

YOUTH EXCHANGES

*A tips&tricks manual from idea until execution by
Cherry International Foundation*



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INTRODUCTION

Organising an Erasmus+ Youth Exchange requires significant effort, energy, time, responsibilities, and commitment. It is not only about making it happen but also about implementing it with high quality to have a meaningful impact on local communities and the participants involved. Our experience has shown that these short, yet intense projects, often lead to life-changing experiences that leave a lasting impact. They can ignite curiosity, foster future learning, and facilitate personal development. Unfortunately, on the side of trainers and team members, we also see that Youth Exchanges are often underestimated and are not considered as valuable practices as training courses (to name an example), while in Youth Exchanges you can prepare yourself as a facilitator for anything, and if done with the right attention to it, it will become a beautiful means for youth work.

Whether you are new to the world of Erasmus+, have an idea for a Youth Exchange, or you are preparing to implement your first project, this booklet is designed for you.

Have you wondered how to transform your inspiration into an impactful Youth Exchange? How to choose the right venue? Why logistics play a crucial role and how to ensure smooth operations? How to build an effective team? In this booklet, we aim to provide you with valuable insights, tips, and tools covering the key aspects of a youth exchange project: **Thematics, Logistics, your Team & Colleagues, and the program of your Exchange.**

This booklet goes beyond offering tips and tricks. In each section, we encourage you to reflect on questions and engage in exercises that will guide you in developing your project idea and your methods of implementing it. So, whenever you encounter a question or exercise, pause, take a moment, and reflect upon your answers.



TIPS

Practical tips and recommendations to support you in organizing your youth exchange effectively.



REFLECTION QUESTION

Stop for a while, take your time, take your notebook, read the questions and think your answers. You can do it by yourself or in your team.



ACTIVITY

Engage in reflection activities and exercises.



TOOLS

Useful resources and tools that can assist you in the planning and execution of your project.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This resource is here to accompany you on your path, helping you shape your Youth Exchange project and meet your goals. It's up to you how you will use this booklet and how it will answer your curiosity and specific needs. Whether you choose to follow the chapters step by step, allowing your project idea to evolve, or simply read and explore the content by going through the chapters in a random order (or no order at all!). But it could also be of help when a specific question arises, or in case you need guidance during your project implementation.

Enjoy!

PART 1



THEMATICS

THEMATICS

FINDING A SUCCESSFUL IDEA

Every project starts with an inspiration.

In this chapter our intention is not to provide a definitive guide to finding a successful project idea or dictate which ideas can become successful.

Instead, we will provide tools and insights that will help you develop your own project idea from its initial concept, to a well-defined and impactful theme. We will guide you through a series of key questions and by combining a problem solving approach, clarity, innovation and focus on impact, you'll be able to create the foundation for your dream youth exchange.

SOLVING A PROBLEM

Start with the problem, not the solution. If your project idea does not address a problem, it will have a lower chance of approval due to a reduced impact on the target groups involved.

Starting the process of brainstorming your project idea with a clear definition of the problem that you want to address is like turning on a guiding light for all other project elements. This approach will help you identify and understand your target group, set your objectives, define expected results and plan for a significant impact.

KEEP READING TO SEE WHY WE MENTION THE WORD "IMPACT" SO OFTEN.

THEMATICS

By focusing on the problem at hand, you can dig into the different approaches used to tackle similar issues, learn from past experiences, and uncover existing tools to help you create a more effective project.

Moreover, by identifying and understanding the problem you want to tackle, you will be able to provide statistics and facts that will make it more reliable.

IS IT RELEVANT?

If you want to enhance your chances of project approval, it's crucial to ensure that the problem you're addressing aligns with the priorities of the EU Commission for the program you're applying for. After all, these programs are designed to create a real impact and you should want to create a real impact with your work as well, right?

To make sure you're on the right track, you can refer to the [program guide](#) of the EU Commission. This will give you valuable insights into the priorities that need to be addressed. Finding a project idea fitting with the principles and priorities of European Programmes is one of the most difficult parts of the entire process of submitting a project proposal. Start with an analysis of the problems and needs within your sector, work, environment and, before you get too far into your planning, take the time to research and ensure that your project aligns with the [priorities of the EU Commission](#).



THEMATICS



IS IT RELEVANT?

Now you have a problem to be solved and it is in line with the EU priorities of the programme you want to apply. The next step is to be sure that this problem is common to all countries you want to involve in the project and, hopefully, to the whole of Europe.

There are different tools you can use to check if the problem you will focus on is wide-spread in Europe, including statistics, reports and general trends.

Your partner organisations can significantly contribute in assessing the widespread nature of a problem and its relevance across Europe. Their local expertise, networks and firsthand knowledge of the specific challenges faced in their communities contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the issue. They can provide valuable statistical data, reports, and information from their countries, showcasing that the problem extends beyond a single region. Their involvement ensures that the proposed project addresses a common concern across Europe and establishes a foundation for collaborative and impactful action.

