roles before starting, especially for visual learners;
- Use a loud, clear voice and keep music playing softly in the background to enhance the rhythm and atmosphere;
- Use "Earthquake!" sparingly for surprise effect and to reset group energy;
- Make sure no one is left out when groups are reformed.

Hugs

Hugs is a light-hearted and inclusive energizer that invites participants to move, interact, and form spontaneous physical connections in a fun and safe way. The facilitator calls out a number, and everyone quickly forms groups with that exact number of people and shares a group hug or a creative group pose. It's a joyful activity that sparks laughter, connection, and comfort among participants, while also promoting teamwork and flexibility.

Preparation:

- Open space for the group to move freely and form small clusters;
- Optional: background music with a warm or playful rhythm.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to walk freely around the room while music plays. Encourage relaxed movement and smiles.
2. The facilitator suddenly calls out a number (e.g. "3!"), and participants must quickly form groups of exactly that number;
3. Once in the group, they give each other a hug or create a friendly group gesture (like a group pose, team huddle, or silly group shape);
4. For the final round, you can call out "Everyone!" for one big group hug or circle.

Goals:

- Build warmth, trust, and closeness within the group;
- Break physical barriers in a light and inclusive way;
- Promote a sense of community and belonging.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Before starting, clearly explain that hugging is optional—participants can choose; alternative friendly gestures (e.g., group pose, elbow touch, team cheer) if they prefer;
- Use music to keep the flow and energy light;
- Adjust the range of numbers based on your group size (avoid numbers that exclude too many people).

Balloon Trolley

Balloon Trolley is a high-energy, team-based energizer that challenges participants to work together while balancing balloons between their bodies. It's a fun and slightly chaotic activity that builds communication, coordination, and trust. Teams must move from one point to another without dropping the balloons they hold between them—without using their hands. Laughter and creative problem-solving are guaranteed!

Preparation:

- Balloons (1 balloon per pair of participants in each team + a few extras);
- An open space with a clear start and finish line;
- Background music to boost energy and fun.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into teams;
2. Give each team several balloons. The participants must form a line and place the balloons between them (e.g., between chest-to-back or side-by-side at the hips), without using their hands to hold them;
3. The goal is to move as a unit from the start line to the finish line without dropping any balloons or letting them fall;
4. If a balloon drops, the team must stop, reset the balloon in place, and continue;
5. Once the first round is complete, you can make it harder by adding turns, obstacles, or backward walking.

Goals:

- Promote teamwork, coordination, and group problem-solving;
- Encourage physical movement and laughter;
- Strengthen non-verbal communication and cooperation.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Demonstrate how to hold the balloons without hands before starting;
- Encourage teams to communicate and strategize before moving;
- Have extra balloons ready in case some pop during the activity;
- This energizer works best toward the end of the youth exchange, when the group has built trust and a stronger sense of community—it becomes much more fun and engaging when participants feel comfortable.

Dance Train

Dance Train is a joyful and high-energy energizer where participants form a conga-style train and move together across the space while dancing. The leader of the train sets the rhythm and movements, and the rest of the group follows, mimicking the style. As the train moves around the room, participants take turns being the leader, adding their own flair or even steps inspired by their national dances.

Preparation:

- Rhythmic music (can include traditional or modern songs from the participants' countries);
- A spacious room or outdoor space for moving freely;
- Optional: prepare a list of music from different cultures to switch during the train.

Instructions:

1. Ask all participants to line up behind one person, holding onto the shoulders or waist of the person in front of them to form a "train.";
2. Start the music and have the leader begin dancing and leading the group around the space with creative steps or gestures;
3. After 30–60 seconds, shout "Next station!" and the leader moves to the back of the train, while the second person becomes the new leader with their own dance style;
4. Continue the rotation until everyone has had the chance to lead the train;
5. Optionally, you can pause the music and switch the style of music to match the new leader's culture or personality.

Goals:

- Raise group energy and create a festive, shared experience;
- Celebrate individuality and cultural diversity through movement;
- Strengthen group connection and trust.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage leaders to incorporate simple and fun dance moves—this isn't a performance but an expression of energy;
- Use a mix of music styles to keep the vibe fresh and inclusive;
- Remind participants to keep the train connected and watch the pace—no running!;
- This energizer works well after a break or toward the end of the day to bring everyone back together in a joyful, relaxed way;
- It's even more fun in the later days of the exchange, when group bonds are strong and participants feel more confident being expressive.

Popcorn

Popcorn is a light, engaging energizer that starts quietly and builds into a burst of movement and laughter. Participants begin in silence, and one by one, they “pop” up with a jump or sound of their choice—like popcorn popping in a pan. The goal is to create a spontaneous wave of pops without speaking or signaling, using only awareness and timing. This activity is simple, inclusive, and great for activating group focus and playful energy.

Preparation:

- No materials needed;
- A quiet, open space where the whole group can stand or sit in a circle.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to stand (or sit) in a wide circle, relaxed and quiet;
2. Explain that they will “pop” like a piece of popcorn—but they must do it without speaking or coordinating out loud;
3. One person begins by jumping up with a clap, shout, or silly noise. Then, others follow one by one, in no specific order;
4. The challenge is to create a natural “popping” sequence, without overlapping too much, and trying not to be the last one;

Optional variations:

- Add music for a more rhythmic version;
- Do it in reverse: everyone is “popped” and slowly “settles” back into silence;
- Try a “double pop” version where pairs must jump at the same time.

Goals:

- Stimulate focus and group awareness;
- Break the silence and encourage spontaneity.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage participants to observe the group and trust their instinct for when to “pop”;
- Remind everyone that there’s no right or wrong way to pop—it can be a jump, a sound, a wiggle, or a funny move;
- Works well as a gentle energizer in the middle of the day or before a creative session. It’s especially fun once participants feel safe and relaxed in the group, so try it after the first couple of days of the exchange.

Color of the King

Color of the King is an active, fast-paced energizer that combines movement, listening, and color recognition in a playful and imaginative way. Participants must quickly react to the commands of the “King” (the facilitator), who declares a color—and everyone must touch something of that color in the space around them. It’s a creative way to get people moving, laughing, and observing their environment with fresh eyes.

Preparation:

- A space with access to a variety of colors (indoors or outdoors) – clothing, walls, bags, floor, etc.;
- Optional: background music to keep the energy light and upbeat.

Instructions:

1. Ask all participants to stand in a central space, ready to move;
2. The facilitator takes on the role of the “King” and says: “The King wants... the color [color name]!”;
3. Everyone must run or move to touch something of that color—this could be a piece of clothing, an object, a wall, etc.;
4. After a few seconds, call everyone back to the center. Then declare a new color;
5. Repeat with increasing speed or more unusual color choices;
6. To make it more dynamic, you can pass the King’s role to a participant after a few rounds.

Goals:

- Boost energy and quick thinking;
- Stimulate awareness of surroundings;
- Encourage movement and interaction.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Ensure the blindfolded photographer stays in a safe, stationary spot;
- Set clear safety rules: no running at full speed or sharp turns;
- Encourage exaggerated movements, dramatic dodges, and stealth tactics;
- Use music to add suspense or a comical mood;
- This energizer is perfect for the later days of the exchange, when participants are fully relaxed and ready for wild, silly fun;
- Consider using the funniest or most unexpected photos in your final slideshow—with participants’ permission.

Don't Get in the Picture Challenge

Don't Get in the Picture Challenge is a hilarious and unpredictable energizer where participants must avoid being caught in a photo—taken by a blindfolded photographer. One participant is blindfolded and randomly takes a photo while others move freely in the space. The goal for the rest of the group is to dodge the photo and avoid being seen.

Preparation:

- A smartphone with a camera;
- A blindfold or scarf;
- A spacious indoor or outdoor area where participants can move and dodge safely;
- Fun background music to raise energy and suspense.

Instructions:

1. Choose one participant to be the photographer and blindfold them. Give them the camera or phone, already opened in camera mode;
2. The rest of the participants spread out in the space and begin moving freely—walking, dancing, sneaking, crawling, etc.;
3. At any moment, the blindfolded photographer raises the phone and takes a photo without knowing who is in front of them;
4. Everyone's goal is to avoid being captured in the photo—by hiding, dodging, or escaping the frame before the photo is taken;
5. After the photo is taken, remove the blindfold and show the picture to the group. Anyone who appears (even a toe, hand, or shadow) is “caught”;
6. Rotate the photographer every few rounds so multiple participants get to take a blind shot;
7. You can raise the challenge by asking for a completely empty photo—or celebrate the funniest “almost escaped” moment!.

Goals:

- Energize the group with surprise and movement;
- Encourage creative thinking and fast reactions;
- Foster playful interaction and trust.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Ensure the blindfolded photographer stays in a safe, stationary spot;
- Set clear safety rules: no running at full speed or sharp turns;
- Encourage exaggerated movements, dramatic dodges, and stealth tactics;
- Use music to add suspense or a comical mood;

This energizer is perfect for the later days of the exchange, when participants are fully relaxed and ready for wild, silly fun.

Time Swap

Time Swap is an imaginative and high-energy energizer in which participants travel through different time periods by swapping seats while acting out the movement style of their assigned roles—robots, dinosaurs, or humans. Each announced era requires a specific movement pattern. Some are slow and heavy (like dinosaurs), others stiff and mechanical (robots), while some allow free and playful expression (like space!). This energizer promotes body expression, fun roleplay, and group laughter.

Preparation:

- Sticky notes (one per participant);
- Pen or marker to write roles on the sticky notes: “Human,” “Robot,” “Dinosaur”;
- Chairs arranged in a circle (one fewer than the number of participants).

Instructions:

1. Set Up: Arrange chairs in a circle, leaving one chair empty;
2. Assign Roles: Write “Human,” “Robot,” or “Dinosaur” on sticky notes and hand out one to each participant. Each person takes on the behavior of their assigned role’
3. Facilitator’s Cue: Announce a time period. Participants move according to their role and the rules of the era;
4. “We’re in the present!” → Humans swap seats, walking normally;
5. “We’re in the future!” → Robots swap seats, moving stiffly and mechanically;
6. “We’re in the past!” → Dinosaurs swap seats, with big, slow stomping steps and roars;
7. “We’re in space!” → Everyone moves and swaps places however they want—freestyle!;
8. Seat Swap: Only participants whose role is called must stand up and swap seats, moving as described. The participant left without a seat stays in the middle for the next round’
9. Continue: Keep calling out different time periods and observe how participants interpret the movements. You can also let the person in the middle choose the next time period;
10. Finish: End after several rounds or when the energy is high and the group is fully engaged.

Goals:

- Energize participants through active and playful movement;
- Promote creativity and imagination through role-play;
- Build group connection by encouraging shared laughter and spontaneity.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage dramatic movements and sounds—this activity thrives on creativity!;
- Make sure everyone understands their role before starting the first round;
- For larger groups, repeat roles if needed or create new ones like “Aliens” or “Time Travelers”;
- Works best in the middle or second half of the exchange, when participants are comfortable being playful and expressive.

Get to Know Each Other

Breaking the ice and building first connections

The first phase of a youth exchange is all about creating a welcoming space where participants can begin to feel comfortable, seen, and connected. Getting to know each other activities—especially name games—help break down initial barriers and spark the first smiles, laughs, and conversations.

These activities are designed to help participants learn names, share small parts of their identity, and start forming bonds. Through movement, play, and creativity, participants begin building the foundation for trust and collaboration that will grow throughout the exchange.

In the following pages, you'll find a selection of name games and icebreakers we used at the start of "On the Waves of Rhythm."



