REPORT

DON'T FEAR TO DIFFER: EMPOWERING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN EUROPE

Youth Exchange
13-17 July 2021

The purpose of this report about the Don't Fear to Differ project is to motivate other non-governmental organizations and youth workers to develop projects and initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance, mutual acceptance and understanding among young people in Europe.

Host organization:

Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education, Bulgaria

Partners:

Asociatia Centrul Pentru Strategii de Dezvoltare a Tineretului, Romania
Asociacija Tavo Europa, Lithuania
Evropske Centrum Mladeze Breclav, Czech Republic
Center for Education and Development, North Macedonia
EUROSUD, Italy

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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The youth exchange *Don't Fear to Differ*: *Empowering intercultural dialogue in Europe* took place in the beautiful Uzana area, Gabrovo. The hotel Prima S is situated at 1300 m altitude in the heart of the Balkan Mountain. It is surrounded by a green forest and high peaks. The atmosphere was ideal for conducting outdoor activities.

In the youth exchange, 32 young people aged 18-24 from six European countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, North Macedonia and Romania. The participants arrived in Uzana in the late afternoon on 12 July and left in the morning of 18 July.



The topics of the project were:

- Cultural Diversity
- Migration and Refugee Waves
- Racism and Discrimination
- Hate Speech
- Understanding and Acceptance
- Human Rights
- Cultural Awareness
- Intercultural Dialogue

The aims of the project were to:

- develop young people's soft skills such as cultural awareness and expression, intercultural skills and social interactions
- create preconditions for active intercultural dialogue and the promotion of solidarity and cooperation
- raise awareness of the negative consequences arising from being intolerant to others
- educate youth to self-respect and tolerance towards the "other"
- foster mutual understanding and combat hate speech, discrimination and bullying
- raise awareness on the fundamental human rights, such as respect, tolerance and freedom of expression



The used methods of non-formal learning included:

- Ice-breaking games and energizers
- Inputs from experts
- Simulations and role-playing
- Intercultural and experiential learning
- Brainstorming and discussions
- Creativity and teamwork
- Collective games



The reached results within the project are:

- Encouraged and developed soft skills as intercultural competences
- Participation in a platform for discussion and of different points of view on the main topics of the project
- Integration into an unfamiliar environment and turn it into tolerant one for culture and gender differences
- Empowered through individual and team work
- Gained knowledge, skills and experience on cultural diversity
- Learned about the possibilities that are offered by the Erasmus+ Programme

Energizers to Wake the Body Up

Every morning, the working day started with an inspiring phrase about tolerance, intercultural dialogue and human rights:

> *Hatred paralyzes life; Love releases it. Hatred confuses life, love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life, love illuminates it!* – Martin Luther King, Jr.

> *No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.* – Nelson Mandela

> *Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman, Zoroastrian, stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the mystery, unique and not to be judged.* – Jalal ad-Din Rumi

> *Men build too many walls and not enough bridges.* – Joseph Fort Newton

> *Everyone on Earth, they'd tell us, was carrying around an unseen history, and that alone deserved some tolerance.* – Michelle Obama

> *Tolerance implies a respect for another person, no because he is wrong or even because he is right, but because he is human* – John Cogley

After breakfast, the participants engaged in collective energizers to wake their bodies and get ready for the other activities. In this way, they started the day in a good mood and high tonus. The exercises were different every morning, taking basic elements of gymnastics, yoga, dance and random short games such as counting and hide-and-seek games.



Cultural Diversity

What is culture?

The term was introduced for the first time by the Ancient Roman orator Cicero in his Tusculanae Disputationes, who used the term cultura animi as "a cultivation of the soul". In 1952, the German scholars Kroeber & Kluckhohn gave 163 definitions of culture.

One of the most influential definitions of culture today is the following:

> *Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.* – Sir Edward Tylor (1871)

Cultural relativism – the view that ethical and social standards reflect the cultural context from which they are derived.

Multiculturalism – the view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgment of their differences within a dominant political culture

What is diversity in culture?

> *The cultural wealth of the world is its diversity in dialogue* – UNESCO Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity (11 Sep 2001)



Discrimination

Discrimination – in all its possible forms and expressions – is one of the most common forms of human rights violations and abuse.

Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favorably than other people are in a comparable situation only because they belong, or are perceived to belong to a certain group or category of people.

People may be discriminated against because of their age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, sex or gender, sexual orientation, language, culture and on many other grounds.

Forms of discrimination

- Direct/Indirect discrimination
- Structural discrimination
- Affirmative action

Discrimination is usually exerted by majorities upon minorities, even though discrimination from minorities also exists.

There are more static positions of majority and minority, when one or several aspects of our identity (nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender, lifestyle, disability) are representative of a group that constitutes less (usually much less) than 50% of the whole of the population of a given geographical unit.