CLEAR AND SPECIFIC THEME

Making your project idea clear and specific helps you communicating your vision to others effectively and ensures that everyone involved in the project, including yourself, understands what you want to achieve. It also helps you to stay focused and organised throughout the project development process, making it easier to plan and execute your ideas.

One way to make your project idea clear and specific is to brainstorm different aspects of the project. Brainstorming involves generating a large number of ideas, without judging or evaluating them yet, just listing up possibilities. This can help you explore different possibilities and angles, and can help you to see the project from different perspectives.



BRAINSTORMING TIPS

- **Use visuals:**

Visual aids such as whiteboards, sticky notes, or mind maps can be effective tools for brainstorming. Write down or visually represent ideas to stimulate thinking and create connections between different concepts.

- **Define clear project parameters:**

Establish specific criteria or guidelines that will help narrow down and refine your project ideas. Consider factors such as available resources, time, target group, and the desired outcomes of your youth exchange.

- **If possible, involve others in the brainstorming process.**

Different perspectives can bring fresh ideas and insights to the table. Invite team members and individuals from different backgrounds to contribute with their thoughts.





BREAKING OLD THINKING PATTERNS

Breaking old thinking patterns can be particularly important when coming up with ideas for youth exchange programs, as it can help to generate innovative and impactful ideas that meet the needs and interests of the participants. When going through the brainstorming process, make sure you:



DEFINE YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Before you start brainstorming ideas, define your goals and objectives for the youth exchange. This will help you stay focused and ensure that your ideas are aligned with your goals.



CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS:

Approach the brainstorming process with an open mind and encourage creative thinking. Take a step back and identify the assumptions you have about youth exchange programs. Challenge yourself to consider alternative perspectives and ideas that may not align with your assumptions.



RESEARCH AND GATHER INFORMATION:

Research different youth exchange programs and gather information on what has worked well and what could be improved. What methods and activities are overused?

MIND MAPING



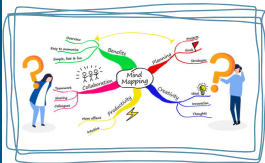
After brainstorming, review and refine your ideas to make your project idea more specific and concrete. This can involve clarifying your project's objectives, outlining the steps required to achieve those objectives, and identifying the resources and constraints that may impact the project's success.

Having a clear and specific project idea will help you to stay focused and motivated, as you have a clear understanding of what you need to achieve and how you plan to achieve it.

Mind mapping was developed as an effective method for generating ideas. In order to create a mind map, you usually start in the middle of the page with the central theme/main idea and from that point you work outward in all directions to create a growing diagram composed of keywords, phrases, concepts, drawings and figures.



MIND MAPING



This is a mind map about – conveniently enough – mind mapping itself. It presents, in a visual way, the core elements and techniques on how to draw mind maps and how it can help you. Yes, this may look a little bit messy initially, but once you break the ingrained habit of linear note taking, you won't look back.

We will guide you through creating a mind map for your project idea. Feel free to visualise it however you want.

THEMATICS THEMATICS



> **CENTRAL IDEA:**

Start with a central idea that represents the core concept of your youth exchange project. Write it in the centre of the mind map.

> **OBJECTIVES:**

Branch out from the central idea and create sub-branches for the main objectives of your youth exchange. These objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

> **THEMES/TOPICS:**

Create branches for different themes or topics that align with the objectives of your youth exchange. These can represent areas of focus, such as intercultural understanding, environmental sustainability, leadership development, or community engagement.

> **ACTIVITIES:**

Extend branches from each theme/topic and list various activities that can be implemented within the youth exchange program. These activities should support the objectives and help achieve the desired outcomes.

> **RESOURCES:**

Include a branch dedicated to resources needed for the youth exchange. This can include financial resources, partnerships, venues, materials, or experts that could contribute to the success of the program.

> **PARTICIPANTS:**

Create a branch focusing on the target participants for the youth exchange. Consider factors such as age range, background, skills, and interests that are relevant to the objectives and themes of the project.

THEMATICS

> **TIMELINE:**

Add a branch for the timeline of the youth exchange, indicating important milestones, deadlines, and phases of the program. This will help in planning and organizing the project effectively.

> **EVALUATION:**

Include a branch dedicated to evaluation and assessment. Consider how you will measure the success of the youth exchange, collect feedback from participants, and assess the impact of the program.

REMEMBER!

This is just a starting point, and you can customize the mind map based on the specific needs and goals of your youth exchange project.

Feel free to add additional branches or sub-branches as necessary to capture all relevant aspects of your idea.




Can you define your project theme and main goal(s) in one sentence?

IMPACT

Great, you found a project idea! What is the impact you want to create with it? How do you make sure it has the greatest possible effect and how will you measure its success?

