Youth Exchange Quality Handbook

Methods

Tips & Hints

Tools

YES
Youth Exchange System

"YES - Youth Exchange System" - Vinci (IT) 20th - 26th June 2017

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1 - INTRODUCTION

The following Booklet is the report from The TC "YES – Youth Exchange System", held in Vinci –Italy by Associazione Agrado, from 20th to 26th June 2017.
Here we have collected all the information, rules and tips for writing a quality Youth Exchange Project, developed with participants during the 7 days.
We hope these results can be useful for you too, for writing your own Youth Exchange following quality paths!

2 - YES PRESENTATION

YES is a TC aimed to empower organisations (especially newcomers) and Youth workers in planning and developing quality Youth Exchanges. It is planned in order to provide learnings and tips on quality system in each phase, from planning idea to implementation to dissemination of results. At the end it supported participants in developing their own project Application forms and creating partnerships. It offered 1 month of mentoring by the Trainers on the Project idea and Application form.

PARTNER COMPOSITION

10 partner organisations from EU (newcomers in Erasmus+ or willing to improve quality in their Youth Exchange projects):

Associazione Agrado- Italy

Associaçao Check-IN - Portugal

Ayuntamiento de Majadas – Spain

Hellenic Youth Participation – Greece

Almyras - Cyprus

HVSF -Hungary

Sveikatingumo idėjos – Lithuania

Zdruzenie Pavel Satev Kocani - Republic of Macedonia (FYRM)

Youth Association Bedekovčina - Croatia

The Change Is In You - Bulgaria.

PARTICIPANTS PROFILE AND NUMBER:

Youth workers, Project managers and coordinators, Responsible of Organisations.
2 motivated participants with high decisional capacity in their organisation, from each organisation

AIMS

• Provide youth workers with know-how on planning and developing Youth exchanges, focusing on each phase of the project life, partnership and communication;
• Support participants in putting in practice the learnings gained, submitting quality application forms to their NAs (through planning project ideas in partnership during one TC session and offering a mentoring support after the TC);
• Facilitate the creation of partnership for further projects among the organisations;
• Strenghten participants and organisations competences and capability in youth work and international dimension and cooperation.
• Enhancing Non Formal education methods and recognition of NFE learnings.

METHODOLOGIES

We used non-formal and interactive tools, exercises and games. Teamwork, , and evaluation tools for self-assessment (Diary and Badges).

3 - WHAT IS A YOUTH EXCHANGE?
YOUTH EXCHANGES

Youth Exchanges allow groups of young people from at least two different countries to meet and live together for up to 21 days. During a Youth Exchange, participants, supported by group leaders, jointly carry out a work programme (a mix of workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, simulations, outdoor activities, etc.) designed and prepared by them before the Exchange.

Youth Exchanges allow young people to:develop competences;
become aware of socially relevant
 topics/thematic areas;
discover new cultures,
 habits and life-styles,
 mainly through peer-learning;
strengthen values like solidarity,
democracy, friendship, etc.
The learning process
in Youth Exchanges is triggered
by methods of non-formal education.
The rather short duration makes the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities appropriate; as such a Youth Exchange offers an international mobility experience in the safety of a group with the possibility of having an adequate number of group leaders to take care of the participants.

A Youth Exchange can also be a good setting for discussing and
learning about inclusion and diversity issues. Youth Exchanges are based on a transnational cooperation between two or
more participating organisations from different countries within and outside the European Union.

The following activities are not eligible for grants under Youth Exchanges: academic study trips; exchange activities which aim to make financial profit; exchange activities which can be considered as tourism; festivals; holiday travel; performance, tours.

Tools

(Erasmus+ Guide 2017 pag. 78)

Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myhRLRrV8Io

YOUTH EXCHANGES BASIC INFO

-WHO CAN APPLY?

Any participating organisation or group52 established in a Programme Country can be the
applicant. This organisation applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the
project.
A youth mobility project is funded in a specific way (see the section "funding rules") if the
applicant is:
- a public body at regional or national level53;
- an association of regions;
- a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation;
- a profit-making body active in Corporate Social Responsibility.

-NUMBER AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

A mobility activity is transnational and involves at least two participating organisations (sending
and receiving organisation) from different countries.

