



Building Bridges for Understanding
between Tourists and Local Communities

Handbook:

Building Bridges for Understanding between
Tourists and Local Communities



Cofinanziato
dall'Unione europea

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Introduction

[B²TL – Building Bridges for Understanding between Tourists and Local Communities](#) was a European project funded by the Erasmus+ – KA153-YOU – Mobility of youth workers programme. The goal was to empower youth workers in promoting sustainable tourism and ecological awareness, especially in rural and disadvantaged contexts.

Project Description

The B²TL project arose from the increasing need to address the negative impacts of mass tourism—such as environmental degradation, gentrification, and cultural erosion—particularly in rural and marginalised areas. In these contexts, tourism represents both an opportunity and a challenge for local development.

The project responds to the urgent need to equip youth workers with tools and competences to promote sustainable tourism practices while actively engaging local communities and young people in processes of conscious change. Through non-formal, experiential, and intercultural learning approaches, B²TL contributed to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the EU Youth Strategy.

Partner

- Coordinator: [Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci – ETS](#), Italy
- Jograis Audazes, Portugal
- [SDRUDZENIE ZNAM I MOGA](#), Bulgaria
- [Cesta rozvoje](#), Czech Republic
- [AsfarEurope MTÜ](#), Estonia
- AMITIES Luxembourg-Armenie, Luxembourg

- Centrul European pentru Tineret, Romania
- [AO “Concordia. Proiecte Sociale”](#), Moldova
- ZDRUZENIE STRITS KUMANOVO, North Macedonia

Objectives

- To strengthen the role of youth workers in promoting ecological and economic sustainability within rural and disadvantaged communities.
- To introduce educational methodologies such as the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) to foster critical thinking and active participation.
- To improve youth workers’ digital competences for promoting responsible tourism through online platforms and social media.
- To empower participants to create and lead community-based projects and campaigns focused on sustainability.
- To enhance international cooperation and the exchange of good practices among youth organisations in Europe.

Activities

- 8-day training course in Trappeto (Sicily) for youth workers
- Field research and study visit in Palermo
- Design and presentation of local sustainable action plans and campaigns

Methodology

Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education is described as any organized and systematic educational activity that takes place outside the framework of the formal school system, designed to provide specific learning to particular groups of people, whether children or adults (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). While it is structured to some degree, it is more flexible than formal education and often voluntary in nature. Non-formal learning tends to emphasize learners' needs, choices, and interests, focusing on intrinsic motivation (Eshach, 2007; Radović & Passey, 2016). It frequently takes place in community settings such as youth centers, after-school programs, literacy workshops, or cultural institutions (Filippoupoliti & Koliopoulos, 2014; Garner et al., 2015). Unlike formal education, it rarely leads to formal certification (Colley et al., 2003) and instead focuses on developing practical, procedural knowledge and life skills (Sadler, 1989; Młynarczuk-Sokołowska, 2022). Non-formal education is often used to promote social inclusion and provide learning opportunities for marginalized groups (Gee, 2015; Hidayat et al., 2016).

Informal Education

Informal education is the lifelong process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes from daily life experiences and exposure to their environment, without following a planned curriculum (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 3). It is largely unstructured, unsystematic, and often unintended. Informal learning can take place anywhere—at home, in the workplace, or in social interactions—and is often invisible or unrecognized by the learner (Eraut, 2004). It is closely linked to tacit learning, which occurs through observation, imitation, trial and error, or social participation (Johansson,

2003; Kral & Heath, 2013). Informal education is situation-dependent and highly contextualized, with learning emerging naturally from meaningful activities rather than being externally imposed (Eisner, 1992; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Although it does not result in formal certification, research suggests it accounts for the majority of learning in people's lives—up to 70–90% according to some estimates (Latchem, 2018).

The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach

The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach is a dialectical method of inquiry and popular self-analysis developed by Danilo Dolci in the 1950s and still practiced today by the Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo. Rooted in the idea of Socratic maieutics (from the Greek maieutikós, “the art of the midwife”), it views education as the act of bringing to light the inner potential of each learner, not by transmitting knowledge but by helping it emerge through dialogue.

Unlike the unidirectional Socratic method, Dolci's approach emphasizes reciprocity: knowledge arises from shared experiences and collective exploration. It is a group-based process in which one person poses questions, others respond, and together they deepen inquiry, creating a cycle of mutual learning.

