

# Creativity

stories to inspire

guidelines to succeed in motion...

# Creativity

in motion...

# **Creativity in motion...**

A collective work, a profound intercultural encounter of reflections and ideas, a showcase of the lived experience, a purveyor for the memory, a compass for what is desirable to come...

A publication that seeks to illustrate the past of "Creativity" and pave the way for its future...

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# **Prologue**

## Creativity?

*Is it a matter of talent?* 

*Is it a matter of practice?* 

We believe that it's a matter of attitude... That's why in 2004 we took a decision to dedicate our energies, thoughts and ideas plus a whole intercultural youth mobility project to creativity.

> Our goal was simple: to give space, time and inspiration to young people from all over the world to express themselves in issues and themes that concern them and their peers.

We did it using a very productive and appealing method: **art**.

Looking back to all these years we feel very proud because we belong to the group of friends that started and pushed forward the "Creativity" project.

With this group of friends we are still together, designing and preparing new youth mobility adventures, but always somewhere in our mind, in our soul exists the spirit of "Creativity".

Probably it is not the biggest in the world (numbers has never been the case for us, whatsoever) even more not the most famous (we like it underground, anyway!) but for sure it has offered to us the most wonderful memories of our lives.

We believe in imagination...We adore Creativity... We love to live with no limits....

And you?

## Introduction

Inevitably, two things need to be introduced in this little available space:

- a) the "Creativity" project itself;
- b) the publication you hold in your hands.

For the former, these pages are not the only source of information. A dedicated web site, www.creativity.gr, can shed light to your questions while it will surely enliven the project's eminent past!

For the latter, few words about the work on the back stage, can really show you why we finally did it (which is as important as how we did it!)

All in all, we aim at bringing you inside the soul of a project that brought together hundreds of young people, from dozens of different countries, during the last few years and led to a one-of-a-kind publication...this one. And we want to do this, in a couple of lines. Challenging, isn't it?

But we are used to that, nonetheless!

## The "Creativity" project: interesting bits & pieces

Technically speaking, "Creativity" are projects funded by the European Commission's "Youth in Action/Youth" Programmes. They are categorized as multilateral intercultural youth exchanges.

Everything started in 2004 by "Kids in Action" with the helping hand (mind and soul) of several partner NGOs from different European countries. Thenceforth, several editions of the concept took place.

Different themes have been addressed:

- Peace & Solidarity (2004), Greece
- Tolerance & Diversity (2005), Greece
- Love & Unity (2006), Greece
- Democracy & Participation (2008), Greece
- Creativity.cat Act for interculturality (2009), Girona, Spain
- CreArtivity Creativity & Innovation (2009), Greece

The main vehicle for having young people expressing themselves in these themes has been traditional and contemporary forms of art. These include video, web design, street theater, circus, dance and more.

The vision? Noble and global... Creating a "A world where difference is a driving force, equality is a must, mistakes are means for change and development and creativity is being". <sup>1</sup>

The desired outcomes? Several: increased solidarity, enhanced intercultural understanding, fostered respect for otherness, active participation in things that matter to oneself and the society, utilization of arts not only for the purposes of aesthetic enrichment but as means for expanding possibilities for expression on all what influences the lives of young people.

The results? Countless, remarkable, inspiring, encouraging, surprising! We are in a struggle - starting from this publication - for making them available to everyone.

The future? Who knows? But we almost believe we can create it!

### This publication: whats and hows

The concept for this publication evolved in part-fulfillment of our collective message to all youth workers and hosts in the youth mobility field, that we must constantly strive to raise the quality of our youth actions. This can only be achieved and maintained through the on-going evaluation system of (D. Kolb), that is; Action, Reflection, Conclusion and (re)Planning. After 5 "Creativities" in Greece and 1 in Spain, the need for such an international evaluation was recognized, as was the collective "Creativity" experience of the authors to enable them to facilitate such a process.

The publication that you now hold portrays to you the feedback received from 80 past "Creativity" participants from 16 European countries. They have outlined for the reader, exactly what "Creativity" means to them, how they would like to see it moving towards future improvement and finally we have outlined step-by-step, how to organize a "Creativity" in one's own country.

Bringing the pieces of the puzzle together has been the collective work of Padraig O' Sabhain - Galway, Antonio Pedro Barbosa - Porto, Eduard Gutierrez - Vilanova i la Geltru, Athanasios (Sakis) Krezios - Thessaloniki and Giorgos Georgiadis - Thessaloniki. The "Youth in Action" Programme of the European Commission has provided the funds needed. The Greek Institute for Youth (www.ify.gr) has been supporting us throughout the whole process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Taken from www.creativity.gr

## The lived experience

Creativity means to make, to begin, to launch or to set forth.

"Creativity" by "Kids in Action" does so much more than this; it is a creative process that empathizes with and embraces the youth world and seeks to dynamically evolve and maintain its appropriateness to all youth, with no exception.

Because no one is better than another, there is no in or out, up or down in the circle that is "Creativity".

Either because we want the memory to be alive and to keep learning from it or because the truth is in the lived experience of every individual, we asked two very simple questions related to the "Creativity" projects to its former participants.

Therefore the messages outlined and future directions proposed here are those of the most important people within the "Creativity" process: the youth directly involved.

## The questions were:

- (1) Just what being part of "Creativity" has meant to them? How would they describe their experience to their friends?
- (2) How would they like to envisage "Creativity" in the future years, what would they like to see included in it, where would they like to see its direction going?

We are merely the conduit in a process that involves the action of 6 "Creativities", reflection on these events, conclusions drawn from them and their learning /proposals inclusion in future plans.

Photos included in this rather visual, "multi-voiced", narration are all, unexceptionally from the "Creativity" projects.





(Alex Thenner, Austria) Imagine the Universe! So many planets, stars and solar systems, and for sure-creatures! And now imagine all of them coming together for 10 days. And now remember your teacher when he/she told you about the ideal system of harmony and democracy!....combine it...Voila...Creativity!!!



(Carlos Brandao, Portugal) So far, Creativity means being in a place where intercultural exchange is possible and encouraged in rather unprejudiced environment. I think the most interesting part is the exploration of new and original thought through international co-operation. As for describing it to others, it's an environment people should experience at least once and a chance to open up your borders (physical and mental).



