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Website | www.dctr.pt/we-need-to-talk

We

need

to

TALK

Creating Safe Spaces
through Communication

KA1: Youth Workers Mobility

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In a society where fundamental human rights are increasingly called into question, and where differences between people are often seen as dividing factors, it becomes ever more urgent to promote unity among people of different cultures, ages, and backgrounds. Now more than ever, we feel the need to build strong communities guided by love as a primordial and powerful force in the fight against injustice, inequality, and all forms of discrimination.

And so, "We Need to Talk: Creating Safe Spaces through Communication" was born — a project conceived by a group of socially conscious young

people, driven by the belief that communication is one of the most powerful tools we have to transform society. By fostering dialogue, empathy, and active listening, the aim of this project was to empower citizens to find their voice in the field of human rights, challenge harmful narratives, and reimagine the way they connect with themselves and others.

The ultimate goal of the project was to cultivate a non-violent, compassionate, and participatory way of being in the world — one in which communication becomes a bridge, not a barrier. Through non-formal education and by valuing art



and creativity as dynamic forms of expression, this project emerged as a response to social challenges, offering innovative and collaborative solutions rooted in human connection.

Over the course of 11 days, 28 youth workers from 8 different countries — France, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Sweden, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Greece — immersed themselves in an intensive, hands-on program in Viseu, Portugal, focused on developing their socio-emotional and communication skills. Through workshops, artistic expression, group dynamics, and intercultural dialogue,

they explored the transformative power of communication as a catalyst for social change.

As youth workers, the participants were not only invited to reflect and grow on a personal level, but also challenged to become multipliers — taking the knowledge, tools, and inspiration gained during the project back to their local communities. The aim was to strengthen their capacity to support young people, promote human rights education, and foster inclusive, communicative, and empathetic environments in their own contexts.

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**WHAT DID
WE LEARN?**



DAY 1

Each day began with a practice introduced either by the trainers or the participants themselves, aimed at preparing us for the day ahead. We explored activities such as yoga, contemporary dance, walking, running, beach volleyball, and more.

Day 1 was dedicated to getting to know one another, building connections, and exploring youth work within the framework of Erasmus+ programmes.



DAY 2

On Day 2, we explored emotions through improvisational theatre, cultivated self-awareness, and reflected on our inner speech. The day concluded with a creative circle, where participants drew, painted, created and expressed themselves through art inspired by personal memories and life experiences.



DAY 3

Day 3 focused on empathy and active listening. In the afternoon, we celebrated cultural diversity by discovering each other's traditions, gastronomy, and customs. Each group had the opportunity to present their country and offer a taste of typical local foods.



DAY 4

On Day 4, we continued to develop social awareness through improvisational theatre games. We also explored different forms of communication and reflected on privilege and inequality—and how these shape social interactions and dynamics.



DAY 5

Day 5 was devoted to learning and practicing the principles of Nonviolent Communication, as developed by Marshall Rosenberg. In the afternoon, participants were invited to explore the streets of Viseu through a fun and interactive challenge that involved completing tasks and engaging with the local community.



DAY 6

On Day 6, we examined communication within social systems, tackling key topics such as bias, gender dynamics, barriers to communication, misinformation, stereotypes, inclusive language, and power relations. In the afternoon, participants collaborated to write a communication manifesto, followed by a workshop on public speaking.



DAY 7

Day 7 centered on music as a tool for social transformation and communication. Through circle songs and improvisational exercises, participants explored learning through mistakes, active listening, cultural sensitivity, appreciation of diversity, breaking language barriers, and building a cohesive group identity.



DAY 8

On Day 8, we began with a guided tour of Viseu. The rest of the day was dedicated to a community intervention activity with students from a local professional school. Working in groups, participants facilitated mini-workshops based on the topics explored throughout the week.





