

Youth Exchange

Promoting Inclusivity and respect

TOOLKIT



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This document aims to share some of the activities implemented during the youth exchange. This publication is aimed at youth workers, social workers, teachers, and anyone interested in approaching the topic of cultural awareness and tolerance, respect for cultural, social and gender differences.

The youth exchange **“Promoting Inclusivity and respect”** was funded by the European Union in the frame of the Erasmus+ programme and implemented by InformaGiovani ETS

Disclaimer

This project was funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Italian National Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Youth Exchange - Promoting Inclusivity and respect
Filaga, Palermo, Italy | 21st to 28th August 2025
Italy, Estonia, North Macedonia, Slovenia

The activity "Promoting Inclusivity and respect" was a cross-cultural youth exchange involving 20 participants aged 14-17 from Italy, Estonia,, North Macedonia, and Slovenia, and 4 adult leaders and 1 trainer with experience in managing nonformal activities. The objective was to enhance cultural awareness and promote tolerance and respect for cultural, social and gender differences.

By providing a safe and inclusive environment participants were able to reflect on personal stereotypes and beliefs, confront societal biases and engage in open and respectful dialogue about topics such as gender, identity, diversity and inclusion with peers from diverse backgrounds. Through simulations, games, role-playing participants developed essential life skills, such as respectful communication, conflict prevention and resolution and empathy.

Aims of the activity

- Enhance cultural awareness and tolerance by fostering mutual understanding among young people from diverse backgrounds and promoting intercultural dialogue and empathy;
- Promote inclusive attitudes and behaviors by encouraging participants to recognize and challenge stereotypes, discrimination and social exclusion based on culture and gender
- Develop communication and conflict resolution skills by exchanging tools to engage in respectful dialogue, resolve misunderstandings, and build positive relationships across differences
- Exchange information about identity and diversity in a safe environment by providing a space where participants can share knowledge on gender identities

Wed 20 Aug	Thur 21 Aug	Fri 22 Aug	Sat 23 Aug	Sun 24 Aug
	Energizer	Energizer	Energizer	Energizer
	Get to Know	Intercultural learning: Cultures and multiculturalism	Communication styles and active listening	Social construction of gender and stereotypes Gender and identity
	Agenda, expectations, contributions			
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Arrivals	Team Building	Values, principles, common objective and relationship	Preventing misunderstandings and managing conflict through non-violent communication	Discrimination and inclusive language
Arrivals	YouthPass Key competences			
	Stay together: Set our own open and safer space			
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
Welcome evening	Games	Intercultural evening	Intercultural evening	Intercultural evening
Mon 25 Aug	Tue 26 Aug	Wed 27 Aug	Thur 28 Aug	Fri 29 Aug
Energizer	Energizer	Energizer	Energizer	
Emotion and expression	Visit to Eraclea Minoa	Preparing the event sharing ideas and creating groups	Erasmus+/ESC opportunities	Departures
			Finalising the event working in groups	
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
Personal boundaries, respect and consent	Back to Filaga	Preparing the event working in groups	Final evaluation and YouthPass	
Mid-term evaluation			Event open to local public	
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
Intercultural evening	Self-managed	Self-managed	Firewall party	

Exploring values for cultivating positive relationships

by Monica Valenti

Duration: 120 minutes

Source: Inspired by birds and bees project (Ambitia Institute) and adapted to the topic of positive relationships

Aim of the activity

- to encourage participants to reflect on their personal values
- To understand the values that shape positive relationships and explore how they can apply these values in their daily lives.

Materials needed for the activity

- list of values printed
- paper
- pens
- flipchart
- a drawing of a tree to be used for creating the map

Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Be prepared to explain the terms “value” and “principle”.
- Cut out the values and arrange them randomly in a room. (this have to be done before the beginning of the activity)

Instructions (described step by step)

The facilitator introduces the topic and explains the difference between values and principles. They then ask the participants to move around the room and select ten words that represent their values. They must write these words on a piece of paper or in a notebook.

Next, participants have five minutes to individually rank their list of values in order of importance.