Name Ball

Name Ball Game is a simple and fun icebreaker that helps participants learn each other's names through movement and repetition. Standing in a circle, participants toss a ball while saying the name of the person they're throwing to. It's a classic name game that builds familiarity, focus, and attention in a light and engaging way—ideal for the very beginning of a youth exchange.

Preparation:

- 1 soft ball (or any soft object that can be safely thrown);
- Open space where participants can stand in a circle;
- Optional: background music at low volume for a playful atmosphere.

Instructions:

1. Ask all participants to stand in a large circle, facing inward;
2. The facilitator starts with the ball, says their own name aloud, and tosses the ball to someone else in the circle;
3. The next person catches the ball, says their own name, and throws it to someone new, continuing the pattern;
4. Once everyone has caught the ball once, start a new round where participants say the name of the person they are throwing the ball to instead of their own;
5. For extra challenge:
 - Add a second ball to the game;
 - Make it faster each round;
 - Reverse the order;
 - Use body movements, dance steps, or national greetings while saying the name.

Goals:

- Help participants learn each other's names in a fun, active way;
- Improve focus, listening, and memory through repetition;
- Break the ice and create early group interaction;
- Build confidence in speaking up in front of the group.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Start slowly and encourage clear voice projection when saying names;
- If someone forgets a name, help them out with humor and support—it's part of the process;
- For multilingual groups, encourage participants to say their names as they are pronounced in their native language.

Wanted Poster

Wanted Poster is a creative and funny name game where participants are grouped in pairs and tasked with creating a “Wanted” poster—not for themselves, but for their partner. This playful twist encourages active listening, observation, and creativity as each person learns about their partner and translates that into a visual, humorous poster. The end result is a colorful collection of illustrated personalities and a stronger group connection.

Preparation:

- A4 paper or poster sheets (1 per participant);
- Markers, crayons, pens, and colored pencils;
- A wall or space to display all posters after completion.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into pairs, ideally mixing people who don’t know each other well;
2. Explain that each person will interview their partner and then draw a “Wanted” poster about them;
3. Provide guiding questions or categories for what to include, such as:
 - Name or nickname;
 - “Wanted for” (e.g., being too funny, dancing all the time, knowing cool facts);
 - Hobbies and passions;
 - Favorite food, music, or animal;
 - A fun fact or secret skill;
 - A drawn portrait of the person;
4. Allow about 20–25 minutes for interviews and drawing;
5. Each pair presents their partner's poster to the rest of the group;
6. Display the posters on the wall as a gallery of personalities and humor.

Goals:

- Strengthen first connections through creative pair work;
- Encourage active listening and observation;
- Foster self-expression and laughter in a relaxed setting;
- Help the group learn fun facts and names in a memorable way.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Offer example posters or a template if participants need visual inspiration;
- Encourage humor and exaggeration—as long as it’s respectful.

Two Truths and One Lie

Two Truths and One Lie is a classic icebreaker that invites participants to share surprising or funny facts about themselves—with a twist. In this version, participants work in pairs to guess each other's hidden lie. It's a fun and light activity that promotes storytelling, curiosity, and deeper one-on-one conversations, helping participants learn unexpected things about one another in a relaxed and playful way.

Preparation:

- No materials required (optional: small slips of paper and pens);
- Chairs or open space for pairs to sit or stand facing each other;
- A playful atmosphere.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to form pairs, ideally with someone they don't know well;
2. Each person thinks of three statements about themselves:
 - Two should be true, and one should be a lie;
3. The pair takes turns reading their three statements to their partner, who must guess which one is the lie;
4. After guessing, the truth is revealed and the roles switch;
5. After both people have shared, allow 1-2 minutes for follow-up conversation or fun facts that came up;
6. Optional: After all pairs are finished, ask a few volunteers to share the funniest or most unexpected truths or lies with the whole group.

Goals:

- Encourage personal sharing and curiosity in a light, pressure-free way;
- Build first-level trust and communication between participants;
- Promote active listening and observation.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Remind participants to keep their lies realistic enough to be believable—this makes the game more fun;
- After the activity, you can rotate pairs for another round or use the facts for a group quiz later in the exchange.

Walk and Talk

Walk and Talk is a relaxed and reflective getting-to-know-each-other activity that takes participants outside—into nature, a park, or the city center—to have meaningful conversations in pairs. Using prepared guiding questions related to the topic of the exchange, participants connect in motion, share personal stories, and reflect on key themes in a natural and pressure-free setting. It's a great way to combine social bonding with thematic exploration.

Preparation:

- Prepare 4–6 open-ended questions related to the topic of the youth exchange (e.g., cultural roots, rhythm, identity, traditional arts, personal expression);
- Print or write the questions on slips of paper or cards;
- Choose a safe walking route: a park, city center, or nearby nature path;
- Sample Questions:
 1. What's a cultural tradition or dance you connect with deeply, and why?
 2. Do you feel connected to your heritage? In what ways?
 3. How do music or movement help you express yourself?
 4. What's something unique about your local culture that others might not know?
 5. How can we keep traditional art forms alive in a modern world?

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into pairs, ideally mixing nationalities or backgrounds;
2. Give each pair a small card or paper with guiding questions (or read them aloud before departure);
3. Explain the route, safety boundaries, and the goal: walk, talk, and listen actively;
4. Encourage switching roles between speaker and listener with each question;
5. Set a time limit (e.g., 20–30 minutes);
6. After the walk, gather participants and invite short reflections—what did they discover or feel during the conversation?

Goals:

- Facilitate meaningful one-on-one conversations beyond surface-level introductions;
- Explore key project themes (e.g., cultural heritage and dance) in a natural and open setting;
- Encourage movement, calmness, and focused connection;
- Foster intercultural understanding through deep listening.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Choose a scenic or peaceful walking route that encourages comfort and openness;
- Rotate partners mid-way if time allows for more connections;
- Offer an alternative seated version for those with limited mobility;
- Combine with a short debrief or creative reflection afterwards (drawing, word cloud, or group circle).

Name & Movement Circle

Name & Movement Circle is an energizing name game where each participant introduces themselves with a unique movement or dance gesture that represents them. As the game moves around the circle, participants repeat the names and movements of everyone before them—creating a rhythmic and memory-boosting experience. It's a fun, physical, and expressive way to learn names and break the ice through shared creativity and laughter.

Preparation:

- A spacious area where participants can form a large circle;
- Background music with a soft rhythm or beat.

Instructions:

1. Ask everyone to stand in a circle, facing inward;
2. The first person starts by saying: "My name is [Name]," and performs a simple movement or dance gesture (e.g., a spin, a clap combo, a hip sway, a hand wave);
3. The next person in the circle repeats the first person's name and movement, then adds their own:
 - "This is [Name + movement], and I'm [Name + new movement]";
4. The third person repeats both previous names and movements, then adds their own... and so on;
5. The game continues until the last person must repeat everyone's name and movement in order before adding their own at the end;
6. At the end, everyone performs the full chain of names and moves together as a fun finale.

Goals:

- Help participants learn each other's names through repetition and movement;
- Encourage body expression and creativity;
- Build memory and focus in a fun and inclusive way;
- Create early group bonding through laughter and shared play.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage simple, repeatable movements—no need for advanced dance moves;
- Celebrate mistakes with humor and support—this activity is about fun, not perfection;
- If the group is large, divide into smaller circles of 8-12 people for better engagement;
- You can repeat this activity later in the week as a fun recap or remix version.

Team Building

Strengthening connections through cooperation and play

Team building activities are an essential part of every youth exchange, helping to transform a group of strangers into a strong, united community. Through playful challenges, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative experiences, participants develop trust, improve communication, and learn how to work together effectively.

These activities are designed not only to be fun but also to support personal and group development. They encourage listening, creativity, leadership, and empathy—key competences in both youth work and intercultural contexts.

The following pages present the team building activities we used during “On the Waves of Rhythm.” Each one helped us build stronger bonds, promote inclusion, and create a safe and supportive environment where everyone felt valued and involved.

Each activity is described using the same format:

- What is this activity?
- Preparation and Instructions.
- Goals and Tips.



Marshmallow Tower

Marshmallow Tower is a creative and time-limited team building challenge where small groups must construct the tallest free-standing structure using only dry spaghetti, tape, string, and a marshmallow. The catch? The marshmallow must sit on top—and the structure must stand on its own. This activity tests teamwork, communication, planning, and creative problem-solving in a fun and engaging way.

Preparation:

For each team (3–5 people), prepare:

- 20 sticks of dry spaghetti;
- 1 meter of tape (masking or painter's tape works best);
- 1 meter of string;
- 1 large marshmallow;
- Open workspace (tables or floor).

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small teams of 3–5 people;
2. Give each team an identical set of materials. Explain the challenge:
 - Build the tallest free-standing tower possible.
 - The marshmallow must be placed on top and must remain there.
 - The tower must stand on its own.
3. Set a timer for 18 minutes. Teams can plan, test, and build during this time;
4. When time is up, measure the height of each structure from the base to the top of the marshmallow;
5. The team with the tallest standing tower wins—or just celebrate all the designs!

Goals:

- Develop teamwork and group decision-making;
- Encourage creative thinking and experimentation;
- Strengthen communication under time pressure;
- Promote reflection on group roles and collaboration styles.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Walk around and observe group dynamics—see who leads, who supports, who steps back;
- Encourage participants to test ideas early instead of spending too long planning;
- After the activity, hold a short reflection or debrief:
 1. What worked?
 2. What would you do differently next time?
 3. How did your group communicate?
- Use this challenge early in the exchange.

Paper Plane Relay

Paper Plane Relay is a high-energy, team-based challenge that blends creativity, engineering, and quick thinking. Participants work in teams to design and test paper airplanes—first aiming for distance, then for weight-carrying capacity. After each rapid design phase, planes are passed between teams in a relay-style rotation. The activity encourages fast adaptation, teamwork, and shared learning under time pressure, resulting in lots of laughter, friendly competition, and flying paper!

Preparation:

For each team (3–5 people), prepare:

- A4 sheets of paper (at least 3–4 per team);
- A few paper clips;
- Pens or markers (optional, for decorating or numbering);
- Open indoor or outdoor space for testing the planes.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into equal teams and provide each with one A4 sheet of paper.
2. Round 1 – Distance Flight:
 - Teams have 3 minutes to design and fold a paper airplane that flies as far as possible.
 - At the end of the round, each team takes turns launching their plane. Measure and record the distance.
3. Round 2 – Weighted Flight:
 - Now, the challenge changes: the same plane must be modified to carry a paper clip and still fly as far as possible.
 - Teams get 3 minutes to adapt their plane. Then, launch and record distances again.
4. Relay Round – Pass the Plane:
 - Each team passes their latest paper plane to the next team. The new team must improve or re-design the received plane within 3 minutes.
 - Repeat the launch and measure. You can continue for 2–3 relay rounds.
5. At the end, discuss which designs were most successful, most creative, or most resilient.

Goals:

- Encourage teamwork through hands-on experimentation;
- Promote creativity, adaptability, and innovation;
- Strengthen time management and collaboration under pressure.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Emphasize quick decision-making—it's not about perfection, but testing and adapting;
- Celebrate both distance and creativity in the design;
- Use this activity to explore the idea of “failing forward”—learning through quick prototyping;
- Works especially well in the middle of the exchange, when teams are ready to collaborate and compete in good spirit.

Egg-Drop Challenge

Egg-Drop Challenge is a creative and hands-on team building activity where participants must design and build a structure that will protect a raw egg from breaking when dropped from a height. Using limited materials, teams must brainstorm, prototype, and test a solution that balances innovation with practicality. It's a classic exercise in group collaboration, critical thinking, and turning pressure into fun!