-ACTIVITIES WITHIN PROGRAMME COUNTRIES:

all participating organisations must be from a
Programme Country.
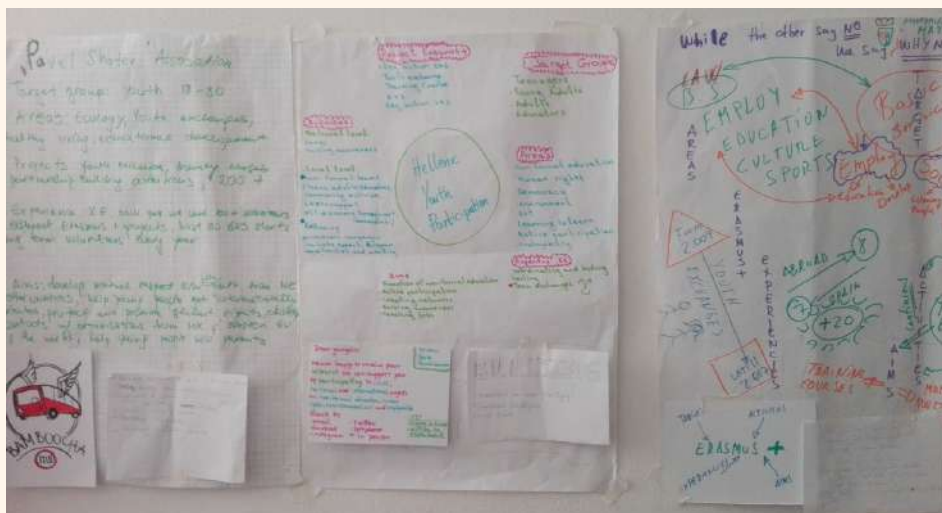
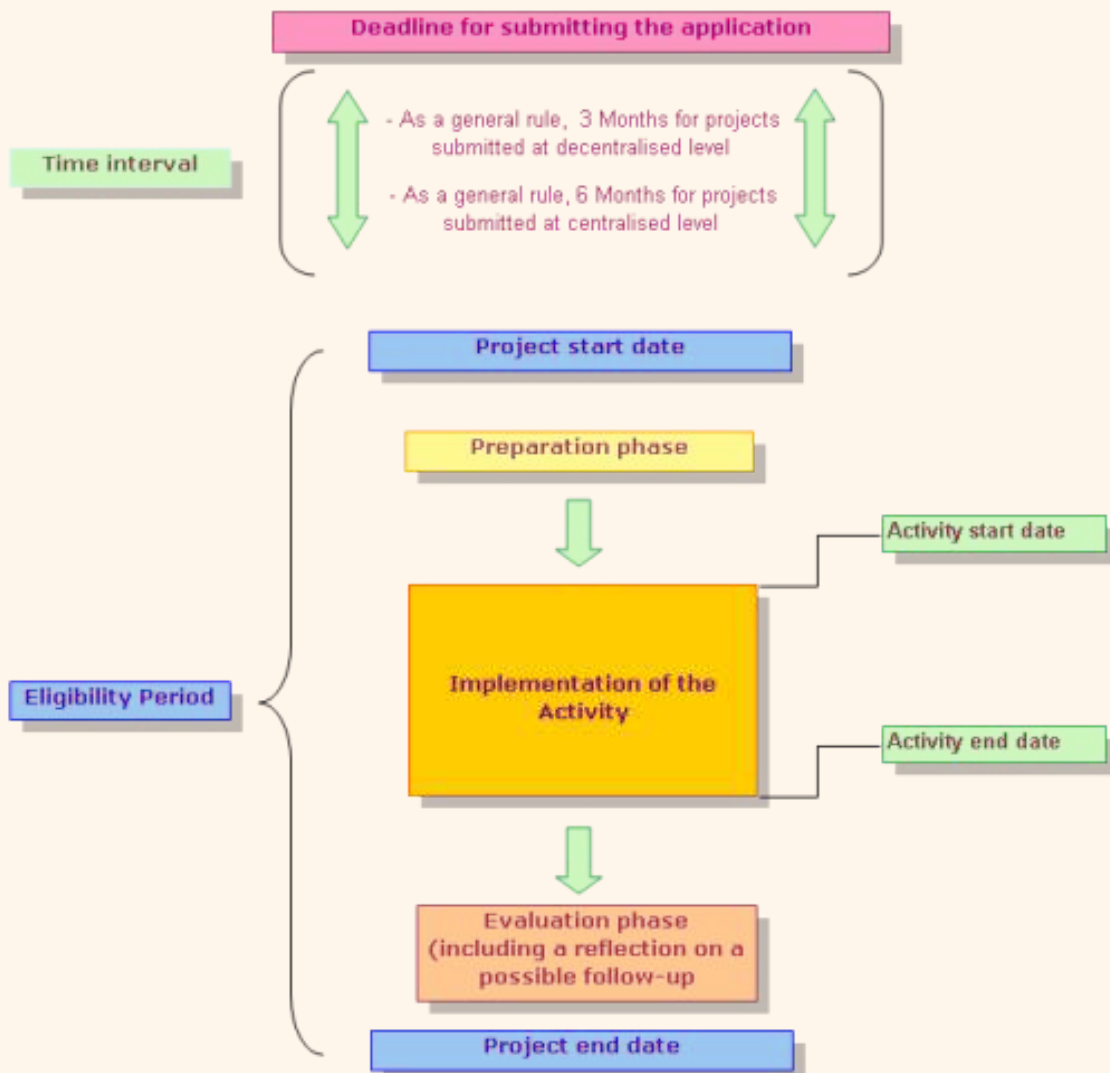## -ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER COUNTRIES NEIGHBOURING THE EU:

the activity must involve at least one participating organisation from a Programme Country and one participating organisation from a Partner Country neighbouring the EU.

