



Engagement of International Students in Local Communities

Implementation report of the SIEM local phase



Copyright © 2022 by the Erasmus Student Network AISBL. All rights reserved.

Title: Engagement of International Students in Local Communities

Subtitle: Implementation report of the SIEM local phase

Published by: Erasmus Student Network AISBL

Authors: Anna Kowalczyk, Wim Gabriels

Implementation Team: Juan Rayon Gonzalez, Christine Drosne, Paulina Bednarak, Betül Sare

Altaş, Rareş Gherasim, Richard Mazúr, Maria Giankampouzidou, Paula Pop, Bianca Stefan

Design: Nikolina Duric

Pictures: Nicolas Menijes | Canva

This information can be freely used and copied for non-commercial purposes, provided appropriate credit is given and any changes made are indicated. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

About SIEM Project

Social inclusion is a priority for the next Erasmus programme, but very little hard data is available on the accessibility of the current programme and what measures could be put in place to improve access and participation. Students from less advantaged backgrounds and from underrepresented groups that go abroad tend to get better degree results, have lower unemployment rates, are more likely to start their career in graduate-level jobs and have a higher starting salary than their non-mobile peers. However, while they stand to gain from this experience, these students are underrepresented in mobility, with only 7% of Erasmus students coming from a disadvantaged or underrepresented group.

In response to this, ESN has launched the 'Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility' project. The project is a collaborative cross-European partnership between ESN, UUKi the European University Foundation, YES Forum, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE), University of Vigo (ES), Masaryk University (CZ), University of Latvia (LV), ESN Spain (ES) and ESN France (FR).

This project is an important step toward making international mobility opportunities more inclusive, enabling students from all backgrounds to study, work or volunteer abroad. The ultimate goal of higher education in general, and studying abroad in specific, is to shape a generation of Europeans that transcend traditional cultural beliefs, who embrace cultural differences and endorse mutual intercultural understanding to shape a united society that offers space to everyone.



About Erasmus Student Network

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the biggest student association in Europe. Present at over 1000 Higher Education Institutions, it unites over 500 local associations in 41 countries. More than 15,000 volunteers take care of international colleagues under the motto "Students helping students". ESN works for the creation of a more mobile and flexible education. environment by supporting and developing the student exchange from different levels and providing an intercultural experience.

As the main responsible for the implementation phase, ESN was responsible for the role out of the local initiatives on the ground, with support from the project partners in the preparation of the content.

Erasmus Students for Social Inclusion

The activities within the scope of this project are very important for the Erasmus Generation and are a strong pillar in the organisation of the local outreach component in the SIEM project.

The objective of the implementation phase was to ensure interaction between international students during their exchange and local communities with a focus on local young people.

Thanks to such an engagement, international students learn the value of volunteering and school pupils get a chance to hold an intercultural dialogue. At the same time student mobility and civic engagement is promoted.

To implement activities across Europe, an extensive implementation strategy is needed. Throughout the academic year 2021-2022, many supporting activities were organised to empower national and local volunteers and encourage Erasmus students to engage in local volunteer initiatives.

Community Management

The Erasmus Student Network is an extensive organisation with more than 15.000 volunteers across 41 countries and 510 local organisations. In order to reach this extensive Network, it is important to engage in extensive community management.

In the Academic year of 2021-2022, the ESN headquarters were supported by a group of experienced volunteers recruited from the community of ESN volunteers across Europe. This allows for a grass-root level approach through co-management, where the needs of the volunteers are represented.

ESN Headquarters

- Wim Gabriels, Project Coordinator
- **Juan Rayon Gonzalez**, International Board member

The social impact team, responsible for an increase in engagement and local volunteering on the ground.

- Christine Drosne, Social Inclusion Coordinator
- Paulina Bednarak, Communication Officer
- **Betül Sare Altaş**, Programme Manager
- Rareş Gherasim, Community Management
- **Richard Mazúr,** Data Analist

Together the team managed the community of volunteers active within national and local level through several channels and platforms. One of the main objectives was to empower national coordinators, in order for them to function as multipliers to local volunteers. They, in turn, execute activities with Erasmus students in their local communities.

