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CULTURAL HARMONY BOOKLET

INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN
EUROPEAN SOCIETIES THROUGH ART

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Harmony Through Art is a youth exchange that took place from 8 to 16 April 2025 in Skaudvilė, Lithuania. It brought together young people and youth workers from Lithuania, Germany, Georgia, Romania, Serbia, Albania and Türkiye to explore how creative work can support the integration of Ukrainian refugees and other young people with fewer opportunities.


The project was created as a response to the ongoing war in Ukraine and the visible changes in European communities. Many young people arrived in new countries, schools and neighbourhoods, often carrying trauma, often carrying trauma, uncertainty and a feeling of being in between two worlds. At the same time, local young people and institutions faced new questions about inclusion, support and shared responsibility.

Instead of starting from theory, the project used artistic processes as the main way to connect people and talk about difficult topics. Participants created visual art, photography, theatre and mixed media pieces, shared personal stories and organised a public presentation for the local community in Skaudvilė.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES



The project aimed to use art as a safe and accessible space where young people can meet, share experiences and build empathy across cultures. Through creative work they had the chance to explore their own stories and listen to the stories of others, which supported the social inclusion and wellbeing of Ukrainian refugees and other young people with fewer opportunities in European communities.

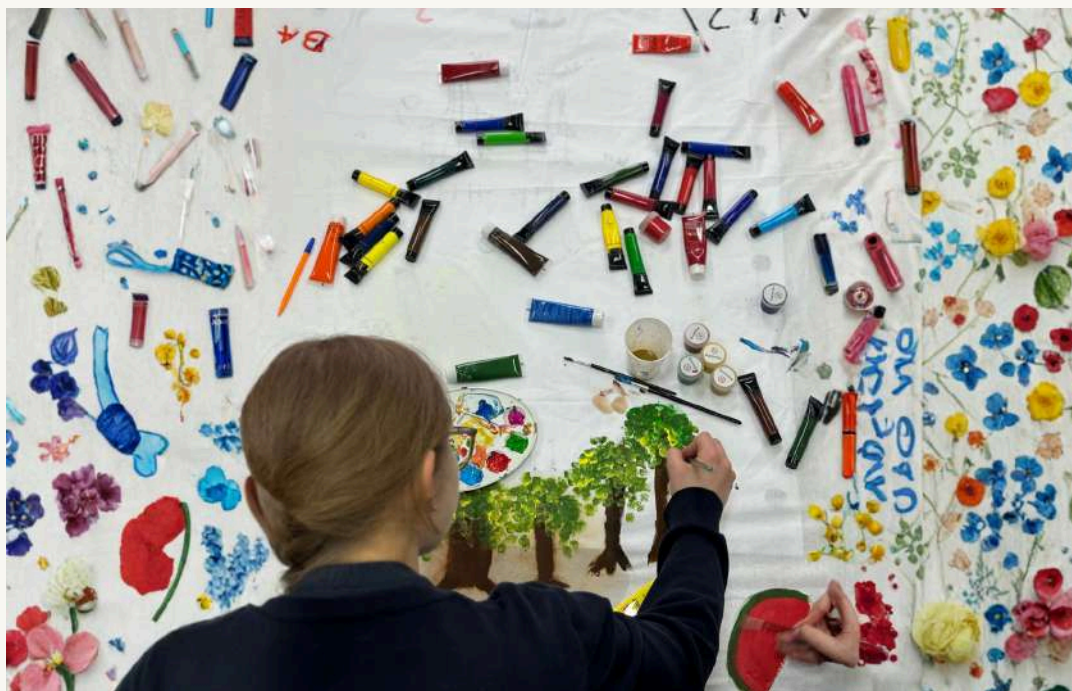


It also focused on strengthening participants' skills in intercultural communication, cooperation and creative expression. The activities were designed in a way that invited everyone to take an active role, experiment with different forms of art and learn how to express complex feelings and ideas in a visual or performative way.



