ΦΠΚΟ
FECE

My yEUth Story 2.0

REPORT

My yEUth Story 2.0 YE



Funded by
the European Union

Place: Varna, Bulgaria
Date: 16-20 May 2025



The purpose of this report about the youth exchange **My yEUth Story 2.0** is to motivate other non-governmental organisations and young people to develop similar projects and initiatives to stimulate young people to be active citizens and through their actions, to promote youth engagement and active citizenship through various tools such as storytelling, interviewing and content creation.

Host organisation:
Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education, Bulgaria

Partners:
CEKOS, Serbia
Monomyths, Romania
Youth for Equality, Slovakia

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My yEUth Story 2.0 took place at Golden Sands seaside resort on the Northern Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The chosen accommodation was Detelina Hotel. It proved to be an ideal place for conducting the activities as it is located away from the big city, making it easy to work outside and enjoy the first sunny days of the summer. It is also minutes away from the beach and bus stops, thus giving participants the option to easily explore nearby places.

26 young people aged 18-30 took part in the exchange, from four European Countries: **Bulgaria**, **Romania**, **Serbia and Slovakia**. The participants arrived at the hotel on 15 May and left on 21 May.



The youth exchange introduced the participants to the **European Youth Strategy (2019-2027)** and its corresponding **11 European Youth Goals**, emphasising the importance of youth participation and active engagement to the topics and policies that concern young Europeans. The participants explored storytelling as a tool to raise the awareness of young people's voices and opinions and to promote the EU values among various target groups.

The topics of the project were:

- 11 European Youth Goals (focussing on #3 Inclusive Societies and #6 Moving Rural Youth Forward)
- Inclusivity
- Storytelling
- Video Interviewing

Various non-formal learning methods and activities were used:

- Ice breakers
- Role playing and collective games
- Creativity and teamwork games
- Discussion, debates, brainstorming and reflection
- Intercultural and experiential learning
- Soft-skill training



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The aims of the project were:

- To raise awareness of the importance of active youth participation through the use of storytelling techniques and video interviewing
- To deepen participants' understanding of the EU values, the European Youth Strategy and the EYGs
- To promote the EU Youth Strategy through digital storytelling and the collection of video interviews
- To address the topic of youth participation and inclusivity and to foster participant's co-creation skills by exploring interview techniques
- To raise awareness of the importance of youth voices in shaping new European strategies towards the better integration into society of young people

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The reached results:

1. Participants gained a deeper understanding and new knowledge about the European Union, its values and goals in the field of youth
2. Participants increased their understanding of inclusivity and supporting vulnerable groups
3. Empowered young people to become active European citizens and participate in the democratic life of Europe, through exploring the EU Youth Strategy
4. Participants are more aware of the importance of youth activism and the use of digital storytelling when giving voice to their peers
5. Participants gained and further developed valuable soft skills including leadership and negotiation skills, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, constructive participation in dialogue and debate, the ability to comprehend abstract concepts and intercultural competences



What are inclusive societies?

The participants were first asked to come up with three words/definitions about inclusive societies and then gathered in groups of two and later in groups of four to come up with one agreed definition on what are inclusive societies.



An inclusive society is where we all belong, work together as equals and celebrate what makes each of us unique. Everyone should be respected, because our differences make us stronger and each person brings something special to the world.

In **an inclusive society** you are free to socialise respectfully without the fear of being judged, promoting no discrimination, equal rights for people of different genders and ethnic backgrounds. It is a place where everyone helps each other, even if a language barrier exists.

An inclusive society is a society where people respect each other and make strong connections with everyone.

Inclusive societies are accepting and not judgy. A community can be diverse, but everyone has to be equal and have opportunities. People should respect each other.

An inclusive society is a community where everyone is accepted by different groups of people, being able to have the same opportunities in all aspects of life.

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Youth Goals Heroes

In this activity the participants had to choose a specific youth goal and describe the ideal role model advocating for the chosen goal.

Youth Goal Heroes

Based on the Youth Goal logo design by Mireille van Bremen

Where does the person come from?

How old is the person?

What does the person wish for in terms of Youth Goals?

What is the level of education of the person?



Are there any targets of the Youth Goal that are of particular concern to the person?

What is the family status?

Does the person have a job, if so which one?

How does the person contribute to achieving the Youth Goal? And what does the person need to achieve it?