This methodology fosters responsibility, creativity, and co-education, encouraging individuals to reflect on their experiences, express their insights freely, and collaboratively validate ideas. A maieutic workshop requires participants to open themselves to others and engage in a common journey of research, analysis, experimentation, and creative co-learning.

Target Group

The training course was aimed at youth workers who operate in rural and disadvantaged areas, where tourism can be

both a source of opportunity and a driver of social and environmental challenges. These professionals often face limited access to resources and support, yet play a vital role in empowering young people and fostering sustainable development.

Impact

The B²TL project generated meaningful impact by equipping youth workers with essential ecological and digital competences. These enhanced skills enable them to design and implement innovative, community-based initiatives that promote responsible tourism and environmental stewardship. By fostering project development capacities, the initiative empowered participants to become agents of change in their local contexts. Furthermore, the creation of an international network of youth organisations facilitates ongoing exchange of good practices, intercultural learning, and long-term collaboration across Europe, amplifying the project's reach and sustainability.

Activities

Day 1

On the first day of the training course, participants were warmly welcomed and introduced to each other through interactive ice-breaking and group-building activities designed to foster connection and community. The relaxed atmosphere encouraged sharing of personal stories and goals, setting a collaborative tone for the days ahead. The evening concluded with a shared dinner, offering space for informal conversations and deeper engagement among the group.



At the end of each training day, participants engaged in a structured evaluation process to reflect on their experiences, learning outcomes, and group dynamics. These evaluations took place in various formats, individually and in groups, both digitally and on paper, to accommodate different preferences and encourage honest, thoughtful feedback.

The evaluations served as a vital tool for monitoring the effectiveness of the training, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that the course remained responsive to participants' needs. They also helped foster a sense of ownership and active involvement, reinforcing the collaborative spirit of the program and supporting continuous learning throughout the week.

Day 2

The second day of the training course began with a collective session to establish shared ground rules, ensuring a safe, inclusive, and open space for dialogue and learning. Participants gathered in a circle to contribute ideas about the atmosphere, communication, and mutual respect they wished to uphold throughout the course. This was followed by a presentation of the project, the hosting team, and practical information about the venue and schedule.

To build on the sense of community, the morning continued with additional group-building activities that encouraged trust, collaboration, and intercultural exchange. These laid the foundation for the

day's deeper exploration of sustainable tourism, youth work, and ecological awareness through creative workshops and reflective exercises

The day concluded with the first intercultural dinner, a vibrant celebration of diversity and mutual understanding. Each country group had the opportunity to present traditional dishes, music, and dances, creating a rich tapestry of cultural exchange. This festive moment not only strengthened group cohesion but also deepened participants' appreciation for one another's backgrounds, fostering cultural sensitivity and laying the groundwork for collaborative learning throughout the course.



This or That



Time

20 minutes

Participants

Youth worker - large groups

Suggestions for implementation

Instructions:

1. Divide the room into two areas and ask participants to stand in the middle.
2. Ask participants what they prefer between two options: they will have to move to one side of the room or the other based on their answers

Source

<https://teambuilding.com/blog/get-to-know-you-games>

Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)

Examples for questions:

- Day or night?
- Text or phone call?
- Cats or dogs?
- Plane trips or road trips?



Time

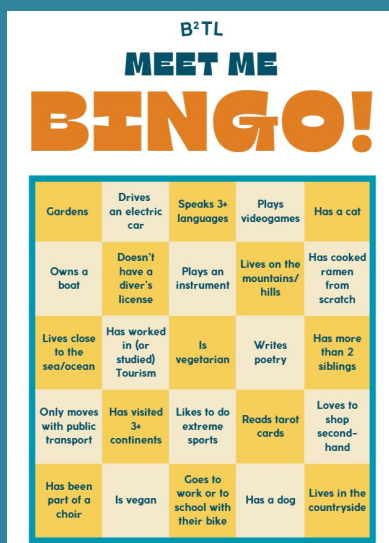
20 minutes

Participants

Youth worker - large groups

Suggestions for implementation

Instructions:



➤ ...

Meet me Bingo

1. Give each participant a bingo card.
2. Give participants 10 minutes to go around and talk to the others. They have to mark squares with the names of other players who fit the descriptions.
3. It's not possible to write the same name under two different descriptions, or to write one's own name.
4. After 10 minutes, the person who marks the most squares wins. They'll have to read out loud the descriptions and the names.
5. The winner has to share the descriptions that match them as well.
6. Participants can continue sharing anecdotes on their descriptions.