Divide participants into groups of four and ask them to share their values, explaining why they are important. After discussing this, each group must compile a list of the five most important values among the ones selected earlier. They have 20 minutes in total.

Read all five lists in plenary and check for similarities, diversity, and unique insights. Later, ask participants:
How do your personal values align with the way you treat others?
How can understanding different values help to interact with people from different backgrounds or cultures?

All participants will then create a shared map (symbolised by a tree) of the values they believe are essential for creating positive relationships. Each leaf has a value. Once the map is completed, the facilitator gives each group 2-3 values (2-3 leaves) and asks them to brainstorm ways in which they can be demonstrated in

relationships (e.g. honesty = speaking the truth, even when it's difficult). The results are presented in plenary.

The facilitator concludes by emphasising that positive relationships are founded on shared values, which can change over time. It is therefore important to consider personal values when making decisions. If something conflicts with your beliefs, it's best to reflect and consider if step back.

Questions for debriefing

- What can you do to be more mindful of others' values in a relationship?
- How did the activity help you better understand the link between values and building positive relationships?

Communication styles and active listening by the Estonian team

Duration: 120 min

Source: brainstormed by the group

Aim of the activity

- Get familiar with styles of communication and active listening
- Practice styles and reflect on personal behaviour

Materials needed for the activity

- flipchart
- paper
- rope or chalk (for the debate)

Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Prepare a flipchart with the 4 styles of communication
- Small piece of paper with communication style (for part 2)
- Prepare statements in a big picture so people can read them (for the debate. optional)

Instructions (described step by step)

1. Introduction to the 4 communication styles: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, assertive.
(We used a flipchart)

Passive - don't say what you really think	Aggressive - say what you want loudly, don't think about others
● avoid expression ● avoid conflict ● not protecting rights ● no self-defending ● avoid eye-contact ● quiet, uncertain ● closed, posture Key words: it's fine whatever, it doesn't matter, sorry Ex: "Okay, do whatever you want..."	● Dominates, interruptions ● Blames ● Always aims to win ● Very expressive ● Violating other rights ● Loud voice ● Pointing fingers ● Crossed arms Key words: you must, i'm right, you have to. That's stupid. Ex: "I said it will be like this!"

Passive-Aggressive - Don't say what bothers you, show it in sarcasm or actions	Assertive - say what you think clearly, listen, respect
• Undermine others • Doesn't share their true thoughts, needs • Tries to hurt you, to get back at you without letting you know the reason • Sarcastic • Indirect, fake smile Key words: sure, do it your way... (sarcasm); Whatever you say; wow, so clean in here... Ex: <i>"Sure, because I always do everything..."</i>	• Eye contact • Open posture • Respects self and others • Direct but polite • Listens actively • Calm • Confident Key words: I feel, let's find a solution, I need. Ex: <i>"Let's split the tasks so we finish on time"</i>

2. Group Activity: Guess the Style

Divide participants into 4 groups and give each one two secret styles. They have to act it out for 2-3 minutes while others have to guess the style. For each scenario provided, they have to act in all of the styles they have.

Scenario example:

- decide where to go tonight
- your classmate submitted a project you worked together full of mistakes.
- your friend invited you for a party but you don't want to go
- your best friends disagreed on how to solve a problem
- you need more time to complete your tasks, ask for an extended deadline
- someone says your presentation was confusing
- You need more money for your birthday party

At the end, ask the whole group: What signs showed the style? Which style is healthiest for teamwork?

3. Pairs Activity: Story & Mirror

Divide participants in pairs, one person shares a short story (it can be a funny travel moment, a challenge, etc) while the other doesn't give reactions. After, partners switch and one practices **active listening** using eye contact, nodding, paraphrasing, asking questions. At the end, they both analyze how they feel and how it was to play one situation and the other.

At the end, ask the whole group: How did it feel to be truly listened to? What helped?

4. Movement Debate: Line of Opinions

Draw a line on the floor or in the room: one side will represent '**Strongly agree**' and the other '**Strongly disagree**'. Read out a statement at a time and ask participants to position themselves according to their

opinion. After each positioning, ask participants to explain their choice and lead a debate. Participants are allowed to move if they change their mind during the activity.

