Key Action 2 PARTNERSHIPS FOR COOPERATION
Cooperation Partnership - Youth

HOTSPOTS

Connecting European Suburbs through Smart Youth Work

28/02/2022 – 27/04/2024 (26 months)

NEEDS AND CONTEXT

Civil society organizations have been called, in 2020, to answer new challenges to keep their mission and actions still effective and pro-active. The Covid-19 widespread pushed to design new plans for the upcoming years and to find new strategies and alternative solutions to engage the beneficiaries and participants of our activities, young people and local communities.

In a framework where physical meetings and activities in presence have been drastically reduced to contain the pandemic, it became evident the **need to rethink the way and methods to involve the youth groups we work with**. Therefore the digital sphere, day by day, started to gain more relevance and organizations initiated a process to be quipped for the new conditions. This implied both a wider use of digital platforms and tools and also an adaptation of the non-formal education methods we were used to.
Even though, in the last years an impressive work has been run, with a consistent variety of approaches and a big heterogeneity of methods applied, still the work could be further fine-tuned. This, specifically, for what concerns the creation of a pedagogical approach (including different tools and methods for the digital and offline spheres) to strengthen intercultural perspectives among young people coming from different European suburbs and from more marginalized realities.

Suburbs are indeed the settings where young people can encounter and interact with other peers. Still, they often might risk to become the landmark of exclusion and the stage for racism, sexism, bullying and different displays of discrimination. In Europe these areas are normally marked by a quite strong heterogeneity, still there are elements in common as, for example, the tendency of being a "artificial ghettos" for the youth living there, a space where it's challenging to create interactions with the other realities and benefit from other opportunities. They might become the setting for discriminative events, hate speech and harmful rhetoric. Therefore they can be the places where the extreme right parties and movements are setting their roots, permeating the mind-setting of the young people and leading them to extremism and radicalization. In these realities it's acquiring more and more relevance the raising awareness action targeted to young people, to acknowledge the values of cultural differences, the importance to exchange ideas with peers and to have open minded approaches towards what we don't necessarily know.

OBJCTIVES

HOTSPOTS is a Cooperation Partnership in the field of youth, **aimed to develop non-formal education tools and methods, within a newly designed pedagogical approach, to enhance both online and offline, intercultural learning-ICL among young people coming from suburban backgrounds, and more specifically, in national and transnational Youth Participation Activities-YPA, within the Erasmus+ program.**

In order to achieve this goal, a set of **specific objectives** have been set:

- **SO 1**: to build up, in the suburban dimensions involved, the local **diagnostic** to better understand the situation, needs and profiles of the youth, the challenges they face in their everyday life and with a specific focus on the subject of Intercultural Learning
- **SO 2**: to share the existing tools, approaches and the **smart and digital youth work**'s practices, with specific regards to the online and offline dimensions, used by the consortium to promote active participation and Intercultural Learning
- **SO 3**: to design a new, synthetic and innovative **pedagogical perspective** applicable to smart youth work in the involved countries, and **including an educational package with tools and methods** usable for the online and the offline sphere. These tools will be designed also for a potential use in the national and transnational YPA
- **SO 4**: to strengthen the **capacity-building of youth workers**' digital and offline practices, in order to have them ready to face the nowadays challenges and to be ready to offer a wider variety of activities to the young people they work with, motivating them for an higher participation and bringing new ones on board
- **SO 5**: to **connect, empower and engage** young people from outskirts and isolated areas in different EU outskirts, to equip them to act as agents of change and promoters of new grass-rooted actions.

PRIORITIES

The project will be focused on the following **priorities covering the Erasmus+ sectors:**

- **Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport**: the project's main setting will be the suburban dimension of different European cities improving the outreaching of young people and youth with fewer opportunities. A specific attention will be dedicated to under-represented groups, facing socio-economic difficulties or any other potential source of discrimination based on sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The project will contribute to strengthen their access to the program's opportunities and to create the setting for an inclusive environment for learning
- **Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience and capacity**: the main methodological framework of the project is non-formal education-NFE, with the perspective of combining the offline with the online spheres in order to bring more young people on board and to offer them a bigger variety of inclusive activities. Therefore the project will support the purposeful use of digital technologies for learning and will contribute to design a pedagogical approach, including the alternation and the inter-changeability of work in presence and the use of digital tools
- **Common values, civic engagement and participation**: the project main axe is Intercultural Learning and the importance of developing the young people social and

intercultural competences, critical thinking and open minded approaches. Moreover, within the end of the project and as a direct outcome, the young people involved are expected to become peer educators of other youth of the same age and background, further enhancing their social and civic engagement and strengthening the possibilities for participation through non-formal learning activities.