Source

<https://gameonfamily.com/blogs/tutorials/human-bingo?srsId=AfmBOoo2-llgXEOm4duaXyVc9Oc6f4WUamDX0XDVjMDkOVEC9SQI41Fp>

Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGvGAjfWGY/KJB4usQCBzOBOL5NXrz7Mw/view?utm_content=DAGvGAjfWGY&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniqueinks&utlId=h9756b514c0

I talk, You Draw



Time

30 minutes

Participants

Youth worker - large groups

Suggestions for implementation

1. Everyone receives a sheet of A4 paper and a pen.
2. Everyone forms pairs.
3. Each pair has 10 minutes total – 5 minutes per person.
4. During the 5 minutes:
 - One person answers around 3 questions.
 - The other person draws while listening.
 - The drawing doesn't have to be a portrait – it can be anything that comes to mind based on what the person says.
 - Important rule: the person drawing is not allowed to look at the paper while drawing.
5. After 5 minutes, they switch roles.



Source	<p>6. When both are done, the drawings can be hung on a wall or board.</p> <p>7. Anyone who wants can present their drawing and the person they drew – this way, everyone gets to know more people, even those they didn't talk to directly.</p> <p>self-invented but based on: https://www.workshop-spiele.de/ein-echt-gutes-kennenlernspiel-fuer-erwachsene/#:~:text=So%20geht%20das%20Kennenlernspiel%20hat%20nur%20eine%20Minute%20Zeit</p>
Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)	<p>Paper, Pencils, adhesive tape</p> <p>Examples for questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ What does a typical day in your life look like?➤ What was your last trip and with whom did you travel?➤ ...

	<p><u>Speed Dating</u></p>
Time	10-15 minutes
Participants	Youth worker - large groups
Suggestions for implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participants form pairs by making two lines facing each other 2. You give a topic or Question which should be discussed by one pair for one Minute 3. After every round you point at one row which moves one spot to the right so new pairs will be formed 4. You continue until everyone has faced everyone else
Source	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD46SDgyMes
Materials (handout, video, link etc.)	



Tree of life: introduction to the project topics

Although participants were already familiar with the planned activities during the training, the main topics of the training and their significance were discussed in more detail.

In the workshop, there was a tree of life, and on it, papers with various training course' topics were hung. Each participant chose one and, as an individual, expressed his/her view and opinion on a particular topic, for example "Sustainability of tourism/Urbanisation/Climate Change/ Local actions/ Youthwork" etc.. There was a possibility

that topics will be repeated, however, the emphasis was on expressing individual thoughts to establish mutual interaction and exchange of ideas. As a guideline, trainers reminded participants to comment realistically on the content and to focus on the current issues of the given topic and potential suggestions for their resolution.

Day 3

The third day of the training course focused on exploring the complex relationship between urbanisation and sustainable tourism. As cities continue to grow and attract visitors, they face both opportunities for development and challenges related to environmental and social impact. Today's sessions were designed to help participants critically examine these dynamics through interactive workshops, group debates, and simulation-based learning.

Beginning with a reflection on the advantages and disadvantages of urbanisation, participants engaged in collaborative discussions to identify balanced approaches that support tourism while preserving local well-being. The afternoon introduced a role-play simulation around a fictional coastal town, allowing participants to step into the shoes of various stakeholders and negotiate competing interests in tourism development. These activities fostered deeper understanding of stakeholder perspectives, power dynamics, and the importance of inclusive decision-making.

The day concluded with the second intercultural dinner.

Urbanisation and tourism: web of connections



Theoretical introduction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGrriw-izPI>;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55wb1nO_4oE;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C7F_2OpRT8

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354075573_Tourism_and_Urbanization_An_Interconnected_Evolution

Objectives

- Encourage critical reflection upon urbanisation and tourism;
- Stimulate the co-creation of knowledge;
- Promote participation, active listening and an interdisciplinary approach.

Suggestions for implementation

Introduction (10-15 minutes): participants are introduced to the topic of urbanisation and its impacts through a series of videos.

