

INCLUSION



*A compass
to international
Inclusion projects*

How to manage inclusion related issues
in international activities

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Erasmus+



INCLUSION



*A compass
to international
Inclusion projects*



SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

...‘Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the **Erasmus+: Youth in Action** programme’. The European Commission has created a network of SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme, which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to **support the implementation of the European Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme with regard to** priorities such as Social Inclusion, Cultural Diversity and Participation. SALTO also supports co-operation with regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and The Caucasus and co-ordinates all training and co-operation activities, as well as information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Most of these resources are offered and disseminated at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net. Find inspiration in the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training & Youth Work, the Trainers Online for Youth database, links to online resources and much, much more... SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in the European youth field, among them the National Agencies of the Youth in Action, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre (based in Belgium-Flanders) works together with the European Commission to support the inclusion of **young people with fewer opportunities** in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme and to contribute to social cohesion in society at large. SALTO-Inclusion also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing training, developing youth work methods, disseminating information via its newsletter, etc.

Besides this focus on inclusion, the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre also carries out **transversal tasks** on behalf of the whole SALTO network, such as the Trainers Online for Youth (TOY) database, SALTO-YOUTH.net website developments, publications (for example Making Waves booklet about visibility, dissemination and exploitation of project results).

For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion pages at

 www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

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In January 2014, the European Commission launched a new **mobility programme** called Erasmus+. Erasmus+ offers young people a range of European learning experiences which allows them to try something different in their leisure time and learn new skills such as international communication, social and intercultural competences, organisational skills, and so on. Erasmus+ youth activities are a source of inspiration and motivation to start new projects and to encourage young people to take the next steps in their lives. The Erasmus+ Programme is an exciting milestone as it introduces a new era of increased recognition for this type of non-formal learning and a marked rise in the financial resources available for European-level youth activities.

Erasmus+ is open to young people aged between 13 and 30 (depending on the specific activity). The programme wants to give ALL young people a fair share – to take part in its own activities and to fully take part in life in general. However, previous experience has shown that some young people find it difficult to take part in European-level activities. These individuals are blocked from participating due to a variety of obstacles. For instance, some face poor socio-economic conditions, some struggle in school, others belong to minorities which experience discrimination. Some young people come from disadvantaged or isolated areas while others have health problems or a physical and/or mental disability. Erasmus+ refers to individuals from these backgrounds as “young people with fewer opportunities”.

In response, the “Youth in Action” branch of Erasmus+ has developed an **Inclusion & Diversity Strategy** to give youth organisations a framework to make the most of inclusion and diversity within the programme. To put this strategy into action and make Erasmus+ as truly inclusive as possible, youth workers and youth leaders working with these young people need information, advice and support to understand the obstacles they face and to know which steps to take to overcome them. Luckily, a huge wealth of knowledge has been gathered regarding how to help young people from all backgrounds gain easier access to European-level activities... and that’s where this booklet comes in.

“Inclusion A to Z” is designed to help open up Erasmus+ youth mobility activities to as many potential users as possible. The booklet is aimed at two specific target groups:

1. Organisations already working with young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds who would like to add international mobility projects to their box of educational tools for inclusion.
2. Organisations working with so-called “mainstream” youth who would like to open up their international projects to include (more) fewer-opportunity young people.

While this booklet is primarily intended for youth organisations, it may also be useful for other youth stakeholders (like National Agencies, policy makers, city councils, employment offices, etc) who would like to get to know the fewer-opportunity target group and better understand the challenges involved and the steps required to include them in international-level activities.

How to use this booklet

“Inclusion A to Z” is divided into three parts:

PART 1 - GETTING YOUR BEARINGS. The first part of the booklet will help you get orientated to the concept of “Inclusion”. It provides some background information about the current social problems facing young people and explains what the European Union is doing in response. It then goes on to look more closely at the Erasmus+ : Youth in Action philosophy and approach to working towards more inclusion, diversity and equity for young people in and through its international-level youth activities. This section is relevant for you if you have little or no experience working with the fewer-opportunity target group and/or if you are a newcomer to international mobility projects.

PART 2 – GETTING A PICTURE. This section is designed to help readers better understand what is meant by an “inclusion project” in the context of Erasmus+ : Youth in Action. It provides several brief examples of the different forms such projects can take. Here you can learn more about the benefits of inclusion projects for different stakeholders as well as about potential barriers that may prevent young people from taking part. This section can be helpful for readers who want to understand concepts like the personal pathway and active participation and why these are considered so important in international inclusion projects.

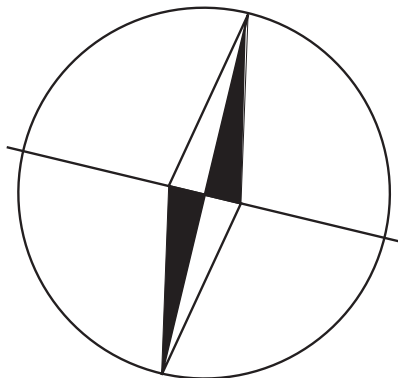
PART 3 - GETTING TO WORK. The final part of the booklet is a mini-guide to planning and carrying out successful inclusion projects with and/or for young people with fewer opportunities. Here we have split the project management cycle into three phases – Preparation, Implementation and Follow-up. In each phase we provide an overview of the most important elements to be addressed and illustrate them with methods and tips to help you put theory into action. This section will be particularly useful to readers with some basic experience in project management and who are looking to further develop their knowledge and skills. But who knows? Even experienced organisations may find inspiration here and begin to look at some of their standard working practices in a new way.

Throughout the booklet we also give you some “food for thought” to better understand social exclusion/inclusion issues and to encourage you to stop and think about the implications of certain steps for young people with specific challenges or needs.

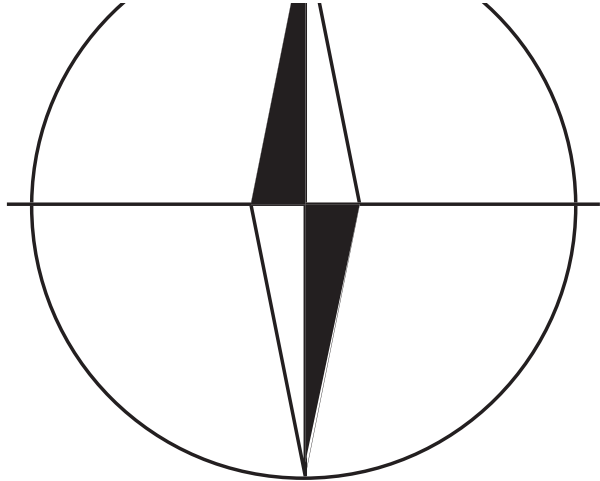
We hope that the combination of theory and action will equip you... to either take your first steps into Erasmus+ : Youth in Action with your inclusion group OR to improve the quality and scope of your current inclusion activities.

Including young people with fewer opportunities is a long-term process involving many different steps. The “Inclusion A to Z” booklet can best be imagined as a compass. You can use it to steer through the issues of inclusion as well as through the steps to managing an international-level activity from beginning to end. We sincerely hope it will get more stakeholders interested and enthusiastic about inclusion topics... and ultimately help YOU to start off on a journey of creating new and exciting chances for young people to get involved and “go international”.

“Inclusion from A to Z” is in part a compilation of the essential concepts and advice from previous SALTO Inclusion manuals. We express our thanks to all the writers, youth workers, young people and external experts whose earlier contributions to the “Inclusion for All” series provided the foundation for this booklet.







GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

The new possibilities and increased resources offered by the Erasmus+ Programme are reason for celebration and optimism in the youth sector. However, the programme is starting off at a time of great change and uncertainty for young people in Europe.

At the time of writing this booklet, the world economic crisis and massive youth unemployment were continuing to unfold. According to Eurostat, **almost one out of three young persons between the ages of 15 and 24 was at risk of poverty or social exclusion within the European Union.**

What exactly does this mean? Why does it matter? Why should we care?

What is social exclusion?

Social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control of the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives. Put simply, social exclusion is the combination of policies, systems, structures, attitudes and behaviours which result in some individuals being sidelined, left out or left behind.

Social exclusion can affect all age groups but it demands particular attention from the youth field because it produces deep and long-term damage to the living conditions, social and economic participation, emotional life, and health status of young people. It also contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. When young people experience insecurity in terms of living standards, political or social isolation, feelings of estrangement and unhealthy lifestyles these can aggravate pre-existing conditions of social exclusion. This results in a vicious cycle where socially excluded young people are in even more danger of suffering from additional material deprivation, social and emotional marginalisation, and health issues, which in turn expose them to more serious risks of exclusion.

In recent years the European policy debate about social policies for young people has been dominated by issues of employment and education. It is a fact that the economic crisis has affected young people particularly hard, with unemployment and inactivity rates consistently higher than for other age groups. However, some disadvantaged groups of young people face exclusion in the longer term **for reasons beyond the current crisis**. Remaining outside the labour market has farreaching consequences – not solely economic. These include a loss of confidence, an undermining of trust and expectations, and an increasing risk of social exclusion and disengagement from society.

In 2011, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) carried out the third **European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)**. This survey collected data in order to examine the quality of life of young people in Europe in 2011, comparing it with the results of the previous survey in 2007. It concentrated in particular on young people's social situation, on dimensions such as living arrangements, social exclusion, relationships & sources of support and participation in society and social and cultural activities.

Some of the key findings from the EQLS survey, published in 2014, included:

- More young people remained living with their parents, with young men more likely to find themselves living at home.
- Both unemployed young people seeking work and inactive young people would like to work if they could freely choose their working hours. This includes inactive young mothers and fathers looking after their children.
- Unemployed and inactive young people gave a comparatively low rating for their subjective well-being.
- Deprivation had increased for young people of all social backgrounds in nearly all EU countries, especially for those who are living in extended families with their parents and their own children; such people were likely to be unable to move out of the family home.
- Unemployed and inactive young people were more likely than others to feel socially excluded, to feel lonely, to face a lack of social support and to have lower levels of mental well-being.
- Young people were less likely to trust institutions – with the exception of the police, whom they trusted at the same level as before
- Young people were more likely than older people to perceive tensions between ethnic or religious groups, as well as between groups of different sexual orientation.

It should be kept in mind that although the current economic crisis has exacerbated many social issues, many of them are long-standing. Youth unemployment has been an urgent issue for the past twenty years (Dietrich) while rates of school disengagement (i.e. early-school leaving) have been stubbornly high for decades. The reality is that for many years, significant numbers of Europe's young people have struggled in the transition to independent adulthood, even when resources were more plentiful and the economy stronger.

Dealing with social exclusion

When trying to tackle the social exclusion of young people, it is important to remember that being excluded (that is, being side-lined, left out or left behind) is not simply due to one or two isolated incidents. Social exclusion is a complex long-term process where **multiple factors are usually at play** - factors which can impact each other and which can worsen over time. When this happens, a young person's situation can go from bad to worse in a vicious cycle.

EXAMPLE

A young person with low-level education is statistically more likely to be unemployed or to find only poorly paid employment. As a result, they may suffer from poverty. Because of their poverty, they may not have the means to afford decent accommodation or to provide for their children. Over time, this could negatively impact their physical and mental health, which in turn may jeopardise their ability to work... they then risk falling still further into poverty.

If you wanted to help this young person, what would be the best place to start? By finding them a better job? More education? Better housing? Assistance with child care? Medical attention? While all of these are without doubt helpful, none of them are quick fixes and there are no guarantees that they are even realistic options. (E.g. there may be no jobs available; the young person may not have the skills or competencies for a higher level of education, they may not be able to afford a visit to the doctor, etc.). The solutions to social exclusion can sometimes be just as complex and intertwined as the problems themselves.

This interaction of multiple factors means that social exclusion is similar to a Gordian knot – with no clear beginning and no clear end. As a result, there is no single string to pull which will unravel the knot – **no “magic bullet” or “cure-all pill”** which will solve all overlapping problems at once.



The same holds true for the youth sector. Youth work in and of itself cannot solve all the causes of social exclusion (e.g. it cannot change the economy). However, youth work and youth projects can impact social exclusion by helping young people to improve their skills, motivation, resilience, behaviour, attitudes and view of the world around them.

Therefore although social exclusion is definitely a complex challenge, it is not a reason to despair. As was shown in the results of the EQLS survey (see page 13), **most young people want to work**. They want fulfilling jobs that reward their efforts and recognise their talents. They want **to contribute to society and to be independent**.

No matter the complexity of the problems we are facing, that should not blind us to the fact that young people have a lot going for them – they **are passionate, resourceful, full of energy and alive with talent**. The young are resilient, endlessly creative and our hope for the future. This should be our point of departure – adopting an approach which **focuses on the assets of the young** rather than the problems they face as the way forward.

 **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Are you a “have” or a “have -not”? Are you “in” or are you “out”?

To better understand what is meant by “social exclusion”, try this short exercise.

Consider the young people you work with. Think about how they relate to other young people in their school, in their community or in their country as a whole. Would you say they have equal or fair access to things like:

- ▶ Decent housing?
- ▶ Healthy food every day?
- ▶ Regular medical and dental care?
- ▶ Good schools with caring teachers?
- ▶ Pocket money?
- ▶ Affordable free time activities?

What about other factors? Would you say that they:

- ▶ Have a loving and supportive family?
- ▶ Have positive friendships?
- ▶ Live in a community where their language, religion and culture are respected?
- ▶ Live in a community where they are safe from harm and violence?
- ▶ Have a voice on social and political matters and that they are listened to?
- ▶ Have, in general, an interesting life and reason to feel positive about their future?

If you answered “yes” to most of the questions above, your young people enjoy a certain amount of well-being and privilege in life. In these categories, they could be considered as the “haves” in society or as those who are “in” (included). If your answers were mostly “no”, then, in some respects, your young people may be “out” or “excluded” from some aspects of a healthy life. In the context of the questions above, they could be considered as the “have-nots” of society.

This short exercise is a good demonstration of how social exclusion is about much more than not having a lot of spending money or not having a job. Our place in society, the quality of our personal relationships, our possibilities to participate and our future perspectives are just as important to our sense of well-being and belonging (“Am I in or am I out?”) as the amount in our bank account.



Wall mural by street artist Banksy in Clacton-on-Sea, UK. Photo: Banksy.

<http://banksy.co.uk>

Who are young people with fewer opportunities?

As clearly shown by the Eurostat and EQLS survey results, there is currently a very high number of “have-nots” in our society. These youngsters are sometimes referred to as young people with fewer opportunities.

“**Young people with fewer opportunities**” is a term used to describe young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the exclusion factors below. These often prevent young people from taking part in formal and non-formal education, trans-national mobility, employment, democracy and society at large.

- ✓ **Social obstacles:** people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc., people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky sexual behaviour, people in a precarious situation, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans, young people from broken families, etc.
- ✓ **Cultural differences:** immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems, etc.
- ✓ **Educational difficulties:** people with learning difficulties, early school-leavers and school dropouts, lower qualified persons, people with poor school performance, etc.
- ✓ **Disability** (i.e. participants with special needs): people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities.
- ✓ **Health problems:** people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, young people with mental health problems, etc.
- ✓ **Economic obstacles:** people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, people in long-term unemployment or poverty, people in debt or with financial problems, etc.
- ✓ **Geographical obstacles:** people from remote or rural areas, people living on small islands or in peripheral regions, people from urban problem zones, people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities, abandoned villages...), etc.

Different cultures use different words to describe excluded target groups. In some contexts, the group is referred to as “disenfranchised”, “marginalised” or “disadvantaged youth”. Some youth workers prefer to focus on positive traits and use terms like “youth with alternative skills”.

- 👉 The term “young people with fewer opportunities” used in the Erasmus+ Programme purposely **focuses on the situation in which young people are in** so as to avoid stigmatization and blame. The causes of disadvantage can be manifold, and the solutions similarly so.

Young people with fewer opportunities are young people who, largely due to their personal situation and sometimes also due to the choices they make, face different and/or more difficult obstacles in their lives than other young people. In many cases, individuals may fit into several of the categories described above at the same time (e.g. a teenage mother who lives in a remote village and who suffers from alcoholism). This compounds their difficulties still further.

It is important to bear in mind that simply being in one of the situations above does not automatically lead to fewer opportunities compared to peers. The risk of exclusion because of specific factors varies according to country and context. Keep in mind that young people are individuals, not carbon copies, and each individual’s situation is unique. It is a mistake to over-generalise or to label young people without a deeper understanding of both their challenges and their strengths. It is important, therefore, to be aware of the concept of **comparative disadvantage**. Comparative disadvantage means looking at a potential disadvantage within a specific context (or between specific young people) and determining in how far that disadvantage is a real vs. a theoretical obstacle.

For instance, a young person who is blind may experience some mobility challenges due to their disability. From this one specific point of view, they could be considered to have “fewer opportunities” than their peers. But if that same young person is about to complete their university degree, has a good job offer and will soon move into their own apartment... should they be considered as someone with “fewer opportunities”? Or is this young person in fact one of the “haves” in society, despite their disability?

Besides context-dependent factors, there are also a number of **absolute exclusion factors**. When people’s fundamental rights are violated, they are always disadvantaged no matter how common this situation is in a particular context (for instance if a young person is refused their basic human right to go to school, the right to practice their religion, etc.)

No matter which term you use or from which angle you approach the issue (fewer opportunities, comparative disadvantage, absolute exclusion, etc) one point above all should be kept in mind. While individuals within this target group each have their own specific needs, **they share one characteristic in common: they are unlikely to take part in European-level youth activities without additional forms of support.**



FOOD FOR THOUGHT *Understanding Comparative Exclusion*

If you were to compare yourself with, say, Mark Zuckerberg (student of Harvard University, founder and owner of Facebook, estimated personal net worth of over a billion dollars) it would probably be fair to say that, in many ways, you have “fewer opportunities” than he does. But by that reckoning, 99,9% of the world’s population could be considered to have “fewer opportunities”, too! This is not how comparative exclusion works.

When dealing with social exclusion, we must be careful not to fall into the trap of seeing in extreme terms of “black-or-white” or “all-or-nothing”. Social exclusion has many shades of grey. For instance, if a young person from a visible minority is subjected to an insulting remark, it does not mean that the entire society in which they live is racist. If a young woman is passed over for a job in favour of a young man, it does not mean that the entire society in which she lives is gender-biased.

There is always someone with more advantages and there is always someone with more disadvantages... so it is important to consider a young person’s situation in their daily context and from several different angles before comparing it with that of their peers to determine to what (if any) extent they may be considered to have fewer opportunities.

To gain more insight into the idea of comparative exclusion, try this exercise:

Think about yourself and your “position in life” compared to that of your peers (like your siblings, your close friends, your study- or classmates, the neighbours on your street, your co-workers, the people in your sport- or hobby clubs, etc.) How do you compare to them (or they to you) in terms of things like:

- ▶ Your financial income
- ▶ The quality of your home
- ▶ The level of your education
- ▶ Your self-confidence
- ▶ Your physical and mental health
- ▶ Your future prospects
- ▶ Your support network
- ▶ Your general feeling of happiness
- ▶ Etc.

Questions for reflection

1. In what ways (if any) would you say your “position in life” is stronger compared to that of your peers? In what ways (if any) would you say your position is weaker?
2. If you or your peers face specific barriers, obstacles or setbacks, would you say these are rare incidents or something that must be dealt with every day?
3. On balance, would you say this qualifies you (or them) to be considered to have “fewer opportunities” in some way? Why or why not?

What is social inclusion?

If social exclusion is how individuals get left out or left behind... then social inclusion is how they get brought back (or are kept) in.

Social inclusion is an on-going process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to **participate fully** in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision-making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights.

In practice, this “process” is made up of a wide variety of experiences and opportunities that can give an individual a sense of belonging, a sense of citizenship, and a sense of identity. Of course elements like having a good education, having a job and a decent standard of living are important aspects of social inclusion, particularly for young people, but perhaps even more important is **the breaking down of barriers to social opportunities** caused by factors like low income, discrimination, fear of the unknown and a lack of access to relevant learning experiences.

Social inclusion can consist of “big” or “one-off” events for a young person (like graduating from college or getting their first paid job). However, professionals who work with fewer opportunity youngsters know that inclusion is a long-term process which can be made up of much smaller steps in much simpler forms.

EXAMPLES

What do young people want to be included in?

- ▶ in a family
- ▶ in a group of friends
- ▶ in their class at school
- ▶ in a sports team
- ▶ in the “adult” world
- ▶ in the world of work
- ▶ in the “majority”
- ▶ in fun and social gatherings (like parties, going to a bar or going to the movies)
- ▶ Etc.

How do you know when they have been included?

When they:

- ▶ Make friends
- ▶ Are accepted by the rest of the group
- ▶ Smile
- ▶ Contribute to a discussion
- ▶ Take initiative
- ▶ Voluntarily take part in an activity
- ▶ Concentrate on a task
- ▶ Observe the rules
- ▶ Show up on time
- ▶ Ask for help
- ▶ Help or praise another youngster
- ▶ Are not afraid of physical contact
- ▶ Show patience
- ▶ Are happy

*Feedback from youth workers during the SALTO-Inclusion
“Fit for Life” Training Course, Belgium 2004*

There is no one right way of working towards inclusion – no standard recipe and no “one-size-fits-all” solution. To be successful, the inclusion process needs to be personalized to suit the needs of the individual.

Ideally, social inclusion should be a **participative process**. This means that the young people themselves should be in the driver’s seat. Young people are experts on their own lives so their wishes, goals and concerns should always be the starting point. Each individual should be able to set their own inclusion agenda according to their current needs, circumstances and possibilities. This means that professionals striving to be “inclusive” should always be aware of the limits of what they know and be prepared to ask the young people what to do, what *they* want, what *their* opinion is...

There are many methods, activities and approaches which can successfully be used in the social inclusion process; youth work and youth projects are particularly excellent contributors. Thanks to the wide scope of their activities (everything from resume writing to sports, from public speaking to arts and crafts, from theatre to project management), youth work can provide a huge variety of learning experiences, many of which provide the “small steps” necessary to help a young person feel that they belong.

Europe’s Response

Although the statistics around the social exclusion of young people are quite sobering, the good news is that the European Union is actively taking steps to address exclusion issues and make the Europe of the future a better place for its young people. This can be seen on policy as well as on programme levels.

POLICY LEVEL EUROPE 2020 AND THE EU YOUTH STRATEGY

EUROPE 2020

Europe 2020 is the European Union’s growth and jobs strategy for the coming decade. It aims to create the conditions for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Concretely, the strategy sets out five ambitious objectives – on **employment, education, social inclusion**, innovation and climate/energy – to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels underpin the strategy.

👉 For more information on Europe 2020, go to: <http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/>

EU YOUTH STRATEGY: INVESTING AND EMPOWERING

Youth are a priority of the European Union's social vision. The EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) aims to create favourable conditions for youth to develop their skills, fulfil their potential, work, actively participate in society and engage more in the building of the EU project.

The EU Youth Strategy has two overall objectives:

1. To provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market
2. To encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society.

To this end, it proposes eight fields of action:

- Social inclusion
- Education & training
- Employment & entrepreneurship
- Health & well-being
- Participation
- Voluntary activities
- Youth and the world
- Creativity and culture

This strategy's vision is addressed to all, but actions should focus on young people with fewer opportunities.