To this end, this is what we call impact. This term refers to the change which is achieved partly as a result of a project, for the benefit of an individual, an organisation and society as a whole. Also, keep in mind that the National Agency where you applied your project will want to know how the impact was measured as well. The [Impact Tool](#) of Erasmus+ serves as a valuable resource for assessing and evaluating the impact of projects funded by the program.

To understand the impact you want to create with your youth exchange, you should start by identifying your objectives and goals.

- 
- What do you hope to achieve through this program?
 - Is it to promote intercultural understanding and communication, to develop leadership skills, to address social or environmental issues, or to promote personal growth and development?
 - Is it something else? Is it something completely out of the box?

THEMATICS

Once you have a clear idea of your objectives, you can begin to think about how you will measure the impact of your youth exchange. This may involve collecting feedback from participants, tracking changes in attitudes and behaviour, or assessing the long-term outcomes of the program.

It's also important to consider the broader impact of your youth exchange on the community or society as a whole.

- How will the skills and knowledge gained by participants be applied in their communities or future careers?
- Will the program contribute to positive social or environmental change? Again, how can you measure this impact?

Ultimately, understanding the impact you want to create with your youth exchange involves setting clear goals and objectives, defining metrics for measuring success, and considering the broader social and environmental context in which the program will operate.

THEMATICS

INNOVATIVE THEME

How innovative is your theme and why is it different from others?

What makes an idea innovative? A youth exchange program can be considered innovative if it incorporates new and creative ideas that go beyond traditional exchange programs. Innovation is a critical factor in projects, Erasmus+ funded projects are not an exception and can be a real challenge. If other organisations have already executed similar projects in past years, your project proposal may be perceived as less innovative.

The more significant and widespread a problem is, the more challenging it may be to find a unique and innovative solution. It's possible that many organizations, including governments or the European Commission, have already attempted to address this issue. The problem shouldn't only be strongly relevant all over Europe, but also "flexible" enough to be solved in an innovative way. In the case of Erasmus+ the European Commission is sharing a database with all the projects funded and its outcomes, called [Erasmus+ project results](#), which can be a valuable resource for inspiring innovation in your own youth exchange project. By learning from the successes and challenges of other projects, you can develop an innovative project that is tailored to your specific needs and goals.

THEMATICS

Erasmus+ supports that, by encouraging innovation, we can create an unforgettable learning experience that's dynamic, engaging, and effective for all participants. Innovative approaches should not only provide today's and tomorrow's workers with the appropriate skills for rapidly-changing labour markets, but should also arm today's and tomorrow's workforce with creativity and skills to confront the growing complexity of societal challenges that we all face such as climate change, the protection of bio-diversity, clean energy, public health, digitalization and automation, artificial intelligence, robotics and data analysis.

1.

ENHANCING QUALITY:

Innovative ideas can improve the quality of Erasmus+ programs by introducing new approaches, methods, and tools to promote learning and teaching. By incorporating innovative ideas into their programs, educators and trainers can create a more engaging and effective learning experience for participants.

2.

MEETING EVOLVING NEEDS:

Erasmus+ programs must adapt to the evolving needs of society and the job market. Innovation can help programs stay relevant and meet the changing needs of participants, employers, and society.

3.

ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY:

Innovation encourages creativity and stimulates critical thinking. By promoting innovative ideas, Erasmus+ programs can inspire participants to think outside the box, take risks, and come up with new solutions to complex problems.

4.

STRENGTHENING COMPETITIVENESS

Innovation can help Erasmus+ programs stand out from the competition. Programs that incorporate innovative ideas are more likely to attract participants, partners, and funding, which can help them to achieve greater impact and reach.

THEMATICS

Innovation can be achieved not only by creating something completely new but also by looking at existing solutions from a new perspective and making incremental changes that can lead to significant improvements. By reflecting on these questions, you can identify opportunities for innovation and improvement in your project, and develop a more effective and impactful solution. Use these questions to guide your thinking and generate new ideas, in order to create innovative youth exchange programs that are more engaging, inclusive, and impactful for all participants.



REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- Consider the traditional activities and approaches used in youth exchanges. What elements could you replace with alternative options to make the experience more engaging, inclusive, and impactful?
- Think about the different elements of a youth exchange, such as cultural exchange, learning, and social activities. How can you combine these elements in new and creative ways to enhance the experience and achieve your goals?
- Challenge your assumptions about what a youth exchange should look like and consider new possibilities. What new ideas could you generate by turning traditional concepts upside down or approaching things from a completely different perspective?

