



ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ  
ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ

# Tool Kit for the youth exchange

## *X-Press YOUrself*



Erasmus +

We welcome you in the guide of the youth exchange "X-press YOUrslef". From the 19th to the 27th of May 2015, ELIX-Conservation Volunteers Greece implemented a youth exchange in Athens entitled "X-press YOUrslef ", giving the opportunity to 30 youngsters from Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, Estonia and Turkey to participate actively in a program concerning freedom of speech.

"X-Press Yourself" is a youth exchange aiming to the promotion of one of the fundamental human rights, the freedom of speech and the right of expression. 30 participants from Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, Estonia and Turkey have together tried alternative ways of expressing as a mean to overcome the O-pression felt nowadays in some aspects of our Euro-society. Europe is a multinational platform open to everyone and all European citizens and inhabitants should have the right to X-press themselves freely. Our goal was to learn how we can overcome this barrier and find alternative and interactive ways of expressing our opinion under NO-pressure.

The Youth Exchange was based on a non-formal & outdoor education approach and Learn-by-Doing methodologies, so as to let the participants learn from experience and reflection, thanks to peer-to-peer debriefing sessions and through the use of different methods such as: small/big group work, role plays, simulation exercises, debates, theoretical input and practical work.

We prepared this guide to communicate about this great experience!

The "X-press YOUrslef" Team

## Aims and Objectives

The main topic of our exchange was the participation of young people in activities as a mean to promote the right of expression and the cooperation between participants who belong to different cultures, values and ethics reflecting on how society work. Our goal was to make young people more aware of the importance of expressing their own feelings and ideas, but also to educate them to inter-cultural learning and to a more positive attitude towards other people and cultures. Through the experiential education, in line with the principle of non formal education, we have tried to overcome the barriers and foster a more inclusive society, aiming to the promotion of one of the fundamental human rights, the right of expression. Firstly, freedom of expression is essential as a mean of assuring individual self-fulfillment, and for individuals to reach their full potential. Secondly, it foster the search for truth and the advancement of knowledge; in other words, an individual who seeks knowledge and truth must hear all sides of the question, consider all the alternatives, test his judgment by exposing it to opposition, and make full use of different minds. Thirdly, freedom of expression is important for people to be able to participate in the decision-making process, especially in the political arena. Finally, freedom of expression enables a society to achieve stability and adaptability.

## Day 1, 19<sup>th</sup> of May: Arrival day

The youth exchange was hosted in the "parko tritisi" a park north of Athens, in the premises of a Boy Scout group. The premises were composed of a dormitory with sanitary facilities; a meeting room and a kitchen were participants had the chance to cook specialties of their country in a different national group every day. The park around and the good weather allowed us to set a lot of activities outside.

As the participants arrived by small group all along the day, we simply showed them around the park and let them have some rest before the beginning of the activities the next day.



## Day 2, 20<sup>th</sup> of May

For this first day of activities we welcomed the participants and started with some energizers, name games and ice breakers.

Orientation:

-agreements of engagement; participants agreed to follow some engagement during the exchange to ensure the good running of it. This is done in a participative way, everyone is free to suggest the rules he/she thinks are necessary for a successful exchange. At the end of the session the participants came up with the following rules:

-presentation of the association Elix

-detailed presentation of the seven days of the project, stressing the fact that it is open to changes in case some participants want to organise their own activities. Explanation of the methodology; non-formal education, learning by doing and by participating. Presentation of the organisation of the week: cooking teams, cleaning teams, organisation of the dormitory.

Respect the sleep of the others

Participate in the activities

Be punctual

Keep the premises clean at all time

Be open minded

No wifi: switch off your phone and talk to each other!

Always speak English



### Hopes fears and contributions

We made the participant come into the meeting room blindfolded with a soft music. We asked them to relax and to think of the last hours: where they were the last day, how they came to the exchange, how long it took... We asked them to remove their blindfolds and to draw on a large piece of paper their hopes fears and expectation for the exchange.



### Sense of time

Participants sit with closed eyes on a chair. They have to count up to 60 in their heads and once they reach 60 they have to stand up quietly and open their eyes. We want to stress that the sense of time is something very relative and remind them to be punctual every day.

### Interculturalism.

We give an orange to each participant, they have to look carefully at it, touch it, memorise every detail of it, name it if they want... Then they have to put all the oranges back in a bag. We mix them and dispose them on the ground. Participants have to find their orange. We then make them discuss about the exercise and orientate the discussion towards the possible analogies between the exercise with oranges and real life with people, their differences, the prejudices between people regarding sex, culture and origins.

### Presentation of the working group:

At the end of the sessions of every day, participants will meet into working groups to produce a final result. There were 3 groups: video, photo, reporting

## Day 3, 21<sup>st</sup> of May

Team spirit activity, the eggcercise.