The strategy is divided into three-year cycles. At the end of each cycle, the EU Youth Report (a joint report by the European Commission and the European Council) is published. The first of these (published in September 2012) found that since 2009 – due to difficult labour market conditions – more young people have been involved in education and fewer are in work, while

the proportion of those not in employment, education or training (“NEETs”) has also increased (European Commission, 2012). There has been a corresponding increase in the proportion of young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The Youth Report also calls for a greater focus on social inclusion, health and well-being in the second three-year work cycle (2013-2015).

👉 To learn more about the EU Youth Strategy, go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/

👉 For more information on the first EU Youth Report (2012), go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm

PROGRAMME LEVEL ERASMUS+

All of this shows that the EU is taking youth issues extremely seriously and that much progress has been made in recent years on policy level. This is good news.

What about concrete action? What is Europe really *doing* to help young people? This is where the Erasmus+ Programme comes in.

ERASMUS

The fields of education, training, youth and sport have been recognised as key drivers within the Europe 2020 Strategy to overcome the socio-economic crisis affecting European countries, to boost growth and jobs and to foster social equity and inclusion. Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in these fields for the period 2014-2020. It is the tool for putting youth policy into action.

Erasmus+ aims to address the following challenges:

- Fighting rising levels of unemployment among the young, preventing early-school leaving and providing young people with the skills required by the labour market and a competitive economy
- Developing social capital among young people by empowering them to participate actively in their local communities and society at large
- Providing youth organisations and youth workers with training and co-operation opportunities in order to develop their professionalism and the European dimension of youth work.

THE ERASMUS+: YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

SALTO-YOUTH
INCLUSION
RESOURCE CENTRE



Erasmus+

Erasmus+: Youth in Action is one specific branch of the larger Erasmus+ Programme. It is the European Union's mobility and non-formal education programme for youth from 2014-2020. It offers different possibilities to young people to set up projects with an international dimension (e.g. group exchanges, voluntary service, youth encounters, group initiatives). It also provides funding for support activities for youth workers. Doing an international project can bring a new level of quality, an added dimension or a different approach to your youth projects. It could also provide an opportunity to include new target groups into your youth work – maybe by reaching young people that you haven't been able to reach before through other types of projects.

Through Erasmus+: Youth in Action it is possible to apply for funding for different types of projects:

- Mobility projects for young people (like youth exchanges and European Voluntary Service)
- Mobility projects for youth leaders/youth workers (training and networking opportunities like seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits and job-shadowing)
- Strategic Partnerships (including transnational youth initiatives)
- Capacity Building (with other regions in the world)
- Meetings between youth people and decision-makers in the field of youth

The funding rules of the Youth in Action programme are largely based on a simple system of flat rates and fixed amounts depending on the number of participants, the activity, its duration etc.

Erasmus+: Youth in Action is open to young people and youth workers in the so-called 'Programme Countries'. These are the EU countries, the EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) and the candidate countries to the EU. There are also some (limited) opportunities to set up projects with other regions in the world - mainly the neighbouring regions of the EU.

- 👉 Find out more about **all Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities**, including durations and eligibility criteria, by downloading the **Programme Guide** from <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/> or contact the National Agency in your country (an address list is available on the same website).

ERASMUS+ YOUTH IN ACTION AND INCLUSION

Erasmus+ recognises that Europe's socio-economic situation is changing rapidly and that our societies are becoming increasingly complex. As a result, more and more young people face difficulties and risk being excluded. Therefore the **inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities** has been defined as an important feature of the programme and its Youth in Action activities. The programme has set itself the task of being as easily accessible as possible. It is committed to making extra efforts to reach out and support young people who face disadvantages in their lives and to giving them a fair share of opportunities on European level.

A STRATEGIC APPROACH

To further promote this vision, Erasmus+: Youth in Action has developed an **Inclusion & Diversity Strategy**. The strategy aims to invest in young people's and youth workers' intercultural and interpersonal competences to manage and work with diversity in all its forms. The strategy emphasises that **extra efforts should be made to reach out and support young people from the fewer opportunity target group**. This applies to project organisers as well as other stakeholders like National Agencies, participants, trainers and so on. This should ultimately have a positive impact on young people with fewer opportunities and their situation.

👉 For more details on **the Erasmus+: Youth in Action “Inclusion & Diversity Strategy”**, go to: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

However, just including fewer-opportunity young people in activities is not enough. It is also essential to support both young people and youth workers **to deal with the diversity resulting from social inclusion**. In our daily lives we regularly encounter different ethnicities, languages, (dis)abilities, religions, sexualities, educational levels and individuals from a variety of backgrounds. European-level youth activities should be no different. Diversity in Europe (and in Erasmus+) is a reality; we need to learn not just to tolerate diversity it but to actively live with and embrace it.



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY - TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Imagine you work with a homogenous group of young people. They all live in the same neighbourhood, they go to the same school, they share the same racial and religious background, their parents earn more or less the same amount of money, etc. There can be a lot of advantages to working with such groups – they probably share many similar views, interests and ways of working and living. Sounds pretty comfortable, doesn't it?

What would happen if young people from very different backgrounds joined your group? For instance young people who were much richer... or much poorer? Young people who were much better at school... or who had severe difficulties with learning? Young people who were different on the outside (skin colour, language, clothing, body types, etc.) or who were different on the inside (beliefs, interests, values, priorities, etc.)? In fact, two things would have happened at once: the group would become more **diverse** through the variety of the profiles of the young people AND the group would become more **inclusive** by opening up to newcomers.

But it is not enough to just get different types of young people “in” to your group. Diversity requires that we **account for** and **value** the ways in which people are different. It means we must ensure that people’s differences are respected within the group’s systems, practices, and behaviours. Diversity means seeing difference as richness and as opportunity.

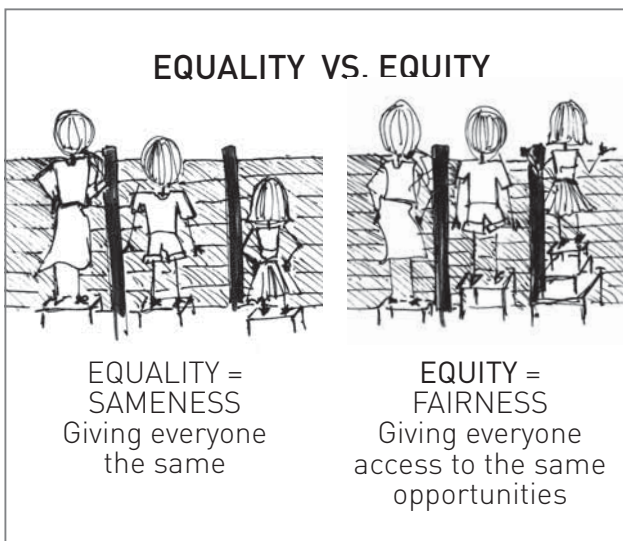
Inclusion and diversity therefore go hand in hand. When we focus on being inclusive, we also enhance diversity. The same is true in reverse; when we focus on achieving diversity, we have an opportunity to be inclusive.

Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is getting the mix to work together.



EQUITY

The Inclusion & Diversity Strategy also stresses the need for **equity** in the work with fewer-opportunity young people. Equity is the quality of being fair, unbiased and just. Equity involves ensuring that everyone has access to the resources, opportunities, power and responsibility that *they* need to reach their full potential... as well as making changes so that unfair differences may be understood and addressed.



Equity is not the same as equality. *Equality* implies sameness. It means treating everyone in the same way and giving everyone the same things. *Equity*, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account – to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. (Charvat, 2009). Although equality is a noble aim, we often forget that individuals can have very different starting points and therefore can have very different needs. *Equity* places less emphasis on treating people the same and instead tries to understand and give people *what they need*.

To achieve **more equity** in Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities, a series of **support measures** have been put in place (financial and structural) to help projects in their aim of including young people with fewer opportunities. These include:

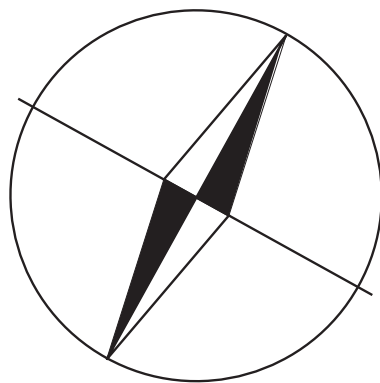
- **Easy project formats** - relatively accessible for first-timers and inclusion groups
- **Extra funding** - for special needs due to disability or health OR for exceptional costs due to other exclusion factors like extra mentorship, items needed to travel abroad, visa costs, travel insurance, etc.
- **Additional support** - to help young people make the jump into an international project like linguistic support, an advance planning visit to the host organisation, additional group leaders, etc.)
- **Open applications** - to allow for the volatility some youngsters face in their daily lives which can make it difficult for them to commit to or follow through on an international project.

👉 You can read more on support measures in Part 3 –The Preparation Phase - “Funding” (page 76).

Understanding the differences between equity and equality can help us to recognise and respond to differences in a young person's personal situation which may be unfair, avoidable and changeable. This is an important aspect of the social inclusion process.

The irony of striving for equity is that it is a way of working which often implies a degree of unequal treatment compared to other ("mainstream") young people. Equity requires positive discrimination when meaningful differences exist. (E.g. selecting a young woman to join an activity rather than a young man in order to achieve gender balance; providing a young person with learning disabilities with a language coach while the "student profiles" fend for themselves, etc.) It is up to project organisers to distinguish who is, and who is not, in need and what those specific needs are. While the outcomes may be different for different people, so long as the process and the opportunities are fair, then equity is achieved. (Charvat, 2009.) Once all the young people (in a group, in a specific project, etc.) enjoy a level playing field, then we can be fair by giving everyone the same things.

Remember: equity is the means; equality is the outcome.



This brings us to the end of Part 1. Hopefully you now feel better informed about the issues facing young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds and how the Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities aim to actively contribute to the inclusion of these youngsters.

But what, if anything, does all of this mean for you?

- ☞ Would you like to go deeper into the theory and practice of social inclusion, learn more about the obstacles facing specific profiles of young people and how Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities can help? » We refer you to the “**References – Hunger For More**” section (page 140) where you can find many useful other useful resources.
- ☞ Are you interested in providing more support to fewer-opportunity young people... but don't currently work with these young people yourself? » We recommend that you start **networking in your local area**. Get in touch with organisations working with the fewer-opportunity target groups and start getting to know the young people, their strengths and their needs. » We also recommend that you **contact your National Agency**. They can put you in touch with organisations who are experienced in organising international activities for fewer-opportunity youngsters. They can also inform you about upcoming national- and international-level meetings, training courses, contact-making seminars, etc, where you can meet colleagues and potential partner organisations for future projects.
- ☞ Do you feel that Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities may have something exciting to offer your young people? » Then we recommend you follow us and continue reading Part 2 of “Inclusion A to Z - Getting a Picture”.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT *Experiencing Exclusion*

When was the last time you were the “new kid” or the “outsider”? To remind yourself how it can feel to be put in a totally new situation and completely on your own, try one or more of these activities by yourself (no, you can’t take a friend!):

- ▶ Go to a restaurant and have a full meal. Do not take your phone, a book or anything to occupy your attention.
- ▶ Go to an ethnic food store or supermarket (preferably where the all products are labelled in a different language) and try to find ingredients for a meal. Take your shopping home, cook and eat it.
- ▶ Go to an event organised by a different cultural group (e.g. a party, a lecture, a festival, etc.) Ask the organisers in advance to speak to you only in their language for the first 60 minutes.
- ▶ Go to a religious service in a congregation other than your own. Or, if possible, go to a service of another religion in your area. (Get in touch with a contact person in advance to check if and when this would be appropriate.)
- ▶ Go to observe a session of your city council or provincial/national government and see if you can understand their discussions and procedures.

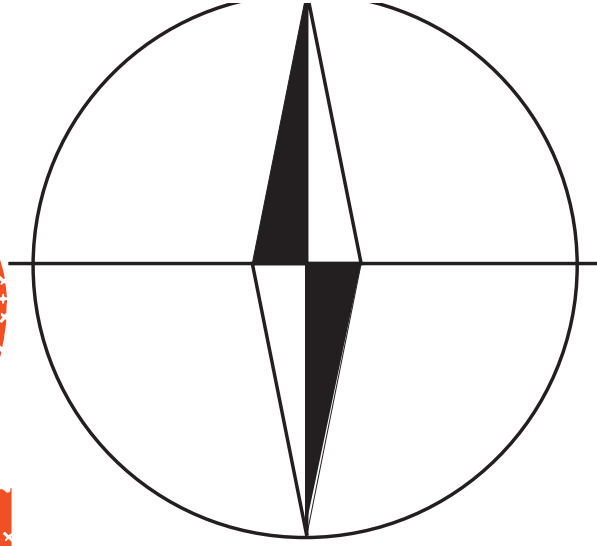
Ask yourself:

- ▶ How did it feel to be on your own in a new situation? To what extent could you understand what was going on?
- ▶ Which (if any) barriers did you encounter? (E.g. language, communication, mobility, stereotypes, attitudes...?)
- ▶ How did other people (the “insiders”) react to you? Did anyone take steps to make you feel welcome or “included”? If so, how? If not, what was the result?
- ▶ When you are an “outsider”, how important is it to be treated “inclusively”?

Now stop and think about the young people you work with:

- ▶ How do you think they might feel if put in a similar situation (i.e. on their own, little support, no common language, etc.)?
- ▶ What are the implications of this exercise if you consider taking young people with fewer opportunities abroad on an Erasmus+: Youth in Action activity? What would you, the project organiser, need to keep in mind? What steps would you have to take?





GETTING A PICTURE

For those with no previous experience with international mobility projects it can be very difficult to try to visualize an international inclusion project. What is an inclusion project, exactly? What could it look like? And what do the young people actually do in such a project when they are there? This section aims to answer these and other questions and to help you get a more complete picture of the aims, benefits and formats of such activities.

We also take some time here to present two important concepts: the personal pathway and active participation. Erasmus+: Youth in Action strives to promote these two working approaches. They should underpin all inclusion projects, no matter what their format, length or profile of their participants.

What is an “inclusion project”?

If you work in the youth field, you are probably used to organising projects of all shapes, sizes and descriptions. Erasmus+: Youth in Action offers young people the chance to do something out of the ordinary by taking part in *international youth mobility projects* – specific types of short-term activities designed to help young people to move – to move between countries AND to move forward along their learning path.

When young people move between countries, they get to know new people, new cultures and new languages. However, a mobility project is not just a vacation abroad. A mobility project can help a young person to:

- improve a whole range of hard and soft skills,
- increase their self-empowerment and self-esteem
- increase their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- enhance their employability and career prospects
- increase their motivation for taking part in future (formal/non-formal) education or training
- improve their awareness of the European project and EU values.

Most importantly, mobility projects offer young people a unique chance to actively participate and make their voices heard – in shaping their own learning process and in improving their own communities.

It is of course possible to organise and carry out mobility projects with young people in your own country and even inside your own community. **The advantage of international-level projects is that they serve to intensify the learning experience in a way that national- or local-level projects often can't match.** For a young person, the act of going abroad and being immersed in new ways of living and seeing the world can be challenging, destabilising, eye-opening and life-changing. In a sense, international youth mobility projects can serve as a kind of “**high-powered jet fuel**” to the learning process and that is what makes these projects such powerful instruments, especially for young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds.

If your international mobility project involves young people with fewer opportunities or if it in some way addresses the issues facing them then Erasmus+ : Youth in Action specifically calls this an “**inclusion project**”. An inclusion project strives specifically:

- to consciously include young people with fewer opportunities as active participants (in ALL phases of the project)

and/or

- to address and improve one or more of the social exclusion factors of young people. (Such projects should, of course, ideally also include young people from the fewer-opportunity target group.)

Erasmus+ : Youth in Action considers both types of project to be of (equally) high importance.



Some examples of inclusion projects

Here are some short descriptions of past projects to help you get a clearer picture of what inclusion projects can look like in practice.

EXAMPLE # 1

Crossing Borders – European Values”

This **youth exchange** project brought together young people from twelve European countries for one week in Hagen (Berchum), Germany to break down stereotypes and prejudices between East and West. The project focused on understanding different opinions based on culture and aimed to help the participants learn to accept differences.

The main activity of the youth exchange was a series of six workshops:

1. Theatre: how do we perceive sexual minorities?
2. Video: expressions of extreme rights in Europe
3. Poster: which values do Christianity and other religions bring to our countries?
4. Presentation/debate: how will we face globalization on our planet?
5. Workshop: are wars a tool for policy?
6. Photo-workshop/discussion: is gender mainstreaming only a luxury of Western Europe?

The results of each workshop (including a theatre play and two short films) were presented on the last day of the project.

Outside the workshops, the participants had the chance to take part in other activities like sports and sightseeing in the Ruhr area. During free time and in the evenings the group enjoyed a cafeteria space and disco.

One evening the participants had a conversation with invited guests Bernd Becker, superintendant of church affairs in Hagen, and Mehmed Soyhun, dialogue commissary of mosques in the Ruhr region.

Youth exchanges allow groups of young people from different countries to meet and live together for up to 21 days. During a youth exchange, participants jointly carry out a programme designed and prepared by them. (This can be a mix of workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, simulations, outdoor activities, etc.) Youth exchanges are based on a transnational co-operation between two or more participating organisations from different countries within and outside the European Union.

EXAMPLE # 2

“Roma Short Term EVS”

This **European Voluntary Service** project gave young people from Roma backgrounds an opportunity to take part in a volunteering project in the UK without any need for English language ability (which is often a barrier to their participation). An individual young person spent 1 month in Wales during which they first spent 2 weeks learning English and developing ideas on how to share their Roma background with others. They then spent 2 weeks in a volunteering project with 10 other volunteers from all over the world where they have many formal and informal opportunities to share their Roma heritage and culture. During their stay the volunteer also had the chance to link up with Welsh organisations working with Roma children living in Wales which gave them further chances to develop their skills in communication and leadership.

***European Voluntary Service (EVS)** allows young people aged 17-30 to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary service for up to 12 months in another country within or outside the European Union. Young volunteers are given the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations dealing with social and cultural themes. An EVS project can include between 1 and 30 volunteers who can do their voluntary service either individually or in a group.*

EXAMPLE #3

“Socialising Safely”

This **transnational youth initiative** involved two groups of young people - one from Northern Ireland and one from the Republic of Ireland - who worked together to identify issues which affect young people regardless of religious affiliation, social class or geographic setting including drug/alcohol awareness, peer pressure, drunk driving and date rape.

The participants created a DVD and resource pack to highlight these issues, to demonstrate how they impact on young people in negative ways and to support young people to explore positive ways of dealing with such problems. The DVD and resource pack were presented to younger members in the respective communities in the hope that by highlighting some of the danger, young people will be better equipped to “socialise safely” in the future.

A **transnational youth initiative** is a project jointly initiated, set up and carried out by two or more groups of young people from different Programme Countries. These initiatives may involve:

- the establishment of associations, clubs or NGOs
- the development and delivery of courses and trainings on entrepreneurship education (notably social entrepreneurship and use of ICTs)
- the development of information or actions to stimulate civic commitment among young people (e.g. debates, conferences, etc.)
- actions for the benefit of the local communities (e.g. support to vulnerable groups)
- artistic and cultural initiatives (theatre plays, exhibitions, music performances, discussion fora, etc.)

Young people carrying out transnational youth initiatives may be supported by a coach (i.e. a resource person with experience in accompanying groups of young people, facilitating their learning and supporting their participation.)



EXAMPLE #4

“Performance as the tool of social youth action!”

Aiming to activate Balkan youth, this 8-day **training course** was designed to provide youth workers, youth leaders and street animators from Serbia, FYR Macedonia, Slovenia and Romania with the skills and techniques to use “performance art” as a tool to deal with youth issues and to work for constructive social change.

The participants created their own performances which dealt with issues such as isolation in contemporary society, the need for closeness and the “cry” to achieve it, prejudices, human trafficking, human rights, violence, war, and self-destruction. The performances were carried out twice in Belgrade.

***Youth workers’ training & networking activities** support the professional development of youth workers in the form of participation in seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits, and job-shadowing/observation periods abroad in an organisation active in the youth field. The activity can last from 2 days up to 2 months. There is no age limit.*

- 👉 For more details and **further examples of inclusion projects**, go to: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoodInclusionPractice/
- 👉 Find out more about **all Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities**, including durations and eligibility criteria, by downloading **the Programme Guide** from <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/>

The range and scope for potential inclusion projects is limited only by your imagination. Each individual and each group is different, so as the project organiser it is up to you to choose your format and put together a programme of activities to meet specific needs as necessary.

If you are about to take your first steps into an international inclusion project, bear in mind that you don't have to imitate or repeat projects that others have done before, nor should you feel obliged to create projects bigger than you can realistically handle. Remember the KISS philosophy: KeeP It Simple Sailing.

- If there is nothing like a “youth group” or “youth club” in your area, think about other groups of young people who might be interested to take part in a **youth exchange** like musical groups, dance companies, sports teams, volunteer fire fighters, etc.
- Informal groups of young people who are not attached to or involved in an “official” organisation, club or activity can set up their own **transnational youth initiatives** (for instance with a group of their friends or other young people who share their interests and concerns).
- If the idea of an inclusion project still seems overly-ambitious for your young people, consider taking an intermediary step to “going international” like organising a volunteer workcamp (see www.sciint.org or www.alliance-network.eu) and bring a group of international participants to your area to help with not-for-profit local projects.

You don't need to be an experienced international youth organisation to get involved in Erasmus+: Youth in Action but it is always a good idea to link up with as many local- and/or national-level partners as possible who are experienced in international inclusion projects. Ask for their advice and take advantage of their knowledge and contact networks. Consider co-operating with them to organise a future project together.



Benefits and potential obstacles to inclusion projects

Erasmus+: Youth in Action inclusion projects offer a **variety of benefits** to young people as well as to their organisations and their local communities. These activities can be dynamic learning experiences. They are a unique alternative to formal learning settings (like school) which may have little to offer young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds.

BENEFITS FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Taking part in an international inclusion project can help young people to:

- **Discover new cultures, new people and new places.** Young people can become curious about other countries and cultures and want to explore them. They realise that “our” way of doing (our identity, culture or belief) is but one of many. In other countries, people look at things in a different way. This can make a young person question their own certainties. It forces them to reconsider “normality”, to ask questions, to communicate, to open up and to try new things.
- **Confront prejudices and stereotypes.** By interacting with people from other countries, young people can begin to see that there are more similarities between peoples than differences. In this way, they learn to be more tolerant and open to diversity.
- **Improve a wide range of hard skills** (like new languages, decision-making, working in multi-cultural teams, completing tasks, long-term planning, listening to other opinions, communicating your ideas, etc.) **and soft skills** (like taking responsibility, creativity, empathy, patience, learning to be independent, supporting others, etc.)
- **Step away from daily life.** Travelling to another country means being taken out of your daily life and out of your regular routine. Being freed from the pressures that can sometimes come from family, friends and daily surroundings can be a relief and create a distance which can help a young person to reflect on their life and make choices and decisions about how to go forward. Being in a new environment where the “normal” solutions don’t work forces a young person to find new solutions for the challenges they meet.