In order to create a sense of community and to encourage volunteers on the local level to engage in the organisation of volunteer activities during the implementation phase in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, the team organised the Social Inclusion Days. The aim of the Social Inclusion Days initiative organised twice per year is to provide young citizens with the opportunity to do more with their mobility experience, to make a difference and create a positive social change

through volunteering. The initiative stresses the importance of intercultural learning, and the learning students experience during their volunteering activity.

This biannual initiative took place for 2 weeks per semester:

- Fall 2021: from 29th of November till the 12th of December 2021.
- Spring 2022: from 22nd of April till the 8th of May 2022.

This encouraged local and national volunteers to act and organise volunteer activities for international students. Throughout the semester, the team engages with the community in different ways to offer them support in the organisation of the initiative on the ground by creating an online community to engage volunteers and exchange knowledge, offering capacity building and training, and providing communication tools.

Capacity Building through training

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit across the world and impacted mobility of students, youth workers and staff members, the capacity building and training initiatives in the project were quite heavily impacted throughout the project, with **delays of implementation** as well as more **restricted participation** throughout the early recovery period of the project. The project consortium managed to implement all three of the initiatives mentioned in the project application, An **Inclusive Mobility Workshop**, as well as a joint conference and Training & Conference for Student Representatives and Higher Education Institutions and Policy Makers as well as a the Multiplier workshop. The order of events shifted, by reshaping the concept and moving the larger capacity building activity towards the end of the project alongside with the final conference.

Inclusive Mobility Workshop - Stuttgart

The Inclusive Mobility Workshop took place in Stuttgart, Germany from 13th to 16th of September 2023. The event brought together 16 students from diverse backgrounds from the 8 different partner organisations that had limited experience with mobility opportunities.

We predominantly looked for people with a profile that connects to a group of students that are underrepresented in mobility, we, therefore, gave priority to participants that identify as:

- A young person from a lower-than-average income background;
- A young person from an ethnic minority background;
- A young person that grew up in a more rural environment;
- A first-generation student in higher education;
- A young person from the lgbtq+ community.

The event had a blended approach with a first virtual component to get participants to engage with each other before the event. Throughout the three-day event, the participants coming from backgrounds with fewer opportunities, were introduced with the thematic of the project and the opportunity for the participants to engage with the research outputs that were relevant towards a particular underrepresented group and with them it was discussed

how the group could be impacted by their mobility experience as well as which support activities could be useful for these groups.

As a result of the Inclusive Mobility Workshop, the project produced fact sheets on the different minority groups that collected these outputs that can be found on the project website:

Social Inclusion and Youth Engagement - Training

Social Impact and Youth Engagement is one of the activities of the SIEM project, that aims to widen participation in Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, while fostering interaction between international students and local students in order to increase internationalization at home. One of the main activities within the project is the Social Inclusion and Youth Engagement multiplier training, in which student representatives coming from all over Europe will have the opportunity to learn about the topics and work together towards a more inclusive mobility. The training took place in Sevilla starting from 7th of October and ending on 10th of October 2021. The participating countries were;Romania, Spain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, UK, Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Russia, Czech Republic and Georgia. We had a huge diversity of European countries, and a total number of 50 participants. Representatives from organisations joined the training and got the chance to learn and take action towards a more inclusive mobility support and impactful actions.

Topic	Description
Impact of Erasmus+ and ESN in	In this workshop participants explored the accessibility
society	and the impact of the events and opportunities that
	Erasmus+ and ESN specifically implement. They had the
	time to create presentations in groups and show their
	results to the rest of the group. At the end there was a
	group discussion by debriefing the activity on questions

	like How we can make an event impactful? and What are the key elements of accessibility in an event?.
Explore relevant concepts and the Social Model	In this activity participants were split in groups and had two concepts that are controversial to explore, research and show to the group their meaning. Examples of such concepts are equality and equity, inclusion and integration and transcultural Identity and intercultural Awareness. Presentations of those concepts followed up and participants had the chance to discuss them. At the end the social model of disability by Mike Oliver was explained to the group.
Inclusion in Mobility	This activity was focused on showing the results of the SIEM survey to the participants and better understand the objectives of the overall project under the KA3 of Erasmus+ mobility. Also, we introduced to the participants of the Social Impact team of our organisation, a representative of which presented the goals and the mission of this team. The portal of activities.esn.org was explained in detail and the process of submitting an activity there.
How do people learn?	Participants started to understand the learning cycle through the theory of Kolb cycle and got into exploring their own personal learning styles and discussing it with their peers. This is a first approach on how learning takes place which helps participants to understand how to create a learning path and hence apply it in their events in the future.

