

THE STAR OF EUROPE

START A EUROPEAN ADVENTURE! The goal of this game is not to be the first to reach the end but to help you and your team to carry out an Erasmus+ Youth Exchange step by step. A Youth Exchange is an international meeting of youth groups, designed by the young people themselves. As the game progresses, you will be given advice on how to design a project, how to prepare for it, how to carry it out and how to apply for funding for it from your National Agency. We wish you an inspirational project and hope you enjoy playing the game!

BEFORE YOU START YOUR ADVENTURE, it is good to know what this is all about. The Erasmus+ Programme Guide includes all the rules and guidance concerning projects.

The Programme Guide lists the objectives of youth exchanges. These objectives provide a framework for contents and themes the projects can have. The projects can then contribute to achieving these big objectives, for example, by

- giving young people opportunities for learning new information, skills and perspectives through international activities
- involving disadvantaged young people
- helping young people participate actively in democratic life
- tackling social issues, such as employment of young people, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social empowerment and solidarity for other nations and people.

MORE INFORMATION OVERLEAF

NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

You will find plain facts under this title. The info box will tell about the official rules of the programme and explains the quality requirements of projects.

TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

Under this title you will learn from other people's experiences. Youth workers who have carried out youth exchanges give concrete tips and tools about how young people can be involved in the process. It will also remind you about your responsibilities as an adult to support the young people. You will find more tools and materials on your National Agency's website.

PITFALLS

Under this title, you will learn about experiences that should be avoided. These are genuine examples from real projects that you can avoid with good planning.

SEE YOU AT THE PITFALL!



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Erasmus+



CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed your project. Is it time to get back to the start and carry out a new exchange?

1. BUILD A GROUP

Your group should consist of young people of 13 to 30 years of age and enough adult group leaders.

A youth exchange can have 16 to 60 young people participating.

2. FIND A PARTNER

Think which country you would like to meet young people from and which culture you would like to learn more about? The partners can be European or neighbouring countries to the EU. You can choose from over 50 countries!

3. DESIGN A PROJECT

This step is very important and you cannot proceed without participation of all group members.

TOPIC

What issues are you interested in, concerned or wondering about? Choose a suitable topic together with your partner.

GOAL

What do you want to learn, understand or find out? Choose a concrete goal together.

METHOD

How will you achieve your goal? Together with your partner, make a list of daily actions that relate to your topic and that will help you learn more about it.

6. BE PREPARED

You have got far already. Make a list of things you still need to do before the exchange. Be prepared!

YES

Congratulations! You designed a great project plan and your youth exchange will be supported! Go ahead!

NO

Unfortunately, your plan wasn't quite there yet. Don't lose your courage and return to the design section!

5. WAIT FOR THE DECISION

You need to wait for the funding decision for "three turns" (3 months). Think of something fun to do with your group during this time.

4. WRITE THE APPLICATION

You will need to make an application for funding. Give a concrete answer to all the questions of the application form together with the partners and group leaders. The application form can be downloaded and filled in online.

9. WRITE A REPORT

The report is the final step of the project and you will be needed at this stage, too. Think about all the things you did together, what you experienced and learned, what you used the money for. Reporting can be done easily online together with the group leader and the partners.

8. TELL OTHERS

The youth exchange is over but there are still things to do for the project. Tell other young people about your exchange, and adults, too! Think of different interesting ways of how to do this.

7. PARTICIPATE IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE

It's happening! You will meet the young people from your partner country. Carry out the programme you have designed and enjoy yourselves, sharing your similarities and differences.

1 BUILDING THE TEAM



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ Young people of 13 to 30 years of age can participate in youth exchanges.

■ Each participating group must include at least 4 young people and 1 adult group leader. The combined number of young people from all the participating countries in the project must be at least 16 people and at most 60 people.

■ The projects are open to all young people, including those who are disadvantaged and may need more support than others to participate.

■ Young people participate in projects voluntarily and out of their own interest.

■ Young people are involved in the project from the very beginning of the process: they cannot be selected only at the end stage of the planning or after the funding has been granted.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

TIMELINE
Use an empty board game available in the resource bank. Print the different stages of the project on separate pieces of paper and let young people put them at the correct places on the board. At the same time, you can talk about the different stages of a project with the young people, for example, discuss the timeline and what will be expected from them.

WISHES AND DREAMS

You will need three different coloured post-it notes: e.g. green, yellow and red. On the green one, people will write why they want to be involved, what they expect from the project (friends, the beach, shopping, sights...) etc. On the yellow, they will write possible questions they have about the project. On the red, they will write topic suggestions: What are you interested in? What kinds of things would you like to learn more about?