-DURATION OF PROJECT:

from 3 to 24 months.

N.B: The project duration is NOT the duration of the activity. Project duration must include time (after and before the activity itself) for:

1. Preparation of the project (before)
2. Implementation of the project (real activity)
3. Dissemination (after)
4. Evaluation (after)

Deadline for submitting the application

Time interval

- As a general rule, 3 Months for projects submitted at decentralised level

- As a general rule, 6 Months for projects submitted at centralised level

Project start date

Preparation phase

Activity start date

Eligibility Period

Implementation of the Activity

Activity end date

Evaluation phase
(including a reflection on a possible follow-up

Project end date

-WHERE TO APPLY?:

To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established.

-WHEN TO APPLY?:

Applicants have to submit their grant application by the following dates:
- 2 February at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 May and 30 September of the same year;
- 26 April at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 August and 31 December of the same year;
- 4 October at 12:00 (midday Brussels time) for projects starting between 1 January and 31 May of the following year.
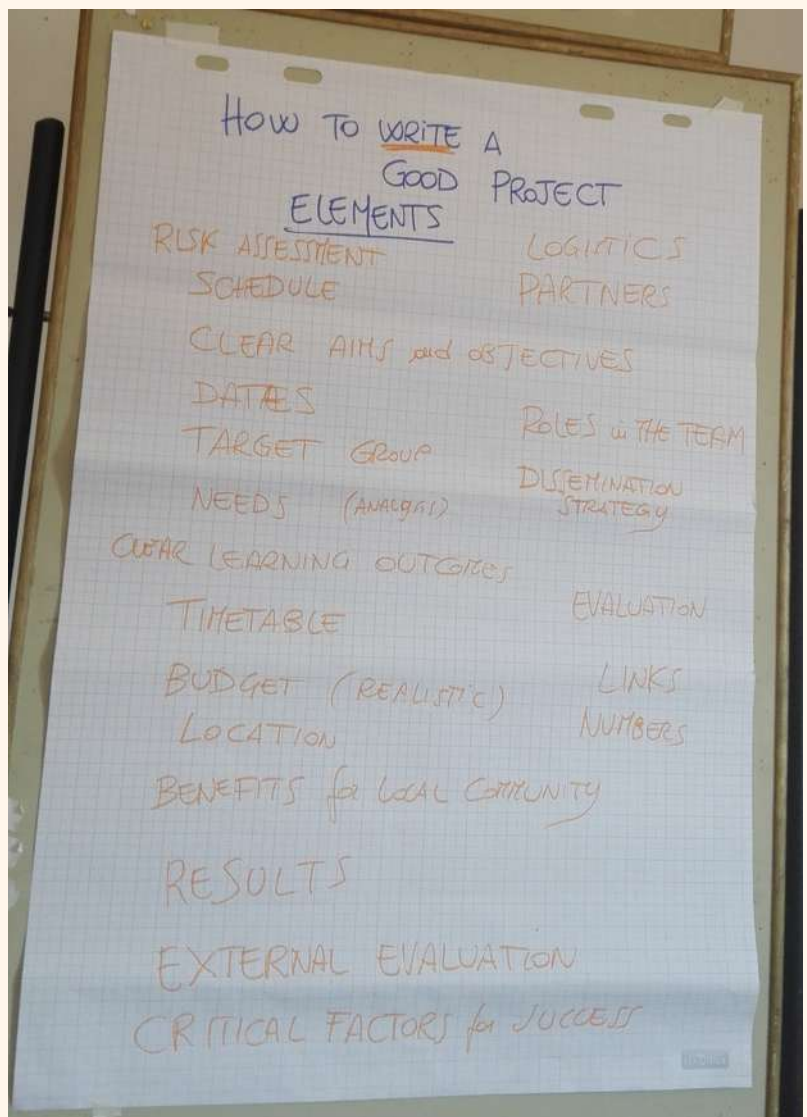
-HOW TO APPLY?:

Please see Part C of this Guide for details on how to apply.

-OTHER CRITERIA:

A timetable for each of the activities planned in the project must be annexed to the application form

Tools

(Erasmus+ Guide 2017 pagg. 80-81)

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR YOUTH EXCHANGES

-DURATION OF ACTIVITY:

From 5 to 21 days, excluding travel time.

