



Co-funded by the  
European Union



Agency for International  
Programs for Youth  
Republic of Latvia

ERASMUS+ PROJECT ON GROUP DYNAMICS AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS  
FOR YOUTH WORK PRACTITIONERS AND EDUCATORS

# The Power of Together: Building Stronger Groups Outdoors and Indoors

**KICK-OFF**  
training course

**3-11 August,  
2025**



**BOOSTER**  
seminar

**17-24 October,  
2025**



**Exploring group  
dynamics and  
applying non-formal  
learning methods**



# MAIN IDEA



## WHY?

We believe empowering young people begins with strong connections and effective teamwork. Youth often face conflicts, exclusion, and poor group dynamics, which affect their well-being and growth. This project aims to improve youth work by providing practical tools to address these challenges. Using experiential learning, outdoor activities, and non-formal methods, we'll explore how group dynamics shape inclusion, cooperation, and leadership.

### ***What are Healthy Group Dynamics?***

*Healthy group dynamics involve positive interactions, mutual respect, and effective communication, creating environments where everyone feels valued, heard, and safe to participate and contribute.*

## AIM

- Raise awareness of group dynamics and healthy relationships in relation to youth well-being and empowerment.
- Encourage critical reflection on personal group behavior and build skills to support youth.
- Share international experiences of unhealthy group dynamics in youth work.
- Provide and practice tools to foster healthier group relationships.
- Build skills to plan and facilitate non-formal activities that improve group dynamics.
- Apply concrete strategies within each organization to strengthen group relationships.
- Network and develop new Erasmus+ and ESC project ideas focused on healthy group dynamics.

**We want our activities to empower youth workers and educators with tools to promote quality relationships and cooperation – on individual and group level.**

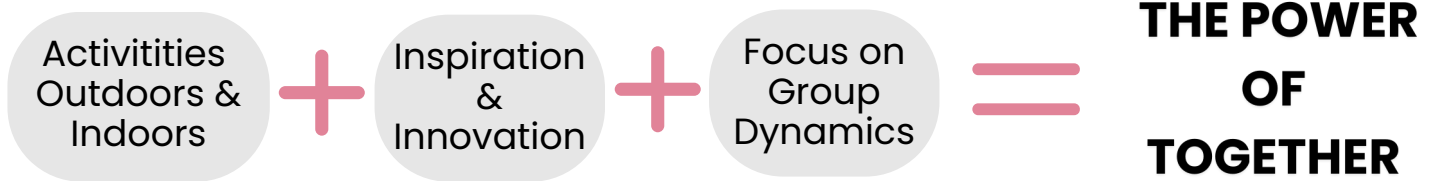
# HOW?



## APPROACH

To make learning powerful and transformative, this project is structured as a longer-term journey with two international mobilities and a crucial local implementation phase in between. It requires your active involvement in preparing, researching, and applying the knowledge gained by organizing local activities in your community.

During this project, we will combine diverse methods from various fields, including outdoor and adventure education, experiential learning, connection with nature, non-formal learning, and community work.



## OUTDOOR & INDOOR learning

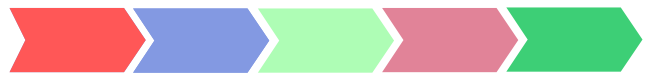
Our approach to this project is to bring the learning process “beyond 4 walls” as much as possible, because **active involvement of body and senses and being immersed in nature is crucial for our learning outdoors and in the nature.**

Our approach emphasizes bringing the learning process “beyond four walls” whenever possible, as active involvement of the body and senses in nature is vital for learning outdoors. We expect to spend significant time outdoors, so be prepared for activities in natural settings and varying weather conditions.

We will utilize both outdoor and indoor environments to create immersive learning experiences. Outdoor activities will be specifically designed to strengthen trust, cooperation, and leadership skills within groups. While the program will not include extreme survival tasks, be open to the challenges that may arise from engaging in activities outside your usual comfort zone, as these are valuable opportunities for growth and exploring group dynamics in action.



# TIMELINE



- **June – July** – Getting Ready. We kick off with online activities and research to prepare you and connect you with fellow participants.
- **3–11 August Kick-off Training in Latvia.** Dive in to build foundational understanding and gain practical skills in group dynamics through hands-on experiences.
- **August – October.** Putting it into **practice locally back home**, you'll apply your new tools by leading activities for colleagues and young people in your own community – turning knowledge into action!
- **17–24 October – "Booster" Seminar in Italy.** Reflect on your local experiences, deepen your expertise, explore advanced facilitation, and collaborate on exciting future projects.
- **November 2025 & Beyond** – Make a lasting impact, integrate your learning into your daily work, continue to support your peers, and keep the spirit of our learning community alive.