- **Make a fresh start.** Being abroad and among people who don't know you and who don't have specific expectations of you offers the possibility to make a fresh start, unhindered by things that have happened in the past. It is an opportunity to be an individual without a history of negative labels, past mistakes and bad experiences. It is a chance to "start from scratch" which can lead to new opportunities, experiences and perspectives.
- **Gain a sense of belonging in a wider community.** Meeting young people from a different country who face issues very similar to your own can be an eye-opening and inspiring experience. Thinking, discussing and working together for a common purpose or to address a common problem can be very powerful and can create a new sense of belonging. "When we work together, we can make change happen."
- **Discuss issues and exchange ideas that are important to them.** Young people are curious about the world around them and they want to play a role in making things better but youngsters from fewer opportunity backgrounds seldom get the chance to do so. An international inclusion project offers time and space for young people to reflect and share ideas in order to better understand complex problems in society. It offers a framework where young people play the central role, determine the agenda and make a direct contribution to helping their local community.
- **Gain prestige and recognition.** An inclusion project is not a holiday; it involves a lot of work and commitment. Participating in such projects and achieving all sorts of personal and learning goals can go a long way to increasing a young person's status and gaining a new level of respect in their home environment (e.g. within their family, within their circle of friends, at school, in the wider community, etc.).
- **Develop a feeling of citizenship.** International inclusion projects give young people a rare opportunity to consider their place and their role in society – not just on local level but also in terms of their national and wider European identity. For example, for those young people living in countries which do not require carrying personal identification, applying for a passport can be a first step to feeling like they are a citizen of their country. For youngsters from refugee or immigrant backgrounds, being seen for the first time as French or Slovakian or Estonian or... may be the first time they identify themselves with their new home country.

And of course the most important benefit of all: **international inclusion projects are a lot of fun!**

BENEFITS FOR THE ORGANISATION

It is not just the young people who benefit from an international inclusion project. The participating organisations and their youth workers also stand a lot to gain.

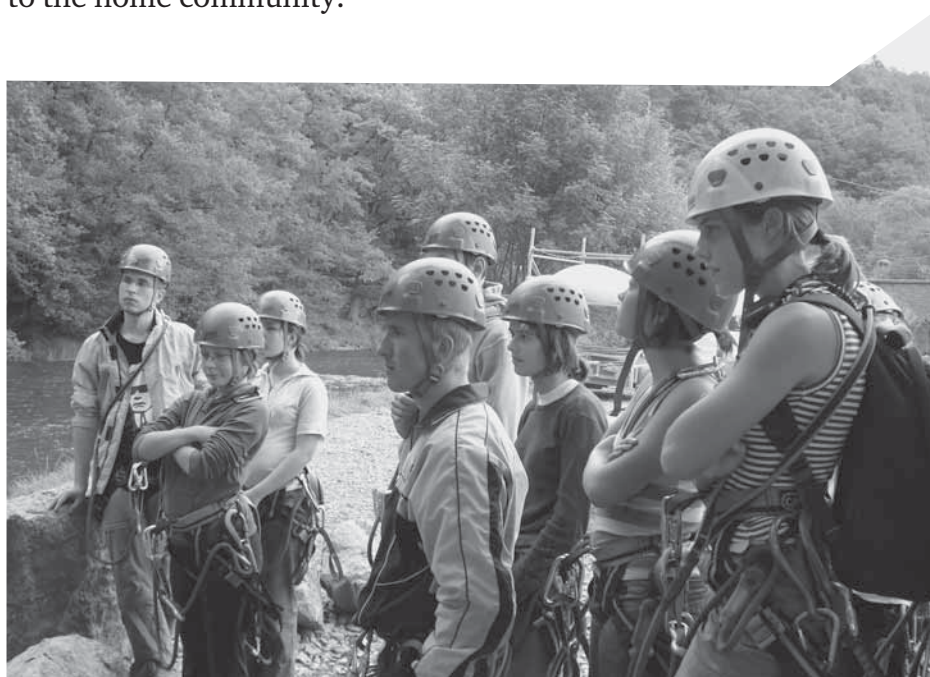
For example:

- Contacts with organisations and youth workers abroad can **stimulate new ideas**: for new projects, for new working methods, for fresh initiatives, for doing things differently or more efficiently. There is great potential to learn from one another.
- Organising an international youth project is a great opportunity to develop **organisational and project management skills** within your organisation (like intercultural competence, foreign language skills, marketing, fundraising, etc.) which can also be beneficial for your regular activities.
- Working with international partner organisations allows many opportunities to **share and compare** and to find out how good a job you are doing. The exchange of good practices and the design of common projects may lead your youth organisation to rethink some of its youth work practices to better meet the needs of your youngsters.
- Participation in an international project could be a **welcome change** from the regular day-to-day work of your organisation. The 'international variation' could motivate your staff/volunteers in their daily work and provide a new level of challenge for them as well.
- Young people returning home from inclusion projects are often full of inspiration and new ideas and are eager to give something back. Youth workers and youth leaders can take advantage of this fantastic human resource by **involving the young people in their home organisation** – for instance by giving them new tasks and responsibilities, by involving them in developing new inclusion projects and by encouraging them to make use of their newly-acquired international network.

BENEFITS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

International inclusion projects can also have a big “knock-on effect” for the local community. For instance:

- An international inclusion project often serves as a “window on the world”. As a result, **people in the wider community can also become curious and interested in other countries and cultures**. This can be a first step towards breaking down prejudices and stereotypes.
- An inclusion project offers **opportunities for many people in the larger community to get involved** – e.g. offering homestays or home visits, co-operation with other local NGOs, donations from local businesses, visits to local projects, joint activities, etc.
- The project can **generate new energy** by showing that “something is going on here”. This can contribute to **positive image-building** in and around the community and give local people a chance to “show their best side” to the world.
- The learning young people acquire during their time abroad often inspires them to start **new projects, local initiatives and even local businesses** when they return, all of which can be of great benefit to the home community.



POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

With such an extensive list of possible benefits, you would think that young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds and their organisations would be standing in line for a chance to take part in an inclusion project. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Depending on a young person's background, there can be very serious obstacles, both practical and personal, which can block them from participating in inclusion projects.

Some examples of these include:

- **Lack of information.** Many young people (and indeed many youth organisations) have never heard of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme or of “international inclusion projects”. This may be because “traditional” promotional methods (like posters, leaflets or information sessions) often don't reach or don't appeal to youngsters from fewer opportunity backgrounds. Youngsters with severe learning disabilities may have difficulty in reading printed information about the possibilities which exist. Youngsters living in rural or isolated areas may receive little or no information at all.
- **Lack of understanding.** Young people who have never travelled outside their own country (or even outside their own neighbourhood) have a limited frame of reference and may find it hard to imagine just what an international inclusion project could look like. They may equate the project with school or other formal activities (e.g. being forced to sit for hours and listen to “boring” topics). They may conclude that this sort of activity is not for them.
- **Lack of self-confidence.** Young people who have never been away from home, who have never spent a night away from their family, who have spent their whole lives with the same group of friends, who do not speak a word of a foreign language, etc, are not always eager to leave their comfort zone for all the unknowns involved in travelling to a foreign country. Others may (at first) be reluctant to interact with people from backgrounds very different from theirs (e.g. people of different ethnicity, of different religions, of different physical and mental abilities, etc.) Some individuals have pasts characterized by negative experiences and failure. Consequently they have a sense of inferiority. They lack the confidence to take on new challenges and (re)gain control of their lives.

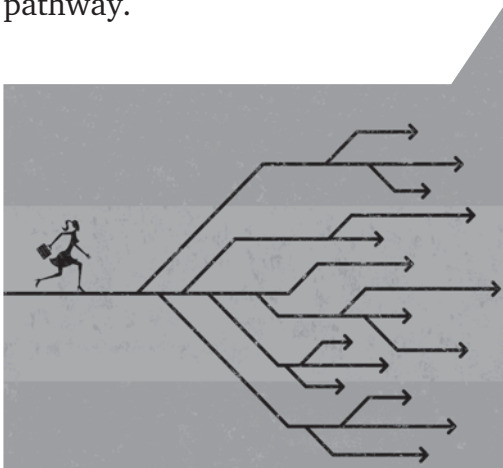
- **Lack of support.** The opinion of a young person’s family, peer group and other role models in the community can have a big influence how an inclusion project is perceived. For instance, a young person’s circle of friends may think that taking part in a project is not “cool”. Conversely, some families may see an inclusion project as a “frivolous” way to spend time and not as important as focusing on school, looking for work or collecting benefits.
- **Personal and/or financial obligations.** Young people from this target group often have a wide range of responsibilities and commitments which can severely restrict their ability to travel. For instance, some are parents of young children; others are carers (in charge of caring for ill or disabled family members). Some make a vital financial contribution to their family (through wages, social benefits, alimony payments, etc.). Some have specific routines they must follow for their health (courses of medical treatment, therapy, etc.) or which are linked to their culture/religion (like structures/schedules for worship and prayer, dietary practices, etc.)
- **Institutional obligations.** Some youngsters have official requirements to fulfil which cannot be postponed or ignored (like signing for social benefits, appearing before the court, checking in with a parole officer, etc).
- **Practicalities.** And of course there is a whole range of practical obstacles which can limit a person’s mobility like lack of a birth certificate, lack of a passport, lack of facilities suitable for people with physical or mental disabilities, etc, etc.

Naturally, these potential obstacles do not affect all fewer-opportunity young people all of the time. Each individual case is different. Some obstacles can be overcome with effort and creative thinking; some cannot. The degree of seriousness of an obstacle depends on the young person’s specific circumstances as well as on the type and duration of the inclusion project. (For instance, taking part in a 7-day youth exchange has different implications than taking part in a 6-month European Voluntary Service placement).

The importance of the personal pathway

For “mainstream” young people (that is, for the “haves” and for those who are “in”), the idea of taking part in a project abroad can be very exciting. Doing something new, starting on an adventure, meeting new people, learning other languages... what more could you ask? However, for young people with fewer opportunities, and particularly for those from fragile or volatile backgrounds, the idea of doing something as unusual as an inclusion project can be extremely challenging, stressful, and even threatening.

Young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds do not share the same motivation or starting point as “mainstream” young people. For them, the idea of going abroad is not a fun opportunity but is rather a frightening proposition. These youngsters often have difficulty understanding the sense of spending a period abroad. They do not always see the benefits of leaving the safety of family, friends and their home environment. There is a good chance that they may reject the entire idea outright... UNLESS... they can see how the experience fits in with their personal pathway.



The “**personal pathway**” is an approach which helps place an inclusion project in a clear context designed to help a young person move forward in their life. It responds to a young person’s most urgent needs and learning objectives. It makes sure that the act of “going international” does not harm the young person or create more difficulties than they are already dealing with now. The pathway approach takes into account a young person’s past development, assesses their current situation and then gives the inclusion project a place which relates directly to that person’s future aims and goals.

To better understand the pathway concept, imagine a young person walking along a path. This path symbolizes the road they are following through life. Behind them are their past experiences in the family, in school, in work and within their peer group. Right beside them are the current issues they are dealing with (for example being long-term unemployed, trying to become independent from their family, beating an addiction, avoiding bad influences in their environment, etc.).

In front of them are their long-term goals (for instance, finding work, living independently, gaining a formal qualification, staying “clean”, etc). Depending on their situation, the young person’s path may have many twists and turns. It may be full of dead ends. They may be facing a long uphill climb.

An inclusion project can be used as a tool to help the young person take steps forward along this path and bring them closer to their long term goals. In a sense, an inclusion project can serve as a stepping stone along the pathway. It can be used to overcome specific obstacles in the path or it can be a means to jump-start a journey which has stalled.

However, an inclusion project should not be seen as the ultimate goal for a young person. An inclusion project is the means, not the end. The best inclusion projects serve to compliment and accelerate the work already being done with the young people on local level. An inclusion project should be used as a tool to take that work forward (e.g. to challenge the young people on a higher level, to give them new experiences, to introduce them to new topics, to add a new dimension to things they have done before, etc) and to help individuals achieve personal learning goals.

If a young person can see how an inclusion project directly responds to their needs and where it is taking them along their pathway, they are much more likely to be motivated to take part.

Exercise – “Sketching My Pathway”

To help you and your young people start to make links between “regular daily life” and an inclusion project, have the youngsters describe the pathway (or “life road”) they have travelled up to now and talk about where they want that road to lead to in future.

Give each young person in your group a flipchart-sized piece of paper and a marker pen. Ask them to draw their “life pathway”. Their picture should show:

- Where they have come from (their past)
- Where they are today
- Where they want to go in future

Make the exercise fun by encouraging the use of different kinds of road and highway symbols to express the life pathway – for example, a super highway or a fast sports car to show when things were going well, a stop sign or a ditch when things went badly, an intersection when they had to make an important choice, a service station when they needed extra help or more gas, etc.

In pairs or small groups, have the young people present and explain their drawings. Take time in particular to look at where the young people want to go in future. Discuss what they think they might need to help them get there. Try to see if you can identify concrete ways in which the inclusion project can contribute to this in some way (e.g. by helping the young person to learn new skills, by encouraging them to meet new people, etc.)

★ **Tip: Hold on to the young people’s completed pathway drawings.** You can come back to them in the Follow-Up stage to help the young people see more clearly how the project has moved them forward along their learning path.

⊗ **WARNING!** *Be aware that some young people from the fewer-opportunity target group may be on an extremely difficult pathway—through substance addiction, family violence, abuse, criminal behaviour, depression and so. As such, this exercise may not be appropriate in all circumstances. Be sure there is a level of trust between the young people and the exercise leader before doing this activity and always respect people’s privacy. Never push the youngsters too far or ask them to reveal information they are not comfortable sharing.*

👉 Other **useful exercises** which can give more insight into a young person’s pathway and learning needs are “**In Ten Years**”, “**My Web**” and “**Individual Action Plans**” presented in Part 3- “Identifying Needs and Expectations” (pages 62, 63, and 64).

The importance of active participation

It is often the youth workers and youth leaders working with the fewer-opportunity target group who first recognize the potential benefits of international inclusion projects. When trying to interest your young people in an inclusion project, bear in mind that an individual's motivation level is very closely related to the extent to which they feel personally involved and invested.

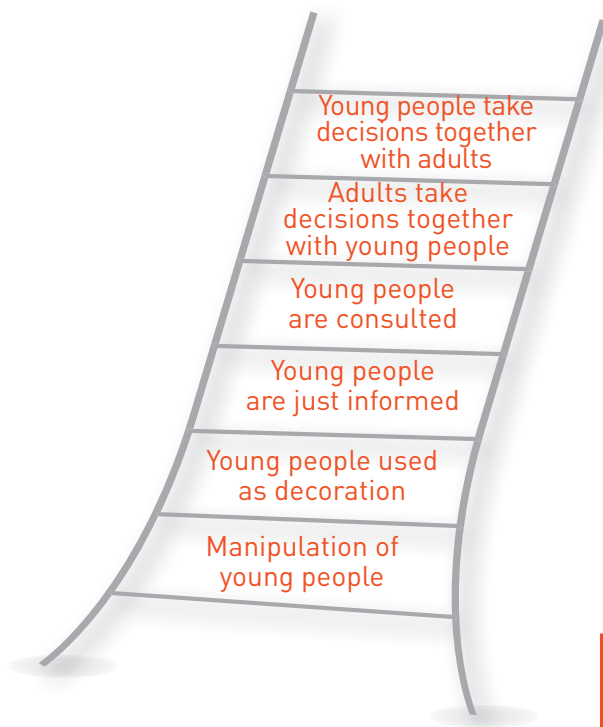
An inclusion project should always strive to promote the **active participation** of the young people. Active participation means empowering young people to set the agenda and take control of the process. It means creating and promoting an environment in and around your project:

- which creates opportunities for young people to initiate and direct the international experience
- where decision making is shared between young people and workers
- where the group leader's role is that of motivator and mentor, and
- which empowers the young people and at the same time enables them to access and learn from the life experiences and expertise of the group leaders.

Active participation is underpinned by the belief that young people are the experts on their own lives and therefore they are the best starting point in any learning experience. Active participation recognises that:

- Young people are imaginative and creative
- Young people are willing to exercise self-direction and self-control in the pursuit of objectives that they feel personally committed to, and
- Young people, under appropriate conditions, will not only accept but actively seek responsibility.

The more the young people can create, steer and own an inclusion project, the greater their level of enthusiasm will be. Take steps to involve them as much as possible in all phases - from the planning to the activity to the evaluation. This can sometimes be a challenge, depending on the profile and situation of your young people, but it should always be your guiding principle.



Exercise:

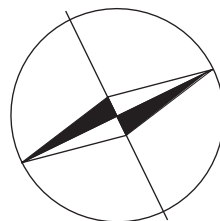
A good way to determine how your young people see their place and role in your inclusion project is to use Hart's "Ladder of Participation". Each rung represents one step on the climb to-wards the goal of full participation.

Briefly present the ladder model to your young people. Next, give them each two colours of "sticky dots".

- **Red:** What they think their current level of participation in the project is
- **Green:** Where they would like their level of participation to be in the future

Ask the young people to discuss their thoughts with other members of their group then stick their dots onto the ladder in the appropriate places. It is good to return to this exercise two or three times throughout the project as this will enable you to identify how inclusive the group feels that the process has been.

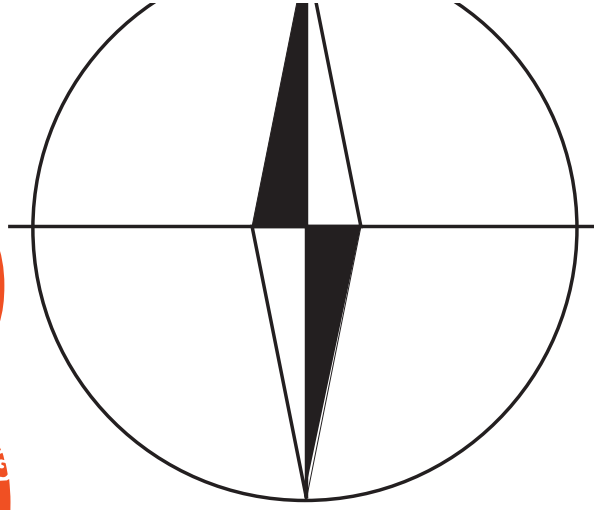
★ **Tip:** Remember that it is the process which is important. Don't panic if active participation is at a low rung when you begin work on an inclusion project and don't panic if you have not reached the top by the end. The achievement, for you and the youngsters, lies in the climb.



This concludes Part 2. With a bit of luck you are starting to feel more knowledgeable about inclusion projects and the philosophical approaches behind them.

Are you ready to learn more about the different practical steps involved in putting together and carrying out an international inclusion project? Then follow us and continue on with Part 3 – "Getting to Work".





GETTING TO WORK

In Part 2 we gained a clearer picture of what an inclusion project *is* in the context of Erasmus+ : Youth in Action. Now we will look at how an inclusion project *is done*. In this section we will look at the most important practical steps which need to be taken to plan, carry out and round off an inclusion project.

According to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, an inclusion project consists of three phases:

- Preparation
- Implementation, and
- Follow-up

We will look more closely at each of these in the following pages.

While there are, of course, many differences between the types of activities offered through Erasmus+ : Youth in Action (youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service, transnational youth initiatives, etc.) this section provides a general framework on how to set up and implement quality inclusion projects of all kinds. This framework can be applied to any international mobility project activity. It is up to you, the project organiser, to determine which steps are relevant to your specific project and your specific young people... and which ones are not. Use those steps which are helpful to you and your youngsters. Adapt those steps which can be adapted. Don't get bogged down by the rest... just "get to work"!

The Preparation Phase

Preparation is not just about packing your suitcase; it involves much, much more.

For the purposes of an Erasmus+ : Youth in Action project, the preparation phase encompasses everything that needs to happen **before** the young people travel abroad to their inclusion project: practical arrangements, the linguistic/intercultural/task-related preparation of participants before departure, and so on.

This phase is all about planning; it starts at the moment you are inspired to create a project and continues on right up until the young people leave to travel to their host country. This can be quite a long period –organisations working with fewer-opportunity young people may need anywhere from a couple of months to a couple of years to carry out all the necessary steps in the preparation stage.

A successful project begins with good planning and thorough preparation so that you, the project organiser, know what you are doing and why you are doing it, from the beginning to the end. The preparation phase involves laying down a strong foundation for your activity to give you as much chance as possible for a successful outcome. In this section we will look at the different building blocks you need to put that foundation together, including:

- Identifying needs and expectations
- Partner-finding and partnership-building
- Funding
- Preparing the participants
- Risk assessment

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Before you start to “build” your inclusion project (i.e. defining the aims and objectives, planning daily activities, timetable, resources, etc.) it is important to first establish a strong foundation. This means focusing on understanding the needs and expectations - of the young people themselves but also of the project partners and of the local community. To be of real value, your project should reply directly to one or more of to these needs.

NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

For many young people, an Erasmus+: Youth in Action inclusion project will be their first experience abroad. They will have certain fears but also certain expectations, all of which need to be identified and addressed.

It is important to spend sufficient time to exchange and discuss the different impressions, hopes, and concerns the young people may have. It is vital to help the youngsters create as clear a picture as possible of what is going to happen and what their project programme involves. Just as important is to dispel any myths or exaggerated expectations that the project cannot live up to.

A good guiding question for the young people in the preparation phase can be **“What do I want to get out of this?”** This can be a good way to start discussions with the youngsters on how the project programme should take shape and also a way to help the participants make an individual action or learning plan. You can also come back to the question in **the follow up phase** as part of your evaluation.

Bear in mind that it is not always easy for young people to express their wishes, needs and fears. If you ask them directly, you may not get an answer. Many young people from this target group have difficulties projecting themselves into the future. They often don't have a clue what their life will look like in a year's time or even next week. Nevertheless you and the youngsters need to work together to define a programme of activities for your project, so although it can be a challenge, it is crucial to find out just what a group's and/or an individual's needs are.

A session on talking about needs could be based on:

- wishes expressed by the young people at that moment
- wishes expressed by the young people in the past
- suggestions from family and friends or support staff
- suggestions from the supervisor
- outcomes from specific exercises like 'In Ten Years' and 'My Web' (see below)

Think about various aspects of a young person's life like school, family, work, friends, free-time, etc.

Here are some suggestions and ideas to help you help the young people to express their needs:

Exercise - In Ten Years

Although it can sometimes be difficult to describe long-term hopes and dreams, many young people do have some kind of vision of what they hope their future will be.

