
INCLUSION

13 GOOD PRACTICES

TO IMPROVE THE INCLUSION OF
VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE
IN ERASMUS± YOUTH EXCHANGES



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INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLECTION

THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES REPRESENTS ONE OF THE OUTCOMES PRODUCED DURING THE ANNUAL MEETING OF OUR NETWORK, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN GALBIATE, ITALY, FROM NOVEMBER 27 TO DECEMBER 1, 2023.

THIS MEETING WAS A MOMENT OF INSPIRATION, COLLABORATION, AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, WHERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM NETWORK ORGANIZATIONS GATHERED TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE FIELD OF INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES AND HIGHLY VULNERABLE YOUTH. THIS BUILT UPON THE WORK INITIATED IN 2022 WITH THE CREATION OF THE POSITION PAPER FOR INCLUSION IN ERASMUS+ AND ESC PROJECTS.

THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW DEPICT A MOSAIC OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL IN OUR CHALLENGE TO ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF GENUINE INCLUSION IN YOUTH MOBILITY PROJECTS, INVOLVING GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE TYPICALLY EXCLUDED FROM SUCH EXPERIENCES. EACH BEST PRACTICE INCLUDED HERE IS THE RESULT OF A SHARED COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES.

THE COLLECTION IS STRUCTURED INTO 5 PARTS, REPRESENTING DIFFERENT STAGES OF A YOUTH MOBILITY PROJECT. FOR EACH OF THEM, WE HAVE SELECTED 2 OR 3 PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED BY NETWORK PARTNERS.

THIS PUBLICATION IS INTENDED FOR ORGANIZATIONS PRIMARILY ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH INCLUSION, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT SOME PRACTICES CAN BE EASILY ADAPTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS AND WITH DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS.

WE HOPE THAT THIS COLLECTION NOT ONLY INSPIRES YOU BUT ALSO MOTIVATES YOU TO IMPLEMENT THESE IDEAS IN YOUR ORGANIZATIONS. ONLY THROUGH JOINT ACTION CAN WE FUEL POSITIVE CHANGE AND BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ALL. MAY THIS COLLECTION BE A VALUABLE TOOL IN YOUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, AND MAY THE BEST PRACTICES SHARED HERE BECOME A GUIDING BEACON FOR YOUR ONGOING SUCCESS.

PHASE 1: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

GOOD PRACTICE 1: IDENTIFICATION AND PERSONAL INVITATION

Aim of the practice	Reaching target groups that are hard to intercept and to involve
Target group(s) with whom it was used	13-17 years-old young people and young adults, facing social and economic challenges, learning difficulties and autism, who were difficult to intercept and to convince to participate.
Proposing organisation	Zavod Nefiks (Slovenia)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices:	Ye Too Ponese Association (Spain), Parcours le Monde (France), Las Niñas del Tul (Spain), Academy of Experience (Hungary)
Project(s) in which it was implemented	Several youth mobility projects between 2016 and 2023
Description of the practice	Talking to youth workers or other professionals that know the young people and can propose who should participate. After we identified who are the young people that would benefit from the YE we talked to them directly and invited them to join. Explaining to them how a YE looks like, what are the costs (if any), how we will support them throughout the project ... If needed we talk to the parents also and explain that this is an educational opportunity, answer all their questions etc. (whatever they need to hear, to convince them).

GOOD PRACTICE 2: START BY INVOLVING PARTICIPANTS IN IN-COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

Aim of the practice	Helping highly vulnerable young people to overcome the fear of a youth exchange experience
Target group(s) with whom it was used	Young people facing fewer opportunities, at their first international experience.
Proposing organisation	Las Niñas del Tul (Spain)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Associazione Joint (Italy), Ye Too Ponese Association (Spain)
Description of the practice	In some cases the fears and barriers to participating in an international activity can be overcome with intermediate steps. One option is to involve young people with fewer opportunities in youth exchanges (or other activities) in their own country. This helps them lose fears and acquire competencies that will make their subsequent participation in projects abroad possible.

GOOD PRACTICE 3: INCLUSIVE SELECTION PROCESS

Aim of the practice	Making everyone able to participate, beside their personal background; creating an inclusive environment.
Target group(s) with whom it was used	Young people from the Roma community
Proposing organisation	Conexão Jovem (Portugal)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Europe4Youth (Poland), Associação Juventude de Vila Fonche (Portugal), Life Zone (Estonia), Associazione Joint (Italy), Las Niñas del Tul (Spain), Academy of Experience (Hungary)
Project(s) in which it was implemented	O Teatro Anda Comigo
Description of the practice	<p><u>Strengths-Based Approach</u>: During recruitment, focus on identifying the strengths, interests, and talents of potential participants rather than traditional academic criteria.</p> <p><u>Inclusive Interviews</u>: Conduct interviews in a conversational and inclusive manner, considering the unique perspectives and experiences of the Roma community.</p> <p><u>Community Involvement</u>: Involve members of the Roma community in the selection process to ensure representation and a deep understanding of the community's needs.</p>