Part1: Quality VS Quantity	Now participants started to think of the overall
	objectives of the events as well as the specific events
	they have been implementing the last year. They came
	into realisation of how much the events they are
	organising aligns to the objectives and goals of ESN in
	general. Following that, a facilitated discussion around
	the topic of setting a learning goal was held. And lastly
	participants explored the various aspects and
	responsibilities before, during and after an event.
Part2: Designing an Activity	And as participants have started from their learning
	process now it is time for them to create a learning
	journey for young people. They are split in groups of 4-5
	people and their task is to design an activity,
	considering all the resources they were introduced in
	the previous workshops. The design activity was split in
	5 parts, and they were introduced to their task one after
	the other so they can focus on each aspect of designing
	an activity. The steps were: 1. Goals and objectives of
	the activity, 2. Date, Location and Target group, 3.
	Methods and potential partnerships, 4. Communication
	and Logistics and 5. Overall design of the workshop and
	final touch.
Measuring Impact - Causes and	Participants explored the causes of ESN and the
SDGs	connection that they have with the 17 Sustainable
	Development Goals. They had the chance to think of a
	specific goal their section/organisation is focusing on
	and then connect this goal with one of the causes of
	ESN. We also got the chance to explore the SDGs, which
	we found in a cultural building in Sevilla. That way we

	practically experienced the variety of SDGs and participants were able to understand them better.
25%project	Participants were coming from various and different countries, and they all had their vision in creating a better future for the mobility of youth. The content team presented the 25% project and the chance to share their idea to make Europe a better place for young people and the opportunities in mobility.
Follow up and Dissemination	The content team introduced the follow up plan after this training to the participants and the Local Phase, a chance for them to organise an event with the specific targets and goals and getting compensated for that was presented. Participants had also the chance to brainstorm on their personal goals after this training and later on network with others by sharing their plans and getting recommendations, feedback and possible collaborations.
Feedback and evaluation	Participants reflected on the whole training and their accomplishments, provided feedback to the training and made an appreciation round with all teams that worked for this training to happen.

Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility - Training & Conference

On the 3rd and 4th of October, Brussels hosted the 'Inclusion & Engagement in Mobility: The Social Dimension of Erasmus+' conference, moderated by Safi Sabuni, former president of the Erasmus Student Network. The event was organised as an official closing ceremony for the Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility Erasmus+ project, co-funded by the European Commission.

The conference was organised within the scope of the 'Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility (SIEM)' project, Erasmus+ KA3 project on Inclusion and Social Cohesion, an important step towards making international mobility opportunities more inclusive and enabling students from all backgrounds to study, work or volunteer abroad. The conference also represented an outstanding occasion to present the main outputs of the SIEM project and stimulate a debate on how they can be implemented by the different stakeholders. The Erasmus Student Network has launched the project in collaboration and cross-European partnership between ESN, UUKi the European University Foundation, YES Forum, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE), University of Vigo (ES), Masaryk University (CZ), University of Latvia (LV), ESN Spain (ES) and ESN France (FR).

Almost 200 participants joined the two-day event, including **European Commission**representatives and Policy Makers from the CULT Committee of the European Parliament,
Educational Policymakers, Erasmus+ National Agencies, Ministries working on education &
youth, as well as International Officers facilitating mobilities as well as students and youth
representatives from all over Europe and beyond. It is worth mentioning that the balance
between the students and other related stakeholders has been highly respected with
approximately 50%-50% share of the representatives, making this a very inclusive event.
The goal of the event was twofold: first, to discuss the possibilities of overcoming barriers to
taking part in learning mobility opportunities and then, how engagement and active
participation can support social integration in the host society.

"We don't want people to feel like permanent guests when they are abroad, we want them to feel at home"

- Adel Smejkalova, Vice President for Development.

The SIEM conference has been a milestone in bringing a diversity of actors together to discuss and make a step forward in developing tangible initiatives to make international mobility opportunities more inclusive, and enable students from a diversity of backgrounds to study, work and volunteer abroad. The conference has offered plenty of stimulating discussions and initiatives on diversity and inclusion in student mobility and how student mobility programmes can have a lasting impact on students and their host communities.

