



Europe for all YOUth - Innovative art based
methods in youth work

Methodology of the training course
implementation

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Co-funded by
the European Union

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Erasmus + KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth
Project: 2022-1-RO01-KA220-YOU-000089323



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INTRODUCTION

1.PROJECT MISSION AND PURPOSES

The „EU for Youth” Erasmus project is carried out of profound concern for the European Union's democratic functioning, given the growing prevalence of Euroscepticism and the surge in extremist movements across the continent. These challenges threaten the democracy of our societies, contributing to democratic erosion, curtailment of civil liberties, inter-group conflicts, manipulation of public opinion, and a decrease in youth participation. In light of the upcoming European Parliamentary Elections in 2024, we are aware of the significance of these elections in shaping the future of the European Union and the democratic landscape of its member states. For these reasons, "EU for YOUth" seeks to equip youth workers with the tools and techniques needed to design and deliver engaging, high-quality activities, grounded in innovative art methods and the microlearning approach. Fostering a sense of civic duty and responsibility among young people, ultimately striving to counter Euroscepticism and promote a more inclusive and participatory democracy in Europe is crucial for the future of the EU.

This project envisions a Europe where young people are actively engaged in promoting EU common values, embracing a shared social and cultural heritage, and upholding the principle of unity in diversity. To achieve our vision, the project harnesses the transformative power of art, non-formal education, and adopts the model of microlearning.

Our approach is based on the studies that revealed that art-based activities stimulate civic and political engagement, reinforce common values, foster community involvement, and enhance the social and academic outcomes of young people, including disadvantaged youth. Art stands as a potent medium for young people to make sense of their experiences and construct their perceptions of themselves and the world that surrounds them.

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1. PROJECT MISSION AND PURPOSES

1.1 The objectives of our project are:

Objective 1: To develop the competencies of youth workers to use art-based methods and microlearning principles in approaching EU topics.

This objective is at the core of the "EU for YOUTH" project. It entails enhancing the skills, knowledge, and competencies of youth workers, educators, and facilitators to effectively employ art-based methodologies and microlearning principles when addressing with young people topics concerning the European Union.

The primary focus is on equipping youth workers with the necessary expertise to harness artistic forms engaging young people in discussions related to the EU. This competence development involves training on how to design and implement art-based activities.

Objective 2: To counter Euroscepticism among youth, increasing civic and democratic participation.

This objective addresses the pressing issue of Euroscepticism and aims to foster greater involvement of young people in democratic and civic life.

It seeks to counter Eurosceptic narratives by providing young individuals with a comprehensive understanding of the EU, its values, and its role in their lives. Also involves countering misinformation and misconceptions about the European Union. It encourages active participation in democratic processes, such as voting, community initiatives, and engagement with public institutions. By instilling a sense of civic responsibility, young people are more likely to contribute to the democratic well-being of their communities and countries.

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Objective 3: To foster inclusion of disadvantaged youth and engagement in European topics.

Inclusion and engagement of disadvantaged youth are vital components of the project and the current training methodology. The objective promotes an inclusive approach to ensure that no youth is left behind. Art-based methods are used to make European topics appealing and accessible to a broad range of young people, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. We actively seek to break down the barriers that may prevent youth from engaging with European topics. By providing art-based and microlearning resources, the project focuses on removing obstacles and enhancing their understanding and participation.

The training program is a central activity within the EU for YOUTH project and aims to transfer the knowledge of the methods contained in the developed Manual to youth workers who work with young people on European themes including European active citizenship, European democracy, and the European Union Values.

The driving force behind this training program and methodology is the immediate need to foster a more dynamic and captivating educational approach for engaging young individuals in discussions related to European matters, while simultaneously addressing the issue of Euroscepticism and youth participation. With the nowadays challenging times, it has become increasingly evident that young people often struggle to connect with the European Union, failing to recognize their direct relevance to their daily lives and the pivotal role they play in shaping their and our future as citizens. To bridge this gap and make the process of understanding these complex subjects more effective and appealing for the youth, we propose an innovative methodology centered around the power of art.

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1.2 The training methodology aims to be a tool for:

Empowerment against Euroscepticism. Euroscepticism, the scepticism or criticism towards the European Union and its policies, has gained traction in recent years. It is crucial to equip young people with new and potent tools to combat Euroscepticism effectively. By harnessing the expressive and communicative power of art, we aim to instil in youth a deeper understanding of the European Union's functions, benefits, and its role not only in their lives but in the lives of all citizens from the European Union.

Active participation in democratic and civic life. A strong democracy relies on active citizen engagement, and it is imperative that young people are actively involved in democratic and civic life. By using art-based methods, we seek to empower the youth to become more proactive citizens who not only understand the democratic process but also actively participate in it. Art has the unique ability to evoke emotions, provoke critical thinking, and inspire action. Through this methodology, we aim to instil a sense of responsibility, awareness, and agency in young individuals, encouraging them to take an active role in shaping the future of their communities and countries within the context of the European Union.

