

# Inclusion Through the power of art Booklet



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# Introduction

Welcome

Inclusion through the Power of Art is a youth exchange that was implemented from 26 to 30 January 2026 in Yambol, Bulgaria. The project brought together young people and youth workers from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Spain and Italy to explore how artistic expression can be used as a powerful tool to overcome discrimination, stereotypes, social barriers and social anxiety.

During five intensive days, participants worked in an intercultural environment where creativity became the common language.

Through theatre, visual arts, movement-based activities, storytelling, inclusive portrait creation, educational visits and structured reflection sessions, young people examined real-life experiences of exclusion and transformed them into constructive dialogue and artistic output.

The project was designed as a response to growing social division, increasing cases of discrimination, and the rising levels of social anxiety and isolation among young people across Europe. Many participants arrived carrying personal experiences of marginalisation, misunderstanding or cultural barriers. At the same time, local communities are increasingly challenged to create safe, inclusive and empathetic environments for young people from diverse backgrounds.



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# PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to use art as a transformative and inclusive tool to address discrimination, stereotypes, social barriers and social anxiety among young people. Through creative and non-formal learning methods, participants were encouraged to openly explore personal experiences of exclusion, reflect on societal challenges and develop empathy in an intercultural environment. Art was used not only as expression, but as a bridge between different realities, identities and life stories.

A key objective was to strengthen young people's competences in teamwork, cultural sensitivity, communication and self-expression. Through activities such as forum theatre, inclusive filmmaking, world café discussions, creative portrait sessions and storytelling formats, participants learned how to transform difficult topics into constructive dialogue and collaborative solutions. The exchange created a safe space where vulnerability was respected and diversity was celebrated.

Another important goal was to empower participants to take active roles in their local communities. By developing skills in assertive communication, critical thinking and emotional awareness, young people were better equipped to challenge discrimination and promote inclusion beyond the mobility.

Finally, the youth exchange sought to strengthen cooperation between partner organisations and provide youth workers with practical, replicable methods for working with mixed groups, including young people with fewer opportunities. The long-term vision was to ensure that the artistic tools, educational approaches and partnerships developed during this mobility continue to generate impact at local, national and European level.



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# ABOUT THIS BOOKLET



This booklet presents a carefully structured collection of art-based workshops, educational sessions, energisers and teambuilding activities implemented during the youth exchange Inclusion through the Power of Art in Yambol, Bulgaria. Each activity was designed, tested and refined in an international learning environment focused on inclusion, self-expression and overcoming discrimination and social barriers.

The methods shared here combine creativity with non-formal education. They were created to support young people in exploring sensitive topics such as stereotypes, social anxiety, exclusion and emotional wellbeing in a safe and participatory way. Although developed within the framework of an Erasmus+ youth exchange, these activities can be adapted to different contexts, age groups and community settings.

The purpose of this booklet is to inspire youth workers, NGOs, educators and volunteers to replicate, adapt and further develop these tools in their own initiatives. At the same time, it serves as a transparent overview of our project's objectives, methods and learning outcomes, while promoting the values and opportunities of the Erasmus+ Programme.



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# What is Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the European Union's programme supporting education, training, youth and sport across Europe. It creates opportunities for young people to travel, learn, grow and connect beyond borders.

Through youth exchanges, training courses and solidarity projects, Erasmus+ empowers young people to develop new skills, build confidence, experience different cultures and become active citizens. The programme promotes inclusion, diversity, participation and creativity, ensuring that young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, can access meaningful international experiences.

Erasmus+ is more than mobility. It is a space for dialogue, cooperation and personal transformation. It supports non-formal education, intercultural learning and innovative approaches that respond to real social challenges.



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# Inclusion through the power of art

CREATIVE METHODS AND ACTIVITIES



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# Curtain Guesser

**Name-learning and ice-breaking energizer**

## Objectives:

- Support participants in learning and remembering each other's names.
- Break the ice and reduce initial social tension in the group.
- Encourage interaction, quick thinking and team spirit in an international setting.