## CONTENTS

### TRAINING – LATVIA

This training builds a foundation in group dynamics and facilitation skills through:

- **Creating a Safe Learning Space:**  
Activities to build trust and connection.
- **Exploring Group Dynamics:**  
Understanding group behavior and its impact on youth.
- **Outdoor Team Challenges:** Hands-on experiences to observe teamwork and leadership.
- **Developing Facilitation Skills:**  
Enhancing your ability to lead inclusive, engaging groups.
- **Practice Lab:** Designing and testing non-formal learning methods.
- **Ongoing Reflection:** Regular personal and group reflection to deepen learning.

### SEMINAR – ITALY

This seminar builds on your local experiences, offering deeper insights and collaboration opportunities:

- **Learning Reflection:** Share outcomes from your local activities.
- **Group Dynamics & Social Impact:**  
Explore how group relations affect inclusion and exclusion.
- **Advanced Lab:** Test complex non-formal tools with peers.
- **Project Development:** Turn ideas into Erasmus+ & ESC projects.
- **Sustainable Impact:** Plan how to apply learning long-term.
- **Ongoing Reflection:** Continue processing and exchanging ideas throughout.

# PARTICIPANTS: YOUR ROLE IN THE PROJECT

This project is for youth work practitioners – including educators, youth workers, and similar roles – who want to improve their skills in working with group dynamics and fostering healthy relationships among young people. You will participate as part of a national team, typically 3-4 members from your country.

Join our international learning community to explore effective methods and share experiences with peers. While national team members might vary slightly between the two mobilities, we aim for continuity. Experienced young adults (18+) can also be part of the team for the second mobility.

National teams:  
Spain, Turkey, Italy –  
3 pax.  
of 4 people

As not all participants will be available for both mobilities, we expect national teams to be slightly different in training in Latvia and seminar in Italy. **1 or 2 participants could be replaced** by some active young members.

## WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?



1. Are aged 18+
2. Actively work with groups of young people (13-30) in formal or non-formal settings.
3. Are interested in group dynamics and community development.
4. Are committed to the full learning process, including preparing for and actively engaging in one or both mobilities.
5. To organise follow-up activities:
  - Leading at least two group-building sessions for young people (15+ youth per country).
  - Organizing at least one mini-training for colleagues (5+ colleagues per country).
6. Implementing new approaches within your work.
7. Will contribute to sharing project results and insights to promote wider impact.
8. Possess sufficient English communication skills for international exchange.
9. Are open to outdoor and indoor experiential learning.
10. Join us to develop your skills, build a supportive network, and make a lasting difference in fostering stronger, more inclusive groups for young people.

ENGLISH



# WHEN?

1st mobility –  
training

## DATES

Arrival day:

**Sunday, 3rd of August 2025**

Departure day:

**Monday, 11th of August 2025**

You can attend  
both mobilities or,  
if you are not  
available, only  
one of them.

2nd mobility –  
seminar

## DATES

Arrival day:

**Friday, 17th of October 2025**

Departure day:

**Sunday, 24th of October 2025**

Please be aware that  
within the programme  
visiting of cities and  
typical touristic sites is not  
included, so,  
if you want to see them,  
please plan some  
extra days.

\* You can arrive in  
Latvia/Italy earlier 1-  
2 days and leave few  
days later at your  
own expense.

# WHERE?

To be closer to nature, we have chosen to hold both mobilities in locations that are slightly more away from towns.



**Guest house**  
**"Zviguli"**, Gauja,  
Sigulda District



**Ostello Parco**  
**Monte Barro**



\* You would probably be flying to  
some airport near **Milan – Bergamo,**  
**Malpensa or Linate**, but if you can, we  
encourage also greener way of travel

# PRACTICALITIES



## COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

This project is implemented in the framework of EU's "ERASMUS+" Programme (2 mobilities of youth workers).

The accommodation and food will be covered fully. Travel expenses will be reimbursed at the maximum of flat rates **AFTER submitting valid tickets, boarding passes, invoices.**

If possible, coordinate your travel together with other participants from your country. We recommend to use search engines like kiwi.com or skyscanner.com to search the options, but to buy the tickets **directly** from airline websites (not kiwi.com).

Please make sure that **BEFORE** buying the ticket, you consult with us and get a "green light" for buying the tickets. We could assist you in finding the best options (Arta, the coordinator: [arta.zakse@gmail.com](mailto:arta.zakse@gmail.com); [+37129676337](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/00299a63333333333333) (whatsapp)).