This training program represents a visionary and innovative approach to education and civic engagement. By using art we aim to bridge the gap between young people and European topics, fostering a deeper connection between their lives and the broader European context.

The following section will explore the concept of Euroscepticism and will focus on the power of art in dealing with Eurosceptic attitudes among young people.

INTRODUCTION

2. APPROACH OF EUROSCEPTICISM

Euroscepticism has been present since the launch of the European integration process and has taken various forms over the last few decades. There is no common agreement regarding the definition of the concept of Euroscepticism, but it is certainly a result of the dissatisfaction of certain groups of people with the process of European integration or with the way the European Union functions.¹

The most commonly cited examples of Eurosceptic attitudes are the following: the lack of power in international relations, the excessive bureaucratization of the EU, the EU imposing rules against the will of sovereign countries, Western countries exploiting the Eastern countries economically, lack of representativity, rules, and regulations that are rarely explained correctly, losing one's national identity, the EU being viewed as a new Empire, scepticism regarding the EU's capacity to support Ukraine, inadequate communication with the public, the EU taking away some of our identity, general Euroscepticism without specific arguments, double standards, inequality in EU decision-making, multi-speed Europe, and the rejection of Romania and Bulgaria from the Schengen area, even though they fulfill the accession conditions. Some young people believe that powerful EU member states will never see Central Eastern European countries as equals. This is a strong argument, especially in the context of future opportunities because many people think they don't have as many chances as individuals from Western European countries, leading to polarization and strong Eurosceptic attitudes.²

Culture, in general, and arts, in particular, play an important role in the education process of the young generation. Art-based methods offer a larger possibility of self-expression and have a strong potential to overcome social, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic differences, forging a feeling of belonging and community. In other words, using art-based methods in education tends to remove and overcome mental barriers of any kind while having an inclusive role.³

1. Michael Ray, „Euroscepticism“. Encyclopedia Britannica. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Euroscepticism> (accessed 31.03.2024); Paul Taggart, „A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems“, in *European Journal of Political Research* 33:3 (1998); Cécile Leconte, *Understanding Euroscepticism*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010

2. K. Arató, P. Kaniok, eds., *Euroscepticism and European Integration*, Political Science Research Center, Zagreb, 2009; Matthijs Rooduijn, Stijn van Kessel, „Populism and Euroscepticism in the European Union“, in *Oxford Encyclopedia of European Union Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019

3. Tatiana Chemi and Xiangyun Du, eds., *Arts-Based Methods in Education Around the World*, River Publishers, 2017.

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Cultural heritage is important for a better understanding of European values, the common past, and for promoting European values too. The most used art-based methods by educators to approach European values are role-play, debates, Art-Based Research (ABR), visual methods like film, photography, theatre, and drama, organizing exhibitions with the involvement of young people, etc. In some cases, visual art and new media could help us to highlight the present European cultural diversity, its origins, and how this diversity became a respected reality after the Second World War.

During our project we conducted a survey to collect good practices in art-based methods, to measure the level of interest in art-based methods and level of Eurosceptic attitudes among young people. The survey was launched among non-profit organizations, educational institutions and other types of institutions who work with young people. Most respondents consider art-based methods very useful in terms of European values, especially in explaining cultural diversity, national vs. European identity, etc. Among them, visual methods such as film, photography, theatre, role-playing, debates, and organizing exhibitions with the involvement of students are mentioned.

To achieve sustainable results in combating Eurosceptics and supporting the European integration process, lifelong education must become a general principle for our society, and components regarding common European values must become a constant part of formal and non-formal educational programs and projects. At the same time, for the efficiency of these measures, it is necessary to involve all social and professional components, including the active participation of various people from each community.

The European Union remains one of the most attractive and efficient organizations that offer member states both security and economic stability.⁴ At the same time, democracy, transparency, and social equity are some of the standards of the European community.

4. K. Arató, P. Kaniok, eds., Euroscepticism and European Integration, Political Science Research Center, Zagreb, 2009

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Therefore, both state institutions and non-governmental associations must be more actively involved in the promotion of European values, to contribute directly to the strengthening of the European Union.

Based on these considerations, our project fits perfectly into these approaches, and combating Euroscepticism through art is a field that is as necessary as it is effective. Therefore, we suggest the following recommendations:

- Multiplying and diversifying the training activities of people who are active in the educational field and who are important factors in promoting European values and combating Euroscepticism among young people in our countries;
- Encouraging the exchange of good practices both at the national and European levels in combating Euroscepticism, paying attention to art-based methods that have a great impact on young people;
- Encouraging the mobility and exchange of young people at the European level, which also has a great impact on the training of young people;
- Promote inclusion, participation, solidarity, and unity of young people through various forms of art.