ESN and the SIEM consortium are firmly committed to the idea that the ultimate goal of higher education in general and studying abroad, in particular, is to create a generation of Europeans who are able to transcend conventional cultural beliefs, embrace cultural diversity, and support mutual intercultural understanding in order to create a unified society that provides space for everyone.

Considering the above-mentioned values and commitments of SIEM, the first day of the conference started with a student panel joined by mobility alumni coming from diverse backgrounds to discuss experiences and the challenges they have identified during their mobilities, in line with the findings of the research report "Maybe it will be Different Abroad", that gathered inputs of 12.000 students and 750 staff members across Europe and beyond on the inclusion in international student exchanges. The research project explicitly focused on the following backgrounds: first-generation students and migrant students, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, LGBTQI+ students, and students coming from rural areas.

Break-out sessions for the participants were a component of the conference's program. These sessions gave the participants the flexibility to choose and attend the event that was most applicable to them. Besides, such a format greatly enhanced the value of Q&A sessions. The breakout sessions covered the topics of **Defining Minority Groups in your Country/Higher Education Institution**, **Engaging more challenging to reach youth**, **Support for students in need**, **refugees and migrants**. Thanks to the diversity of the speakers, the topics were addressed from a variety of angles, which included sharing insights and experiences.

The participants also had an opportunity to brainstorm specific strategies for making student mobility more inclusive in terms of access, student support, and student experience at the conference's World Cafe interactive sessions. The outcomes of these discussions contributed to shaping the final recommendations and conclusions of the project.

The first day of the conference was concluded with a presentation of the Inclusion actions in the new Erasmus+ programme, including the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, Framework of Inclusion Measures, National Action Plans and the Monitoring of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, delivered by Marta Gutierrez Benet - Head of the sector, DG EAC B4 Unit, European Commission.

On the second day of the conference, the 4th of October, participants had an opportunity to hear from the related stakeholders and think of ideas for fostering social inclusion in Erasmus+. There was a big diversity of speakers in this panel, including Josip Luša, SALTO Resource Centre for Inclusion and Diversity (Education and Training), Svava Finsen, Policy Officer, European Commission - DG EAC B1, Martin Bogdan, Policy Officer, Academic Cooperation Association, Lucia Gennaro, ARQUS European University Alliance and Katrina Sproge, Vice-President, European Students´ Union.

Afterwards, The Erasmus Student Network presented <u>project recommendations</u> on adapting the Erasmus+ documents, such as the programme guide, the grant agreements, or the ECHE monitoring system, in order to make Erasmus+ more inclusive. These recommendations

target European Institutions, National Agencies and Higher Education institutions, seeking to provide concrete proposals that can lead to changes in the documents in the near future.

The Erasmus Student Network introduced the Erasmus Generation Portal at the SIEM conference, which was noteworthy as it connects useful services for students, improves peer-to-peer information about student mobility, increases civic engagement, and measures the social impact of exchange. The Grant Simulator tool is one of the most prominent features of the Erasmus Generation Portal, as it responds to students' expressed need for clear and easily accessible financial information on their mobility grants. The grant simulator will allow the students to make a simulation based on general Europe-wide rules in respect to the Erasmus+ program guide. They will receive an estimate based on their mobility type, duration, and location.

Every participant was able to find an inspiring story to listen to and learn from on the second day of the conference, as it offered a diversity of topics during the poster sessions and ignite presentations. Additionally, the breakout sessions were dedicated to the broad topic of success stories through impactful initiatives, which included concrete presentations on Inclusion Practices in Mobility and Engaging students in society. The breakout sessions on Day 2 brought together speakers from a diversity of backgrounds, knowledge, and experience to discuss the crosscutting initiatives and ideas with the audience. Such topics included "How to use cross-sectoral engagement to improve access to mobility: Erasmus in Schools and beyond", "Mobility outside of the Erasmus+ programme - How can we make it inclusive?" and "The role of student accommodation in making mobility more inclusive".