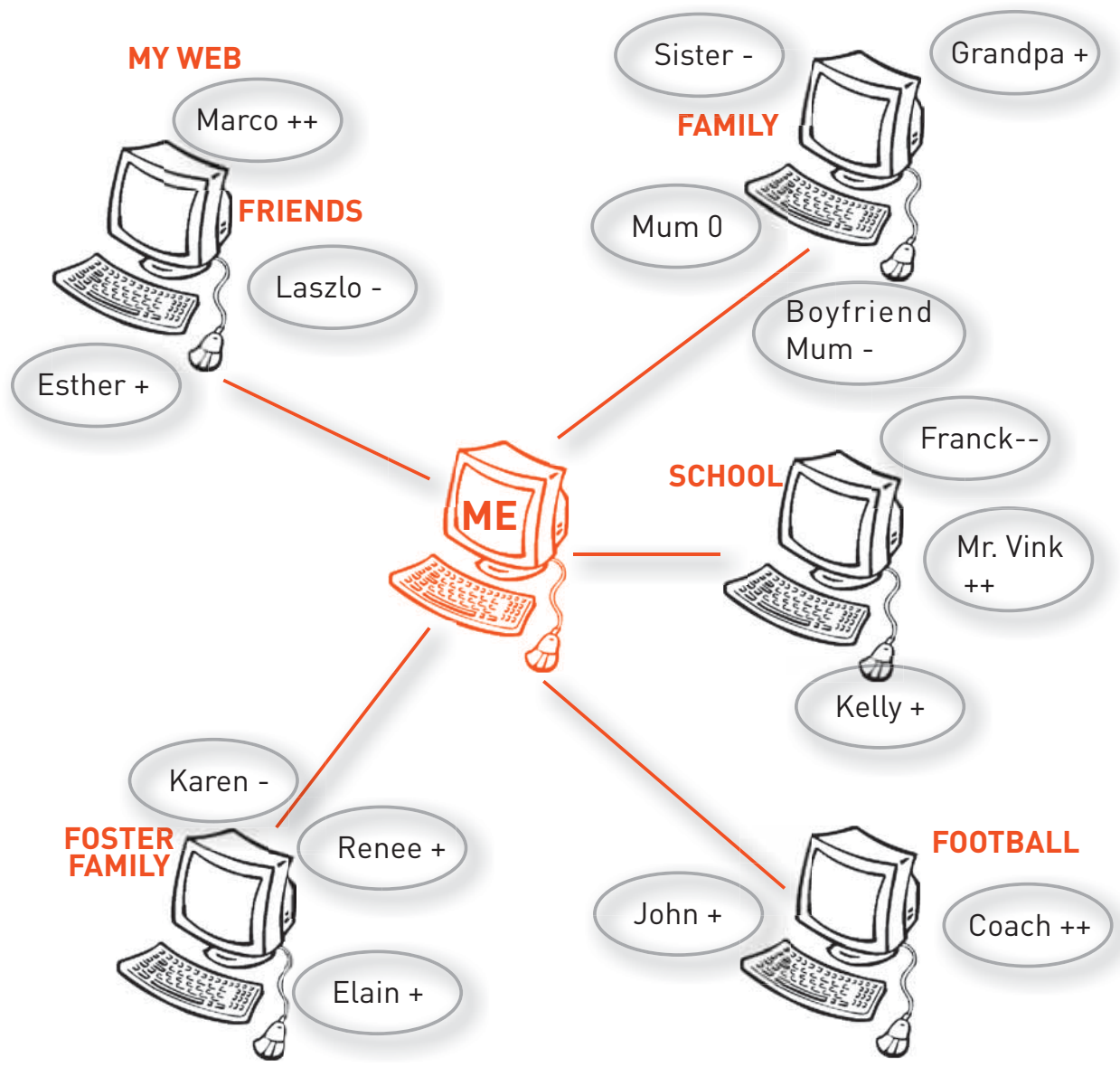
To start off the discussion, ask your young people how they imagine their life will look like in ten years' time. What will their life look like?

- How will they live?
- With whom will they live?
- How will they spend their evenings?
- Who will be their friends?
- What does their day look like?
- Which issues will be important to them?
-

Once you have that future picture, you can start to work backwards. Ask the young people what the consequences are of this ten-year picture. What does it mean for their lives in just five years' time? What does it mean in just two years' time? What plans must they make and what steps must they take to make their "ten-year picture" a reality? In this way you can work slowly towards defining short-, medium- and long-term needs and objectives.

Exercise – “My Web”

“My Web” is a tool to help a young person to ‘map’ his/her network and to identify key persons in their life. These are persons that can be of great value when it comes to assisting and supporting an individual and keeping them on track as they take new steps in their lives. After having “drawn the map” you can discuss the different relationships.



Exercise – “Making an Individual Action Plan”

Action planning is a process which can help young people to focus their ideas and decide which steps they need to take to achieve specific goals. An action plan is a statement of what a person wants to achieve over a given period of time.

Young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds will probably not have a lot of previous experience with action planning, so keep the process as simple as possible:

- Ask the individual young person to identify a short list of 5 personal goals they would like to achieve. (Refer back to the outcomes from exercises like the “Sketching My Pathway” or “In Ten Years”.) Ask them to decide which of these goals are most important or most urgent to them and which are less so.
- Next, ask them to list the steps that they think are necessary to achieve each goal. (A longer list of small but achievable steps is better than a short list with one or two unrealistic ones.) Have them indicate which steps they can take on their own and which ones they might need help with.
- Make an initial timeline showing when the first steps will be carried out. Which steps can be done this week? Which ones next week? Which ones before the end of the month? Etc.
- Keep a hard copy of the results. Refer back to them regularly so the young person can see their progress and adjust their next steps as necessary.

★ Tips:

- Make sure the goals in the action plan come from the young people themselves and are not the wishes of others.
- Help the young people keep their goals realistic and achievable. Divide larger vague goals into smaller achievable objectives. (E.g. “I want to learn to speak Spanish” is made easier if you say “By the end of the day today I will learn five words in Spanish. Tomorrow I will learn to count from 1 to 10. Next week I will learn how to order a beer.” Etc.

- Formulate goals in a positive way (“I want to...” or “I will...”)
- Combine short- and long-term goals in the action plan. It feels good to achieve things quickly.
- Combine different types of goals in the action plan (e.g. goals relating to attitudes, goals relating to skills, goals related to things to try, places to see, etc.)

NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Working on an international inclusion project means working in international teams with partners from other countries. Your partners will likely be from different cultural and educational backgrounds and as a result have different approaches to working with the fewer-opportunity target group. These differences might have consequences when it comes to working together. Misunderstandings, confusion and conflicts between partner organisations are common in inclusion projects.

Therefore it is essential not just to spend time considering the needs and expectations of the young people but of the different organisations and youth workers taking part in the as well. Be sure to budget adequate time to exchange and discuss motivations, approaches and what you hope will come out of the project together with your partners. Your challenge will be to define a common approach in which individual values and beliefs are respected.

A preparation meeting between partners in the early planning phase is crucial but take advantage of other communication possibilities as well. Send each other documents about your working principles and methods, start discussions on-line, write down any concerns you may and pass them along, share the good and difficult experiences you have while preparing your young people, etc.

A well-prepared team is a key element for a successful project.

NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

International inclusion projects offer young people the possibility to make an impact and work for change in their local communities. You can help start this empowerment process by encouraging the youngsters to talk among themselves and with others about the larger issues and challenges they see around them on a daily basis.

For instance, ask your young people:

- What is happening in our community? What are we concerned about? (E.g. in school, on the streets of our neighbourhood, in the youth club, in the world in general, etc.)
- Why is it happening? What are the possible causes?
- What can be done about it? Who can be involved?

Once you have a list of results, look for ways you can make links between the needs in your community and the activities in your inclusion project.

Exercise – “The Tree”

If your young people are comfortable speaking in front of others, you could start on needs in the community by means of a group brainstorm. If this is not the case, consider using more artistic methods like “The Tree”.

Ask the participants to discuss and agree on a problem or issue in their neighbourhood. In groups of 3 to 5 people, draw a tree on a piece of flipchart paper. On the tree trunk, write down the problem faced and discuss the causes and the consequences of the problems. Write these down on the diagram. The roots of the tree are the causes of the problem, the branches are the solution.

Having discussed the causes and problems of the particularly issue, think together of possible solutions to the problem. Write the solutions on post-it stickers and use these to decorate the tree as “leaves”.

To evaluate the activity, gather together and get each group to present their tree, explaining their results.

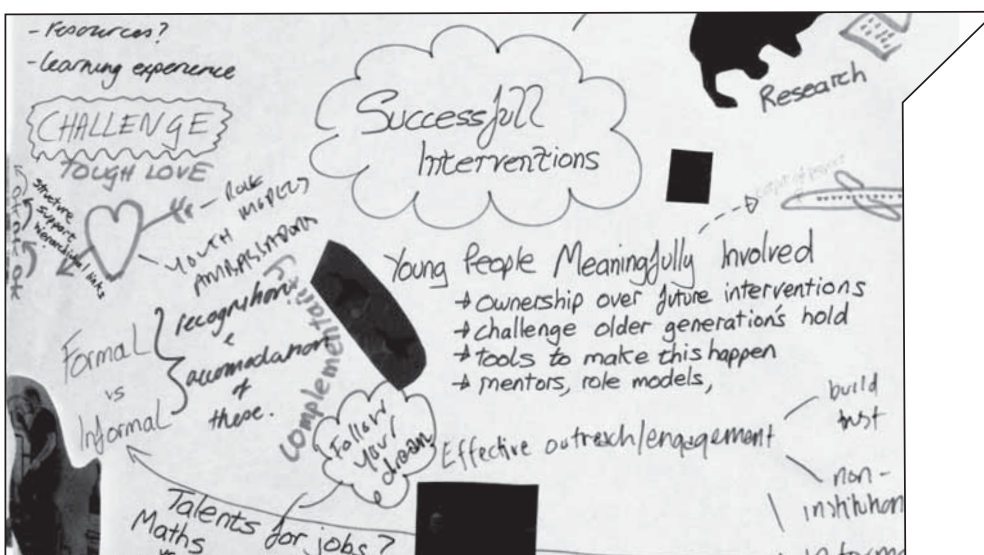
Working with the young people to identify real needs in your community is going to take time. You can, of course, choose to do the needs analysis yourself (or together with your colleagues) but we recommend you make the effort to involve the young people in this process because:

- it allows the young people to tell their own story, to share their point of view on the situation at hand,
- it lets the young people know that you, the project organiser, have listened and understood their situation and their concerns,
- it helps to develop a relationship of trust, and
- it allows the young people to take an active ownership role in the project from the very beginning.

At the end of your needs analysis, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why is there a need for this inclusion project?
- What is the project going to do? What problems/themes/questions will it address?
- Who is the target group? Who should be involved?

These answers should provide you with the first basic building blocks to allow you to start giving shape to your project idea. (E.g. which type of activity would be most appropriate – youth exchange, EVS...? How long should the project be? How many young people should take part? What kind of programme and activities would help the project achieve its aim(s)?)



PARTNER FINDING AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Once you have identified the learning needs of your young people and/or the concrete needs in your local community, you are ready to find a partner organisation to exchange with.

PARTNER-FINDING

International co-operation often starts off by means of **personal contacts** between youth workers or board members from similar youth structures abroad. If you yourself don't have such personal contacts (yet), start networking with **the members or colleagues inside and outside of your organisation**. They might know of an organisation or youth worker abroad who would be interested in organising a project together with you.

Within Erasmus+: Youth in Action there are also a variety of **tools to help you find a partner group** (for an exchange) or a **host project** (for a voluntary service):

- Most National Agencies (NAs) in the Erasmus+ Programme have some kind of **partner request form** in electronic format on their homepage. The NAs can forward your completed form to one or more of the other NAs located across Europe. These NAs use different ways to circulate the partner requests to potential partners (e.g. e-mail lists, homepage, newsletters). A list of NAs can be found on the Erasmus+ homepage at <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/>
- Some National Agencies also have a partner-finding database online. You can access these via the SALTO partner-finding page at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Otlas/
- If you are looking specifically for a host organisation for a European Voluntary Service project, you can consult the **host organisation database** at http://europa.eu/youth/evs_database
- Some centres for Regional Co-operation have **addresses of youth organisations** in so-called “partner countries” with whom Youth in Action programme projects are possible. E.g. SALTO Eastern Europe & Caucasus: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Eeca/, SALTO South East Europe: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/See/, the EuroMed platform for co-operation with EuroMed countries: www.euromedp.org

Another option is to take part in an international training courses or contact-making seminar organised within Erasmus+: Youth in Action (or other such programme). At these training activities you will meet other youth workers who are also (thinking of) doing international youth projects. Some of these contact-making seminars focus specifically on fewer-opportunity groups.

 For an overview of **European youth work courses** see www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/

If you are working with a particular target group (e.g. disabled young people, LGBT youth, specific national, religious or ethnic groups, etc.) you can often find potential partners through corresponding **international umbrella organisations** or **national federations** (and their member organisations).

There are also a number of other **international platforms** you can use including:

- **EUROMET:** www.euromet.in is a **European youth care alliance**, a network of institutions covering both Eastern and Western Europe, providing various educational, socialisation, treatment vocational programmes, working pedagogically with seriously disadvantaged children and youth. EUROMET's objective is to encourage practical projects either on a bilateral or multilateral basis which increase the knowledge, skills, and practice of its members. This is achieved through staff exchanges, youth exchanges and youth visits to other institutions, discussions and presentations, and projects of practical help and aid.
- **Youth Express Network**, a network of youth and social workers working on local, regional and international levels with young people with disadvantaged backgrounds. A pan-European non-governmental organisation, they offer training courses for youth and social workers, study sessions and seminars, publication of magazines and newsletters, cooperation and cross border projects, awareness raising and advocacy. They also offer a database of potential partners in Europe: www.y-e-n.net
- **Youth and European Social Work** fosters a permanent dialogue about the needs and interests of socially excluded young people or those threatened by social exclusion. It promotes co-operation between government bodies and non-governmental institutions in the field of youth social work in Europe and offers new instruments for the transnational dialogue as well as strategies which help to use them efficiently. Check www.yes-forum.eu for more information.
- **Dynamo International Street Workers Network** co-ordinates an international network of social street workers who approach various populations in their environment (children, young people and adults). Forty national platforms of street workers are members of the network coming from southern and northern countries. Go to <http://travailderue.org/> to learn more.

PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING

It is not enough to just find one (or more) partner organisations which are interested in setting up projects together. Once you have been put in touch, you then need to check whether you are on the **same wavelength**, the extent to which you **share similar aims and motivations**, and whether there is **common commitment** to a doing a project together.

The situation of young people is very different from one country to the next; the same is true for youth organisations (a youth club in Belgium is very different from a youth club in the UK, for example). Therefore it is important to clarify with any potential partners **what it is that you do (and do not do)** in your daily work and with **which profile of young people**. What are your regular activities? What is your usual approach? Remember that what is obvious for you in your context is not necessarily so for someone from another country.

- **Case studies** are a helpful way of getting a clearer idea of how a potential partner organisation works. Send each other some examples of situations you regularly come across and ask what your partner would do in such a case.
- **Promotional materials** like films, DVD's, newspaper clippings, reports on past projects, etc, all offer some insight into the work of an organisation and help give a clearer indication of the type of young people they work with.
- You could also consider exchanging **policy texts or legislation** that you adhere to or are bound by.

Deciding which organisations may or may not be a suitable partner is not easy. Here are some guideline questions which can help:

- ✓ Do your organisations share **common aims**? If not, are they at least somewhat compatible?
- ✓ Are you working with a similar **target group** (age, mix, gender, educational background, geographical situation)? If not, will the differences pose any serious problems?
- ✓ Do your organisations have similar **activities**? Can you define a common programme for the project that both organisations are happy with?
- ✓ Do you have similar **organisational capacities** (size of the organisation, number of paid staff/volunteers, budgets, available networks)? If not, can you find ways to work together on an equal footing?

- ✓ Do you have similar **organisational cultures** or working spirit... or at least an openness to adapt to different ways of working?
- ✓ Do you have **common educational principles**? Can any differences in approach be reconciled?
- ✓ Do you have efficient **channels of communication**? A common working language?
- ✓ Do you have similar **legal requirements** (health and safety, required qualifications, alcohol & drug policies, etc.)? Are they compatible?
- ✓ Do you have the **organisation's support** to join such a partnership (e.g. official approval from the boss, from the board of directors)? Is it agreed internally that the necessary time and resources will be freed to work on this co-operation and this project?

If your answer to most of these questions is “yes”, you may be well on your way towards a productive new partnership but keep in mind that it is not necessary for partner organisations to be completely identical to one another. Working with an organisation quite different from your own can bring an extra degree of richness to an inclusion project. Determine in which areas you feel you must share common ground and in which areas you can be flexible BEFORE you agree to carry out a project together.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Once you have found a suitable partner (or partners), the next step is to clarify between you how you will share responsibilities during the project. This should include:

- The development of the project and programme (with the active involvement of the young people)
- Writing and submitting the funding application(s)
- Preparing the participants (ideally done in parallel in the different participating countries)
- Organising the travel (sending organisation)
- Booking and preparing the venue (hosting organisation)
- Implementing the programme (all partners and young people together)
- Reporting and follow-up (all partners and young people together)

This process should give all the parties involved a clear picture of who does what. There should be an equitable and satisfactory division of tasks. Do not forget to talk about legal issues (health and safety) and rules and regulations that you and your organisation are bound by!

Some of this work can be done long-distance (by phone, e-mail, Skype) but there is no substitute for **face-to-face meetings** between partners. It is crucial to see each other in context and to see the place(s) where the project is potentially going to take place, instead of basing everything on treacherous assumptions. This is all the more important if the venue needs to fulfil certain criteria of accessibility or have specific facilities which you cannot improvise or organise in different ways.

★ **Tip:** With a little bit of imagination you can **adapt** to situations that are not completely the same as back home. This is part of the learning experience. For instance, it would be a pity if an individual in a wheelchair had to stay home because there is no ramp in one of the buildings, even though there will be 20 people in the group to lift the wheelchair up the few steps, or where a plank and a few screws could solve the problem.

Erasmus+: Youth in Action offers project partners the possibility to organise “**feasibility visits**” or “**advance planning visits**” (with or without the young persons, or with parents). It is also possible to do a period of job-shadowing in the partner organisation to get better acquainted with their target group and their way of working. You can, of course, also organise your own informal opportunities to meet (e.g. going on holidays in the country of the partner organisation) or participate in festivals/activities in the partner country, etc.

☞ More details on funding **Feasibility Visits, Advance Planning Visits and Job-Shadowing** can be found in the **Erasmus+ Programme Guide**: <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/>



CONFIDENTIALITY

One extremely important aspect in the work with young people with fewer opportunities is **confidentiality**. One vital issue to be carefully considered and agreed upon between all the project partners is what information about the participants can and should be shared. This involves walking a fine line between giving enough information to safeguard a young person and those around them while still respecting their privacy and preventing labelling.

Some types of personal information (for instance educational background, current living situation, future goals, etc.) are more or less harmless and most young people would have no problem sharing them, knowing that it is in their own best interest to do so. Other information, however, like serious medical conditions, a difficult past, a chaotic family situation, etc, is far more sensitive.

It is good practice (and in some countries it is a legal requirement) to **ask the young person** (or their parents/guardian/tutor if they are under age) whether it is OK to disclose information about their personal situation and/or special needs to the relevant persons in the partner organisations. It is often unnecessary to explain all the details, only essential information linked to the programme and setting of the project.

In keeping with the aims of personal empowerment and active participation, consider involving the young person in describing their situation and any special needs which may need to be addressed during the project, then in communicating this to the project partner(s). It is best to send such information pro-actively, before the project starts, to give the partner organisations time to take any necessary steps.

If a young person does not want to disclose certain information about themselves this might, in some cases, be a reason for you as a youth worker not to include them in the project. However, there may be ways around the issue. For instance, a young person unwilling to disclose a medical condition could be accompanied abroad by a trusted person who acts as a personal assistant. This could provide a sort of safety net in case something should go wrong. Ultimately, you as group leader are responsible for the safety and well-being of ALL the young people in your project. If you cannot find a workable way to disclose or otherwise deal with confidential information, it may be wiser not to include certain individuals.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Part 1 of “Inclusion A to Z” looked at the importance of young people feeling that they belong, of being “in”, of being considered an equal full-fledged member of a group. Remember that Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities are open to all young people. Being singled out because of a special need, an illness or a troubled past can immediately label an individual as “different” or as being “out”. Young people may not appreciate special treatment, even if they need it.

Young people have a right to their privacy. They are not obliged to disclose information about themselves that may put them at a disadvantage or influence how others see them. A young person may take the attitude of “if others don’t know it and can’t see it, then I don’t have to talk about it”. This head-in-the-sand approach is extremely risky. Some situations, attitudes and conditions can be dangerous, for the individual but also for others, if not dealt with properly.

Think about the following examples. If you were about to take a group abroad (or, conversely, welcome a group to your country) would you advise a young person to disclose this information to a partner organisation... or to keep it to themselves?

- ▶ A young person is long-term unemployed and has never had a job. Neither one of their parents has ever had a job.
- ▶ A young person suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder. Most of the time the disorder can be kept under control but it can worsen when the young person feels stressed.
- ▶ A young person has a history of heroin use. They have been clean for 6 months.
- ▶ A young person with an intellectual disability tells you they want to go abroad on the inclusion project so they can get pregnant while away from home.
- ▶ A young person suffers from a form of post-traumatic stress disorder. They regularly have extreme nightmares and wake up screaming.
- ▶ A young person has become very religious and tells you they want to go abroad to “convert the unbelievers”.
- ▶ A young person has recently been released from prison after serving a sentence for grievous bodily harm (they were involved in a knife fight in a bar)
- ▶ A young person has recently been released from prison after serving a sentence for sexually abusing a young child.

Cases like these seldom have easy answers. Much depends on the type and duration of the project, the experience-level of the partner organisations, the level of trust between the young person and their youth worker, and so on.

As a general guideline, ask the young person if they think their situation or condition might in any way cause harm to them or to others in the project. If they (or you) think the answer is “yes” then participating in an inclusion project at this time is probably not the right choice for them.

FUNDING

International inclusion projects cost money. The good news is that there are many foundations or institutions which fund projects. The bad news is that you have to apply for this funding – and this will take planning, time and co-operation from all of the partners involved.

ERASMUS+: YOUTH IN ACTION



Erasmus+: Youth in Action sets out to improve the competences of young people, their participation in democratic and working life, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity. It also fosters quality improvements in youth work and youth policy.

The Youth in Action programme offers various opportunities for young people to set up projects with an **international dimension**. It also provides funding for support activities for youth workers to increase the quality of their youth projects.

There are **several types of projects** that can receive funding. The funding rules are largely based on a simple system of flat rates and fixed amounts, depending on the number of participants, the activity, its duration, etc.

It is possible to apply for funding for different types of projects:

- Mobility projects for young people (like youth exchanges and European Voluntary Service)
- Mobility projects for youth leaders/youth workers (training and networking opportunities like seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits and job-shadowing)
- Strategic Partnerships (including transnational youth initiatives)
- Capacity Building (with other regions in the world)
- Meetings between youth people and decision-makers in the field of youth

The funding rules of the Youth in Action programme are largely based on a simple system of flat rates and fixed amounts depending on the number of participants, the activity, its duration etc.

- 👉 Find out more about **the funding possibilities** offered through **Erasmus+ : Youth in Action in the Programme Guide** which you can download from <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/> or contact the National Agency in your country (an address list is available on the same website).

Along with the usual flat rates, two additional budget items have been created specifically for young people with fewer opportunities. This is intended to help you deal with special needs and exceptional costs in your inclusion project.