DAY 9

The final day, Day 9, was devoted to debriefing and reflecting on the learning journey, evaluating the project, and preparing for its dissemination within participants' home communities. Participants were also invited to raise any topics that had not been addressed during the week but could offer value to the group.

We closed the day with heartfelt goodbyes, words of gratitude for the shared experience, and the long-anticipated reveal of the "secret friend."

3 RESULTS

89%

learned how to be
aware and respond
to emotions,
maintain empathy
and effectively
communicate in
an improvisational
setting

85%

considers this
project to be helpful
in recognizing the
impact of working
with the community
and helped
gaining tools to
implement effective
community
intervention

86 %

became more
aware of how
privilege and
inequality affect
communication
and access to
information

89%

feel ready to
practice non-violent
communication in
their daily life

85%

gained useful tools
and knowledge to
implement in their
work as a youth
worker

89%

is likely to share
what they learned
with friends, family,
or in their work
environment

85%

recognize better
the importance
of E+ projects and
the importance of
EU in promoting
socioemotional
development

Some feedback from the participants...

"I loved the atmosphere throughout the whole project"

"Every activity was well prepared and allowed for integration and connection between the group since the beginning (...) We learned how to communicate with each other and how to better communicate and listen with ourselves".

"This is an excellent project, with good tools and activities to implement what we learned"

"Because of the diversity of the participants (different ages and culture) it was a great opportunity to increase our cultural awareness and understand new cultures. It was a very nice group and I'm happy I was a part of it".

"The trainers were amazing, very prepared and kind (...) They are very talented and you can notice the passion that they put in every exercise"



59%

of the participants were participating in
an Erasmus project for the first time!!

... and here is some feedback from them :)





"It was my first project and I didn't think that a project like this could be that good."

"I don't have something to share that I think could be better. For me it was one of my favourite experiences in my life. I would definitely do that again and I hope that every project will be as perfect as this project was for me"

"Being the first Erasmus project for me, my experience here is beyond words."



Looking back, now that passed +/- one month since the TC, can you tell us the learnings that marked you the most?

"Thanks to this project I learned to understand my needs and to be kind to myself".



"One of the things that stayed with me the most was learning how to listen better and communicate without judgment. The training really helped me understand the importance of being more open and patient when talking to others. I also started thinking more about how I react in emotional situations and how I can express myself without hurting anyone".

"One of the biggest learnings for me was around emotions - how to understand, regulate, and express them. I learned to better recognize what I'm feeling, stay in control during tough moments, and respond instead of reacting".



"I realized that communication is not just about what we say, but also how we say it: our tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions all play a crucial role. Being mindful of these non-verbal cues can make a real difference in how our message is received and how we connect with others".

Have you already put into practice some of the knowledge that you acquired in this project?



"I'm currently planning to create some posters with key messages and simple explanations about emotions and emotional expression. Since I live near many places where children and teenagers spend time, I'd love to stick these posters around the area. It would be a pleasure for me to share some of what I've learned and maybe even spark small conversations or reflections among those who see them".

"Now I'm using the wheel of emotions when I am struggling to understand how I am feeling and I'm practicing empathy more intentionally".

Have you already put into practice some of the knowledge that you acquired in this project? Did you share the information you've learned during this project?

"I've already tried to use some of the things we learned in my everyday life. For example, I've been more careful with the way I speak to people, especially when there's a conflict. I try to stay calm and listen instead of jumping to conclusions. I also talked to some friends about the topic and shared some of the methods with them."

"I organized a meeting with the volunteers of a scout NGO and facilitated a role-play activity to help them learn about the different love languages. It was a great way to raise awareness about how we express and receive appreciation, and it also helped strengthen the team's communication and connection".



Have you already put into practice some of the knowledge that you acquired in this project? Did you share the information you've learned during this project?

"I've shared some of the knowledge I gained during the TC with my friends and family. I told them about the concepts we explored, especially related to emotions, communication, and self-awareness. They were genuinely impressed by what I learned and really appreciated the new perspectives. Some of them even told me they plan to apply these insights in their own lives, which made me feel proud and even more motivated to keep spreading this kind of awareness".