-VENUE(S) OF THE ACTIVITY:

The activity must take place in the country of one of the organisations participating in the activity.

-ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS:

Young people aged between 13 and 30- resident in the countries of the sending and receiving organisations. Group leaders involved in the Youth Exchange must be at least 18- years old.

-NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND COMPOSITION OF NATIONAL GROUPS:

Minimum 16 and maximum of 60 participants (group leader(s) not included).
Minimum 4 participants per group (group leader(s) not included).
Each national group must have at least one group leader.

-OTHER CRITERIA:

In order to maintain a clear link to the country where the National Agency is based, at least one of the sending organisations or the receiving organisation in each activity must be from the country of the National Agency to which the application is submitted.

Advance Planning Visit (APV):
If the project foresees an APV, then the following eligibility criteria must be respected:
- duration of the APV: maximum 2 days (travel days excluded);
- number of participants: 1 participant per group. The number of participants can be raised to 2 under the condition that the second participant is a young person taking part in the activity without having a role as a group leader or trainer.

Tools

Videos:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52NezOh2-7o
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PXoCkgqyt4
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB295Yiq8YQ

4 - YOUTH EXCHANGE PHASES: GOOD & BAD PRACTICES

4.1 PREPARATION

DO	DON'T
• Smart objectives • Commitment • Adapt • Macro vision • Task delegation • Cooperation • Set deadlines • Bench marking • Prepare participants • Budget • Local community and media • APV • Insurance	• False expectation • Overload • Do it alone • Procrastinate • Select random people • Misleading info

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION

DO	DON'T
• Up to date info (Quality > Quantity) • Few activities • Break time (30 min) • Mind stimulating activities • Small groups • Topic related to the age of participants • Safety • Location • Evaluation • Learning from different cultures • Informal learning	• Not following the plan • Activities that are not age appropriated • Not name tags • Lack of flexibility

4.3 DISSEMINATION

DO	DON'T
• Promotion throgh social media and mass media • Workshops related to the topic/local area • Presentation of the result to the authorities and to the community • Share the results within interested parties • Articles • Cooperation with schools	• No dissemination at all • Not being realistic, exaggerated and/or underestimated • Misleading information • Underestimate the power of dissemination

5 - PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduce basic info of YE

- title of the YE
- dates
- venue
- list of partner organization
- participants number and profile

Objectives and Methods of the Youth Exchange

- mention objectives of the YE as you wrote in the erasmus+ e-form when submitted to NA
- Point out details on Learning achievements related to the YE
- Give clear references to non formal methods of the YE (make concrete examples if possible...see doc "activity timetable" that you have to submit to NA with erasmus+ e-form

YES
Youth Exchange System

- DUTIES AND TASKS

Characters in a Youth Exchange

Coordinating organization (usually overlaps with the receiving Org.) and Sending organization (or partner organization).

Coordinating (key words to develop in the Partner Agreement)

- Infopack
- team of trainers and support staff
- Accomodation/food/transport and logistic during YE
- Budget managment
- Travel reimbursment
- NA contact
- Support and Mentoring pre-during-after YE
- Youthpass
- Evaluation-dissemination of results
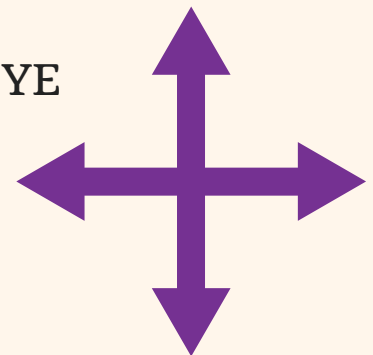
Partner organizations

- Selection of n. ___ participants according to requirements + 1 group leader
- Preliminary meeting
- Support participants
- Provide tickets for travel
- Provide burocratic procedures: (European Health Card-Visa if needed-special insurances?)
- Evaluation
- Dissimination of results in liason with Coordinating Org.

- FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

Managment of budget of Coordinating Organization

- Recognize travel costs according to travel distance
- According to policy of YE managment CO can recognize costs of preparation of participant to partner org.
- Budget issued by NA after approval of project is entirely managed for the implementation of the YE project(accomodation/food/professionals/travel/reimbursments..)
- Expences are recognized only in the eligibility period.