The concluding panel discussion was moderated by the Director of the Erasmus Student Network, Wim Gabriels, and explored the importance and possibilities of civic engagement in international education together with the following panellists: Emmanuelle Gardan, Director of the Coimbra Group of Universities, Justine Gaudillat, Director of Erasmus Student Network Besançon, Tiago Diniz, Advisor to the Director at the Portuguese Erasmus+ National Agency, Stefanie Klose, Project Manager and lecturer at the Freiburg University, EPICUR European University Alliance, Berta Paz, Vice-director of the European

Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE), member of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE), and President of the Asociación española de Aprendizaje-Servicio Universitario, ApS(U).

The keynote speaker, Juan Rayón González emphasised the role of student engagement in making mobility more inclusive and impactful and closed the conference with a moving message: "think about students as actors of change, bring them to the tables of decisions because they will make an impact." Collaboration is better than confrontation".

ESN believes and strongly advocates for the idea that civic engagement and participation in democratic life is one of the horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ programme and also a core part of inclusion, helping students to develop a feeling of belonging to their hosting communities, in line with the objectives of the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. In 2021, ESN will kick start the "Enriching Communities through Engaged Mobilities" project, a new Erasmus+ collaboration project focusing on how civic engagement on an exchange can lead to more impactful and inclusive mobilities.

Student representatives were gathered on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd of October for an introductory training that would tackle topics such as the Impact of Erasmus+ and Mobility exchanges, the research data and how to represent student rights with an evidence based approach, in order for students to be prepared for the conference with the participants.

This action of a combined multiplier training as well as a policy conferencere was an action envisioned for mid-term of the project, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed on travel and event organisation, was postponed to the end as the final numbers for this event were quite large.









SIEM Local Phase

Every year ESN International organises the Social Impact Days. In the year 2021-2022 they were in the theme of the SIEM project with a focus on

- <u>Widening Participation:</u> Increase the participation of underrepresented groups in the Erasmus programme in order to make international student mobility more inclusive.
- <u>Community Engagement:</u> Encourage Erasmus students and student organisations to organise volunteer initiatives in order to reach out to the local community in order to increase intercultural exchange.
- <u>Peer-to-Peer Interaction:</u> Increase the interaction between international students and local communities of underrepresented groups and visibility of international student mobility.

This biannual initiative took place for 2 weeks per semester:

- Fall 2021: from 29th of November till the 12th of December 2021.
- Spring 2022: from 22nd of April till the 8th of May 2022.

This encouraged local and national volunteers to take action and organise volunteer activities for international students. Throughout the semester, the team engages with the community in different ways in order to offer them support in the organisation of the initiative on the ground by creating an online community to engage volunteers and exchange knowledge, offering capacity building and training, and providing communication tools.

As part of the SIEM project there were 2 rounds of SIEM micro-grants available to local ESN sections to organise impactful community engagement activities. The activities needed to be organised between November 29th, 2021, and May 15th, 2022. The goal of this seed funding is to stimulate the implementation of inclusive activities and stress the importance of local outreach, helping people to better understand these concepts and showcase best practices and implementation of the activities.

The Local Phase was a chance for the local organisations to organise an activity focused on the topic of Internationalisation and Engagement, especially when it comes to the topic of inclusion and the challenges students and youth face in your community and involve your volunteers, as well as local and exchange students in this important topic.

- International students should volunteer some of their time.
- Interaction between international students and local students is required (1/4th of the participants should be local)
- Be an Intercultural Dialogue that reflects on internationalisation and mobility (directly or indirectly).

The maximum budget request was 500 EUR, however 80% of the actual costs for organised events/activities could be funded. This means that the maximum reimbursement for sections was 400 EUR, and the remaining 20% must have been provided by the section themselves. To apply for the micro-grant all interested sections had to send an application form and a budget overview. The applications were evaluated then by the SIEM Team. After receiving confirmation chosen sections were ready to organise proposed activities.

Statistics (How many sections applied, which countries, what was the average budget)
In total 44 applications were submitted from which 30 projects were approved by the SIEM
Team. Out of 30 projects in total there were 8 approved projects in round 1 and 22 in round 2.
However, in the end, not all projects that got approved were organised. Out of 30 approved projects 22 projects were organised and therefore got the micro-grant (6 in round 1 and 16 in round 2). Approved projects were organised by sections from 10 countries: Romania (1), Poland (1), UK (1), Turkey (1), Croatia (1), Italy (1), Bulgaria (2), Portugal (3), Spain (5), Greece (6).