Preparation per team:

- 1 raw egg;
- 6–8 drinking straws;
- 1 meter of tape;
- String or yarn (optional);
- 1 sheet of newspaper or paper;
- A drop zone (like a ladder, balcony, or table—ideally around 1.5–2 meters high);
- Towels or plastic sheeting for easy cleanup.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small teams (3–5 people);
2. Give each team the same set of materials and one raw egg;
3. The task: build a structure in 15–20 minutes that will protect the egg from breaking when dropped from a set height;
4. At the end of the building time, teams present their design and reasoning;
5. One by one, drop each structure from the designated height and observe the results;
6. Celebrate all efforts—especially those with creative ideas, teamwork, or surprise success.

Goals:

- Encourage experimentation and resilience when facing challenges;
- Build trust and a sense of accomplishment through shared risk and fun.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Emphasize process over results—creative collaboration matters more than success;
- Keep the atmosphere light and supportive, regardless of whether the egg breaks;
- Allow teams to explain their design thinking before the drop—it adds reflection and humor;
- You can increase the difficulty by limiting tape or reducing time.

Secret Hand

Secret Hand is a playful and silent guessing game that challenges participants' focus, teamwork, and non-verbal coordination. One participant stands inside a circle with their eyes closed while another walks around the outside and places a small object—usually a paper ball—into someone's hands. In later rounds, participants in the circle may secretly pass the object between them. The person inside must observe, listen, and ultimately guess who is holding the secret item. It's an excellent activity for quiet tension, laughter, and building group cohesion.

Preparation:

- A small soft object, like a paper ball;
- Enough space for participants to stand in a circle;
- Background music (quiet and mysterious) to increase atmosphere.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to stand in a tight circle, all with their hands behind their backs;
2. Select one participant to stand in the center;
3. Choose another participant to walk around the outside of the circle, holding the paper ball;
4. The outsider places the ball silently into someone's hands behind their back, then continues walking as if nothing happened;
5. The person in the middle tries to guess who has the object;
6. If they guess correctly, they switch roles with the person holding the ball;
7. In later rounds, allow the circle participants to pass the object silently behind their backs once the guessing begins;
8. The outsider can also retrieve and reposition the ball during guessing to confuse the guesser(s);
9. To increase challenge, allow 2 or more people inside the circle to guess at the same time—they must cooperate or compete to find the object;
10. Rotate roles regularly so everyone has the chance to guess, hide, and observe.

Goals:

- Enhance focus and observational skills;
- Promote group coordination and silent communication;
- Create tension, excitement, and trust in a safe environment;
- Encourage everyone's participation in a shared playful experience.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Emphasize silence and stillness to keep the game fair and engaging;
- Allow the "outsider" to use playful distractions or fake movements;
- Start with one guesser and increase the number gradually for more complexity;
- Use this activity as a calm but exciting transition between intense or creative sessions.

Human Knot

Human Knot is a classic team building game that promotes physical cooperation, communication, and problem-solving. Participants stand in a circle, reach across to grab random hands, and then work together—without letting go—to untangle themselves back into a full circle. The activity is simple but highly effective in building trust, encouraging teamwork, and strengthening group dynamics through shared challenge and laughter.

Preparation:

- No materials needed;
- An open space large enough for the group to form a tight circle and move freely.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to stand in a close circle, shoulder to shoulder;
2. Everyone closes their eyes, then reaches across with their right hand to take someone else's hand;
3. Then, without letting go, they reach with their left hand to grab a different person's hand;
4. Once everyone is connected, they can open their eyes;
5. The task: untangle the knot and return to a complete circle, without releasing any hands;
6. Participants must communicate, step over or under arms, twist, and work as a team to resolve the puzzle;
7. Once complete, celebrate and debrief the experience.

Goals:

- Foster trust and group collaboration;
- Develop non-verbal communication and teamwork;
- Encourage patience and shared problem-solving.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Make sure participants are comfortable with close physical proximity—offer an opt-out or observer role if needed;
- Remind the group that communication and cooperation are more important than speed;
- Works best with 8–14 people; for larger groups, create two knots and race to see which team untangles first.

Secret Friend

Secret Friend is a reflective and heartwarming activity that runs in the background during the youth exchange. Each participant is secretly assigned another person from the group to support, uplift, and observe throughout the days—without revealing their identity. At the end, everyone tries to guess who their secret friend was. This activity fosters kindness, awareness, emotional connection, and a stronger sense of community.

Preparation:

- Small slips of paper and a container (box or hat);
- A list of all participant names (including leaders and facilitators if involved);
- Optional: envelopes or notes for writing messages.

Instructions:

1. At the beginning or middle of the exchange, gather all participants and explain the concept:
 - Everyone will draw one name randomly and keep it secret—this is their "secret friend";
 - Their task is to spread positivity to this person without revealing their identity (e.g., leave kind notes, give small surprises, offer help, give compliments);
2. Make sure participants do not draw their own name. If they do, they should return it and choose again;
3. The activity runs silently in the background for 3–4 days;
4. On the final day, gather the group and allow everyone to guess who their secret friend was;
5. After guesses, the secret friends are revealed—this often leads to smiles, hugs, and emotional moments of connection.

Goals:

- Encourage kindness, empathy, and emotional intelligence;
- Strengthen group connection through subtle acts of care;
- Promote awareness of others and small thoughtful gestures;
- Create a safe, warm, and reflective group atmosphere.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Emphasize the importance of staying anonymous until the final reveal;
- Encourage creativity—participants can leave notes, do small acts of service, or even share something personal or funny;
- Offer quiet encouragement if someone seems unsure how to engage as a secret friend;
- Best used during the last few days of the exchange to deepen emotional connection and leave a lasting impression;
- You can combine this with a final “open letter” or “message wall” where participants write kind notes to each other.

Post Box

Post Box is an ongoing reflection and connection activity that allows participants to write anonymous or signed messages to one another throughout the youth exchange. It creates a safe, personal, and meaningful space for expressing appreciation, encouragement, or kind words. The messages are collected in a box or envelope system and delivered at the end of the project, often creating emotional and memorable moments.

Preparation:

- A decorated box or envelope labeled “Post Box”;
- Small note papers and pens available in a common area;
- A space where participants can privately write and post messages.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the Post Box system with Secret Friend on one of the first days of the exchange;
2. Explain that participants can write messages, compliments, thank you notes, or reflections to others and place them in the box at any time;
3. Messages can be anonymous or signed—it’s up to the writer;
4. On the final day, hand out the envelopes or letters to each participant so they can read their messages privately or share with others if they wish;
5. (Optional) Create a cozy reading corner or soft music space for participants to enjoy their notes quietly.

Goals:

- Strengthen emotional connection and peer support;
- Provide space for quiet reflection and appreciation;
- Encourage kindness and thoughtfulness through writing;
- Leave a lasting positive impact and personal memory of the exchange.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Remind participants regularly that the Post Box is open and encourage inclusive writing—everyone should receive something;
- Monitor discreetly to ensure no one is left out; facilitators can write messages too;
- Works beautifully throughout the exchange, especially when combined with Secret Friend or as part of the farewell session;
- Let participants personalize their messages with drawings, quotes, or inside jokes;
- Distributing the letters at the end can be paired with soft music or a moment of silence to close the project meaningfully.

Group Formation

This group formation method turns a practical need into a fun, interactive energizer. Instead of assigning groups directly, participants must find their groupmates through playful actions, sounds, and even counting in different languages. Whether it's miming a color, making an animal sound, or counting aloud in Turkish, Spanish, or Lithuanian, this activity creates movement, laughter, and cultural learning while forming diverse, randomized teams.

Preparation:

- No printed materials needed—just decide the number of groups and how many people you want in each;
- Choose one of the following themes for each round:
- Colors: assign a color to each participant in secret (whisper or pass a note);
- Animals: assign each person an animal (e.g., cat, lion, elephant);
- Counting: assign a number to each person (1 to number of people per group), and a language in which they must count (e.g., Bulgarian, Turkish, Serbian, etc.);
- Optional: background music for ambiance.

Instructions:

1. Quietly assign each participant a group identity—either a color, animal, or number/language combo;
2. Participants must then find their groupmates by:
 - Colors: acting out the color (e.g., pretending to paint red, showing blue clothing);
 - Animals: moving and making sounds like the animal (meowing, roaring, hopping, etc.);
 - Counting: walking around and counting aloud their number repeatedly (e.g., saying “uno, uno, uno” or “iki, iki, iki”)—only using the language assigned;
3. No one is allowed to say what they are—only act, move, or speak in theme;
4. Once they find others with the same identity, they form a group;
5. Repeat with different themes to form new groups throughout the exchange.

Goals:

- Make group formation fun, active, and inclusive;
- Promote intercultural learning through language and cultural expression;
- Encourage spontaneity, movement, and playfulness;
- Remove social pressure from group formation and boost participation.

Tips for Facilitators:

- For counting rounds, choose numbers in participants' native languages to promote cultural sharing;
- Observe who gets stuck and gently help if needed;
- Use this activity to introduce reflection groups, workshop teams, or energizer subgroups;
- You can also mix themes (e.g., counting and animal sounds) for added challenge and fun.

Introduction Sessions

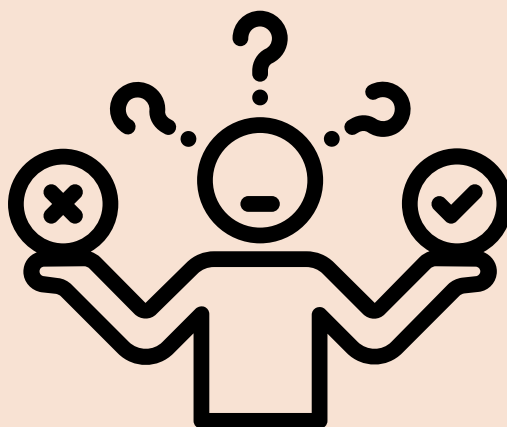
Setting the stage for learning, connection, and shared purpose

The introduction phase of a youth exchange is essential for creating a common ground, building trust, and aligning expectations. It is during these sessions that participants begin to understand the purpose of the project, their role in it, and the broader context of Erasmus+ and non-formal education.

This part of the exchange allows space to explore individual motivations, clarify logistics, share the agenda, and address fears and hopes. It also helps participants feel safe, informed, and included—setting the tone for the days ahead.

The following sessions were implemented during “On the Waves of Rhythm” to help participants feel oriented, supported, and inspired from the very beginning. Each session follows the standard format:

- What is this activity?
- Preparation and Instructions
- Goals and Tips



Erasmus+ Quiz (via Kahoot)

The Erasmus+ Quiz is an interactive learning session designed to introduce participants to the Erasmus+ programme in a fun and dynamic way. The session begins with a short presentation that gives a clear overview of Erasmus+, its opportunities, and its impact. This is followed by a digital quiz using Kahoot, where participants test their knowledge and reinforce what they've just learned. The combination of presentation and game encourages both focus and fun while ensuring everyone leaves with a better understanding of the Erasmus+ world.

Preparation:

- Prepare a short presentation about Erasmus+, covering:
 1. What is Erasmus+?
 2. Key actions (KA1, KA2, etc.);
 3. Who can participate?
 4. Youth exchanges, training courses, volunteering, Youthpass, inclusion, and NFE;
- Internet connection and projector or screen;
- One device per participant (or per pair/group) for playing Kahoot;
- A custom Kahoot quiz with 10–20 questions related to Erasmus+;
- Optional: small prizes or rewards for top players.

Instructions:

1. Start with a 10–15 minute presentation about Erasmus+, using visuals, real examples, and your own organization's experience;
2. Transition into the quiz: ask everyone to go to www.kahoot.it and join using the game PIN;
3. Launch the quiz and guide the group through the questions;
4. After each question, briefly explain the correct answer and add extra details if needed;
5. At the end, celebrate the top scorers and allow a short debrief or Q&A session.