PHASE 2: PREPARATION

GOOD PRACTICE 4: PROVIDE CLEAR, YOUTH FRIENDLY INFORMATION

Aim of the practice	Providing clear and precise information increases the safety of the experience and creates a higher level of trust between the participants and the sending organisations.
Target group(s) with whom it was used	13-17 years-old young people, facing social and economic challenges, learning difficulties and autism
Proposing organisations	Zavod Nefiks (Slovenia)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Development Youth Association (Türkiye), Europe4Youth (Poland), Life Zone (Estonia), Parcours le Monde (France), Las Niñas del Tul (Spain)
Project(s) in which it was implemented	Several projects between 2016 and 2023
Description of the practice	<p>1) Preparation meetings where we discuss the program of the exchange in detail and all the steps of the travel (especially if travelling with a plane, we go through all the details from how we will get to the airport, check-in, security, boarding...). If possible we show photos of the accommodation.</p> <p>2) Especially working with young people with autism/Aspergers we provide them with a very detailed schedule and stick to it. If there are any changes, we inform the participants as soon as possible and explain why there are changes and what will be the adjusted plan.</p>

GOOD PRACTICE 5: ALWAYS ASK PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THEIR NEEDS AND DON'T GIVE THEM FOR GRANTED

Aim of the practice	Helping highly vulnerable young people to overcome the fear of a youth exchange experience
Target group(s) with whom it was used	Diverse groups of young people, especially highly vulnerable young people
Proposing organisation	Las Niñas del Tul (Spain)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Parcours le Monde (France), Asociación Yetooponese (Spain)
Project(s) in which it was implemented	YE Roots & Revel, Climate theatre camps
Description of the practice	<p>An example of this: last summer, in a youth exchange with minors (14-17 years old) we had two transgender boys. The bedrooms were shared and we asked them if they preferred to share rooms with boys or girls. Each of them chose a different option, as they were at different points in their transition and felt more comfortable in different contexts.</p> <p>People who play the role of leaders must have sufficient knowledge about their group, not so much on a personal level (which is also highly recommended) but on a social level. They should know what needs their group has, how to deal with them, what extra support they may need.</p>

GOOD PRACTICE 6: RESIDENTIAL PRE-DEPARTURE MEETINGS

Aim of the practice	<p>Spending a few days with the participants helps strengthening the trust level, as to better investigate and understand their needs. For many of them, it is also a “safer” way of experiencing living the dimension of a youth exchange.</p>
Target group(s) with whom it was used	<p>Diverse groups of young people facing fewer opportunities and/or highly vulnerable young people, from the local network Mi-Way, who got involved in youth exchanges during summer 2023.</p>
Proposing organisation	<p>Associazione Joint (Italy)</p>
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	<p>Conexão Jovem (Portugal), Parcours le Monde (France)</p>
Project(s) in which it was implemented	<p>Several Youth Exchanges implemented in summer 2023</p>
Description of the practice	<p>Since 2023, we implement a 3 days in-person preparation meeting for youngsters (minors) who will be participating in youth exchanges during the summer/ next few months as an introduction to: non formal education, multicultural communication and living in a multicultural community, expressing their needs and adapting to the needs of others, going deeper into the fears and expectations of their upcoming experiences.</p>

PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD PRACTICE 7: CHOOSE THE RIGHT GROUP LEADER

Aim of the practice	Group leader is an essential figure, when it comes to safety and support to the participants during a youth exchange.
Target group(s) with whom it was used	Every group sent to youth exchange, with a special attention to minors and highly vulnerable young people
Proposing organisations	Associação Juventude de Vila Fonche (Portugal)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Europe4Youth (Poland), Achaia Adult Education (Greece), Asociacion Yetooponese (Spain), Las Niñas del Tul (Spain)
Description of the practice	<p>For our part, the most important thing when we participate in a youth exchange for minors is choosing the right group leader. We never choose or send a group leader that we don't know or have never worked with. We tend to involve at least an organization's youth worker or involve youngsters (+18) who have been taking the lead of a group in a youth exchange for minors in Portugal having all the time the support of the organization.</p> <p>During the activities, we train the group leader to support all the participants in each moment needed like with the translations, explaining if they don't understand the activity, training them for making the reflection about the day through non-formal education tools and create a safe environment for each participant.</p>