Project Outlines

The main goal of all granted activities was to engage international students in local communities through various actions and volunteering initiatives. ESN sections organised diverse activities, all of them with different main concepts.

One of the frequently used ones was sports - sections organised sports classes in which international and local students teamed up together. Such activities not only boosted fair and intercultural play but also promoted staying active and learning about local sports history. Another often used theme was **intercultural dialogue**. There were many projects during which participants could learn more about other people's stories, their culture, challenges, and stereotypes or prejudices they're facing. By enabling them an open and safe space fruitful discussions took place. Thematic cultural trips were also often organised. Not only this type of activity is interesting to international students as travelling is one of the favourite activities for everyone, but it also had an added-value as the trips were focused on interacting with local communities. School projects were present as well. Many sections got a chance to collaborate with schools (often in rural areas) in which they could organise their activity. The projects in schools were often organised because ESN sections already have a lot of experience in collaboration with educational institutions (e.g ESN's flagship project Erasmus in Schools). It is also worth mentioning that some of the sections' projects were moch longer than a couple of hours and lasted full day or even multiple days or included more than 1 activity. It's also commendable to see that many sections were able to organise their activities in collaboration with their partners' support.

Sign Language Workshop - Break the Silence

Name of the project	Sign Language Workshop - Break the Silence
Organised by	ESN Cluj-Napoca
Country	Romania
Number of participants	50
Goal of the project	One of our goals was to raise awareness about the deaf community and to have more people that will be able to communicate elementary things in sign language. Another goal that we had was to bring to light the problems that this category of disabled students can have in their everyday life.
Description of the project	It was a workshop aiming to give an insight into the Sign Language for our Local Volunteers and the current Erasmus Students from Cluj-Napoca. The event was organised in a partnership with one of the branches of OSM Cluj-Napoca (Medical Student Organisation), the branch is called "Văd Voci" (I see voices). There were two different sessions: one for English speakers and one for Romanian speakers.



Erasmus Helping Hand - Christmas Edition

Name of the project	Erasmus Helping Hand - Christmas Edition
Organised by	ESN Sevilla
Country	Spain
Number of participants	50
Goal of the project	 make a big difference to the families who need help bring joy to the families in need this holiday season. recreate the magic of the holidays with the traditional Christmas campaign for children in need. make the little ones smile and keep Christmas magic. encourage Erasmus students to participate in volunteer initiatives to reach the local community in order to increase intercultural exchange. increase interaction between international students and local communities of underrepresented groups. show international students how we celebrate Christmas in our country and to the children how Christmas is in other countries.
Description of the project	On the 17th of December, we went to the Red Cross facilities in Seville with seven international students and five ESN coordinators. One of our coordinators was dressed as a Christmas helper, and she was in charge of collecting the letters that children wrote to the Three Wise Men. We prepared a snack and we spent all afternoon playing games with the children and helping them with the letters. After this day, International students together with ESN coordinators were in charge of reading Christmas letters of children's wishes and buying presents. Also, we organised a solidarity campaign on Instagram to raise money for the remaining 20% we needed to cover expenses. On the second part of the activity, the 11th of January, we visited them again, to give them presents and sweets, and we spent some time playing together.

Stereotype, it's not my style

Name of the project	Stereotype, it's not my style
Organised by	ESN EYE Łódź
Country	Poland
Number of participants	44
Goal of the project	Our first goal was to spread knowledge about other cultures and combat stereotypes. During the activities the youth had an opportunity to gain knowledge about foreign countries. We wanted to awaken interest in other cultures and curiosity about the world. Our aim was also to broaden their perspectives. Polish youth aged 15-25 is brought up by a generation of people that didn't have an opportunity to travel, don't know how to do it affordably or are just scared of doing it because of their old beliefs. Those beliefs are often injected into young minds and discourage them from getting to know other cultures. The main objective was to battle harmful stereotypes that can often lead to unnecessary conflicts. We feel that our society is uneducated in that aspect. Sometimes we don't realise we can offend someone by assuming their features. Some stereotypes can be fun but we should spread awareness that not everything that is funny for us is funny for other people.
Description of the project	The project was divided into two stages. The first one consisted of presentations and workshops addressed to high school students. It took place in schools which were taking part in this project as its partners. This event was held twice in two different schools for 2nd or 3rd-grade students who are interested in the subject of intercultural exchange and studying abroad. During the first stage, two local ESN members alongside international students came to the partner high school and tried to draw attention to the negative influence of stereotypes on the perception of foreign people, as well as show the national heritage of their native countries. The whole project was carried out in English in order to promote learning foreign languages as well as simplify communication between Erasmus and Polish students.

