

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG
INTRA-EUROPEAN MIGRANTS





New role-play for stimulating active participation in youth projects and diminishing thinking in patterns



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This project was implemented with the help of Erasmus+ Youth.



LESSONS FROM THE PAST



The issues and needs the project is seeking to address could best be defined by various situations we came across during previous projects. Such episodes underline the dramas of children growing up without the presence of their parents as one of the dimensions of intra-EU migration. In one project for instance, there were three participants whose parents had emigrated to work in other countries: a Norwegian (of Estonian origins), a Romanian and a Moldavian. The personal stories the three youngsters shared with the group served as an extremely valuable learning experience for all the participants to that project. At that moment we thought: how could we use these type of lessons in order to raise more awareness on the issue and share our direct knowledge with other people working with youngsters?

Experience learnt us the importance of addressing such needs in youth projects. We learnt how such situations can lead to personal dramas with long-term consequences: the social isolation and introversion of the youngsters, which further leads to their social exclusion - at home or abroad. How can youth workers contribute to the social inclusion of these young people, who need special care both in the new societies where they are likely to emigrate in order to reunite with their families and at home, in their own social environment? This was one of the questions we tried to answer through this project.

Instead of conclusion: "Painful things make you stronger"

"My mother left to work in Italy. I did not see or speak to her for two years, not even on the phone. My father is working all day long and I am by my own the whole day. So for eight years I grew up half alone and I educated myself with things surrounding me like with school, sport. This is also strength, painful things make you stronger" (Romanian boy)

"I just want to say that I am proud of my parents because I understand they want to do this for my good and to give me the best knowledge. I think I will do my best too for my own children. My mother works now in Italy and my father in Germany. And I left Moldova to come to Romania and study."

(Moldavian girl)

"My father decided to go abroad because he could get a good job with a good paycheck there and give us food at the table. I was seven when he went the first time to Norway. Sometimes I only saw him once a year or once in two years but it was not different to me because I grew up like that. I do not know the difference"

(Estonian girl)