## Materials:

Curtain, large cloth or blanket (to hide participants), enough open space for two teams to stand facing each other, optional chairs or markers to define team positions.

## Description of the activity:

Curtain Guesser is a dynamic ice-breaking energizer designed to help participants get to know one another and feel more comfortable in the group. At the beginning, participants briefly introduce themselves. After that, they are divided into two international teams standing on opposite sides of a curtain (or a large cloth held up between them).



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Each team secretly chooses one participant to stand close behind the curtain. When the curtain is dropped, the two selected participants must quickly say the name of the person standing in front of them. The participant who says the correct name first wins the round, while the other participant joins the winning team.

The activity continues through several rounds, creating a playful and engaging atmosphere. Through repetition and fun competition, participants become more confident, interact with new people, and improve their ability to remember names.

## Reflection questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Did this energizer help you remember participants' names more easily?
- What made the activity fun or challenging for you?
- Did you feel more connected to the group after playing?
- Why are ice-breakers important at the beginning of a youth exchange?



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# Inclusive Portraits

Portrait drawing for connection and perspective-taking

## Objectives

- Foster deeper interaction and connection between participants through creative observation.
- Encourage attention to detail, empathy and respect for individual uniqueness.
- Demonstrate how one person can be seen from different perspectives.
- Support the overcoming of social and cultural barriers through art-based interaction.



## Materials

Chairs (enough to form an inner and outer circle), blank drawing paper, clipboards or hard surfaces (optional), pencils/pens/markers, erasers (optional), timer or phone stopwatch.



## Description of the activity

Inclusive Portraits is an interactive art-based workshop in which participants explore connection, observation and diversity through portrait drawing. Participants are divided into two international teams. One team sits in the inner circle of chairs, while the other team sits in the outer circle facing them.



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Participants in the inner circle become the “painters” and draw quick portraits of the participants sitting in front of them in the outer circle. They have only one minute for each portrait, which encourages focus, spontaneity and attention to key facial features and expressions. After one minute, participants in the outer circle move one chair to the side so that each painter faces a new person. The process continues until they have observed and drawn several participants.



After completing the round, participants switch roles, so everyone has the chance to be both a painter and a model. Through this process, participants experience how each person can be represented in different ways and from different perspectives. The activity creates a playful and inclusive space, strengthens interaction, and helps overcome social and cultural barriers through shared creativity.



## Reflection questions

- How did you feel when drawing others and when being drawn?
- What details did you notice when observing different participants?
- How did the activity show that one person can be seen in different ways?
- Did this workshop help you interact with people you did not know well before?
- How can art help us overcome social or cultural barriers?



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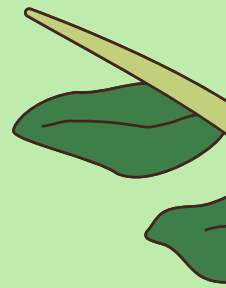




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# Molecules and Atoms



**Movement-based energizer for connection and grouping**

## Objectives

- Energise participants through movement and playful interaction.
- Encourage quick social connection and teamwork through group formation.
- Support inclusion and help overcome initial social barriers in the group.
- Improve listening, concentration and reaction skills.

## Materials

Open space for movement, optional music speaker.

## Description of the activity

Molecules and Atoms is an interactive movement-based energizer that combines basic science-inspired imagery with social connection. At the beginning, the facilitator briefly explains that each participant represents an “atom,” while groups formed during the game represent “molecules.”



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Participants move freely around the space like atoms. The facilitator gives different “temperatures” (for example, high temperature for faster movement and low temperature for slower movement), and participants adjust their speed accordingly. At different moments, the facilitator interrupts the movement and says a number (for example, “5”). Participants must then quickly form a “molecule” of exactly that number of people.