Statements used are:

- Speaking is easier than listening
- Better to tell the truth even if it hurts
- Emojis help communication
- Silence is also communication

At the end, ask the whole group:

Was it hard to listen to opposite opinions?

What helps us respect and understand different views?

Questions for debriefing

- Which style is the easiest to apply, and which is the hardest to avoid?
- How do emotions influence the style we use?

Social construction of gender and stereotypes

by Stefania Dagnino

Duration: 110 minutes

Source: personal idea

Aim of the activity

- To explore gender stereotypes
- To build an understanding of what gender means at its different levels (gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation)

Materials needed for the activity

- Images of children's bedrooms having evident gendered elements (one for each working group)
- A4 paper
- Pens
- Blank Genderbread Person templates
- Markers

Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Get familiar with the different levels of the Genderbread Person model
<https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com33/genderbread-person/#gp4>
- Have knowledge of common gender stereotypes
- Arranging the space to allow small group work and plenary discussion

Instructions (described step by step)

1st phase

Divide the group into two or three small groups of 4 or 5 people.

Give each group an A4 paper, pens, and one image of a bedroom. Ask each group to carefully observe the image and collectively describe the person who might live in that space (10-15 min)

Guide them to reflect on aspects such as:

- Age of the person living the room
- Its interests and passions
- Its gender

After the time is over, invite each group to present their room-picture to the plenary. Later, ask which elements of the image led them to their conclusions. (e.g. colours, toys, posters, objects, etc). Now, ask the other groups whether they agree with the description given and to explain why.

If participants are willing to share, ask them if there were any elements or toys in their own childhood bedroom that described them or influenced how others perceived them. If they feel to, they can discuss it in their working group.

2nd phase: introduction to genderbread person model

- Ask participants if they have ever heard of gender stereotypes. Build together a shared definition of what gender stereotypes are and what gender means to them.
- Present the blank Genderbread Person template and ask participants to identify and name the different levels represented.
- Once the structure of gender and the concept of gender stereotypes are clearer, ask participants to share in group of 3 or 4 people for 10-15 minutes:
 - The most common gender stereotypes in their country or community
 - Possible ways to challenge or reduce these stereotypes

Questions for debriefing

- What new things have you discovered about gender stereotypes?
- Why is it important to challenge them in society?
- What can we do to create a more equal society?

Discrimination and inclusive language

by Stefania Dagnino

Duration: 120 min

Source: personal idea

Aim of the activity

- To highlight the importance of language as an element that reflects and reinforces stereotypes.
- To emphasise how language can convey forms of discrimination, even unintentionally.
- To improve communication in diverse groups

Materials needed for the activity

- Flipcharts
- Markers
- Sheets of paper
- Mobile phones

Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Find your own definition of inclusive language
- A space/room for working in smaller groups comfortably

Instructions (described step by step)

Phase 1: inclusive language mode ON

Participants are divided into four groups (4-5 people per each). Each group is given a flip chart and a list of eight sentences containing negative or non-inclusive language (see below). Each group has 20 minutes to transform these sentences into inclusive language, ensuring everyone agrees on the changes. Once they have finished, the groups should compare their results. The facilitator then leads a discussion about what inclusive language means to participants and its importance in society, using a guide version of the modified sentences.

nr.1	
Negative	Positive
You throw like a girl!	That was a great throw! Want to practice together?
You're too skinny to play sports.	You have great athletic potential!
You people always complain about everything.	I'd like to understand your concerns better.
That's so lame!	That's disappointing
That's so gay!	That's not my preference
Your food smells weird.	That smells different from what I'm used to - what is it?
Real men don't cry.	It's okay to show emotions.
You're pretty smart for someone from your background.	You're really smart!

Nr.2	
Negative	Positive
Maybe you should skip dessert.	Enjoy whatever makes you happy.
You're acting crazy.	That seems confusing to me.
People like you don't understand money.	Everyone has different experiences with money.
Old people just don't get it.	People of all ages have valuable perspectives.
You don't act like a normal girl.	I appreciate you being yourself.
That's not how we do things here.	That's an interesting way of doing things.
She's too emotional to be a leader.	She would make a great leader because of her high emotional intelligence.
Where are you really from?	Where did you grow up?