Goals:

- Reinforce learning through digital gamification;
- Improve digital literacy using online tools like Kahoot;
- Build motivation to explore future projects and EU youth mobility.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Keep the presentation short, visual, and story-driven—use your organization's past projects as examples;
- Include fun quiz questions such as: “How many countries participate in Erasmus+?” or “What is Youthpass?”;
- Start with easier questions and increase difficulty gradually;
- Use humor and celebrate mistakes during the quiz—it's about learning, not winning.

Fear, Motivation and Expectation

This reflective group activity helps participants express and explore their feelings at the beginning of the youth exchange. By identifying their fears, motivations, and expectations, participants connect more deeply with themselves and their peers. It allows facilitators to better understand group dynamics and creates a shared emotional starting point for the project journey. This session helps normalize mixed emotions and encourages open dialogue from the very beginning.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- 3xA3 posters (labeled Fears, Motivations, Expectations);
- Markers or pens (enough for each group);
- Tape or sticky tack to hang posters;
- Optional: calming background music during the writing phase.

Instructions:

1. At the beginning of the session, explain the purpose: to explore how each participant feels as they enter the exchange;
2. Present the three posters and briefly explain each category:
 - Fears – What are you worried or uncertain about?
 - Motivations – Why did you come to this project? What excites you?
 - Expectations – What do you hope to learn, feel, or take away?
3. Invite participants to walk around the room and write their responses directly on the posters;
4. Let them take their time—some may write a lot, others may just add a word or two;
5. After everyone has contributed, gather the group and read aloud some of the points (without naming anyone);
6. Use this moment to reflect on common themes and remind participants that it's okay to have fears—this is a space for growth, learning, and support.

Goals:

- Create a space for emotional expression at the start of the exchange;
- Help participants reflect on their personal intentions and concerns;
- Encourage empathy by sharing experiences in a visual, collective way;
- Build a foundation for trust, vulnerability, and group bonding.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Keep the room quiet and calm during writing—this adds depth to the experience;
- Don't rush the process; allow everyone space and time to reflect;
- Let participants write anonymously if they prefer;
- Revisit the posters later in the exchange to reflect on how expectations and feelings have changed.

Word Cloud Flash Poll (Mentimeter)

This activity is a short, interactive digital moment designed to capture participants' first impressions and personal hopes in a single word. Using the Mentimeter platform, participants answer the question:

"In one word, what would make this exchange unforgettable for you?"

Their answers appear live on screen as a colorful, growing word cloud, visually representing the collective hopes of the group. It's a fast and inspiring way to connect everyone's energy and intention right from the start.

Preparation:

- Set up a Mentimeter presentation in advance at www.mentimeter.com;
- Create a Word Cloud question with the prompt:
"In one word, what would make this exchange unforgettable for you?"
- Internet connection and a projector or screen;
- Devices (phones or tablets) for participants to access the voting link (menti.com + code).

Instructions:

1. After a short warm-up or introductory session, introduce this flash poll as a creative reflection;
2. Share the Mentimeter code and link with participants and ask them to go to www.menti.com;
3. Ask them to submit just one word that reflects what would make this youth exchange unforgettable for them (e.g., friendship, dancing, nature, adventure, learning, rhythm);
4. As they respond, the live word cloud appears on the screen—the more a word is repeated, the larger it grows;
5. After everyone has answered, take a moment to observe the results together and highlight interesting or emotional responses;
6. Optionally, take a screenshot of the word cloud to use later in the final evaluation or digital memory materials.

Goals:

- Capture individual hopes in a simple, visual, and collective way;
- Set a reflective and participatory tone early in the exchange;
- Use digital tools to support creative expression and inclusion;
- Strengthen group awareness of shared values and themes.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage honesty and imagination—there's no wrong answer;
- If some participants don't have devices, let them pair up or share;
- You can also repeat this activity later using a different question (e.g., "What word describes your experience so far?").

Reflection Sessions

Turning experience into insight

Reflection is at the heart of non-formal education and a key element of any meaningful youth exchange. It allows participants to pause, observe their own development, and make sense of what they're experiencing—both personally and as a group. Through guided questions, creative expression, and shared conversation, reflection helps transform activity into learning.

In “On the Waves of Rhythm”, daily reflection moments were built into the program to give participants space to process emotions, track personal growth, and connect the dots between movement, culture, and identity. These sessions also supported Youthpass learning by encouraging awareness of key competences.

The **MORE**
you **REFLECT**
the **MORE**
you **LEARN**

Dixit Cards

This reflective activity uses Dixit cards—a set of abstract, symbolic, and imaginative illustrations—to help participants express their feelings at the end of the day. By choosing an image that represents how they feel or what stood out to them, participants can reflect on their experience in a creative, non-verbal way. The images allow for open interpretation, making it easier for participants to access emotions and share meaningfully without needing to find the “perfect words.”

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A full deck of Dixit or similar visual storytelling cards;
- Quiet space arranged in a circle for sharing;
- Optional: soft background music or candles for a calming atmosphere.

Instructions:

1. Spread the Dixit cards face-up on the floor or a large table in the center of the circle;
2. Ask participants to slowly look at all the cards and choose one image that reflects how they feel at the end of the day, or a moment that stayed with them;
3. Once everyone has chosen a card, go around the circle and invite each person to share:
 - Why they chose their card;
 - What it represents for them;
 - A thought, feeling, or story connected to their day;
4. Make it clear that participants can share as much or as little as they like—some may just give a title or a single word;
5. Conclude with a short thank you round, breathing moment, or summary of shared reflections.

Goals:

- Support emotional reflection and expression at the end of the day;
- Help participants connect personal experience with visual symbolism;
- Strengthen listening and empathy within the group;
- Encourage creativity and deeper self-awareness through non-verbal tools.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Remind participants there is no right or wrong interpretation—it’s about personal meaning;
- Keep the atmosphere quiet and safe; avoid rushing;
- Works especially well with multilingual or shy groups, as images offer an alternative to words;
- Use different guiding prompts depending on the day’s focus, such as:
 - “Choose a card that reflects how you felt during today’s workshop.”
 - “Choose a card that represents something you learned today.”
 - “Choose a card that shows what you need for tomorrow.”
- Ideal for end-of-day reflection (20–30 minutes), either in small groups or as a whole group circle.

Multi-Sensory Reflection

This combined reflection session invites participants to express their end-of-day experiences through three different channels: emotions (feeling cards), body movement (dance figures), and creative sound-making. Each participant connects with their day on a deeper level, using the senses and body to reflect rather than relying only on words. It's a powerful way to honor different communication styles, promote inclusion, and allow quiet or expressive participants to reflect in their own unique way.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A deck of feeling cards (illustrated or word-based);
- An open space for movement;
- Simple sound-making objects (optional): drums, shakers, paper, cups, stones, etc.;
- Soft background music and calm lighting (optional).

Instructions:

1 – Feeling Cards (Emotional Check-In):

- Spread the feeling cards face-up in the center of the room or on a table;
- Invite each participant to choose one card that reflects how they feel after today's experience;
- Once everyone has chosen, they can briefly share (if they wish):
- "This card represents how I feel because..."
- Or simply say the feeling without explanation.

2 – Dance Figure (Body Reflection):

- Ask participants to find their own space in the room;
- In silence, reflect on the day and create a frozen body shape or movement pose that expresses their inner state (e.g., energized, tired, open, stuck);
- Once everyone is in their pose, allow the group to walk slowly and observe the "living gallery" in silence;
- Optionally, invite a few participants to share the meaning of their figure.

3 – Sound Expression (Closing Circle):

- Gather everyone in a circle;
- Ask: "If today had a sound, what would it be?"
- One by one, each participant makes a sound (vocal, body percussion, or using an object) that expresses their feeling or impression;
- Encourage full silence in between sounds, so each one stands out;
- Close with one unified breath, a group clap, or a calming final sound together;

Goals:

- Support emotional, physical, and creative reflection;
- Promote inclusive expression—beyond language or verbal sharing;
- Deepen personal awareness and build group empathy;
- Reinforce the connection between rhythm, feeling, and presence.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Reassure participants that all forms of expression are valid—there's no "wrong" way to reflect;
- Use this session on a creative or emotionally intense day, especially mid-project or near the end.

Group Leaders' Evening Meeting

This is a daily reflection and coordination meeting held each evening with the group leaders from each national team and the main facilitators. It serves as a space to share feedback, evaluate the day's flow, address any emerging issues, and prepare for the next day's activities. These brief but essential check-ins ensure clear communication, promote shared leadership, and keep the group experience safe, responsive, and dynamic.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Printed program agenda (with space for notes);
- Evaluation notebook or shared digital document (optional);
- Quiet meeting space;
- Hot tea or snacks (optional for comfort!).

Instructions:

1. Gather group leaders and facilitators for a 15–30 minute meeting at the end of each day;
2. Start with a brief check-in:
 - How are the participants feeling overall?
 - Any health or emotional concerns to address?
3. Go over the day's activities and reflect:
 - What worked well?
 - What challenges appeared?
 - Were the goals of the day met?
4. Discuss logistics and improvements needed for the next day (schedule, materials, room changes, etc.);
5. Agree on messages or reminders to share with participants the next morning;
6. If needed, adjust facilitation roles or group dynamics based on feedback;
7. Optionally, end with a short appreciation round to boost group morale.

Goals:

- Ensure consistent communication between facilitators and group leaders;
- Strengthen teamwork and co-responsibility for the well-being of all participants;
- Address logistical, emotional, or group challenges early and constructively;
- Create a space of mutual support and leadership development.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Keep the tone open and collaborative—this is a support meeting, not a report session;
- Rotate roles occasionally (e.g., note taker, timekeeper) to engage all leaders;
- Use a shared notebook or online doc to track key decisions and follow-ups;
- Recognize and appreciate the work of group leaders—it keeps motivation high and ensures sustainability of their support.

The Compliment Shirt

This is a powerful reflection and peer appreciation activity used on the final day of the youth exchange. Each participant wears a blank paper on their back, and everyone walks around writing short, positive, or meaningful messages on each other's papers. It creates an opportunity to express gratitude, encouragement, or memories that might not otherwise be said aloud. Afterward, participants take the papers off and read the messages privately—often feeling seen, appreciated, and uplifted.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- One sheet of A4 paper for each participant;
- Markers or pens (preferably colorful);
- Tape or safety pins to attach papers to each person's back;
- Calming background music and a relaxed space.

Instructions:

1. Distribute one blank sheet of paper to each participant and help them tape or pin it to their back;
2. Give everyone a pen or marker and explain:
 - "Walk around the room and write something nice, kind, funny, or meaningful on each person's back. Think about your shared memories, what you appreciated in them, or how they made the exchange special."
 - "Write clearly and respectfully. This is something they'll read and keep."
3. Let the activity flow for at least 15–20 minutes as participants mingle and write;
4. When finished, each person removes their paper and takes a quiet moment to read their messages;
5. Optionally, end the activity with a calm circle or short sharing round:
 - "How did it feel to receive messages from the group?"
 - "Did any words surprise or move you?"

Goals:

- Provide a warm, meaningful closure to the exchange experience;
- Promote peer-to-peer reflection and recognition;
- Support emotional connection and self-esteem through positive feedback;
- Leave participants with a tangible, personal souvenir of the group.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Prepare extra pens and papers in case of need;
- Emphasize respect, honesty, and kindness in the messages;
- Allow time and space afterward for participants to process their emotions—this can be a deeply moving moment;
- You can combine this activity with Youthpass distribution or closing circles for a powerful final reflection.