The game continues with different movement speeds and different numbers, creating a dynamic and playful atmosphere. Through movement, quick reactions and teamwork, participants connect with one another, become more comfortable in the group, and gradually overcome social barriers in an inclusive way.

## Reflection questions

- How did you feel during the movement and grouping rounds?
- Was it easy to quickly form groups with the correct number of people?
- What helped your group react faster and organise better?
- Did the activity help you feel more connected to the group?
- How can simple energizers like this support inclusion at the beginning of a youth exchange?



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# Inclusive World Café

**Collaborative discussion workshop on barriers and inclusion**

## Objectives

- Increase participants' understanding of different barriers to inclusion.
- Encourage teamwork and dialogue on practical ways to overcome exclusion.
- Develop communication, public speaking, critical thinking and creativity skills.
- Promote empathy, intercultural understanding and shared problem-solving.

## Materials

Tables or separate discussion corners, chairs, flipchart paper or large sheets, markers/pens, sticky notes (optional), tape/blu-tack (optional), timer or phone stopwatch.



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# Description of the activity

Participants are divided into international teams and discuss different barriers to inclusion, such as social, language, economic, geographical, cultural and educational barriers. Each team shares ideas and proposes practical ways to overcome these barriers and support inclusion.

After the discussion, each team presents its ideas and solutions to the whole group. Through this activity, participants improve their understanding of inclusion and strengthen soft skills such as communication, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking and public speaking.

## Reflection questions

- Which barriers were most discussed in your team?
- Which solutions did you find most useful?
- What did you learn from other participants' perspectives?
- How can you use these ideas in your community?



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# Human Library

Creative storytelling on discrimination and barriers



## Objectives

- Raise awareness of discrimination and barriers through storytelling.
- Encourage empathy and deeper reflection through reading others' stories.
- Develop creativity and self-expression through writing.
- Promote understanding of inclusion through art-based learning.

## Materials

Writing paper or notebooks, pens, presentation table or designated space ("library"), optional title cards for stories.

## Description of the activity

Each participant writes a short fictional story that includes an example of discrimination or a barrier to inclusion. After writing, participants place their "book" on a presentation table, creating a symbolic human library.

Participants then read each other's stories and reflect on the message or moral behind them. Through this storytelling activity, they explore discrimination and barriers in a creative way, build empathy, and strengthen their creativity and self-expression.



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# Reflection questions

- What message did you want to share through your story?
- How did you feel while reading other participants' stories?
- What common barriers or forms of discrimination appeared in the stories?
- How can storytelling help people understand inclusion better?



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# Yambol Mission Impossible

Teambuilding activity

## Objectives

- Strengthen teamwork and cooperation through shared tasks.
- Promote inclusion through art- and photography-based challenges.
- Encourage creativity, critical thinking, leadership and communication.
- Support social and intercultural connection among participants.

## Materials

Task list / challenge sheet, phones or cameras for taking photos, pens, optional map of Yambol, optional clues/envelopes, comfortable walking shoes, water.

## Description of the activity

Participants explore the town in international teams while completing a series of photography-focused and art-based tasks connected to the topic of inclusion. The challenges encourage them to observe the environment, work together, and create visual responses related to inclusion.



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Throughout the game, participants cooperate, make decisions, and solve tasks as a team. The activity helps break social and cultural barriers, while also developing creativity, critical thinking, teamwork and leadership in a fun outdoor setting.

## Reflection questions

- What was the most interesting or difficult task for your team?
- How did your team cooperate during the challenge?
- How did the activity connect the town exploration with inclusion?
- What did you learn about other participants while working together?



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# Dance Leader

Circle energizer through movement and rhythm

## Objectives

- Energise participants and start the day with positive group energy.
- Encourage connection and interaction through dance and movement.
- Develop observation, concentration and reaction skills.
- Support group bonding in a fun and inclusive way.

## Materials

Open space, optional music speaker.

## Description of the activity

Participants stand in a circle and choose one dancing leader and one guesser. The leader creates dance moves that the group follows, while the guesser stays in the circle and tries to identify who the leader is.



