ERASMUS+ PARTNER IDENTIFICATION FORM

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| **A. PARTNER ORGANISATION** |
| OID | E10304525 |
| Full legal name (National Language) | Τέτα Μάρα |
| Full legal name (Latin characters) | Teta Mara |
| Acronym | N/A |
| National ID (if applicable) | N/A |
| Department (if applicable) | N/A |
| Address (Street and number) | Leivadotopi 0, Nestorio |
| Country | Greece |
| Region | Δυτική Μακεδονία |
| P.O. Box | N/A |
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| CEDEX | Ν/Α |
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| **B. PROFILE** |
| Type of Organisation | Group of young people |
|  Main sector of activity | Organizing cultural activities and involvement possibilities with local community |
| Is the partner organisation a public body? | No |
| Is the partner organisation a non-profit? | Yes |
| **D. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE** |
| Please briefly present the partner organisation. | Teta Mara is an informal youth group created in early 2022. The initiative was created based on the needs expressed by young people living in remote areas and rural areas around Kastoria. Living in one of the poorest and with the highest unemployed rate areas of Greece, the young people of the group expressed the need to create opportunities to express themselves, acquire skills, and to expand their horizons to new experiences, while fostering active participation and citizenship at the local level. Teta Mara is working at the grassroots level, having always as a priority the needs and interests of the young people involved within. Teta Mara is based at Nestorio but at the same time, it works as a reference point for all the young people of the surrounding villages and settlements, in the area of Kastoria and Western Macedonia.Teta Mara means Aunt Mara (Θεία Μάρα) and it's used as a way to refer to bears in some villages around Western Macedonia. The bear is strongly present in the mythologies and folk tales of the area of Kastoria. Although big and threatening in appearance, in stories, the bear always has positive characteristics, while often helping people (especially children and youth), hence the name 'Aunt'. Our group envisions building on this legacy, being a beacon for the youth of the region, not just creating opportunities for training and employability, but also creating a safe place to grow and create within a framework of diversity, acceptance and equality. In particular, we aim to fight the inequalities created due to economic status, distance from big cities, fewer opportunities to participate in formal education, as well as the stereotypes that follow young people who live in small, remote and rural communities.Western Macedonia is located in north-western Greece, a sparse, mountainous province that has a population of approximately 280,000 people mostly living in rural areas. As of 2021, the region had one of the highest unemployment rates in the European Union with the unemployment of young people to be near 47% - with the biggest part being NEETs and/or young women. The region is fairly isolated from the rest of the Greek mainland. Only two airports, serve the region while the mountainous landscape and lack of public transportation can make it difficult to traverse between villages or even towns. While officially the main economic activities of the region are mining sites, electric power production, tourism and fur - in fact, most rural residents are engaged in agriculture, livestock and logging. The whole region has only 36 upper-secondary school units, the lowest number in Greece. It is also a fact that most young people who leave their villages and cities either for vocational training or for university education do not return, washed away by the high rates of unemployment and the lack of opportunities both in terms of economic development and in terms of quantity and quality of the services offered to citizens (hospitals that are under-functioning, lack of opportunities for entertainment, missing social structures such as psychological support, social workers, etc.). All of the above, combined with the almost complete lack of civil society in the region, let alone organizations working with and by young people, led our group to become active and rally around the vision of Teta Mara.There are currently 20 people actively involved in the group, either volunteering or taking part in frequent events, with the number growing daily as the group becomes better known in the area. Most of these people live in rural and remote areas, are NEET themselves, or have such people in their circle of friends and family - but most of all, they are people who love their area and want to see it progress and develop. At the same time, people originating from the region but living and working in other large cities are also actively involved in the group, especially since many of these people have previous experience with non-formal learning, human rights education, diversity and inclusion, and/or environmental protection, issues which also strongly concern the young people of the region.Target groups: Youngsters living in remote and rural areas, between 13 to 30 years old, regardless of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation. Special interest in NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) regardless if they have this status due to short or long-term unemployment, are unavailable due to family responsibilities, are discouraged workers or are inactive for other reasons.Fields of work: Non-formal education, human rights education, environmental protection and ecology, active citizenship and participation, youth empowerment and employability in rural areas, diversity and inclusion |
| What are the activities and experience of the organisation in the areas relevant for this application? | Τhe group's goals are the promotion of youth empowerment and employability, the creation of opportunities for the NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), active citizenship and participation at the local level, the promotion of non-formal education, environmental protection, and Human Rights education. Therefore, the scope of activities of the organisation is divided in the following 4 pillars:1)Youth empowerment and employability in rural areas: the majority of young people who live in rural and remote areas in Western Macedonia, are employed in small-scale agriculture or livestock farming. Women and youngsters are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment, and poor employment conditions. The group aims to create projects and opportunities for young people for improvement of employment prospects by providing access to modern, market-oriented soft skills, as well as supporting the creation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups;2)Promotion of non formal education: Non-formal learning assist young people with decision-making and builds self-confidence. In addition, non-formal education promotes a spectrum of skills, with the majority of the lacking from other traditional forms of education. Activities based on non formal education reduce obstacles for young people with fewer opportunities to participate, especially in cases in which youngsters haven't conclude secondary education, are NEETs or facing other situations that make it difficult them to obtain skills through other paths;3)Environmental protection: Biodiversity is severely threatened and declining in many parts of the world, unfortunately