(Monika, Bulgaria) It is the way one person expresses his or her individual inner world, but it is also the way that we understand the others, because everything in this world is connected. One cannot live alone. Creativity is the thing that helps individuals to interact and understand each other even though they are so different.



(**Pedro, Portugal**) Creativity is under my skin, it's part of my blood; it's in everything I do every day! It's a space / place where you can express and be yourself, learn a lot with the others, build together and understand the meaning of team work, exchange, art, love, unity and participation. It opens your mind and your heart.



(*Vítor Tavares, Portugal*) For me Creativity is interaction promoted by activities, workshops and free time. A place where we try to develop ourselves and our skills, and where we can show this to the others. It is a life experience. Better than a description is to participate!



(Katrina Pistola, Greece) Creativity is like injections of the spirit of the people who are coming here and somehow by an invisible and imperishable immaterial positive energy that floats around here, your imagination jumps to the peak.



(**Davide, Italy**) Creativity is one of the best experiences of my life. It is a very good way to mix a lot of different cultures and styles of life: through workshops you could learn and enjoy with a mixed group, through free-time you can enjoy sport and know other cultures. I think that also the country group is a good experience, living 10 days together and concerns a lot of things like sleeping for the 1st time in the same place.



(Halmze & Lena, Germany) I think that Creativity starts with an idea that might be constantly followed in to a good movement



(Marcin, Poland) Creativity is the real You, the person you want to be.



(Florin Bataran, Romania), Creativity was the chance to feel free after a very long time, to see that hope lies within ourselves and that we can count on each other, and that you can have tremendous fun among people you've just met



(**Luis Amorim, Portugal**) Creativity is a great European experience, where you can express yourself and all the potential that you have. It's a place where you can exchange ideas and feel new things, a place that can open your mind and your heart!



(**Selene, Italy**) Creativity is an opportunity to know new people and new thoughts and to challenge myself



(**Lukasz, Poland**) For me Creativity is a chance to improve my English and an opportunity to improve myself in many different ways. I can meet here people from many different countries who teach me a lot. It's a great motivation to work harder after returning to Poland, learn languages and so on.



(Sigrid Lederer, Germany) Creativity was a life-changing experience, here I learned that everything is possible.....and I got to know the best friends.



(Jose Antonio Zurita, Spain) Creativity is a new way of life; you know many interesting people and share unforgettable feelings... simple and phenomenal!!!



(**Helmut - jimmy- Schabschneider, Austria**) Love; a paradise-like place that makes you feel better about the fate of the world again....... and feeling free.



(Olwin Schrauwen, The Netherlands) To me Creativity was and is the ultimate energizer: to create such a level of positive energy between young people of different backgrounds, in such a short time, is simply unique. Creativity means sharing the same creative rhythm with 100 people during 10 unforgettable days. Never before and never again I felt so comfortable with people formerly known as strangers.



(Ricardo, Portugal) A life altering experience. An opportunity to learn an incredible amount of skills, resources and knowledge always smiling and having fun. It doesn't make people good but it makes them better.



(**Stanislaw, Poland**) I like that Creativity people create a lot of positive things and it's not a product for selling. Also it's good that it's a place and time that I can practice my character with 'the help' of other people during some plays, parties etc!



(Sigrid Janisch, Austria) It's freedom, different cultures meeting and exchanging, harmonic living together, despite differences. You get to know different ways of living.



(**loanna Symeonidou, Greece**) creativity is an opportunity to express through arts global concerns about issues such as peace, solidarity, love, unity, democracy; It is an artistic volcano, where thoughts and feelings that burn come on the surface with the form of an artistic outburst. It is a life experience that fills you with happiness of expression, a place to create and share and enjoy the process; it is a rainbow of people from different countries, colours and religions.



(Magda, Poland) It's a great opportunity to meet people from different countries, learn things about their countries and their way of living. It's even more developing than workshops because it shows that there are much more things in common between us Europeans than we suspect.



(Sakis, Greece) Creativity meant and still means that another World is possible. A World where difference is valued and mistakes are opportunities for change and development. Creativity is being, a living space where people are coming together to live the maximum of their human needs for self-realization, belonging and evolving. It is s a never-ending harmony, a magical drum beat! Move with us!



(Eduard Gutierrez, Vilanova I la Geltru) Creativity: an experience that changes lives and persons, An open-minded space, A place for sharing with equals, learning by doing and doing by learning, Something that every youth should live once!



(Michal Makowiecki, Poland) Creativity has changed my life. It has awaken in me the big wish to make it last forever, to fill my life with it, not to make it a one-time experience. Suddenly I knew that I have to move something to make it happen more often in my life, so I have started to search for ways how to bridge that kind of international and creative spirit into my daily life. After some time I have found an association that made it possible. I have joined it and now I am organizing my own projects, travelling a lot and all these small things put together in a row are making my life full of very special events. Creativity set the fire!



(**Stratos, Greece**) Creativity is a unique space that gives you the possibility to interact with a huge diversity of young people



(Uvis, Latvia) By creative means everyone can feel and stand.

Creative is a universal disclosure unlimited by age, tongue or nascence. If I could create something (story, song, dance, painting, photo, etcetera) most people could engage upon, I would die happy.



(**Zuzana, Slovakia**) Creativity changes your view of things in one or another way. I have been to youth exchanges before, but none of them was of such importance to me. It is a place that opens your mind and heart etc! The creative energy floats in the air and I found a lot of 'people' of similar thinking and approach to life as I have.



(**Micheal, Ireland**) Creativity means meeting different people from all over Europe in a pleasant and sunny atmosphere and having the freedom to express just who you are without fear or favor.



(Ana Oliveira Dias, Portugal) There are not many words that can describe Creativity because only when we have participated will we realize that it is a Life Experience. It's learning for our own, People here are just great.



(Aoife Giles, Ireland) God I don't know where to start, as for me personally Creativity meant so, so, so very much. I was lucky to be there on two occasions and each time it was like a world away, such a magical place. My first time at Creativity I was only 19 years old, still a baby in so many ways, but being in Creativity helped me on the road to being more independent, more social and less shy, more open minded as a person. It was an overall amazing experience to get an in-depth, first handed experience into so many different cultures. It's such an unique experience that anybody who is offered the experience should definitely jump at the chance...Creativity is most definitely a paradise.