THEMATICS



REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- Explore existing youth exchange models. How could you adapt them to better meet the needs of your thematic and your target group?
- Identify areas of your youth exchange that could be optimized. What specific changes could you make to enhance the overall value and impact of the experience?
- Think creatively about new and innovative ways to use youth exchanges to achieve your goals. How can you leverage this experience to create broader impact or address social challenges? For example, could you organize a youth exchange focused on environmental sustainability, where participants collaborate on projects related to renewable energy or waste reduction?
- Consider aspects of traditional youth exchanges that may not be necessary or effective for your specific goals. What elements of the experience could you remove or streamline to make it more efficient and effective?

THEMATICS

INNOVATION



Write down 5 stereotypes that you commonly encounter in society related to your project theme. These can be generalisations, prejudices or misconceptions about the topic.

Consider these stereotypes from different perspectives, such as cultural, gender, age, or socioeconomic backgrounds.

How can these stereotypes be challenged, debunked or addressed through your project goals and activities?

RIGHT RESOURCES TO SUCCEED?

**You found the perfect idea and your project got approved!
So what's next? The activities, right? Well...**

PART 2

LOGISTICS

LOGISTICS

**LOGISTICS
ALWAYS COME
FIRST!**

While organising your project, a high-quality program is also important, but to support the participants' learning process fully, you must also consider other elements that can affect the project's overall quality.

Logistics must be given the utmost attention, and out of experience we see that often it is a neglected aspect; if everything runs smoothly, it enhances the project's success. If everything is going smoothly on the logistic side it will affect the magic happening, but at the same time if any small aspect is getting out of control, it might ruin not only the quality but also the entire outcome of the project.

Our aim with taking care of all the logistical aspects of a youth exchange is to offer a safe and easily accessible and adaptable environment for the participants where their learning process can be fully facilitated.

Logistics in the context of a youth exchange are all the practical arrangements needed to ensure the smooth running of the project.



LOGISTICS

When you start working on logistics, be very clear about the distribution of tasks and make a clear plan using the 4W+1H method.



WHO

- Who will be responsible for organising all the logistic operation activities?
- What is the task distribution among the team and between the partner organisations?
- Who are the participants (Target Group)? Is there anyone with special needs?



WHAT

- What is the theme of the activity?
- How can we make sure that the logistic preparations will support the theme of the activity?
- What resources are required?
- What kind of facilities are available and needed?



WHEN

- When is your project taking place?
- Will your target group be able to attend then?
- How much time do you need for the logistics?
- Is the allocated time adequate to prepare everything?



HOW

- How do you allocate the tasks among the project team?
- How do you organise the logistics, which are the starting points?
- What is the method you are going to use for the full organisation?



WHERE

- Where do you want your project to take place?
- Is it easy to reach the location? What kind of preparation do you need to get your participants to the venue?
- How do you get the materials to the site?



Imagine a hypothetical situation where things go wrong on the logistic side of your youth exchange. Take a moment to think about the potential challenges that could arise.

Identify

the specific risks or challenges that could impact the logistics of your exchange. Consider factors such as transportation, accommodation, meals, communication, and unforeseen circumstances like weather conditions or local disruptions (i.e. strikes in public transport). What can go wrong?

Brainstorm

alternative solutions or backup plans. Think creatively and consider different options to take care of the logistics issue. What solutions could you implement if any of your identified risks or challenges occur?

Evaluate

the effectiveness of each alternative solution. Consider factors, such as available resources, time and the potential impact on the overall program. Which of the solutions are most practical and suitable for your project?

Prioritise

the alternative solutions based on their level of importance and potential impact. What are the logistics aspects that need immediate attention?

Communicate

your plan B. How would you effectively communicate changes or adjustments to the participants and colleagues if needed?

Reflect

and learn. Take a moment to reflect on the importance of having a concrete plan in place for the logistics of your youth exchange. Consider the potential benefits of being prepared for unforeseen circumstances.



LOGISTICS

TARGET GROUP

There are so many crucial aspects while organising and implementing your project. But could you imagine a youth exchange without participants?

A target group refers to the specific demographic that your project is designed for, whether it's young people with disabilities, students from a particular field of study, young people with fewer opportunities or individuals with a shared interest or experience. By defining and understanding your target group, you can tailor your program to meet their unique needs, interests, and backgrounds, creating a more meaningful and impactful experience for everyone involved. Here's some things you should consider when determining the profile of your target group:





AGE



Focusing on the age group of the participants will help you determine the project strategy at the very beginning of a project planning. You shall be mindful that there is a difference if you organise an activity for underage participants, or adults, different aspects to keep in mind.

Young people can participate in Youth Exchanges from the age of 13 to 30 years old while group leaders must be 18+. Keep in mind that age balance is also important. By narrowing the age limit, the group would have more things in common and it would be easier to plan the activities and correspond to the learning needs. As you can imagine, it can be challenging to work with a group where you have 13 and 23 year old participants at the same time, since their interests and learning needs can be very different.