including the region of Western Macedonia. There are 11 NATURA protected areas in Western Macedonia, two National Parks, eight lakes, rivers, valleys and a number of significant archaeological and geological sites. Teta Mara firmly believes that environmental education help young people to develop a deeper understanding of environmental and ecological issues and obtain the skills to make informed and responsible decisions; 4)Active citizenship and participation: Participation in civil society and active citizenship is the right, the means, the space and the opportunity, as well as, the support to participate in decision-making, influence decisions and engage in actions which contribute to building a better society. Youth participation further aims to serve development of a democratic society, giving the opportunity to youngsters to make their own voice heard. All the activities realised by the group are based on the strengths of the young people and their active contribution. Each activity during the preparation phase is examined and formulated according to the following criteria: • Needs-based: the activity should be built around the needs, interests and aspirations of the young people participating and targeted by the activity; • True participation: young people are embedded in the project design, carry out tasks and take initiative, aiming to use their competencies and develop; • Tailor-made: the activities adapted to the competencies and previous experience of the young people, the methods suitable to their age, background and previous knowledge; • Supportive approach: the activities are adapted so that are inclusive of all, especially since most of the beneficiaries are youngsters with fewer opportunities; • Social dimension: the facilitators of the activities help everybody to mingle and find their place in the group, keeping the activity fun, without losing the educational dimension;Since the creation of the group is very recent, the activities are of a purely local nature, in informal contexts and having as a guide the immediate needs of the target groups. More specifically, after a needs analysis done by Teta Mara members, activities for learning basic English, developing soft skills through non-formal learning, introduction to human rights as well as environmental awareness began to take place. These meetings are open to all young people and are held in different villages both in the morning and in the afternoon, with the aim of giving access even to people who do not have a means of transport, are engaged in agricultural work many hours a day or/and are primary caregivers to small children and the elderly.During the summer of 2022 the group hosted a series of study visits from youth workers and members of youth organisations. Part of the aim of those study visits was the familiarization of the youth workers with the unique reality of the region, for example by visiting the villages of Grammos, Kotyli. Peukofyto and Kali Vryssi which have few residents and no public transportation, albeit are livingly. The group had the opportunity to discuss with the youth workers, who shared good practices for working with young people with fewer opportunities while gathering feedback on the group's activities so far. |
| What are the skills and expertise of key staff/persons involved in this application? | The group is made up of young people who live or come from the wider area of Western Macedonia, with the main core being in the villages of the Kastoria area. Members of the group have diverse educational, economic, social and ethnic backgrounds - however, the vast majority are people with fewer opportunities or NEETs. Although a large proportion of the members of the group have previous experience with non-formal education, active participation in civil society and the opportunities offered to young people by EU programmes, some of the group members have little or no experience, have not traveled abroad and/or do not speak a language other than their mother tongue.When formulating proposals for projects but also in the context of action planning in general, group members contribute democratically with their ideas, indicate their needs and provide feedback before each final decision. All decision are taken starting at the grassroots level, while special attention is given in the needs of youngsters belonging in minorities or are facing discrimination at any level, having always intersectionality in mind.Specifically, in the creation of the following proposal, as well as in the implementation of the resulting actions, the following people are actively involved:Luiza Tsikala: Managing Director – Luiza has studied Balkan, Slavic, and Oriental studies, but her passion lies in youth work and the promotion of human rights education. Since 2010 she has been a volunteer and a member in various organisations, while participating in many EU mobility programmes as a participant and facilitator of non-formal education. From 2017 and on, as a youth worker, grants writer and project manager, she has developed, coordinated, and involved in more than 45 EU-funded projects (Erasmus+, AMIF, Europe for Citizens, EYF, etc.), especially in the areas of LGBTI+ rights, gender mainstreaming, active participation, youth policies, intersectionality, integration of refugees and migrants, prevention of sexual violence and promotion of human rights. Luiza is the only resident of Livadotopi, a previously abandoned settlement near Nestorio. Fotini Papasotira: Communications Manager – Fotini has a background in the Travel and Hospitality sector, having worked, since 2017, in different sectors of the hospitality industry, including lodging, food and beverage service, travel and tourism. While working directly with hundreds of customers from different countries, cultures and backgrounds, she is passionate about intercultural dialogue, civil rights and the promotion of diversity and inclusion. Fotini is in charge of all dissemination activities of the group, including both online and offline channels of communication. Fotini has various certifications in social media marketing, as well as experience in managing the social media accounts of businesses and organisations. Mateo Natsi: Equality & Diversity Officer – Mateo has studied Theater and later did a Master in Hospitality Management, while since 2013 he has been working in the hospitality industry's Food and Beverage sector. His family migrated from Albania in Greece during the 90s, something that lead Mateo to be especially interested in diversity issues, integration of refugees and migrants, minority rights and intercultural dialogue. As the Equality & Diversity Officer of the group, he is responsible for making sure that the groups are engaged and activated, while he supports and mentors young people belonging to minorities or experiencing some form of discrimination. Meanwhile, he is delivering diversity workshops to the community.Kostas Toumpidis: Mobility Officer – Kostas has a background in the IT sector, working as Network & System Administrator. Since 2008 he has participated and volunteered in different organisations, with a special interest in social welfare and cultural understanding. Kostas has participated in many EU-funded projects since 2018, while he is enthusiastic of non-formal education. |
| **E. LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE** |
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| **E. CONTACT PERSON** |
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