But to make these methods more efficient, they must be adapted to the needs and specifics of each community. Our recommendations are based on the needs assessment made at consortium level in the project. The following section will approach the process of needs assessment of the target group.

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3. STEP-BY-STEP

3.1 Needs Assessment

Youth workers in the European Union who are dedicated to using arts-based methods to promote EU values and combat Euroscepticism face a unique set of needs critical to their initiatives' success and impact. First, they need comprehensive training involving arts-based methodologies and a deep understanding of EU history and values. This knowledge enables them to deliver engaging and informative activities.

In addition, these professionals need access to various resources and materials, including art supplies, digital tools, and educational content tailored to explore EU values creatively. Such resources support creating informative and engaging programs that make EU principles and values more accessible and understandable to young people. Opportunities for networking and cultural exchange also play an important role, allowing youth workers to exchange ideas, strategies, and best practices with peers and professionals in arts, education, and European studies. Cooperation can establish innovative approaches and improve the quality of youth work.

In addition, evaluation and feedback mechanisms need to be implemented to assess the effectiveness of artistic activities in communicating EU values and addressing Euroscepticism. Such feedback facilitates the continuous updating and improvement of these educational programs.

Establishing strong links with local communities and stakeholders, including educational institutions, cultural organisations, and EU information centres, can strengthen the efforts of youth workers. These partnerships help reach a wider audience and reinforce the message of the importance of the values of the European Union.

By addressing these complex needs, youth workers can dramatically increase their ability to use the arts to educate young people about the EU and foster a sense of unity and counter-skeptical attitudes, thus contributing to a more informed and cohesive European community

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METHODOLOGY

3. STEP-BY-STEP

3.2. Defining the target audience

Youth worker

A youth worker is a professional who supports and empowers young people at different developmental stages. The target group of youth workers is usually young people, often ranging from teenagers to young adults in their twenties. This group may also include young people with fewer opportunities, students, and youth looking for direction and support. They create and facilitate programs to promote educational achievement, social skills, and personal growth. By providing guidance, mentoring, and access to resources, youth workers help young people meet challenges, make positive life choices, and reach their potential.

Their mission often involves working with community organisations, non-governmental organizations, schools as well as families to ensure a holistic approach to youth development. Youth workers apply their work in various ways, including direct mentoring, educational workshops, outdoor activities, and arts-based programs. By creating safe and caring spaces, youth workers enable young people to explore their identities, develop new skills, and engage meaningfully in their communities. This approach fosters various skills and encourages critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness among the youth.

In the European Union

In the European Union, youth workers using arts-based methods play a crucial role in engaging and empowering young people. By incorporating creative practices such as painting, craft, photography, tailoring and theatre into their workshops, these artistic fields offer education, personal development, and unique opportunities for self-expression, including on unusual arts-related topics.

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METHODOLOGY

3. STEP-BY-STEP

Such methods have proved particularly effective in overcoming language barriers and bringing different groups together, promoting social inclusion and mutual understanding between different backgrounds. Through their innovative work, these youth workers significantly contribute to the development of young people and equip them to navigate creatively and confidently in the complex conditions of today's interconnected world.

3.3. Defining the learning objectives

The main objective is to promote a comprehensive understanding of the European Union among young people and to combat Euroscepticism. This includes conveying knowledge about the history of EU countries, the values of the EU and its vital role in young people's daily lives, and highlighting its tangible benefits, such as promoting peace, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges. Such an approach is necessary to counterbalance the prevailing negative perceptions and to encourage a more balanced view of the EU.

There is a strong emphasis on developing essential skills for young people, particularly critical thinking, creative expression, and effective communication. By engaging young people in debates, art projects, and interactive encounters encouraging analysis and questioning various EU-related topics, the initiative seeks to develop their capacity to form well-informed and independent opinions. In this context, art is a unique tool that allows participants to express their thoughts and feelings about the EU, thereby deepening their engagement and understanding.

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3. STEP-BY-STEP

The initiative aims to change attitudes by challenging Eurosceptic views through real-life narratives and personal stories that highlight the positive impacts of the EU. A key aim is to foster a sense of European identity, encouraging participants to see themselves as part of a larger, diverse community. The program promotes openness, inclusiveness, and a more positive view of the Union through educational and artistic skill-building activities and exposure to different cultures and perspectives of the EU.

3.4. Tools for conducting need analysis

In this project, focused on using art-based methods in youth work, conducting a thorough needs analysis is crucial. This involves various approaches:

Surveys and questionnaires are utilised to gather quantitative data, offering a broad overview of the youth's perceptions and knowledge about the EU. These tools provide an objective baseline of the target group's understanding and sentiments.

For deeper qualitative insights, **interviews and focus groups** are perfect tools. These interactions delve into the youths' thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards the EU, uncovering underlying misconceptions and unrecognised perceptions.

