

PARTNER SEARCH – FRANCE & IRELAND / other country

LAYERS

Who are we, and who gets to decide what "we" means?

Erasmus+ KA154 – Youth Participation Activities

Planned implementation: 2027–2028

Coordinator: Basilicata Link APS, Italy

Partners sought: one youth organisation from **Normandy, France** and one from **Ireland (or other country)**

The idea

In the framework of **MILLENIUM – European Year of the Normans 2027**, Basilicata Link is developing a transnational Youth Participation project exploring a very contemporary question:

How are our identities built, and who gets to decide what belongs to "us"?

The Normans provide an extraordinary historical starting point.

From Scandinavian origins to settlement in Normandy, and from Normandy towards Britain, Ireland, Southern Italy and the Mediterranean, their history is one of **mobility, conquest, settlement, encounters and cultural transformation**.

But **LAYERS is not a project about celebrating the Normans**.

We want to use this shared – and sometimes contested – history as a lens through which young Europeans can critically explore **identity, belonging and cultural memory in Europe today**.

Why LAYERS?

European identities are often presented as ancient, homogeneous and clearly defined.

History tells a much more complex story.

The places and cultures we consider “ours” are the result of centuries of:

movement – encounters – conflicts – migration – conquest – exchange – adaptation – coexistence.

LAYERS will invite young people to question the idea of cultural purity and investigate how identities are continuously constructed and reconstructed.

Some of the questions we want young participants to explore are:

- What makes us feel that we belong to a community?
- Can identities change without disappearing?
- When does an “outsider” become part of “us”?
- Who decides which parts of history become heritage?
- Can the same historical event generate different and even conflicting memories?
- Can we protect local identities without turning identity into exclusion?
- How are concepts such as *roots, tradition, homeland, foreigners, invasion, migration* and *belonging* used in today's public debate?
- What does it mean to be simultaneously local, regional, national and European?

The project will connect these questions with contemporary European challenges including **polarisation, nationalism, migration narratives, disinformation and the construction of “us versus them” identities.**

The project does not intend to give young people predetermined answers. Its purpose is to give them **knowledge, tools and spaces to question, discuss and formulate their own positions.**

Three countries – three perspectives

NORMANDY – ORIGIN & MOVEMENT

Normandy represents the starting point of the European Norman expansion.

Young people will investigate how Norman heritage is remembered and represented today and how movement, settlement and cultural transformation contributed to the creation of Norman identity itself.

Key question:

Where do identities actually begin?

BASILICATA – ENCOUNTER & LAYERS

The project will involve the area of **Melfi, Venosa and Lavello** in Southern Italy.

Rather than presenting the Normans as the single origin of local identity, young people will explore them as **one layer among many** within a territory shaped by different populations, cultures, religions and political powers.

Key question:

What happens to identity when cultures meet?

IRELAND – MEMORY & CONTESTED HERITAGE

Ireland adds a particularly important perspective.

Norman heritage can be approached through settlement and cultural exchange, but also through conquest, domination and contested historical memory.

This provides an opportunity to investigate how the **same European history can be remembered very differently by different communities**.

Key question:

Who decides how history is remembered?

From history to the Europe of today

LAYERS will deliberately move beyond medieval history.

Historical investigation will become a tool for **critical thinking and democratic participation**.

Young people will explore the difference between:

FACT → INTERPRETATION → MEMORY → IDENTITY → PUBLIC NARRATIVE

They will also investigate the language used historically and today to describe people crossing borders:

migrant – traveller – foreigner – settler – invader – conqueror – refugee – expat – citizen.

These words are not interchangeable.

They reflect different historical circumstances, but also different perspectives and power relations.

Rather than making simplistic comparisons between medieval Norman expansion and contemporary migration, participants will examine a broader question:

How does the language we use to describe human mobility influence the way we define “us” and “them”?

The participation dimension

LAYERS is conceived as an **Erasmus+ KA154 Youth Participation project**, not as a historical exchange or heritage project.

Young people will therefore be directly involved in researching, questioning, discussing and communicating the issues explored.

Possible activities include:

Identity Labs

Local workshops exploring belonging, identity and perceptions of Europe.

Archaeology of Identity

Young people investigate buildings, words, traditions, objects, places and stories to uncover the different cultural layers behind what is today perceived as “local heritage”.

Same History, Different Memories

Young people from the three countries compare how Norman history is narrated in their communities.

The Language of Belonging

Media-literacy activities analysing words, narratives and representations connected with identity, migration, roots and belonging in contemporary public discourse.

The History Trial – Conquerors or Connectors?

A participatory format in which young people examine different interpretations of Norman expansion using historical evidence and multiple perspectives.

Transnational Youth Labs

Meetings between young people from Italy, France and Ireland combining non-formal education, heritage exploration and democratic dialogue.

Dialogue with decision-makers

Young participants engage with municipalities, cultural institutions, researchers and European/local decision-makers to discuss how communities represent their history and identity.

A possible final outcome

Rather than producing another conventional project manifesto, participants could develop:

THE LAYERS DECLARATION

Questions young Europeans want Europe to ask about identity

A youth-generated set of questions and reflections emerging from the three national experiences.

The process will explore principles such as:

Identity ≠ purity

Tradition ≠ immobility

Heritage ≠ one single story

Belonging ≠ ancestry

These are starting hypotheses, not conclusions: young participants will be free to question, challenge and reformulate them throughout the project.

The final results will be presented and discussed with local and European stakeholders in the context of **MILLENNIUM – European Year of the Normans 2027**.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for **two motivated partners**:

One organisation based in Normandy, France

- **One organisation based in Ireland - or any other country in which identity has been influenced by the Normans (or, in other words Norman culture is a powerful historical layer that still shapes the regional identities of modern populations).**

Ideally, partner organisations should:

- work directly with young people;
- have experience in non-formal education and youth participation;
- be interested in identity, European citizenship, democracy, history, cultural heritage and/or media literacy;
- be able to involve a stable local group of young people throughout the project;
- be willing to involve local authorities, historians, museums, heritage organisations or other relevant stakeholders;
- be interested in co-designing the project rather than simply joining an already defined programme.

Previous Erasmus+ experience is welcome but **shared motivation and the capacity to involve young people actively are more important**.

For Ireland, organisations based in or around **Dublin** are particularly welcome, although proposals from other areas with a meaningful connection to Norman heritage will also be considered.

We can also consider to have partners from Malta, Germany, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

For France, we are particularly interested in organisations based in **Normandy**, including smaller towns and rural areas connected to MILLENNIUM 2027.

About Basilicata Link

Basilicata Link APS is an Italian youth organisation based in the Basilicata region, active in European youth mobility, non-formal education, volunteering, social inclusion, intercultural learning and community-based youth work.

The organisation has extensive experience within Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps and has previously developed projects such as **STAY – Small Town Active Youth**, exploring youth participation, creativity and life in small communities.

With LAYERS, Basilicata Link wants to connect this long-standing work on **young people, mobility, territory and belonging** with the unique European opportunity offered by MILLENIUM 2027.

Interested?

We are not simply looking for organisations willing to “participate in an Erasmus project”.

We are looking for partners interested in **questioning the idea together** and bringing their own perspectives, local histories and young people's voices into its development.

If these questions resonate with your organisation, we would be happy to start a conversation.

LAYERS

Our identities have a history. Let's dig into it.

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