Creation of the web of connections (15-20 minutes):



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The trainer begins the activity by holding the yarn and offering a brief thought that links urbanisation and tourism, then tosses the ball to someone else.➤ Each person that receives the ball of yarn shares an idea, an example, a connection with what was already said (max 30 seconds); Before passing the yarn to the next person, they hold onto one end, forming a web that connects their thoughts. (Instead of being randomly tossed, the yarn can be passed to participants who want to speak);➤ In the meanwhile the trainer captures key concepts on the flipchart, connecting ideas as they emerge.
Time	Closing reflection: Brief wrap-up; participants can share what links struck them most. 30 minutes
Participants	Whole group
Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1 ball of yarn➤ A flipchart➤ Markers➤ Laptop, canvas, HDMI cable, speaker

Role Play activity

<p>Theoretical introduction</p>	<p>Sustainable tourism, stakeholder negotiation, environmental & Cultural Impact</p> <p>Simulation exploring tourism development conflicts in Porto Verde, a coastal town facing a major resort and marina proposal. Participants analyze how economic, environmental, and social interests intersect and learn to negotiate among competing priorities.</p>
<p>Suggestions for implementation</p>	<p>Scenario: Porto Verde faces a development plan (luxury resort, marina, theme park, new infrastructure). The promises are: jobs, tax revenue, global visibility. The concerns are: environmental damage, gentrification, cultural exploitation, seasonal jobs, overcrowding.</p> <p>Each participant receives a role card representing one stakeholder group: local government, tourism investors, residents and workers, environmental or cultural activists, or tourists. After reading their roles, participants meet in groups to define their priorities, goals, and possible compromises. They then take part in a simulated public debate, presenting their views and negotiating with other groups to influence the council's final decision. The session concludes with a collective reflection, discussing which voices had the most influence, what compromises were made, and how the simulation reflects real-world tourism dynamics and power relations.</p>
<p>Time</p>	<p>90-110 min</p>
<p>Participants</p>	<p>28</p>

Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)

Role cards, scenario brief, reflection questions

Day 4

On this training day the group set off in the morning for Palermo, starting with an activity at the office of Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci – ETS. The Activity aimed to introduce sustainable and responsible tourism. Afterwards, participants took on the role of tourists, guided through the city’s main cultural landmarks and natural surroundings to experience local life. They were asked to observe carefully and note impressions, positive and negative, about the destination and their interactions with the community. They got the opportunity to get lunch at the lively Mercato di Ballarò, offering traditional food and direct contact with Sicilian locals. The day concluded with a shared dinner, where participants evaluated together their experiences and insights.

Study Visit in Palermo

Introduction to sustainable and responsible tourism



Activity



1. participants explored the concepts of sustainable and responsible tourism through active participation and critical engagement.
2. They moved from comparing different definitions to reflecting on concrete practices that can be implemented both as tourists and as hosts.
3. The topics were then situated within the context of Palermo, highlighting the specificity of each local reality. This

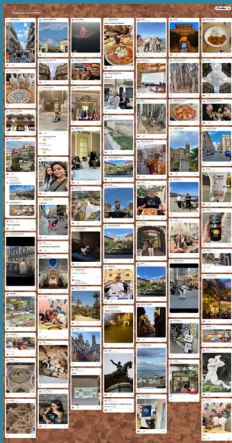
	<p>included discussions on the impact of organized crime, its connections with tourism-related issues, and the positive initiatives undertaken by local communities to promote sustainable and responsible tourism while keeping particular attention to these local dynamics.</p>
<p>Time</p>	<p>120 Minutes</p>
<p>Participants</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>The vast majority of participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the activity, showing particular interest in situating the topics addressed within the social context of Palermo. In doing so, they were able to recognize the interconnections and transversal nature of the topics addressed with other social and cultural areas, highlighting their interdisciplinary dimension.</p>
<p>Shared dinner at Moltivolti</p>	<div data-bbox="965 1288 1181 1556" data-label="Image">  </div> <p>https://moltivolti.org/en/</p>

Day 5

The next day began with an evaluation activity reflecting on the study visit to Palermo, using a snapshot wall to share photos, videos, and impressions.

The focus then shifted to the relationship between tourists and the local community, exploring issues that arise through tourism such as cultural impact and social tensions. Through participatory methods inspired by the Theatre of the Oppressed, participants engaged in role-play and discussion to critically examine these dynamics and consider possible solutions.

The final activity of the day was based on the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach, which encouraged participants to reflect on their personal dreams and the vision of an ideal city, as well as the obstacles that stand in the way. Through group work and collective discussion, they explored practical steps and actions that could bring such dreams closer to reality. The exercise highlighted the importance of dialogue, shared reflection, and collaborative problem-solving as tools for building inclusive communities and fostering active citizenship.



