

4ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

AN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE PROJECT



Erasmus+

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INTRODUCTION

This international Youth Exchange was organized as Learning Mobility Project in the frame of Erasmus+ Program by Youth Initiative Cana - Slovakia a civic association from Slovakia in cooperation with partners from Italy and Portugal. This youth exchange is made in a frame of a project

"FOUR ELEMENTS OF CULTURE"



Organizer

YIC SLOVAKIA

www.yic.sk

The idea of the Youth Exchange "*4 Elements of Culture*" arose when young people from Čane and the city of Košice took part in an international youth exchange that took place in Portugal in May 2022 and during informal conversations between young participants from four countries and later with partners (represented by subjects) conducted conversations about the current situation in their countries, about the problems they experience daily in their communities.

The main goal of the project is to strengthen awareness of the importance of peaceful cooperation, cultural diversity, tolerance and solidarity among young people from three European countries.

Goals of the project for 24 young people from three countries Slovakia, Italy and Portugal:

- Increase intercultural competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes/values) - Understand and enable participants to promote and discover their own and other cultures
- To provide young people with new ways of learning about cultures and ways of life;
- Support and teach them different methods of self reflection;
- To promote solidarity and tolerance between groups of young people for exploitation experiential pedagogy as part of non-formal education;
- Support contact with different cultures and ethnic groups during the exchanges in Slovakia;
- To promote tolerance and greater social cohesion of young people through joint activities;
- Inclusion of 12 young people (50% of participants) with a lack of opportunities;
- Breaking existing prejudices against other cultures and religions (which are often a trigger of intolerance and violence);

PARTNERS

YIC – YOUTH INITIATIVE CANA SLOVAKIA
WWW.YIC.SK

CRESCER SEM RISCO PORTUGAL
WWW.CRESCERSEMRISCO.COM

MAEK APS ITALY
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MAEK



PROJECT TEAM

Martin Gbúr - trainer / facilitator from Slovakia

Martin Karen - trainer / facilitator from Slovakia



Hereby we would like to thank all our partners and participants who were involved in this project.

We wish you to find interesting and inspiring information in this report!



Getting to know each other

Objectives

- To make the participants comfortable around each other
- To learn and remember the participants names
- To get to know each of the participants better
- Speed dating activity

Activities

The name game involved the group standing in a circle and task was saying your own name and then doing some gesture, after that whole group had to repeat your name and your gesture. Starting from facilitator turns go in clockwise direction, so group repeats each person's name and gesture.

Name game with paper balls. Participants stand in a circle and throw a paper ball to each other in order, saying their names. Gradually, more balls are included in the game.

Getting to know activity under name "Speed dating" participants sit opposite each other in pairs and talk for a few minutes. The topics of the interviews are determined by the facilitator. The topics change after 5 minutes and are focused on areas so that people can learn as much as possible about themselves



Learning goals and agreement

Objectives

- **Introducing Non-formal learning**
- **Establishing learning needs**
- **Sharing expectations**

Activities:

Whole team was divided in smaller groups, in those mini groups they could share answers on following questions: what are my expectations about the project? What are my fears? What are my learning needs?

After working in little groups, participants were able to share their thoughts in big circle, answers on aforementioned questions gave final form to program and working specific.

Last part was reflection of the whole day, participants were reflecting on the following questions: what did you like today? What have you learnt today? What would you modify/add/change? Participants were sharing their answers in big circle.

Outcomes:

- **Formation of the working specific**
- **Establishing learning goals**

Team building

Objectives:

- To make the group of participants one team
- To rise team spirit
- To make group work together
- To get them used to each other

Activities

City game is popular activity, the aim was to try to improve their ability of working as a group. Participants were given proper instruction with different missions in it, the main task was to complete all of the missions together. Mission consisted from: create a team name, make picture with 5 locals, find out the name of the mayor of town Košice and others...

Outcomes

Activity helped team members to get to know each other better and to get used to each other as well. Making pictures, found out interesting places in old town of Košice, meet locals and create a positive working atmosphere. Debriefing of Mission Impossible led participants to acknowledge





Culture - What is it?

Discovering term Culture in formal and non-formal education in our countries and comparing with present situation – Expectations vs. Reality.