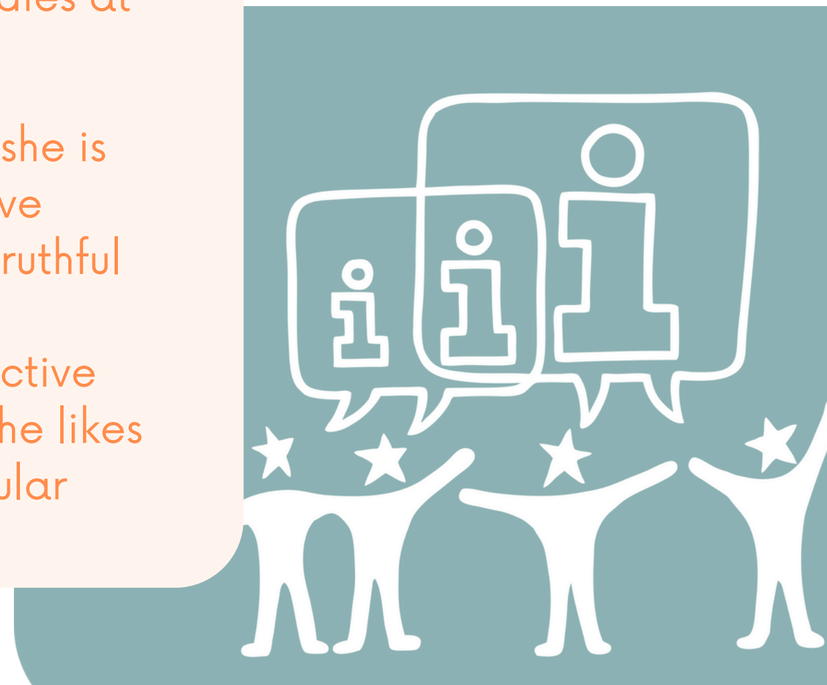
What language would the person like to learn?

What is the person's life dream?

Youth Goals Heroes



Group 1: Inclusive societies – This person lives in the European Union, he is 20 years old. He wants everyone to feel included, not discriminated. The person wishes for universal accessibility – public spaces and transport services for everyone, social protection and education that celebrates diversity. His main concern is for people to feel accepted, no matter who they are. He wants to help people with less opportunities He spends his free time at charity events, making all people feel included. He donates money to poor people and he wants his child to feel included. He is single and has one child, currently he is a casher at Tesco put part time. He is from the European Union and he is 20 years old. He finished high school and now is studying European studies at University.



Group 2: Information and Constructive dialogue – This person is called Amina, she is from Sarajevo and she is 22 years old. She wishes for a society where people have access to information and constructive dialogue. She is interested in spreading truthful information and enjoying in constructive dialogues. She volunteers in a youth organization and she teaches kids about fact checking and engaging in constructive dialogue. Her biggest dream is to become a global youth mediator at the UN. She likes to learn French, Spanish and German languages. She also is a blogger at a popular youth website. She is single and she has been at university for journalism.

Youth Goals Heroes



Group 3: Quality employment for all – This person is a woman, her name is Vanillina. She comes from Sweden. She wishes for quality education with practice vacancies. She wishes to learn how to deal with crisis situation, and speaking out when facing problems. Her life dream is self-employment and she wants to be an entrepreneur. She likes to learn English, French, German and Italian and is currently employed as a software engineer. She is single and has a Masters degree. She is 24 years old.

Group 4: Quality learning – This person comes from a small village in Greece and is 20 years old. He wishes for better education, better job opportunities and access to cultural events. This person wishes to be orientated with new friends, learn some new skills and organize workshops, work with local NGOs and organize opportunities and funding. This person wishes to finish University and find a good job and to learn German language. He is 1st year in University, lives with his parents and is currently unemploeed.