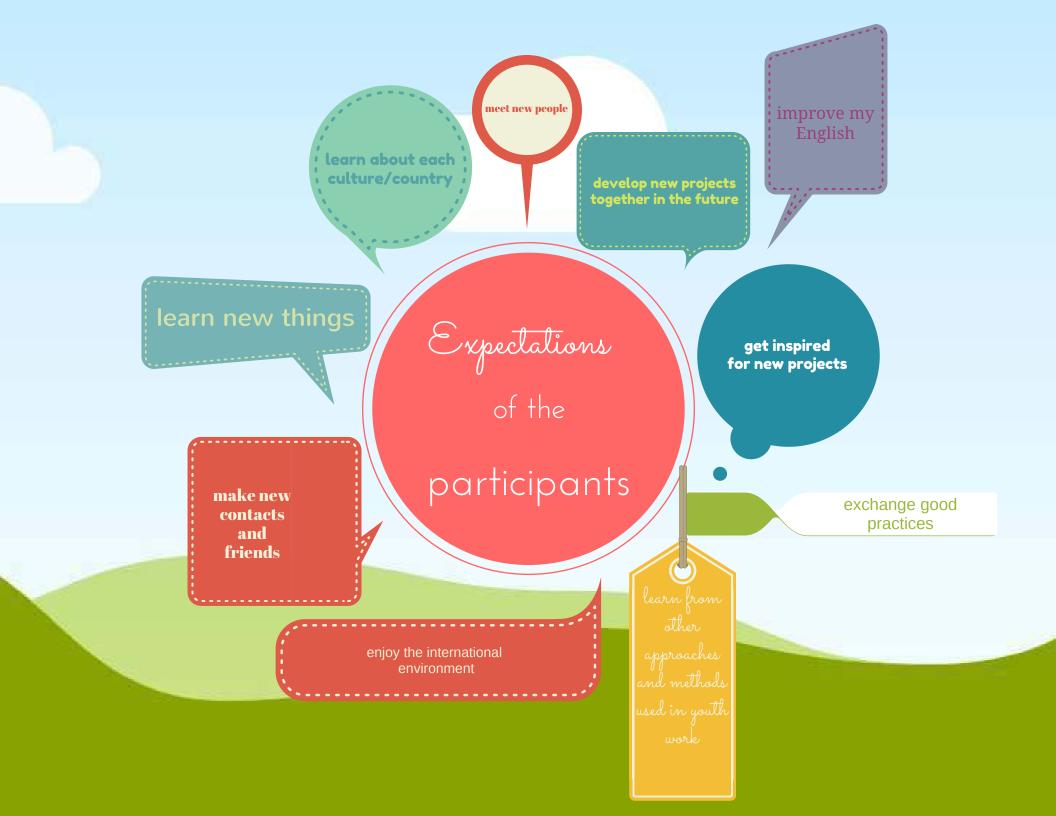
Description of the project

The social inclusion of young intra-European migrants came forward in many projects organized by our Foundation. Mobility of young migrants within the European space and the problematics around their inclusion in society is no doubt a subject of interest for many institutions and requires a cross-sectorial approach. The youth work dimension is one of them. We are building up some experience from this perspective. The lessons we learnt are generating further questions: what are the most encountered issues faced by the young generation in the European integration process? How can youth workers contribute to a better inclusion of the intra-European migrants groups in society? What consequences does this relatively new phenomenon imply for those working with youngsters - youth workers, teachers, counselors, project managers, local policy-makers and the institutions they represent?

Such questions triggered us to develop the project, giving participants the opportunity to share expertise and local knowledge for a better social inclusion of young migrants. This should lead to a more collaborative approach towards fostering inclusion and inspire participants to come up with concrete products to be used in the non-formal education of young migrants.

Putting together various experiences, sharing local problems and strategies of social inclusion in youth work through non-formal education, will build a base for evaluating and developing new visions, methodologies and intellectual outputs. That could be useful for youth workers and organizations dealing with social inclusion of young Europeans and will add to a more comprehensive European approach on the topic.

All three activities of the project focus on achieving a concrete goal at the end, as a result of the learning outcomes and daily experience exchanges. The start-up seminar will put together a Top 10 list of mostly-encountered problems and an Action Plan for the following activities of the project. The training aims at creating a role-play. The evaluation seminar will sum-up the outcome of the project in an on-line document (booklet) comprising the non-formal learning experiences on the inclusion of young European migrants and its direct consequences for youth work.



The group was welcomed at the Municipality of The Hague and the discussions took place in the Council Room. After a short introduction of each other and sharing a few experiences from the project, participants were asked to give their answers to the following questions:

→ what do you think are the basic conditions for someone to feel at home in our city?
 → why are migration and integration such important phenomena in our present day world?
 → how is migration perceived in your country?
 → is the country/city where you come from an inclusive one?

Some participants thought that learning the language is the main condition for immigrants to feel at home in their city, other participants said that they do not think immigrants would very easily feel at home in their city because local people have a rather closed attitude towards outsiders. Another opinion was that getting a job and respecting the way of life of the locals would be a must for the immigrants that want to feel at home in their city. Most of the participants agreed that migration and integration are very important issues nowadays because it has become increasingly easy for people everywhere to travel, and trying to integrate in a new country would be a sign of respect towards the local people.

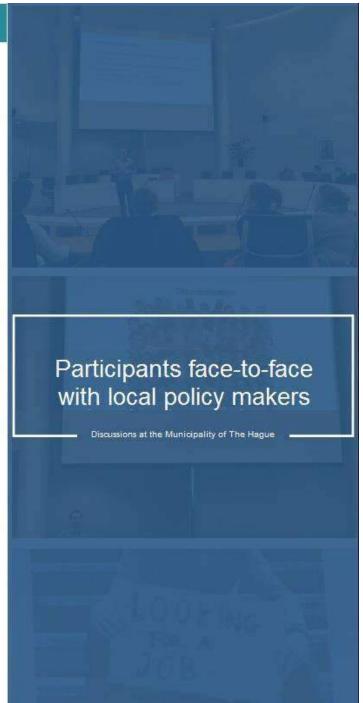
While the Dutch and Norwegian participants said their societies are generally inclusive and that most people perceive immigration as a positive aspect, the Polish and Romanians had divided answers.

The group also discussed some statistics in relation to the population of The Hague at the beginning of 2016, as a proof for the multiculturalism of the city (natives are under 50 % of the population of The Hague).

Mr Bob van Meijeren from the Department of Integration also brought into discussion topics connected to work and participation of young migrants, education and language, discrimination, well-being and social pressure they have to go through, sometimes.

Even though the Dutch society is an open one, the officials underlined that immigrants should not take advantage of this and they should do their best to integrate in the Dutch society and respect the Dutch way of life, through finding a job and assuring the well-being of their family, through getting their children in Dutch schools, learning the language, avoiding discriminating or reporting any cases in which they have been discriminated.