Together we discussed the meaning of the term Tolerance and its opposite Discrimination and how we are affected by other people's behaviors in our societies. We continued the discussion in this topic with NGO organisations in Košice.





Meeting in SaplinQ - PRIZMA NGO

We had also a meeting in Civic association SaplinQ in Košice and we had a nice discussion with director of the organisation Mr. Róbert Furiel who informed us about the organisation, activities, situation of LGBTIQ community in Slovakia and Košice and we discussed topics related to our project such as Solidarity, Tolerance and Respect toward this community in Slovak society.



Meeting in Cinema Usmev in Košice

We had also a interesting meeting with managers in Cinema Usmev in Košice - old town. Cinema Usmev (smile) plays a important role in local community. It is not only cinema but also a community meeting that is open for every sub-culture and variety of audience. In cinema they showed us also the installed technology that provides help for people with hearing and visual obstacles and we discussed also how they understand solidarity and respect toward different cultures and groups.





Museum of Victims of the Communism in ČSSR

We also visited a very unique place in Košice and also in Slovakia. We visited the only one Museum of Victims of the Communism regime in Czechoslovakia. It is the first multimedia museum that exists in Slovakia. The museum opens up the topic of victims who were persecuted for various political reasons during the 40 years of communism. It covers two periods of communism - the years 1945 to 1968 - the so-called harsh persecutions and the period from 1969 to 1989 - the so-called a period of normalization when citizens were persecuted with sophistic methods that kept people in constant fear.



OBETE KOMUNIZMU NA SLOVENSKU	
Odsúdení za politické trestné činy	94 888
Pomocné technické prípravy	8 04
Táborníci a najpráce	40 188
Odvlačený do gulagov	6 170
Internovani a rehabilitaci	2 888
Deportovani grckokatolíck: kňazi	470
Útëhy cez hranice	1 188
Chete kolektivizacie	6 188
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Zatrhnutí a väznení	188
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Trestani robníci	188
Počin akčných obet komunizmu	288 188

Respect - Values

Discovering terms such as Respect and Values through different activities.

Together we searched what Respect means and what manifestations are in our daily lives. We also had a workshop about Values and Common European values and connected these topics with Solidarity and the European Solidarity Corps program. Participants have learned how they can be actively involved in their communities and what options the Erasmus+ and ESC programs provide.





Taxi - Discovering the diversity of cultures in Central Europe

Finding historical connection between our nations was at first a big question mark for participants when the idea was introduced by trainers. But then we went for a trip to a Tokaj region to a special place called Borša Rakoczi castle with a task to listen and ask so we could find out if there are any connections..

And yes they where..

Tokaj region was inhabited by Italian settlers in 15. Century and they came from Bari region - that is way a village is called Vel'ká Bara.

And Madeira island was a popular place of the Empress Elisabeth von Habsburg or better known Sissi and also in Madeira died the last Kaiser of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the Charles IV. And this ware only few examples of our findings..



The Hofstede Cultural Dimensions theory

is based on cultural preferences research conducted by Gert Jan Hofstede and his research teams. Hofstede based his research on national cultural preferences rather than individual cultural preferences.

Together we re-discovered this theory and used Hofstede scheme on comparison of our nations. This scheme included six key aspects of national culture scales: the power distance index (PDI), individualism vs. collectivism (IDV), motivation towards achievement and success (MAS, formerly masculinity versus femininity), uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), long term orientation versus short term normative orientation (LTO), and indulgence versus restraint (IVR). We also have discussed the Tolerance vs. Discrimination opposites and their manifestations in our countries.



Youthpass

This was our second activity connected to Youthpass. The first was held in a beginning of the training and for most of the participants was Youthpass a well-known tool.

Trainers prepared 8 areas with description of 8 key competences areas according to Youthpass. Participants evaluated individually and then in a big group their learning outcomes.



Evaluation and Reflection

The session began with self-reflection on the following questions:

What were my expectations..

What am I taking me from this project..

To the group I would like to say that..

I am leaving behind..

I am looking forward to..

After self-reflection, they shared their thoughts in micro groups, which was followed by a discussion in whole circle. Participants in the general circle should share the most important thing that they got from this project. Finally, the whole project was summarised.