€

- REIMBURSMENT POLICY

Travel costs and other grant reimbursment

- Partner orgs provide original travel tickets (dates of ticket must be coincidents with period of YE)
- Money transfer will be done to the bank account of Coordinating org. Which will refund the participants to YE in case they anticipated for travel costs
- Part. Org issued a receipt of grant received (if applicable)
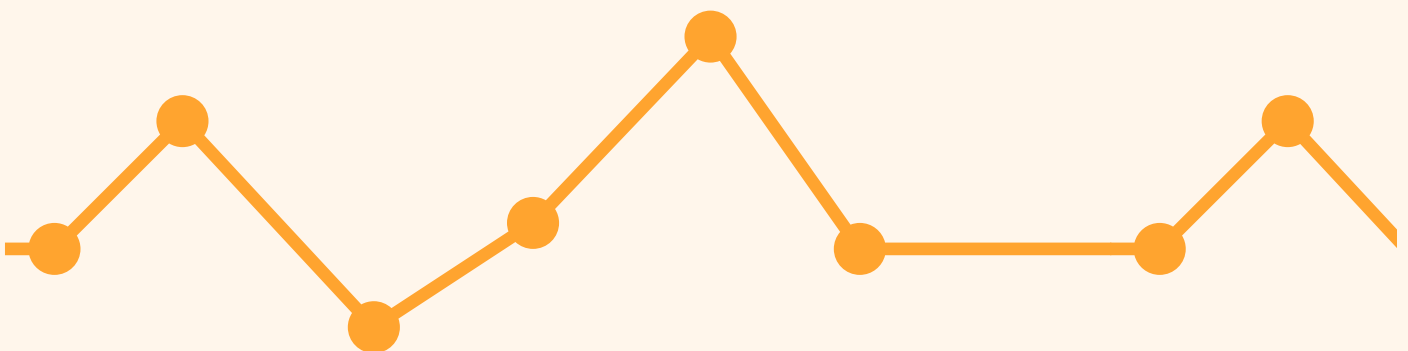
- SIGNATURES OF LEGAL RAPRESENTATIVES

...and finally do not forget to sign!

WEBSITES FOR PARTNER FINDING:

- **Salto Youth**
- **Youth Portal (for EVS...but useful)**
- **Erasmus+ project results**
- **Social networks**

COMMUNICATION AMONG PARTNERS

- Before the Agreement make sure you trust your partners
- Be flexible and open to change
- Be clear and simple
- Make the communication constant and fluid
- Comunicate each step and decision
- APV
- Assertive comunication
- Clear tasks assigment
- Perspectives of future opportunities
- Use of Google Apps for work/establish the tools of communication
- Constant follow-up of the progress and feedback
- Deadlines
- Consequences
- Realistic information
- Keep a proof of commmunication among partners
- Communication before, during and after the project

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- Code (Reference number)
- Where and when the project takes place
- Basic information: special needs, health insurance, accomodation, food, number and profile of participants, age range
- Responsabilities: tasks division, budget, payment agreement, deadlines, dissemination, preparation of participants, evaluation, follow up
- Information about the project
- Consequences
- Participants agreement
- Describe the exact activities

MESS WITH PARTNERS

Experiences
- Not answering emails/requests
- Dropping out last minute
- Irresponsible participants
- Not listen to and fullfill requests of other partners
- Everyone is equal by their eperience in writing projects
- Not partecipating in dissemination
- No or lack of coordination
- No preparation of participants
- No respect of deadlines and budget
- Not providing boarding passes and invoices

Solutions
- Try to request/schedule calls and deadlines
- Set a date, if there is no response by then, jump in and do it by yourself
- If possible, try to find a new partner
- There should be balance between partners
- Contribution in dissemination
- Share tasks

ROLE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARTNERS (BEFORE-B- / DURING-D- / AFTER-A- YOUTH EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES)

Coordinator

- Write application (B)
- Planning (B)
- Allocation of role (B)
- Implementation (D)
- Allocation of budget (D)
- Dissemination of results (D) (A)
- Evaluation (D) (A)
- Report (A)
- Flexibility in changes (B, D, A)
- Adaptability (B, D, A)
- Visibility (B, D, A)
- Follow up (A)
- Contact as many as possible (B, D, A)
- Send materials used during the activities (A)

Sending organisation

- Assist on writing the application (B)
- Planning (B)
- Find the participants leader (D)
- Dissemination of results (D, A)
- Evaluation (D, A)
- Preparation of the participants (B)
- Monitoring of the participants work (D)
- Proper application process (B)
- Find proper participants (B)
- Follow up activities (A)
- Travel reimbursement (A)

6 - LEARNING REFLECTION

The main aim of a Youth Exchange should be LEARNING.

The main issue of Non formal education is just that YOU are responsible of your learning and YOU assess your own progress. This is great because none has to give you a mark and decide for you like at school, but at the same time, it makes very subjective all the evaluation.
For this reason, the more tools you use for assessing, evaluating and "measure" the participants learning, the more useful it is for the project.
YOUTHPASS certificate must be the final document attesting the whole process of learning.

So, please remember to set up a complete strategy for assess and measure it in all the phase of the project. It will help a lot your participants in the last phase , when they will fill in their Youthpass with the 8 Key competences.