Another point of discussion was the social pressure from the Dutch society on guiding immigrants towards adopting the Dutch way of life - not in a negative way, but rather in continuing to be a community which respects people no matter their nationality, religion or sexual orientation. In this context, the group also discussed about the involvement of youth workers in helping young migrants to better integrate in the city. The municipality does not have enough human resources; that is why the support of volunteers, youth organizations, youth workers from migrant organizations and other dedicated people is essential for the municipality to implement its projects and policies in the field of social inclusion.



After a short introduction of the role of an Embassy and the main fields the institution is covering, participants and speakers discussed about the impact that youth projects can have on social inclusion of migrants in another society. The Polish diplomats were speaking from the perspective of the Polish community in The Netherlands and the concrete situations they are facing in their daily work. They also underlined that the Dutch society is a very organized one, which makes it easier for all type of projects to be implemented with success.

The PERFECT EUROPEAN YOUNGSTER

Participants were challenged to split in multinational groups and asked to think of a portrait for the Perfect European youngster, able to integrate in each and every society.

Some of the answers:

→ Know more languages than the mother tongue

→ Tolerant

→ Open to the world

→ Not a tourist but a traveler

→ Focus on the personality of the others not the way they look

→ Positive thinker

→ Interested in the world, in learning new languages, open to new cultures

→ Does not give up easily

→ Know about other cultures

→ Empathic

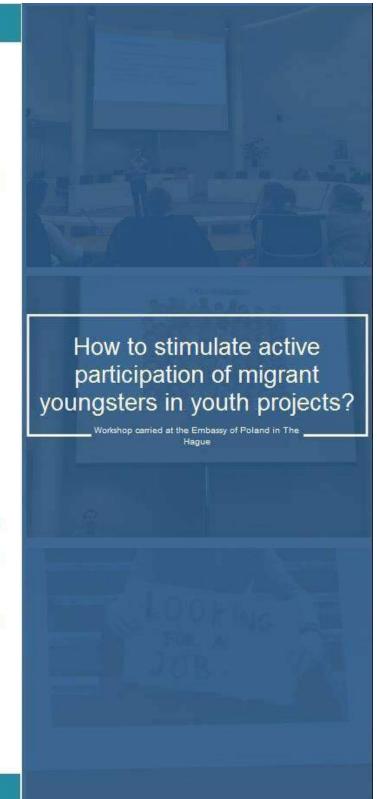
→ Intelligent

→ Active

When asked how can migrant youngsters be stimulated to participate in youth projects, participants said that families and schools should be the first ones to encourage them to actively participate and explain them the benefits – a better inclusion in the community, get to know locals better, more prospects for the future, better understanding of local culture, making new friends among local youth and build a solid social life.

Some solutions for a better integration would be, according to the participants, tolerance, openness and understanding of each other, acceptance of other cultures, constant dialogue and interaction.

At the end of the discussions, participants continued talking during an informal drink about other subjects connected to the theme of the project or their personal interests.



During the visit at the Dutch Senate, Mr. Wim van Eekelen showed the participants around, introducing them to some relevant moments of the Dutch history, culture, architecture and political organisation. Mr Van Eekelen is a honorary board member of our Foundation and a renowned Dutch personality (former Senator, Minister, Secretary General of Western European Union, chairman of the European Movement etc).

After a tour of the First Chamber, the speaker talked with the participants about the Dutch history and the reason why he thinks that the Dutch have always been more open to newcomers than other nations – starting with the strong sea commerce and ending with the mild attitude towards different religions, even in the old times.

Participants were asked to talk about the way people in their local communities are looking at social inclusion and at newcomers in general. They could share knowledge gathered by each group during the preparatory phase of the project.

Mr Van Eekelen shared some of his extensive experiences with the group, in an informal but special atmosphere. During the discussions, participants were allowed to sit in the benches where the Dutch Senators are sitting. Among the topics brought into discussion were the rejecting attitudes of natives towards youngsters from other countries, the way prejudices and stereotypes can influence the good functioning of a system, the influence of the parents and the culture at home on the further integration of minority youngsters in society, the destructive effect of negative beliefs about other nations.



