

Call for partners

Who are we?

United Societies of Balkans (U.S.B.) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Thessaloniki, Greece working in the field of youth mobility, participation and facilitating society's awareness about social issues, inclusion and understanding.

U.S.B.'s objectives and values are actualized in the society and the needs of the society by:

- Promoting the values of non-formal learning, volunteerism, active citizenship and democracy for the creation of a better future for the European citizens;
- Promoting human rights, solidarity and respect for diversity amongst society;
- Involving minorities and immigrants into youth and cultural activities;
- Building healthy cooperation bridges between countries of the area of the Balkans and Eastern Europe with the rest of Europe;
- Using New Media and Citizens' Journalism methodologies to encourage youth and citizens' expression, to raise awareness about Human Rights and to promote intercultural dialogue;
- Utilizing the arts as a tool for the cultivation and expression of people;
- Locating and multiplying the special cultural attributes of our societies;
- Breaking down prejudices and stereotypes among the European countries and amongst people.

The organisation has significant experience in organising international activities and gives the opportunity for local people to interact with peers from different European countries. USB has successfully implemented more than 60 projects, about various subjects across a range of ages, having hosted more than 2,800 people in Greece. Therefore, USB has developed very diverse and considerable experience in youth work, having worked in different topics that have advanced its expertise in human rights education, intercultural learning, gender-related issues, new media techniques, entrepreneurship, ecology and many more.

Moreover, USB has been involved in more than 1000 youth projects and has prepared and sent around 2,500 youngsters abroad to youth mobility projects. USB always tries to give priority to youngsters with fewer opportunities, such as Roma, LGBTI, immigrants, rural, etc. USB has also been part of the three-year project "Spreadthesign-Syria", a project that, as an objective, has to develop online dictionaries of sign languages and make them accessible.

The project

The project #DEAFinition aims to promote the community of the Deaf and raise awareness about Sign Language, Deaf culture and the rights of the Deaf, among a group of 30 young people from 7 countries. The implementation of the project will be supported by the use of Arts, such as theatre, drama and film. The participants will have the opportunity to learn International Signs and take part in drama and theatre workshops and, most importantly, they will experience the active creation of either a short film, documentary or a theatre play.

As a result, they will develop their ICT skills and they will gain experience in planning and organising a dissemination event, where they will present the outcomes of the exchange.

The participants, through working and interacting with others in a multicultural and multilingual environment, will develop interpersonal and organisational skills and a sense of respect for diversity and inclusion.

The project is divided into five phases:

1. Team building activities: during the first three days of the project, the participants will get to know each other better through ice-breaking, team-building activities and lessons of International Signs. They will also familiarize with the community of the Deaf and its special cultural and social characteristics.

2. In the second phase of the project, the participants will take part in a ‘workshop carousel’, splitting into three mixed groups (Deaf and hearing) of ten people, and rotating between the workshops. Drama therapy approaches will be incorporated into the sessions and the participants will also learn the basic techniques of theatre and acting.

3. Collection of materials: in the third phase, the participants will choose the way that they would like to present their outcome; through a theatre play, a short movie, or a documentary. The host organisation will provide them with the respective equipment and the topic on which the participants will be working will be raising awareness about Deaf culture.

4. Creation of the outcome product: The following days of the project, the participants will be working on developing their products. Specialised professionals and instructors will be available to help them and guide them through the process.

5. Dissemination: All the outputs will be presented in a special event that will take place on the last two days of the project, where the local community will be invited to attend. The outcomes will be recorded and shared as a product of dissemination, for future activities and events.

Objectives and activities

1. To promote cultural diversity and inclusion.
2. To raise awareness about the Deaf community, culture and language.
3. To create connections between Deaf and hearing participants aiming to achieve equality and intimacy between the two cultures.
4. To inform the hearing community with regards to Deaf culture and Sign Language.
5. For Deaf to feel more comfortable among the hearing community where their language and culture is respected.
6. To build collective consciousness towards the fight against discrimination.
7. To empower a group of 30 young people by educating them with the knowledge and skills to use, in order to raise awareness and promote human rights.
8. To use the aforementioned skills to run their future campaigns and projects
9. To enhance the digital, professional and personal skills of both Deaf and hearing young people, preparing them for their future careers with an enriched personal portfolio.
10. To build a strong network of organisations for joint action that concerns the Deaf community.
11. To open the way for future programmes in order to reinforce the connection of the two cultures.

During this project the participants will:

- Take part in theatre activities and workshops

- Follow their initiative to create short films, documentaries or theatre plays in order to raise awareness
- Dance in Silent Disco and in Deaf Hip Hop rhythms
- Meet Deafhood
- Learn International Signs and develop their Sign Language skills
- Dispel myths and stereotypes around deafness

Participants profile:

- Young people, over the age of 18.
- Interested in Arts, with previous experience in theatre and/or film making.
- About Deaf participants: Having a sign language as their first language.
- About hearing participants: Interested in other cultures and languages, but not with previous experience in Sign Languages or contact with the Deaf community before.
- Willing to work in teams

The role of the partners

- To find 4 participants over 18 years old, at least two of them Deaf.
- To find a group leader with previous experience in Sign Language and interaction with the community of the Deaf. The leader could be either Deaf or hearing.
- To support the preparation of participants giving them information about the logistic, the accommodation and the transport;
- To find a sign language interpreter that can use both the Sign Language of their country, but also International Signs.
- To collect information about the specific needs of participants and send them to the hosting organization;
- To support participants in the follow-up activities after the mobility;
- To promote the project and the campaign through their channels, websites and social media.

Role of USB

- Project management of the project;
- Responsible for the logistics and to inform partners about the accommodation and transportation;
- Organize the workshops and provide facilitators and competent instructors;
- Give direction and guidance about the creation of the project outputs;
- Responsible for the financial management of the project.