

Key Action: Learning Mobility of Individuals
Action Type: Youth mobility

Project Title

Promoting democratic resilience and life skills among young people in Europe and its neighbouring regions to prevent their violent radicalization: Improv tools and methodologies for youth work

Project Coordinator

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Project Information

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EC Contribution 12,080.2 EUR

Partners KulturLife gGmbH (DE) , INTER ALIA (EL) , JORDAN Youth Innovation Forum (JO) , DEMOSTENE Centro Studi per la Promozione dello Sviluppo Umano (IT) , JOVESOLIDES Egypt (EG) , Forum for Civic Initiatives (XK) , FUNDACJA AUTOKREACJA (PL) , VOJVODJANSKI GRADJANSKI CENTAR (RS)

Topics Creativity and culture ; Youth (Participation, Youth Work, Youth Policy) ; Intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong)learning

Project Summary

In recent years there has been a sharp increase in the levels of intolerance, hate and violent extremism, manifested in forms of violence that involved young victims (Paris 2015) and/or were perpetrated by young people (Manchester 2017, Macerata 2018) born and raised in Europe and/or coming from/transiting through countries in the Middle East and the Western Balkans. Episodes that continue to upset Europe and its neighbouring regions and which should be prevented, rather than cured, by promoting a peaceful identity development of youngsters in complex and multicultural societies, encouraging their empowerment, empathy, life skills and social, civil and intercultural competences. Youth workers can play a crucial role in this respect, but to do so they must be able not only to create effective educational activities, but also to develop skills themselves to constructively guide young people through fears and points of view that perpetuate inequalities and discrimination. The improvisation theater represents a space of interconnection and moral imagination, as well as a non-formal/informal learning methodology particularly adequate to encourage in young people, especially those at risk of marginalization, a cathartic-reconciliation process and a healthy identity development, producing an artistic-cultural product that as a counter-narrative to violent and xenophobic ideologies can speak to and influence a wider public. The project therefore has as objectives:

- To increase the understanding of youth leaders with regard to the problem of violent radicalization of young people and the role they can play in preventing the problem
- To equip youth workers with relevant Improv tools and methodologies to stimulate in young people an understanding of the fundamental values of freedom, tolerance and respect
- To encourage in youth workers critical thinking, emotional resilience, intercultural and interreligious competences, empathy, so as they can efficiently act as mediators and facilitators in an open and constructive dialogue with and among young people, including refugees and migrants.
- To strengthen cooperation in the youth field between European organizations and between these and those of the Mediterranean and Western Balkans Partner Countries, as well as the inter-cultural/religious dialogue in line with the objectives of the EU's external action.

The project includes a 6-day training in Puglia to equip 18 youth workers from Italy, Greece, Poland, Germany, Egypt, Jordan, Serbia and Kosovo with skills useful for "doing theater" and "seeing theater" as an non-formal education methodology to be used in their work with youngsters, but also as a self-training technique for self-analysis, reflection on the values of our society and means to critically read a world in continuous becoming, relative and plural. The Training IMPROVe will be carried out through a dynamic, participatory and interactive approach, with practical and theoretical moments, as well as spaces for reflection and evaluation of the learning process and results. The non-formal education methodologies that will be used refer to the techniques of theatrical improvisation, role playing, team building and storytelling. A performance of restitution of the work done, conceived and staged by the participants themselves, will be presented to the local community to raise awareness of the objectives and activities of the project, as well as to give visibility to the Erasmus + Program. A video and a short final publication will narrate the main aspects of the project and will be disseminated on the web. The project will produce significant and lasting impacts on the youth workers involved and their respective organizations in terms of their capacity to work with young people for preventive purposes, strengthening their networks also at local, European and international level, as well as creating the conditions for further more complex projects on the thematic. At a more systemic and medium-long term level, the project will activate a human and social capital that, interconnecting with that of other initiatives at different levels, will contribute to the creation of more inclusive and cohesive societies, in which intercultural understanding, responsible and active individuals' and communities' participation, collaboration and respect for diversity can be an antidote, before than a cure, to the appeal that extremist and violent ideologies exert on young people. A drop in Europe, one in the Western Balkans, one in the Mediterranean: the combined effect of many drops over time can create a "change in the sea".

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