Youthpass Ceremony

The Youthpass Ceremony marks the formal end of the youth exchange by recognizing each participant's personal journey and learning. In this version, rather than a traditional facilitator-led certificate handout, participants take turns giving each other the Youthpass certificates in a random order. Each person shares a short message, reflection, or compliment while handing over the certificate. This transforms the ceremony into a moment of peer appreciation, connection, and mutual celebration.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Printed Youthpass certificates, placed in envelopes or folded with names hidden;
- Calm, ceremonial space (indoors or outdoors);
- A table or basket where the certificates are placed randomly;
- Optional: soft background music, candles, or symbolic decoration.

Instructions:

1. Prepare the Youthpass certificates in advance and place them in a basket or table, shuffled so no one knows whose is whose;
2. Gather participants in a circle or semicircle and explain the rules:
 - One by one, a participant comes forward, chooses a random certificate, opens it and reads the name;
 - They call that person up, say a few kind or meaningful words about them (a shared memory, a compliment, a thank you, etc.);
 - Then they give them the certificate with a handshake, hug, or creative gesture;
 - That person then chooses the next certificate, and the chain continues;
3. Continue until all certificates have been given and each person has had their moment;
4. End with a big group photo, a group hug, or a small closing ritual to mark the end of the journey.

Goals:

- Celebrate each participant's learning and growth in a meaningful, peer-based way;
- Strengthen group bonds through mutual appreciation;
- Close the exchange with a warm, memorable and emotional experience.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage participants to prepare short messages or reflections in advance if they're shy;
- Keep the atmosphere respectful, joyful, and slow-paced—let each person have their moment;
- You can add music or symbolic rituals (like giving a small stone, candle, or bracelet with the certificate);
- Consider combining this with the "Messages on the Back" activity for a complete closing block.

Storytelling Activities

Voices, memories, and meaning through rhythm and words

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of communication. In this youth exchange, it became a powerful tool for connecting cultures, preserving traditions, and expressing personal identity. Whether through spoken word, dance, or visual art, storytelling helped participants explore who they are, where they come from, and what they want to pass on.

These activities created space for youth to reflect on their roots, embody cultural heritage, and discover common values in diversity. Stories helped preserve customs and traditions, while also building empathy and dialogue between countries.



Story Cubes

This storytelling activity uses Story Cubes—dice with symbols or images instead of numbers—to inspire spontaneous and collaborative storytelling. Participants roll the cubes and create a story using the images they see. The activity encourages imagination, group bonding, and creative expression. It can be used with a personal or cultural focus, or purely as a fun and light storytelling warm-up.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Sets of Story Cubes (or create your own with paper dice and symbols);
- Optional: paper and markers if participants want to sketch or write their story;
- Comfortable space to sit in small groups or pairs.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small groups (2–5 people) or let them play individually if time allows;
2. Each group gets a set of Story Cubes (usually 9 dice);
3. One participant rolls all the cubes, and the group observes the symbols;
4. Using all the symbols, they create and tell a story—either taking turns adding parts, or having one person narrate;
5. Encourage groups to connect the symbols to themes like identity, traditions, rhythm, travel, or intercultural moments;
6. After about 10–15 minutes of preparation, each group can present their story to the others, using storytelling techniques (voice, gestures, small props, etc.);
7. Optionally, you can guide a reflection after each story or at the end of the session:
 - “What did you enjoy about the process?”
 - “Did any symbols remind you of your culture or background?”

Goals:

- Stimulate creativity and collaborative storytelling;
- Support imagination, improvisation, and expression;
- Help participants explore identity, culture, and rhythm through visual triggers;
- Encourage public speaking and confidence in a playful way.

Tips for Facilitators:

- You can give a theme (e.g., “A journey across cultures”, “A forgotten tradition”, “A legend of the future”) to help focus the stories;
- If Story Cubes are not available, create your own using printed icons, stickers, or flashcards;
- Works well as an ice-breaker before deeper storytelling or as a warm-up for more personal reflection;
- Adapt group size and number of dice to your time and goals.

Story Cubes – Mixing Traditions

This storytelling activity uses Story Cubes combined with folklore, traditional characters, and cultural elements from the participants' countries. The goal is to inspire imaginative stories that blend symbols from the cubes with legendary figures, customs, or myths from each culture. This method promotes intercultural dialogue while preserving and reimagining shared heritage through storytelling.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Story Cubes (or dice/cards with abstract symbols);
- A prepared set of folklore cards featuring traditional characters, cultural rituals, or legendary creatures from the participating countries (e.g., Samodiva, Karagöz, dervish, forest spirits, traditional wedding dancers, musical instruments, mythological places);
- Paper and markers (optional);
- Open space for storytelling or small performances.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into mixed-nationality groups (3–5 people);
2. Give each group a set of Story Cubes and 3–4 randomly selected folklore cards featuring legends, characters, or cultural symbols from different countries;
3. Their task is to create an original story that incorporates all the symbols from the Story Cubes and all their folklore cards, blending fantasy with cultural memory;
4. Encourage participants to ask each other about the folklore items they don't know—this builds learning and exchange;
5. Allow 20–30 minutes for story development, where groups can also plan a creative presentation (spoken, acted, danced, drawn);
6. Each group presents their story to the rest of the participants in an engaging format;
7. End with a reflection round:
 - “What folklore character or symbol inspired you the most?”
 - “What similarities or connections did you discover between cultures?”

Goals:

- Encourage storytelling that celebrates legends, traditional knowledge, and folk culture;
- Promote creative intercultural collaboration through shared mythologies and characters;
- Preserve and reimagine cultural elements in a modern, playful way;
- Strengthen communication, imagination, and group bonding.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Prepare a diverse and visually engaging deck of folklore cards in advance—aim for a mix of real cultural figures, mythical beings, and symbolic items from each country;
- Use this session to bridge traditional heritage with creative expression;
- Works well mid-project, once participants are comfortable with one another;
- Allow flexibility—some stories may be funny, others deep or symbolic;
- Optionally, record the stories or illustrate them for a visual gallery or podcast episode.

Echoes of Tradition

“Echoes of Tradition” is a reflective storytelling session where participants recall and share stories, memories, customs, or rituals from their culture that have shaped them. The focus is not only on preserving traditional tales but on exploring how these echoes live within us today—through values, rhythms, words, or symbols. Whether a lullaby from childhood, a family ritual, a regional myth, or a seasonal celebration, each participant becomes a storyteller and a cultural bridge. This activity allows participants to connect their personal identity with cultural heritage, and to recognize the universal themes hidden in local traditions.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Quiet and comfortable storytelling space (circle formation);
- Optional: candles, traditional music, or symbolic items from each country to set the atmosphere;
- Paper and pens (if participants want to write or sketch before sharing);
- Talking piece (optional) to pass in the circle.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the theme:
 - “Each of us carries echoes of our culture—songs, sayings, beliefs, foods, rituals. Today, we’ll give voice to those echoes.”
 - “You are invited to share a short story or memory connected to your tradition—something meaningful to you. It can be a festival, a superstition, a song your grandmother sang, a family tradition or anything passed down.”
2. Allow a few minutes of silent reflection or writing before starting;
3. One by one, participants take turns sharing their stories in a calm and respectful atmosphere;
4. Remind everyone to listen with full attention and without interrupting;
5. After the sharing round, open a reflection circle:
 - “What stories or values stayed with you?”
 - “Did anything surprise you or feel familiar, even across cultures?”
6. Optionally, close with a collective rhythm (e.g., synchronized clapping, humming a melody, or saying one word that reflects the session).

Goals:

- Preserve and honor intangible cultural heritage through lived stories;
- Encourage deep listening and personal sharing in a safe space;
- Help participants connect their identity to tradition, and see the value of cultural transmission;
- Strengthen empathy and intercultural understanding through personal narratives.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Set a calm, respectful, and sacred tone—this session is often emotional;
- Offer prompts if someone feels blocked:
 - “Tell us about something your grandmother or grandfather taught you.”
 - “What custom or tradition makes you feel most at home?”
 - “What did you learn from a holiday or celebration in your culture?”
- You can record the stories (with consent) or invite participants to write them later for a digital booklet or podcast;
- Use this session in the middle or second half of the exchange, when group trust is high.

Whispering Walls Postcard Challenge

“Whispering Walls” is a place-based storytelling challenge where participants create reflective postcards inspired by their visit to historical and cultural sites—such as the Ethnographic Complex in Zlatograd and the Balabanovo Folklore Museum. By observing their surroundings and “listening” to the stories hidden in walls, objects, and traditions, participants craft short personal or fictional messages in the form of postcards addressed to the future, the past, or even to themselves.

This activity blends introspection, imagination, and cultural awareness, while helping young people connect emotionally with cultural heritage.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Blank postcards or card-sized thick paper;
- Markers, pens, colored pencils, stickers (optional);
- Background information or guided tour of the visited cultural sites;
- Optional: music, museum guide, or storytelling prompts.

Instructions:

1. Before the visit, introduce the idea:
 - “As we explore this place, imagine that every wall, artifact, or street corner is whispering a story. What do they want you to remember? What would you say back?”
2. During or right after the visit to Zlatograd or Balabanovo, give each participant a blank postcard and writing/drawing materials;
3. Invite them to write a short message or story on the postcard. The message can be:
 - To their future self;
 - To someone from the past;
 - To a folklore character or ancestor;
 - A cultural message they want to preserve;
4. They may also draw an image on the front or back of the card—either inspired by the site or abstract;
5. Create a safe space for sharing: participants can voluntarily read their postcard aloud or hang them on a “Whispering Wall” or story corner;
6. Optionally, collect all postcards for a digital or physical exhibition.

Goals:

- Deepen personal connection to cultural sites and objects;
- Encourage creative writing and visual storytelling;
- Preserve emotions, insights, and reflections through symbolic messages;
- Explore how tradition speaks to us and through us in modern ways.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Let participants explore freely and intuitively—some will be inspired by a single object, others by the atmosphere or a person they met;
- This activity works best after a guided tour or storytelling introduction at the site;
- Encourage both fictional and real reflections—some may invent a myth, others may write a personal letter.

TikTok Story Mashup

This is a digital storytelling challenge where participants create short TikTok-style videos that creatively combine elements of their cultural heritage—traditional music, clothing, customs, dances, rituals, or folklore—with modern trends and formats. The goal is to reinterpret and remix tradition using humor, visual storytelling, dance, or voiceover to make it relatable for today's youth while preserving and sharing cultural identity. These videos can be fun, emotional, reflective, or artistic—and they become powerful digital souvenirs of intercultural exchange.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Smartphones or tablets with TikTok or similar video apps installed (InShot, CapCut, etc.);
- Access to Wi-Fi (optional);
- A shared folder or hashtag for collecting the videos (e.g. #EchoesOfTradition, #RhythmReels);
- Traditional items: clothing, props, instruments, music samples.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small intercultural groups (3-5 people);
2. Challenge them to create a TikTok-style video (30-90 seconds) using:
 - At least 1 traditional cultural element from their country (music, dance, object, character, costume, saying, etc.);
 - A modern or trending TikTok format (dance challenge, transitions, storytelling voiceover, lip-sync, etc.);
3. Give them 1-2 hours for brainstorming, filming, and editing;
4. Offer story prompts such as:
 - "A message from a folk hero in the 21st century"
 - "If your traditional dance had its own trend"
 - "Recreating an old custom in a modern setting"
 - "What your culture would say in 10 seconds"
5. At the end, gather to watch the videos together as a fun cultural film night or digital exhibition;
6. Optionally, upload or share the videos using a shared hashtag or Google Drive folder.