Another important objective was to give youth workers practical tools for working with mixed groups that include refugees, migrants and local young people. The project aimed to support long-term cooperation between organisations that work with youth, culture and community development in different European countries, so that the methods and relationships created in this exchange can continue to grow after the project.


ABOUT THIS BOOKLET



This booklet collects a selection of activities that were used and tested during the Cultural Harmony Through Art youth exchange. The activities focus on creative expression, group building, storytelling, reflection and community connection. They were designed for international groups that include young refugees and local youth, but they can be adapted for many other contexts.

The aim is simple. Any youth worker, teacher, volunteer or cultural organiser who reads this booklet should be able to take these methods, adapt them to their own reality and use them in daily work. The activities do not require professional artistic training. They focus on process, participation and the messages that young people want to share.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET



Each activity is described in a practical way. You will find information about the aim of the activity, group size, needed materials, step-by-step instructions and suggestions for debriefing and adaptation. Some activities work well as a stand-alone session. Others are more powerful when they are combined into a longer process.



WE INVITE YOU TO:

- Read through the activities and choose the ones that fit your group;
- adapt the timing, questions and materials to your local context;
- connect the methods with real stories from your community;
- encourage young people to shape and lead parts of the process.

We encourage you to pay attention to the emotional safety of participants, especially when the group includes young people with lived experience of war, displacement or discrimination. Create clear group agreements, always leave time for reflection and offer individual support when needed.



CULTURAL HARMONY THROUGH ART IN PRACTICE

CREATIVE METHODS AND ACTIVITIES



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the European Union

EBRU

Turkish art of marbling

Objectives:

Support relaxation and stress release through slow, repetitive movements.

Encourage focus, patience and grounding through working with water and colour.



Materials

Trays with prepared marbling bath (CMC, about 7 grams per litre of water), marbling paints, droppers or brushes, wooden sticks or needles for drawing, napkins or paper towels, trash bags or plastic covers to protect tables, surface for drying artworks, thick absorbent paper. Optional: combs for patterns, aprons and gloves.

Description of the activity

Ebru is a traditional Turkish art of painting on the surface of water and then transferring the image onto paper. Before the workshop, prepare the marbling bath by mixing CMC powder with water and letting it thicken. Pour the prepared bath into shallow trays so that the surface is completely covered. Invite participants to gently drip or sprinkle paint onto the surface.



The colours will spread and form round shapes. Show how to use sticks, needles or combs to move the colours and create different patterns. When they are ready, participants carefully place a sheet of paper on top of the water, press it lightly so it touches the whole surface, then lift it from one corner. The pattern will appear on the paper. Leave the artworks to dry flat.

Reflection questions

Which part of the workshop did you enjoy the most? Have you heard about ebru before? How did you find the overall experience? Was there anything that surprised you about ebru? What emotions did you experience while creating your ebru piece?

COLLABORATIVE DRAWING



Objectives:

Encourage creativity and imagination.

Foster collaboration and communication in the group.

Materials

One large sheet of paper or fabric, different colours of paint or markers (ideally washable), brushes in different sizes, containers with water, cloths or newspapers to protect the floor, aprons or old shirts if needed.

Description of the activity

Welcome the participants and briefly explain the goal. They will create one big shared artwork where everyone can add their own ideas. Emphasise that the focus is on playing with colours, shapes and symbols together, not on making a perfect drawing.

Invite participants to stand or sit around the large sheet. Show the available materials and explain that they can use brushes, markers and, if they feel comfortable, even their fingers and hands. Encourage them to start with simple lines, shapes or small figures.

As the drawing grows, invite participants to react to what others have already drawn, to connect elements or to continue someone else's line or shape. If someone feels stuck, suggest that they move to a different place around the drawing and look at it from another angle.

Remind the group to talk to each other, ask before drawing over someone else's part and stay curious about different ideas. When you feel the artwork is complete, invite everyone to step back and look at it together. Ask participants to help with cleaning the materials and the space.