Snapshot wall

Suggestions for implementation

1. prepare a shared digital board
2. ask the participants to post videos and pictures taken by them on the board and to comment or like the ones posted by others
3. project the snapshot wall with a projector on the wall so the group can look at it together
4. Ask the participants about stories they would like to share- What is the story behind this video/picture?

Time	20-30 minutes
Participants	28
Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)	https://padlet.com/



Theater of the Oppressed

Methodology

Participatory techniques give young people an active role in the learning process. They transform learners from passive recipients into co-creators of knowledge. Forum Theatre, part of Augusto Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed*, is a participatory method that helps young people reflect on social issues (such as discrimination or exclusion) by acting out scenarios. The audience becomes active (“spect-actors”), stepping into roles to test alternative strategies and explore possible solutions. Boal, inspired by the thoughts of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, writer of the renowned book “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” created the Theatre of Oppressed as a technique to make theatre available to all, rather than only to professional performers. The aim was to shatter the barrier



Activity

between performer and viewer, engaging the audience as an active participant in the show. The Theatre of the Oppressed is a creative approach utilized to examine and challenge implicit biases. This participatory style of theatre promotes democratic and collaborative involvement, allowing individuals to act as "spect-actors" who interact directly with the performance and utilize theatre for social transformation. This builds empathy, critical thinking, and agency. This methodology can be a bridge to introduce the topic on how youth can really do something in a context of a discrimination, thus starting a reflection on how participation is crucial in their life as citizens.

1. Warm-up (10–15 min)

Objective: to create trust, loosen bodies, and prepare participants for improvisation.

Trainers can propose the following warm-up games (they can pick one of them):

- **Mirroring exercise:** In pairs, one person leads with slow movements, the other mirrors exactly the movements the other does. After 5 minutes, they swap roles. This activity is essential to build attention and empathy.
- **Human statues:** Participants walk freely. On a signal, they freeze into statues that represent "power," "exclusion," or "resistance" (please, remind to choose one concept at a time). This activity usually is followed by a quick reflection on how these "statues" feel or what they convey to the others.

2. Scene creation (20 min)



Objective: to be able to co-design scenarios reflecting real-life problems as well as to think about interventions to counteract acts of discrimination.

Preparation:

- Divide participants into groups of 3–6 people.
- Each group chooses a situation of oppression or exclusion that feels relevant (e.g., bullying, sexism, racism, unemployment, barriers in youth services).
- The facilitator/joker provides a template which helps them to create the setting: 1) topic of the story; 2) the context of the story; 3) the main character; 4) the other characters; 5) the act of discrimination where the performance will stop.

Criteria for the scenario:

- Short scenario (3–4 minutes of duration)
- It must show a defined protagonist who faces oppression/discrimination.
- It must end with a negative situation for the main character (the protagonist is unable to overcome the situation of oppression/discrimination).

3. Performance (10 min)

Each group presents its scene to the rest of the participants.

- The audience watches silently without intervening on the situation of failure/discrimination.



- The facilitator briefly summarizes the scenario: “This is a story about X. The protagonist tried... but failed.”

4. Spect-actor interventions (30–40 min)

This is the core of Forum Theatre: audience members become spect-actors, stepping into roles to test solutions.

Objective: to think about and plan a counteraction to a discrimination.

Process:

- The facilitator/joker explains: “At any point, if you think the protagonist could try something different, shout ‘Stop!’, take their place, and act it out.”
- The original actor steps aside, the spect-actor enters the scene, and the play resumes from just before the critical moment.
- Multiple interventions are possible—different people may try alternative strategies (negotiation, collective action, refusal, asking for help, humor, etc.). For this reason, it is important to ask if there’s someone else who would like to intervene before ending the performance.

5. Debrief (15 min)

Objective: to connect theatre with real life by promoting self-reflection and analysis on the performance and interaction with the spect-actors.