Lastly, **observational studies** in various settings give real-life insights into how youths' theoretical perceptions translate into actual behaviours and discussions. Observing interactions in environments like educational settings or art-based activities reveals the social dynamics affecting their views on the EU.

Integrating these methodologies ensures a comprehensive understanding of the target group, which is essential for developing effective strategies to empower the EU and combat Euroscepticism through youth work.

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3. STEP-BY-STEP

3.5. Group of Participants

The youth workers who participated in the Learning, Teaching, and Training Activity (LTTA)⁵ on arts-based methods are passionate professionals who want to integrate creative approaches into youth work to engage with the values of the European Union and combat Euroscepticism. These individuals come from different backgrounds within the EU and share the goal of using the arts to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of EU values such as unity, peace, freedom, and cultural diversity among young people. Through a series of workshops and cultural exchange, they explored how different fields of art can be powerful tools for dialogue, reflection, and education. The group is committed to using the knowledge they have gained to use the arts to bridge gaps in understanding, challenge misconceptions, and build a stronger, more inclusive European identity among young people.

5.The training methodology was applied during the training course in Lucca, Italy (13-19 November 2023) where the developed Manual activities were piloted.

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PROGRAM

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.1. Planning a series of activities based on artistic methodologies.

Planning a series of activities based on artistic methodologies to contrast Euroscepticism means having in mind what the real needs of the group of young people we are addressing are. A careful analysis of the problems and questions that our group finds itself facing every day in the world at home, at school, and in social contexts.

Highlight the key points that will determine the choice of planning of the days to be implemented not with the intention of giving clear answers but to trigger questions and reflections. In the group context, it will be nourishing for everyone to understand that many questions of individuals are questions of everyone and that the answers if there are any, can be found together.

This section offers an example of how the EUforYOUTH training programme was built considering the needs assessment and using the activities developed in the Manual.

First, the learning objectives of the training programme have to be well defined considering the needs and the competences that the target group needs to acquire or develop.

TRAINING PROGRAM CONTENT

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

The objectives of the training programme delivered under the EU for YOUTH project were:

- Innovate youth work by integrating art-based methods into youth activities;
- Develop youth workers' competence in using art-based methods in approaching EU topics and values in youth activities;
- Equip youth workers with art-based methods to tackle Euroscepticism and foster youth participation;
- Encourage young people's engagement with European values through art;
- Promoting understanding and appreciation for the interconnectedness of European nations and cultures;
- Promote critical thinking and reflection on European identity.

Once the objectives of the training programme are defined it can be chosen the activities from the Manual that are the most relevant to the background of participants and cover the learning needs.

TRAINING PROGRAM CONTENT

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.2. Choose art fields and activities from the Manual that best match with the content

To facilitate an enriching and immersive experience in each chapter of the Manual we have chosen to go through all the art fields contained in the manual: painting, tailoring, handcrafting, photography and theatre during our training programme. With this choice, participants will be able to understand which of the art fields is best suited to their way of working and closest to their aptitudes and the group of young people they work with. The Manual was written in an accessible way even for youth workers and educators who do not have strong experience in the field of art.

Our training programme included the following selection from each art field:

PAINTING – *Prints of Solidarity*

Overview: The aim is to promote European values and contrast Euroscepticism among young people through the art of textile printing. Participants will create printed signs symbolizing unity, inclusiveness, and solidarity within the EU.

TAILORING - *No flag*

Overview: This is a tailoring workshop that intends to use the flag as an identifying element, reworking it in a personal and collective way. The ethnic and cultural identity mixes with that of others intending to lead the group towards a new vision of relationships, identities, and the world.

Handcrafting - *Many faces*

Overview: The workshop aims to increase the sense of cooperation and community, the interaction between diversity using clay as a tool for self-definition, one's uniqueness, and the originality of the different characters of people.

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PROGRAM

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

THEATER - *Cultural Festival*

Overview: The activity aims to promote cultural diversity in Europe, tolerance towards other cultures, and mutual understanding of all citizens living in the European geographical space. The activity highlights the similarities and differences of all European nations.

PHOTOGRAPHY - *Capturing European Values through Photography*

Overview: Young people use photography to explore and show European values. Through the acquisition of images and the application of digital editing techniques, participants delve into the essence of European values and counter-Euroscepticism.

The sessions have in general different lengths of time, furthermore, some require specific spaces, for this reason, a trainer or facilitator must plan the time and spaces well beforehand for the choice of activities.

There are some techniques, for example tailoring, that need more time than other activities. Make sure to respect the time allocation suggested in the Manual.

TRAINING PROGRAM CONTENT

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.3. Planning of the training sessions - development of training course agenda

When planning the training programme agenda, we first considered creating a proposal that had a wide variety of techniques, but as a second aspect we put the EU values we wanted to address back at the centre. In the diagram below we provide the training course extended agenda.