Before the workshops, international volunteers gave an introduction in which they briefly described their home countries and cultures. This was to interest the audience and learn how fascinating foreign travel, mobility and Erasmus + programme can be. This introduction was followed by workshops that focused on discussing stereotypes and their possible incorrectness. During this part, each Erasmus volunteer wore a white T-shirt. On these T-shirts workshop participants were able to write stereotypes about the country from which a given Erasmus volunteer is. After that, the participants were engaged in a discussion regarding the stereotypes and how they impact our views. After that, there was a short break, during which participants were able to rest or ask additional questions about foreign students' culture and the influence of stereotypes on their lives.

The last part of the event was a game quiz which was based on the information contained in the presentations, as well as the knowledge gained during the workshop about stereotypes. It was done in order to consolidate all the information and summarise the event.

At the end of this event, participants received packages with certificates and promotional materials with information regarding mobility opportunities within Erasmus+ (as we know from our own experience, high-school pupils often lack this knowledge and there are no resources available to them), including, among others, promotional materials for mobility studies and ESN gadgets. International volunteers will also obtain vouchers for their activity.



Human Storyboard

Name of the project	Human Storyboard
Organised by	ESN Greece
Country	Greece
Number of participants	50
Goal of the project	We aimed to create a space where everyone would be encouraged to speak out and get out of their comfort zone. Young people from different backgrounds need to speak out, see how they can help local people and interact with the local community. So, we also wanted to give this platform to them. The big goal was to counter stereotypes by hearing the stories of people who have faced discrimination. Real stories are more impactful than theoretical sessions. So, we wanted them to gain some empathy by experiencing this.
Description of the project	During this event, the participants had the opportunity to meet and engage with teams and people who have dealt with prejudice and discrimination. These people shared their stories and experiences, and the participants were able to step into their shoes by asking them questions and realising their reality. We aimed to create a space where everyone was encouraged to speak out and get out of their comfort zone. By the end of the event, participants learnt something new and had become more aware. After the end of the event, we organised a dinner for discussion of all the information gained through the event. We cooperated with some organisations that protect people from minority groups. In our event, a refugee, an LGBTQI+ representative, a homeless person, a person with a physical disability, and youth workers shared their stories. Every story had a coordinator that facilitated the discussion and ensured that the person who said the story would feel comfortable during the whole event.



Erasmus Olympics

Name of the project	Erasmus Olympics
Organised by	ESN Plovdiv
Country	Bulgaria
Number of participants	45
Goal of the project	The main goal of the Erasmus Olympics was to promote social inclusion through tackling stereotypes and cultural differences using sport as a universal language. The target group were high-school students from underrepresented groups, who typically don't pursue higher education, Erasmus students and local university students. We strongly believe that by doing sport we can work towards closing the gap of discrimination of different minorities in our local society. Moreover, the event was a perfect tool to promote higher education among high-school students from underrepresented groups and the opportunities within the Erasmus programme among all participants. By raising awareness on these topics and fighting for a common cause, i.e. charity, we underlined the need for active participation in society.
Description of the project	Erasmus Olympics was a sports activity which consisted of small tournaments in two areas – volleyball and table tennis. Each team included participants from mixed backgrounds - Erasmus students on exchange in Plovdiv - our city, local university students and high school graders from underrepresented groups. Creating this setup, we aimed to target discrimination and stereotypes as a major issue in the local community in order to provide better understanding and to raise awareness on the topic. The organisation of the games was handled by ESN Plovdiv's volunteers and some external guests - volunteers, referees, medical support. Erasmus Olympics was a whole-day event within the period of the Social Impact Days in December. Due to the complicated COVID-19 situation in the big cities, the event had to be held in the mountains, in nearby sports town Chepelare. Creating such an event in such a place helped us

to reach more local youngsters from underprivileged groups and to expand the impact of the aims we have set to achieve.

