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FECE

YOUNG VISIONARIES

REPORT



Date:
18-23.09.2024

Place:
Varna, Bulgaria



YOUNG VISIONARIES

The purpose of this report about the youth exchange *Young Visionaries* 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 engage young people for sustainable and inclusive Europe through storytelling techiques and interactive interviews.

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

Partners:
Youth for Equality, Slovakia,
Monomyths, Romania
DCTR – Associação Cultural - Portugal

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The YE Young Visionaries 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. 24 young people took part in the exchange, aged 18-30, from four European Countries: Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania, and Portugal. The participants arrived at the hotel on 18 September and left on 24 September.



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The youth exchange explored the views and opinions of young people from across Europe through storytelling techniques and interviewing processes to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding democracy through active youth engagement.
The project implemented civil and non-formal activities to highlight the importance of youth participation through the exploration of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027), particularly YG #1 Connecting EU with Youth, YG #3 Inclusive Societies, YG #9 Space and Participation for All.



The topics of the project were:
EU institutions and values
European citizenship Youth active participation European Youth Strategy (2017-2024)

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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SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT WERE:

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1. To raise awareness of the importance of youth participation and stimulate young people's involvement in decision-making processes
2. To connect, engage and empower young people to be active citizens and to strengthen democratic processes across Europe
3. To promote the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) through digital storytelling and the collection of video-interviews
4. To raise digital skills and new knowledge on storytelling and interviewing
5. To raise new knowledge and skills on active participation, activism and campaigning
6. To raise awareness of the common EU values and provide ways to promote them and safeguard them



The reached results:

01 Participants are more aware of the importance of youth participation for the creation of sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies across Europe

02 Participants gained a deeper understanding and new knowledge about the establishment of the European Union, its values and core institutions

03 Participants increased their understanding of the fundamental EU value such as democracy and engaged in activities to promote the EU values and participation

04 Empowered young people to become active European citizens and participate in the democratic life of Europe, through exploring the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) and the Youth Goals connected to participation

05 Participants developed valuable soft skills including leadership skills, negotiation skills, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, constructive participation in dialogue and debate, the ability to comprehend abstract concepts and intercultural competences

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The participants were first asked to come up with three words/definitions about democracy and then gathered in pairs and later in groups of five to come up with one agreed definition on what is democracy



1. **Democracy** is system in which every citizen is free to participate in choice making processes, while following the principles of equality, representation and freedom of diverse voices and perspectives.
2. **Democracy** is a life style that gives people the opportunity to run their nation by recurring to freedom of choice. If done correctly it will end with more equality and equity around the nation and also more respect to human rights.
3. **Democracy** stands for the concept of giving to the people equal respect, opportunity, freedom without border and elections which consider one's vote in overall results.
4. **Democracy** is a political system where people can participate in public affairs. It is based on respect and peace covering human rights and freedoms, while respecting agreed rules.
5. **Democracy** is respecting and understanding each other, to have freedom of speech and voice when it comes to making choices for one's community and its future. Its to have equal rights when it comes to making choices.

Threats to democracy

- Corruption
- Too much freedom
- Extreme political parties (right and left)
- Disinformation, propaganda, fake news, unrealistic promises
- Lack of equality
- Young people's apathy
- Populism
- Lack of civil/civic education
- Armed conflicts
- Lack of voting



Traditional tools

- Voting
- Joining a political party or Trade Union
- Signals and Complaints
- Petitions (to European Parliament)
- Protests

