

Project Title: Preserve Your Heritage

Dates: late June 2018

Venue: Sveti Martin (near Zagreb), Croatia

Participants: 10-12 per partner, ages 13-15 (45 in total)

Partners: Croatia, Georgia, Portugal and *looking for one partner from the Nordic countries.*

Project description:

Nationalistic populism is spreading quickly through the Western world. One of the best ways of fighting nationalism is giving young people the opportunity to meet people from other countries and to explore other cultures. This YE is meant to give precisely these opportunities to young people from poorer and more provincial parts of Europe the chance to travel and engage in intercultural experiences with their peers from other countries. The applicant is a provincial primary school in Croatia and it wanted to expand its non-formal education activities for its students. It has chosen this international project because the majority of parents in the community cannot afford to send their children abroad and to give them the opportunity to challenge themselves by meeting different people from different cultures. The applicant was also selecting partners from similar background - organizations from either more provincial or poorer parts of Europe where young people have less opportunity to travel and explore the world compared to the rest of their peers.

Objectives

1) improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, as well as to promote active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity

Young people will become more curious about the world around them, especially the world outside of their local communities. They will develop positive attitudes towards learning new things about other cultures and appreciating differences between people and cultures. They will also be more confident meeting new challenges in communicating with people from different cultures. In a nutshell, young people will broaden their horizons through this YE, become more tolerant and accepting of others, which is especially important for very young people (13-15 years of age) when they are developing their opinions, values and attitudes. This YE is especially important for Young People with Fewer Opportunities whose parents often cannot afford to send their children abroad where they can be exposed to people from other cultures.

In this YE young people will compare different aspects of their lives and culture with young people from other countries - how they play and have fun, what they eat, what are the local customs and similar. By challenging their values and norms of behaviour with values of young people from other countries, they will also learn more about their own culture.

Young people will also learn about the importance of helping those less fortunate. For this purpose, young people will gather all the left-over food from lunches and dinners and will go to distribute it to the poorer households in Belisce. In addition, they will visit the SOS Children's Village in Ladimirevci where they will play and pass the knowledge they acquired during this YE to children without parents. These activities will also develop positive attitudes about helping those less

fortunate because young people will see how grateful marginalized people are when attention is given to them and young people will feel very good about helping those in need.

Young people will use the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired in this project to be more inquisitive and curious in school and will use Youthpass they will receive in this project to obtain scholarships in their later education or find a job easier.

2) foster quality improvements in youth work and cooperation between organisations in the youth and education field

Partner organizations will learn new non-formal education methods and will use this knowledge to increase the number of additional activities outside of official school curricula. Also, partner organizations will form ties and will use them in future projects. During this youth exchange young people will start creating plans for a new youth exchange next summer. The partners will also use this project to create ties for future cooperation in formal education projects through ERASMUS+.

Forming international ties is very important for partner organizations because most of them come from provincial and poorer parts of Europe with less ties to the rest of the world. Also, for some of them this will be the first international project. They will use this project to create new competencies in managing international projects. At the same time, this project will create positive attitudes towards international projects among young people and their parents.

This project addresses the following needs:

- more intercultural experiences for young people in provincial and poorer areas
- more tolerant and accepting youth
- more non-formal learning activities provided by partners
- active participation of young people in their local communities, especially targeting inclusion of marginalized groups
- increased self-confidence and self-esteem;
- enhanced employability and improved career prospects
- increased motivation for taking part in future international projects

Main activities of the youth exchange:

With the eurosceptic populism on the rise, it is important to invest more in young people to show them that they have far more in common with young people from other countries than what divides them. With many European countries have open-border policy, it is easier to travel abroad than ever before. However, in many provincial and poorer areas of Europe traveling abroad is not common for young people. The aim of this project is to provide opportunities to young people from this type of communities to meet their peers from different cultures and countries and at while they are still very young (ages 13-15). Teenagers are in the process of forming their own worldview and the sooner they get exposed to values of multiculturalism and tolerance and acceptance of different people the stronger the impact will be. This project will not be about lecturing young people the "liberal worldview". Instead, young people will live in a multicultural environment; they will see how rewarding it can be; they will learn how to communicate with different kinds of people and to resolve conflict amongst themselves.

In order to increase the impact of intercultural learning and to create a very multicultural environment, the partners come from very different parts of Europe - Caucasus, Central Europe, Northern Europe and Western Mediterranean Europe. The activities will exploit this richness in culture and traditions that partners will bring to this project. Even though the participants will be very young (13-15), they made significant contribution to the creation of this project. Young people have chosen topics like entertainment, food, music, local customs and similar as topics they wish to explore with their peers. Also, they have contributed to creating some workshops and will actively lead the implementation of some workshops (e.g. traditional dances and food).

Objectives

- learn more about other cultures and their own culture

During the YE young people will explore different aspects of contemporary culture and cultural heritage of partner countries - cuisine, language, traditional crafts and dances, how young people play and entertain themselves and similar. Young people will look for similarities and differences between their cultural traditions. In this way, they will learn more about their own culture.

- develop tolerance and acceptance of others

Young people will come from very different cultural backgrounds and during this YE young people will learn to appreciate that being very different from you is very interesting because you can learn so much from the other person. In this way young people will view different people as an asset to their lives instead of threat. The positive experience of being a member of an intercultural group will shape their values and behavior to not only tolerate people from different religions, cultures and countries, but to actively embrace this diversity as an added value to their lives.

- develop solidarity and compassion for those less fortunate

During this youth exchange young people will include less fortunate groups from the local community in Sveti Martin - they will be delivering food to the poor and needy families and will organize a playing event with a marginalized group like children without parents. Young people will see how grateful less privileged people are when someone pays attention to them and helps them in their time of need. Also, young people will experience how wonderful it feels and rewarding it is to help others. Therefore, during this YE they will continue to support those in need in future.

- develop self-confidence and self-esteem for tackling new problems

For many young people this will be first time they travel abroad without their parents, for other this will be the first international and intercultural experience altogether. Going to another country, meeting new people who speak different language (many of them will not speak very good English) and hanging out with people who have different norms and patterns of behaviour will be a big challenge for the participants. However, by successfully going through this youth exchange young people develop self-confidence and self-esteem that they are able to resolve any problems they face.

- improve knowledge of English language

The official language of the YE will be English but many of the participants will not be fluent in English. Therefore, while communicating with other participants they will learn many new words and expressions and will significantly improve their knowledge of English and develop confidence to use English.

- improve networking for partner organizations and develop new ERASMUS+ projects

Partner organizations will use this project to develop stronger ties between their organizations and to plan for new projects. At the end of the YE young people will develop new project ideas for future YE projects.