GOOD PRACTICE 8: LISTEN TO THE PARTICIPANTS AND BE FLEXIBLE WITH THE PROGRAMME

Aim of the practice	Making participants feel more involved in the process and making the whole programme accessible to everyone.
Target group(s) with whom it was used	It is used in every youth exchange programme, with a special attention to groups facing barriers and to minors.
Proposing organisation	Associazione Joint (Italy)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Conexão Jovem (Portugal), Asociación Yetooponese (Spain), Las Niñas del Tul (Spain), Academy of Experience (Hungary).
Description of the practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily reflection in national groups with provided materials (customized the needs of the group), in order to get feedback from participants about how much they felt involved in the process; - Daily leaders' meetings, to discuss the feedback from the participants and evaluate changes to the programme; - Adapting the timetable to the needs of the group, taking into account the feedback received everyday during the leaders' meetings; - Methodologies adapted to non-English speakers (practical, visual, creative) - both activities & reflection.

PHASE 4: FOLLOW UP

GOOD PRACTICE 9: MEET THE PARTICIPANTS AFTER THE YOUTH EXCHANGE AND ENGAGE THEM

Aim of the practice	<p>Providing participants with a space to reflect about the Youth Exchange experience, the learning outcomes and how to apply them in real life. Offering them with opportunities to keep on being engaged.</p>
Target group(s) with whom it was used	<p>It is normally used with every target group, but with a particular attention to minors, young people facing fewer opportunities and highly vulnerable young people.</p>
Proposing organisations	<p>Associazione Joint (Italy)</p>
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	<p>RED CROSS – Sanguedo (Portugal), Mladinski EPI center Piran (Slovenia), Associação Juventude de Vila Fonche (Portugal), Asociación Yetooponese (Spain), Parcours Le Monde (France)</p>
Description of the practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least an online follow up meeting, in which we evaluate the youth exchange and their degree of involvement, reflect on the learning outcomes, plan follow up activities and support them with travel documents. • once a year, we organize a follow-up in-person meeting of 2-3 days with the youngsters involved in the youth exchanges to share their experiences, help them with dissemination activities, discuss future steps and opportunities to get involved in Joint activities. • 2 annual meetings of the members of Joint, weekends in which the most active members of the association and youngsters that participated in opportunities provided by Joint are invited to come, in order to exchange good practices and to define future plans of the organisation. This activity is part of a larger empowerment strategy to foster the active participation of the members of Joint in the decision making process of the association. The weekends are a moment for the members to meet each other, the staff and the board of Joint, creating a stronger identity and commitment to the association's vision and mission. • we invite participants to get involved in other youth exchanges, or to become volunteers in national activities.

GOOD PRACTICE 10: PROMOTE THE PROJECT RESULTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Aim of the practice	Offering participants a space where they can share about their experience in a youth exchange, confronting with other young people
Proposing organisation	INPRO (Poland)
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	Life Zone (Estonia), Las Niñas del Tul (Spain)
Project(s) in which it was implemented	Most of the Youth Exchanges implemented by the organisation, from 2016 on.
Description of the practice	<p>A good case example of how to promote youth opportunities and disseminate the results of an ongoing project is through a community meeting. INPRO has been hosting its weekly local event called Open Cafe since 2016. It is a two-hour meeting that takes place every Wednesday at 6 PM in our city. The format is based on non-formal methods hosted in the English language by our ESC volunteers. Participation is free of charge, and there is no need for a reservation. Through this event, we create a community around our organization, meet new locals and internationals, promote our opportunities, and encourage people who have just come back from an exchange or a training course to share their experiences and inspire others. It is also an opportunity for groups that we host within our ongoing programs to participate in local events and meet locals. Every week, at least 30 people participate, but it often exceeds 50 or even 70 participants!</p> <p>The aim of Open Café is also to promote an open and integrated society and enable young people from Rzeszów, both those born in the city and those who have moved here from other countries, to meet and get to know each other.</p>

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

GOOD PRACTICE 11: ACTIVELY INVOLVE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

Aim of the practice	Actively involving local stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to meet the participants of youth exchanges, fosters their willingness to be engaged in this field.
Proposing organisations	INPRO (Poland)
Project(s) in which it was implemented:	Focused on diversity
Description of the practice	<p>INPRO's approach to organizing international projects exemplifies the effective engagement of local stakeholders. Headquartered in Rzeszów, where it hosts regular local events and maintains strong local connections, INPRO has cultivated a deep understanding of the city and its resources. This enables INPRO to design exchange programs that utilize a variety of locations throughout the city, adding significant value to the overall experience. Each day, participants have the opportunity to engage in activities at different youth-friendly venues, such as the Urban Lab, the Podkarpackie Center of Innovation, the Photo Gallery, and cultural centers, all of which actively support INPRO's initiatives. Every program also incorporates participation in local events, providing participants with a unique opportunity to interact with Rzeszów's residents and gain insights into the city's culture and lifestyle. This immersive approach fosters the development of competencies, social skills, and a deeper understanding of Polish culture. A prime example of INPRO's commitment to local engagement is its recent youth exchange "Focused on Diversity" held in September 2023, which focused on photography as a tool for connecting people.</p>