You might as well experience this if you are working with underage participants; the bigger the age difference the more difficult it might be to bond with the group. For example, you may notice a big difference in the interests, behaviours and learning needs between a 13 and a 17 year old participant. On the other hand, when working with an older target group, age differences may be less of a concern and can even bring greater diversity and experience to the group.

REMEMBER!

If you are organising a project with underage participants you will need to take care of some extra tasks:

- Get signed parents or other legal representatives permission, if needed (for example for travelling or being alone in another country). Ask your National Agency if there are any other needed documents.
- Be mindful about More strict rules about consuming alcohol, tobacco or any other drugs consumption that are legal in the country where the project is taking place.



What will be the age range of your participants and group leaders, based on your project theme? Why?



LANGUAGE

When selecting participants for your project, consider language proficiency. It's not necessary for participants to be fluent in the language of the exchange, it's important that they have a good level of proficiency to ensure that they can communicate and participate in the activities effectively, a minimum of understanding would be ideal.

However, it's also important to keep in mind that language learning is one of the key objectives of a Youth Exchange. A lot of young people have gained or significantly improved their language skills by participating in Erasmus+ projects.



1. Based on your theme and the activities that you have planned, what is the language proficiency that is required?
2. How can you incorporate young people with lower proficiency of English in your project?

TARGET CROWD




BACKGROUND

Understanding your target group's profile and background will support you in creating an inclusive, engaging, and successful youth exchange project that meets the needs of all participants.

Your target group's background encompasses their unique characteristics, experiences, and circumstances, which define who they are and what they need. This includes demographic information like age, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, and socio-economic status, as well as other factors that shape their interests and needs.

Understanding your target group's background allows you to customise your project to their specific needs and interests, making it engaging, relevant, and impactful. Moreover, it helps you identify any potential challenges or barriers to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all participants.

- 
1. What specific skills and experiences do participants need to have in order to contribute to the success of the program?
 2. What is the input of the participants in your project?
 3. How will the participants contribute to the goals of the program?
 4. What kind of diversity do you want to promote in the participating group?

In line with its commitment to inclusion, Erasmus+ places a strong emphasis on promoting equal opportunities and access for all individuals in its activities. The program seeks to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the opportunity to participate and benefit from Erasmus+ projects. To enable greater inclusion, the program identifies these target groups for their enhanced participation in Erasmus+ activities.

LOGISTICS

ACCOMMODATION AND VENUE

The venue refers to the physical location where the activities of your program take place. This can include indoor and outdoor spaces, such as meeting rooms, a conference centre, a theatre or a sports field. The venue should be chosen based on the program's thematic objectives, activities and logistics and be able to accommodate the number of participants and any necessary equipment for the realisation of the program and its activities.

The accommodation, on the other hand, refers to the place where the participants will be hosted during the program. This can include hotels, hostels, dormitories, camps or other forms of lodging. The accommodation should be chosen based on the budget, safety, convenience, and it should be able to provide the necessary amenities services for the participants besides taking into consideration if it matches with the sphere you want to create with the thematic of your youth exchange (for example, in our Utopia exchange, we need an accommodation that allows us to switch electricity and water appliances off).

Make sure that no matter the type of accommodation you choose, that it is clearly shown to participants so they are aware of where they are staying.

Consider that the venue is the business card of your youth exchange. Establishing an environment conducive to learning is a critical aspect of starting any learning project.

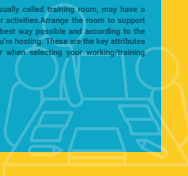
QUICK TIPS



You can ensure that participants walk into a relaxed atmosphere and an environment that is welcoming and ready for their learning and safe for them to step out of their comfort zone. The venue says a lot about the project and our aim is to make it as supportive and easy to access as possible.

VENUE: YOUR WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Your working room, or usually called training room, may have a significant impact on your activities. Arrange the room to support the learning process the best way possible and according to the number of participants you're hosting. These are the key attributes that you should consider when selecting your working/training room:



VENUE: YOUR WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Your working room, or usually called training room, may have a significant impact on your activities. Arrange the room to support the learning process the best way possible and according to the number of participants you're hosting. These are the key attributes that you should consider when selecting your working/training room:

- **Size:** Arrange for a room to accommodate the number of participants. A room that is too large is as bad as a room that may be too small.
- **Meeting the requirements:** If the activities consist of many small group activities, check if there is enough space in the main room. If not, arrange additional room to meet your needs (if you need more rooms for particular activities, please keep that in mind as well).
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that the room is accessible to all, including those with limited mobility should you have participants fitting this situation..
- **Convenience:** Easily accessible Restrooms, break and dining areas, accommodation help ensure that participants return on time after breaks and meals
- **Distractions:** Select a room that is free of distractions and noise

VENUE: YOUR WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- ➔ **Obstructions:** Select a room that is free of structures such as posts or pillars that may obstruct participants' view. Should you have no other options, think about how you will set up the chairs and where the participants' focus point will be.
- ➔ **Seating:** Select a location that provides comfortable and moveable chairs that can allow you to make arrangements. Seating arrangements can further enhance the learning environment that you want to create, besides creating dynamism in the room just by changing chairs' disposition..
- ➔ **Lighting:** Natural light in the room is essential, however, the proper use of lights can help you set up the correct atmosphere (think about a meditation session or about a scary play) .
- ➔ **Workable walls:** Most trainers/facilitators hang flipchart paper or paper sheets on the wall: session objectives, group work etc. Is wall space available? Is it possible to create separations with curtains or panels?
- ➔ **Climate control:** Not essential, but... how would you feel in a room that is too hot but you need to stay there until the program finishes? Or, how does it feel to only be worried about the cold??