More info at https://www.youthpass.eu/en/

TIPS: Some suggestions for assessment and evaluation strategy

1. In PREPARATION PHASE: Set up an initial diagnosis of competences of the participants (questionnaire) to repeat after the project (final diagnosis of competences) and comparing the results you can "measure" the learning of participants (or at least their perception of it!).

2. In IMPLEMENTATION PHASE:
A. Daily reflection time (30 minutes at the end of the working day)- half in small group with facilitator/half individual.
You can assess your learning achievements of the day through coaching tools with a facilitator, using inspiring tools for facilitating the expression (like Dixit Cards, Blob,...).
This is useful to clarify the progress, insights and achievements, thanks to the group cooperation and tools provided by the facilitator.
The second part of the Reflection is individual using a Diary with sticky Badges (each Badge represents a competence- when you feel you achieve that, you can stick the correspondent Badge on the page of diary of the day).
For digital Badges, you can check the website
. https://www.badgecraft.eu/
We created Digital Badges also for our Training YES!

B. Final Evaluation:
• Questionnaire evaluating logistic, (Accomodation, transport, food,...) facilitators,
Personal Involvement, Learning,..
• Rope Evaluation: Final evaluation for letting also a message to the group.

C. YOUTHPASS filling- assessing the 8 Key competences.

3. IN EVALUATION PHASE

-Filling Final diagnosis questionnaire of competences
- Filling Final report of participant- sent automatically by European commission to participants email

6.1 LEARNING STYLES

In a Youth Exchange it's important to take care also of the different learning styles participants can have- just to facilitate their process and to make the activities more dynamic and involving!

What are the Learning Styles?

In few words...the way you prefer to learn!
Someone can learn better in individual way, someone else in a group, someone can be helped by memorising through rimes and music and rythms, or only listening or having a visual approach through diagrams, schemes, tables, pictures, drawings....

You can have benefits from different approaches, and this is the reason why you should know the different ways people learn if you want to propose them a learning experience called Youth Exchange!

Below the graphic example of the 7 Learning styles:

6.2 ONE MODEL OF LEARNING: KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

The ability to reflect on our practice and learning progress is an essential ingredient in academic and professional development. Opportunities to reflect, and to build upon those reflections to enhance performance, should be built into learning designs.
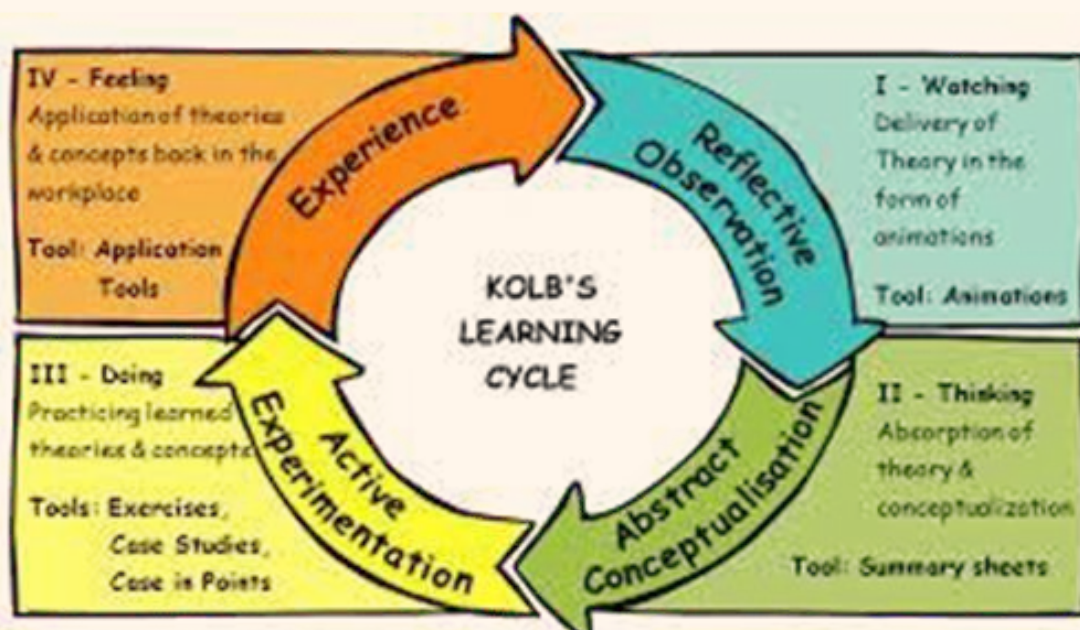
One way of looking at this process of reflection, review and improvement was described in a model by David Kolb and his colleague Ron Fry, called the Experiential Learning Model (ELM). This is often referred to as 'Kolb's learning cycle'.

We will examine Kolb's learning cycle in more detail, and start to relate it to your own experience as a learner. You will also consider how you would design a learning experience based on the cycle.