### IMPORTANT

Please make sure to keep/save all your travel documents and share them with Arta by e-mail. These documents must include:

- A receipt or invoice for your plane ticket (with the price and date visible)
- Your **reservation email saved as a PDF**
- **All boarding passes or train/bus tickets.**

If you have any tickets in paper form, please keep the original and hand them over to Arta. We cannot refund copies—only original paper tickets are accepted. When in doubt, it's better to save more documents than fewer. Reimbursement will only be possible after the mobility and your follow-up activities, and only if you have submitted all the required travel documents.

Also ensure you have a valid ID card or passport, and that it is valid for at least 6 more months.

We cannot reimburse costs if you:

- Fail to submit the required documents
- Miss your train or bus
- Use non-public transportation e.g., taxis without our consent before.

\*Remember that boarding passes in an app, disappears in 2-3 days. MAKE SURE you download or prt scr and save them. Otherwise you will need to contact airline and the reimbussment process can take longer!

# TRAINING IN LATVIA

More detailed info pack about practicalities for seminar in Italy will be developed in September

## TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT

Limits of travel costs **per person**, including inland transport and insurance. It is very crucial to buy the flight tickets **as soon as possible!** If the budget is tight and you fly cheap airlines, we also recommend for 2 people to cooperate and only 1 person paying for check-in luggage (2 people sharing 1 check-in luggage).

If the tickets costs more that the budget then you cover the additional sum.

Please make sure that BEFORE buying the ticket, you consult with us and get a "green light" for buying the tickets. We could assist you in finding the best options ([arta.zakse@gmail.com](mailto:arta.zakse@gmail.com); +37129676337).

When the training comes closer, we will provide you with information on how to reach training location.



Latvia

28 €



Italy

309 €



Estonia

211 €



Greece

395 €



Poland

309 €



Spain

395 €



Turkey

309 €

## SAFETY and INSURANCE



- All participants during the projects will have to follow some basic safety rules (we will inform you about them more in detail during the mobilities).
- All participants **MUST BE** insured
- All EU country participants are asked to bring European Health Insurance Card too (otherwise most travel insurances don't cover some costs...).

## SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have any special needs in terms of health condition, mobility or food (such as vegetarian food, food allergies, food intolerance, etc.), we would like you to formulate these in detail and mention them in application form.

We will do our best to accommodate them (if possible). (If this will not be possible, we will let you know and try to find the solution together).



# ACCOMMODATION

The guest house "Zviguli" located 50 km from Riga, in the beautiful surroundings of Gauja National Park.

It is located near a road, so, getting there by public transportation from Riga should be quite easy.



Although the guest house is located in a very small village with private houses, cafes and shops are few km distance from the guesthouse, so, be ready to be "a bit isolated" :)

## ROOMS

Participants will share rooms of 2-5 people (of same gender), and some sleeping on couch beds or extra matraces added to the room.

As not all the rooms have private bathrooms, people from several rooms will be sharing bathrooms (so, be ready for short showering times :)).

Bed sheets and towels will be provided.



Link to the photos of the guesthouse "Zviguli": [www.zviguli.lv/galerijas/](http://www.zviguli.lv/galerijas/)

# WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU



- Suitable clothes for different temperatures. Multiple layers to put on in the layering clothing system “onion style”. Have some t-shirts, hoodie/sweater, rain/wind jacket, long pants, shorts, but don't worry – no need for “professional outdoor gear”. It could be enough to have some sporty and comfy clothes that you are ok to dirty
- Comfortable and sporty shoes for outdoor activities (it could be good to
- Thinner socks for regular activities and hiking (your feet should be well ventilated) and optionally thicker socks for cooler evenings and cooler nights
- Small backpack
- Swim-wear and towel
- Shampoo
- Water bottle (1-1.5 l) – for using during the exchange and refilling
- Personal HEALTHY snacks to quench your “sudden hunger” during the activities outdoors (small quantity of cookies, (dried) fruits, energy bars, nuts)
- Personal medications you might need and anti-allergy drugs
- Anti-mosquito repellent (could be 1 for few people)
- Sun protection – hat, scarf, sunglasses, and sunscreen (could be 1 cream for few people)
- Flashlight or head torch (if you have one)
- Ear plugs and eye cover
- Your own note-book

As there will be a washing machine in the guest house and you could manage to do a laundry in the middle of the project, we recommend you to do your best to travel light and not take TOO many clothes :)

## For National Coffee Breaks



To complement plain standard coffee breaks, please also take some sweets, snacks that are typical for your country/region (can also be non-sweet..). During the training we will provide space for all countries to share some of their food by serving it during one of the coffee breaks (for example, Spanish coffee break, etc.).