(Kadri Karu, Estonia) For me Creativity meant opening up emotionally, physically and from the creative side as well. I laughed a lot, I made acquaintance with a big salty sea, I danced like mad, I was fully inspired by our Luna Park workshop team and leader, I admired people around me and I almost fell in love. So, Creativity is a garden of fecundity.







Many of the following guidelines will resemble guidelines on how to organize a multi-lateral youth exchange, but it must be remembered that "Creativity" is more than a multi-lateral youth exchange. "Creativity" is a phenomenon and through all these years, much work has been invested in achieving and maintaining a quality control over the fulfillment of its aims and objectives, especially those relating to the physiological and sef-actualisation needs of the participating youth. Thus, while many similarities will exist here, youth leaders/workers wishing to organize a "Creativity", will find help and guidance in every step from the existing experience. The steps to follow might include:

## A) Background work to be conducted 12 - 9 months prior to the implementation dates

- If the idea for a "Creativity" did not come directly from the youth, you must propose the idea to them and bring them on board, give them ownership of the project, full participation in the decision making.
- Gather around you a group of local youth, youth leaders and persons with good organizational skills, who are interested in the idea and are able to invest a lot of time and energy in the organization and facilitation of the project. This must happen at least a year before the proposed "Creativity" date.
- View on the Creativity websites (www.creativity.gr and www.creativity.cat), video clips / pictures / reports of previous editions.
- Send some of these youth / leaders / possible organizers on the next available "Creativity".
- Draw up a list of possible venues where:
- there is a certain extent of isolation
- there is a maximum of 2 hours drive access to airports / train & bus stations etc!
- they can host around 100 persons, (sleeping, feeding, showers etc) in perhaps 6 to 14 different comfortable sleeping areas, for between 9 and 12 days
- there are about 6 to 9 different workshop areas
- there is one very large common area to assemble this group
- there are some external social facilities available
- the night-time party areas are far away from the sleeping area
- there is an internal communication and music system
- Contact your National Agency (NA) of the European Commission's "Youth in Action" Programme with regard to application dates and levels of funding available

- The critical thing to watch for here is the flat rate payment per day for the participants for food and accommodation and whether this will cover the costs of food and accommodation at your possible venues. You will probably require other sources of funding.
- Contact all your partner groups to gauge their levels of interest, especially noting if the dates of availability of your venues suit those of your partner groups' availability.

# B) Funding application work to be conducted 9 - 6 months prior to the implementation dates

Ideally you should place your completed application with your National Agency (NA) 2 terms prior to the final application dates, that is by November 1st deadline for events that should take place after May 1st and by the February 1st deadline for projects that are to take place after July 1st. This way, should you encounter problems with your application you will have another application date by which to make things right for your National Agency and possibly avoid the tedious work of contacting all your partner organizations and agreeing new dates which will suit the hosting-venue and all of your partners – a process which never works out 100%. Generally when something of this nature happens one is left trying to substitute one or two partners and it gets messy, a general Pian Sa Toin .

The Irish National Agency / Leargas, for example, uses a preliminary date for applications for youth exchanges, which is normally 2 to 3 weeks prior to the final deadlines. This is a great idea, as it allows them to work with the applicant should any further information be needed; the drawback is that it brings the date for applications that much earlier and gives you less time to prepare your application. Check if there is a similar system in your county's National Agency.

Your partner numbers and delegation sizes will have to be less than the maximum sleeping capacity available at the chosen venue. Please be advised to avoid applying for a multi-lateral exchange with only 4 partners (host + 3 others), as should one partner pull-out then you might be left with a tri-lateral exchange, something entirely different for funding purposes. So, always have at least 5 partner groupings in a multi-lateral exchange. For a multi-lateral exchange of "Creativity", we go for the maximum numbers under the funding rules, that is 72 persons and this is usually comprised of 12 partner-groupings (countries), each with 6 persons (1 leader and 5 participants). Actually a case can be made to accommodate 84 persons, should minors (under 18 years) participate and that 2 leaders are required for each group. Thus, many of the partner groupings remain the same from one year/Creativity to the next, but it is good to mix/change one or two each year. Though the partner organisations generally remain the same, the actual participants should be new persons, those who have not been present before, and pref-

erably young people that never had the chance before to participate in an intercultural youth exchange.

Thus, one completes the application form, demonstrating, amongst other things:

- Where the idea for the exchange came from;
- What are the aims and objectives for the exchange;
- How all partners are involved in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the exchange;
- An itemized daily programme;
- How the exchange promotes the aims /priorities of the European Union's youth sector;
- An itemized budget;

That your exchange will have a good gender balance and if possible 'tightness' of ages present. "Creativity" should, among other things, promote the inclusion/participation of young people with less opportunities.

**Note:** The completed appropriate project application form should be accompanied by a signed and stamped "Part III" from all partner organizations. While an e-copy might suffice for the initial application, it is generally better to have a fax copy and totally the best to have the originals from your partner organizations. A support letter from the sending organization to the "Creativity" host organization will also help them to demonstrate that a good level of co-operation and trust exists between the organizations. Thus, you should require these from your partners well in advance of the application date from your partners, remembering that postal systems throughout Europe differ quite a lot in their efficiency. Know your partners also and which you can trust to get this to you on time. Your application cannot afford to be missing even one.

**Note:** You will also need from your partners their estimated travel costs, including all travel within their country (getting to the airport etc!) and yours (getting to the project venue if you're not picking them up at the airport). This will generally include busses, trains and airplanes. Usually, the cheapest means of travel is required and thus internal flights are advised against. All travel must be receipted and all documentation kept and gathered by you the applicant, upon arrival of the participants, especially the boarding cards for airplanes. You will need these for your final report.

**Note:** if you' re getting the travel estimates 6 months to the proposed "Creativity" implementation period and especially so if the implementation period is to be in the summer season, then it is always a good idea to add around 10-20% to the group total, because flight prices usually rise for that time. If you do not do this

and the prices rise, you cannot give them any more than you have agreed for with the National Agency (in total).

**Extra Personal Accommodations Extensions:** Please note that all participants must be clear that your duties to provide accommodation and meals begin on the first night of the official exchange implementation period and finish at the official completion/departure time.

While, it usually happens that some participants request to spend a few extra days in your country/city or indicate to you that their flights would be much cheaper if they were to travel some days before the exchange implementation dates or depart some days after, please know that you have no obligations to provide this accommodation and absolutely cannot take money from your budget for this. Advice should be offered to help these participants to locate safe and cheap/hostel accommodation.