Evaluation process

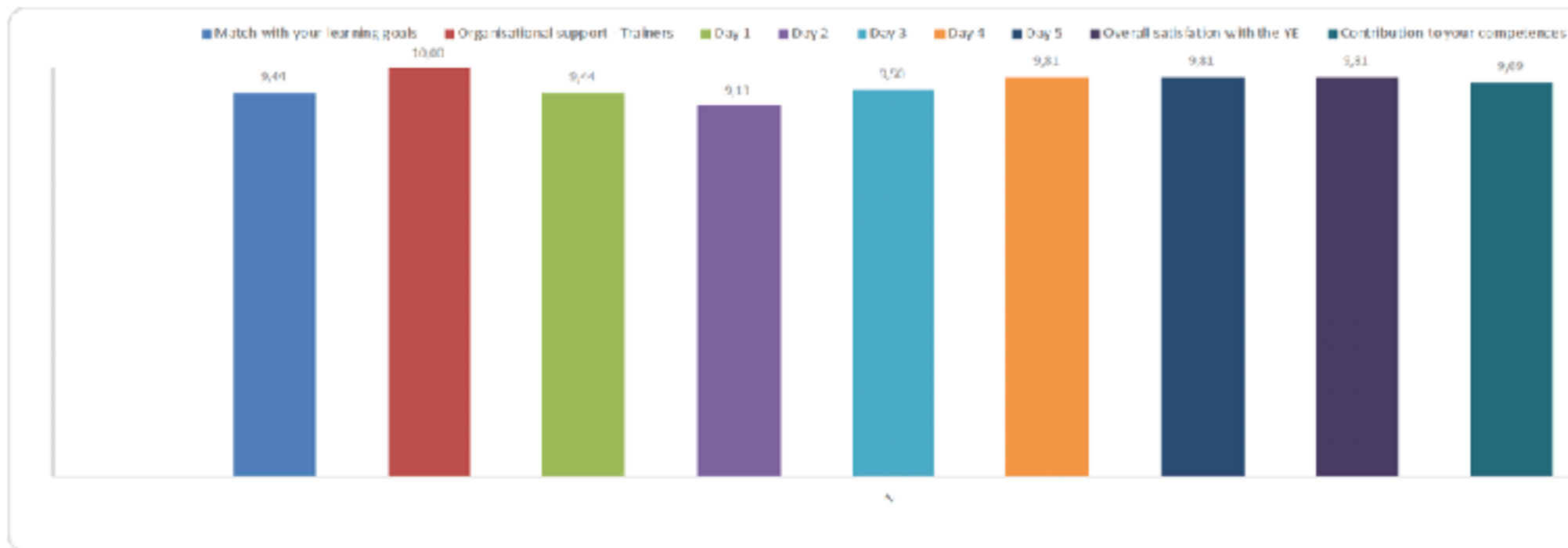
The evaluation of the youth exchange took place on several levels. Before the YE, the participants filled out a questionnaire in which we asked them about the level of knowledge of the topics. At the beginning of the YE, we checked their level of knowledge and also addressed their expectations. Every day, we reflected on the day and the education achieved, and at the end of the youth exchange, in addition to the verbal personal evaluation, we also evaluated the written evaluation or filled out our online questionnaire. They also devoted themselves to creating their Youthpass at the end of the training.



EVALUATION

YE-4 Elements of Culture
2. - 10.9.2023, Kešice, Slovakia

Here we present the results from the online questionnaire.



How much has this YE contributed to/improved your competencies?	9,69
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Overall satisfaction with the Youth Exchange	9,82
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THEORIES FOR FUTURE READING



Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory

is a framework for cross-cultural psychology, developed by Geert Hofstede. It shows the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, using a structure derived from factor analysis.

This initial analysis identified systematic differences in national cultures on four primary dimensions: power distance (PDI), individualism (IDV), uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and masculinity (MAS), which are described below. As Hofstede explains on his academic website,^[4] these dimensions regard "four anthropological problem areas that different national societies handle differently: ways of coping with inequality, ways of coping with uncertainty, the relationship of the individual with her or his primary group, and the emotional implications of having been born as a girl or as a boy". Geert Hofstede created the cultural dimensions theory in 1980. In 1984 he published *Culture's Consequences*, a book which combines the statistical analysis from the survey research with his personal experiences.