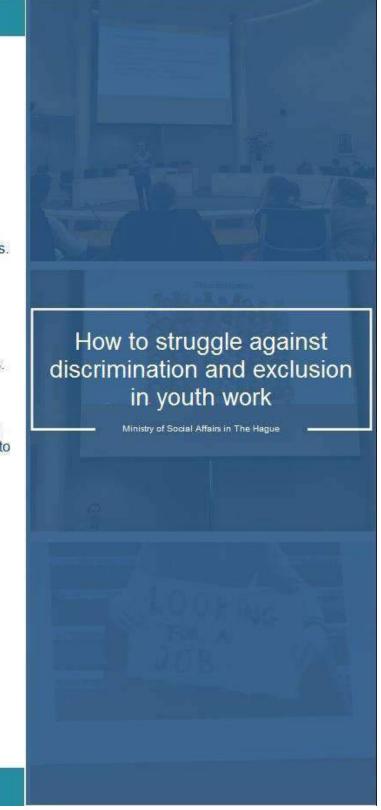
This session took place at the Ministry of Social Affairs in The Hague, where the group had the opportunity to exchange experiences with experts of the Ministry, involved in inclusion policies of migrants.

After a presentation on the Dutch inclusion policies, participants were invited to answer the questions:

- What is your picture of the diversity in the Dutch society?
- What is the social climate towards newcomers in your society?

Some participants said that they see the Dutch society as being very diverse and open towards newcomers - a view which is different from the one the Dutch people have about their society nowadays. They feel less open than the previous generations.

Some other topics of discussion referred to the history of migration to The Netherlands, the changing integration policies over time, the current state of political affairs, current Agenda of the Government on Integration. The session ended with a round of questions from the participants (referring, among others, to the inclusion of Muslim youngsters, differences in integration between various minority groups, possibilities of checking if the refugees are connected to terrorism or how is the Dutch government identifying youngsters involved in a radical group).



The group was welcome by Mr. Eduard Slootweg, Head of Office at the European Parliament Information Office in The Hague.

He started with a short presentation about the EU and its main bodies. As an introduction to the theme of the session, participants were asked to think about advantages created by the existence of the EU for the young generations. They talked about the freedom of movement, which gives youngsters a chance to visit other EU countries without needing passports or visas, and also about the Erasmus+ programme, which helps youngsters study anywhere they want, become more socially-involved by joining projects where to get in touch with other European fellows, learn how they think, exchange knowledge and good practices, learn from each other and work together for achieving concrete goals.

Mobility within European space opens new doors in development and overtakes borders that were serious barriers between nations in the past. The older generations had to grow up with them.

The debate continued with participants asking many questions: how are people seated in the European Parliament? (by political groups), what are some weak points of the EU (bringing 28 different opinions together, differences between West and East in immigration policies for instance), Euro, the chances of Turkey to enter the EU, why does France have so much power on keeping a part of the Parliament in Strasbourg (written in the Treaty and to change the Treaty, you need the acceptance of all the countries while France opposes it - French officials not the French people).

The discussions also shed light on the notion of European Citizenship as well as the main values in youth work. Participants were divided in smaller groups made up of people from different nationalities and each group had as a task to discuss values they consider important in youth work:

involve everybody, irrespective of color, religion and beliefs;

→ give everybody equal opportunities;

→ stimulate youngsters to have their own voice heard at local level;

→ give them the possibility to take decisions about their future;

→ equality is the key;

→ respect all young people the way they are.





Top 10 list of problems that young immigrants face in the process of their social inclusion when moving to another European country



- 1. In Poland there are very few immigrants so the differences between them and the Polish become clear (their skin or hair color, their accent)
- 2. Polish people are afraid of refugees because they think they're terrorists, though terrorist attacks never occurred in Poland
- 3. In Rom<mark>ania, Rroma people still str</mark>uggle on the job market
- 4. In Romania, many times Rroma people refuse to integrate, by keeping hold to traditions like underage marriage or getting young girls out of school to marry them
- 5. In the Netherlands there are still "black/white schools"-schools where students are mostly black or mostly white; this happens because immigrants tend to live in the same neighborhoods, while other neighborhoods are dominated by Dutch residents
- 6. In the Netherlands, Moroccan and Turkish people are still not well received by Dutch people because of their different ways of living
- 7. In the Netherlands, Moroccan and Turkish people tend to stay in their own communities rather than integrating in Dutch groups/ communities
- 8. In Norway, youngsters from immigrant families tend to integrate more difficult in the local communities because they and their parents were used to different ways of life
- 9. In Iceland and Norway, young immigrants face many challenges in learning the local language because Icelandic and Norwegian are difficult languages
- 10. All young immigrants face problems when trying to learn the language of their new country, when going to school in the new country or when trying to find a job, more so because their parents can't help them



New role-play for stimulating active participation in youth projects and diminishing thinking in patterns



A Dutch family has recently moved out from their 2 bedroom apartment in The Hague, because they need more space for their growing family. They now want to rent out the apartment. After they send an announcement online, various candidates come to see it and show their interest in renting the said apartment, but before choosing their new tenants, they also need to discuss their options with the tenants' association of their apartment building.