- **Special needs** (due to disability or health): Erasmus+ : Youth in Action funds up to 100% of the costs to make it possible for people with a disability or a chronic health condition to participate in a project. This can be the costs of a personal assistant, the rental of assistive equipment, specialised travel items, additional medical care or insurance needed for the project, etc. (This is not intended to cover regular medical or insurance costs.)
- **Exceptional costs** (due to other exclusion factors): like the case for special needs, Erasmus+ : Youth in Action also funds exceptional costs needed for implementing a mobility project with young people with fewer opportunities (different from the organisational support). This can include reinforced mentorship, coaches, items needed to travel abroad, visa costs, travel insurance, ...

The Erasmus+ : Youth in Action programme recognises that young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds often need just a little bit of extra support to take the step into an international project. There are several financial possibilities to provide this.

- **Linguistic Support:** you can apply for additional funding or access to online support for extra linguistic training in long-term EVS projects.
- **Advance Planning Visit:** these planning visits help to build trust, understanding and solid partnerships between organisations. We recommend including young people in this visit in order to integrate them fully in the project design. This also warms up the young person to the project and the other people involved.
- **Additional group leaders:** the Programme Guide indicates a minimum of group leaders per project but no maximum. It is possible to take more staff than the strict minimum for an inclusion project.

You must be able to explain and justify any extra costs you request in your funding application and describe how the individual(s) in question would not be able to participate without these extra costs.

- 👉 Every country in Europe is different. Your National Agency will determine **if your requests for extra funding support are reasonable**, considering the ‘disadvantage’ in your specific context.
- 👉 More information about support measures and the supportive approach can be found in the Erasmus+ : Youth in Action **Inclusion & Diversity Strategy**:
www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

MORE MONEY FOR INTERNATIONAL INCLUSION PROJECTS

Besides the user-friendly Erasmus+ : Youth in Action programme, **other funding opportunities** for inclusion projects also exist. Bear in mind that a funder never funds a project 100%, so you will always need to rely on more than once source of funding.

- **European Youth Foundation** (Council of Europe): www.coe.int/youth/ - The EYF funds international youth projects (minimum 4 European partner countries).
- **Interact**: www.interact-eu.net - Interact is financed by the European Development Fund for social cohesion and supports cross border trans-national and interregional co-operation.
- **European Cultural Foundation**: www.eurocult.org - ECF is an independent non-profit organisation that promotes cultural cooperation in Europe and gives funding for projects with a strong cultural component (e.g. concerts, theatre, ...).
- **World Bank**: The Social Development Civil Society Fund (CSF – formerly known as the Small Grants Programme) is one of the few global programmes of the World Bank that directly funds civil society organisations. www.worldbank.org
- **Rotary & Lyons Clubs**: www.rotary.org & www.lionsclubs.org - These are associations of professionals that sometimes give money to projects which respond to challenges in communities around the world.
- **Embassies & Cultural Institutes**: Some embassies and cultural institutes (e.g. Goethe Institut, British Council, Alliance Française, ...) are actively involved in supporting local projects in different countries.
- **Open Society Foundations**: www.opensocietyfoundations.org - Founded by George Soros, Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable to their citizens.

- There are funds for **bilateral or multilateral youth projects** between specific countries: e.g. the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ/DFJW) - www.ofaj.org; the International Visegrad Fund - www.visegradfund.org; German-Czech youth exchanges - www.tandem-org.de; German-Polish youth exchanges - www.dpjw.org; Nordic countries - www.norden.org.

There is also private money available from foundations and companies. Contact them directly to inquire about their sponsoring and/or Corporate Social Responsibility policy and activities.

NOTE: It is not allowed to combine two European Union funds to finance the same project. You will need to find non-European Union money for your co-funding (e.g. from the Council of Europe, national-level funding, bilateral or multilateral programmes, private foundations or other institutions).

- 👉 Find an overview of foundations at **Funders Online**. www.fundersonline.org
- 👉 If you are interested in more creative ways of raising funds in your local community (e.g. bake sales, auctions, raffles, organising events, offering services, etc) have a look at the **Fundraising Idea Bank** at www.fund-raising.com
- 👉 For more information on getting and managing money for youth projects, have a look at the **T-Kit on Funding & Financial Management** at www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk is an integral part of an international inclusion project. No matter how well you have prepared **things can still go wrong** so it makes sense to take time to anticipate the possible risks and problems which may occur during your project.

During your project, you will, of course, want to push your youngsters out of their usual comfort zone... but not so far that you endanger their basic health and safety. Therefore it is a good idea to prepare a **Risk Assessment Plan** to help prepare for the unexpected. Such a plan can serve as a kind of **first aid kit** and provide you with guidelines on how to act and the steps to take when events take you by surprise.

Together with your young people, make a list of the **possible accidents, mistakes and misunderstandings** that might occur during your project. Be as realistic as possible (but don't go so far as to frighten people off!) Then look at ways in which you could minimize the risk of these occurring. A contact list with emergency phone numbers, a copy of the list of participants, insurance and other relevant documents, or a pre-activity briefing with all those involved may be all you need to **manage the risk**. On the other hand, if you identify what you consider to be **situations of high risk** (like, for example, a canoeing activity involving a group of non-swimmers) you may have to seek external advice, take further action or even consider the situation too high a risk to become involved in.

★ Tip: Bring the Risk Assessment experience to life by engaging the young people in professionally facilitated risk simulation experiences. Government and NGOs working in the area of Outdoor Education, other specialists and organisations like the Red Cross and Red Crescent may have people that can offer you this training.

To get started, consider the general framework of your project and the content of your daily programme (as far as you know it). Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there any risks in the various programme elements planned? How can these be dealt with/controlled/minimised?
- Are there special situations or circumstances in the programme which could lead to strong emotions for a participant? (E.g. travelling, having not enough individual space, home sickness, alcohol...)
- Might there be particular challenges in the group-building process?

- Are there any potential “dead moments” in the programme where the young people risk getting bored?
- Are there enough group leaders available in case of sickness, emergency or if the young people need extra support and guidance?
- Are there times and methods built into the programme to help the young people process and digest their many new experiences?

Take time to also think about the location and setting of your project. (For instance, will it take place in a big city or a small village? Will it take place in a western European country or an eastern European country? Will the young people be staying in a secular venue or a religious venue? Etc.)

- Are there extra risks (beyond the usual) involved with things like alcohol or drug use (taking into account ‘availability’ and the possibly of different laws existing in the host country and/or venue where the project takes place)?
- Are there cultural or personal behaviours/expressions that might conflict with the social norms of the host country and/or venue where the project takes place? (For instance certain language, certain clothing, specific activities, religious practices, dietary observances, personal relationships, etc.)

And of course also consider the profile and background of the young people taking part:

- Do the participants have any special needs or requirements? (E.g. medicines, special diets, allergies, etc.) Are extra medicines/equipment/devices available in the host country if necessary?
- Is any special paperwork or travel documents needed for the young people? (E.g. signed consent forms, insurance information, police report/declaration of good conduct, etc.)
- Is there an action plan in place in case a young person:
 - ◆ fails to observe the project rules or code of behaviour?
 - ◆ becomes seriously ill or is injured
 - ◆ needs to return home early
 - ◆ gets in trouble with the law while abroad?

The resulting information can be summarised and presented in a Risk Assessment Plan (see the example here below). The plan should be clearly explained to everyone involved (young people, parents, group leaders, etc.) and displayed prominently throughout the lifetime of the project.

EXAMPLE

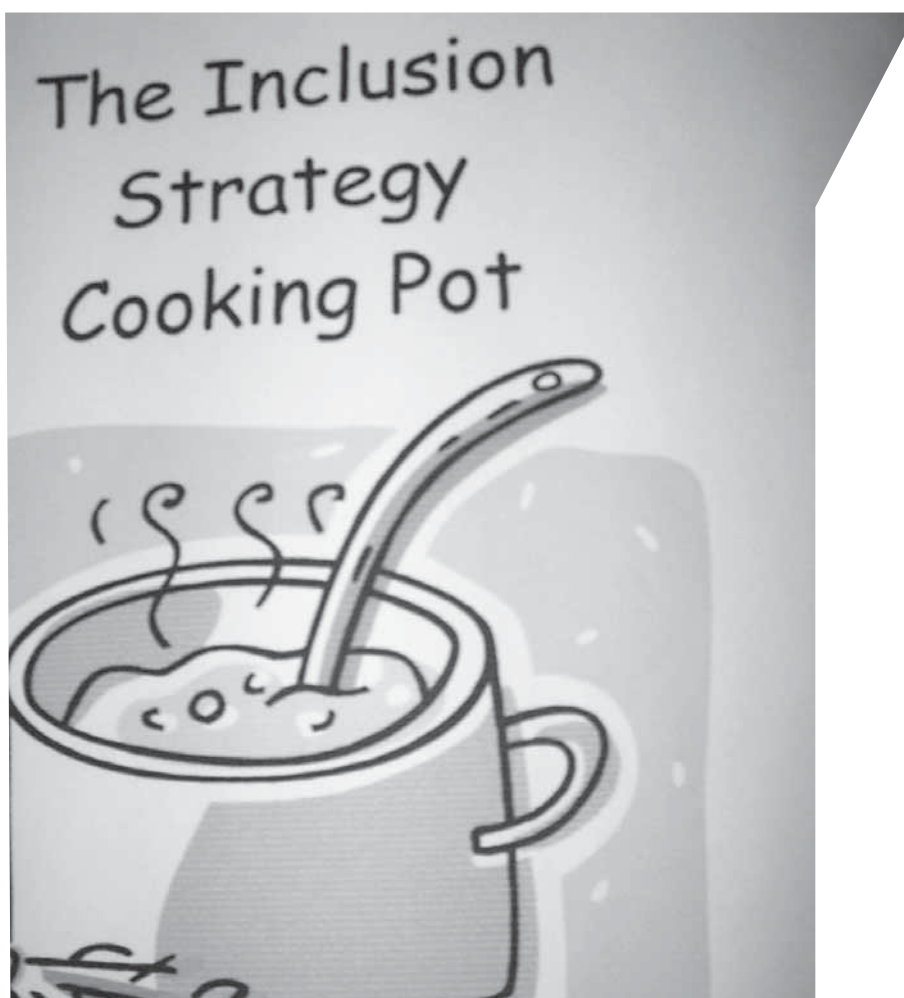
of risk assessment form

Activity	Risk/Hazard	Who might be harmed?
Travel to host country	1) Injury to participants at pick-up point or during travel	Participants / staff
	2) Someone goes missing while travelling	Participants / staff
Welcome activity with host group	1) Language barriers	Participants / staff
Evening free time	1) Getting lost in the city	Participants (staff are in meeting)
	2) Homesickness	Participants/staff

Control steps to be taken	Risk Level & Further Action Needed
<p>Family informed of travel details</p> <p>Young persons supervised during travel, briefed regarding appropriate behaviour/health and safety</p> <p>Staff members all qualified first aiders</p> <p>Participants briefed regarding vigilance</p> <p>Set up a buddy system</p> <p>All members of the group to have contact numbers of group leaders in their phones and on paper</p> <p>System in place to inform emergency contacts if missing person not found within short period of time.</p>	<p>Risk factor low</p> <p>No further action required</p> <p>Risk factor low</p> <p>Participants are supervised throughout period of travel</p> <p>No further action required</p>
<p>Young people have previously taken part in fun exercises with no common language</p> <p>Group has learned some words in advance (1-10, hello, goodbye, thank you).</p>	<p>Risk factor medium</p> <p>Group leader in the host country can speak English.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>
<p>Include map in welcome pack.</p> <p>Have all participants programme their mobile phones with group leaders' numbers</p> <p>Set up "buddy system" between young people during welcome activity (host country/visiting country)</p> <p>Access to phone to contact home</p>	<p>Risk factor low</p> <p>Set up "buddy system" between young people during welcome activity (1 host with 1 visitor)</p> <p>Risk factor low</p> <p>Participants have spent time away from home before</p>

When making your own version of a risk assessment plan, it is not necessary to list each individual session in the programme or to try to predict every little thing that could possibly go wrong. Focus your attention on areas where real risks might occur and do your best to equip yourself and your young people to handle them in the event that they do.

- ☛ For more background information on **risk assessments** see **the T-Kit on Project Management** www.youth-partnership.net/publications/
- ☛ To learn more about managing health and safety issues in international projects, see the **Guidelines for Young Person Protection and Safety** of the National Agency of Ireland at www.leargas.ie



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When we think about reducing risk, some dangers are easily recognisable (for instance, walking alone down a dark alleyway at night). However in a foreign country with other norms, customs and practices, it is not always easy to know where different types of risk exist.

Did you ever stop to think that the way you physically interact with others might be a source of misunderstanding and potential risk? For instance:

- ▶ Think about the way people greet one another. In some cultures you shake hands, in others you kiss, in some you nod or bow and in still others you touch foreheads.
- ▶ In some cultures public displays of affection (petting, hugging, kissing, etc.) are considered normal while in others they are frowned upon. In some cultures a man may not touch or speak to a woman who is not a blood relative; other cultures may see this as a sign of contempt and disrespect towards women. In some cultures homosexual and lesbian relationships are accepted while in others they are actively discouraged and even violently persecuted.
- ▶ In some countries (particularly Ireland and the UK) child protection rules can be strictly interpreted, meaning that there may be restrictions on the way children and teenagers are permitted to physically play together (to prevent physical injury, bullying, etc.) and also on the way teachers/coaches/youth workers/group leaders/volunteers/etc. are permitted to physically interact with minors (to prevent abuse). Breaches of these rules can be taken very seriously and may be reported to the police, with far-reaching consequences.

When preparing to travel abroad, young people (and group leaders as well) may not know in advance exactly what the “home rules” are or how they should or should not behave in their host country. This brings a considerable degree of risk - risk of behaving “inappropriately”, risk of negative judgements, risk of losing the trust and good will of the host community, risk of personal liability or even risk of personal injury.

When making your risk assessment, do not focus only on “obvious” elements like possible sickness, missing a flight or losing a passport. Consider aspects like cultural expectations, standards and codes of behaviour as well. Start a dialogue with your partner abroad to try to spot any cultural differences which may cause problems down the road and prepare your young people accordingly.

PREPARING THE PARTICIPANTS

Preparing the young people for an international inclusion project is no small task and there are many different elements to be dealt with. In this section we will focus on a small number of key points to help you get started.

It is not easy to decide precisely the right moment to begin preparing your youngsters – too early and they may lose interest or drop out of the project; too late and you may not have enough time to touch on all the necessary elements. The best advice is to use common sense. Consider the experience level and any special needs your young people may have and plan your preparation schedule accordingly.

COMMUNICATION

It is important to establish **open channels of communication** during the planning stages of an international inclusion project. This is obvious in the case of the partner organisations but it is just as important for the young people as well. Seeing, hearing and getting to know (some of) the young people they will later meet face to face is a good way to boost your youngsters' motivation levels and keep them interested in the project.

With all the new technologies available, many forms of communication are simple, immediate and virtually cost-free. Encourage the young people to use a mix of traditional forms of communication (writing letters, sending photographs or small items by mail) and modern methods like e-mails, SMS messages, a project Facebook page, regular Skype calls, etc.

If you have additional resources, you can go a step or two further and become really creative. For instance you might suggest that your young people prepare a regular e-newsletter (or maybe even a “real” paper version) or make a short video clip about your group, its members, expectations towards the exchange, greeting messages to partner group(s) etc. Encourage the groups of young people to exchange these prior to the actual project in order to create a better base for communication and co-operation when the groups actually meet.

★ **Tip:** If you decide to work with video and share it with the partner group through public spaces like Youtube.com, Vimeo.com or any other format which can be accessed publicly, **make sure you discuss privacy issues** and, in the case of minors, be sure you obtain consent from the parents or guardians. We also recommended you establish guidelines and etiquette if the young people have the means to SMS and/or send photographs to one another.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION

A big part of your inclusion project will involve encountering other cultures in your host country – other ways of living, thinking and doing. This is part of the excitement, but sometimes also a reason for frustration. This process is not always easy for youngsters who may have had little or no real contact with people from different cultures before so it is a good idea to spend some time on this in the preparation phase.

Working on intercultural awareness involves **challenging our own stereotypes** about other groups and cultures, learning to **feel comfortable with difference** and, ultimately, **celebrating diversity**.

It is important to prepare yourself and your young people for this confrontation of cultural differences. An important message within this process is that within different approaches to life, no one approach is intrinsically better than the other. Different cultures are not “right” or “wrong”, nor are they “good” or “bad”. Rather they provide different answers to the same challenges in everyday life. When young people are able to see things from different perspectives, not only does it widen their horizon, it also gives them a more varied set of possible answers to the challenges that they meet in their lives.

Getting to know a new culture is like playing a new game without understanding the rules. The challenge is to learn those rules while you are already right in the middle of play! Here are some examples of fun methods you can use to kick start the intercultural learning process:

Exercise

- **“The World in Your Backyard”** – You may be able to find a variety of cultures, religions and/or nationalities right in your own home community. Take the opportunity to visit places or neighbourhoods where people from other cultural groups live. Contact the people in advance of your visit and explain why you are visiting and what you hope to achieve. Ask if you can interview individuals and groups, take their photographs and make an information board or display of the information.
- **“Who are we?”** - Organise a session (or even a party) around the theme of understanding aspects of your own culture. Delegate responsibility to the young people to put together a whole programme of fun exercises... like a game of Charades to guess well-known personalities and important historical figures from your country; drawing a giant wall map to the five most important places in your city, town or neighbourhood; a team competition to put together the best (or funniest) list of do's and don'ts for visitors from abroad; a quiz to improve your knowledge of local or national events, preparing a simple buffet of “typical” foods and snacks.
- **“Intercultural Week”** - Develop different activities linked to different aspects of a new culture for a period of one week. For example: on Monday, have a look at online promotional material from the Board of Tourism; on Tuesday, prepare some typical or related food, on Wednesday, listen to some typical music; on Thursday watch a well-known film, on Friday...

Use your imagination and consult with your young people to come up with more ideas!

In preparing young people from fewer opportunity backgrounds for the intercultural dimension, remember that as group leader/project leader your role is to create an environment that celebrates difference and unites the group in its diversity. Before you begin addressing intercultural issues with young people it is important that YOU have a clear understanding of the topic and have taken some time to critically examine your own thoughts, opinions and prejudices and how they might impact on the learning experiences of the young people. Your preparation should involve contact with workers who have experience of this area of work and other relevant resources.

- 👉 For more information see the **T-KIT on Intercultural Learning**
www.youth-partnership.net/publications/

PREPARING FOR OTHER LANGUAGES

One of the main reasons why fewer-opportunity young people hesitate to participate in international projects is because they lack the skills to communicate in a foreign language. But learning a language is an important part of getting to know another culture. How can you take steps to get your young people interested in language learning? The good news is that you do not need to know a foreign language to take part in an inclusion project - nevertheless it can be a great way to motivate young people to learn!



It may surprise you to know that there have been many projects on international level which involve young people who do not speak any foreign languages at all. These projects use creative methods to support the participation of young people through mostly non-formal methods (for example art, music, dance, sports, etc.). The options are limitless and contact between the young people can be just as strong as with a common language.

Nonetheless, it can be a challenge for the participants to go through an entire project without understanding any words at all, so you may want to consider other options like:

- Carrying out your project together with a group who **speaks the same language** (e.g. UK and Ireland, Germany and Austria, France and French-speaking Belgium, etc.).
- Carrying out your project with a group who **share the same language group** (e.g. Romance, Germanic, Slavic, etc). There are many similarities within the same language group – enough, usually, for people to get the gist of what others are trying to convey.
- If you don't share any common language, consider **translating** some parts of your programme. Translation doesn't have to be expensive. Perhaps you have a resource person in your group who is good (enough) in a foreign language so as to do a bit of translating when needed. In some cases you can make use of online translation programmes such as <http://babelfish.altavista.com/> or www.translate.google.com that don't cost a thing – just some laughs when something completely incomprehensible comes out.
- Organise an exchange with **no native speakers**, where the common language used to communicate is no one's mother tongue. This way all the young people are on the same level and everyone has to make the effort to speak a foreign language.

Working in and around different languages can take a lot of mental energy. Be sure you plan time in your programme where the participants can “take time off” from having to speak and think in a foreign language. For instance, carry out some exercises or discussions in national groups (in the native language) or activities where no language is necessary (games, sports, etc.)

If you want to go a step further and encourage your young people to actively learn some words in a foreign language, consider using a variety of simple and fun methods like:

- Brainstorming any words you already know in a particular language
- Learning a small number of new words and/or simple phrases each week (e.g. Hello. My name is... It's nice to meet you. Etc.)
- Tongue twisters
- Learning short rhymes or poems
- Learning song texts
- Learning a new alphabet (Greek, Cyrillic, Arabic, Hebrew, Armenian, Georgian...) and trying to phonetically spell out well-known names with the new letters

- Learning some words in sign language
- Look through a youth magazine from another country and see how much you can understand
- Write simple e-mails, texts, Facebook messages, etc, to your partner group as a way to practice.

If you know a native speaker in your community (e.g. an au pair, EVS volunteer, exchange student) invite them to give an informal talk to your young people once a week (either at your organisation or in a local café, etc). This way your young people can try out the language before they actually go on the exchange. There are also many interactive ways to learn a language on Internet – exercises, games, chatrooms, courses, etc.

- ☞ To find more fun methods for language learning, go to the site of the “European Day of Language” at: <http://edl.ecml.at> (published in 29 different European languages).



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Trying to get young people interested in learning foreign languages is not always easy. This can be particularly true for young people who drop out of school at an early age or who have intellectual or mental disabilities. These young people may have been told that they are “slow”, “stupid”, or “not able to learn”. They may think that language learning is “boring” or “not cool”.

Past inclusion projects have shown that, given the right conditions and support, virtually any young person can start to learn a foreign language. The challenge lies in finding ways to make language learning relevant and fun.

As a first step, it is important to dispel the myth that “language = school”. You can do this by putting “formal” techniques (like grammar exercises) to the side and focusing instead on helping the young people to practise speaking. The methods listed above are good ways to get started. You can also help to boost a young person’s confidence by:

- ▶ Creating an atmosphere where they feel safe enough to speak
- ▶ Setting a good example by speaking and making mistakes in the foreign language yourself
- ▶ Working in smaller groups or pairs whenever possible
- ▶ Focusing on the interests of the young person (e.g. if the young person likes skateboarding, learn vocabulary in the foreign language around skateboarding)
- ▶ Focusing on words and phrases the young person can easily use while abroad (e.g. vocabulary to describe their activities, their tasks, the clothes they will wear, the food they will eat, etc; phrases to say hello/goodbye, phrases to use at the dinner table, phrases to use in the bar, etc.
- ▶ Provide “support tools” that can be used during the project (e.g. a mini-dictionary to remind them of the words and phrases learned).
- ▶ Provide a back-up system (e.g. match up a participant with good language skills with one with poorer language skills so that one can help the other and translate if needed).

Remember that in an inclusion project, “language learning” does not mean a young person must become fluent. It does not mean they should be able to read Shakespeare, Voltaire, or Dostoyevsky. Rather it means encouraging a young person to learn what is suitable, useful and relevant to them and their situation. It is about stimulating their curiosity to learn, their openness to things that are different and their self-confidence to try things that are new.

PREPARING THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The many practicalities involved in going abroad offer a wealth of opportunities for the young people to get directly involved in the planning and organisational aspects of their project.

The points below are just some of the details that you and your youngsters will need to arrange before departure. Work together to identify any other practical steps that should be taken to make the international experience a positive one.