Geert Hofstede is perhaps the best known sociologist of culture and anthropologist in the context of applications for understanding international business. Many articles and research papers refer to his publications, with over 26,000 citations to his 2001 book *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nation* (which is an updated version of his first publication). The five dimensions model is widely used in many domains of human social life, and particularly in the field of business. Practical applications were developed almost immediately.

WEB: <https://geerthofstede.com/landing-page/>

VIDEO: <https://geerthofstede.com/training-consulting/online-lectures/>

Euro-rail “à la carte”

None of us is a racist but... This activity is about looking at prejudice using an everyday situation: travelling together on a train.

Issues addressed

- Prejudice and limits of tolerance.
- Images and stereotyping about different minorities.

Aims

- To challenge participant's stereotypes and prejudice about other people and minorities, and about the images and associations the text raises.
 - To reflect on the perceptions different participants have of minorities.
 - To raise self-awareness about the limits of tolerance.
 - To confront the different values and stereotypes of the participants.
- Time: 90 minutes - 2 hours.
Group size: Minimum 5, maximum 40.

Preparation

- Copies of activity sheet, one per participant.
- A pencil for each participant.

Instruction

1. Give a copy of the activity sheet to each person.
2. Briefly describe the scenario and tell them to read the description of the people travelling on the train.
3. Now ask each person individually to choose the three people they would most like to travel with and the three they would least like to travel with.
4. Once everybody has made their individual choices, ask them to form into groups of four to five and to:
 - Share their individual choices and the reasons for them.
 - Compare their choices and reasons and check where there are similarities.
 - Come up with a common list (the three pluses and the three minuses) by consensus.
5. In plenary, ask each group to present their conclusions including the reasons for their common choices. They should also say in which “cases” there was most disagreement within the group.

Euro-rail “à la carte”

Debriefing and evaluation

The debriefing and discussion will be based on the group's reports. Comparing the different results is a good way to introduce the discussion.

You may continue by asking questions such as:

- How realistic are the situations presented?
- Has anyone in the group experienced a similar situation in real life?
- What were the major factors that determined your individual decisions?
- If the groups did not manage to reach common conclusions, why was this?
- What was most difficult?
- What factors prevented you coming to a consensus?
- Which stereotypes does the list of passengers evoke?
- Are the stereotypes in the descriptions given or in our minds and imagination?
- Where do we get these images from?
- How would it feel to be in a situation in which nobody would want to share a train compartment with you?

Tips for the facilitator

Be aware that the list of passengers enclosed is very long and makes it difficult for the groups to come up with a common list, consequently you may require more time for both the individual and the group part. If you wish, you may reduce the list to a maximum of

10-14 passengers and adapt it to the local or national situation of the group you work with. It is very important that some of the passengers' descriptions correspond to minorities which are familiar to the group including “invisible” minorities such as homosexuals, people with disabilities, someone who is HIV positive etc.

In many cases the groups will not manage to come up with a common list. Do not emphasise this aspect of the activity especially as it may lead to a false consensus. It is equally interesting to check why it is difficult to reach a consensus on a matter like this. It is important for everyone to respect each other's opinions and not attack people for their personal views. If some choices seem doubtful it is more relevant to discuss the reasons which lead to a particular choice rather than to question personal decisions. In fact both the participants and you, the facilitator, will be in difficult positions: it's very easy to turn this activity into a condemnation session! For this reason beware not to let the discussion develop into “who's got the least prejudice?” but rather to work on the fact that we all have prejudice.

It is also important to discuss and explore the fact that the description of the passengers is very brief, we know little about the personality or background of people. But isn't that the way we normally react to information in newspapers and television, and in conversations or when meeting people for the first time?

Source:

Education Pack “all different - all equal”, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe, 2nd edition

Take a step forward

The group may like to take more time to consider the stereotypical images they have of the people represented in “Take a step forward”.

You could use the activity “Euro-rail ‘a la carte’” in the All Different – All Equal Education Pack to ask which people they would most like to share a railway carriage with, and which people they would least like to share with.