QUICK TIPS



- If it fits your project theme, prefer smaller places or villages outside of the cities and closer to nature. Not only can it reduce destructions and increase the well-being of the participants, but nature also provides a unique setting for experiential learning. It can be used to enhance activities related to the project theme, such as outdoor activities, team building exercises, and environmental projects. Keep in mind that you need to ensure that place is easily reachable, preferably by public transport.




- Check seasonal places out of the season. The prices are cheaper and there are also usually good conditions.



- Visit the place in advance if possible, so you know what to expect and what are the conditions of the accommodation. Do not trust the pictures.



- Think if the place is easily accessible and suitable for all the group participants. If not, how can you solve it?

- 
1. What are the special needs of your program that you should consider when selecting your venue?
 2. What are the special arrangements that you need based on your thematic?
 3. What are the special needs of your participants that you should consider when selecting your venue? How can you create the ideal learning environment for them?



Out of these pictures choose the one which could work as the best working environment during a youth exchange? The theme of the exchange is "Art as a form of nonviolent communication" and there are 25 participants.

1.



2.



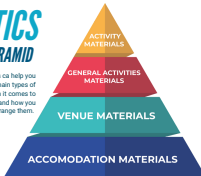
3.



- What are the most important aspects for you when choosing the best venue?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of these meeting/training rooms?

LOGISTICS PYRAMID

The pyramid of logistics can help you consider some of the main types of materials when it comes to organising a project and how you can arrange them.



ACCOMODATION MATERIALS

This includes all materials concerned with the accommodation which you will providing the participants with. Examples: **Bedsheets, pillows, cutlery, plates, cooking equipment and kitchen appliances**



VENUE MATERIALS

This includes all materials you need in your venue so your project can run smoothly. Examples: **Chairs, computer, projector, flip chart, sound system, whiteboard, tables, internet access**



GENERAL ACTIVITIES MATERIALS

Here you can think about the material you will most likely need for more than one activity and that you should always have on hand. Examples: **Markers, tape, papers, pens, drawing materials, notebooks, scissors, glue, crayons**



ACTIVITY MATERIALS

This section mainly depend on the specific activity you have in mind and the materials you don't already have from the general materials section. Some examples can be **ropes, blindfolds, balls** or if your activity is concerned with camping, **all types of camping gear**.

LOGISTICS



COOKING AND CLEANING, A GREAT TOOL

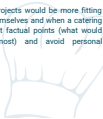
Among the responsibilities of the organising team is to ensure that the participants have access to food and that the living quarters are clean and safe. In some cases, the organising team may hire professional catering and cleaning services to take care of these tasks.

However, involving the participants in the meal preparation and the cleaning can be a great tool that can help build a sense of community and responsibility within the group, encouraging participants to take ownership of the program. Also, they rely on each other on creating a meal they might enjoy (or not), stimulating cooperation, conflict management, budget management and a sense of accomplishment. In most of our projects, Cherry lets participants cook their meals.



TIP

Write down which type of projects would be more fitting that participants cook by themselves and when a catering should be hired. Think about factual points (what would benefit the group the most) and avoid personal preferences.





COOKING AND CLEANING, A GREAT TOOL

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

When participants are assigned tasks such as cooking and cleaning, they must work together to achieve their goals, possibly by creating their own reliable system, managing their time, resources and distributing roles. This can help to foster a sense of community and encourage participants to work together towards a common goal. It can also help to break down barriers between participants and create a more inclusive and supportive environment. Some venues might not provide daily cleaning services, therefore having cleaning groups is an effective idea that can stimulate a sense of responsibility.



TIP

Inform participants beforehand if they will be cleaning and cooking by themselves, in this way they already know that this will be an expected task from them.



COOKING AND CLEANING, A GREAT TOOL

CULTURAL MEALS

Involving participants into the meal preparation facilitates cultural exchange. People with different cultural backgrounds can share traditional recipes and cooking techniques, learn about each other's food customs and practices, and develop a deeper appreciation for each other's cultures.



TIP

Embrace the diversity of participating countries by dedicating an "International Cultural Night" for each country represented in the Youth Exchange. Encourage participants to organise and showcase their country's culture through music, dances, activities and by cooking a typical dinner from their country for all the participants.