You will go through the notes together and collect them. You could do this, for example, during the first meeting when the young people may still be quite unclear about what the project is about. The next time you could do the exercise after you have found your partner in which case you can already concentrate on the target country in more detail. Or you can do it after writing the application when participants already have a clear idea of the timetable, topic etc.

and they know better what to expect. At the same time, the team can see what they have already learned during the project.

MOTIVATION CONVERSATION

Make a questionnaire in which young people need to think about their own motivation for working in the group. It is recommended that you use the information from the questionnaires during face-to-face conversations afterwards, too, because many young people can express their wishes and hopes better in conversation than in writing. This can be especially helpful if you are building a completely new group. You can find an example of a questionnaire in the resource bank.



PITFALLS

■ Don't get involved in a project that you know nothing about and in which the participation requires nothing more than signing a mandate. If the young people don't have ownership of the project, they are less interested in it. They will be less satisfied, more likely to cancel and drop out.

■ Always explain things, don't hide anything from the young people: involve them in all situations.

■ Get permission from your employer for the activity – this will provide a framework for your plans and allow you time for your work.

■ Always try to make your group somewhat larger than the minimum required – there are many changes in young people's lives and even if somebody drops out, you can still carry out your project.

2 FINDING A PARTNER



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ The partners must come from a programme country or a neighbouring country to the EU, see picture...

■ Applicant can be, for example, a youth department of a village/town or a church, a youth organisation, a social enterprise or an informal group of young people operating without a backing organisation, but not an individual young person or a youth worker.

■ A good partnership is willing to cooperate and is committed to the project, the partners have clear roles to accomplish specific parts of the project and there is a clear division of tasks between group leaders and young people from the different countries.

■ The partners agree on a shared topic and shared goals.

■ Make an Activity Agreement with your partner, covering the most important issues, such as the finances, division of tasks and responsibilities.

■ People have different ways of doing things in different countries – make sure that you all understand things and terms used in the same way and agree on common practices.

■ You can find partners from international training events of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme – participate in training events (follow your National Agency's events calendar).

■ You can also find partners from the OTLAS database and through other national and international networks: <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/>



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

VIDEO PRESENTATION
Make together a video, in which the young people introduce themselves, tell about their free time activities and hobbies etc. This will also help the young people clarify their thoughts about what they want from the exchange and what is important for them. The video is easy to share with the partners.

FLIGHT TICKET

Give the young people flight tickets and a map with all the participating Erasmus+ countries. With the help of the flight tickets, the young people can tell what they know about each country and what kind of image they have of them. With the help of this exercise, you can consider whether the young people want to go to a country they already know about or to a country or culture they wish to learn about. A model for a flight ticket can be found in the resource bank. You can also create your own flight ticket, listing countries in which you already have contacts in.

GOOD FRIEND

A good partner is like a good friend. Discuss what a good friend is like. You can use results of the discussion in your own group and to show that for the exchange to work, people will need similar skills to what they need to do things together with friends. Remember that contact and trust are important.



PITFALLS

■ Be prepared to encounter cultural differences: people will misunderstand each other and do things differently – make sure people understand each other, talk to each other, and explain terms and practices by giving concrete examples.

■ Share a schedule that everybody should adhere to: if people don't keep to the schedule, submitting the application may have to be postponed.

■ Choose appropriate means of communication: some things are better to be had in writing but sometimes a telephone call is more effective than an email.

■ There are loads of different practices used in Europe to carry out youth exchanges: this does not mean that these practices are necessarily good – do not accept practices that do not involve young people or in which responsibilities between the partners are not shared, aim for a better quality.

■ There are many different ways to do youth

work: in the northern countries, youth workers are professional, in the South of Europe often volunteers – use working methods of both partners and learn from each other.

3 DESIGN OF THE PROJECT



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ The duration of the youth exchange (when the groups meet each other) is at least 5 days and at most 21 days, with 2 travel days added on top.

■ All partners and their youth groups should be involved in choosing the topic, setting the goals, choosing and designing the ways of working and in carrying out the programme, according to their abilities – show in your application how you worked together equally.

■ Discuss the difference between your topic and the method – don't choose music as a topic but instead think which topic you can address with the help of music.

■ Design a sensible programme, relevant to the set goal and that deals with the chosen topic from different perspectives every day.

■ Make up preliminary exercises that will help each group orient to the project, give all groups responsibilities.