Possible tenants, that came at the open house:

- 3 Bulgarian students, which count solely on their scholarships for income
- a young Romanian unmarried couple with 1 recently born baby
- a Rroma couple
- a gay couple from France
- a Dutch family (he has physical disabilities and she suffers from OCD) with 2 children

Roles:

- 2 owners of the apartment: husband and wife
- 3 Bulgarian students
- 2 young Romanians (couple)
- 2 Rroma (couple)
- 2 gay French men/women (couple)
- 2 Dutch (family)
- 4 members of the tenants' association: 1 old man (former military), 1 house wife, 1 vocal supporter of the "traditional family" and 1 young person who works at the Department of Integration at the Ministry of Social Affairs

32 out of the 64 participants to the project have completed the survey, with 26 of them declaring themselves very satisfied with their Erasmus+ mobility experience in general.

Half of the participants strongly agreed that during the seminar - the first activity of the project - they have developed their communication competences in their mother tongue while also rather agreeing to them improving their analytical skills. The majority of them strongly agreed to have improved their practical skills, their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, while learning how to learn better. Apart from these, the participants also developed their interpersonal and social competences, their emotional skills and they also became more aware of their culture and got better at expressing it. Most of the participants improved their skills in the main foreign language - English - used during this mobility activity, while two participants stated that their English skills have not been bettered.

The majority of the participants agreed that thanks to this mobility activity they have learned from good practices abroad, gained practical skills relevant for their current job and professional development, experimented and developed new learning practices/methods, shared their own knowledge and skills with learners and/or other persons, increased the quality of the projects they develop, they improved their competences in the use of Information and Communication Technology tools, reinforced or extended their professional network or built up new contacts, enhanced their organisational/management/leadership skills, while only slightly more than half stated that they have managed to reinforce the cooperation with the partner institution/organisation, build cooperation with players in the labour market, increase their job satisfaction, and enhance their employment opportunities. When talking about building cooperation with players in civil society, half of the participants stated that they don't agree nor disagree with this.

Beyond the professional dimension, the greater part of the participants strongly agrees to have increased their social, linguistic and/or cultural competences, while getting actively involved in social and political life, and being more interested in European topics. They have also become more aware of common European values and Europe's multiculturalism, feel more as Europeans than before, and have become more aware of how important foreign language skills are for their personal and professional development. Participants stated that, in the future, they will be more committed to the inclusion of disadvantaged people, while currently committing to work against discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia or racism. During the program, they have also established contacts with people in other countries which are now useful for their involvement in social or political issues.

Seven out of nine participants stated that they were very satisfied with their Erasmus+ mobility experience in general and declared that their participation in the activity met their needs in terms of personal development, while six out of nine participants also agreed that their needs in terms of professional development were met.



Participants' reports

Activity nr. 1

Half of participants that responded the questions of the survey agreed that the project helped them improve their communication skills in the mother tongue and their employment opportunities, while almost half of them reinforced or extended their professional network or built up new contacts. Five out of twelve participants didn't agree that the programme helped them build cooperation with players in the labour market. Half of the responding participants didn't agree nor disagreed with the fact that the activity helped them improve their competences in the use of ICT tools, nor the fact that it helped them increase their job satisfaction. All of them stated that, thanks to this programme, they have improved their interpersonal and social competences, and also their cultural awareness and expression.

The majority of the participants agreed that this mobility activity has given them the opportunity to learn from good practices abroad, enhance their organisational/management/leadership skills, reinforce or extend their professional network or built up new contacts, and build cooperation with players in civil society. They also agreed that the programme has helped them increase the quality of the projects they develop, share their own knowledge and skills with learners/other persons, experiment and develop new learning practices/methods, or gain practical skills relevant for their current job and professional development or better their skills in English. Most of the participants agreed to their emotional skills, learning to learn and analytical skill, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and practical skills being developed during this activity.