Goals:

- Encourage digital creativity while honoring cultural roots;
- Make cultural heritage engaging and relevant for modern youth;
- Promote intercultural teamwork through video creation;
- Develop digital literacy, editing, and visual storytelling skills.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage participants to respect cultural symbols, even in humorous or creative formats;
- Offer basic support on video editing tools if needed (InShot, CapCut, TikTok editor);
- Set music guidelines—participants can use traditional recordings or modern mashups of folk music;
- If participants are shy about posting publicly, keep videos in a private shared folder.

United Legend: A Story Woven from All Traditions

This collaborative storytelling session invites participants to create an original legend that fuses folklore elements from each participating country. Using traditional characters and beings, sacred or symbolic objects, national motifs, and mythological places, each group co-creates a new mythic narrative that reflects intercultural unity, imagination, and respect for tradition.

The goal is to build one story that holds space for all voices—like weaving a new tapestry from old threads.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Pre-prepared Folklore Element Cards from each country (divided into categories:
 1. Characters/Beings (e.g., Samodiva, Karagöz, Zmey, forest spirits, dragons);
 2. Objects/Symbols (e.g., wooden spoon, tambourine, embroidery, water jug);
 3. Motifs/Themes (e.g., healing, love, betrayal, time, transformation);
 4. Places (e.g., mountain cave, sacred tree, river crossing);
- Large paper, markers, or digital writing tools.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into mixed-nationality groups (4-6 people);
2. Each group draws one card from each category for each country represented in the exchange;
3. For example, if 4 countries participate, each group will receive:
 - 4 beings/characters;
 - 4 cultural objects;
 - 4 motifs;
 - 4 symbolic places;
4. Challenge the group to build a coherent new legend that:
 - Integrates all elements;
 - Feels like an authentic folk tale (with an opening like “Long ago in a distant land...”);
 - Has a clear conflict, journey, and moral or lesson;
 - Shows how the cultures blend and connect in the story;
5. Allow 1-1.5 hours for storytelling and script writing;
6. Afterward, groups present their legend by:
 - Reading it aloud as a fireside story;
 - Performing a short dramatized version;
 - Turning it into an illustrated scroll or comic.

Goals:

- Promote collaborative storytelling across cultures;
- Preserve and reinterpret folklore elements from different traditions;
- Explore unity in diversity through creative narrative-making;
- Build empathy, imagination, and intercultural awareness.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Prepare the folklore element cards thoughtfully to balance well-known and unique symbols;
- Encourage groups to assign roles (writer, illustrator, reader, etc.) so all can contribute;
- Allow flexibility: the stories can be serious, magical, humorous, or symbolic;
- Optionally, record the legends as audio stories or compile them into a digital booklet or zine as an output of the exchange.

Rewriting Traditional Stories

In this storytelling session, participants choose a traditional story, legend, or folk tale from their culture, then work in mixed groups to rewrite it—adapting its characters, setting, or message to a modern or intercultural context. Whether it’s a myth about nature, a moral tale, or a heroic journey, each group transforms the original story into something fresh and relevant, while still honoring its traditional essence.

This activity encourages both cultural preservation and creative reimagination—where youth become the new storytellers of their heritage.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A short selection of traditional stories or folk summaries from each participating country (1 per country, translated if needed);
- Paper, pens, or laptops/tablets for rewriting;
- Optional: costumes or props for dramatized presentations.

Instructions:

1. Prepare 4–6 traditional stories from the participating countries. Either let each participant bring one, or facilitators provide them;
2. Form mixed-nationality groups and assign (or allow them to choose) one traditional story;
3. Give the challenge:
 - “Retell this traditional story, but give it a new context or twist. You can modernize it, change the ending, switch the character roles, move it to another country or time, or mash it up with another story!”
4. Encourage them to think about:
 - How would this story change if it happened in 2025?
 - What if the main hero was female, or from another culture?
 - How would young people today interpret this legend?
5. Allow 45–60 minutes for brainstorming and rewriting;
6. Each group presents their new version to the whole group: as a story reading, play, comic, or digital post.

Goals:

- Promote creative expression while preserving and engaging with folklore;
- Help participants understand traditional values and adapt them to modern contexts;
- Foster intercultural empathy and imaginative re-interpretation of common human themes;
- Encourage teamwork, discussion, and shared storytelling.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Provide short summaries of stories in accessible language if time is limited;
- Encourage respectful innovation—honor the cultural roots while allowing creativity;
- You can collect all rewritten stories into a booklet or online archive with both the original and adapted versions.

Tale Painting – Visual Storytelling on Canvas

“Tale Painting” is a visual storytelling activity where participants express a personal or cultural story through painting. Whether it’s a childhood memory, a family tradition, a folk tale, or an abstract reflection of identity, the goal is to translate stories into images, symbols, and colors. It offers an inclusive and non-verbal way to connect to culture and communicate across language barriers, making it especially powerful in intercultural youth exchanges.

This activity encourages creativity, emotional expression, and reflection on heritage and belonging.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A3/A2 size paper or canvas boards;
- Acrylic paints or watercolors, brushes, palettes, cups of water, cloths;
- Music playlist to set the mood.

Instructions:

1. Create a calm, creative space—ideally with tables in a circle and calming background music;
2. Introduce the concept:
 - “Think of a story, legend, symbol, or feeling that connects you with your culture or life journey. It could be a personal tale, a folk image, a traditional motif, or a modern memory inspired by your roots.”
 - “You will now express that through a painting. You don’t have to be a ‘good’ artist—this is about feelings and symbols, not technique.”
3. Allow 45–60 minutes of focused painting time;
4. Once everyone finishes, invite participants to display their work in a circle gallery;
5. Those who feel comfortable can present their painting and tell the story behind it in a few sentences;
6. End with an optional group reflection:
 - “What did you learn about others through their paintings?”
 - “Did visualizing your story help you connect to it differently?”

Goals:

- Foster self-expression and reflection through visual storytelling;
- Explore identity, memory, and cultural symbolism;
- Offer a non-verbal, inclusive way to tell stories and feel heard;
- Encourage deep listening and empathy during the sharing round.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Emphasize emotional authenticity over artistic skill;
- Offer examples of folk symbols or visual motifs if participants need inspiration (e.g., spirals, animals, embroidery patterns, mythical figures);
- Let participants work in silence or with calming music to create an introspective atmosphere;
- You can digitize the artworks afterward into an online exhibition or printed mini-book.

Cultural Heritage Sessions

Exploring roots, sharing traditions, and keeping heritage alive

Culture lives through people—and in this phase of the exchange, participants had the opportunity to honor, share, and creatively reinterpret their cultural heritage. From traditional dances and music, to crafts, symbols, rituals, costumes, and regional folklore, these sessions created a space to celebrate identity, preserve memory, and learn from one another's customs and traditions.

Through interactive, hands-on, and non-formal methods, participants explored how heritage connects us across borders and how we can become modern-day storytellers and keepers of our roots. These sessions helped us understand the deeper rhythm behind our dances, objects, and beliefs—and revealed how vibrant and relevant tradition can be in the present.

The following activities reflect the creative journey of participants during the Cultural Heritage phase of “On the Waves of Rhythm”.



Cultural Bingo

Cultural Bingo is an engaging icebreaker-style game with a cultural twist! Each participant receives a bingo sheet filled with culturally themed prompts—such as traditional foods, costumes, rituals, sayings, or childhood memories. The task is to walk around, talk to others, and find someone who can match each prompt, collecting a name in each box. This activity opens conversations about customs, traditions, and identity in a fun and non-formal way. It helps participants realize how much they can learn from one another through storytelling and memory.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Printed Cultural Bingo cards (a 4x4 or 5x5 grid);
- Pens or markers for each participant;
- Space for mingling and movement;
- (Optional) Small prize for the first bingo.

Instructions:

1. Give each participant a Cultural Bingo card and a pen;
2. The goal is to fill the grid by talking to others and finding people who match the cultural prompts;
3. Each square must be signed with the name of a different person—no duplicates!;
4. When someone fills a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal), they shout “BINGO!”;
5. Pause and celebrate the first 1-3 winners, then invite the group to continue playing or share interesting cultural discoveries;
6. Optional wrap-up: gather in a circle and ask some participants to share their favorite answers or surprising cultural facts they learned.
7. Example Bingo Prompts:
 - Knows a traditional dance
 - Has worn a national costume
 - Can sing a song in their native language
 - Celebrates a unique family ritual
 - Knows a legend from their region
 - Can teach a traditional hand gesture
 - Has eaten a dish with grape leaves
 - Knows a lullaby from childhood
 - Has a cultural tattoo or symbol at home
 - Has visited a folk festival

Goals:

- Encourage intercultural interaction and curiosity;
- Create space for sharing heritage in a playful and inclusive way;
- Build community and ease communication barriers;
- Spark interest in deeper cultural storytelling later in the exchange.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Design the Bingo prompts based on participating countries and topics from your exchange;
- Use this activity on Day 2 or 3, when participants are more relaxed and eager to mingle;
- Make sure to mix easy and deeper prompts so everyone feels included.

Cultural Symbols Carousel

Cultural Symbols Carousel is a rotating sharing activity where participants present and learn about traditional cultural symbols—such as patterns, objects, colors, animals, or gestures—commonly found in their heritage. Each participant or country group chooses a symbol and prepares a short explanation or story behind it.

Through a series of short carousel-style rotations, everyone gets the chance to learn from each other, reflect on the deeper meanings of these symbols, and discover the values, beliefs, and traditions encoded in them.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Tables or poster stands arranged in a “carousel” or “exhibition” format;
- Paper/posters or printed visuals of the cultural symbols;
- Markers, drawing tools, stickers (optional);
- Timer or bell for rotation.

Instructions:

1. Ask each national group (or individual) to choose a cultural symbol from their country. This can be:
 - A traditional pattern or embroidery motif;
 - A specific object (e.g., spoon, belt, musical instrument);
 - A color with symbolic meaning;
 - An animal, plant, or mythical figure;
 - A ritual gesture or symbol used in ceremonies;
2. Each group prepares a visual station with:
 - A drawing or image of the symbol;
 - A short description or story behind it (oral or written);
3. Arrange the room in a carousel/exhibition format. Groups take turns being the presenters at their station while others rotate around;
4. Every 5–6 minutes, participants rotate to the next station;
5. After all rounds, gather in a circle for reflection and sharing:
 - “Which symbol surprised you the most?”
 - “Did you find any similarities between symbols from different countries?”

Goals:

- Explore the hidden meanings and origins of traditional cultural symbols;
- Promote intercultural learning in a visual and experiential way;
- Encourage storytelling and symbolic thinking;
- Deepen participants’ pride and knowledge of their own heritage while learning about others.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Offer example symbols ahead of time to inspire participants (e.g., the Bulgarian “shevitza” motif, the Turkish evil eye, Lithuanian sun symbols, etc.);
- Keep the rotations lively with music in the background;
- You can document the carousel symbols into a digital storybook or online gallery.

What Is Cultural Heritage? (UNESCO Brainstorm)

This interactive brainstorming session helps participants understand and explore the different types of cultural heritage using UNESCO's framework: Tangible, Intangible, Natural, and Digital heritage. Through group reflection, participants identify examples from their own lives, countries, or cultures and engage in discussions that broaden their perspectives.

This session builds a strong foundation for the cultural heritage activities that follow by encouraging participants to think critically about what heritage really means—and why it's worth preserving.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Four large flipcharts or posters labeled:
 1. Tangible Heritage (e.g., monuments, artifacts, traditional houses);
 2. Intangible Heritage (e.g., songs, dances, rituals, languages, oral traditions);
 3. Natural Heritage (e.g., sacred mountains, protected forests, rivers);
 4. Digital Heritage (e.g., digital archives, video recordings, online folklore platforms);
- Markers, tape, and space to move around;
- Optional: projector or printed cards with UNESCO definitions and photos.