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Civil Dialogues

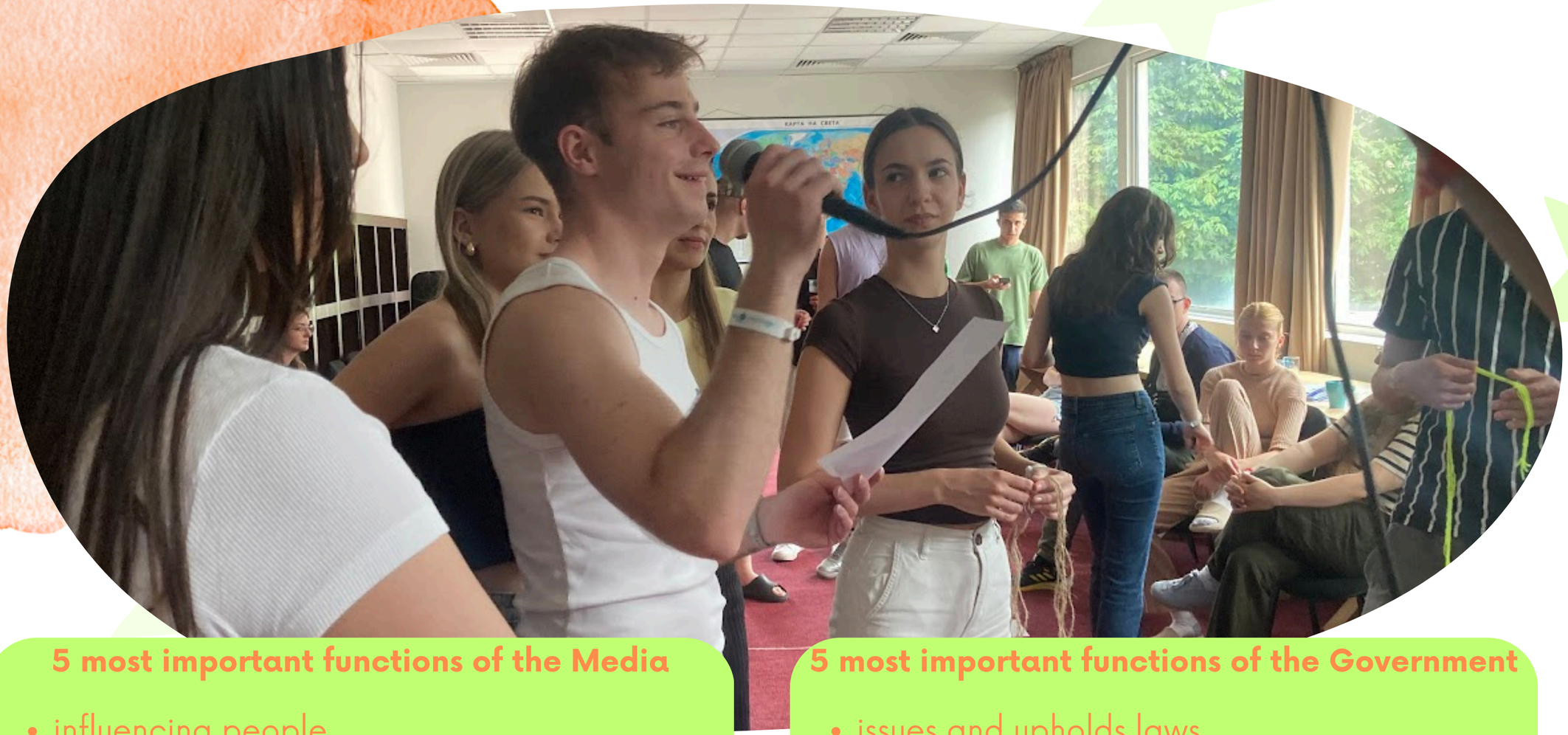
After outlining the 4 most important actors in an ideal democratic society – government, citizens, media and NGOs, the participants were divided into 4 groups, each group representing one of the actors. Together they listed the 5 most important functions of each actor. Each group had to come up with 2 demands for the other actors. Within 3 rounds they discussed the demands and reached a compromise.

5 most important functions of the Citizens

- **vote/participate** in elections to choose their representatives
- **right to express** their opinions and and **assemble** peacefully
- **paying taxes** and **uphold laws**
- **community engagement and volunteering**
- **respecting each other**

5 most important functions of the NGOs

- listening to the real needs and providing opportunities
- NGOs recognise non-formal education as compliment to formal learning and support individual growth
- connect people and the government
- NGOs are independent groups that speak freely and stand up for people's rights
- Support the development and reform of laws and strategies



5 most important functions of the Media

- influencing people
- informing people
- entertaining
- providing a platform
- advertizing

5 most important functions of the Government

- issues and upholds laws
- fees and taxes
- building public services
- international relations wth other countries
- provides security to the citizens

Fighters for inclusivity

In this activity, participants had to think of inspiring figures that fought for human and civil rights.

- Who is the person? When was he/she born and where?
- Famous quote/motto of the person
- Interesting fact
- Legacy of the person
- Type of activism - what did he/she do to fight for rights and inclusivity?



Fighters for inclusivity

Group 1

1. Dimitrina Petrova, 25 October 1955, Sofia/ Bulgaria

2. "There is no such thing as 'Roma problem'—there is a racism problem."