■ Plan ahead how you will assess reaching your goal: through assessment you will find out if you reached your goal and how successful the project was.

■ Plan how you will support participation of disadvantaged young people and what kind of support will be needed for them.

■ Learn about the Youthpass certificate and use it as a planning tool for learning.

■ Think ahead what impact the project will have both on the participating young people (learning) and the participating organisations (new practices, new target groups)

■ Plan how you can also make an impact on local communities – include events in your programme, such as events in the locality, information to local media, interviews with local people on your topic, flashmobs about your topic in public places etc.

■ Agree on practical issues, such as schedule, accommodation, materials needed, the venue etc. before submitting the application.

■ Calculate yourself how much support you can get from the Erasmus+ programme: information about the funding rules are available at your National Agency's website

■ If the partnership is new or if participating young people need extra support, it is a good idea to include a 2-day advance planning visit (APV).

■ Think about the co-funding required from the partners – how much of your own money will be needed and how will you raise the money needed in each country?

■ Submit your application on time – remember that projects can start at earliest 3 months after the application deadline.

THESE ARE EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN PROJECTS:

■ The programme of the exchange is active and diverse and it takes into account different needs and ways of learning of young people. It is concrete and explains clearly the methods used and what their aims are.

■ Activities will help young people learn about their chosen topic and learn different general skills, such as languages, social skills, initiative, intercultural skills, confidence, solidarity, understanding of differences, civic skills, tolerance etc.

■ Young people should participate actively, not be objects of activities or consumers of bought services.

■ The programme includes feedback discussions and assessment of experiences.

■ A youth exchange is about learning that has been planned in advance: it cannot be just about spending free time together, nor a tourist trip, a concert or other performance, a training camp or a meeting.

■ Each part of the project has been planned in advance at a concrete level: if one part of a

project is not planned (e.g. dissemination of results), it can result in rejection of the whole application.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

TOPIC-SUN
You can start getting ideas about your topic by asking the group what interests them, what they would like to know more about, what to learn about and on what topic they would like to start designing a programme with the partner country. When you have collected different topics on post-it notes, you can vote and select three. These will be sent to the partner group as suggestions. The partner groups can also send their suggestions. Try then to select just one topic together. Write the selected topic on a paper and hang on the wall.

It is easier to handle a concrete topic rather than a big abstract or philosophical term. When you have selected your topic, think about concrete things connected to the topic, write them on notes and add them as sun rays around the topic note. Ask for more ideas from your partners and add them to your sun. Go through the sun rays together and remove ones that you think are not relevant to the topic.

When you have collected all ideas, you can start planning the programme. When planning activities, select one of the sun rays and think what kind of activities would help you learn new information, skills or perspectives about the thing written on the ray. Each group can choose the rays they are most interested in and plan a part of the programme relating to the topic selected.

DIVERSE METHODS

Write down different types of methods that you could use to deal with the selected topic. Young people can select the ones they are the most interested in and ones they can actively help implement or supervise during the exchange. Methods can include photography, visits, comics, plasticine, use of newspapers, participation of people outside the partner groups, debate, online quizzes, opinion polls on the street, competitions, outdoor events, music, theatre, interviews, team work, designing a poster, production of flyers, environmental art, comparison of things, videos, role plays...

PROGRAMME

The resource bank has a programme template that you can use as a tool. In it you give each activity a learning objective (why), contents (what) and designate a person/group responsible for the activity (who). This will help ensure that each activity has a clear link to the topic selected, that it has a goal and you will know who is responsible for its implementation.

GOOD WEBSITES TO HELP IN PLANNING

■ www.mindmeister.com – how to create mind maps together and at the same time.

■ www.trello.com – a handy tool for making schedules and working together.



PITFALLS

■ The project funding will not cover 100% of your expenses and is not meant to: by putting together the co-funding – by selling things, doing gardening, applying for grants or by any other way – young people will commit to the project.

■ Make sure that there is enough co-funding to complete the whole project because you will only receive the final 20% of the grant after you have submitted your final report!

■ Sometimes people think that participation means young people participating in a programme designed and led by adults – this is not the case. If it looks like that in your programme the young people are put in a bus and taken somewhere to listen to a lecture given by somebody else, you are on a wrong track. Buying services is not participation.

■ You can do visits but young people could actively find information about places to visit and present them to others. Participants can be active during the visits, for example, by asking local people about their opinions on the selected topic or by documenting activities so that they can be continued after the project ends.

4 WRITING THE APPLICATION



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ The application is electronic and is downloaded online.

■ Check the application deadline and make sure that you have the latest version of the application form.