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The guesser has up to three attempts to guess correctly. The activity creates a positive and playful atmosphere, helps participants connect through movement, and supports group bonding through the art of dance.

## Reflection questions

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Was it easy to follow the leader and stay coordinated?
- What made it difficult or easy for the guesser?
- How did this energizer affect the group mood?



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# Origami Theatre

Creative storytelling through paper art and acting (workshop)



## Objectives

- Explore discrimination and barriers through creative storytelling.
- Support inclusion through art, teamwork and performance.
- Develop creativity, critical thinking and cooperation skills.
- Encourage self-expression through acting and visual creation.

## Materials

Colored paper / origami paper, scissors, markers, glue or tape (optional), pens, table space, sample origami tutorials (printed or digital), phones/tablets (optional for tutorials).

## Description of the activity

Participants are divided into international teams and receive art materials. Each team creates an interactive story that includes a clear example of discrimination or a barrier to inclusion.

They then craft the characters and scene using paper/origami. Trainers and group leaders support the teams during the process, and tutorial videos or origami apps can be used if needed. After preparation, each team presents its origami story through a short performance using acting skills.

The workshop helps participants reflect on inclusion through art and theatre, while improving teamwork, creativity and critical thinking.



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# Reflection questions

- How did your team choose the story and barrier to present?
- What was the most challenging part: creating, planning or performing?
- How did art and acting help express the message of your story?
- What did you learn about inclusion from the other teams' performances?



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# Toaster, Laundry, James Bond and Don't Speak

Circle energizer with group reactions and role associations

## Objectives

- Start the day with energy and a positive group atmosphere.
- Strengthen connection and quick interaction among participants.
- Help overcome social and cultural barriers through playful teamwork.
- Develop concentration, communication, reaction speed and creativity.

## Materials

Open space.

## Description of the activity

Participants stand in a circle. One participant is chosen as the leader and stands in the centre. The leader points at a participant in the circle and says one of the commands: "Toaster," "Laundry," "James Bond," or "Don't Speak."

The selected participant and the two participants standing next to them must quickly react together by imitating the chosen word/action as a small group. The activity continues with new commands and new participants, creating a fast, fun and energetic rhythm.



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# Reflection questions

- Which command was the funniest or most difficult to imitate?
- How did you cooperate with the people next to you?
- Did the activity help you feel more relaxed and connected to the group?
- How did this energizer affect the group's energy and mood?



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# Forum Theatre

**Inclusive acting workshop on discrimination and inclusion**

## Objectives

- Explore discrimination, barriers and racism through acting.
- Build empathy by stepping into real-life situations and perspectives.
- Encourage active problem-solving and inclusive thinking.
- Develop teamwork, communication, critical thinking, leadership and acting skills.

## Materials

Open space or stage area, chairs, simple props, costumes and masks (optional), paper and pens for script planning, markers (optional).

## Description of the activity

Participants are divided into multicultural teams and prepare a short play based on a real-life situation involving discrimination, barriers or racism. They choose roles, create a simple script, and prepare the scene and atmosphere.



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Each team presents its play twice. During the first presentation, the audience observes the situation, context and behaviours of the characters. During the second presentation, participants can interrupt the play, replace actors, and suggest or act out different responses to solve the issue in a more inclusive way. This continues until the situation is improved or resolved.

The workshop helps participants understand inclusion through experience, reflection and action. It encourages empathy, critical analysis and practical solution-finding, while also strengthening acting and soft skills.

## Reflection questions

- How did it feel to act in or intervene in a difficult situation?
- What solutions were most effective during the second presentation?
- How did this activity help you understand discrimination or barriers better?
- How can forum theatre support change in real life and local communities?



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# Inclusive Movie

Team video-making workshop on discrimination and inclusion

## Objectives

- Explore discrimination, racism and social barriers through filmmaking.
- Encourage solution-focused thinking and inclusive storytelling.
- Build teamwork, creativity, organisation and acting skills.
- Develop basic video recording and editing competences.