Before the start of the training programme, collection of participants' expectations is crucial as it allows them to tailor of the programme according to their specific needs. We provide an example of the agenda that was carried out based on the needs of our training course.

| TIME | DAY 1 | DAY 2 | DAY 3 | DAY 4 | DAY 5 | DAY 6 | DAY 7 |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| 07:30 – 8:30 | BREAKFAST | | | | | | |
| 09:30 – 11:00 | Arrival of participants | Registration + welcome kit and welcome Speech Introduction to the project and project results | Inclusion through art Beginning of Tailoring workshop «No Flag» | Handcraft workshop «Many Faces» drawing phase | Visit Bi done Atelier Art& Recycle for Circular Economy Sustainability in youth work | Photography workshop «Capturing European values through photography » | Closing Project next steps Planning piloting art based methods activities in local communities |
| 11:00 – 11:20 | | COFFEE BREAK | | | | | |
| 11:20 – 12:30 | | Art in youth work: how to prepare an art based method workshop | Continuing Tailoring workshop «No Flag» | «Many Faces» - shaping in clay » | Theatre workshop «Cultural Festival» | Photographic exercise in the city (EU values and EU practicality) | |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | LUNCH BREAK | | | | | | |
| 13:30 – 15:30 | Get to know each other activity, Introduction of expectations | Print workshop «Prints of Solidarity» | Finalising «No Flag» workshop and results presentation | Finalising workshop «Many Faces» | Importance of debriefing and reflection in art-based workshops | Review of photo assignment | Departure of participants |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | COFFEE BREAK | | | | | | |
| 16:00 – 17:30 | Exploring the local place | Reflection on EU values and meaning of Euroscepticism | Reflection on national/European identity | Diversity in the European community and youth participation | Tour of the city with treasure hunt | Feedback and evaluation | |
| 20:00 – 21:00 | DINNER | | | | | | |

TRAINING CONTENT

PROGRAM

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.4. How to use the Manual on tackling Euroscepticism using art-based methods

Choose the activities that suit best the objectives and target group. Slowly approach the things in the Manual that seem more complicated to you, studying them and transforming them according to your ability as facilitator of the learning process. Curiosity will always be an ally and the sense of adventure you bring into doing things will certainly be an extra spark for the participants.

In the manual you will find various levels of difficulty indicated at the beginning of the chapter, this difficulty is given not so much by the technique but rather by the tools or materials that you will have to look for and prepare in time.

This aspect is more important than you think, preparing an activity is already half the work. Taking care of this phase of the work, preparing, and choosing the materials, tools, room, light, table or floor are all very important and non-trivial elements. This aspect of care is a value that the facilitator transmits to the participants, saying that they are important and that the proposed materials are useful.

Each activity of the manual indicates the necessary time for implementation. Choose the activities making sure they fit in the time you have at disposal. It is very important that everything to be done with care and attention, without stress and without speeding up the time because it is getting late. Giving the necessary time, participants will have a pleasant learning experience.

Procure the materials carefully, above all try not to buy them but to recover them in the clean waste of local companies. Choose them by shape and colour when placing them on the table, always include natural elements in the colour palette.

TRAINING CONTENT

PROGRAM

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.5. Debriefing role in conducting activities that tackle Euroscepticism

At the end of each activity, it is important to reflect on the outcomes, reactions of the group, and the participation and inclusion of those people who find it most difficult to become active. This moment will help to plan and calibrate the next activities. A new reflection must be made at the conclusion of the completed activity to understand whether the objectives set by the workshop have been achieved.

The Manual contains debriefing questions for the group, but also the facilitator. By collecting the participants' reflections, the facilitator will be able to understand if the message of the activity was assimilated by participants and theoretical concepts understood.

We believe it is very important for the facilitator to fully understand the potential of debriefing activities as activities that give space to the sedimentation of the theoretical and practical. It will be a moment of personal verification and analysis concerning the path in progress and will help the facilitator to monitor the level of learning, but above all connect it with the other participants.

The role of the debriefing activities is also to analyse, evaluate, and implement (if necessary) the training paths - in this case, to tackle Euroscepticism - creating a community of practice in which the collective intelligence created is shared with every participant.

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CONTENT

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.6. Designing inclusive activities

As part of the activities that aim to tackle Euroscepticism, it is very important to design activities and training programmes that are as inclusive as possible. This was an even more important mission for us given the complexity of the issues covered and given that Euroscepticism can have a heterogeneous origin.

Thanks to a participatory process between all the partners and a communion of different intentions and skills, it was possible to create and propose to the participants an inclusive environment accessible to anyone.

In reference to the art-based methodologies structured, these same practices were conceived and designed as strategic and inclusive methods and tools, suitable and adoptable by all participants and future stakeholders.