Debriefing questions (these can be a hint, the trainers can ask different questions, depending on the context):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did it feel to watch the original scene? ● How did it feel to intervene as a spectator? ● Which strategies seemed most effective, and why? ● What barriers remained even after interventions? ● How do these situations relate to our daily lives, schools, communities, or workplaces? ● What actions can we take outside the workshop?
Time	90-100 Minutes
Participants	28 Participants
Source	-
Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)	-

The Reciprocal Maieutic Approach



Theoretical introduction

(read under the chapter Methodology)

Activity

1. Ask the group to sit in a circle
2. Ask the participants questions and everyone has time to answer
3. - Who are you and what is your dream?
- How would you imagine your dream city?
- What are the obstacles that you believe prevent this dream from coming true?
4. The Question for the group work: What could be done to achieve that dream? What practices can we adopt to make a step forward towards this dream?
5. divide the participants into 4 groups (depends on the number of participants) according to the practices to be explored
6. Time for the group work
7. Each group presents their ideas/ solutions/actions


Time	180 minutes
Participants	28
Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ flipcharts ➤ Markers

Day 6

The training day followed a clear and purposeful progression. It began with the energizer “Fruit Salad,” creating energy and connection among participants. This was followed by an exploration of digital media in everyday life and a reflection on personal digital footprints, which set the stage for a deeper look at digital communication. Here the focus shifted to building strategies that start with understanding the audience, their interests, and the intended impact of a message. From this foundation, the group examined how to lead communication campaigns, with tourism and personal projects serving as practical examples. Real digital campaigns were then analyzed to identify tools, platforms, and success factors. The day concluded with participants beginning to design their own action plans through brainstorming and group-building, a step that was perfectly prepared by the earlier discussions and analyses, ensuring a coherent and meaningful flow from start to finish.

Time	<u>Fruit Salad</u> 10 minutes
Participants	Youth workers - large groups
Suggestions for implementation	Instructions:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants sit in a circle with one member standing in the middle. 2. The person in the middle says their name and announces that they see someone with, for example, "black shoes." 3. All the people wearing black shoes have to exchange seats with each other, including the person in the middle. 4. One person will not be able to find a seat, and becomes the person in the middle of the circle, saying their name and telling the rest of the group what they see (other examples: blue jeans, glasses, black hair, etc.). 5. When the person in the middle says "Fruit Salad," everyone must get up and exchange seats. <p>Source: International HIV/AIDS Alliance. (2003). 100 ways to energise groups: Games to use in workshops, meetings and the community (Reprinted ed., p. 8). First published May 2002.</p> <p>Materials (handouts, video, link etc.): -</p>
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<p><u>Digital footprint mapping</u></p> <p>Time</p>	 <p>20 Minutes</p>
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Participants

28

Suggestions for implementation

1. The initial question could be: “Think about the last week. What digital tools did you use to send or receive a message, learn something, or organise something?”
2. Draw a big circle on a board labelled Digital Communications
3. Invite participants to add post-it notes for each tool/platform they used to send or receive external content:
 - - Messaging apps (WhatsApp, Telegram)
 - - Video calls (Zoom, Google Meet)
 - - Blogs or newsletters
 - - Email campaigns - maybe you received an email from the French Institute telling you about their French courses? or from Lidl about their discounts of the week?
 - - Websites
 - - Podcasts
 - - Online petitions or forms
 - - Internal platforms (Slack, Discord)
 - - Content platforms (YouTube, Canva, Google Docs)
4. As tools/platforms are added, we discuss how to cluster them visually into categories: messaging, content sharing, coordination, broadcasting, etc.

Materials

post-it notes

Day 7

The day was dedicated to finalizing the action plans and presenting them within the group, allowing participants to exchange feedback and strengthen their projects. This process culminated in the final open event, which brought together local actors in the field of sustainable tourism, the participants themselves, and the wider public. By inviting all these groups, a genuine dialogue could emerge that was both enriching and inclusive, taking into account diverse perspectives. Each group presented its project, showcasing concrete ideas for sustainable tourism and community engagement. The round-table format encouraged open discussion, mutual learning, and cross-cultural exchange, ensuring that participants not only shared their outcomes but also deepened their connection with the local community.



Objectives

Action Plan Activity

Empowering youth for community action

- Develop practical action plans to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts of tourism, while promoting sustainable practices within local communities;
- Enhance collaboration, critical thinking, and trans-cultural dialogue through teamwork and shared problem-solving;
- Encourage community-driven entrepreneurship and active youth participation in local sustainability efforts.