If you want to share some alcoholic drinks from your country/region, this could be done in the evenings.

# TRAINERS AND ORGANIZERS

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## LAUMA ŽUBULE – LATVIA



Lauma has been involved in youth work for more than 15 years. Starting out as an active member and later peer educator in Scout and guide movement, participating in youth educational programs, she continued with her studies in organizational psychology, supervision and coaching. She is a non-formal education trainer and practitioner, working with groups of youngsters, youth workers, teachers, social workers and people from the business field and state institutions. Subjects of her work involve emotional intelligence, team work, motivation, learning, outdoor and adventure education.

## IEVA GRUNDŠTEINE – LATVIA

Ieva has been working in the youth field since 2001 as a local and European project initiator and manager and since 2009 is an active trainer of non-formal learning in the field of youth. She has carried already more than 150 trainings for different target groups (youth workers, teachers and others). Last 8 years Ieva has also been involved in exploring Outdoor Experiential learning opportunities for youth work. She is also a member of pool of trainers of Latvian NA: <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/ieva-grundsteine.1858/>



## ARTA ZAKSE – LATVIA



The main coordinator. For the past years Arta works as HR professional at an international company.

Arta will be responsible for logistics of the project and managing your basic needs – food, roof and safety, and will ask for all the formalities such as travel receipts and etc.

Feel free to ask her about travel in Latvia as well.

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Feel free to contact her with any doubts:

[arta.zakse@gmail.com](mailto:arta.zakse@gmail.com)





# PROGRAMME

In this info pack we share the programme for training in Latvia. Changes are surely still possible – this is just to give you a general insight.

Time / day	A 3	Mon, August 4	Tue, Aug 5	Wed, Aug 6	Thu, Aug 7	Fri, Aug 8	Sat, Aug 9	Sun, Aug 10	A 11
8 - 9.30	Arrivals to training location	Morning ritual outdoors to connect to oneself (morning yoga, meditation) and breakfast							
9.30 - 11.30		Welcome & Connection  Intro, Youthpass, objectives	Understanding Group Dynamics (Theories, research results)	Outdoor Challenges: Testing Teamwork Under Pressure	Free morning ("me-time")	The Art of Group Facilitation: Building or Breaking the Flow?	Laboratory: non-formal learning activities to understand some more aspects about group relationship OR activities for building group and improving relationship	Reflection on Laboratory  Discussion on how to improve group dynamics among youth	Farewell and departure
11.30 - 12.00		Coffee break						Coffee break	
12.00 - 13.30		Share motivation	Self-Awareness in Group Work	Preparing for Adventure Hike	Reflection - personal and group experience	From Small Groups to Larger Social Divisions (Inclusion-Exclusion)		Learning journey, Youthpass, and next objectives in this project	
13.30-15.30		Lunch							
15.30-17.00		Creating a safe, supportive & trustful learning space	Unhealthy Group Dynamics and Behaviour	Adventure Hike with different individual and group exercises	Discussion on learning points from Hike experience, applicability for YW	Intro to Lab phase and division in groups  Preparations in groups	Laboratory	Planning of follow-up activities (in national groups and research groups)	
17.00 - 17.30		Coffee break			Coffee break			Coffee break	
17.30 - 19.00	Welcome	Continuation of Building Group  Small input and discussion: what is a Group?!	Empathy in Action: Understanding Others'		Open space - ideas for physical and mental well-being	Preparing for Laboratory, consultations		Summing up, evaluation and see you again	
19.00-19.30		Dinner	Time for reflection in group						
20.00	Welcome evening	Dinner							
After 21.00		Connection evening	"Boomer games"	Return from Hike ~2 am.	Relaxing (sauna) evening	Free evening	Open Mic Evening	Farewell	

# APPLYING

Deadline – latest by : June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Application form online: [ej.uz/applyGROUP](https://ej.uz/applyGROUP)

Selection results will be informed by your orgnisation: ~20ties of June

Looking forward to

SEE YOU  
IN LATVIA!



The project "Roots & Wings" (youth exchange) is financed with the support of EU's "Erasmus+" programme. This programme is administered by "Jaunatnes starptautisko programme aģentūra" in Latvia. It is coordinated by association "Piliens okeānā" ("Drop in the Ocean"), Latvia.

ANY QUESTIONS – COORDINATOR:

[ARTA.ZAKSE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ARTA.ZAKSE@GMAIL.COM), +371 29676337 (WHATS APP)

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