**Note:** Some National Agencies have outer limits on the dates that can appear on the travel tickets/receipts from the participants of "Youth in Action" co-financed events. Therefore while participants can normally spend one or two more days in an event location, you should check with your National Agency that their travel days are within the period allowed. Otherwise they might be putting your agreed travel budget in jeopardy.

## C) Advance Planning Visit (APV) of the leaders from your partner groups

Advanced Planning Visit (APV) is a meeting of all partner organizations in the host country. It takes place before the youth exchange, suggested to be one month before, in order to maintain quality preparation. Usually, one leader and one participant per partner group attend the APV. Its duration is of 2 days maximum (travel days excluded).

This should always take place, accepting no excuses for its omission !!!

We recommend that you host/attend the APV for the following reasons:

- You have the chance to meet with the group leaders (in person) and begin to bond as a team.
- You get familiar with the area where the activities will take place.
- You can have an eye on the accommodation facilities and other practicalities (TIP: If the youth exchange includes host families, you must try meeting them during the APV)
- It gives you the opportunity to discuss and try out all the facilities and provisions arranged by the host organization such as food, cleaning, bathrooms etc! and to talk about your participants' needs and how these needs will be taken care of (e.g. vegetarian food, allergies, health issues)
- You can discuss with the other leaders about safety issues and together a "safety map" can be drawn and put in place. You can even talk about your participants and their needs when it comes to their safety (e.g. You might lead a group of young people with mental or

physical disabilities, or you might even have in your group youngsters with psychological issues, fears or even coming from difficult social environments).

- Rules can be discussed and applied after common agreement (for example with regards to alcohol consumption, drug use, safety and of course monetary payments and repayments)
- You can discuss the security measures (including insurance) to be undertaken by the hosts.
- You will be introduced to the programme of activities and you will be able to give input and change it in agreement with the other group leaders if necessary. You can also suggest changing the accommodation place, the timetable or a particular day of the project.
- You'll have the chance to assess all possible risks on the spot and respond to them with the input of every leader.
- You can collect photos and information to present to your group and the people involved in the youth exchange.
- The APV also gives you the confidence and knowledge of practical travel arrangements before bringing the group (most probably using the same route/itinerary).
- At the APV you can agree with the other group leaders on a common problem-solving strategy.
- It is crucial that the APV and the youth exchange leader is the same person. That should be made clear by the hosts and also by the partners to those the role is delegated.

## As Host of the APV, you will ensure:

- The APV takes place at a month in advance of "Creativity"
- If possible the APV should take place in exactly the same venue that will be used for the exchange, if not the leaders must at least be brought there to examine the venue. Everything must be viewed, kitchens, dining hall, bedrooms, shower and toilet facilities, workshop areas and medical room.
- That a doctor and/or nurse is available at all times
- All partner groups shall have the leader in attendance for the full duration of the  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{APV}}$
- Try to utilise the same airports/modes of travel that you will use in the exchange
- Let the leaders sample the same foods as you will use in the exchange, as much as possible
- That the entire programme is discussed and fully understood by all leaders present and that they are presented with the materials to bring back to the national groups (timetables, maps etc!)
- A final agreement report is typed up and signed by all leaders before they leave the venue.

#### Note Well!

The APV must be applied for at the same time as the exchange (on the same appli-

cation form). Once more you will need to estimate the travel costs for the participants, so you must agree whether they will attend as one leader or be accompanied by a young person (this arrangement allowed by the European Commission does not fit within the Irish guidelines on child protection, if the participant is under 18 years of age). Also, you, as host, will need to collect the receipts of travel and boarding passes during the APV. You will need them for your final accounts.

## D) Final Preparation prior to hosting a "Creativity".

Noting that you might not know the result of your funding application with the NA until 6 weeks prior to the project, all arrangements will have to be firmly in place, as much of your energies will be occupied with final preparations at this stage, rather than opening new avenues of support, both financial and artistic. (We wish to stress here once more that to apply 2 funding terms before the project offers you a lot more preparation time before the event, if the project is approved). At this time, everything should be in place such as:

- Travel Arrangements: Getting all participants from the air / ferry ports / trains / bus stations to the venue
- Getting workshop facilitators and all necessary equipment to the venue
- Getting social / free time equipment (music, volleyball, canoes etc!) to the venue
- Getting the administration equipment (computer / printers / paper / inks to the venue
- Accommodation: enough bedding / pillows / sleeping bags / mosquito nets and some extras
- Barbeque equipment, if this has not been supplied by the hosting venue
- Extra chairs / benches / tables / fridge / electricity leads for night time bar area
- Thrash/recycling bins and plastic bags for thrash and arrangements for its disposal

## **Expert Persons:**

All expert persons should be on the site of the "Creativity" exchange at least one day before the event begins, especially those that have not the possibility to travel there in the weeks/months before. They should prepare their own work areas and materials, to convert it into a comfortable work area, in which they can give of their best.

All expert persons and members of the Facilitation/Animation teams must be as role models for the participants. What they do and how they behave will speak much louder than their words.

The "workshop facilitators" are amongst the most critical persons to the project, they must be able to motivate the participant and sell their product, especially when the participants are tired, half way through the exchange.

The "animation team" are the most important group of people, critical to the success of the exchange. Theirs is the job of keeping everyone moving, motivated, happy and participative. Their self-sacrifice must be ultimate.

The "administrative team" are critical to the success of the project, as well. This group most likely includes you, but please know now that you cannot do it alone! You will surely fail, unless you are surrounded by an expert team, broadband connection to the internet and a good landline telephone.

## The Programme:

Everything possible on the programme should be tied down at this time, certainly anything that involves going out of the camp or members of the public coming into the camp, basically anything that involves a third party. In the case of a "Creativity", a critical point of the programme involving the public should be the final performance. This must be arranged in its entirety.

**Note:** We (along with the philosophers...) will stress that *Life is about the journey and not the destination*. Still to set out on any journey, we need to set ourselves towards the destination. We need goals in life, in order to attempt to improve, maybe we will not achieve all the goals, but they are necessary for our motivation. Without them we will become lazy and careless. To have this final performance before members of the public, pushes us to a higher level and also increases the public awareness and involvement in the programme. This is all good and helps the application to succeed in the eyes of the National Agency.