3. She was the founding executive director of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), based in Budapest.

4.Dimitrina Petrova's legacy lies in institutionalizing Roma rights as a core human rights issue in Europe. her work brought international legal recognition of anti-Roma discrimination including at the European Court of Human Rights

5 .Legal activism, Strategic litigation, Policy advocacy, Research and public education, Organizational leadership

Group 2 - Lepa Mlađenović

1. Who is the person, when was she born, where? Lepa Mlađenović was born in 1954 in Belgrade, Serbia.

2. Quote: "We need to create spaces where women can speak without fear."

3. Interesting fact:! She was one of the first open lesbian activists in the Balkans and co-founded the first SOS hotline for women survivors of violence in Serbia.

4. Legacy of this person: Lepa is a pioneering feminist, peace, and LGBTQ+ rights activist. She played a key role in building inclusive feminist networks across the former Yugoslavia, promoting anti-war resistance and support for marginalized women.

5. Type of activism – what did she do to fight for rights and inclusivity? She fought for women's rights, LGBTQ+ visibility, and against war and nationalism. She organized feminist workshops, provided support for survivors of violence, and was part of anti-war protests in the 1990s.

Fighters for inclusivity

Group 3 - Malala Yousafzai (Pakistan)

1. Who is the person, when was she born, where?
Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani human rights activist known for promoting girls' education. She was born on July 12, 1997, in Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan.

2. Quote / Motto:
"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."
– A powerful message from Malala about the importance of education.

3. Interesting fact:
Malala was only 17 years old when she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, making her the youngest Nobel laureate in history.

4. Legacy of this person:
Malala continues to inspire millions through her work for education and equality. Her story has been shared worldwide, and she has helped bring global attention to the challenges girls face in getting an education.

5. Type of activism – What did she do to fight for rights and inclusivity?
Malala stood up against the Taliban's ban on girls' education in Pakistan. Even after surviving an attack in 2012, she continued to speak out. She founded the Malala Fund, which supports education for girls around the world.

Fighters for inclusivity

Group 4 - Martin Luther King Jr. (USA)

1. **Who is the person, when was he/she born, where?**
Martin Luther King Jr. was an American civil rights leader. He was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

2. Quote / Motto?
"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." – One of his most famous quotes.

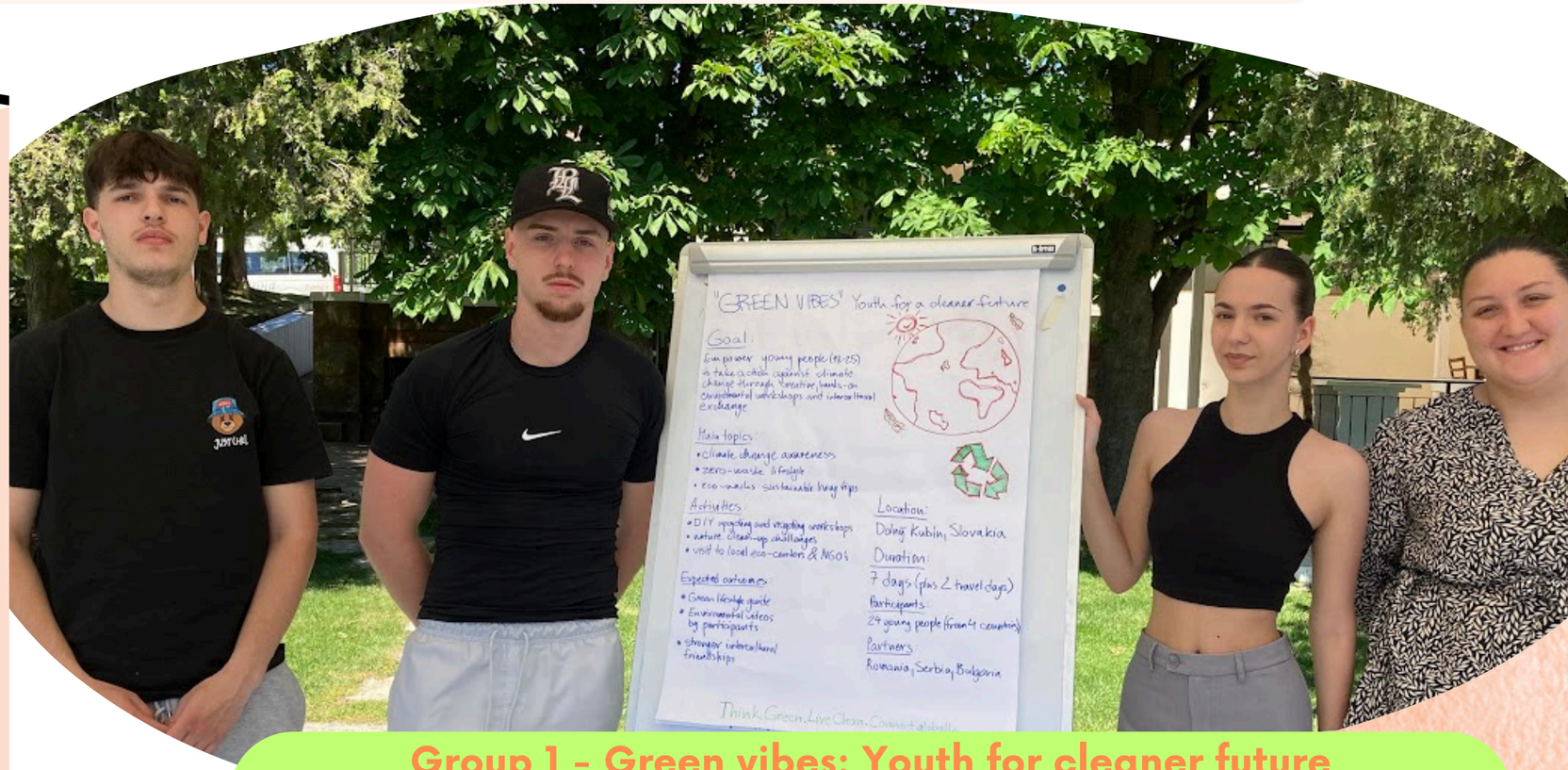
3. Interesting fact:
He was the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize at the time, awarded in 1964 when he was only 35 years old.