Beyond the professional dimension, the greater part of the participants strongly agrees to having increased their social, linguistic and/or cultural competences, now being more interested in European topics, to having become more aware of common European values and Europe's multiculturalism, and feeling more as a European than before. The majority of the responding participants agree that during this activity they have established contacts with people in other countries which are useful for their involvement in social or political issues, and now feel more committed to work against discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia or racism and the inclusion of disadvantaged people, have also become more aware of how important foreign language skills are for their personal and professional development, while also being motivated to become more involved in social and political life.

Eleven out of twelve responders stated that they were very satisfied with their Erasmus+ mobility experience in general and strongly agreed that their participation in the activity met their needs in terms of personal development, while only eight of them agreed that their needs in terms of professional development have also been met.



Participants' reports

Activity nr. 2

When answering the question "which of the following competences did you develop most by participating in this Erasmus+ activity?", all participants, that responded to the survey, agreed that their practical skills and their cultural awareness and expression, have been bettered during this activity, while almost all participants agreed that they also developed their communication in the mother tongue, the learning to learn skill, their interpersonal and social competences, and the skill in the main foreign language used during the activity – English. The majority of the responding participants think that their analytical or emotional skills, and their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship have been developed thanks to the programme.

When talking about their professional development, the majority of the participants answered that, thanks to this mobility activity, they have learned from good practices abroad, gained practical skills relevant to their current job and professional development, experienced and developed new learning practices or methods, improved their competences in the use of ICT tools, reinforced or extended their professional network or built up new contacts, while also reinforcing the cooperation with the partner organisation, have built cooperation with players in civil society, and have also enhanced their employment opportunities. All responding participants have agreed that during this activity they have shared their own knowledge and skills with learners and other persons, and have enhanced their organizational/management/leadership skills, while almost all participants have also agreed that they have increased the quality of the projects they develop.

When talking about building cooperation with players in the labour market, 1/3 of the participants agreed they had this opportunity during the programme, 1/3 didn't agree nor disagree with this, while the other third disagreed to having done this. 1/3 of the responding participants have also agreed to have increased their job satisfaction thanks to this programme, 4 participants didn't agree nor disagree, while 2 participants answered that they rather disagree with this.

Beyond the professional dimension, all responding participants answered that they have increased their social, linguistic and/or cultural competences, while also growing more aware of Europe's multiculturalism, and now feeling more as Europeans than before. Almost all participants said that they are now more interested in European topics, they have become aware of common European values and more aware of how important foreign language skills are for their personal and professional development, they are now committed to work against discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia or racism, and have established contacts with people in other countries which are useful for their involvement in social or political issues. The majority of the responding participants, also have pledged to become more committed to the inclusion of disadvantaged people, in the future. On the other hand, only 4 participants said that they now participate in social and political life, 3 of them don't agree nor disagree with this, while 2 participants disagree with getting involved in this matter.

8 out of 9 participants who answered the survey, said that they are very satisfied with this Erasmus+ mobility experience in general and they strongly agree that globally, their participation in the activity met their needs in terms of professional development. All participants have agreed to being satisfied in terms of personal development.



Participants' reports

Activity nr. 3

At the end of each activity, participants were asked to evaluate to programme, as following...



Which of your expectations were not fulfilled during this seminar?

About the discussions: we discussed a lot about refugees because this topic is current, but we would have liked to discuss more about the problems faced by young Europeans going to other countries, and how can we help them integrate.

⇒ discrimination;

 ⇒ money problems because they do not find work easily;

 ⇒ separation/segregation so they usually fail to integrate;

 ⇒ natives get work more easily than the immigrants, also because of the language;

 ⇒ immigrants do not learn the language and it is hard to communicate with the natives;

 ⇒ the racist remarks they get from people, they are not nice, they need to feel at home;

 ⇒ in Romania: the lack of jobs and houses;

 ⇒ in Poland: discrimination and lack of jobs;