Learning happens after we reflect about what we did and we conclude what is to do next.

Learning is not a given and it does not happen while we are doing thus it doesn't finish when the activity finishes. Learning occurs in a continuous loop of reflection. Many times teachers ask their students to reflect on their learning. But what this means and why it is useful?

Kolb has come to a model of reflective learning taking as the starting point the concrete experience.

KOLB'S LEARNING CYCLE

IV - Feeling
Application of theories & concepts back in the workplace
Tool: Application Tools

Experience

I - Watching
Delivery of Theory in the form of animations
Tool: Animations

Reflective Observation

III - Doing
Practicing learned theories & concepts
Tools: Exercises, Case Studies, Case in Points

Active Experimentation

II - Thinking
Absorption of theory & conceptualization
Tool: Summary sheets

Abstract Conceptualisation

Reflection, what does it mean? It is like looking in a mirror but instead of trying to see your face or arm what you try to see is your experience in order to identify what to do in the future. Sometimes it is best if you can do it with others so you can ask for feedback. Sometimes outsiders can see more clearly than you do.

How to reflect? You should go through a series of phases that will you allow to reflect upon your experiences. It shall begin with concrete questions that ask you to describe what happen and how do you fell so you can evaluate the positive which you want to maybe repeat as well as the negative which you would try to avoid to improve the next time.

The idea is to identify your own problems for which asking for feedback is very much advice. Once you have conclude your current experience there must be a planing what comes next in order to improve and learn upong this experience.

You can follow this steps:
• Describe what happened
• Explain how you feel
• evaluate the positive + negatives
• analyse the reasons
• conclude what you learned from the experience
• plan how to improve

6.3 FORMAL, NON FORMAL, INFORMAL LEARNING

Formal education – Organized, guided by a formal curriculum, leads to a formally recognized credential such as a high school completion diploma or a degree, and is often guided and recognized by government at some level. Teachers are usually trained as professionals in some way.
One protocol of learning is valid for all the students- Evaluation is external: teacher evaluate the tasks and the learning of the students.

Non-formal learning – Organized (even if it is only loosely organized), may or may not be guided by a formal curriculum. This type of education may be led by a qualified teacher or by a leader with more experience. Though it doesn't result in a formal degree or diploma, non-formal education is highly enriching and builds an individual's skills and capacities. Continuing education courses are an example for adults. Girl guides and boy scouts are an example for children. It is often considered more engaging, as the learner's interest is a driving force behind their participation.
In Youth Exchanges for instance, participants get especially non formal and informal learning: They self-assess the competences achieved, there is not a "teacher" judging their process of learning.

Informal learning – No formal curriculum and no credits earned. The teacher is simply someone with more experience
such as a parent, grandparent or a friend.
A father teaching his child to play catch
or a babysitter teaching a child their ABC's
is an example of informal education.
These may be overly simplified explanations.
There are times when the lines between
each type of learning get blurred, as well.
It isn't always as cut and dry as it seems,
but these definitions give you a general idea of each type of learning.

Tools

Exercise: LEARNING RIVER

AIMS:
• To reflect on important learning moments in life
• To become aware of what and how they have learnt (formal, informal, non formal?)
• To share and compare with others
To experiment different learning approaches and styles during the exercise

MATERIALS:
• A large piece of paper for every participant
• Markers, pencils, paint

INSTRUCTIONS:
Provide materials
Ask participants to look back at their lives and think about times or events when they really felt they had learnt something. The results of this reflection should end up being illustrated on the piece of paper, using the metaphor of a river
Use examples such as: boats, islands, different streams, wind, fish; that can help create the metaphor. They have half an hour to do this.

The reflection should be individual and supported by quiet soft music.
Ask then participants to reflect on which percentage of these learnings involves Formal learning, non formal learning and informal learning, and ask them to draw a graphic cake to show the percentage of these 3 learnings in their lives so far.

- Then each one can chose a colleague to share the results of his/her reflection and exchange experiences: the couple should go walking outside in the nature for 30 minutes telling about their reflections on own learnings

At the end they came back all into the room and facilitator can ask questions to resume the process:

- which kind of education provided the most of your learning?
- How was for your colleague?

And at the end, show participants that in this "simple" activity they applied the 7 learning styles:

INTRAPERSONAL: they reflected alone about the main learnings in their lives.
AUDITORY: Music accompanied the reflection.
VISUAL: Drawing of the river.
LOGIC: They made percentage graphic of the kind of education provided the learnings.
INTERPERSONAL: Sharing learnings with a mate.
VERBAL: Sharing verbally the experience
KINESTETIC: Walking in the nature.

7 - PROJECT TIPS

TIP 1

We suggest to count 2-3 months before the activity implementation-for preparation phase- and 2-3 after the activity- for dissemination and evaluation of the whole project.