**Social/Free Time Activities**, arrangements must be put in place for participant free-time. This is critical to the success of the exchange. Though the equipment might not be used, still it must be there.

**Signage/directions**, all destinations and arrangements around the exchange venue should be signposted in the main languages of the participants, not just in English or whatever the agreed working language is. This demonstrates respect for the participant groups and their mother tongues. Timetables / programmes for the exchange should also be displayed in the different participant languages.

## **Publicity / Press:**

No publicity is bad publicity. This statement says it all. You need to have formed good relations with your local / regional / national press and they need to be aware of the event before it happens. Give them all the information about which country groups will visit their region and what you hope to achieve. Invite them to a press briefing and / or to visit the exchange, especially invite them to the fi-

nal / public performance. Also strive to bring other forms of the media on board, such as radio and television. Create a website for your "Creativity", or utilise the international "Creativity" website (www.creativity.gr) with links to your organization, if that is possible. Don't forget to mention the European Commission's support (check the Contract for the exact citation) and use the right logos (check the Guide).

### Police / Neighborhood committee:

Be absolutely sure to alert the local police and any neighbourhood committees to the fact that the "Creativity" will take place in their locality and that the music/noise levels will probably be higher than normal. Give them as much information as possible to bring them on board and almost make them stakeholders in the project. This way, they should give you less grief.

E) The Implementation of the "Creativity" Exchange.

## The Leader / Facilitator / Sees Everything!!!

Once the exchange has begun, the person with overall responsibility must become its facilitator, allowing the workshop leaders and task forces to get on with their own work. Try to get to know the participants, be there for them, if possible. You must remain as free as possible, not tied to a desk. You must be ready to answer any call, to attend to any emergency. You must expect the unexpected! You will need to keep a special eye on the minority groupings, in order to ensure that their special needs are being addressed, such as vegetarians etc! What tends to happen a lot is that they are served the same meals as the others, simply minus the meat! This is not enough and they cannot be expected to survive for the duration of the exchange on pasta or potatoes; they will need nutrition also. Having advised this, you will also have to address the needs of the majority, with the general running of the exchange. When it comes to afterhours and curfew time around the sleeping area, a minority wanting to party cannot be allowed to disturb the sleep of the majority. If people need reminding of agreed rules and timetables, then you need to be the leader. In response to serious transgression of agreed rules, such as use of drugs etc!, you might even need to send people home or at the very least, send them out of the exchange, depending on their ages and your legal responsibility to them.

# **Communications / Networking:**

Constant communications are "key" to the successful implementation of the project, that is; on-going daily meetings of each country grouping and the leaders meeting. Without these meetings the project will not be a quality one, people will get lazy, become careless and this is when accidents are caused (happen).

Sometimes participants (even some leaders) will consider these meetings a waste of time,

especially if they conduct one or two meetings with their country group and have nothing to report back to the leaders meeting. However, even having nothing to report back (accepting that the meeting did in fact happen) is a positive statement to the exchange organizers; it indicates to them that much of what they have put in place is operating successfully.

Communication must also be on-going between the workshop facilitators and the animation team, with regard to the attendance and participation levels within the workshops, especially as the project approaches the middle days and people are getting tired. Also information from these teams/task forces must be presented to the national group leaders, as they are ultimately responsible for the behaviour and participation of their young people. Without all these systems and support networks in place, the exchange will not run smoothly. These various teams and task forces must meet every night, no matter how briefly.

#### A Communications System within the "Creativity" Implementation:

You must ensure that you have put in place a concrete communications system and that everybody in the "Creativity" youth exchange (participants, leaders and facilitators) know exactly who is responsible for what and who to approach when enquiring about or suggesting something with regard to different areas of work and play etc! This system needs to be followed pragmatically in order to ensure a smooth running, clean machine, communications system. As well as ensuring some media presence and publicity for your exchange, you must ensure to gather a constant stream of photos and little video-clips. Apart from being able to utilise these within the exchange (a mini movie-night etc!), you will need them for your final report. One must also ensure that news is uploaded to the "Creativity" website daily, no matter how brief and carry also a picture of the day.

#### Mid-term evaluation

Evaluations are accepted as part of the closing process in any exchange project. However the Formative Evaluation (within the project time-frame) is actually more critical to the success of the project. The Summative (final) Evaluation will highlight areas of improvement towards the next "Creativity" but a mid-term evaluation will help you to look after the needs of the immediate / present grouping. It will be too late for them, should you find out at the end of the exchange that they did not like the food / bedrooms etc!

#### Implementation of the rules,

During the exchange, it is ultimately the exchange leaders' job (you perhaps?) to oversee the implementation of the rules, especially those rules agreed at the APV. Obviously you will not run around like a dictator, but neither will you neglect your duties in favour of imagining that you are in a popularity contest. When the hard calls have to be made you must make them without fear or favour. Ultimately the buck stops with You and the rules were agreed and put in place for the safety of the project and its participants. If something needs to change, change it and always put safety first (if you must err, err on the side of caution). Remember that you can't please all of the people, all of the time.

#### Final evaluation

This is a very valuable exercise and one that needs to be executed very carefully. Often exchange evaluations are conducted late at night on the final day or even in the departure morning. Such an action robs you and everyone else of a very real learning experience. It is only by reflecting on an action or an event that we can conclude on how to make it better and the tool of evaluating allows us to do this, especially so when we invite everyone who participated in that event to evaluate themselves and to offer us their own conclusions. Therefore as a "Creativity" organizer you must ensure that a good time is set aside for the evaluation, a time that will not be in danger of being stolen and used for something else. It must be a time of the day when the participants are awake and energized and the evaluation should be implemented in various forms, not only the written format. Offer the participants more than one format of expressing their opinions and conclusions about the event. When necessary and possible, challenge them and ask them to explain their opinions, inviting a discussion amongst the entire group, avoiding personal ridicule, welcoming, thanking and cherishing all ideas / proposals / opinions. Have records of the evaluations, as you will also need these for the final report to your National Agency.

## **Pre-Departures**

#### Arranging returns to the Airports, Train and Bus Stations:

These arrangements will have to be finalised at the same time that you gather the travel documentation from each visiting group. Remember that you might also have other participants that are not entitled to travel re-imbursements (open-callers), but that you will also arrange their travelling to their departure points from your country. Only when you know everyone's departure times can you work out the most economical and comfortable way of getting them all to their desired destinations.