GOOD PRACTICE 12: INVOLVE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Aim of the practice	<p>Organisations working in the Erasmus+ field and not working with young people on a daily basis, often meet difficulty to reach groups of highly vulnerable young people. Local organisations working directly with them, can offer an extraordinary support.</p>
Proposing organisation	<p>Associazione Joint (Italy)</p>
Organisations of the network implementing similar practices	<p>Conexão Jovem (Portugal)</p>
Description of the practice	<p>1- Fuori Traccia - a local project, a step towards creating a network (MiWay) of shelters, youth centers, social cooperatives (target group 14-19 years-old) and meeting places popular for teenagers in the city of Milan, in order to inform them about voluntary work and civic participation activities, based on non formal education on the topics of civic participation, environmental sustainability and international mobility; the aim of this initiative is to prevent and combat the social isolation of adolescents in Milan, with particular reference to HVYP; in addition to it, we coordinate ESC volunteers who work with the youth centers.</p> <p>2- MiWay - a network of social cooperatives and already existing networks in province of Milan who support the inclusion of HVYP at the local level, Joint created in 2021 the informal network Mi-Way, that puts together over 10 NGOs working with vulnerable and highly vulnerable young people in Milan metropolitan area. Mi-Way is the structure used to recruit and properly support their participation in mobility opportunities, mostly Youth Exchanges and short term ESC Teams. Inside the network, we organise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and sharing activities to build the capacity of the local NGOs in the support of their beneficiaries involved in mobility activities • Presentations of the mobility opportunities through presentations and orientation interviews; • Residential training courses of 3 days for the preparation and the evaluation of the mobility activities, both for participants and group leaders. • The participants of Mi_Way are involved across the years, getting more responsibilities and autonomy (from participant to group leader, to facilitator etc.), through the follow-up weekends and the project management local training courses, in a process of empowerment and participation.

GOOD PRACTICE 13: ESTABLISH LONG TERM COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Aim of the practice	<p>Limiting the number of organizations to cooperate with helps defining and consolidating good practices in the management of youth exchanges and also increases the level of mutual trust.</p>
Proposing organisation	<p>Zavod Nefiks (Slovenia)</p>
Description of the practice	<p>From 2015 to today we have been involved in a partnership with organisations from France and Germany. Together we organized 7 youth exchanges and are planning our 9th project for summer 2024.</p> <p>The projects are financed by OFAJ/DFJW, a similar program to Erasmus + but on the level of French-German coloboration. Our partnership is based on building a strong personal relationship between the youth workers involved.</p> <p>The first project was planned and implemented by the French organisation, but all the following projects were planned by all 3-4 partners together, from choosing the topic, to planning the activities and sharing all the responsabilites. Before each exchange we have a preparation meeting (discuss all the details, create the schedule, divide tasks ...) and after each exchange we do an evaluation meeting and prepare proposals for next year (topic, dates, accomodation, activities).</p> <p>We know each others strenghts and weaknesses well, so we can use that knowledge to our advantage.</p> <p>We also invite youth workers that are inexperienced with YE to our team so they can learn and later prepare their own projects. We don't talk about sending and hosting organisations. All organisations are equal partners and contribute to the program. Each year one of the partners just takes a bit bigger role with logistics (providing accommodation and food).</p>

CONTACTS OF THE ORGANISATIONS INCLUDED IN THE COLLECTION

NAME OF THE ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	EMAIL ADDRESS
Associazione Joint	Italy	exchanges@associazionejoint.org
Life Zone	Estonia	info@lifezonegroup.com
Parcours le Monde	France	timothee.violleau@parcourslemonde.org
Achaia Adult Education	Greece	sandyvamvaka@gmail.com
Academy of Experience	Hungary	andris.csapi@elmenyakademia.hu
Europe4Youth	Poland	info@europe4youth.eu
INPRO	Poland	office@goinpro.org
Associação Juventude de Vila Fonche	Portugal	juventudearcos@sapo.pt
Conexão Jovem	Portugal	conexaojovem.geral@gmail.com
RED CROSS – Sanguedo	Portugal	dsanguedo.assessoria@cruzvermelha.org.pt
Zavod Nefiks	Slovenia	international@nefiks.si
Las Niñas del Tul	Spain	tul@lasdeltul.net
Ye Too Ponese Association	Spain	info@yetooponese.net
Development Youth Association	Türkiye	sivasgelisim@hotmail.com

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