Ideas for action

Take up the ideas from the follow-up. Follow through how you and young people can help groups and organisations working with cultural or social minorities, and turn the ideas into practice.

You are an unemployed single mother.	You are the president of a party-political youth organisation (whose “mother” party is now in power).
You are the daughter of the local bank manager. You study economics at university.	You are the son of a Chinese immigrant who runs a successful fast food business.
You are an Arab Muslim girl living with your parents who are devoutly religious people.	You are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living.
You are a soldier in army, doing compulsory military service.	You are the owner of a successful import-export company.
You are a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair.	You are a retired worker from a factory that makes shoes.
You are a 17-year-old Roma (Gypsy) girl who never finished primary school.	You are the girlfriend of a young artist who is addicted to heroin.
You are an HIV positive, middle-aged prostitute.	You are a 22-year-old lesbian.
You are an unemployed university graduate waiting for the first opportunity to work.	You are a fashion model of African origin.
You are a 24-year-old refugee from Afghanistan.	You are a homeless young man, 27 years old.
You are an illegal immigrant from Mali.	You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in a remote village in the mountains.

Take a step forward

Situations and events

Read the following situations out aloud. Allow time after reading out each situation for participants to step for-ward and also to look to see how far they have moved relative to each other.

Source:

Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people - Council of Europe

- You have never encountered any serious financial difficulty.
- You have decent housing with a telephone and television.
- You feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live.
- You feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters and your views are listened to.
- Other people consult you about different issues.
- You are not afraid of being stopped by the police.
- You know where to turn for advice and help if you need it.
- You have never felt discriminated against because of your origin.
- You have adequate social and medical protection for your needs.
- You can go away on holiday once a year.
- You can invite friends for dinner at home.
- You have an interesting life and you are positive about your future.
- You feel you can study and follow the profession of your choice.
- You are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets, or in the media.
- You can vote in national and local elections.
- You can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends.
- You can participate in an international seminar abroad.
- You can go to the cinema or the theatre at least once a week.
- You are not afraid for the future of your children.
- You can buy new clothes at least once every three months.
- You can fall in love with the person of your choice.
- You feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live.
- You can use and benefit from the Internet.
- You are not afraid of the consequences of climate change.
- You are free to use any site on the Internet without fear of censorship.

Recommended resources

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1. Education Pack "All Different - All Equal", Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe, 2nd edition <https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac>
2. Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people - Council of Europe <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>
3. The training kits (T-kits) are methodological publications for trainers and facilitators with young people, written by teams of field experts. They are easy-to-use thematic educational material designed for training and facilitating learning with groups of young people.
<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/t-kits>
4. Salto-Youth Toolbox - 3x different activities <https://www.salto-youth.net>
5. Salto-Youth Toolbox - Educational program: Inclusion, Non-Discrimination, Democratic participation [Manual.pdf](#)

Authors and Trainers



Martin Gbúr is a trainer, facilitator, coach, and active member of the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education, Sciences, Research and Sport in Slovak republic. Certified lector in the non-formal education field, a former teacher in the Dual education system in Slovakia. Cooperates with NIVAM - National Institute of Education and Youth in Slovak republic as a member of a pool of trainers for programs Erasmus+ and European solidarity corps.

As a trainer, he is active at the national and international levels. Supports youth initiatives and as a coach in the European Solidarity Corps program. He has also experience with European voluntary service, he spent 12 months in Poland in the Edith Stein organization.

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Martin Karen is a trainer, facilitator and a inspirational person.

He grew up in an institution for the physically disabled children. Martin has no fingers and palm, but he has enthusiasm to give away! He started tying shoelaces at the age of 13, he can even crack eggs. But he doesn't know one thing. Separate the whites from the yolks. And despite that, today he has his own YouTube channel about cooking. He likes to move around in the kitchen and maybe inspire someone with his videos.

As a trainer and facilitator, he is active at the national and international levels. Supports youth initiatives in Brno (Czechia) and in Košice (his home town). He has also experience with European voluntary service, he spent 10 months in Berlin in Germany. Martin has a lot of experiences with international youth exchanges and projects, public speaking and Living Library method.

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NÁRODNÝ INŠTITÚT VZDELÁVANIA A MLÁDEŽE