#### **Monetary Repayments:**

The partner organisations that have supported your application to "Youth in Action" Programme will be entitled to receive 70% of the agreed travel costs from you and this can be given to them in cash or bank transferred to their organisations account, whichever is agreed between you and your organisations. Also, please note that it can be given to them at any time that you agree to within the exchange (after you have received their travel receipts and boarding passes from the airplane travel to the exchange). If you have arranged a day-trip with the timetable of the exchange, it is a good idea to give them the money (cash – in the agreed currency) before this, so that they can use it, if they wish, on the tour.

#### Return airplane boarding passes:

You must never stop insisting that they send back to you the return airplane boarding passes, train and bus tickets etc!, once they return home. This is the leaders' of the partner groupings responsibility, but you must keep reminding them until the last minute. You

might even give them an envelope with your organizations address typed clearly on the envelope so that they have no difficulties with a foreign language or even the address layout on the envelope (some countries put the house numbers first on the street line, others at the end). These boarding passes are critical to your final report submission.

### **Post-Departures**

Clean-up of the exchange site: 'It's nice to be nice', and not to put your visitors working, but it would most certainly be in your best interest to attempt to have most of the site clean-up done prior to the departures of the participants. If you can break down the "Creativity" camp site into 8 or 9 common areas and send a team of participants with one of the local leaders (who knows how the site is required to look) into each area for even one hour, then most of the physical work will be completed. If it is left to you and a few leaders to clean all afterwards it will take a very difficult entire day to achieve this. Be pragmatic at this time and use the resource available to you, get the country leaders on board and most of the participants will not mind to lend a hand.

#### Final report:

Once you have recovered, some days after the end of the exchange, you should begin gathering all the required documentation that you have together in one place / box and set about writing the final report (on the official downloadable National Agency report form), as you await the receipt of the boarding cards and any travel receipts from the various partner groupings. This is also a good time to pay all remaining bills and making sure that you have an official receipt for all money spent. There will be a lot of very important paperwork here and the best advice that we can offer you is to begin it as soon as possible and to get into the habit of putting /keeping it in one box, all together. For this you will also utilize some of the pictures/video clips and participant evaluations.

Probably the most important document that you will need to guard with your life is the participant signature document. You should begin to collect these signatures as soon as possible after the exchange has begun, at least by the time that you are making the reimbursements. You can chase-up receipts that you might lose (hopefully not), but once the participants leave you, that's it, you will never see most of them again and certainly not within some months. It is only upon submission of this final report and the National Agency's acceptance of it that your organization will receive the remaining of the agreed grant.

Remember that advice and help is always available; don't loose the chance!



Before relating any participant comments on what changes might be implemented in the evolvement that is "Creativity", it must be acknowledged that many of the questioned participants made it known that they were of the opinion that the present format of "Creativity" is perfect and they did not wish to see any changes made.

However, inspiration can be certainly drawn from the following:

#### Location

Many participants propose that "Creativity" should evolve to be presented in all countries of Europe and even in the world! Some interesting differences were amongst the forwarded proposals regarding the staging of "Creativity" in different countries. Various participants proposed that "Creativity" becomes a moving itinerant festival, travelling all around Europe and staging the project in the different host countries. Other participants proposed that while "Creativity" should be staged in different countries, that its location should be chosen by a central "Creativity Committee", much as the Olympic movement chooses where the next Olympics will be held!

It should also be acknowledged here that "Creativity" was held outside of Greece in 2009 (August 7th – 16th) in Girona, Spain. This represents the very first staging of "Creativity" outside of the country in which it was born and prefaces this timely discussion on the future of "Creativity". Also needing to be acknowledged here is the fact that a few years ago the organisers of "Creativity" did a lot of work towards having participants present from South America and Africa. Due to visa restrictions and obvious financial implications this worldwide attempt did not succeed. However many important lessons were learned through this attempt. While there would seem to be an unstoppable force within "Creativity" that it be staged in various countries and indeed continents, the steps to be taken and the many proposals forwarded here by past and present "Creativity" participants need to be fully explored and discussed before many actions are taken.

### Number of "Creativities"

Many figures/numbers are being forwarded in the participant proposals that "Creativity" should happen here, there and everywhere. Some very enthusiastic participants are stating that they would host "Creativity" next year and when questioned, they advised in reply that they had never organized an exchange or achieved a grant under the "Youth in Action" Programme. Once more the need to explore and discuss all proposals is highlighted here (please see section on "How to organize a "Creativity"). At this time, amongst the organizations presently participating in Creativity, those that have the Time, Organisational Staff / Volunteers, Money / Funding and Facilities / Location with which to host a "Creativity" are few. Very much planning, preparation and inter-organisational co-operation is needed

before we can realise the dream of hosting two "Creativities" every year, one in Greece and one elsewhere. We must remember that finances and resources are limited at this time. Also we must never choose a road that might even open a possibility of lowering the quality standards of Creativity.

### Quality / Standards / Safety / Staff in the facilitation of Creativity.

As witnessed in other pages of this publication the vast majority of respondents have let it be known that "Creativity" has been and continues to be "perfection" for them. Whether proposing new activities or directions that might be incorporated in future "Creativities" or amongst those proposing that nothing should be changed, there is little doubt that comments are being made on the basis that we are operating from a total quality framework. These are the standards that we have set ourselves and to date (2010) they have ensured that 6 "Creativities" have been facilitated, to a very comfortable standard in relation to physiological needs (food and accommodation etc!) and to an amazingly high standard in relation to self-actualisation needs (self and artistic expression etc!). These standards must now become the base standards to which all future editions must strive and we cannot afford not to match them.

The principle of "paramountness" in the case of "Creativity" shall refer to safety for all, participants, leaders, facilitators, organizing staff and site staff. No consideration shall take precedence over safety; it shall remain the paramount one. Every other consideration shall be read/implemented secondary to this.

Staffing levels impinge on safety and yet as well as the numbers of leaders present, their skills/qualifications and ability to run a workshop or activity safely must always remain the first consideration, crucially, even if this means cancelling a workshop.