Intolerance

Intolerance is a lack of respect for practices or beliefs other than one's own. It also involves the rejection of people whom we perceive as different, for example members of a social or ethnic group other than ours, or people who are different in political or sexual orientation.

Intolerance can manifest itself in a wide range of actions from avoidance through hate speech to physical injury or even murder.

Forms of intolerance:

- Xenophobia
- Racism
- Anti-Semitism
- Hate speech



What can we do?

- Be more tolerant to people from diverse backgrounds
- Be more patient with people from different backgrounds
- Know before you judge
- Change your perspective
- Practice Respect
- Develop curiosity



Human Rights

Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings – they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are **inherent** to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty.

Fundamental rights that belong to every person, simply by being a human being.

Principles:

- Universality
- Equality
- Non-discrimination

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. The UDHR continues to be the foundation of all international human rights law. Its 30 articles provide the principles and building blocks of current and future human rights conventions, treaties and other legal instruments.

Young people pointed the human rights that are particularly important for them:

Quality Education
Body Autonomy
Equality in front of the Law
Cultural Liberty
Right to Choose
Freedom of Expression
Tolerance and Non-discrimination
Free Existence and Freedom
Participate in Political Life
Gender Equality
Access to Drinkable Water
Right to be Myself



Migration and Refugees Waves

Since the height of the migration crisis in 2015, the EU has implemented measures to control external borders and migration flows better. As a result, irregular arrivals to the EU have been **reduced by more than 90%**.

The EU and its Member States are intensifying efforts to establish an **effective, humanitarian and safe European migration policy**. The European Council plays an important role in this effort by setting the strategic priorities.

Based on these priorities, the Council of the EU establishes lines of action and provides the mandates for negotiations with third countries. Over the past few years, the Council and European Council have built up a **strong response** to migratory pressure.

Eastern Mediterranean route refers to irregular arrivals to Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria. In 2015, high numbers of refugees seeking shelter from Syria's war arrived in the EU via this route. Since then, the number of irregular arrivals on this route has fallen considerably thanks to the cooperation between the EU and Turkey.

Western Mediterranean route refers to irregular arrivals to Spain. It is mostly used by migrants from Algeria and Morocco but people from many sub-Saharan African countries also try to reach Europe via this route. Following a peak in 2018, Spain has seen a decrease in the number of arrivals, for a variety of reasons. One major factor was the EU’s investment in a close partnership with Morocco to help strengthen border control and combat trafficking of migrants.



Group Non-Formal Activities

to promote Cultural Awareness
and develop critical thinking, social and leadership competences among young people

Language barrier: A short simulation activity to present to participants the difficulties that refugees face when applying for asylum. Issues raised include the frustrations and emotional factors refugees have to face, overcoming the language barrier and discrimination during the application procedure.

All equal - all different: A short quiz game to expand understanding of the universality of human rights; to develop skills to read information critically and independently; to foster awareness of ethnocentrism and prejudice in themselves and others, and to develop intercultural learning skills.

Who are I?: Buzz groups and brainstorming activity to explore issues of identity, to increase understanding of the concept of identity and widen self-awareness; to develop communication skills; to promote solidarity and respect.



Youth Goals

The 11 European Youth Goals summarize the issues that affect young people in Europe and the political priorities that are important to them. The Youth Goals show in which areas change still has to happen so that young people in Europe can use their full potential.

The EU Youth Dialogue works on the implementation of the Youth Goals. At European, national and regional level, the EU Youth Dialogue works with the Youth Goals to shape policy in the interests of young people.

During the youth exchange, the participants were divided in groups of six and picked from the 11 youth goals. They acted as a small community of young people and developed awareness raising campaigns to promote the chosen youth goal to other young people outside of their communities. After this, they presented to the other groups their goals.





Uzana Adventure Activity

On the fourth day of the youth exchange, an adventurous game was organized. The participants were divided in groups of five and took part in an adventure game to explore the Uzana area. The game had 8 tasks to be fulfilled by each group:

1. Create a team name
2. Create a Tutem and a team song
3. Create a short dance-steps to present their team
4. Pick a team color and re-dress for this activity, according to the color of the team
5. Make a photo with an animal and a local
6. Follow a road and find the geographic center of Bulgaria
7. Meet a local and speak with them about culture and diversity and give them a DFTD sticker.
8. Create a short video presenting the game's activities







Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue can be enhanced through non-formal learning and sharing national culture. The organization of cultural evenings gives opportunities to young people to learn more about other groups' culture, cuisine, music, dance and interesting facts. The cultural evenings are full of Kahoot games, dances, food and a lot of fun. These evenings foster the formation of intercultural groups and develop the sense of tolerance between young people.







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