Participants are split into 4 groups. We give to the each of them some irrelevant objects: 3 straws, 2 felt pens, a plastic glass, a paper plate, two colourful sheets of paper, scissors, tape and an egg. We ask them to build a protecting case for the egg as high and as stable as they can. We then test the egg case by throwing it from a height of approximately 2 meters. During the game in each group one participant will be blindfolded and one other will be unable to speak.

This exercise is a good way to build a team spirit and to insist on the inclusion of everyone in the group including participants with special needs.



Circle of Trust:

Shepherd and sheep

The group is divided in 4 smaller groups. Each group has to decide who will be the shepherd and the others will be the sheep. The target of the shepherd is to lead all the sheep inside a safe place but by using only clapping and whistling as a means of communication. The group has 5 minutes to discuss a strategy. After that the sheep are blindfolded and facilitators are placing them randomly around the area. The game starts and the shepherd has to lead them as fast as he can into the safe place. The faster group finally wins. Two groups are playing while two groups are watching. This is a an activity to create team spirit but more importantly trust between participants. We then make them discuss about their feelings about the exercise, if they felt safe or not, if they trust there shepherd or not.

Spider webs

We create a big spider web between two trees with some holes in it some smaller some bigger. We divide the group into two groups facing each other on each side of the web. Each group has to pass all its participants on the other side of the web using each hole only one time. Some are higher than others meaning that some people will have to be carried so touched. This exercise is also focused on creating trust between participants and try to make them feel comfortable with each other.

### X-expression/O-pression/D-pression

We ask the participants to team in 5 national groups and to reflect on the situation of freedom of speech in their country. To which extent can they express themselves, do they feel any oppression on them, does it lead to some kind of depression and what are the consequences.



### First impressions

We show the participants a series of pictures representing current social themes: a family of gypsies, a boat with migrants, a businessman... We ask them to write, anonymously, their first impression on the pictures. The facilitator reads out loud what participants wrote. Through this exercise we wanted to show that everybody has prejudices and ask the question: does freedom of expression has limits?



Day 4, 22<sup>nd</sup> of May

### Interview time

Participants went into the streets of Athens and interview people on the topics they chose. We gave some time in the morning for the preparation of the questionnaires and left them the afternoon to go around the neighbourhood. A lot of participant came out much later than they were expected because they met nice Athenians and had very long conversations with them! Foreign participants were really satisfied by this exercise as they were able to meet Greek people, ask them freely the questions they wanted to ask and immersed into Greek culture. They presented the results of their interviews to the whole group in the evening.

### Draw the word

This activity is meant to develop knowledge of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Participants divide into 4 small groups. One person per group will have to draw a human right to the rest of the group. This shows how participant perceive these human rights.



Day 5, 23<sup>rd</sup> of May

X-expression hunting in Athens.

We asked the participants to go around the city on expression hunting.

How does the city express itself, how do you feel in a city like Athens?



"The acropolis makes you feel so small!"

"It is a city full of life but you can definitely see the effect of the crisis"



"There are graffiti everywhere but really beautiful ones, I loved it"



**X-Press** YOUrself

Day 6, 24<sup>th</sup> of May

### Take a step forward

Hand out a role card randomly, one to each participant. They have to keep it to themselves and not to show it to anyone else. (Among the possible roles : unemployed single mother, illegal immigrant from Mali, owner of a successful company, daughter of a bank manager...)

Ask them to reflect on their character: their type of lifestyle, where they live, their leisure...

Read a list of statements, if the characters can answer yes to the statement they take a step forward, if not they stay still.

Example of statements: You have decent housing with a telephone line and television. You are not afraid of being stopped by the police. You can fall in love with the person of your choice.

At the end of the exercise all participants will have a different position showing the inequalities between all of them.



## Forum theatre:

Forum theatre also called theatre of the oppressed is a peaceful conflict resolution method.

Actors play a scenario showing a social issue were someone is oppressed, one first time. When they play it the second time members of the audience can interrupt it and replace an actor to change the play and try to solve the problem.

In groups participants had to play 3 different themes: xenophobia, modern democracy, censorship.



## Allow me to express

Split into 4 groups, participants have to express the topic "Europe and the crisis" in 4 different ways: singing, dancing, theatre play, mime



X-Press YOURself

Day 7, 25<sup>th</sup> of May

### Train of Europe

In 4 small groups, participants are asked to put themselves in the shoes of a person travelling with the Eurorail from Lisbon to Moscow during a week. They have to share the compartment with 3 other people. They have to choose the 3 people they'd rather spend the journey with and 3 people they would absolutely not spend the journey with among 17 different characters. (A Serbian soldier from Bosnia, A polish prostitute from Berlin, an African woman selling leather products...)

This activity enables a discussion about the prejudices and limits of tolerance of people and the stereotypes associated with some minorities.



### Front page

a simulation of a group of journalists working to get the front page of their paper ready to go to press. They are given all the material they need (scissors, pens, glue, sheets of paper...) and a set of 40 different pictures linked to the current actuality (refugees, drugs, parliament, pesticides, demonstrations...)