Proposals in this area include:

#### That there be assembled an International Facilitators Team.

This proposal, if implemented, needs to begin operation at the planning stages (even by an electronic meeting format, if a physical presence is not possible). Because this event, wherever it is run will always include youth from different zones of Europe (quite apart from the rest of the World), and expert consideration needs to be implemented as early as possible in a plan, considering the views, morals, laws and customs of all types of peoples and cultures expected to participate. To inform a gathering of leaders some weeks before an event (eg. AVP) of readymade plans is not conducive to best-practice in planning for such a major event, amongst the largest multi-lateral exchanges in Europe. This team should (if at all

possible), be the implementation team at the exchange, much as the leaders present at the Advance Planning Visit should be the leaders to lead the youth on the exchange.

#### That there be new workshop leaders and from different countries.

This proposal was inevitable and in no way should it be read as a slight on the present workshop leaders' abilities or love for their work. After many years of giving of their services to "Creativity" and facilitating the same workshop, some ideas have gone stale or energies have run dry. This has come about simply because we are dealing with Human Beings and it is human to err. In all walks of life, we tend to implement what has worked before. This action neglects a quality control cycle of building towards improvement in quality, where one has to reflect on an action (delivered workshop) and make and implement conclusions on how it could be improved. Perhaps, in the case of "Creativity", a weakness in the system allows returning participants to always enlist in their chosen workshop (which seems logical) and yet we end up with participants being paired with the same workshop content and workshop facilitator for many sequential "Creativities". Perhaps, a system should be implemented whereby a participant should be allowed to participate in 2 "Creativities" in a particular workshop and after this, if he/she wishes to remain within the chosen artistic expression, then it should be as an assistant to the facilitator (by agreement), or else should be encouraged to choose another workshop.

#### That each International Group brings with them one workshop facilitator;

This is a very interesting proposal that needs to be explored in great depth. On the one hand it would help to alleviate the previously identified need to 're-energise' the workshop facilitation system. A plus with this proposal also is that it would require much more constant communication between the international group leaders and the host country of a particular edition of "Creativity". A down-side would be the impossibility of knowing how good/poor an individual facilitator is. What might suffice in facilitating a workshop in a local organization at 'home', might in very many cases not suffice when faced with the facilitation / implementation of a workshop to a mixed group of possibly 10-20 persons over 10 days, bringing with them a collective baggage of mixed language abilities, mixed artistic expression abilities and also very mixed expectations. To maintain a safety standard and also a quality standard of workshop delivery, the "Creativity" organizers would have to know the facilitation level of all facilitators.

That "Creativity" builds up a database of proven / trusted workshop facilitators. Surely, a critical proposal in relation to ensuring safety and to maintaining a 'freshness' and quality standard in all workshops. This proposal has to be a 'runner', it's

surely the way forward. However, it also brings with it two drawbacks, one minor and one major. The minor one being the time it will take to build up the database. The major drawback is the question of quality, who or what system shall decide what workshop facilitators get on the database list?

# That the workshop subject choice and number of choices to participants of Creativity be changed.

This proposal was put forward time after time, in one format or another. The same basic choice of workshops has been utilized now for some years and while there have been some minor changes (eg. thrash art in 2006), the workshop content/ structure needs to be examined. A new choice of thematic discussion group has been proposed, as has forum theatre, new art of dance and also pantomime. Any new workshops will of course be contingent on sourcing suitable facilitators and any changes to the workshop structures will be contingent on fitting in with the overall structure of "Creativity" and the suitability of workspaces available within the particular host area for the given edition of "Creativity".

Once more the proposal that each participant could choose more than one workshop to attend throughout the duration of "Creativity" has both merit and drawback. Merit, in that those participants wishing to 'taste' more than one or all workshop subject areas (many proposals for this choice) could do so. The drawbacks are many to this proposal:

Very little subject area groundwork could be facilitated if the participants are changing all the time, it would be a nightmare for the workshop facilitator;

Working on an overall "Creativity" theme, eg "tolerance & diversity", would be minimized.

A description was included with one such proposal that the participants visit with each workshop leader for one day and then finally have some days to work alone, to prepare their personal presentation, in their own chosen art-form or indeed incorporating the various art-forms, depicting the particular "Creativity" theme. This proposal merits serious consideration. Perhaps, if after the visits to 1 day or 1.5 day workshops, the participants had the choice to come together in groups around their predominant art-form and worked on group presentations. Choice is a word that is integral to "Creativity" and yet we must encourage participant group working as much as possible.

## **Inclusion in Creativity**

This subject area was touched upon by very many participants' comments and proposals, the following are some of the comments and questions in relation to inclusion.

# That a space be made in "Creativity" for children, especially for those of single mothers/fathers.

This is a super proposal that again needs discussion and exploration. Doubtless, at this time an entire section of our community is being excluded from participating on "Creativity". We cannot sit smugly and ignore this exclusion. The plusses to such a proposal are self-evident. The minuses might include, the extra facilities and staff required (qualified and with multi-linguistic abilities). The possible imposition that such a proposal could have on the facilitation of workshops, daytours and other day time activities and serious impositions on night time activities regarding playing of music and loud conversations etc. However, this is a proposal that must be debated and worked upon.

#### That "Creativity" makes a greater local impact.

This proposal was made in different ways by many of those questioned. Some proposing a greater media presence, while others stating that after three days of workshops, some of the local youth be invited into the camp so that they can see what is happening and possibly play some part in the programme. A very practical proposal was put forward by another past participant stating that "local impact be included in "Creativity", such as building something or cleaning up a local park etc"! Once more, this is a very interesting proposal that fully merits consideration. If implemented, it would most certainly heighten local public awareness. The necessary preparations needed would be dependent on the scale of the project. Considerations must include: costs of the project (materials and travel), ability to complete the project safely and to integrate the time required to complete the project into the overall timetable. A major question concerning any project requiring work outside of the venue or having locals/members of the public entering into it, would be that of insurance, who is covered and who is not?

#### Inclusion and the creative use of the World Wide Web

# That a full-time open area be created on the "Creativity" database so that young people can always upload their opinions / questions on "Creativity".

Such a facility would enable a shared ownership of "Creativity" to open further. One can envisage such a facility being used a lot by past-participants, however this need not be the case, with more publicity and spreading of the word by past-participants to their friends and school / college / work mates, then some really

fresh and un-tainted ideas and proposals might be elicited. Many future and new participants might be recruited through this facility.

That a permanent 'Creativity' web site be created where we can publish results, put up pictures and even allow participants to 'follow the lives of fellow participants after the event'.