PART 3

*TEAM &
COLLEAGUES*

QUESTIONS TEAM & COLLEAGUES

TEAM & COLLEAGUES

As you may have understood from the last section, organizing a youth exchange project is an exciting but challenging task that requires a lot of effort, time, and resources. While it is possible to implement the project alone, having a team can make the process more manageable and efficient.

Not only does a team allow you to delegate tasks and share the workload (especially the logistic part), but it also brings a range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas to the table. This can help you to develop innovative solutions and create a project that truly resonates with your target group.

One of the main challenges is communication and coordination. Larger teams may have more difficulty coordinating schedules, delegating tasks, and ensuring everyone is on the same page. On the other hand, smaller teams may lack the necessary diversity and expertise to cover all aspects of the project. In the end it will also rely on how you will manage and guide your team.



?

- How many people do you need in your team to make sure your project is running smoothly?
- What are the main roles that you need to assign? What responsibilities come with it?
- What are the core qualities that a team member should acquire for each role?



By going through this reflection activity, you can gain a better understanding of what qualities are most important for your team to possess and how to prioritise them.

Start by reviewing this list of 20 qualities that make a great team member. Select 5 qualities from the list that you feel are the most important for your team to possess in order to achieve your goals. Write down your chosen 5 qualities in order of priority, with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Communication | 11. Trustworthiness |
| 2. Collaboration | 12. Honesty |
| 3. Adaptability | 13. Open-mindedness |
| 4. Reliability | 14. Empathy |
| 5. Accountability | 15. Cultural awareness |
| 6. Initiative | 16. Leadership |
| 7. Positive attitude | 17. Time-management |
| 8. Problem-solving skills | 18. Organization |
| 9. Creativity | 19. Resilience |
| 10. Flexibility | 20. Sense of humor |

Take some time to reflect on your choices. Ask yourself why you chose these particular qualities and what they mean to you in the context of your youth exchange project?

Consider how you can encourage and cultivate these qualities in your team members. What strategies can you use to promote them and ensure that they are present in the team?

Finally, reflect on how your team's qualities may change and evolve over time (i.e. Communication). Are there certain qualities that may become more important as the project progresses, or as you encounter new challenges and opportunities?



TOOLS

THE HIGH 5 TEST

The High 5 test is a tool that can help you identify and understand your own strengths and qualities. By taking the test, you gain insights into the top five qualities that make you unique and valuable in a team setting. Once you have a clear understanding of your own strengths, you can use this knowledge to identify the qualities you should look for in a colleague. By recognizing your own strengths, you can seek out team members who possess complementary qualities.

This allows for a more balanced team, where each member brings their unique skills and strengths to the table.

CORE QUALITY QUADRANT MODEL

The Core Quality Quadrant Model is a simple yet effective tool that can help you understand and organize your team more efficiently. Developed by Dutch psychologist Daniel Ofman, this model focuses on individual qualities and how they relate to teamwork.



CORE QUALITY QUADRANT MODEL



The essence of the Core Quadrant Model lies in identifying a person's core qualities. These are the strengths and positive traits that define an individual's unique contribution to the team. By recognizing and appreciating these qualities, you can leverage them to enhance team dynamics and overall productivity.

However, every strength has its opposite, which Ofman refers to as the "pitfall." These are the characteristics that can negatively affect teamwork if not managed properly. For example, a highly detail-oriented team member may become overly perfectionistic, causing delays in decision-making.

To avoid falling into the pitfall, the model introduces the concept of the "challenge." The challenge represents the positive quality that, when developed, helps individuals find a healthy balance between their core qualities and pitfall tendencies. Going back to our example, the detail-oriented team member can develop flexibility and adaptability to overcome their perfectionistic tendencies.



CORE QUALITY QUADRANT MODEL



Lastly, the Core Quadrant Model highlights the "allergy," which refers to the qualities that individuals find particularly challenging or irritating in others. By understanding these allergies, team members can cultivate empathy and improve their ability to work collaboratively.

Using the Core Quadrant Model within your team can foster self-awareness, improve communication, and enhance teamwork. By encouraging individuals to identify their core qualities, pitfalls, challenges, and allergies, you can create a more effective working environment.

Learn more about the model in [this video](#) by the creator, Daniel Ofman.



Now that you know your own strengths, are the qualities that you chose still the ones you would choose?

VALUES TEAM & COLLEAGUES

FACILITATION

Now that you have thought about the team and the colleagues you will be working with, it's time to focus on facilitation.

The facilitator's main role is to ensure that the youth exchange runs smoothly and effectively. They provide guidance, structure, and support throughout the exchange, helping participants to actively engage, learn from each other, and work towards achieving the goals of the program.