Reflection questions

What did you enjoy most about this activity?

What does the collective artwork represent or show for you?

Was anything difficult or challenging while you were creating the drawing?

If you had more time, what would you add or change in the artwork?

How did it feel to draw on the same surface together with others?

E-COLLAGE

Objectives:

Supporting participants to express their feelings through visual art.

Encouraging environmental awareness by reusing scrap materials.

Developing basic artistic skills such as composition, colour and shape.



Materials

Glue sticks, coloured paper (new or reused), magazine pages or other scrap paper, white paper or cardboard for the base, markers or pens, scissors.

Description of the activity

Explain that participants will create an abstract art piece using paper shapes and glue. The focus is on using colours, textures and forms to show how they feel today. There is no need to make a realistic picture of anything specific. They can tear or cut the paper, layer different pieces, combine colours and add short words or symbols with markers. Emphasise that there is no right or wrong result. The collage is a personal expression of what they feel inside at this moment.

Each participant receives a white sheet of paper or cardboard as a base. They choose coloured or scrap paper and cut or tear any shapes they like, for example circles, triangles, strips or irregular pieces. They place the shapes on the base, move them around until they like the composition, then glue them down to create their own abstract design. At the end they can add lines, patterns, short words or symbols with markers if they wish. When everyone has finished, invite the group to sit in a circle and look at their collages together before starting the reflection.



Reflection questions

How did you feel during this activity?

What kind of mood or energy does your collage give?

In what way does your artwork show how you feel today?

Is there something in your collage that you would like to explain or share?

Would you like to do a similar activity again?

COMMUNICATION LINE

Objectives:

This activity encourages teamwork and trust through simple group games. Participants practice multilingual skills by passing words in different languages and build confidence by stepping out of their comfort zone. It also creates moments of creativity, laughter and spontaneity in a relaxed and inclusive environment.



Materials

Blank paper, crayons or markers, tape, speaker or any type of music player.

Description of the activity

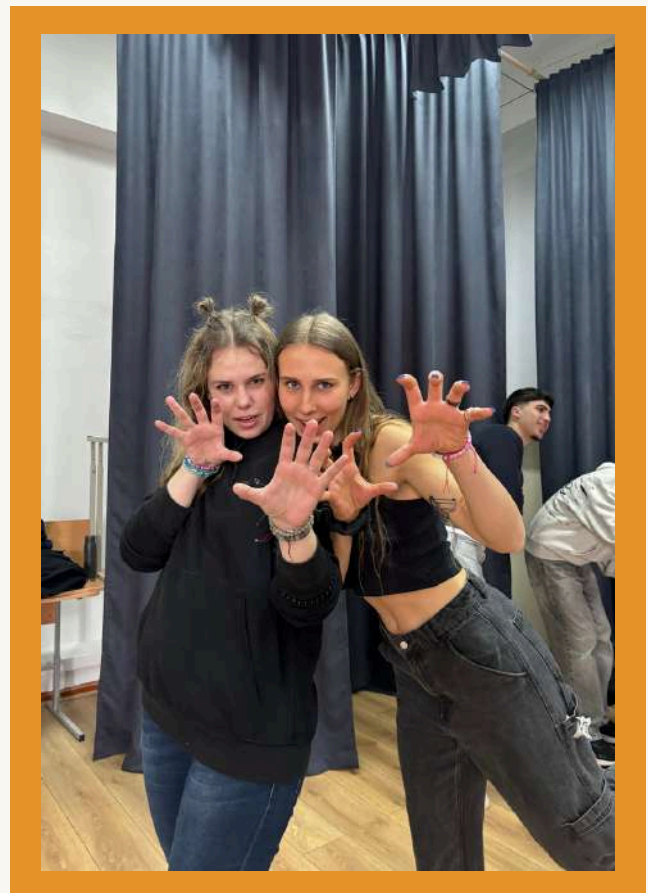
Introduce the team and explain that they will try two short exercises about communication and listening.