Instructions:

1. Start the session with a short interactive introduction to the concept of cultural heritage and UNESCO's role in defining and protecting it;
 - You can ask: "What comes to your mind when you hear cultural heritage?"
2. Briefly explain the four categories of heritage with simple examples:
 - Tangible: buildings, clothing, instruments;
 - Intangible: traditions, stories, music;
 - Natural: landscapes tied to culture;
 - Digital: cultural expressions preserved digitally;
3. Divide participants into small mixed-nationality groups;
4. Ask them to walk around and write examples on the flipcharts using markers—examples can be from their own country, family, or general knowledge;
 - Encourage both serious and creative answers;
5. After 10–15 minutes, gather around each flipchart and discuss some of the contributions as a group;
 - Ask: "Were there any surprises?" or "Which type of heritage do you feel is at risk?"
6. Optionally, take a photo of the final flipcharts and digitize them as part of your project's visual outputs.

Goals:

- Introduce the concept of cultural heritage in its diversity;
- Promote awareness of how heritage shapes identity and community;
- Help participants connect their experiences to global cultural preservation efforts;
- Prepare the group for deeper activities on traditional arts, symbols, rituals, and storytelling.

Tips for Facilitators:

- If time allows, use images or case studies to support understanding;
- Encourage participation by creating a relaxed and open environment—there are no wrong answers!
- Combine this session with a visual recap or interactive quiz later to reinforce learning.

Story Circles + Vanishing Heritage Poster

This session combines personal storytelling with collaborative visual expression. Participants first sit in small Story Circles to share memories, traditions, or customs from their country or family that they believe are at risk of disappearing—such as forgotten rituals, lost languages, endangered crafts, or songs no longer sung. After sharing, they co-create a “Vanishing Heritage” Poster to symbolically represent and raise awareness of the cultural treasures we may lose if they are not passed on.

This session invites deep listening, emotional sharing, and a sense of collective responsibility.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A quiet and comfortable space for sitting in small circles;
- A1 or flipchart-sized paper for each group;
- Markers, pencils, stickers, and optional collage materials (e.g., old magazines, fabric, photos);
- Optional: traditional music in the background.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small mixed groups (4–6 people);
2. Introduce the activity:
 - “We’ll take time to reflect and share stories about cultural elements from our countries or families that may be slowly fading away. These could be rituals, crafts, songs, objects, recipes, languages, or even places.”
3. In each circle, participants take turns sharing one personal or cultural element they fear may vanish—and why it matters to them;
 - Encourage others to listen without interruption;
 - You can use a talking object to guide respectful sharing;
4. After everyone has shared, each group works together to design a poster titled “Vanishing Heritage” that includes:
 - Drawings or written descriptions of what was shared;
 - Symbolic elements or metaphors (e.g., fading colors, torn pages, footprints);
 - A short collective message, quote, or slogan (e.g., “What we forget, we lose” or “Preserve before it disappears”);
5. Hang all posters in a visible area to create a “Memory Wall” for the duration of the exchange;
6. End with a group reflection:
 - “How did it feel to share these stories?”
 - “What can we do—personally or together—to keep these elements alive?”.

Goals:

- Encourage emotional connection to heritage and memory;
- Raise awareness about endangered cultural practices and the importance of preservation;
- Promote empathy and solidarity through shared cultural vulnerability;
- Empower youth to become storykeepers and transmitters of tradition.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Set a respectful and quiet tone—this can be a sensitive session;
- Offer examples to inspire ideas (e.g., “a language your grandparents spoke,” “a dish no one cooks anymore,” “a local celebration that’s no longer held”);
- Encourage participants to add drawings, words, or symbols to their posters.

The Living Tree of Heritage

The Living Tree of Heritage is a collective, symbolic storytelling activity in which participants contribute their own cultural roots, customs, stories, and values to build a large visual tree. Each part of the tree represents a layer of cultural heritage: roots (origins and ancestry), trunk (values and foundations), branches (traditions and expressions), and leaves/fruits (what we carry forward or share with others).

By building the tree together, participants visualize the richness of their individual and shared heritage—and reflect on how culture continues to grow, evolve, and connect across borders.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Large roll of paper or several flipcharts taped together to form the base of a tree (drawn in advance or co-created);
 1. Pre-cut colored paper shapes:
 2. Roots – for ancestral elements;
 3. Trunk pieces – for values, shared customs;
 4. Branches – for traditions, rituals, folklore;
 5. Leaves/fruits – for what participants want to preserve or share;
- Markers, glue, tape, scissors;
- (Optional) calming background music and cushions for reflection.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the metaphor:
 - “Culture is like a tree. It has deep roots, a strong core, and growing branches. Today, we’ll build a tree that represents our shared cultural heritage, rooted in all our countries, families, and memories.”
2. Distribute paper pieces to participants and guide them through each step:
 - Roots – Write your origins: country, village, family ritual, language, ancestral profession, or story passed down;
 - Trunk – Write one or two values or customs that have shaped you (e.g. hospitality, respect for elders, storytelling, nature);
 - Branches – Write a cultural tradition, dance, celebration, or folklore element you love;
 - Leaves or fruits – Write what you want to carry forward, teach others, or preserve for the future;
3. One by one or in small groups, participants come to the front and attach their elements to the tree;
4. As the tree grows, read aloud a few of the words or invite volunteers to share their meaning;
5. Once complete, the tree can remain on display as a living visual memory of the exchange.

Goals:

- Help participants reflect on personal and collective cultural heritage;
- Encourage storytelling through visual metaphor;
- Explore what connects us and what we value in tradition;
- Create a symbolic artifact that can grow throughout the project.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Keep a gentle, reflective tone—this activity often brings emotional depth;
- Let participants write in their own language if they prefer;
- Photograph the final result and include it in digital storytelling outputs or the final report.

Heritage in a Box

“Heritage in a Box” is a reflective and imaginative activity in which participants select and symbolically place a few cultural elements into a “box” to be preserved for future generations. They must reflect on what parts of their culture matter most to them personally, and what they feel should not be lost over time.

This activity promotes deep thinking about values, identity, transmission, and what it means to be a cultural caretaker.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Small cardboard boxes, envelopes, or symbolic containers (1 per participant or per group);
- Paper slips or blank cards;
- Markers, pens, stickers for decoration;
- Optional: objects/images representing cultural elements (for inspiration);
- Quiet space for writing and sharing.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the activity:
 - “Imagine you’ve been given a magical box that can protect three things from your culture. These things will survive 100 years and be found by the next generation. What would you put inside?”;
2. Give each participant or group a box (or symbolic envelope) and ask them to choose 3 elements of their culture they value deeply—these can be:
 - A traditional object or artifact;
 - A family recipe or dish;
 - A song, story, or dance;
 - A proverb, word, or belief;
 - A memory or tradition;
3. They write or draw each item on a separate card and place it into the box;
4. Once finished, create a sharing round where participants can present one or all of their chosen elements to the group and explain why they chose them;
5. Optionally, create a collective “box” where each person contributes one item to represent the exchange’s shared intercultural heritage;
6. End with a reflection:
 - “What did you realise about what you value most?”;
 - “How can we keep these elements alive in our everyday life?”.

Goals:

- Encourage personal reflection on what participants value in their own culture;
- Promote awareness of transmission and preservation;
- Deepen participants’ sense of responsibility as cultural storytellers and keepers;
- Create a symbolic output that reflects the diversity and richness of the exchange.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Allow participants to write in their native language or use drawings if they prefer;
- Use soft music and quiet space to support introspection;
- Let participants keep their box or display them together at the end of the exchange;
- This activity pairs well with Living Tree of Heritage, Story Circles, or a final Cultural Night.

Modern Keepers of Culture

This creative sprint challenges participants to reflect on everything they've learned about cultural heritage during the exchange and take the role of modern cultural keepers. In small groups, they brainstorm and design poster campaigns or project ideas that aim to preserve, promote, or reinvent cultural traditions for younger generations and modern audiences.

It's a fast-paced, creative, and solution-oriented session that helps participants connect heritage to action and reflect on how they can become cultural change-makers in their own communities.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A3 or flipchart-size paper for posters (1 per group);
- Markers, pens, tape, stickers, glue;
- (Optional) magazines, scissors, symbols, and visuals for collage-style creation.

Instructions:

1. Begin with a quick intro:
 - "After everything we've explored—symbols, stories, traditions, and identity—imagine you are now the modern keepers of your culture. What can you do to help it survive, evolve, and inspire the next generation?"
2. Form small mixed-nationality groups (3–5 people);
3. Give the challenge:
 - You have 30–40 minutes to create a poster campaign or idea titled "Modern Keepers of Culture";

Your poster should include:

- A short slogan or title;
 - An idea, project, or message that promotes cultural preservation or innovation;
 - Symbols, drawings, keywords, or visuals;
 - A call to action or concrete idea that could be done at school, online, or in your town;
1. Encourage diversity in ideas: the posters could promote digital storytelling, local heritage walks, TikTok traditions, school clubs, embroidery projects, podcasting with grandparents, etc.;
 2. Once the sprint ends, organize a "Poster Gallery Walk" where groups explain their ideas or slogans to others;
 3. Optionally, vote on the most inspiring or realistic idea and give it a spotlight in the project dissemination.

Goals:

- Empower participants to see themselves as active cultural contributors;
- Translate cultural reflection into practical ideas for action;
- Promote intercultural cooperation and innovation;
- Reinforce the connection between youth, heritage, and modern expression.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage bold thinking—it's okay if ideas are big, fun, or experimental;
- Play light music in the background to boost creativity;
- Highlight recurring themes or values from the posters in a final discussion;
- Collect the posters and include them in a final exhibition or digital report.

Digital Time Capsule – My Culture in 5 Files

This digital storytelling activity invites participants to create a personal cultural archive by selecting and uploading five meaningful digital items that represent their heritage. These “5 files” are stored in a shared digital folder or portfolio, forming a collective time capsule of intercultural identity.

Participants reflect on their roots and what makes their culture meaningful to them—through images, sound, video, symbols, and written expression. This capsule can later be revisited, shared, or even presented as part of the dissemination phase.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A shared Google Drive folder or a platform like Padlet, Wakelet, or Google Sites;
- Internet access and devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops);
- (Optional) instructions printed or projected on a slide.

Instructions:

1. Set the scene:

- “If someone in the future opened your digital time capsule, what would you want them to know about your culture? What five things tell the story of who you are and where you come from?”;

2. Introduce the challenge:

Each participant uploads the following 5 digital items to the shared folder (or their own folder within a shared space):

- 1 Photo – of a place, object, food, or memory;
- 1 Sound Clip – a traditional song, family saying, or spoken proverb;
- 1 Short Video – of a celebration, dance, ritual, or personal moment;
- 1 Scanned Symbol or Drawing – a pattern, object, or cultural icon (hand-drawn or digital);
- 1 Written Note – explaining: “Why I chose this”;

1. Allow participants 30–45 minutes to gather their files and upload; they may create or find the files in real-time or bring them prepared;

2. If possible, display a few examples on screen (with permission);

3. Wrap up with a circle reflection:

- “Was it easy or hard to choose your 5 files?”;
- “Did you discover something about your own culture through this?”;

4. Let participants know the digital capsule will remain accessible as a memory of the exchange and can be revisited or expanded over time.