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PARTNERS

because
without ***them,***
none of this
would be
possible!

Back to the Roots

Back to the Roots is a non-governmental organization based in Barcelona, Spain, dedicated to environmental protection through education and community engagement. The organization works to empower young people to reconnect with nature and take an active role in developing sustainable solutions to today's societal challenges. Its multidisciplinary team—comprising professionals in psychology, social work, communication, environmental education, and the arts—allows the organization to approach social inclusion from multiple perspectives, ensuring their activities reflect the diversity of human experience.



Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education (FECE)

FECE is a non-profit organization located in Sofia, Bulgaria and founded in 2014. Its mission is to foster culture, education, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit among young people and individuals with fewer opportunities. The organization promotes cultural expression and supports creative initiatives across arts, media, and education. FECE operates along three strategic pillars: the promotion of human rights and European values, cultural and artistic engagement, and youth-oriented activities aimed at empowerment through education and participation.



Asociația DAR DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

DAR Development Association is a non-profit organization based in Titu, Romania and founded in 2013. It focuses on supporting young people's personal growth through non-formal education, helping them acquire transversal skills. The organization is actively involved in the preparation and implementation of training sessions, events, and Erasmus mobility projects. Its key areas of focus include rural development, financial literacy, ecological awareness, healthy lifestyles, and social inclusion for young people living in rural areas.



Hellas for Us

HellasforUs is a non-profit organization founded in 2015 and based in Kozani, Greece, committed to promoting active citizenship, equality, and social inclusion through non-formal education. The organization designs and delivers programs that support holistic development, offering safe and engaging environments where individuals can grow emotionally, socially, and intellectually. Its initiatives aim to build confidence, foster resilience, and unlock the potential of participants by encouraging active engagement and participation in community life.



United Equality

United Equality is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded in 2022 and based in Jönköping, Sweden. The organization advocates for gender equality and seeks to raise awareness through a variety of educational and community-based projects. Its mission centers on equipping young people with the knowledge and tools needed to better understand society, support personal development, and promote equal opportunities for all.



MTÜ EarthWalker

MTÜ EarthWalker is a recently established non-governmental and non-profit organization from Tallinn, Estonia, founded in 2024 by a pair of siblings. The team is composed of young, enthusiastic individuals committed to engaging youth in meaningful and creative ways. Through workshops, educational courses, youth exchanges, and interactive events, the organization promotes non-formal and informal education, providing spaces for social connection, critical thinking, and self-expression among European youth.



Rakonto (France)

Rakonto is a non-governmental and non-profit association founded in 2021 in Pau, France, that promotes cultural diversity, ecological transition, and social activism through storytelling and digital media. The organization produces multimedia content—such as videos, photographs, articles, and digital tools—to raise awareness among young people about global and local issues. Its team brings extensive experience in media production, storytelling, IT, and marketing, all united by a mission to amplify the voices of those working towards a more just and sustainable future.



Special Thanks

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Adamastor, a local NGO in Viseu, and Profitecla, a professional school also based in Viseu, for their essential support and collaboration throughout this project.



Sincere thanks as well to **Pousada da Juventude** de Viseu and **Salpico Rústico Restaurant** for their warm hospitality and contributions.

And finally, a heartfelt thank you to all our **incredible participants** and dedicated **trainers**, for embracing this experience and for the mark you all left on everyone's hearts — we truly hope our paths will cross again in future projects!



Links

Website | www.dctr.pt/we-need-to-talk

Links to (some of) the content shared on social media:

https://www.instagram.com/p/DJZSiSdMYcd/?img_index=1

https://www.instagram.com/p/DJr2kTOBcRO/?img_index=1

https://www.instagram.com/p/DKPnnAQM8pE/?img_index=1