As anticipated, the process of designing inclusive activities was participatory and community in nature. In fact, according to the experience gained, we recommend creating an environment that is as horizontal as possible and starting from the different skills of those in the design team (or community).

The preparation of such an environment will greatly favor the ability to plan inclusive activities as it will serve to map the different skills, i.e. the diversity and heterogeneity of the people involved.

The concept of inclusion (or inclusiveness) is in fact closely connected to that of diversity, i.e. tolerance and space for anyone who wants to take part in training activities, embracing the clear common intent of tackling Euroscepticism through art-based methodologies.

Once this horizontal environment has been prepared in which it is possible to map the diversity of skills present, it will be the responsibility of the people involved to match and communicate the various skills. This, in the awareness that every competence, skill, and knowledge can make a strategic contribution to the community in terms of planning and providing inclusive activities.

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4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

What we propose is to always act through tools relating to soft skills, such as shared dialogue, horizontal participation, creativity and emotional intelligence, teamwork, and building.

These tools - very often used for bottom-up actions - are very important to encourage the generation of inclusive activities, and above all to maintain a high level of inclusiveness over time.

Finally, the management and proliferation of inclusive activities is an important theme. In fact, it happens that very often we may have the best intentions to create an inclusive environment for everyone, but unfortunately, we then fail to plan and put it into practice.

It will therefore be very important in this case to always refer to the common objective of the selected art-based methodologies - i.e. tackle Euroscepticism - developing a necessary critical spirit that can help you redirect the purposes towards the adoption and activation of inclusive activities.

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4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

4.7. Designing sustainable activities

The concept of sustainability is closely connected with that of inclusion (or inclusiveness). Moving from this, the process of designing sustainable activities obviously goes hand in hand with designing inclusive activities, and the two cannot be separated.

The sustainability of the activities we propose lies in their attention to the people involved who participate in them, the materials used and the skills and knowledge interconnected.

Our objective was to conceive and plan activities compatible with the complexity of the meaning of sustainability in its multiple values of environmental, social, cultural, economic, technological sustainability, etc.

To design sustainable activities, it is therefore very important to adopt soft skills such as time management, critical thinking, systemic thinking, creativity and emotional intelligence. These transversal skills will be very useful for you to conceive, create and develop a fruitful atmosphere for the development of sustainable actions dedicated to tackling Euroscepticism. Furthermore, the above-mentioned soft skills are closely related to the selected art-based methodologies and will be useful for the various activities proposed and undertaken.

The sustainability (but also the inclusiveness) of the planned activities must be appropriately monitored and evaluated both in the process of carrying out the activities and afterward. Sustainable activities are those actions that can be continued over time and which continuously benefit those involved (both at the level of organizers and participants or future stakeholders).

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PROGRAM

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

Furthermore, sustainable activities are also those practices that are adopted by possible stakeholders who are positively influenced by them, trying to apply and adapt objectives, mission and expected results to the new reference context.

With particular reference to the objective of tackling Euroscepticism through art-based methodologies, this means that the sustainable (and inclusive) activities that we have conceived and designed can be adopted and conveyed in different applications, obviously paying attention to the new reference context (territory, objective, etc.). In the project of sustainable (and inclusive) activities, we consider the process of assessment and continuous monitoring of the activities very important, so that they remain sustainable (and inclusive).

4.8. Evaluation of the training program

As anticipated, it is very important to forecast and design an evaluation system for the training program, especially in reference to the inclusiveness and sustainability of the actions undertaken. The evaluation system that has been prepared can be structured into three defined and interconnected phases which concern the initial preparation for carrying out the training program, its actual carrying out, and the final phase of follow-up and dissemination of the results achieved.

Correct management of evaluation activities is essential to monitor the entire training program process and to ensure that the expected results are aligned with those that will actually be achieved. The importance of adopting a good evaluation system is also closely related to the project and promotion of inclusive and sustainable activities within the developed training program, always keeping in mind the general objective of tackling Euroscepticism through art-based methodologies.

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PROGRAM

4. Gather the content aligned with the learning objectives

Regarding the methods and tools used for the evaluation of the training program, we made use of open-source methodologies adaptable to the context and useful for collecting heterogeneous data, i.e. both qualitative and quantitative. Some of the tools commonly used to assess training program practices are focus groups with the participants involved, surveys and semi-structured interviews which serve to collect emotional data on the individual participant, and detailed photo journals of the activities.

This was accompanied by methodologies from European and international evaluation systems (such as OECD evaluation criteria) and other semi-structured methods that will be implemented by the academic partners who will monitor the training program, thanks to the experience gained in the field.

The evaluation system we have created is "manipulable" in the sense that it is an open, open-source system that can be adopted for different purposes and different contexts. Our main and specific objective is to collect as much qualitative and quantitative data as possible that can help us understand the actions put into practice, to evaluate whether these activities are inclusive and sustainable, and above all, to evaluate whether the training program designed and piloted is really incisive in the general objective of tackling Euroscepticism through art-based methodologies.