Goals:

- Help participants digitally express and preserve their cultural identity;
- Promote the use of digital tools for storytelling and cultural documentation;
- Foster personal reflection and pride in cultural heritage;
- Create a shared intercultural archive that lives beyond the project.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Prepare a folder structure in advance (e.g., folders per country or participant);
- Offer tech support for those less comfortable with uploading or file formats;
- Encourage creativity—sound clips can be recorded directly, drawings can be done on paper and photographed;
- Consider turning the collected files into a digital exhibition, website, or virtual museum for dissemination.

Heritage Remix – TikTok Folklore Duets

In this interactive and creative task, participants work in pairs to choose a traditional element—like a song, proverb, dance, or folk custom—and reinterpret it in a modern style, creating a short video that mixes tradition with fun, humor, or innovation.

Inspired by the format of TikTok “duets” and remixes, this activity encourages participants to reflect on how cultural heritage can evolve while still honoring its origins. Even without uploading the videos online, participants get the chance to express themselves, engage with folklore, and explore youth-friendly methods of cultural transmission.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Smartphones or tablets with video recording function;
- Space to rehearse and record videos;
- Traditional costume pieces or fabric (optional);
- Props, instruments, or background elements (optional);
- Optional: projector or screen for watching the videos together.

Instructions:

1. Begin by explaining the challenge:
 - “In pairs, you’ll choose something traditional—like a proverb, dance move, or folk song—and remix it into a short modern performance or skit. Think of it as a TikTok duet between tradition and today!”;
2. Offer examples for inspiration:
 - Remix a traditional dance with modern music;
 - Act out a proverb in a funny or theatrical way;
 - Create a skit that brings a folk tale into the modern world;
 - Lip-sync or re-sing a folk song with a twist;
3. Ask participants to form pairs or small teams, choose their element, and plan their remix;
4. Give them 30–45 minutes to prepare, rehearse, and record their short video (max 1 minute);
5. Create an offline video showcase:
 - Project the videos for the group or play them from a phone;
 - Celebrate each with applause and laughter.

Goals:

- Encourage creative expression of cultural elements;
- Explore how tradition can evolve in the digital age;
- Connect folklore with modern storytelling formats;

Tips for Facilitators:

- Emphasize respectful remixing—the goal is celebration, not mockery;
- Encourage teams to add costumes or backgrounds to make it visually fun;
- Provide a few traditional items (scarves, instruments, symbols) to spark inspiration;
- If internet is available and safe, consider uploading to a private group folder or social media account with participants’ consent.

Culture Nights

Culture Nights are special evening events where each national group presents and shares their country's culture, traditions, and identity with the rest of the participants. These sessions are festive, interactive, and full of sensory experiences—from food and music to dance, games, costumes, and stories.

In “On the Waves of Rhythm”, Culture Nights allowed participants from Bulgaria, Turkey, Lithuania, and Serbia to become cultural ambassadors, bringing their roots to life and creating unforgettable moments of connection through rhythm, movement, and meaning.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- A spacious room or hall;
- Tables and supplies for food serving;
- Music player, speaker, or projector;
- National flags, costumes, instruments (optional);
- Props for games, dances, or short performances.

Instructions:

1. Before the exchange, ask each national team to prepare a 20–30 minute presentation of their country's culture. Encourage them to include:
 - A traditional snack or drink (small tasting portions are enough);
 - A cultural dance or music performance;
 - An interactive game, quiz, or language challenge;
 - A story, ritual, or tradition from their region or family;
2. Assign one or two groups per evening to host a Culture Night;
3. The hosting group sets up their space with decorations, food, and music, and then leads the full group through their activities;
4. Encourage active participation from everyone—this is not just a presentation but an immersive experience!;
5. After each Culture Night, allow time for informal mingling, dancing, and discussion.

Goals:

- Celebrate and share cultural diversity in an inclusive way;
- Promote intercultural learning through non-formal, hands-on experiences;
- Encourage participants to take pride in their cultural heritage;
- Build group bonds through fun, laughter, and shared moments.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Ask each group to balance presenting and involving—everyone should be able to taste, play, or dance;
- Remind groups to prepare simple, allergy-safe foods and check dietary needs in advance;
- Set the tone by playing cultural music throughout the evening;
- Record short video clips or take photos of each Culture Night for use in dissemination or a final memory video;
- Use the experience as a follow-up discussion in reflection sessions:
 1. “What cultural element surprised you most?”
 2. “Did you notice any shared values between different cultures?”

Role Play Sessions

Understanding others through empathy, action, and imagination

Roleplay sessions in “On the Waves of Rhythm” were designed to help participants explore complex cultural and social situations by acting them out. These activities provide a safe, creative space to experience different perspectives, express emotions, and reflect on values like tolerance, equality, tradition, and coexistence.

Participants took on imagined roles or real social identities, performed short scenes, and reflected on their experiences—often through group discussion, guided questions, and feedback circles. These sessions connected deeply with the themes of storytelling, identity, and cultural heritage explored throughout the exchange.



Act the Scene – Guess the Movie

In this playful roleplay game, participants work in small groups to recreate scenes from popular movies. The twist? They perform them without using the original names or lines—only body language, tone, and creativity. The other participants must guess the movie and the scene being portrayed. It's an energizing and expressive activity that builds performance skills and group cohesion while sparking laughter and shared memories.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Slips of paper with famous movie scenes or titles (prepare in advance);
- Optional props (hats, glasses, scarves, etc.);
- Open space for performances.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small mixed-nationality groups (4–6 people);
2. Each group randomly draws or selects one famous movie scene (examples: Titanic, Harry Potter, Home Alone, The Lion King, etc.);
3. Give them 10–15 minutes to prepare their scene—encourage improvisation, costumes, sound effects, and movement;
4. Groups take turns performing in front of the others;
5. After each performance, the audience guesses the movie and the exact scene;
6. Optionally, offer small awards for funniest performance, best teamwork, or most creative interpretation.

Goals:

- Develop teamwork, creativity, and non-verbal communication;
- Build confidence in performing and presenting in front of a group;
- Strengthen group cohesion through laughter and play;
- Practice interpreting emotions and gestures, a key skill in storytelling.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Choose well-known, internationally recognizable movies to ensure inclusivity;
- Encourage groups to reimagine the scene (e.g., modern version, silent film, cultural twist);
- If time allows, do two rounds—one serious, one humorous;
- Take photos or short videos (with consent) to include in the final memory materials.

Roleplay: Kardzhali Comes Alive!

During our visit to the Regional Historical Museum of Kardzhali, participants explored the city's rich cultural layers—from Thracian heritage to 20th-century memories. To deepen this experience, they took part in a series of humorous and imaginative roleplay scenes, each inspired by the museum's artifacts, characters, and local history. Through performance, laughter, and reflection, these activities turned history into living memory—highlighting how culture evolves, how tradition meets the present, and how youth can creatively reinterpret the past.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Printed scene prompts for each group;
- Optional props (scarves, glasses, hats, books, phones, etc.);
- Space for small group rehearsals and performances.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into 5 small groups. Give each group one of the following pre-written scene prompts;
2. Allow a hour for teams to rehearse and adapt their scene;
3. Ask groups to perform in front of everyone;
4. After performances, lead a short reflection about how history can be retold through modern eyes.

Scene Prompts:

1. Kardzhali's First Historical Influencers:

The team pretends to run a social media campaign to promote ancient Kardzhali.

- One is an overexcited vlogger;
- One handles "fashion of the past";
- One shares historical food recipes with questionable ingredients;
- One is a fact-checker constantly correcting everyone;
- They try to record a perfect promo video—but everything keeps going hilariously wrong.

2. The Cultural Time Machine... Malfunctions!:

A museum time machine breaks and scrambles the timeline.

- A Thracian warrior holds a selfie stick;
- A communist-era teacher tries to explain TikTok;
- A medieval farmer reviews a pizza;
- A traditional singer hosts a podcast;
- They must figure out what year they're in—but no one agrees.

3. Kardzhali's Got Talent (Ancient Edition):

Characters from different centuries audition for a talent show in the museum.

- A Thracian whistling on a bone flute;
- A folk dancer performing an "ancient TikTok";
- A medieval poet going very dramatic;
- A confused tourist pretending to be historical;
- The judges (the audience) must vote for the winner!

Roleplay: Kardzhali Comes Alive!

4. The Museum Job Interview:

Four historical characters show up to interview for a modern museum tour guide job:

- A Thracian warrior;
- An Ottoman merchant;
- A 1960s schoolteacher;
- A folk dancer;
- Each thinks they're the best. But the interview turns into total chaos—misunderstood tech, folk dance warmups, and bragging about ancient skills.

5. Museum by Night: When Exhibits Awaken:

At midnight, four museum exhibits come to life:

- A Thracian warrior;
- An Ottoman trader;
- A 20th-century teacher;
- A traditional costume;
- They debate which era was most important to Kardzhali's identity. The scene can be funny, emotional, or poetic.

Goals:

- Connect participants to local history and museum education in a youth-friendly way;
- Promote creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking;
- Explore identity, progress, and cultural memory through humor;
- Use roleplay as a tool for non-formal heritage education.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Encourage groups to add modern twists or local references;
- Let them perform freely—even if it becomes silly or absurd;
- Allow time for reflection: What did they learn about Kardzhali's past? What surprised them?;
- Capture photos or short videos of the scenes (with consent) for your final presentation or memory archive.

Traditional Dance Sessions

Where rhythm becomes language and tradition moves the body

In “On the Waves of Rhythm”, dance was more than movement — it was a form of non-verbal storytelling, a shared emotional experience, and a powerful way to preserve and pass on cultural memory. The Traditional Dance Sessions invited participants to learn, teach, and celebrate folk dances from their own and others’ countries.

Through each step, rhythm, and gesture, we explored the values, rituals, and creativity of different communities. These sessions became spaces of joy, respect, unity, and cultural exchange, allowing us to connect beyond language — with our bodies, hearts, and history.

Each session in this chapter shares the dances we explored, the cultural background behind them, and the moments of laughter, challenge, and connection that came from learning to move in rhythm together.



United in Rhythm – Common Choreography from Traditional Dances

In one of the most symbolic sessions of “On the Waves of Rhythm”, participants from each country selected two traditional dance elements and taught them to the group. The goal was to combine these elements into one shared choreography – a co-created cultural mosaic danced by everyone. This session became a beautiful metaphor for unity in diversity: different rhythms, styles, and steps merged into a single sequence that reflected collaboration, mutual respect, and collective creativity.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Large open space (hall, outdoor stage, etc.);
- Speakers and playlist of traditional songs from all countries;
- Comfortable clothes and water;
- Optional: Traditional elements (scarves, sashes, instruments).

Instructions:

1. Each national group chooses two simple and symbolic dance steps from their traditional repertoire;
2. In small breakout moments or open rehearsal, each group teaches their steps to the others, explaining their meaning or the context behind them (e.g., “This is danced at weddings,” “This step represents...”);
3. Once all the movements are learned, the facilitator works with the participants to arrange the steps into one shared choreography – deciding on the order and transitions;
4. Rehearse the full dance together with music;
5. Perform it at a special moment of the exchange (e.g., Culture Night, final celebration, public event);
6. Optionally, record the performance to use in a final video or memory archive.

Goals:

- Encourage peer teaching and intercultural learning;
- Foster a sense of shared ownership and creation;
- Highlight the beauty of differences coming together;
- Build group unity through non-verbal collaboration.

Tips for Facilitators:

- Support participants in selecting steps that are easy to learn but rich in meaning;
- Allow plenty of time for practice and repetition;
- Highlight the storytelling aspect – encourage groups to briefly explain their dance elements;
- Keep the atmosphere light, open, and inclusive – perfection is not the goal;
- Film the final performance with care – it can become a symbolic project result.

On the Waves of Rhythm

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