■ You cannot fill in the application before the applicant and all the partners have a PIC code.

■ Each partner also needs to provide a signed mandate.

■ You don't need to complete all the information in the application form at one go. You can save the application as a draft.

■ Share the writing of the application with your partners. Each partner can write about the activities and responsibilities of their group.

■ Read the questions carefully and answer each of them.

■ Support your answers with concrete examples of your plans and implementation.

■ Describe the backgrounds of the young people in each group clearly, including ages, genders, special needs, international experiences and other necessary background information.

■ If necessary, explain terminology and methodology used.

■ Don't drone on abstractly, stick to concrete facts and explain them clearly.

■ The application needs to meet the eligibility criteria: e.g. it must be submitted by the deadline, include signed mandates from partners and a programme and be signed by your manager (Declaration of Honour).

■ The award criteria are listed in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. Use the guide when planning your project.

■ Your National Agency cannot comment on the quality of your application and advice applicants during the assessment process: always ask for advice before submitting your application.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

Young people can answer the questions in their own way, in their own language. The application does not need to be written in "project-speak".

If needed, the group leader can explain application questions to young people. They can answer the questions first in pairs and then as a whole group as your plans progress.

It is good to break down the questions into smaller parts. It is best to start with the big picture and go into detail later: you cannot finish it at one go.

You will find more tools that you can use with young people to work on the contents of the application in the design section. At this stage, the plans need to be written clearly and concretely in the application form.

The young people of the partner group can contribute to writing the application using, for example, Google Drive or Facebook, answering basic questions needed, such as age, gender, background, how the group was formed and previous experiences of projects.



PITFALLS

■ Don't exclude your partner group from the writing process. It is good that everybody knows what to expect, what the aims are and what will be done. It is important to share responsibilities from the start so that there will not be too much to do for one person.

■ Don't start the application the day before the deadline. Submit it in good time and as complete as possible.

■ Don't expect one word will say it all. Make sure that you will explain special terminology, the selected methods, the jargon used in your group and other necessary things. A programme repeating the title WORKSHOP without explaining their content will not get many points.

■ Make sure that the attached programme reflects what has been said in the other parts of the application form: if you plan to have feedback sessions of activities, include them in the programme, too. If you will address the

topic through dance, explain how it will be done in the programme, too, etc.

■ It takes time to get the signatures from your manager and partners. Start getting them on time.

■ The application and all attachments are submitted online. Ensure that you have all the attachments and scanning done in advance and that you know how your office's firewall and Internet connection work.

■ Things can go wrong with computers. Make sure that you always have a copy of the latest version of your application safe.

5 WAITING FOR THE DECISION



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ The funding decision takes about 3 months: first the eligibility of

the application will be checked, and then the quality assessed. Projects are always assessed by an employee at your National Agency and an external evaluator.

■ If your application wasn't up to scratch this time, go back to the drawing board and improve it. Don't despair – your National Agency will advise.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

GUIDE BOOK
Learn about your partner country by designing a light version of a travel guide book. Find information from different sources. Write about the history and culture of the country, food and sights, from different perspectives, for example. You can also be in touch with the young people in the partner country and ask them questions.

A TASTING TRIP

Make a dish from your partner country with your group. Find a number of different recipes and vote for what you wish to prepare. Go to the shop and cook together. You can also send recipes from your own country to the young people in your partner country and suggest they organise their own tasting trip.

TRAVEL FUND

While waiting for the decision, you could arrange a sale or another event to raise funds for the exchange. People like to support young people's own initiatives and it will also give publicity to your project.

KNOW YOUR YOUTHPASS

Learn about the Youthpass certificate. What kinds of areas of learning can you identify? Have you already learned something? Make yourselves learning diaries in which you can write down your experiences during the exchange.



PITFALLS

■ Don't leave the group alone at this stage. Meet up and learn about the culture of the partner country or organise a small fundraising event. This will raise team spirit and maintain the group's motivation and commitment during the waiting period.

■ Keep in touch with your partners and insist they participate. If a group is not active, find out why and, if necessary, consider if it is worth keeping an inactive partner.

■ If your application is rejected, you need to work on your plans. This is not a catastrophe, but it means that your group needs to do more work and you need to prepare a new schedule.

6 PREPARATION FOR THE EXCHANGE



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ When the application is accepted, the beneficiary will sign an agreement with your National Agency and the project will receive 80% of the awarded funding.

■ Make sure that all the planned practical arrangements are in place.

■ Start making a plan for the safety and protection of participants with your partners. Agree on common rules with the young people.