To have such a facility would certainly enhance our level of inclusion and increase the facilitation of giving ownership of "Creativity" to the participants. The possibilities in using this technology are endless and would appear to be the road which we must travel. However the workload required to initially set up such a facility and then to maintain it afterwards would be huge, almost full-time and could/should place a financial drain that will operate it. If such a site were to be maintained, then the workload could not be maintained / paid for by one member organization. Yet, one thing is clear, that such an action should not be made or even initiated if it cannot be done in a complete manner. Such a facility as is proposed here would need to be always up-to-date and maintained, too many sites are a 'work in progress', or have not been updated for some years. If such a faith were to befall "Creativity", then damage to the organization would result and our quality standards would fall. We must never forget that to set high standards is not so difficult, maintaining and improving upon them however, is much more so.

# **Creativity going Global**

The proposal to spread "Creativity" throughout Europe and further afield has already been mentioned within these pages and here we shall highlight and connect with two points relating to it.

#### Global event with web cameras connected

This action in using web cameras has already been initiated, in 2006's final performance (live broadcast to an international youth camp in Italy). So we know that this action is possible, now we need to:

- Ensure that our "Creativities" are of sufficiently high quality to want to broadcast them to viewing audiences in other continents / countries / places.
- Have viewing audiences in other countries. This shall result from the other actions proposed here, such as, having quality "Creativities" in other countries and giving ownership of "Creativity" to the participants. Making greater local impact with every "Creativity" shall also increase the overall awareness and result in greater viewing numbers.

#### We need a logo/symbol/brand for Creativity.

This proposal can be used in summary for all that has been written above. What began as a proposal to have a unique and recognizable logo, has been partly discussed and has grown to appear very important and integral to the future of the phenomenon that is "Creativity". Proposals made, now appear to move in the direction of:

**Having a logo/symbol**. This would ensure clarity about the name and increase awareness of "Creativity". One proposal is to facilitate an international on-line contest for the design of this logo, with the winner being accepted free as an open-call participant in a "Creativity" of their choice.

Registering/patenting this logo and name. This would ensure that legal ownership of the brand would remain with the organizing committee. It could also be a tool for us to strive to ensure that any event using this name would be one of the highest quality. Thus the possible central organising committee can control the use of the brand name "Creativity". It will only require one poorly planned or implemented "Creativity" to lower or destroy the public perception of this phenomenon and this would have serious implications for all future applications for funding.



Padraig O Sabhain works part-time as a Youth club worker with Youthwork Ireland - Galway and also part-time as a Training the Trainers workshop facilitator with the National University of Ireland - Galway. He first led a national group of teenagers abroad to Wales as participants in a multi-lateral exchange for youth with lesser-used languages almost a quarter of a century ago, in 1985. He has been leading youth groups abroad ever since and has hosted 6 multilateral youth exchanges of 72 persons each, in different locations around

Ireland between 1989 and 1998. He has both, hosted and led groups to numerous bi-lateral wouth exchanges and also organized, delivered and participated in numerous work study visits, European Youth Seminars and Training Courses in Ireland and abroad. He now lives in Leitir Moir, Conamara Co. Galway, Ireland, where he is one of the facilitators with the local youth club, Aos Og na nOilean, every Friday night.



Eduard Gutierrez works in the field of non-formal education since 1997, when he started to work in children camps as an educator. He is coordinator of youth activities, trainer of children animators and advisor of youth mobility programmes for the Municipality of Vilanova I la Geltrú, Barcelona. During the last 5 years he has worked in leading youth projects under the frame of the "Youth" and "Youth in Action" EU mobility programmes and also in sending groups of young people abroad to take part in youth exchanges, seminars and

training courses all over Europe and America. He is a founding member of "Neagenia Intercultural", the organisation responsible for Creativity.cat, the first edition of "Creativity" outside Greece, which brought together 117 young people!



Pedro Barbosa works with youth since 1993, first in summer camps as an educator and afterwards as a member of an environmental NGO. He now works as an Environmental Educator and also leads training courses in this field for the Oporto Youth Associations Federation. He has been involved in Theatre since 1992, first acting and now as founding board member of O Cão Danado - Cultural Association for Theatre. He has been leading groups abroad since 2001 and has also been responsible up to this time for three youth exchanges

and one Euromed exchange.

#### Coordinators



Athanasios (Sakis) Krezios, born 1980, has been working as a freelance youth trainer & consultant since 2003. His involvement in and action for all what matters to youth dates back from 1997. He has worked with the Directorate of Youth & Sport of the Council of Europe, the Greek Institute for Youth, SALTO Youth Participation, SALTO Training & Cooperation, numerous NGOs across the European continent and last but not least, with "Kids in Action", where he has been active since its conception. "Creativity" is a "knowledge feed" for him but also a place where he

found it possible to apply innovative ideas and profoundly participative educational and decision making approaches.



Giorgos Georgiadis, born 1979, has been working with children and young people since 1997. His first youth work steps were in children summer camps all over Greece. There, he led and still does the training of group leaders/animators. Ever since, he is fully engaged with youth mobility projects in local, national and international level. Founder of "Kids in Action", in 2003. He has planned and developed several artistic projects and activist actions in Thessaloniki, Greece, where he is currently living. His last project is "Block33"; a space in which music concerts

and alternative artistic performances are rocking the boat of cultural dullness.

#### And last but not least...

all those young minds, hearts and souls that have contributed to this publication with their creative ideas, well-grounded proposals and constructive feedback.

A special tribute to all those that feel part of the "Kids in Action" family and have been breathing life into "Creativity" since its birth in 2004.

Keep creating with us!

Photos selected with care by Athanasios (Sakis) Krezios and Olga Kiriakidou. All photos have been unexceptionally taken during the "Creativity" projects, by various participants. Our gratitude and respect for their acute look deep into the soul of the human creative endlessness.

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## "Kids in Action" Civil non-profit company

26is Oktovriou 33, 54627 / Thessaloniki, Greece www.kidsinaction.gr / info@kidsinaction.gr

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Coordinators: Athanasios (Sakis) Krezios, Giorgos Georgiadis Authors: Padraig O' Sabhain, Eduard Gutierrez, Pedro Barbosa Photo selected by: Olga Kyriakidou, Athanasios (Sakis) Krezios Lay Out: Stelios Kyrizakis (Inspire adv)

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www.kidsinaction.gr / info@kidsinaction.gr

# \*stay tuned