Nr.3	
Negative	Positive
You'd be pretty if you lost some weight.	You look great just as you are.
Stop being such a spaz.	Take your time, no rush.
Kids these days have no respect.	Each generation brings something unique.
You should try to fit in more.	I'd love to learn about your background.
That's women's work.	Everyone can contribute in their own way.
You don't look like you belong here.	You belong here just like everyone else.
Short people can't be taken seriously.	People come in all shapes and sizes.
Don't be so blind to the obvious.	Help me understand what you see.

Nr.4	
Negative	Positive
That's such a poor person thing to do.	We all have different financial situations.
You'll understand when you're older.	Your perspective is valuable regardless of age.
Your traditions are outdated.	Your traditions are part of what makes you unique.
She's very aggressive for a female manager.	She is a highly assertive and decisive leader.
Stop acting like a drama queen.	I can see you're really frustrated, want to talk?
Can I touch your hair? It's so exotic.	I love your style, it looks great on you!
He's a psycho.	His behaviour is really intense/scary.
Is that a boy or a girl?	What are their pronouns?

Phase 2: Creative Creation

Each group draws an envelope containing a specific task.

- Envelope 1 (Music): Create a song using only inclusive words.
- Envelope 2 (Podcast): Create a podcast on the importance of language in interpersonal relationships.
- Envelope 3 (Video): Create a video focused on catcalling.
- Envelope 4 (Art): Create an artistic piece/poster about "trigger words" and how to change them.

Each group will have 30-40 minutes to design their creative task. After they present them to the whole group.

Questions for debriefing

- What do you think inclusive language is?
- Why do you think it is important in today's society?
- What do you think you can actively do to improve your own language?

Emotion and expression by Catia Provenzano

Duration: 90 min

Source: Catia Provenzano - Psychologist

Aim of the activity

- To talk about emotions and how to manage them
- To explore feelings through song lyrics

Materials needed for the activity

- PowerPoint
- Pre-defined songs

Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

The workshop was held by a professional in psychology and working with young people

Instructions (described step by step)

1st part: Brainstorming activity and overview on emotion

Brainstorming on the word “emotion” - participants have a maximum of 10 minutes to say aloud all the words that come to mind regarding emotions. The facilitator writes them on a whiteboard or poster. Once 10 minutes have passed or the space on the poster/board is full, we will try to organize the words by dividing them into different categories and highlighting the words with a color. After, we then move on to the second category, and repeat the same procedure.

The categories could be:

1. Types of emotions
2. Events that trigger emotions
3. Behaviors related to the expression of emotions
4. Behaviors that regulate emotions.

Once all the categories are discussed a [PowerPoint](#) is actively presented

2nd part: Music understands me!

Some songs have been selected to be listened to and discussed together. The aim is to listen to excerpts and discuss the emotions they evoke. For each song select a verse and play it. After each song, ask participants which emotion they felt while listening.

Selected music:

- Every breath you take (Police)

- Volare (Domenico Modugno)
- Bad liar (Imagine Dragons)

Questions for debriefing

- What new things did you learn from this activity?
- What techniques do you use to manage your emotions?

My home, my boundaries

by Tomaž Perme

Duration: 120 min

Source: adapted by Birds and Bees project of Ambitia Institute

Aim of the activity

- to help participants understand the concept of personal space and boundaries
- to deepen the concept of consent in relationships.

Materials needed for the activity

- XXL Chalks in different colors, Visual for definitions
- A large, paved area (playground, courtyard, big room with washable floor)

Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- An outdoor space, or somewhere on the ground where chalk can be used without causing damage.
- A speaker for playing background music
- Prepare visual beforehand

Instructions (described step by step)

Step 1: The participants are divided into two groups. One group creates homes first, while the other observes and later interacts with them.

Step 2: The first group draws a circle on the ground to represent their home. They choose its size themselves and decorate it to make it feel personal. The more time they spend on it, the more connected they become to it.

Step 3: The first group stands inside their homes and closes their eyes. Anyone who does not want to close their eyes can step aside and observe instead.