4. Legacy of this person:
He played a key role in ending legal segregation in the U.S. through nonviolent protest. His work led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Today, he is honored with a national holiday in the U.S. – Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

5. Type of activism – What did he/she do to fight for rights and inclusivity?
King was a fighter for civil rights who led peaceful protests, marches, and speeches to fight for racial equality, justice, and inclusion for African Americans. He promoted nonviolence and civil disobedience to challenge systemic racism and segregation.

Getting acquainted with the Erasmus+ Programme

After being introduced to the Erasmus+ Programme and the opportunities provided to young people, the participants developed group ideas on sample Erasmus+ projects, reflecting various topics such as social inclusion, green and digital transition and young people's participation in the democratic life, etc. They had to define the name, duration, topic and objectives, activities, target groups and impact of the project.



Group 1 - Green vibes: Youth for cleaner future

- **Location**: Dolný Kubín, Slovakia
- **Participants**: 18-30 years old
- **Topics**: Climate change awareness, zero-waste lifestyle, eco sustainable future
- **Impacts**: Green lifestyle guide, Environmental videos by participants, stronger intercultural friendships

Getting acquainted with the Erasmus+ Programme



Group 2 - Future of the media

- Participating countries: North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Bosnia&Herzegovina
- Participants: 18-30 years old
- Topics: Media, disinformation, fake news
- Impacts: Fostering media literacy and ethical thinking among the participants

Getting acquainted with the Erasmus+ Programme



Group 3 - Cultural Move

- Location: Spain
- Participants: 18-30 years old
- Topics: Promotion of culture through traditional games
- Impacts: Cultural awareness, teamwork skills and inspiration among young people



Group 4 - Citizenship & Participation

- Participating countries: Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and Slovakia
- Participants: 18-30 years old interested in politics
- Topics: Parliament functioning, youth participation and active citizenship
- Impacts: Empowered young people taking part in policy creation and decison-making

Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural Evenings: Non-formal learning and sharing of national culture helped young people engage in intercultural dialogue. By organising cultural evenings, participants got the chance to proudly represent their country, while learning about other groups' culture, cuisine, music, dance, and interesting facts. The evenings included videos about different countries, filled with practical and interesting information, traditional foods and drinks, music, and dances. These cultural nights foster the formation of intercultural groups and cultivate a feeling of tolerance among young people.



Secret Friend Game

On the first day of the youth exchange, everyone received a secret friend, that remained unknown until the end of the exchange. The names of everyone were written on envelopes, that were then stuck to the wall. During the youth exchange, participants had to leave small gifts varying from notes, candy and souvenirs, to their secret friends, without revealing who it is. On the last day, an interactive game was played to reveal everyone's secret friend.

The youth exchange concluded with the awarding of Youthpass certificates, the secret friends revealing, and a final evaluation.

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