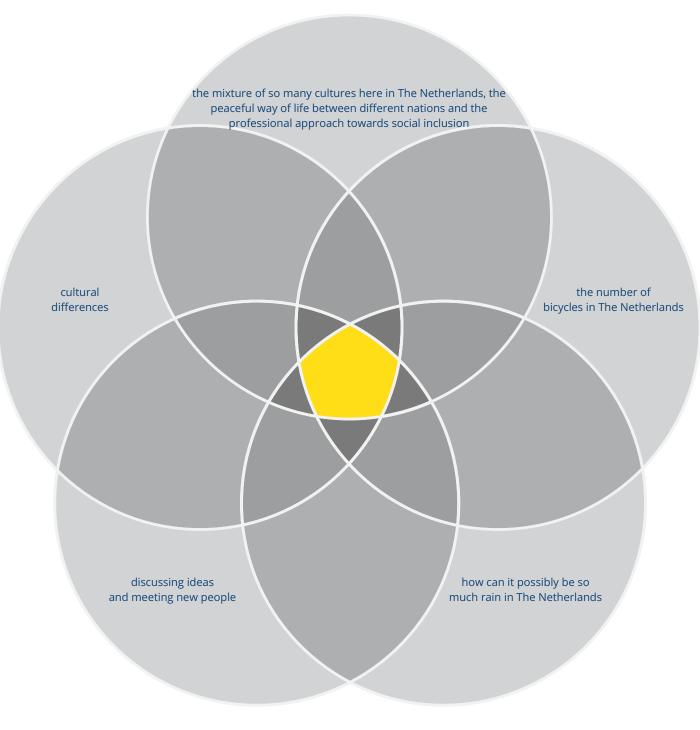
 ⇒ in Norway: different cultures, climate and the language.

Evaluation

Can you tell us 3 problems immigrants are facing when moving to your country?

Some other main problems for foreigners that are trying to integrate in other cultures are, according to the group: **⇒** the political parties set against immigrants; **⇒** getting a job when they do not speak the language; **⇒** immigrants are seen as a problem in general.

Which activity of the week made the biggest impact on you?



The activities with the biggest impact that were mentioned most were the traditional evenings, the discussions at the Municipality and the group discussions.

What makes your country unique in Europe?

The Dutch thought they are confident about keeping their culture but at the same time letting other nationalities come in,
Romanians have beautiful traditions,
Nordics have lots of space and oil and they are in general tolerant to people from other countries as long as they integrate and respect their values,
Polish are patriotic, not so tolerant and see other cultures as a danger to their own, as they care a lot about their traditions and are really sensitive about them.

Poland: most of the people are Polish and they speak Polish language, which is one of the hardest languages in the world

Romania: nature and landscapes

Norway: landscape, fiords, Nordic light, oil

Polish is a sophisticate language and Poland has a very old history

The Netherlands: tulips, bikes, mixing up easily with people from other cultural backgrounds

What is the attitude towards immigrants in your country?

- ⇒ In Norway: they are mostly welcome but they do not really mix with natives;
 - ⇒ In Poland and Romania: it is in general negative because of the stereotypes;
- ⇒ The Netherlands: there are parties like PVV that are very negative, but there is also a shift going on with people that become more positive towards them;
- ⇒ In Iceland immigrants are welcome but they don't really talk to the natives ⇒ The Netherlands: very open because it is a multicultural society.

Accepting immigrants depends a lot on where they come from, it is different if they come from France, Germany or Eastern-Europe, Turkey or Syria. It is also hard if they do not speak the language.

Everybody agreed that The Hague is really open to other nationalities, has very good programmes for inclusion and gives lots of attention to young people from other cultural backgrounds.

There are sometimes acts of violence towards people who have a foreign accent, there is a party that is anti-immigrants and keeps on showing negative images about them, but Dutch are in general tolerant towards immigrants.

Both in Norway and in The Netherlands it is rather difficult to get a job if you do not speak the language or at least English.

Romanians are tolerant in general, but they are discriminating Rroma while they do not feel comfortable with the thought that many people in the West label all Romanians as gypsies.

Polish are not very tolerant, but they are trying hard to change this attitude. If you are from a different country but look almost the same like the Polish, then it is ok. People from Gdynia have special conditions for receiving people from other countries, but other parts of the country are not as tolerant, especially towards people with dark skin.

What is the most important lesson that you will take home with you?

⇒ things are not always as they seem to be;

⇒ do not judge people by their outside but by their inside;

⇒ with discussions you always achieve success;

⇒ it does not really matter what country you are from, people are generally the same, even if they come from different countries;

⇒ Europe overall seems the same but every country is also different in its own way;

⇒ beautiful traditions from other countries;

⇒ it is very easy to brake the barriers between cultures and learn from each other when you come together and discuss about so many topics;

⇒ we are not so different from the others;

⇒ wonderful memories;

⇒ friends for a lifetime;

⇒ respect for other cultures.