THE PROJECT PROGRAMME: The daily programme of your project should clearly link in with the specific needs of the young people, organisations and communities involved. (Refer back to the section on “Identifying Needs and Expectations”.) These needs will make your project unique so it is not possible to say here exactly what your programme should look like or what the precise content/themes should be. We can, however, offer some general tips on how to structure your programme. Filling in the content gaps is then up to you, your youngsters and your partner organisation.

- When planning your timetable, **take different personal habits, particularly eating and sleeping patterns, into account.** These can vary according to different cultural backgrounds and it is often difficult for the young people to adjust. Try to compromise when possible and adjust the local habits to accommodate for differences during the international activity.
- Try to satisfy basic needs concerning **safety, private space and meeting places.** An inclusion project can be a full-on 24-hour-a-day experience. The young people will need places to get together as well as quiet spaces to be on their own. The meeting and working places should offer many opportunities for movement and action (e.g. a sports field nearby). Games and other materials (paper, pens, ...) should be accessible and it is a good idea to create a special corner (or if possible a separate room) for physical activities. (Pay attention to safety.)
- **Be flexible and transparent.** The programme should be clearly organised and easy to see so the young people know what is going to happen and what they should expect.
- Allocate space in the programme for **games and exercises** as well as “serious sessions”. Have a back-up plan in case the group does not feel comfortable with a specific method.
- **Budget enough time.** There is no sense in putting the young people under pressure. You may have definite ideas about what you want to do or achieve in a specific session or workshop but remember that for the young people in most cases the process is more important than the result.

MONEY: To ensure that all of your participants, irrespective of their economic background, have a similar amount of “pocket money” during the project consider the following:

- Go through your project programme. Identify the moments when there will be costs for the group and when (or if) there are moments when there will be **costs for individuals**. (For example, the group pays for items like food, accommodation, transportation, excursions, etc. Individuals pay for their own private telephone costs, souvenirs, food & drinks during free time, etc.)
- Work out what this means in terms of how much money the whole group (youth workers and young people) is going to need in a specific foreign country. Do the same to calculate **what individuals should bring with them in terms of their own pocket money**. (Be careful!! There can be quite a difference in the costs of items like food, drinks, alcohol, public transportation, etc, between different countries.)
- Introduce the idea of a “**common fund**” to address issues of economic inequality and to fund some concrete needs for the international activity: a foreign country guide, a foreign language dictionary etc.
- Take some time to **define roles and responsibilities for handling the money** – for instance, who is going to manage the “common fund” account? Who is responsible for keeping the bills and receipts? Might it be useful to go to a bank to open a group account, with all the youth workers and young people (or some of them, depending on role division in the group as you agree) as account holders?

WHAT TO PACK: exactly what the young people need to bring with them will depend on the length of their stay abroad as well as on the proposed programme of activities. As a general guideline, consider elements like:

- Important documents – passport, visa (if necessary), parental/guardian consent forms, police report/declaration of good behaviour (if necessary), copies of the Risk Assessment plan, a general guide to the laws of the host country, ...
- Travel details – tickets, flight/train numbers, departure and arrival times, etc.
- Contact details – emergency contact details (at home and abroad)
- Health – any relevant medical information and medication; any aides, special equipment, ...
- Clothing & toiletries – check the proposed programme for any activities which may require something beyond the young person’s usual day-to-day clothing (e.g. bathing suit, sport shoes, working clothes that can get dirty, rain gear, etc.)

- Pocket money – in the currency of the host country
- Personal belongings – mobile phone, camera, personal diary or notebook, ...
- Items for intercultural sharing – photos from home, typical food or drink, music, games, ...
- Miscellaneous – check with the partner organisation if the young people need to bring any additional items like a sleeping bag, their own towel, etc, or if these will be provided.

TRAVEL: for young people who may never have ventured out of their own neighbourhood, the jump to travelling to a foreign country can be quite daunting.

- Before the actual inclusion project itself, consider organising some **simulations** like local excursions or weekend camping trips. These are good opportunities to get the young people get used to different forms of public transport and to being on their own. This can, in turn, can help prepare them for a longer period away from home. If possible, try to involve some of your supporters from the intercultural awareness and/or language learning activities in your simulations. This will give the youngsters an idea of what it is like to travel, live and develop joint activities together with people from another country or culture.
- Before you book a ticket, stop to consider the pros and cons of different types of transportation. Should the travel go by car, by van, by bus, by train, by plane, ...? What are the different financial costs? What are the different lengths of travel time? Is one route more interesting than another (i.e. is there more to see)? Keep in mind that the travel element is a very important learning moment within the project as a whole. Although it may be more cost- and time-efficient to travel one hour by plane, there may be many more diverse learning moments involved in a 8-hour train journey (even if it does cost slightly more).
- **Keep in mind that travelling costs a lot of energy. Don't put the young people at an immediate disadvantage through overly-long travel or uncomfortable conditions (especially in the interest of saving money). This is false economy which could negatively impact the start of the project (i.e. if the young people arrive exhausted, hungry and grumpy).**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If you have ever travelled you have very likely experienced frustrations like delays, unclear information, feeling unsure about where you are supposed to go, the stress of last-minute changes and so on.

Have you ever wondered what it may be like to travel with a physical or mental disability or other impairment? Stop and consider for a moment what is involved in “simple” things like getting to the airport, carrying luggage, finding your way, making yourself understood. What if things go wrong? How much extra time and energy are necessary for these young people to get what so-called “normal” travellers take for granted?

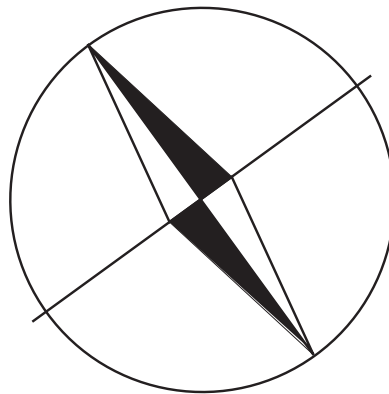
For those who have never travelled before (whether abroad or in their own country) it can be difficult to anticipate the many details that need to be checked to ensure a smooth travel experience. To get a better insight into exactly what needs to be done, consider doing one or two “dry runs” to the airport, train station or wherever your young people will be departing from. This is a good way to help the young people get familiar with new surroundings and take away a lot of the stress due to “unknowns”.

During a “dry run”, look at aspects like:

- ▶ How will the youngsters get to the airport/station/etc.? Can they do it on their own or will they need some assistance?
- ▶ Once at the station/airport, where do they need to go? Can they make their own way? Are there services available to help (e.g. in carrying luggage, in getting to your departure gate, with boarding, etc.)? Do these need to be arranged in advance?
- ▶ What rules, arrangements or procedures are in place for support devices or special equipment like walking aids, wheelchairs, guide dogs, etc.? Will these require extra time to deal with?
- ▶ If things go wrong while travelling (e.g. delays, lost luggage) do the young people know who and where to turn to for help and advice?

Travelling can be a nerve-wracking experience for young people, no matter who they are or what their background. Although it makes sense to prepare thoroughly, it is impossible to anticipate everything that might go wrong. Instead, prepare yourself to be surprised and improvise – go with the flow and make travel part of the learning experience.

To learn more about **travelling with young people with a disability**, see the booklet “**No Barriers, No Borders**” in the SALTO Inclusion series. www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/NoBarriers/



As you have seen from the extensive information in this section, there are many different aspects to take into consideration when preparing an international inclusion project. If you are feeling more than a little overwhelmed, take heart. It may take some time but the day will eventually come when the preparation phase draws to a close and your youngsters are ready to travel abroad.

The key to successful preparation is thorough planning but keep in mind: “even the best-laid plans... can go awry.” If things do go wrong, don’t worry. Keep cool and remember what they say: if Plan A doesn’t work out... there are still 25 more letters in the alphabet (and 204 more in Japanese!).

 **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Did you notice that many of the steps described in the preparation phase make one very big assumption? They assume that the young people have easy access to you, the group leader, and that you have easy access to them.

If, for example, you are working in a neighbourhood youth club where youngsters drop in three or four times a week, then it is relatively easy to engage them in steps like individual action planning, defining needs and expectations, intercultural awareness, language learning, risk assessment and so on. In this type of context, active participation is very realistic.

But what if this is not your situation? What if your young people live many kilometres away and have no easy access to transportation (like some rural youth)? What if they face obstacles which limit their mobility (like some physically disabled youngsters... or youngsters under house arrest)? What if they have little or no free time (like carers or young parents)? How do you then carry out important steps like assessing needs, defining expectations, and so on?

The answer? Be creative! If the young people cannot come to you, you need to find ways that you can go to them. This can be in a literal physical way (like you travelling to meet them after school, after work, at the grocery store, at their child's day care centre, etc.) or it can be in a "virtual" way (like using new technologies and social media). Make use of whatever methods and resources are available to you. Remember that in the preparation stage it is vital for you to keep in touch with the young people (and to encourage them to keep in touch with each other).

The Implementation Phase

You've done it! You've arrived safely in your host country and been warmly welcomed by your hosts. The activity has begun!

This section looks at the different elements at play during the implementation phase of your project (that is, when you and your young people are “on the road” abroad). After all the time required for the preparation stage it can be a surprise to see just how quickly a project can pick up momentum and get going. A week- or 10-day project can often pass by in a blur. But a good inclusion project never just “happens” and a programme does not facilitate itself. In the next pages we will look at some of the key elements needed for to ensure that your project is a positive experience for everyone involved including:

- **Launching the programme**
- **Further into the programme**
- **Dealing with conflicts**
- **Endings and goodbyes**

LAUNCHING THE PROGRAMME

The initial moments in an inclusion project can be full of contradictions. The young people will be curious about one another but possibly a bit shy at the same time. They may want to make contact and say hello but may not want to risk looking foolish or “uncool”. It is not uncommon for an international group to experience inertia in its ‘forming stage’. When young people are introduced to each other they cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable group behaviour. This is a stage of transition from individual to member status, and of testing the youth workers’ guidance, both formally and informally.

The forming stage of a group can include:

- Excitement, anticipation, and optimism
- Suspicion and anxiety about the project
- Defining the tasks and how they will be accomplished
- Determining acceptable group behaviour
- Deciding what information needs to be gathered

- Long discussions about ideas and issues, and for some young people, impatience with these discussions
- Difficulty in identifying some of the relevant problems

Because there is so much going on to distract young people's attention in the beginning, the group may accomplish little, if anything, that concerns its aims. Do not panic - this is perfectly normal! Don't spend too long talking (or worrying). Get the first activity under way as soon as you have introduced and explained its purpose.

Here are some suggestions for methods for getting the group started:

- The first encounter (the forming stage) is the moment for hopes and fears to be revealed and to explore and challenge attitudes. Icebreakers and Name Games are useful tools for the first encounter, as is a **Welcome Pack** (which can include a welcome letter, information about the host country, paper, pens, badges, local sweets or drinks etc).
- **Icebreakers** are short fun activities to help participants to get to know each other. Most of them require very little in the way of special materials or space. They are intended to be light-hearted in order to get young people to feel comfortable with one another before moving on to other activities. They also aim to encourage interaction, develop communication skills and encourage young people to work co-operatively.
- **Energisers** are methods that encourage and legitimise interaction. They often take the form of fun "get-to-know-each-other" exercises or light-hearted ways to re-open a session after a break. Energisers can be used for different purposes: to help the young people feel comfortable with each other, to provide quick exercise, to attract and focus the group's attention, and/or to help introduce the next subject/topic/activity in the programme.

There are many different types of energisers available; choose those which are most relevant to your group, to the timing and to the topics of discussion.

- 👉 For a variety of Icebreakers and Energisers have a look in the **SALTO Toolbox for Training** at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/Toolbox/)

Bear in mind that some young people swear by ice breakers and energisers (because they enjoy them) while others swear at them (because they find them irritating or silly). The first hours/days in a new group can be nerve-wracking; some young people might hesitate at the idea of playing games and drawing attention to themselves. Set a good example by enthusiastically taking part in ice breakers and energisers yourself. At the same time, give the young people some small degree of choice (when possible) as to whether or not they wish to participate. If you pick fun activities where people enjoy themselves, it won't be long before everyone joins in.

- **Information Sharing/Project Fairs:** In the group-forming stage, it is important to give the young people a chance to share who they are, what they can do, what they are thinking and feeling, etc, with the other participants. This helps to create bonds within the group. To do this, create opportunities for the young people to share information about themselves, their skills, knowledge, hopes fears and expectations. Provide space in the early stages of the programme for verbal discussions and presentations, organised project fairs or exhibitions or international evenings to exchange information, knowledge and materials about their organisation, environment or country.

Exercise - "All About ME"

This activity is a good way to encourage the young people to describe themselves by talking about their lives, hobbies, familiar environments, their past, etc. This will help the group understand why they are, who they are, what they are.

Give each person a sheet of paper and a marker pen. Ask them to draw five things on the paper that they feel describe them (e.g. a smiley face, the sun, a fast car, a book, a football, etc.) When they have finished, ask them to divide up into small groups and explain their picture. Once everyone has had a turn to present, ask the participants to post their pictures up on the wall. Then ask everyone to write or draw one positive quality they like about each person on that person's picture. The young people can take the pictures home with them at the end of the project.

Exercise – “The Expertise Panel”

The Expertise Panel can be used to help recognise the skills of individual young people and how those skills can be used to make the project a positive experience both for that individual and for other members of the group. The objective of this activity is to use the young people as experts (because everyone is an expert at something). Young people put what they think they can contribute to the group and project on a wall: **The Wall of Expertise**. To assist the young people in identifying their areas of expertise provide them with the following checklist to work through at individual level:

- Identify your best competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes). You might support young people with some guiding questions like “something you know and could share”, “something you can do well” and “the way you think, feel and act about some important issues” etc. Be ready to support them in this as trying to assess your own competencies can be a challenge.
- Identify competencies needed for the group or the project activities.
- Compare the two (your own competencies with the needs of the project).
- Look to see if other members of the group have similar competencies.
- Present what you have to offer on the wall.

FURTHER INTO THE PROGRAMME

Once the young people have gotten over their initial anxieties and begin to feel comfortable with one another, you can start using other types of methods in your programme. For example:

- **Brainstorming** is a way to introduce a new subject, encourage creativity and to generate a lot of ideas very quickly; it can be used for solving a specific problem or answering a question.
 - ★**Tip:** When brainstorming, **encourage everyone to contribute**. Give your ideas only if necessary to encourage the group. If a suggestion is unclear, ask for clarification. During a brainstorm no one should make any comments or judge what is written down until the end. Write down every new suggestion (often, the most creative suggestions are the most useful and interesting; quantity, not quality, is desired).
- **Small group work** encourages everyone to participate and helps develop co-operative teamwork. The size of a small group will depend on practical things like how many young people there are all together and how much space you have. A small group may be two or three young people but they work best with six or eight. Small group work can last for fifteen minutes, an hour or a day depending on the task at hand. Whatever the topic, it's essential that the work is clearly defined and that young people are focused on working towards a goal that requires them to feedback to the whole group. It's rarely productive to tell young people simply to "discuss the issue"; give them instead a specific task that leads to a result. For example, assign a task in the form of a problem that needs solving or a question that requires answering.
 - ★**Tip:** People naturally feel comfortable with what they know and some may prefer to stay within the comfort zone of their national group. **Unless it is absolutely necessary, don't let young people choose their own sub-groups**. There are a number of ways of ensuring that national groups mix with each other: by nominating at random, giving numbers or cards or arranging by rainbow colours.
- **Project Café**. It often happens that the strongest relationships in a project are built during breaks and informal moments, so it can be a good idea to organise some activities around a cup of coffee. Project Café space can lead to increased interaction, create the foundation for possible further co-operation, improve participation and motivation and contribute to group creativity and self-organisation.

- **Co-operation Activities** are about participation and involvement. These activities are often referred to as “games” because they are fun (like dressing up, parachute games, etc.). But they are more than this; they are about challenging the individual, building group cohesion and keeping the young people interested and “on board”.

Co-operative games are usually

- **Adaptable** - the best can be adapted to fit any situation and reinforce several different points. Most games can often be modified slightly and still retain their original flavour and character.
- **Brief** - they can range from a one-minute visual illustration or verbal vignette up to a half hour group discussion exercise.
- **Inexpensive** - they usually do not require a lot of materials or equipment (many require none at all) and you do not need professional knowledge to run them.
- **Low-risk** - if matched to the right context and applied in a positive and professional manner, they will almost always succeed.
- **Participative** - they involve young people physically through movement or psychologically through visual and mental attention; they connect with young people by making them think, react or have fun.

When using co-operative games, be careful that you do not choose a format or content which may alienate the young people from the start (like introducing a game requiring very individualistic behaviour from a group of highly peer-orientated young people). Similarly, don't choose an activity simply on the grounds that “it has always been effective in the past”. Past circumstances may have been completely different. Young people may have real-life situations that you have little or no experience of and consequently they may become frustrated if you work to an agenda that is irrelevant to their needs.

★**Tip:** If at all possible, always co-facilitate an activity. There are practical advantages in that there will be two to share the responsibility of helping with small group work or dealing with individual needs. Two facilitators can support each other if things don't go as planned and it's also more rewarding to conduct a review with someone else than to do it alone.

- **Social Interaction:** in addition to the “formal” proposed programme of your project you may wish to consider the following “escape valves” which are useful when young people are tired, missing home or simply need a break from the focus of the project:

- To raise curiosity about other cultures, play **board games** from other countries.
- To show what work is being done during the project, **campaign** for the project (make publicity of it, perform something or even organise a press conference with media, if suitable).
- During the project it might be someone's birthday or a local, national or international day of celebration -so **celebrate!**
- Help the group **discover the local environment** by designing or preparing quizzes or questionnaires about different local cultural festivals, currencies, famous local characters, location of diverse places in the city, etc. Split the group into small mixed teams and ask them in a certain given amount of time to come back with the proper answers.
- Make “**do dictionaries**” - match statements in different languages, make lists of traditional foods, words and phrases of welcome/farewell and so on.
- Spontaneously **organise parties** during the project.
- Organise **sport games** during leisure or free time.
- For more local input, organise **a theme night** by inviting someone with an unusual or special talent to share with the group (traditional dancing, wood carving, playing an instrument, wearing traditional costume, etc.).
- ...

As you progress through your programme, remember that **evaluating** your activities is crucial. Never just “do” an activity; it's essential to follow through with debriefing and evaluation to enable young people to reflect on what happened, to evaluate their experience and to go on to decide what to do next.

Spend time at the end of each activity talking over what the young people learned and how they see it relating to their own lives. Without **reflection**, young people do not gain nearly as much from their experiences. Try to go through the **debriefing** and **evaluation** process in sequence by asking young people questions to relate to what happened during the activity and how they felt, what they learned about themselves, what they learned about the issues addressed, how they can move forward and use what they have learned.

- 👉 For more information on evaluation tools and techniques see the sections “**Endings and goodbyes**” (pg. 109) and “**Follow-Up – Evaluating the Activities**” (pg. 113).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As a group leader/facilitator, you probably do your best to treat all the young people in your group equally. But have you ever asked yourself if you are treating them equitably as well?

Be aware of the working methods you choose throughout the duration of your inclusion project and try to make them as equitable as possible.

For instance: if you bring all your young people together for a meeting, you are practising equality (because all the young people are in one place and in theory have equal opportunities to participate) but not necessarily equity. There are always one or two young persons in a group who have no trouble speaking out, who come up with the right answers right away, or who are never short of a comment or a joke. But there are others who rarely say anything and prefer to blend into the background. These young people may lack self-confidence. They may lack language skills. They may have learning disabilities which make it difficult for them to process information as quickly as others do. They may be dyslexic. They may be illiterate.

- ▶ One simple way to deal more equitably with such situations is to wait 5 or 10 seconds after asking a question. Give everyone in the group time to process the question and think up a response – not just the quick and spontaneous youngsters. As facilitator, do your best to give all members of the group the time and space they need to participate fully.
- ▶ Another way is to diversify your working methods to be more inclusive. Often we choose for traditional or “academic” ways of learning (like reading, writing, group discussions, etc.) because it is what we are used to. Remember, though, that different people learn in different ways. Some learn best through visual representation, some through numbers, some learn best while using their hands, some learn best while moving around. To work as equitably as possible, try to use a range of methods that respond to a range of learning styles.

DEALING WITH CONFLICTS

Inclusion projects rarely go exactly the way you expect them to. **Conflicts** can occur at any time; their causes can be many and varied, predictable or unpredictable. Human nature dictates that we cannot and will not all agree with each other all of the time so expect that at some point during your project you will likely experience (and have to deal with) some degree of conflict.

Conflicts can occur between groups or between individuals. They can involve not only the young people but the group leaders as well. Handling disagreements, expressing frustration, dealing with confusion, lacking basic resources... is not easy to deal with and can be particularly hard for fewer-opportunity youngsters who may lack the skills and competences to manage these situations and feelings. Yet in any conflict there is potential for growth and change. Conflict does not have to be destructive, if handled properly. It can serve as a valuable tool in building up skills and personal strengths: when acknowledged and explored in a safe environment it can provide powerful situations and reactions to refer to and follow up on after the project. Viewed in this light, conflict and the way it is managed can be seen as an opportunity to deal with self-esteem and trust.

In a conflict situation, the group leader's role is to be open, non-judgemental, accepting, positive and a careful trustee of young people's vulnerability and openness. They should help the young people to recognise that confronting conflicts is a step forward in their relations to others and will give them an experience they can use in their daily life back home.

COMMON CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN INCLUSION PROJECTS AND HOW TO PREVENT THEM

Timing: Too many late nights, long sessions or excursions can lead to late starts, low energy levels and lack of interest in the focus of the project. The use of **evaluation** tools like "Mood Meters" and "Temperature Gauges" will help you to check out feelings and energy levels regularly and adapt your programme or activity to meet the current mood.

Feedback: Poorly delivered feedback can be misunderstood or perceived as criticism even though this was not the intention of the speaker. When giving feedback, is important to respect the feelings of others, to focus on what they said or did and to give reasons for your point of view. It is better to say, "I disagree with what you have just said because...." rather than "How can you be so stupid, don't you see that....?"

Inappropriate activities: Not all activities will suit all young people all of the time. Be aware of the needs of all the individuals in the group and of any sensitive emotions which might be triggered by a particular activity (or part of it). Make sure everyone knows that they are at no time under any pressure to say or reveal anything about themselves that they do not feel comfortable with. Allow young people time to warm up before and wind down afterwards. Remember to allow enough time for debriefing and discussion so that everyone feels that their opinions and participation are valued.

Responsibilities: Some people thrive on responsibility while others avoid it like the plague. Some individuals have a lot of responsibility at home while others have very little so keep in mind that for some participants the “empowerment” aspects of an inclusion project may be a completely new and very scary experience. Make sure that all young people are comfortable and understand what they are being asked to do. Don’t hesitate to intervene if you think that something isn’t appropriate. Remember that the young people are experts on their own lives, strengths and capabilities so never impose anything. Let the young people decide what they want to be responsible for and support them through the process.