■ If your project has an APV, it will be carried out at this stage.

■ Check the schedule and agreements with your partners.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

The young people can check travelling times, compare prices and make the travel plan. They can prepare exercises included in the programme and acquire tools and materials needed, for example. They can be involved in planning and organising an information event for the parents.

WHAT TO PACK?

The group can make a list of things to pack for the exchange. The group may include experienced travellers and first-timers. Planning together is fun and informative!

LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Some parts and exercises in the programme are the responsibility of young people. It is good to practise these and go through them in advance with the familiar group.



PITFALLS

■ Participation of the young people will help the group leader in the preparation of the exchange. Trust and working together is important, and the group leader can support the groups when necessary. Nobody can do everything alone so share responsibilities with the partners, too.

7 PARTICIPATING IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ The project has to be implemented in the format that it was accepted.

■ If there are unexpected changes to the project (a partner cancels their participation or is changed, the size of the group decreases or something in the plan changes significantly), always get in touch with your National Agency.

■ If the dates of the exchange change but the total duration remains the same and it will still take place within the contract period, it is enough to mention this in the final report.

■ The project period can also be extended, if the exchange dates need to be pushed further back. In this case, please contact your National Agency straight away.

■ Collect signatures of all participating young people and group leaders in the participant list.

■ Write down your learning experiences and your ideas in the Youthpass and share them with all.

■ Agree with your partner about what needs to be done regarding writing the final report, such as writing the participant evaluations and collecting receipts.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

STEAMING HOUR
The young people have daily conversations with their own group in which they can share their feelings in their own language in their own group. This time can also be used for evaluating learning and filling in the Youthpass diary.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME

The young people may feel like outsiders if all events are run by the adults. Everything does not need to go according to book; the young people need to be given opportunities to try out and learn about different situations. They can take on responsibilities and challenges according to their abilities. Do things so that people outside the project can also see and experience what you have achieved during the exchange.

EVALUATION DURING THE EXCHANGE

It is good to take some time for evaluation and documenting during the exchange. Young people can take photos, make videos and write blogs. Furthermore, you can also provide a "wall of weeping and delight" in which young people can write how they feel. Individual activities can also be assessed from the perspective of learning and understanding new things. You can find active methods to support your evaluation from the resource bank.



PITFALLS

■ Cultural clashes are bound to happen! This is the point. Don't try

to sweep the experiences under carpet but discuss them together and try to understand what the clashes result from. Share your experiences first in your own country groups, then with the young people from other countries, find out what the reasons for the clashes were and discuss how people act differently in different situations.

■ Support the young people at this stage – things are getting real: the new people are interesting and scary, leading exercises and presentations that they took upon themselves now seem daunting. Talk to the young people and support them, and when things work, give them space to work things out themselves.

■ Don't form camps – agree on common rules that everybody needs to follow and do a lot of icebreaker activities to begin with.

■ Don't treat groups from different countries differently. It is good for the adult group leaders to agree on common rules, too; you should understand the rules the same way, everybody should support all young people from whichever country they are and be able to intervene when somebody breaks the rules, you should pull together all through the project.

8 TELLING OTHERS



NATIONAL AGENCY INFO

■ Evaluate the project together with young people, conduct discussions about learning and give them a chance to fill in the Youthpass.

■ Dissemination activities that were planned in advance will take place after the project: you should tell about the benefits and experiences gained to other people in all the countries.

■ It is not enough to create a Facebook group or give a photo album to the parents: you should tell why the project was good to other young people outside your group, too.

■ It is recommended that group leaders spread good practices and information about opportunities provided by youth exchanges to their managers, colleagues and other people involved in youth work.

■ The name of the programme (Erasmus+ Youth in Action) should be visible in all communications and products.



TIPS BY A YOUTH WORKER

Tell others about youth exchanges and inspire them to carry them out, too. Let the young people themselves think of good ways of telling others about the project. They usually come up with ideas easily; choose ideas they are willing to put into practice after the exchange.

MAKE SOME NOISE

You should include activities in the youth exchange, the results of which can be used in dissemination. Think where you could get publicity as a group and where you could meet other people not participating in the exchange.

TELL OTHER PEOPLE

Think who could benefit from the project and who you could tell about it and why.

List different target groups on yellow post-it notes: other young people, youth organisations, youth workers, other people in the group's locality, decision-makers... Write different means of communication on red post-it notes: a newspaper article, a blog, a video, visits... Think which means of communication will suit different target groups. Split the group to do different activities for different target groups.

INTERNATIONAL PARTY