## Materials

Phones or cameras for filming, simple props/costumes (optional), paper and pens for planning, access to outdoor/indoor filming spaces, laptop/phone editing apps, chargers/power banks (optional).

## Description of the activity

Participants are divided into international teams and create a short movie (up to 10 minutes) showing a real-life example of discrimination, racism or social barriers. Each team is encouraged to include a possible solution to the issue in the story.

Teams plan the scene, choose roles, prepare materials, film the movie, and edit it using a preferred video editing platform. They may use indoor or outdoor spaces to make the story more realistic and expressive. After editing, all teams present their movies to the group.

Through this workshop, participants explore inclusion through visual storytelling, strengthen their connection, and build practical skills in acting, teamwork, creativity, organisation, filming and editing.



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# Reflection questions

- What issue did your team choose and why?
- How did you decide to show a solution in the movie?
- What was the most challenging part: planning, filming or editing?
- What did you learn from the other teams' movies about inclusion?



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# National Inclusion Presentation

Digital team presentation on discrimination and barriers in different countries

## Objectives

- Explore discrimination, racism and barriers from national perspectives.
- Increase understanding of inclusion challenges across different countries.
- Develop digital presentation skills and public speaking.
- Strengthen teamwork, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving.

## Materials

Laptops/phones/tablets, internet access (if needed), presentation platform (e.g. Canva or PowerPoint), projector/screen (optional), paper and pens for planning.

## Description of the activity

Participants are divided into national teams. Each team prepares a short digital presentation showing examples of discrimination, racism and barriers in their country. They create it using an online or digital platform such as Canva or PowerPoint.

After preparation, each team presents to the group. The workshop helps participants compare realities in different countries, understand inclusion issues from multiple perspectives, and learn from one another. It also develops digital competence and soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and public speaking.



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# Reflection questions

- What similarities and differences did you notice between countries?
- Which examples or perspectives were most impactful for you?
- What did you learn about inclusion challenges outside your country?
- How did your team cooperate while preparing the presentation?



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# Erasmus+ Writing

Creative project design workshop

## Objectives

- Introduce participants to basic youth exchange project planning.
- Promote Erasmus+ opportunities and youth initiative development.
- Develop creativity, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Encourage participants to turn ideas into structured project concepts.

## Materials

Paper, pens, flipchart sheets, markers, laptops/phones (optional), calculators (optional), sample project planning template (optional).

## Description of the activity

In international teams, participants design a mini youth exchange project idea that fits Erasmus+ priorities. They define the topic, participating countries, basic budget, logistics and a simple activity schedule.



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At the end, each team presents its project idea to imaginary EU evaluators. A “best project” can be symbolically selected to make the activity more engaging. The workshop introduces participants to Erasmus+ project thinking, encourages initiative, and motivates them to explore youth work, NGO involvement and future project development.

## Reflection questions

- What was the most interesting part of creating your project idea?
- What was most difficult: topic, budget, logistics or activities?
- What did you learn about Erasmus+ project planning?
- Did this workshop motivate you to join or create future youth projects?



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# THANK YOU

for taking the time to explore this booklet and for your commitment to building more inclusive and empathetic communities through art and non-formal education.

The activities shared in these pages were created, implemented and tested together with young people and youth workers from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Italy and Spain during the youth exchange Inclusion through the Power of Art in Yambol, Bulgaria. Each method carries real stories, honest reflections and creative solutions developed in an intercultural learning environment.

We encourage you to adapt these activities to your own context, combine them with your existing tools and share them with your team, partners and community. Inclusion grows when knowledge is shared and creativity is multiplied.

If you would like to learn more about the project or future initiatives, you can follow “United Future” on our official pages on Facebook and Instagram

Every time you implement one of these activities, you create space for dialogue, understanding and positive change. We hope this booklet supports you in that journey.



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