👉 For more information on the origin of conflicts in an intercultural situation, check the **T-Kit on Intercultural Learning** www.youth-partnership.net/publications/

SOME TIPS FOR MANAGING CONFLICTS

- ★ Find a situation or environment where the young person feels safe and can speak freely: privately, or in a group; open air or in a closed environment; ...
- ★ Listen to the young person and don’t take sides (any side)
- ★ Encourage the young person to talk and LET him/her talk (don’t saddle him/her with your own conflicts and experiences)
- ★ Help the young person to explore where the roots of the conflict might lie: different values, habits, norms, cultural backgrounds, etc.
- ★ Try to understand how the young person feels and thinks
- ★ Try to find out which roles or strategy both parties are using (if there are parties involved, depending on the conflict)
- ★ Ask the young person if you could help in any way
- ★ Help the young person to clarify the situation; the conflict might stem from a (intercultural) misunderstanding. Avoid judging what you don’t understand and promote tolerance of ambiguity.

- ★ Don't impose your cultural norms, but try to understand the cultural rules on both sides
- ★ Ask the young person whether s/he has an idea about how the opposite party might be feeling
- ★ Encourage the young person to formulate possible solutions for the problem. In this way he/she will feel more involved in the solving phase and support his/her own proposals for solution.
- ★ Encourage the young person to talk to the other party in the conflict if both are ready for this, help establishing a fearless atmosphere where open communication is possible (neutral territory, with an external mediator,...)
- ★ ...

ENDINGS AND GOODBYES

An inclusion project can be a powerful and emotional experience. When a project is completed successfully, everyone can move on to new things, feeling good about what's been achieved. Recognizing and being sensitive to **people's feelings** in the final phase is extremely important, particularly if members of the group have closely bonded.

Endings and goodbyes can be stressful so to help you ensure your project closure is a happy and positive one we conclude this section with some ideas for **evaluating, validating and celebrating** the young people's learning experiences.

EVALUATING

A lot of time and effort went into making your project possible - now it is time to identify what went well, what didn't and why. Were the original aims of the project achieved? Were the expectations of the young people met? What could have gone better? This information is useful as it can help you to make improvements in the future.

The first phase of evaluation should take place at the end of your project programme, before everyone returns home. There is a vast array of evaluation methods available (questionnaires, surveys, checklists, etc,) but it is important to choose those which are appropriate for your group and which allow for both the young people and the group leaders to have a voice in the process. Here are a few examples of some fun and active methods:

- **Guided Visualisation:** To refresh people’s memories of recent events, ask the young people to make themselves comfortable (sitting in a chair, lying on the floor, etc.) and close their eyes. Play some soft background music. Then, in a quiet voice, ask the young people to relax and go back in their minds to the day before the project began. Ask them to think about when they started their journey, what they expected, who they met. Remind them of all the different activities in the project programme; include some questions or funny anecdotes here and there. Once people’s memories have been “jogged”, you are ready to start collecting the participants’ feedback and impressions (see the methods below).
- **Remembering sessions** - event after event, in chronological order, the young people recount one after the other what impressed them most during the project (good and bad moments).
- **Symbolising the vision** - have the young people draw a symbol in the sand or on paper that represents their opinion or vision of the project. When everybody is finished drawing, the young people take it in turns to explain their symbol in one sentence or with 2-3 keywords.
- **Playing the “positive answer”** – have the young people divide up into small groups of three. For three minutes, two members of the group pay the third member a series of compliments. (Only positive comments allowed!) After the three minutes are up, the roles are switched and a new person is given compliments.

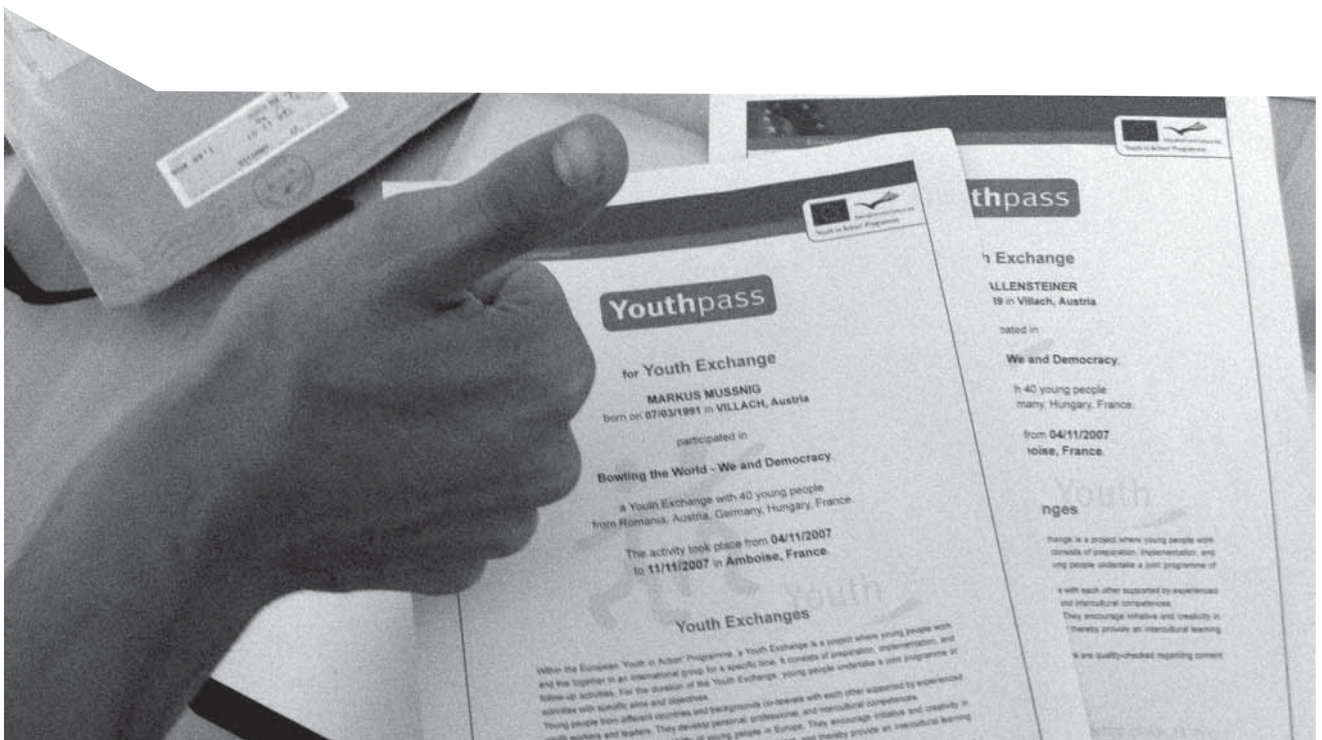
VALIDATING

You can help maximise the impact of your project by helping the young people to recognise specifically what they have learned and what they have gained in terms of their own personal development. You can think of categories like:

- **Intercultural skills** - language abilities, understanding diversity, tolerance of ambiguity, trying to learn not to judge and interpret behaviour wrongly, learning to see things from different perspectives.
- **Knowledge** - how to work in a team, how to make decisions, how to be flexible.
- **Life experience** - which have an impact on their future development.
- **Soft skills** - abilities to communicate and co-operate, to create contacts and partnerships.

There are different ways to identify and categorise the learning gained by young people during an inclusion project. Traditional methods of recognition include **attendance certificates**, **letters of recommendation**, and **invitations** to further projects. You might want to use a method, scheme or instrument which has proven effective in your organisation in the past, or... you might find it interesting to use a **competence-based approach**.

Erasmus+: Youth in Action has an instrument called **Youthpass** which can be used throughout the project cycle to identify specific aspects of a young person's learning. Youthpass is based on a European framework of 8 key competences: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.



When you use Youthpass, you work with the young people to identify and develop certain competencies. You dedicate time in each of the different phases of the project to assess the impact of various activities on a young person's learning. Of course to do this you will need to find working methods which are appropriate to your group's needs, abilities, etc.

- 👉 **All participants in an Erasmus+: Youth in Action activity are entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate.** If you are interested to learn more about how to integrate Youthpass into your project process, have a look at **the Youthpass Guide** and other relevant materials in www.youthpass.eu

CELEBRATING

- **Conclusions:** leave some space in the last session for the young people to say their final words and final farewells to the group as a whole. (Individual good-byes will come later.)
- **Bye-bye rituals:** add an element of fun by closing with a group ritual - a final group cheer, playing the favourite energiser or singing "our song" one more time all together, etc.

An inclusion project involves a long journey full of ups and downs... but in the end it is all worth it. Go ahead - throw yourself and the group a good **farewell party**. You deserve it!



The Follow-up Phase

In this section we look at what needs to happen when the “Implementation” phase draws to a close and you and your young people return home.

The follow-up phase is your opportunity to make the most of your project and use it as a resource in the **long-term development** of the young people by making them aware of the outcomes of the project and helping them apply their new skills, enthusiasm and interests back in their local environment.

The follow-up of an inclusion project involves looking forwards AND looking back. It includes:

- Evaluating the activities (to recognise the participants’ learning outcomes)
- Reintegration
- Disseminating the project outcomes.

It is also the moment to begin monitoring how the experience impacts on the future pathways of the young people.

The last day of an inclusion project should not be the end of the experience but rather the beginning of a new road ahead.

EVALUATING THE ACTIVITIES

You and your young people have just successfully completed your project. You all made a big investment of time and energy to get this far. Now is the time to stop and look at what exactly you have achieved and where improvements need to be made next time.

Evaluation is about collecting and analysing information that reflects the **outcomes of actions** and how these outcomes relate to our original aims and objectives. It is a planned process that aims to measure how far actions have achieved what they intended: to **visualise** what the experience meant to the young people. Evaluation is a **participative** process that empowers all those involved in the actions, young people, youth workers, members of the young people’s support networks, to reflect on and learn from their experiences.

Evaluation should not be something that you “just do” at the end of an international project because you have to. This is a valuable learning moment for everyone who was involved so give it the time and space it deserves. A good evaluation process should start right at the beginning of a project and continue on right through to the end.

STARTING OFF – SELF-REFLECTION

Ideally, evaluation is a process that needs to start at the very beginning of a project. This can be done, formally and informally, by encouraging the young people to self-reflect in various ways and at various moments throughout the activity. Here are some tips and methods to set the process in motion:

- If some of the young people are fond of writing, have them keep a **daily diary**. At the end of the project, ask them to review what they have written to see if they can identify any changes in their behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, skills, etc. If the young person has difficulties with writing, they can also draw a daily picture, or make a weekly collage out of images in magazines to represent events and emotions.
- Encourage the young people to think about their **future** throughout the project; don't leave it until the very end. Do this informally by asking them what they are thinking about, which direction their thoughts are going. In the evaluation stage they should look back on any plans, needs or wishes they had at the beginning and consider to what extent those have or have not changed. Obviously, the effect of this will be stronger in longer projects than in shorter ones but even after only several days or a few weeks in a project a young person may have all kinds of new insights.
- It is easier to evaluate the practical aspects of the international experience (daily activities, accommodation, skills learned, etc) than more abstract elements (like the intercultural experience). But a picture can speak a thousand words... To evaluate the **intercultural experience** give the young people a disposable camera. Have them take photos of people, places, and things in their project which are important to them or which made a strong impression on them. Use the photos to start a discussion about differences and similarities between countries and between cultures.
- At the conclusion of the project, help the young people make an **inventory (list) of the skills they learned**. Help them identify how that learning can help them take their next steps along the pathway (in finding a job, gaining a qualification, within their family situation, etc.).

EVALUATION METHODS

There are many different and fun ways to evaluate your inclusion project. The process need not be overly complicated or challenging. Choose methods and tools that are suitable and interesting for your young people.

When working with the fewer-opportunity target group, you may wish to use a variety of **interactive** methods (group and individual exercises like games, open discussions, brainstorm, etc). If appropriate, you could also consider using more formal methods like interviews, surveys and questionnaires.

If your young people feel comfortable and included “in” the group, they will likely have a lot to say in the evaluation stage. Keep in mind, however, that not everyone is at ease speaking out in large groups. Also, in some cultures it is considered extremely rude to openly criticise, even within a safe constructive atmosphere. So when planning your evaluation, be sure to use a mix of methods which give people the chance to speak their opinions (all together, in small groups, one-on-one) and to show their opinions (with more active methods which don’t necessarily involve speaking out – again all together, in small groups, one-on-one, individually and possibly even anonymously).



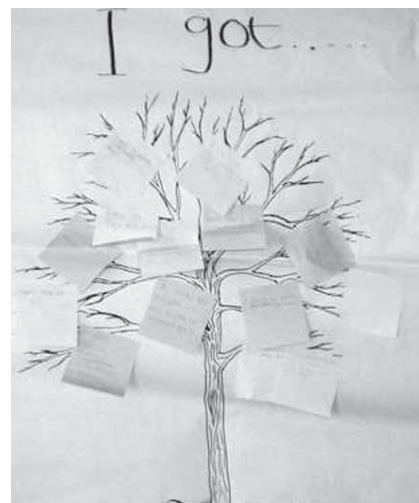
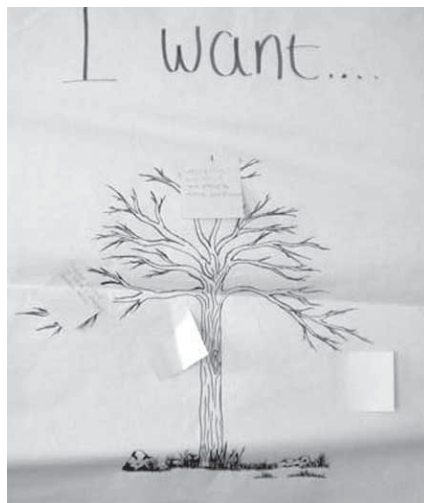
Here below are a few examples to help you get started.

★**Tip:** The examples given here can be used either during the project or when the young people have returned home.

Exercise – “Expectation Trees”

This is a good visual method to revisit individuals’ expectations of the project and to measure the extent to which those were (or were not) met.

At the start of your project ask the young people to write down what they expect to gain from participating in the activity on “post it” notes. These notes are then posted to the “I Want” Tree. At the end of the activity ask the young people to return to the “I Want” Tree to consider which of their expectations have been met. Fulfilled expectations are then transferred to the “I Got” tree.



Exercise – “Dice Evaluation”

Have the participants sit in a circle. If you have a very large group, divide up into smaller groups of 8-10 persons.

Each person takes a turn to roll the dice. Depending on which number comes up, that person must finish the sentence under the corresponding number.

1. My favourite part of the programme was... because...
2. My least favourite part of the programme was... because...
3. I was happy/proud when....
4. It was a big challenge for me to...
5. In a future project I would change...
6. In a future project I would completely drop...

Record the outcomes on a flipchart paper.

★ **Tip:** Depending on the size of the group, you could adjust the method. For instance, have each person roll the dice twice and answer two questions before moving on to the next person. Alternately, you could go around the circle twice.

★ **Tip:** The description above is a good way to evaluate the activity. You could also adapt the same method and **use it to help the group round off the project** in the “Endings and goodbyes” stage by adjusting the statements. For instance:

- 1: I feel...
- 2: I would like to wish something to somebody...
- 3: I would like to thank somebody for something...
- 4: I learned...
- 5: I understood...
- 6: I would like to say ...

Based on the “Dice Evaluation” by Mara Arvai – SALTO-Youth Toolbox for Training and Youth Work. <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/787>

Exercises: Mapping, Ranking & Action Planning

The following three exercises are an effective way of encouraging young people to reflect on the outcomes of the international activity such as the learning, the experiences, and resources produced as a direct result of the activity, to reconnect with networks and contacts established during the international project and to begin to plan and prioritise future actions or events. The exercises are presented here as a series but feel free to adapt them to suit your group.

1) Exercise – “Mapping”

Aim: understanding our “history”.



Method: Draw a “map” of the activity you are going to evaluate. If you have a large programme or timetable on the wall listing all the different activities of the past days, you can use this. However, if you are feeling more creative you could draw a visualisation of your project programme (like a map of the city with all the stops you have made and things you have done). Use lots of symbols and some key words here and there for extra explanation. Give each participant three colours of post-it notes. The participants will use these to show what they liked about the activity, what they didn’t like and what changes they would like to make. For example:

Pink: the things you liked - maybe the international night was great fun

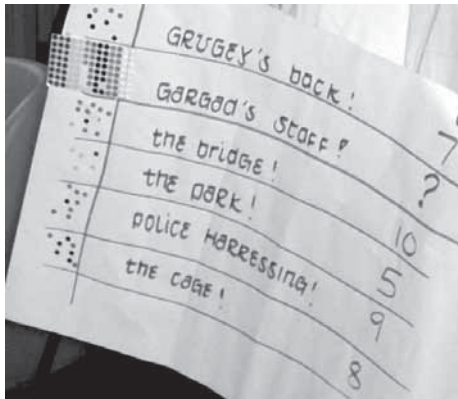
Blue: the things you didn’t like – maybe the visit to the city was dull and boring, maybe people did not work well together in the workshops and some people felt excluded

Yellow: the things you would change to make the next project more effective – for instance to suggest that in future all partners could play a more active role in leading the activities, and not expect the hosting group to be responsible for all tasks all of the time.

Have the participants stick their post-its on to the map. Discuss the results as a group. Collect the comments and feedback on a flipchart paper.

2) Exercise- "Ranking"

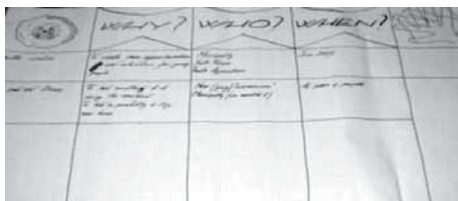
Aim: identifying priorities for change



This exercise follows up from the mapping exercise (above). Take the suggestions for change (the yellow "post-its") and write them out on a grid. Using sticky dots (or sweets), have the participants "vote" or rank those suggestions which the group feels are priorities for action (the ones you most urgently need to change to make your next activity more effective). The group discussion is very important in this exercise. The facilitator should ask lots of questions about the ideas and why they are important. Be sure you give everyone space and opportunities to contribute.

3) Exercise – Future Action Planning

Aim: to define future action



Once you have ranked your priorities you can move on to action planning and making concrete agreements - who will do what and when.

You can visually represent this with a timeline outlining WHAT? WHY? WHO? and WHEN? This is an excellent way to share responsibilities and is also an ideal way to presenting your action plan to other stakeholders once you return home.

REINTEGRATION

The end of an inclusion project is by no means the end of the inclusion process. **Reintegration** is an important stage for the young people as chances are that, due to their experiences and learning gained on the international project, they can arrive home a changed person to the one that left. Consequently the young people may have difficulty fitting back into the position they previously held within their peer or family group setting. To facilitate a “**smooth landing**” upon returning home, high levels of personal support from you, the youth worker, and other professionals may be required.

The word “reintegration” can sound somewhat heavy, giving the impression that it is a bleak and difficult process (like a criminal returning to society after a long period in prison). But this is not at all the case. In the context of an international inclusion project, reintegration means helping the young people to make sense of all they have seen and experienced abroad, to understand the impact this had (and may still be having) on them, to find ways to use the skills and competencies they may have gained and to plan the next steps towards new future goals.

Reintegration involves transformation. However, it must be kept in mind that while a young person may have changed, the home environment has not. There can be friction between the “old” and the “new” ways of thinking, doing and living (within the family, the peer group, and even within a young person’s own mind). Old habits, in particular, die hard so for those young people who left chaotic or problematic lifestyle behind during the project itself, good reintegration is crucial. A young person’s reintegration should be as **inclusive as possible**, involving, when possible, representatives from all areas of the young people’s personal and professional support networks (family, friends and professionals).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When preparing to send young people abroad, we expect that they will experience a certain degree of “culture shock” during their project. Often, however, we forget or underestimate the impact of “reverse culture shock” which can occur when a young person returns home and begins to try to somehow fit their “new self” into their old environment.

This is particularly the case for young people who could be considered to be “at risk” or “in severe difficulty” – for instance young people who have drug or alcohol problems,

who come from a background of violence or abuse, who have drug/alcohol problems or who are exposed to bad influences in their area (criminal behaviour, extremism, etc). An inclusion project can have a big impact on these young people and lead to many positive changes. For instance, they may make many new friends. They may learn many new skills. They may become more independent. They may develop new attitudes and beliefs. They may set themselves new future goals. They may have an increased sense of confidence and pride in themselves and what they have achieved.

These types of positive changes are precisely what inclusion projects are designed to achieve. But what happens when a young person “at risk” returns home? The changes in their perspective, attitudes and behaviour may not always be understood or appreciated by family and friends. In some cases, they may even be seen as a threat to the established order. The home environment may give out clear messages to the young person that their new behaviour is not wanted or accepted by the group. An individual may be pressured to go back to their old ways, resume bad habits, reconnect with negative influences, etc.

Young people “at risk” face a range of additional challenges in the reintegration process compared to their peers. If you work with “at risk” profiles, ask yourself:

- ▶ What specific challenges might your young people face when they return from an inclusion project abroad?
- ▶ As a youth worker/youth leader, what can you do to make the reintegration process as easy as possible? Are you able and willing to invest the extra time and resources needed to support these young people?
- ▶ Is it just the project participants who might need support... or might there be other stakeholders to consider as well? Are you able and willing to spend time with a young person’s family, friends, peer group, teachers, coaches, etc, to help them come to terms with the changes brought about by the inclusion project?

For a young person “at risk”, a successful reintegration may be the most important aspect of their inclusion project. Be careful not to underestimate the degree of commitment needed from you, your organisation and other important stakeholders to make this happen.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN REINTEGRATION?

Reintegration can take different forms depending on how long your young people have been abroad. Reintegrating after one week on a youth exchange may not be all that difficult but reintegrating after 3 or 6 or 12 months abroad on an EVS placement can be much more complicated.

There are different aspects and practical details that an individual needs to “pick up again” after returning home from a (extended) period abroad. For instance:

- **Practicalities:** does the young person have a place to live when they return home? Do they have any income? What is their current state of health (mental and physical)?
- **Personal relationships:** how have personal relationships with family and/or friends changed during the time abroad? Have they become more positive, more negative? Are there dangers involved in re-starting certain relationships now that the young person has returned home?
- **Newly-gained skills and competencies:** are there outlets or opportunities available where the young person can put the skills they have gained/developed to use (e.g. paid work, apprenticeship, volunteering in the community)? Does the young person know that such opportunities exist? Are they able to take advantage of them on their own or do they need some support?
- **Reconnecting with professionals:** are there people, departments or institutions that the young person needs to make contact with once they return home? E.g. the employment office, social work departments, the police, the court system, etc.
- **Future plans:** what will the young person concretely do now that they have returned home? How will they apply their new learning? Is there an action plan in place? Does it involve school, work, volunteering, further training...? Is there a risk that the young person will go back to doing exactly whatever they did before the project?

Of course sorting out these questions is the responsibility of the young people themselves but that does not mean that you, as their youth worker/youth leader cannot lend a helping hand by anticipating areas where the youngsters may run into difficulties and being prepared to help them along the way.

Be aware that the longer the inclusion project abroad, the greater the chance that an individual may have substantially changed (in terms of their personality, their outlook on life, their plans for the future and so on). These are complex processes that all take time to be expressed and understood and it can easily take as much as a year or more to do so. Be sure that YOU budget enough time to guide your young people through the reintegration phase properly.