What experience gained during the programme will help you in the future?

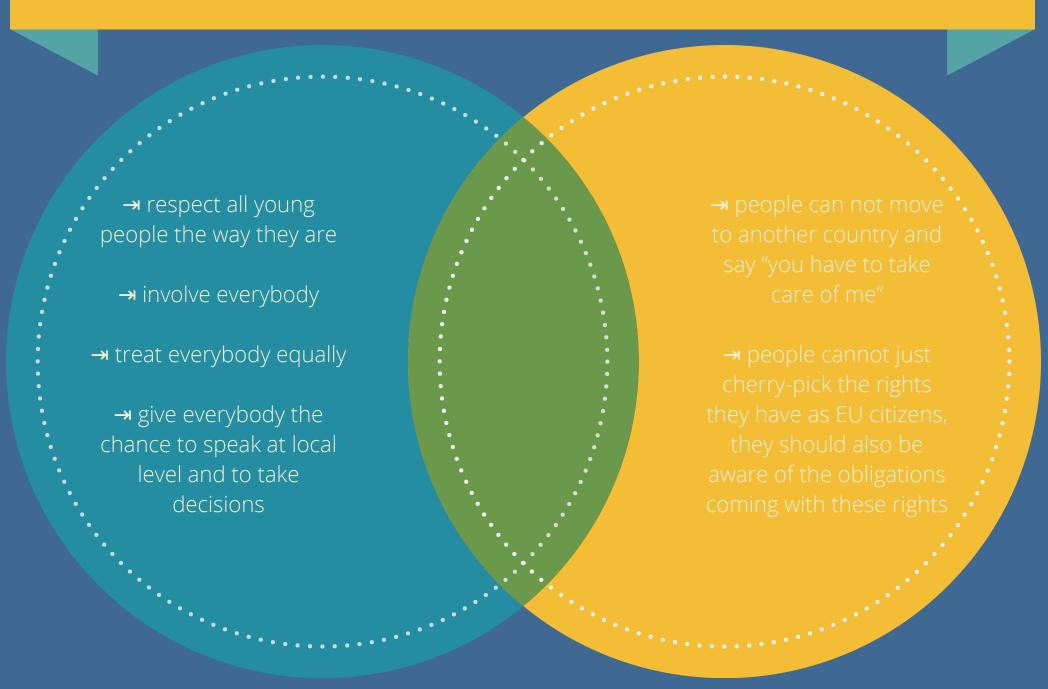


- ⇒ everything that we did in this programme will help me in the future;
 - ⇒ now I have more discussion skills;
- ⇒ the knowledge gathered during the programme will help me look differently at the yougsters coming from other cultures, I will be able to better assist and help them;
 - ⇒ the point of view you have for one country does not exactly mean it is for the whole country;
 - now I can more easily make new friends;
 - ⇒ I can now give The Netherlands as an example when discussing about different issues of integrating young migrants, because you are doing very well here with migrants;
- ⇒ I learnt that family, acceptance, job, the atmosphere at home and the friends around are essential in the process of social inclusion of migrants. Make a cake and go to the neighbors. Search for people culturally similar to you. Be active, do something, stay involved;
- ⇒ I learnt from the positive attitude of the Dutch and that will help me a lot in the future;
 - ⇒ the programme helped me change the way I think;
- ⇒ I learnt that, by giving up stereotypes, new doors are opening everywhere.

Do you have any suggestions for us, for a future project?



If participants would have to make a code of behavior with values to be respected in the process of inclusion of young migrants, some points to be taken into account would be:





"Mainly people make their countries different: their attitudes, their habits."

"We have talked and compared the cultures.

We all have different traditions and different food. Also the difference is in sports, also buildings and architecture, the way people build their houses, because in a different climate people build their houses differently."

"It was really nice talking to people from other countries."

"I think we are very different in our state of mind.

for example when we discussed

the problem of the immigrants, people in the Netherlands are in general more open towards immigrants than they are in Poland or in other countries, so I think that in the state of mind we are very different."

"In my opinion, Polish people are like always in a hurry, fast going people and a little fast forward, they want to have everything done quickly, while here in Holland I notice that people's attitude is very slow, they don't really care about details, people smile all the time."

"Our traditional food is different, but we use kind of the same ingredients because our climates are similar"