All data collected will be catalogued and interpreted so that they can be useful for the implementation and improvement of the designed and piloted training program.

TRAINING PROGRAM CONTENT

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

5.1. Why do trainers play an important role

Trainers are the cornerstone of the training programme, serving as the guiding force behind the successful implementation of art-based methods. They are pivotal in establishing an inclusive and safe environment. They should ensure that every participant, regardless of their background or prior experience, feels welcomed and valued. Such an environment is essential for effective learning and skill development. Trainers also serve as models of effective communication and engagement. Their ability to convey information in an engaging and relatable manner is critical to equipping youth workers with the skills to do the same with young people. This modelling of effective communication techniques is especially vital in breaking down Euroscepticism and fostering constructive dialogue. Their pivotal role goes beyond mere instruction.

Trainers fulfil the role of:

Facilitators. In the context of art-based methods, trainers act as facilitators of creative exploration. They provide the framework and guidance needed for youth workers to effectively employ art in their engagement with young people. Their expertise is instrumental in ensuring that art-based activities are both meaningful and educational.

Mentors. Trainers serve as mentors to youth workers, offering insights, support, and encouragement throughout the training programme. They create a mentorship relationship that goes beyond the training period, fostering a sense of ongoing learning and growth. This mentorship aspect is particularly valuable in nurturing youth workers' long-term commitment to their roles.

TRAINING CONTENT

PROGRAM

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

Change agents. Beyond being instructors, trainers are catalysts for change. They have the power to transform the perspectives and attitudes of youth workers regarding EU topics and Euroscepticism. By conveying the significance of art as a means of communication and engagement, trainers can inspire a new way of thinking and encourage proactive involvement.

5.2. Trainers as a key resource for transferring knowledge to participants

Trainers play a pivotal role in transferring knowledge and skills to participants, who, in turn, will work directly with young people. The success of the training programme hinges on how effectively trainers can equip youth workers with the tools and techniques necessary for using art-based methods. The role of trainers in transferring knowledge and nurturing the skills of youth workers is multifaceted and indispensable for the success of our training programme. Their key actions consist of:

- Trainers are the transmitters of knowledge. They not only possess expertise but are also adept at conveying information in an accessible and engaging manner. The ability to distil complex EU topics into digestible and engaging content is a skill that trainers should master.
- Adapting to diverse learning needs. Effective trainers understand that participants come from diverse backgrounds and possess varying learning needs and styles. Trainers adapt their teaching methods to accommodate these differences, ensuring that every participant can benefit from the training.
- Creating a safe and inclusive space. Trainers play a crucial role in creating a safe and inclusive space for participants. In this environment, individuals feel comfortable exploring art-based methods and expressing their opinions on EU topics. The trainers' ability to establish such an atmosphere is crucial for achieving the project's goals.

TRAINING CONTENT

PROGRAM

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

- Applying knowledge. Trainers bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and its practical application. They facilitate the transformation of information into action, guiding participants in harnessing the potential of art-based methods to combat Euroscepticism and encourage active civic engagement among young people.
- Motivating and inspiring. Trainers are not just instructors; they are motivators who ignite the spark of enthusiasm in participants. They should inspire youth workers to embrace the art-based approach with passion and commitment, recognising its potential for positive change.

TRAINING PROGRAM

CONTENT

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

5.3. What to focus on to tackle Eurosceptic narratives

Tackling Eurosceptic narratives through art-based methods is not just about presenting facts; it's about equipping youth workers with the skills and knowledge to engage with young people in a way that fosters understanding and positive change. Trainers need to be well-prepared and focused on several key areas. These areas encompass the core aspects that trainers should address when working with youth workers to effectively counter Euroscepticism. These correspond to:

Common misconceptions. To combat Euroscepticism, trainers should equip youth workers with a deep understanding of common misconceptions and myths surrounding EU topics. Armed with this knowledge, youth workers can confidently address these misconceptions with accurate information and evidence.

Real-world relevance. Art-based methods should be grounded in real-world issues and challenges. Trainers should guide participants in selecting topics and themes that resonate with the daily lives and concerns of young people. When EU topics are made relevant and relatable, it becomes easier to engage youth and debunk Eurosceptic narratives.

Critical thinking. Promoting critical thinking skills is paramount. Trainers should emphasise the importance of encouraging young people to question, analyse, and evaluate information critically. This empowers them to form informed opinions and make sound judgments regarding EU topics.

TRAINING PROGRAM

CONTENT

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

Constructive dialogue. Trainers should model and encourage constructive dialogue among youth workers. Effective communication skills, including active listening and respectful debate, are essential tools for breaking down Euroscepticism and fostering open, honest discussion.