FOCUS

The project will have a specific focus on two main concepts: **Smart Youth Work-SYW** and **Digital Youth Work-DYW**.

SMART YOUTH WORK is seen as the innovative development of traditional YW encompassing digital practices, including research, quality and policy components. It builds upon the needs of young people, youth workers, youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth and, contemporarily, it takes into account the wider societal context, providing opportunities for experimentation, reflection and learning from experiences. It is not a YW method, since it can be included in any YW setting (open YW, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached YW). It can happen in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments, or in a mixture of these two and digital media and technology can be used either as a tool, an activity or a content in YW

DIGITAL YOUTH WORK means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in YW. It builds upon the ethics, existing principles, knowledge, practices and means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology. It has the same goals of YW, and for this reason, fully meets the above mentioned needs.

TARGET GROUP

YOUTH WORKERS AND EDUCATORS: cooperating with their organizations in educational activities. They should be mainly active in urban, suburban, isolated and very populous areas where are more evident the cases of social exclusion, bullying, racist and sexist discrimination which see young people as the main victims.
The age range of participants will be between 25 and 35 years old, but the participation will be opened also to younger people aged between 18 and 25 active as peer educators and more adults, over 40 working as youth workers.

YOUNG PEOPLE: aged between 15 and 25 years old, living in urban and suburban isolated areas where the youth workers and educators are active. A settled number of places will be also reserved to young people aged 25-30, where motivated and justified by partner organizations. The groups will be heterogeneous to better favour the exchange and interaction: therefore realistically, some will be students from local secondary schools, while others are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and young people at risk of exclusion who have been exposed to different types of discrimination, as bullying or hate speech.

METHODOLOGY

The whole project will be developed within the umbrella of the **non-formal education - NFE** perspective and methodologies. The proposed educational approach will be constantly based on the learning by doing. Therefore, the specific learning objectives forecasted in the different steps are conceived in a consequential perspective to better achieve a coherent learning process of all the actors and stakeholders involved.

This approach moreover allows to shape the action/s according to the needs of the direct beneficiaries (young people) and of the indirect ones (the local communities involved), respecting the specificities, ensuring flexibility to the learning experiences and enhancing the young people knowledge, skills and competences.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Transnational Project Meeting ITALY

Transnational Project Meeting ROMANIA

Learning Teaching Activity ITALY

Multiplier Events ALL THE COUNTRIES

Transnational Project Meeting SPAIN

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
2022										2023												2024			
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

PROJECT RESULTS 1 - TOOLKIT FOR DIAGNOSTIC AND TOOLS SHARING
01st June – 31st January 2023 (8 months)

COUNTRY FIELD RESEARCH
01st June – 30th September 2022 (4 months)
TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES GATHERING
01st September – 30th November 2022 (3 months)
FINALIZATION OF THE PROJECT RESULTS
01st December 2022 – 31st January 2023 (2 months)

PROJECT RESULTS 2 - HANDBOOK FOR A SMART YOUTH WORK
01st March 2023 – 28th February 2024 (12 months)

PROJECT RESULTS 3-BLENDED LEARNING BOARD GAME
01st March 2023 – 28th February 2024 (12 months)

SUBURBAN HOTSPOTS - DESIGN
01st March – 30th July 2023 (5 months)
SUBURBAN HOTSPOTS - LOCAL TESTING
01st September – 30th November (3 months)
FINALIZATION OF THE PROJECT RESULTS
01st December 2023 – 28th February 2024 (3 months)

PROJECT RESULT 1

PROJECT RESULTS 1 - TOOLKIT FOR DIAGNOSTIC AND TOOLS SHARING
Result Leading Organisation: Lunaria

DATES: 01st June – 31st January 2023 (8 months)

- 01st June – 30th September 2022 (4 months) - Country Field Research
- 01st September – 30th November 2022 (3 months) - Tools and activities gathering
- 01st December 2022 – 31st January 2023 (2 months) - Finalization of the Project Results

DESCRIPTION: interactive toolkit presenting the analysis of the current situation, in the participating countries, of YW, its techniques and methodologies. The toolkit will include a detailed diagnostic and the demographics of the participating realities and the analysis of the urban and suburban dimensions where the project is taking place, of the challenges faced by youth workers and young people. The research will have a specific focus on the aspects characterizing the suburban dimensions of the participating cities and will highlight the cultural issues more relevant in these areas.