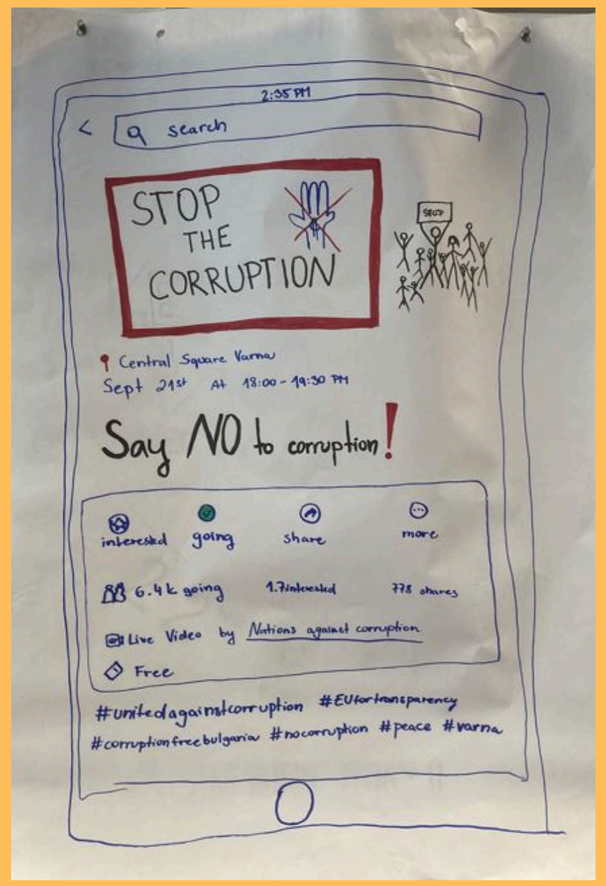
Alternative tools

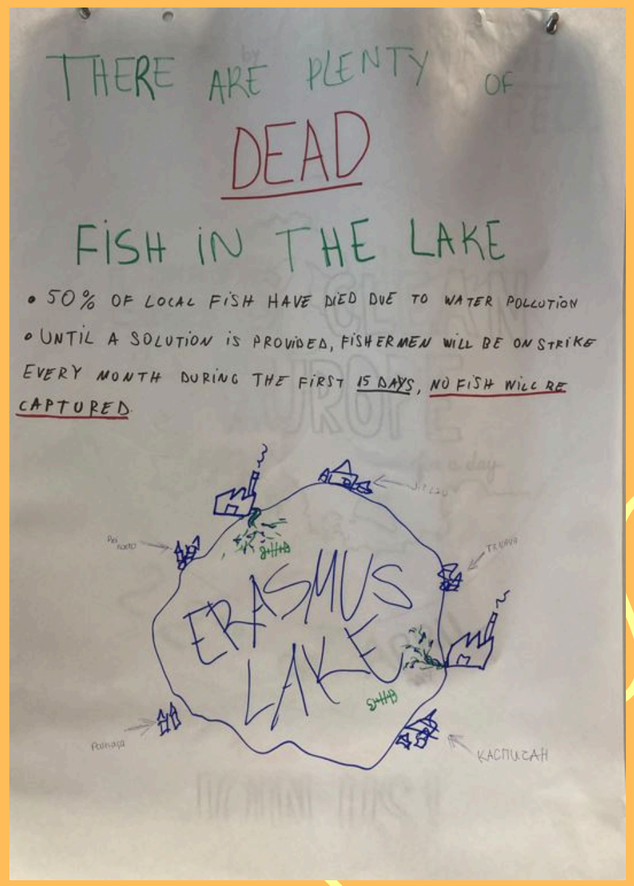
- Volunteering
- Activism
- Joining an NGO or CSO
- Social media
- Procotting and Boycotting
- Sit-ins (strikes)

In this activity, participants brainstormed about the threats to democracy and to democratic participation. Later on, the young participants were asked to discuss traditional and alternative forms of youth participation in democratic life and how to engage young people in decision-making processes.

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Divided in groups, the participants prepared posters to represent their active citizenship in communal setting and to their peers.

GOVERNMENT

- Creation of laws
- Takes care of public property
- Public services
- Collection and redistribution of money
- Protection

CITIZENS

- Vote
- Respect the law and pay taxes
- Respect each other
- Protect the environment
- Be involved with the community

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MEDIA

- Objective spread of information
- Mediator between government and citizens
- Promotes opportunities
- Links people together
- Entertainment

NGOs

- Promoting human rights
- Environmental protection
- Raising awareness
- Providing social services
- Education

Making Links: A simulation game in which participants were divided into four groups, representing the four actors, and their functions in a utopian democratic society: **the government, the citizens, the media, and the NGOs**. The activity involved negotiation and a deeper understanding of the functions of each of the four actors, and the importance of promoting civic responsibility among each actor.

During the session for stimulating new projects, the participants divided in five groups created their own Erasmus+ projects.
The projects had to include:

1. Name of the project
2. General aims + objectives of the project
3. Time framework: When, where and for how long
4. Target groups
5. Activities
6. Results and outcomes



LET'S IMPLEMENT THE 4 R's
Lisbon, Portugal

RETHINK - Brainstorm sessions
REUSE - DIY with found trash
REDUSE - Tips and tricks
RECYCLE - Outdoor activities

Objective: To teach young participants the importance of the 4 R's and to raise awareness and educate youth about the protection of the environment

YOUNG PEOPLE (18-30 years old) from Portugal. Bulgaria and Croatia

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SPORT FOR HEALTH AND INCLUSION
Thessaloniki, Greece

Daily sport sessions: Volleyball, yoga, tennis, swimming.
Raising awareness about the importance of sport as a method to reduce stress and promote mental health.
Imporved physical and mental health of young people

Objective: To promote a healthy lifestyle through sport activities and to increase social inclusion through team sports.

STUDENTS (16-25 years old) from disadvantaged communities

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EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Bucharest, Romania

Seminars on democracy with panelists and experts
Visits to European institutions
Online dialogues and discussions

Objective: To support young people in developing democratic skills and to motivate them to actively participate in democratic processes.
Aims: To raise awareness of democratic values and facilitate dialogue between youth.
YOUTH (18-25 years old) with six months of involvement in workshops

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BACK TO THE MEDIE-VAL CASTELS
Svätý Jur, Slovakia

Energizers (before/after), ice-breakers, introduction to the EU, introduction to heritage, making videos and promoting story telling, workshops and dicussions.

Objective: To inform citizens and participants regarding EU polices and values, project possibilities and non-formal education. To connect people with castle heritage and to promote through social media.

YOUTH (13-30 years old) from Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Czech Republic

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Intercultural Dialogue

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, each participant picked a piece of paper on which was written the name of a different participant. As such, 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 of the exchange.

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