Creative expression. Art-based methods enable creative expression. Trainers should guide youth workers in harnessing the power of creativity to convey complex EU topics. Creativity can serve as a bridge for conveying information and generating interest.

5.4 Tips on making activities more attractive

Engaging young people in art-based activities can be a rewarding yet challenging endeavour. Making activities attractive is about creating an environment where young people feel excited, motivated, and inspired to engage with European topics through art. By embracing creativity, relevance, interactivity, technology, and flexibility, trainers and youth workers can significantly enhance the appeal of art-based activities. There can be employ several strategies to make these activities not only informative but also irresistibly attractive:

Celebrate diversity and inclusion. An effective way to make art-based activities more attractive to young people is by celebrating diversity and fostering an inclusive environment. This means actively promoting the representation and involvement of individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives in the creation and appreciation of art.

Embrace creativity. Youth workers should be encouraged to think outside the box. Art-based activities should be creative and inspiring. Participants should be allowed and encouraged to explore their imagination and experiment with different artistic forms, including visual arts, theatre, music, and creative writing.

TRAINING CONTENT

PROGRAM

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

Relate to youth interests. Activities should be tailored to the interests and passions of young people. When the subject matter resonates with their personal preferences, youngsters are more likely to be engaged and invested in the activity.

Interactive elements. Interactive elements such as group projects, discussions, and hands-on experience should be integrated. These activities foster collaboration, peer learning, and a sense of involvement. Interactive activities also help break the monotony and keep participants engaged.

Integrating technology. Technology should be employed when appropriate. Young people are often tech-savvy, and integrating digital tools or platforms can enhance the appeal of art-based activities.

Flexibility and choice. It is important to allow participants some flexibility and choice in the activities they engage in. Providing options for different art forms or project topics can cater to diverse interests and talents. This flexibility encourages ownership and personal investment in the activity.

5.5. Tips for trainers to conduct successful debriefing activities

Debriefing is a vital part of the process, ensuring that the insights and lessons from art-based activities are effectively internalised. Effective debriefing is not only about summarising the activity but also about promoting reflection, dialogue, and actionable outcomes. Trainers can employ several tips to conduct successful debriefing sessions. By following these tips, trainers can create debriefing sessions that reinforce the value of art-based methods, enhance the learning experience, and facilitate a deeper understanding of EU topics.

TRAINING PROGRAM

CONTENT

5. The role of trainer/facilitator in the process

These tips are:

Foreseen a reflection time. Sufficient time should be allocated to reflection. Participants need time to process their experiences and thoughts. They should be encouraged to ponder what they have learned and how this is related to EU topics. Time for reflection can be included at the beginning or end of each session.

Make use of guided questions. Thought-provoking questions can be used to guide the discussion. Participants should be encouraged to share their observations, emotions, and insights. This can help uncover hidden layers of understanding and promote meaningful dialogue.

Encourage active participation. It should be ensured that all participants have an opportunity to actively participate in the debriefing session. An inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences should be created. Trainers should actively engage with all participants, making sure that quieter individuals have the chance to speak.

Connect to learning objectives. The debriefing should be related to the training's learning objectives. It should be highlighted how art-based activities have contributed to countering Euroscepticism and promoting civic engagement. This connection helps participants see the broader purpose of the activities and how they fit into the project's objectives.

Encourage peer reflection. Peer reflection is a valuable practice. Participants should be encouraged to reflect on each other's experiences and share their observations. This peer perspective can provide fresh insights and alternative viewpoints, enriching the learning experience.

CONCLUSION

The "EU for Youth" Erasmus project team developed the Training Course Methodology on art-based methods to encourage youth workers, trainers, NGO leaders, formal and non-formal educators to apply such methods in their youth activities related to topics regarding the European Union.

Through this methodological guide, we want to increase civic participation, counter Euroscepticism among young people, and promote the inclusion of disadvantaged young people and their more active involvement and awareness regarding European values.

The methodology and activities presented are designed to make them inclusive for people from different cultural backgrounds or with physical/psychological disabilities. Thus, focusing on the values of inclusion through art, youth participation, and sustainability in youth work.

The methodology is based on five different art-based methods (Painting / Tailoring / Handcrafting / Theater / Photography), which have proven their usefulness and appeal among the youth workers involved in the project – from Romania, Italy, Slovakia and Belgium. So, through this Methodology, we want to share experience and good practices in art-based non-formal training activities, promote a comprehensive understanding of the European values among young people, and combat Euroscepticism. We hope that our explanations on how to use the Methodology and the role of trainers will guide all those interested in the practical application of the suggested methods by which Euroscepticism will be combated and European integration will be promoted.

We wish you success in using our guide and hope that the proposed methods will have a positive impact on groups of young people from various countries.

CONCLUSION

With the hope that the proposed activities and methodologies can enliven and stimulate a debate in the younger generation related to the future challenges of our European community, starting with those faced by democracy.

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