Activity 1. Broken telephone with words

Participants stand in a line. The facilitator quietly says a word or short phrase in a foreign language to the first person. That person repeats it to the next one, and so on until the message reaches the last participant. The last person says the word out loud. Then the facilitator shares the original word and its meaning. The aim is to transfer the word as accurately as possible and notice what changes. After each round participants change places in the line.

Activity 2. Back drawing

Participants again stand in a line. Each person has a sheet of paper taped to their back and a crayon in their hand. The facilitator shows a simple drawing to the last person in the line. This person tries to draw the same image on the back of the person in front of them. That person then draws what they feel on the next back, and so on until the first person in the line. At the end everyone takes off the papers and compares the first and last drawings. The aim is to transfer the drawing as accurately as possible and to have fun seeing how it changes.



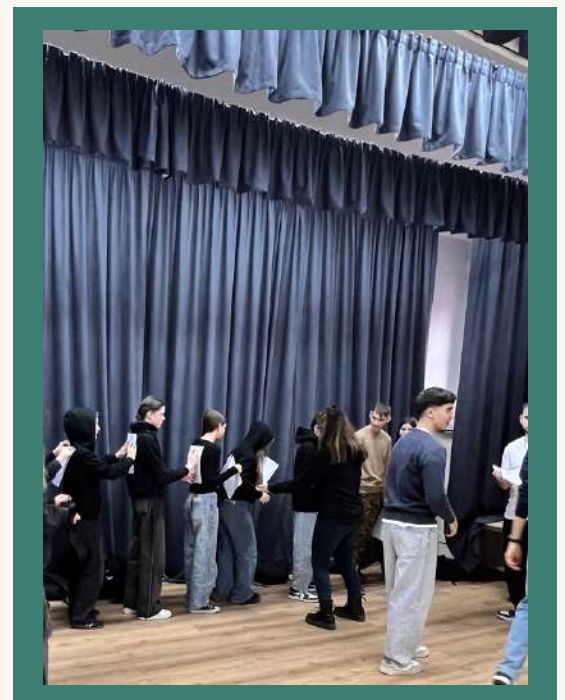
Reflection questions

Did you enjoy this activity?

Which part did you like more?

What was the most challenging part of this activity?

Do you remember any new words in foreign languages? Which words?



MONSTERS OF THE DAY

Objectives:

To help participants express their emotions through a simple creative task.

To encourage self reflection in a playful and safe way.

To develop imagination and creativity.

To practice working individually while sharing space with others.



Materials

Modelling clay or playdough in different colours. Used paper or a tray to place the finished figures on.

Description of the activity

Explain that everyone will create a small clay monster that shows how they feel today or what kind of day they had. The monster can be funny, scary, calm or very abstract. There is no right or wrong way to do it.

Give each participant a piece of modelling clay and around 15–20 minutes to work. Encourage them to focus on shapes, colours and small details that match their mood. Facilitators walk around, offer help if needed and gently ask short questions such as What kind of monster is appearing in your hands or What feeling does it show.

When the time is over, invite participants to place their monsters on a sheet of paper or a tray in the middle of the table. One by one, they can briefly present their monster to the group: say its name, what it represents and which feeling or thought of the day it carries. Participants who do not want to speak can choose to let someone else present their monster or simply keep it without explanation.



Reflection questions

What part of your monster shows this feeling the most?

How did you feel while you were creating it?

Did something change in your mood from the beginning to the end of the activity?

If your monster could say one sentence, what would it tell us?

Was it easy or difficult to show emotions through clay instead of words?



FIND ME IF YOU CAN

Objectives:

To support participants to express emotions through movement.

To practice working in a group and keeping focus.

To boost energy, creativity and mood.

To explore non-verbal communication and body language.

To create a stress free environment where participants can move and have fun.