ACTION STEPS TO FACILITATE REINTEGRATION

As a youth worker/group leader, you can have a positive impact on the reintegration process by:

- working with the young people to create opportunities to share their learning and experiences, and
- helping members of their social networks understand how and why the international project has influenced them.

This can be done in various ways. For instance:

- Create opportunities for the young people to “**report back**”. These should be moments where a young person can **inform** their peers, family, community members and others committed to their cause about the learning outcomes of their experience. To do this, the young people can share their diaries, videos, written reports, personal records of achievement, Youthpass certificates, newspaper and magazine articles about the project, etc. They can write articles for the organisation’s newsletter or website or be interviewed by local newspapers, TV and radio stations.
- Arrange possibilities for the young person to “**give back**” by volunteering in their own community. Similarly, you can empower the young people to **act as resource persons** in your own organisation. For instance, after having gained experience in a youth exchange, EVS, etc, they can motivate other young people (within your organisation, city or region) to do similar projects and support them in their first steps. As well, they can play a part (and take on new responsibilities) in organising the next round of international activities.
- Give young people chances to **implement the skills** they learned during the international activity (for example, if they took part in a dance project, encourage them to give a short performance or organise a dance workshop).

- Help establish **peer support networks**. These are a good way to keep the young people involved in the international arena. Informal social networks such as e-groups, which can be established at the end of the inclusion project, allow the participants (youngsters AND group leaders) to identify common reintegration issues and to work together to solve them.
- Reserve time to **revisit and reconsider the young person's personal pathway**. If you still have the young people's drawings of their pathway from the preparation stage, use them as a tool to start a discussion. How did the pathway take shape during and after the project? Where is the pathway leading to now? What future paths are they interested to follow now? What do they need to help them do this?

★**Tip:** The reintegration process should never be rushed. Young people need time to “digest” the learning and experiences they have made during their time abroad. Revisit the personal pathway only after the young people have been back at home for some time (e.g. 1-2 months or more). **Be patient**; allow the young people to step away from the project itself and look at their learning from a more balanced longer-term point of view.



DISSEMINATING THE PROJECT OUTCOMES

The previous pages of the “Follow-up” section have focused mainly on what you as project organiser can do to help your young people round off their inclusion project abroad and start looking forward to the future. Now the same applies to you – how can YOU take this experience forward? How can you inform others about your results? How can you share the knowledge and experience you have gained?

You can do this by **disseminating** the results of your project as widely as possible and making the outcomes **visible** to a much larger audience than just those who took part.

Ideally, you will start to think about how you plan to share the results of your project already in the preparation stage. If you know in advance the concrete products and outcomes you want to have by the end, you can take steps during the project to get what you need. But if you only manage to consider dissemination and visibility at the end of the project, here are a few steps to help you get organised.

Ask yourself (and your young people):

- **WHAT** exactly do we want to share about our project (and what do we concretely have)? Statistics? A film we have made? Written accounts? Evaluations? Examples of Youthpass certificates?
- **WHO** do we want to share it with? Other young people in your organisation? The parents or guardians of the young people? Your board of directors? Your sponsors? Your local city council?
- **WHY** do we want to share it? To make publicity and raise our profile? To recruit new participants for a future project? To show the sponsors what their financial support has achieved? To share our knowledge with others?
- **HOW** will we do it? An open day? A formal meeting? An informal evening get-together? A travelling caravan? Will we make a report, publish flyers, set up a website, produce a CD, put together a pod-cast, an art exhibition...?

The possibilities for disseminating the results of your project are limited only by your imagination. Make use of all forms of media and technology that are available to you to maximise the impact.

Here are some concrete suggestions:

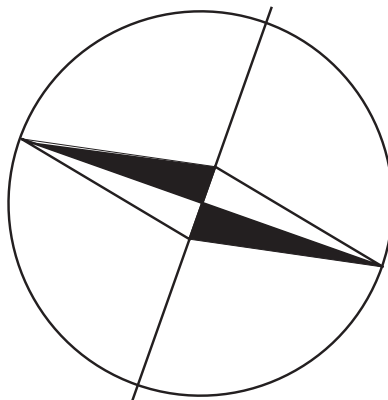
- **Officially recognise the learning and personal development** of the young people who took part in your activity. Give them a certificate or letter of recommendation on your organisation's official letterhead. Help the young person obtain their **Youthpass** as a way to document their learning and their experience.
- **Document the outcomes** of your project. This can include both **visible** results (e.g. a film of the theatre play by the participants, a CD ROM, a report, a collection of artworks, ...) and **invisible** results (e.g. learning points, conclusions, recommendations, new methods used during the activity, ...) Connect with your audience by personalizing the outcomes as much as possible. Think of ways to use reports, diaries, recordings, drawings, photos and real-life testimonials from the young people.
- Get the **local media** involved (TV, radio, newspapers) and make headlines with your international project. to share and spread your documentation. Post information on your organisation's website.
- Give the participants **space to develop networking and follow-up projects** themselves (through discussion, "open space", action plans, etc).
- Offer **guidance and training** to young people who want to get more involved in your organisation.
- **Share your methods, funding opportunities and good practices** to make the lives of "newcomers" to the field a lot easier. Add them to existing databases (e.g. www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/) or circulate them via relevant networks.
- Use **networking and communication tools** for future contacts and exchanging good practice (e.g. via an online platform, weblog, Facebook group, newsletters,...)
- **Thank all your supporters** (authorities, funders, families, local community members, ...) for their contributions and keep up the new contacts established.

Be creative! This is your opportunity to showcase your work, to celebrate your achievements, to let other people benefit from and use your project results and to seek and obtain support for your future projects.

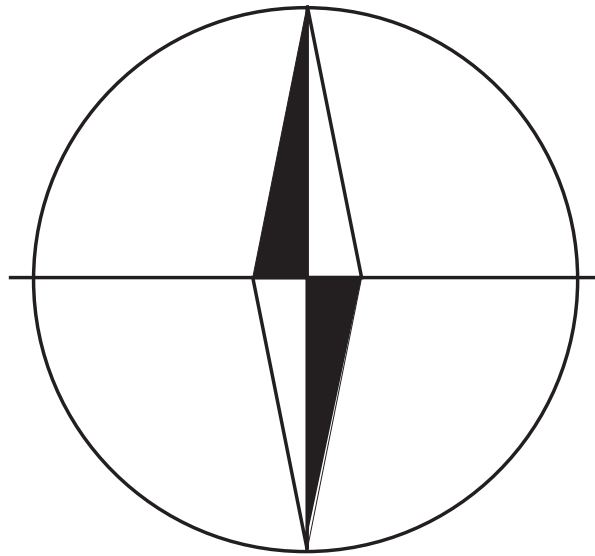
No matter which methods you use, keep in mind that you want people to actually USE the information and knowledge you are giving them. It is not supposed to just disappear into someone's desk drawer!! **Be proactive** – offer support on how to use your products and results. Actively seek out interested organisations or youth workers/youth leaders and get them enthusiastic and involved.

- 👉 To learn more about **how to disseminate the results and increase the visibility** of your inclusion project, see the booklet “**Making Waves**” in the SALTO Inclusion series.

www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/







ROUNDING OFF

Do's and don'ts for outstanding inclusion projects

This brings us to the end of Part 3... and to the end of the booklet. In the previous pages we have tried to provide you with an overview of the different elements you need to take into account when preparing, implementing and following-up an Erasmus+: Youth in Action inclusion project.

Feeling overwhelmed? Can you no longer see the forest for the (inclusion) trees? Don't worry. International inclusion projects involve a huge amount of "learning by doing". There is no such thing as the perfect project and everyone undertaking a project for the first time has to start somewhere.

To keep your energy and enthusiasm levels high, here are some final do's and don'ts to help you make your inclusion project truly outstanding.

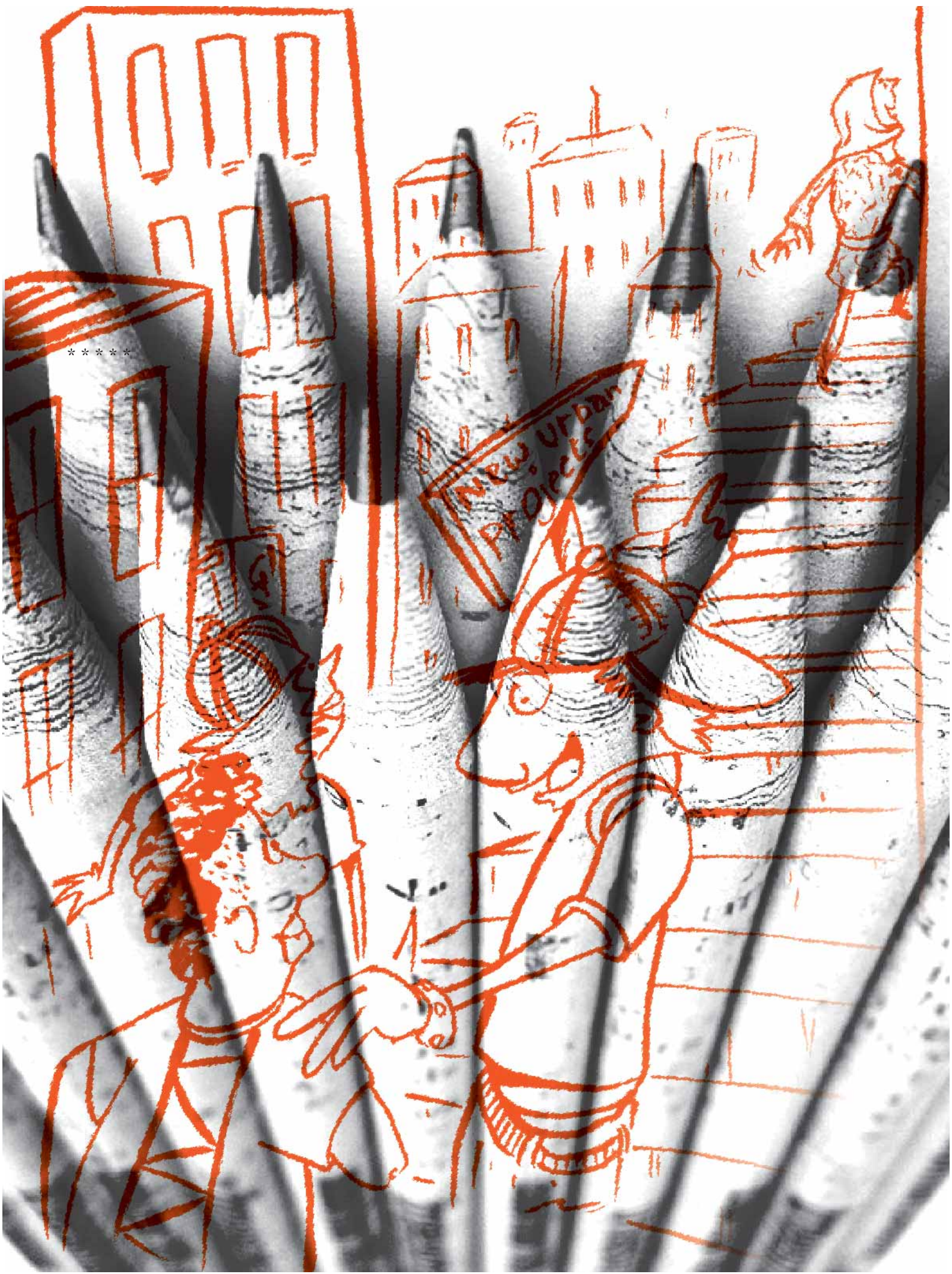
DO

- ✓ **Continue to learn as much as you can about the needs of specific profiles of young people with fewer opportunities.** The more you can custom-design an international inclusion project to respond to these needs, the better your chance of making a significant difference in these young people's lives.
- ✓ **Listen to the young people and give them diverse chances to get involved.** They are the most important stakeholder in the inclusion process and as such they should have the most important voice in determining their own futures. Remember that young people want to be active and they want to belong – it is up to you to create the opportunities.
- ✓ **Network as much as you can with colleagues – in your own country and abroad.** Youth workers who have already been “bitten by the international bug” are almost always happy to share their hard-earned inclusion knowledge with newcomers. This can be an invaluable resource, not just for insider tips, but also to help you find all manner of additional support and maybe even potential partner organisations.
- ✓ **Make use of training and contact-making opportunities offered through Erasmus+: Youth in Action.** Visit the websites of your National Agency and the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre to find out how you can take part.

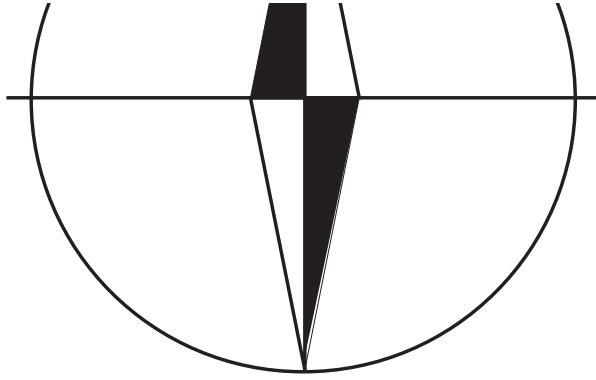
DONT

- X Confuse the end with the means.** Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities are excellent tools but remember that they are just one step along a young person's pathway – they are not the final destination. The best inclusion projects compliment and accelerate the work already being done with young people and help to move them forward.
- X Get discouraged.** Planning and implementing an international inclusion project is a lot of work but many of the steps described here are probably familiar to you as a youth worker already (for instance, needs analysis, risk assessments, evaluations, etc.) If you get stuck or have questions, there are many resources, contact-persons, etc, who can help. You can do it!
- X Succumb to your own prejudices.** Be sure that as you work towards more inclusion and diversity that YOU don't fall prey to your own stereotypes (e.g. of urban youth, immigrants, young offenders, substance abusers, the mentally ill, etc.) Some young people have extremely complicated lives and carry a lot of baggage with them... but they are still young people. They need help and guidance to enable them to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life.
- X Try to reach too high.** Be honest about your own level of knowledge and skill in working with young people. If you have no experience working with particularly complex profiles then these are probably not the right groups for you to start with. Remember that a project abroad should in no way harm a young person or make their home situation worse. If you are in any doubt, don't hesitate to turn to experts for their professional help and advice.
- X Make things too complicated, especially the first time around.** In this booklet we have given you a lot of advice and many potential methods to use. However, it is not necessary to jam-pack your project program or to cram in as many non-formal methods as you can. The very best inclusion projects are simply where the young people can share experiences together. Remember the KISS philosophy: KeeP It Simple Sailing.

Are you ready? Then what are you waiting for? Get to work and “go international”!
Good luck!



NEW URBAN
District



SUCCESS FACTORS

Quality in inclusion & Diversity projects

Erasmus+: Youth in Action has extracted a number of success criteria for inclusion & diversity projects and compiled them in the **Inclusion & Diversity Strategy**. We present a modified version of those criteria here in the form of a checklist to help you monitor and improve the quality of your own project.

This criteria checklist can be used at any stage of your project – in the Preparation, Implementation and/or the Follow-Up phase. We recommend that you refer to it at least once in each stage in order to gauge the extent to which your project is on track (or, conversely, to see where improvements need to be made).

SUCCESS FACTORS

INCLUSION & DIVERSITY PROJECTS

Category

Reaching out

- **Appeal:** Is my organisation making a conscious effort to appeal and reach out to different target groups?
 - **Obstacles:** Is my organisation reducing obstacles for diverse target groups to participate?
-

The young people at the centre

- **Needs based:** Is the project built around the needs, interests and aspirations of the young people? Does my organisation know what the young people really want?
 - **True participation:** Are the young people being given opportunities to steer, carry out tasks and take initiative in this stage of the project? Are the youth workers actively encouraging participation by all members of the group?
 - **Tailor-made:** Is the project adapted to the competences and previous experience of the young people? Are the methods suitable? Is the project striking a balance between the safety of the known and the challenge of the new?
 - **Supportive approach:** Does the project cater for the special needs of young people with fewer opportunities? Is the programme adapted so that it is inclusive of all?
 - **Social dimension:** Does the programme help everybody to mingle and find their place in the group? Is the project set up to deal with stereotypes about different excluded groups?
-

Dealing with diversity of all kinds

- **Preparation:** Are both the young people and the team prepared for the encounter and to deal with inclusion/exclusion issues during the project?

- **Mixed groups:** Are young people from different backgrounds mingled in the project? Does the project actively take this diversity as a learning point?
 - **Social and intercultural competence:** Does the project include elements and learning moments to help the young people learn to deal with difference in the widest sense of the word? Does it set out to promote diversity and counter intolerance and discrimination?
 - **Language support:** Are the young people prepared for communicating across cultures? Are there methods included in the programme to allow the young people to interact despite linguistic barriers?
 - **Reflection and time-out:** Does the programme leave enough breathing space for vulnerable young people? Are there moments in the programme where young people (alone or together) can make sense of what is happening and what they are learning?
 - **Youth workers from inclusion groups:** Does the team of youth workers reflect the diversity of the participants? Do they understand the needs of the target groups they work with? Do they provide specific support and act as a positive role model?
-

Non-formal learning

- **Clear objectives:** Does the project have clearly defined aims and objectives? Has the project (and its expected outcomes) been presented to the young people in a way that is relevant and understandable for them? Do the young people understand what they will get out of it?
- **Attractive methods:** Do the methods and activities in the programme actively engage the young people and allow them to try new things?
- **Peer learning:** Does the project see the young people as a source of learning? Does it encourage all young people to come up with their own solutions to challenges and work together to reach their goal?
- **Simplicity:** Is the project clear, simple and tangible enough for the young people? Is the project work accessible for all involved in the project?

- **Documenting learning:** Is there time and space for the young people to think about their learning? Do the youth workers help the young people to become conscious of their learning? Are there methods to present this learning (e.g. Youthpass)?
 - **Fun:** Is the project attractive and exciting for the young people?
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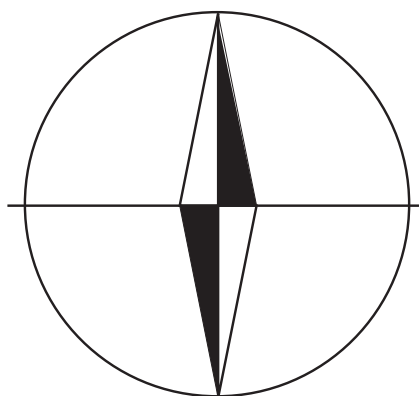
Longer-term impact

- **A wider process:** Is the project embedded in a process before and after the actual project? Does it clearly link in with where the young people are trying to move along their personal pathways? Is there a clear plan to ensure the follow-up of the young people after the project?
 - **Step by step approach:** Do the young people understand the place of the project along their pathway? Are they ready for it?
 - **Motivating experience:** Is the project motivating for the young people? Does it focus on the young people's competencies and potential rather than on their deficits and problems? Does the project include space/methods to recognise and celebrate the young people's involvement and achievements?
 - **Follow-up:** Does my organisation have a plan to continue the work with the young people after the project? Do we have a plan to keep track of their evolution and guide them to the next steps on a path of change?
 - **Dissemination and exploitation:** Does my organisation understand the tangible and intangible outcomes of the project? Is there a plan to help other organisations or young people benefit from our project results?
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Holistic approach & partnerships

- **Holistic approach:** Do the project partners make bridges to others in contact with the same young people (family, peers, health services, employment agency, schools, etc.)?
- **Solid partnership:** Do the organisations and individual youth workers involved in the project know and trust each other? Have they developed a set of commonly agreed objectives, concepts and working methods? Are they aware of each other's strengths and differences?

- **Professionalism and commitment:** Do the project partners take inclusion & diversity projects seriously? Are they aware of the commitment and competencies needed to get the most out of the project?
 - **Risk assessment & crisis management:** Do the youth workers involved have a clear view of the potential problems that may occur when working with diverse inclusion groups? Do they have (emergency) plans and systems in place in case things go wrong?
 - **Training:** Are the youth workers trained in specific inclusion & diversity areas? Do they have previous experience in working with the profiles of young people who will take part in the project?
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FURTHER READING *Hunger for more?*

OTHER SALTO INCLUSION PUBLICATIONS

- **Inclusion through Employability** (reprint 2014) – success criteria for youth projects addressing unemployment, research publication
- **Urban Solutions** (2012) - tapping the talents of urban youth, research publication
- **Growing Inclusion & Participation** (2014) - inspiration for inclusive & participative Strategic Partnerships in youth filed
- **Youthpass Unfolded** (2012) - practical tips and hands-on methods to use Youthpass, also with inclusion groups
- **Youth and the City** (reprint 2012) – developing meaningful international projects with young people in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas
- **Working on Work** (2011) – using international projects to improve the chances of young people on the labour market
- **Youthpass unfolded** (2012) – explaining the Youthpass process to make learning visible, including practical methods to do so
- **Youthpass for All!** (updated 2010) – recognition of non-formal learning through the Youth in Action programme for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Making Waves** (updated 2010) - greater impact with your youth projects through visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
- **Images in Action** (2010) – running a positive image-building campaign for inclusion groups
- **Fit for Life** (2005) – using sports as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth-work
- **No Offence** (updated 2010) – exploring opportunities and setting up youth projects with young ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- **Village International** (updated 2010) – setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **Inclusion & Diversity** (updated 2008) – how to make your youth-work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups
- **No Barriers, No Borders** (updated 2008) – organising international mixed ability projects (including people with and without a disability)

- **Over the Rainbow (updated 2008)** – creating sensitive projects with young LesBiGays and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **E.M. power (2008)** – empowering Ethnic Minority young women through international youth projects
- **Going International - Inclusion for All (updated 2009)** – practical methods and advice for youth workers organising their first international project for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (updated 2009)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities in short-term European Voluntary Service projects
- **Inclusion by Design (2009)** – a manual for youth NGOs to approaching inclusion in a strategic way

☞ Find them all at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/

REFERENCES

*T-Kit Series: The training kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, published by **the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.***

- Social Inclusion
- Project Management
- Organisational Management
- Methodology in Language Learning
- Intercultural Learning
- International Voluntary Service
- Under Construction... Citizenship, Youth and Europe
- Training Essentials
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational Evaluation in Youth Work
- Euromed Co-operation
- Youth transforming conflict

☞ Downloadable from www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

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- **SGBA e-Learning Resource** – Rising to the Challenge.
Module: Equity <http://sgba-resource.ca/en/concepts/equity/>

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Are you working with young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds? Would you like to add international mobility projects to your box of educational tools?

Or are you working with “mainstream” youth? Are you interested in opening up your international projects to include (more) young people from fewer-opportunity target groups?

Then this booklet might be just what you are looking for...

“Inclusion A to Z” is designed to help open up Erasmus+: Youth in Action activities to as many potential users as possible. The booklet is intended to serve as a compass to help you steer through the issues of inclusion and the steps to managing an international-level activity from beginning to end.

The combination of theory and practical methods presented here aim to equip you to either take your first steps into Erasmus+: Youth in Action with your inclusion group OR to improve the quality and scope of your current inclusion activities.

Inclusion A to Z will help YOU to start creating new and exciting chances for young people to get involved and “go international”.

This booklet is part of the SALTO “Inclusion for All” series. Download them for free at:
www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