The Toolkit will include different chapters:

- Brief introduction of the project, specific objectives, expected outcomes, Youth Participation Activities within the E+
- Outcomes of the country field/online research: narrative report showing the situation in the different participating suburban areas for what concerns challenges and situations faced by young people
- Youth work's role: analysis of the youth work's role in the participating suburban dimensions, analysis of the challenges faced and of the approaches used
- Methodological session: technical part for youth, social workers and facilitators on how to use the Toolbox
- Toolbox: collection of different non formal education activities, based on the principles of participation and horizontality, used in the different realities by partner organizations to work with young people promoting intercultural learning

PROJECT RESULT 2

PROJECT RESULTS 2 - HANDBOOK FOR A SMART YOUTH WORK
Result Leading Organisation: Lunaria

DATES: 01st March 2023 – 28th February 2024 (12 months)

- 01st March – 30th July 2023 (5 months) - Suburban Hotspots-Design
- 01st September – 30th November (3 months) - Suburban Hotspots - Local Testing
- 01st December 2023 – 28th February 2024 (3 months) - Finalization of the Project Results

DESCRIPTION: interactive manual including the pedagogical and YW materials designed. The Handbook aims to be an educational package, conceived to equip youth workers, peer educators and young facilitators from different EU countries with tools and interactive methods for Intercultural Learning, where the digital and the offline are combined. The manual will include a newly designed, synthetic pedagogical perspective applicable to SYW in the suburban dimension and usable to promote ICL processes among young people.

The Toolkit will include different chapters:

- Smart youth work: synthetic analysis on how to apply more innovative perspectives, bringing on board practices and approaches of SYW and DYW
- Pedagogical approach: synthetic presentation of the new pedagogical approach built up for the project and applicable to SYW in the participant countries, specifically to suburban dimensions
- Methodological session: technical part for youth workers and facilitators on how to use the Handbook techniques
- Hotspots: different NFE activities, including a combination of online and offline techniques, to be proposed to young people to raise awareness on cultural differences and promote ICL.

These activities will be designed to be also applied in Erasmus+ national and transnational YPAs but they could be contemporarily used in other youth activities.

PROJECT RESULT 3

PROJECT RESULTS 3 - BLENDED LEARNING BOARD GAME
Result Leading Organisation: Infinitivity Design Labs (France)

DATES: 01st March 2023 – 28th February 2024 (12 months)

- 01st March – 30th November 2023 (9 months) - Blended Learning Board Game-Design
- 01st December 2023 – 28th February 2024 (3 months) - Finalization of the Project Results

DESCRIPTION: the Blended Learning Board Game - BLBG, combining physical and digital elements, will allow for the facilitation of learning events both online but also onsite. The aim of the board game is to create an intrinsically motivating gaming layer between learners and the learning material as well as provide a hybrid representation and access to the learning content through both physical and digital means, taking into account that different types of potential users may not be familiar with using an entirely digital learning experience. The BLBG will consist of the typical elements of a board game, including pawns, a board and different types of cards (related to different types of game mechanics). The game will be based on well-established frameworks and approaches to game based learning and educational game design, such as the Game Mechanics – Learning Mechanics framework, the Game Object Model framework and the Elemental Pentad of educational game design. The BLBG will be accessible to everyone having access to the project platform through PDF format and available for printing. This means that different versions (translated in different project languages) will be provided to the target audience. The Blended Learning board game will act as a link and a mediating layer between the learning content produced during the project (requirements elicitation, target audience framing, needs analysis, ideation, design, development) and try to facilitate intrinsically motivating learning experiences, played either online or onsite, by integrating this content into the game mechanics. More specifically, advancing in the board game will either require examining the content of the project platform or using some of the tools provided on the website as part of the game. Different elements of the board game or the cards will consist of QR codes that will be directly related to the project learning material in different languages. This P.R. will also lead to the creation of the project's online platform that will host the learning content as well as the digital version of the Blended Learning board game. The platform's infrastructure will be based on one of several open source codes and its selection will be the result of a needs analysis throughout the project. The online platform will be able to host the materials produced during the project.