Example: I want to submit on 2nd February deadline a Youth Exchange project in my country: I'd like to have the activity during the week 1-7 September 2017.

I have to check in advance:
1. The eligibility date (see below): according to each of the 3 deadlines, one project must start by and between a certain period of time: (example : for our deadline 2nd February, a project must start between 1 May and 30 September of the same year);
So since 1st of May, my project is eligible and could start!
For having the activity in September, so I should have before the time to prepare the project (AT LEAST 2-3 months)-(partnership agreement, logistics, activities, materials, group composition,....): so it can be good to write as Starting date of the project 1st June (June – August will be 3 months for Preparation).
After the activity (1-7 September 2017) I will count more or less 2-3 months more for the delicate phases of dissemination of results and evaluation (counting 3 months the project will finish in December 2017.
So finally the Project duration will be
1st June – 1st December: 6 Months

TIP 2

Try to plan the activity dates keeping into account the time that NA will take to send the first payment (80% of the entire amount) in order to have that money at disposable for the activity expenses- and avoid to anticipate money!!! (Pag. 256 Erasmus+ Guide 2017)
Count at least 5 months in advance

Project life Cycle deadlines					Payment modalities
	Indicative date of notification of award decision by NA – after the submission of project	Indicative date for signing grant agreement with NA	Indicative date for receiving grants (80%)	Date of final payment/request for reimbursement of the balance	% of grant provided at different stages
Youth Exchange Project	From 2 to 4 months	About 1 month from notification	30-60 days after grant agreement signature	Within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the final report by NA	Prefin.: 80% Balance: 20%

A TIP FOR PRJECT DESIGN: IDENTIFYING CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF PROBLEM AND THEN FIND A SOLUTION

PROBLEM TRRE & SOLUTION TREE

DIRECT CAUSES = GOALS
INDIRECT CAUSES = ACTIVITIES
DIRECT EFFECTS = RESULTS
INDIRECT EFFECTS = IMPACT

DIRECT CAUSE 1: Lack of info on health = GOAL 1_ Info on health diet to youth.

INDIRECT CAUSE 1: No regulation on junk food in schools = ACTIVITY 1: CAmpaign to ban junk food in schools.

DIRECT EFFECT 1: Higher risk of heart disease= RESULT 1: Lower the risk of it in youth

INDIRECT EFFECT 1: Increased costs on helthcare = IMPACT 1: Reduced costs on healthcare.

Tools

Erasmus+ How to write a project (Problem tree)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S53DCEd6Avc

PRIORITIES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN WRITING A PROJECT

SKILLS RECOGNITION
D.E.O.R.
OPEN ACCESS TO MATERIAL
INTENATIONAL DIMENSION
MULTILINGUISM
EQUITY and INCLUSION
SAFETY of PARTICIPANTS

E+ Features

RAISE LEVEL OF SKILLS
YOUTH WORK
IMPROVEMENT
RECOGNITION NFE
through GP
INTRNATIONAL
DIMENSION AND YWad
NGOs CAPACITY

Ka1 Youth Objectives

MARGINALISED YOUTH,
MIGRANTS,..

YOUTH WORKERS
COMPETENCE TO ADRESS
NEEDS OF THESE and BUILD
BETTER SOCIETY

KA1 Year Priorities

YOUR NEEDS
YOUR PARTENRS NEEDS

NGOs NEEDS

= GOOD PROJECT!

SMARTER GOALS
IN WRITING PROJECTS

*S*pecific

*M*isurable

*A*ttainable

*R*ealistic / *R*elevant

*T*ime - bound

*E*valuate

*R*e - evaluate

8 - CREDITS

This project has been made thanks to all the support and the hard work of the people which took part in and we would like to thank each one of them.

THANKS TO

The trainers: Laris Guerri, Antonio Gomes, Ilaria Protti and Marco Politano.

The staff: Francesca Biancalani and Simone Sani.

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The partner organisations: Check-In –Portugal, Ayuntamiento de Majadas-Spain, Hellenic Youth Participation- Greece, Almyras –Cyprus, The change is in you- Bulgaria, HVSF- Hungary, Youth Association Bedekovcina – Croatia, Sveikatingumo Idejos- Lithuania, Zdruzenie Pavel Satev Kocani (Republic of Macedonia).

The cookers: Serena and Giancarla Cipollini.

The Parrish of Vinci for the accomodation.

The Municipality of Vinci for the welcome in the City Hall and the guided visit in the Leonardo da Vinci Museum: a special thank for it to the Municipality Responsible for Youth Policies and Education Mrs. Claudia Heimes.

Orme Radio for the visit and the Radio Programme.

Casa del Popolo di Petroio for the Spritz and last dinner of the project!