Activity

Project design (50 minutes): participants will be divided into small groups and tasked with



	<p>co-creating a local micro-action that addresses the social and environmental impacts of tourism. Each group will receive an Action Design Sheet, a structured planning tool to guide them in developing a time-bound, goal-oriented project with a clear target audience and measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Cross feedback (40 minutes): Each group presents their proposed micro-action to the rest of the participants. While one group presents, the others write their feedbacks on 3 differently colored post-its, focusing on three aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Positive elements of the proposed action ➤ Potential challenges or weaknesses ➤ One constructive suggestion for improvement <p>After each pitch, the other groups place their feedback post-its directly on the presenting group's flipchart. Once all presentations are complete, each group reviews the collection of feedback they received.</p> <p>Debrief and closing (5 minutes): participants are invited to share final reflections, raise any remaining questions, and express what they are taking away from the activity.</p>
Time	1,5 h
Participants	Whole group
Materials (handouts, video, link etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Flipchart ➤ Boards



- Post-its
- Pens and markers

Action Design Sheet

Section	Guiding questions
Title of action	What is the name of your project or idea? Keep it short and meaningful.
Main needs & objective	What change do you want to make? What issue are you addressing?
Target group	Who is this action for? Who will be involved or benefit?
Key activities	What are you going to do? List the main steps or actions.
Resources needed	What do you need (people, tools, space, materials)?
Timeline	When will it happen? Over how long? Be realistic!
Expected impact	What change or effect do you hope to create?
Indicators of success	How will you know it worked? What will show progress or impact?



The final event brought together participants, local actors, and the wider community in an open round-table setting. Each group presented its action plan on sustainable tourism and community engagement, sparking dialogue and inspiration across different perspectives. The exchange created meaningful connections and highlighted the importance of collaboration between youth, locals, and stakeholders.

Day 8

The final day began with an energizer, after which the activities of the previous day were recapped and the local event was briefly debriefed. An introduction to the Erasmus+ Programme was then provided, offering an overview of European funding opportunities and highlighting possibilities for follow-up and networking among organisations. A lecture on the European Portfolio and Youthpass tools was delivered, enabling participants to document and validate the competences gained during the course. Time was also dedicated to reflection, with participants sharing individual impressions guided by questions displayed on the board. Finally, a Google form was completed to evaluate the practical aspects of the training, ensuring a comprehensive closure of the experience.



Conclusion

The Building Bridges for Understanding between Tourists and Local Communities training course has demonstrated the vital role that youth workers can play in fostering sustainable tourism and strengthening the connection between visitors and local communities. Through a carefully structured sequence of non-formal and experiential activities, participants were not only introduced to the challenges of mass tourism but were also empowered to design concrete responses that promote ecological awareness, cultural sensitivity, and social inclusion.

The final event, which brought together youth workers, local actors, and the wider public, was a pivotal moment in this process. By presenting their action plans in an open round-table format, participants engaged in dialogue that was both enriching and inclusive, ensuring that multiple perspectives were considered. This exchange highlighted the importance of involving local communities directly in tourism strategies, as their voices and experiences are essential for building sustainable practices that respect local realities.

Several key recommendations emerge from this experience. First, sustainability must remain the guiding principle of tourism development, with youth workers acting as facilitators of community-driven initiatives. Second, the involvement of local stakeholders and the wider public should be prioritized, as dialogue across different actors creates mutual understanding and strengthens social cohesion. Third, transnational exchange among youth workers is invaluable: by sharing experiences across European contexts, participants gained awareness of both similarities and differences, enriching their capacity to act with sensitivity and creativity.

Ultimately, the training course has equipped youth workers with the competences, awareness, and confidence to design and implement projects that address the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of tourism. The combination of experiential learning, intercultural dialogue, and community engagement has created a foundation for action that is both practical and visionary. By fostering collaboration between tourists and local communities, the project contributes to a

more sustainable and inclusive future for European societies, while empowering young people to become agents of change in their own contexts

Quotes from Participants' Evaluation

Thank you for this warm and really meaningful experience. I got out of my comfort zone and I think I grew a lot during training

[...] I discovered myself differently and had a memorable experience.

This experience took me completely out of my comfort zone [...]

The quotations presented above originate from the final evaluation, which was conducted at the conclusion of the training course. Unlike the daily reflections, this comprehensive assessment enabled participants to consolidate their overall learning, articulate personal growth, and highlight the long-term value of the program. Final evaluations are a critical component of Erasmus+ training courses, as they provide structured evidence of impact, measure the effectiveness of the methodologies applied, and ensure that the outcomes extend beyond the immediate experience. By gathering these insights, the evaluation process strengthens accountability, informs future

program design, and demonstrates how the training contributes to the professional development of youth workers and the wider community.

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