The aim of the activity is to reflect on the media and their approach to human rights issues.



### Scrap booking

Presentation what is a scrap book.

Creation of a scrap book of emotions



Day 8, 26<sup>th</sup> of May

Presentation of the Erasmus+ program, showing the participants all the opportunities it gives them. Along with it we gave a presentation of the YouthPass, the importance of filing it at the end of the project and the use participants can make of it.

"I was shy at the beginning but in the end I did Xpress myself and it felt awesome!"

"The train of Europe made me realise that I have prejudices I was not aware of"

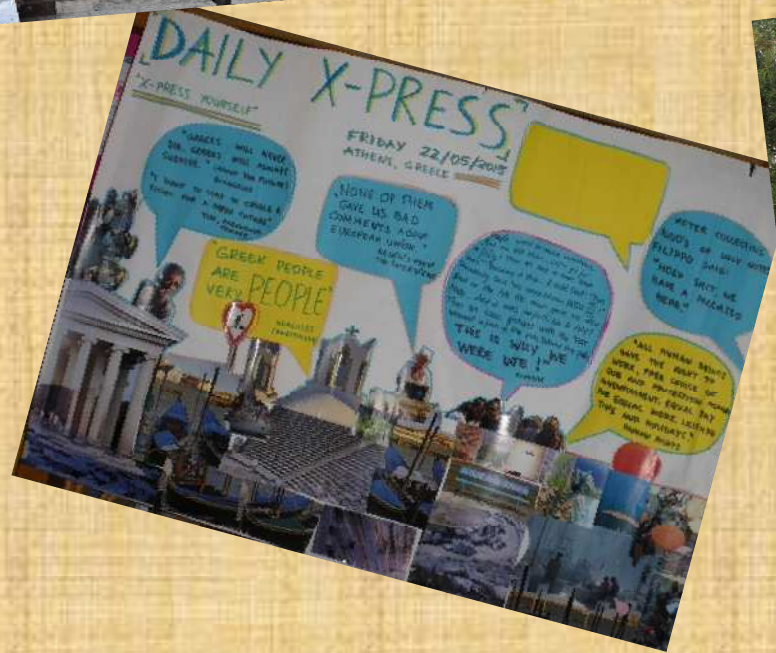
"We had an amazing afternoon for the interviews and we met so nice people"

"I really loved allow me to X-press, we created a really nice song, everybody is singing it now!"

Project Evaluation:  
A formal written evaluation and some evaluation games:  
Debriefing the hopes, fears and contributions game of the second day to see, checking again what had been drawn, what can stay and what can be removed.  
Ask participants to stay in the middle of the room and ask them their opinion about the venue, the activities, the free time, the atmosphere... The more they liked it the more they go to the left, the less, the more to the right.  
Ask them to reflect on the past week and on what they will bring back home and write only one word on a piece of paper that represents the youth exchange for them.



Results of the working group  
 The 3 working groups (video, photo, reporting)  
 presented us the results of their work during the week.







## A few words about ELIX

### ELIX – CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS GREECE

ELIX is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) which cultivates voluntary conscience and promotes voluntary offering. It is a civil, non profit association, and its main activity is the organization of international programs of voluntary work and youth exchange, which are focusing on the environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage, promoting cultural and social contribution



### THE ACTIONS OF ELIX

Organization and coordination of international Workcamps in Greece, with a duration of 2 weeks. The actions are focusing on the environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage, promoting cultural and social contribution.

Organization and coordination of one-day or two-day voluntary actions at a national level.

Attraction of volunteers from abroad and from Greece.

Sending Greek volunteers to Workcamps with a duration of 2 weeks abroad, through the cooperation with the international organization network Alliance of Voluntary Service Organizations.

Reception of foreign volunteers to programs of voluntary service which are held in cooperation with Greek organizations, institutions and state bodies which offer social work, for periods of 6-12 months (European Voluntary Service - EVS). EVS Hosting by ELIX in Greece

Sending Greek volunteers to programs of voluntary service in Europe for periods of 6-12 months (European Voluntary Service –EVS sending by ELIX)

Organization and participation in educational seminars concerning the coordination of international groups of volunteers, intercultural education etc.

Organization and participation in actions related to the European Programs: 'ERAMUS+' (Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, Support measures), LEONARDO, with main target the participation in the European idea, the exchange of know-how, the promotion and certification of voluntary work.

### THROUGH ITS ACTIONS, ELIX

Offers young people the possibility to work in a group, to acquire skills, to meet new places and ways of living and become active citizens.

Offers local societies the opportunity to show the natural and cultural wealth of their area, to come in contact with young people from all around the world, to share with them their customs and habits and also to familiarize with the idea of volunteerism. Offers the authorities the opportunity to take advantage creatively of the voluntary work that is offered to them and at the same time to familiarize with the value of voluntary service.



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