Description of the activity

Start with an energizer to break the ice and get everyone moving. Choose a short game like tornado where participants walk or run around the room, change places and briefly meet different people. When the group feels more relaxed and has some energy, explain the main activity Find me if you can. Ask participants to form a circle. One person becomes the catcher and stands in the center. Play music and invite everyone in the circle to move or dance in their own way. The catcher looks around, notices different movements and chooses one person whose movement they want to copy or follow. After a short time the catcher gently taps that person on the shoulder and they swap roles. Continue until several people have had the chance to be the catcher in the middle.

FIND ME IF YOU CAN

Among the group, one person is secretly chosen as the leader. Everyone except the catcher knows who this person is. The leader starts simple movements or dance steps and changes them from time to time. The rest of the group follows the leader and tries not to show who they are copying. The catcher stands in the middle and watches carefully. Their task is to find out who the leader is. When the catcher thinks they know, they say the name of the person. If they are right, the leader comes to the middle, closes their eyes and chooses a new leader by gently touching someone on the shoulder. The former catcher joins the circle and another person becomes the catcher. Play several rounds so that different people can try both roles. At the end invite participants to sit down, slow the music and move into a short reflection.



Reflection questions

Did you enjoy this activity and what made it enjoyable or difficult?

Would you like to play this game again or try a similar one?

How did you express yourself and communicate with others without using words?

STICKERS

Objectives:

To express yourself in a simple creative way by designing your own sticker.

To explore how everyday household materials can be used for art.

To create small positive messages or symbols that participants can take home.



Materials

Clear tape, preferably wide packing tape, baking paper or wax paper, white or light coloured paper for designs, markers, pens, coloured pencils, scissors

Description of the activity

Explain that everyone will design and make a small sticker they can take home. Show an example if you have one and briefly present the materials. Invite participants to sit around a table, put some quiet background music and give them around 15–20 minutes for the whole process.

Give each participant a small piece of white paper and ask them to draw a simple image, symbol or short word they would like as a sticker. When the drawings are ready, give everyone a piece of baking paper and ask them to place a strip of clear tape on it with the sticky side down.

Participants cut out their drawings, leaving a small white border, and place each drawing on top of the tape on the baking paper. Then they cover the drawing with another strip of clear tape, press it well and cut around it again, leaving a narrow transparent edge.

The sticker is now ready. Later participants can peel the baking paper from the back and stick their handmade design on a notebook, bottle or phone case.



Reflection questions

What did you choose to draw on your sticker and why?

Where would you like to put or use your sticker?

How did it feel to turn a small drawing into something you can carry with you?

ORIGAMI

Objectives:

To develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

To support attention and concentration through a calm, structured task.

To introduce a simple, meditative way to relax through paper folding.



Materials

Used paper or scrap paper for practicing the folds. Origami paper or coloured square paper for the final figures.

Description of the activity

Give the group around 15–20 minutes to make one or several simple origami figures. Start by briefly introducing the activity and asking if anyone has tried origami before and which models they know. Show a few examples of what you will fold together, for example hearts, stars, boats or simple animals, and let participants choose which one they want to try.

Demonstrate the first model step-by-step, folding slowly and holding the paper up so everyone can see. After each step, pause and give time for participants to repeat the fold. Encourage them to help each other and to ask if they get stuck. When some participants finish early, invite them to try a second or third figure or to decorate their models with pens.

Reflection questions

"Did you enjoy this activity?

What made it enjoyable or difficult for you?

Which part of the folding process was the most challenging and why?

Did you notice any change in your concentration or mood during the activity?



THANK YOU

for reading this booklet and for your interest in using art to build more inclusive communities.

The methods in these pages were created and tested together with young people, including Ukrainian refugees and local youth, during the Cultural Harmony Through Art youth exchange in Skaudvilė, Lithuania.

We invite you to adapt these activities to your own context, combine them with your existing tools and share them with colleagues.

If you wish to know more about the project, you can check out Tauragės atvira jaunimo erdvė on Facebook and Instagram.

Every time you run one of these activities, you create space for new stories, connections and ideas. We hope this booklet will support you in that work.

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