Step 4: The second group begins to interact with the homes in stages. First, they quietly walk around the homes without entering, touching, or speaking. Then they are allowed to enter the homes silently, but still without touching or speaking. After that, they step outside again and only walk around the homes before leaving the area.

Step 5: The groups switch roles. The first group leaves their homes, and the second group creates their own homes. They may use an existing home, change it, or draw a new one.

Step 6: The same sequence is repeated with the roles reversed. The first group walks around the homes, then enters them. In this round, they may touch the person inside, but only with one finger on the shoulder. After that, they leave the homes, walk around once more, and then leave the area.

Step 7: At the end, everyone comes together for reflection.

Closing message:

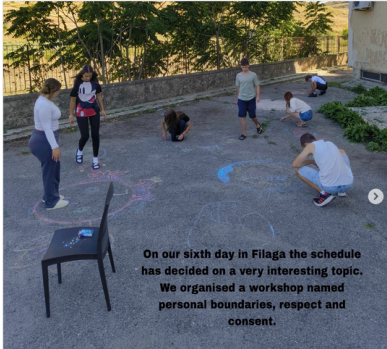
Boundaries exist whether others see them or not. They can shift depending on the situation or day – one day you may want closeness, the next day you may need distance. Respecting and communicating boundaries is essential for healthy relationships.

Questions for debriefing

1. How did you feel when you were in your home?
2. How did it feel to walk around someone else's home?
3. Which role felt easier for you? Why?
4. Did you feel uncomfortable at any point? When and why?
5. What was it like when touching was introduced?
6. If the home is a metaphor for your body, how does this change the meaning of the exercise?
7. How do you usually express or protect your boundaries in everyday life?
8. How often do you ask permission before entering someone else's "space"?

Media produced for the final event by participants

All these media materials have been designed and created by participants with the support of youth leaders

	Post di Associazione InformaGiovani 29 settembre 2025 Attrazione e identità di genere sono parte di ciò che siamo e del modo in cui ci raccontiamo al mondo. In adolescenza, questi aspetti diventano ancora più importanti e influenti nelle nostre vite. Durante lo scambio giovanile "Promoting inclusivity and respectful relationships" realizzato nell'ambito di Erasmus+ e finanziato dall'Unione Europea, abbiamo affrontato insieme questo tema centrale. Un gruppo di partecipanti lo ha tradotto in immagini, per condividere in modo creativo e immediato gli elementi fondamentali legati a questo tema. Gender attraction and identity are part of who we are and how we present ourselves to the world. In adolescence, these aspects become even more important and influential in our lives. During the youth exchange "Promoting inclusivity and respectful relationships" carried out as part of Erasmus+ and funded by the European Union, we addressed this central theme together. A group of participants translated it into images to share the fundamental elements related to this theme in a creative and immediate way. Talking about Gender Identity
About emotions and its expression shared on Instagram and Facebook	About gender attraction and identity shared on Facebook and on Instagram
Post di IGNetwork 19 settembre 2025 From 20 to 29 August, InformaGiovani was in Filaga for the youth exchange "Promoting inclusivity and respectful relationships", which led us to reflect and discuss fundamental issues such as respectful relationships, identity and relationships. Some participants used these images to illustrate the key topics we discussed together! The exchange was made possible thanks to the Erasmus+ programme, funded by the European Union. #Erasmus+ #YouthExchange Associazione InformaGiovani SPPMD Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency Ambitia Institute MTU EstYES 	 ignetwork.youth During the youth exchange "Promoting inclusivity and respectful relationships," carried out under the Erasmus+ program and funded by the European Union, we also addressed an important issue: respecting personal boundaries. Through a nonformal education activity, the participants were able to reflect, confront and challenge themselves. These pictures - taken by two participants - tell the experience through their eyes. @ambitia.institute @sppmd @estyes.ee @associazioneinformagiovani Ancora nessun commento. 22 settembre 2025 Accedi per mettere "Mi piace" o commentare.
About the youth exchange experience shared on Facebook and on Instagram	About personal respect and boundaries shared on Facebook and on Instagram



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Agenzia Italiana
per la Gioventù



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