Group work often requires structure and direction to be productive. With the right facilitation, contributions tend to increase, ideas are tested, and the group can arrive at defensible conclusions. Therefore, the primary goal of facilitation is to unlock the group's full potential by guiding the process.

The choice of facilitation style can significantly impact the direction and dynamics of the project. Some projects allow for a more playful and relaxed atmosphere, while others demand a more serious and strict approach. It is crucial to select a facilitator who aligns with your project's theme and can serve as the direct link between the participants and project execution.



Adaptability is a key skill of a facilitator. While each person has their own facilitation style, it is essential for the facilitator to adapt their approach based on the group's specific needs. The facilitator should possess the ability to recognise these needs and respond accordingly.

Moreover, certain situations and activities may require a particular style of facilitation to leave a lasting impact. It is important to consider these factors when designing the facilitation approach for your project.



1.

What is the facilitation approach that fits your thematic?

2.

Who will be the main facilitator?

3.

If you are the facilitator, based on your project theme, what are the qualities you possess that will help you achieve your goals? What can you improve?

4.

If you won't be the facilitator yourself, how will you choose the facilitator? What qualities do you consider most important for the facilitator to possess?

5.

Is the facilitator solely responsible for the activities and program, or is the responsibility shared among the team?

PART 4

PROGRAM

PROGRAM

When it comes to crafting the programme for your youth exchange, involving the entire team in the decision-making process can be a valuable approach. Each team member brings unique insights, expertise, and ideas to the table, contributing to a diverse range of perspectives. However, it is crucial to strike a balance between team involvement and practicality. With a large team, decision-making can become complex and time-consuming.



TIP

Establish a smaller team responsible for synthesising ideas, facilitating discussions, and finalising the programme. This way, they can lead the process, and later on consider input from the wider team, and make decisions efficiently.



Who is responsible for designing the programme in your youth exchange?

Organising your activities and creating a well-structured programme is important. However, as the youth exchange unfolds, it's important to be flexible, in order to be responsive to the needs and dynamics of the participants .

PROGRAM PROGRAM

By adapting to the group, you can create a more enjoyable and meaningful experience for the participants and therefore, enhance their engagement, which will help you achieve the goals of your project. For example, if the group shows a strong tendency towards outdoor activities and shows high energy level, consider incorporating more outdoor elements into the programme. That means adjusting your schedule by arranging outdoor team-building and energetic activities that align with their interests. On the other hand...

What adjustments can you make to your programme, in order to effectively respond to a lower energy and less enthusiastic group?

Are there alternative approaches or variations to your existing activities that can be introduced to spark interest and participation?



TIP

When you're designing your programme, dedicate moments for reflection throughout the programme. Provide opportunities for participants to assess their progress, share insights, and learn from their experiences. (I.e. by creating reflection groups, or reflecting and sharing learning outcomes after main activities)



PROGRAM

KEY ACTIVITY/ HIGHLIGHT

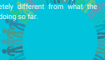
A key activity can be a determining crucial component for creating a successful and memorable program. If you have participated in one of the Cherry projects, or even heard about them, you probably know about the highlight of our exchanges (If not, well, come find out). But why should your exchange have a key activity?

A key activity serves as a focal point of the exchange. It's what ties together the various components of the program, such as workshops, activities, discussions and it can be designed to reflect the overall theme or objectives of your project.

In order to maximise its impact, it's important to build the rest of the program around it. That involves designing and integrating program components that support and enhance the learning objectives of the key activity. Keep in mind that the key activity can always stay a surprise to the participants (we believe that it should always be like that).

The key activity will wrap up all the learning elements applied up to that point, and participants will tendentially remember that activity and all what it brought them, which will, later on, support them in absorbing and processing the learning behind the entire exchange..

Cherry's key activities are usually an entire logistical operation on their own. Besides preparing the entire exchange, the key activity needs extra attention, because the way it will be executed will be (or, should be), something completely different from what the participants have been doing so far.



PROGRAM

Picture this: You're facilitating a project about community engagement and your key activity is a community service project. The community service project is a day in your program where participants are working together to make a positive impact in the local community, such as by volunteering at a food bank, building a community garden, or helping to renovate a community center. This project would serve as the focal point of the program, and all of the other program elements would be designed to support and enhance the learning objectives of the project.

For instance, participants could attend workshops on leadership and teamwork, learn about the local community and its needs, and reflect on the impact that their actions are having on others. The program would culminate with the completion of the community service project, allowing participants to see the tangible results of their hard work and feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in what they have achieved together.



What is the key activity of your Youth Exchange?

Where would you put it in your programme and why? (i.e beginning, middle, end)

What do you need to have prepared before the exchanges start and during the exchange so that everything is arranged for the key activity (i.e. booking bicycles, booking a boat, buying construction materials, booking a different location, etc.)?





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Questions about this booklet, Youth Exchanges or other Erasmus+ matters? Do not hesitate contacting us:

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