The ESN team, the volunteers and the Erasmus and local students gathered in the morning and got transported to beautiful Chepelare. The event kicked off with an introduction of ESN Plovdiv, ESN in general and a brief project presentation. All participants presented themselves and had the chance to express in a non-formal way through games and ice-breakers their expectations and personal goals for the event. The event continued with the first games in each sport. There was a lunch break with free space to mingle, to communicate with each other and to test participants' language abilities. The sports day continued in the afternoon. There was a short debrief at the end of the day in order to provide general feedback and to evaluate whether the event has met the expectations of the participants and has achieved the set goals.

All events were open for the audience. The participants in the games and the spectators were invited to contribute with "pay-as-you-wish" based pricing for the games. The idea was that the collected money will be used to support a bookstore in Plovdiv, which is entirely funded by donations. Its mission is to support children with intellectual disabilities and their families both financially and mentally.



Kastoria Cultural Immersion trip

Name of the project	Kastoria Cultural Immersion trip
Organised by	ESN UniPi
Country	Greece
Number of participants	36
Goal of the project	a) Apply the highest possible level of environmentally friendly practices: We chose to travel by bus to eliminate the carbon dioxide emissions and since we stayed in a small town we explored most of it mainly by walking. Moreover, we also used eco-friendly materials during our activities (non-plastic cutlery, biodegradable trash bags and gloves, etc.) b) Raise awareness about environmental issues and the importance of volunteering in combating them: We ensured that our Treasure Hunt activity would include some challenges that could point out the environmental problems that Greece, as many other countries, faces nowadays and that our international and Greek students would engage in volunteering activities related to these issues. c) Ensure the interaction between international and local students: Our incoming students had the opportunity to participate in activities with local students and interact with them about issues of worldwide importance as well as participate in intercultural conversations. Moreover they met the Regional Governor of Western Macedonia. d) Give to our incoming students the opportunity to explore Greek natural and cultural heritage.
Description of the project	We organised a three-day trip in Kastoria, Greece. Our International Relations Office supported us and the trip mainly included activities related to Environmental Sustainability and Cultural Heritage pillars of Social Impact Days. More especially, amongst the activities there was a Treasure Hunt based on sustainable volunteering challenges (such as cleaning some landscape areas of the town)*, a Greek Night*, some visits in cultural and natural heritage places and museums (e.g. Geopark of Grevena - Kozani, which is protected by UNESCO, Natural History and Mushrooms'

Museum in Meteora, Meteora Landscape, Natural History Museum in Milia of Grevena, one old mansion in Siatista and some remainings of buildings from Hellenistic and Roman period).

At the Geopark we've been welcomed by the Regional Governor of Western Macedonia.

By organising this trip we aimed to bring international and local students together in some hidden gems of Greece, in order for them to come closer to our country's nature and culture and to participate in volunteering activities, while exploring a new place.

*For organising these activities we have cooperated with ESN Western Macedonia. Some of their volunteers joined us in the Geopark visit as well.



European Year of Youth Event

Name of the project	European Year of Youth Event
Organised by	ESN Santiago de Compostela
Country	Spain
Number of participants	100
Goal of the project	Make the local and international youth community aware of the initiatives developed by the EU in the field of this inclusive, sustainable and digital framework.
Description of the project	As 2022 is the European Year of Youth, ESN Santiago de Compostela organised a Youth Congress for local students. The Vice Presidents for Internationalisation of Galician Universities, MEPs Nicolás González Casares, Ana Miranda and Francisco Millán's chief of staff, the City Council of Santiago and the Xunta de Galicia met in Compostela to listen to the proposals that generation Z has. In the words of the event's coordinator, Karan Novo, "it doesn't make sense that institutions don't take youth's opinions into account when designing policies for us." The representatives declared to reach out to collaborate in the future on matters such as Mental Health, Sustainability or Employability.



Students for City in Split

Name of the project	Students for City - Split
Organised by	ESN Split
Country	Croatia
Number of participants	60
Goal of the project	Goal of our activities was to connect local and international students through these social activities. They met new people from whole world and which is good for preventing discrimination. Also together they helped people and the local community thanks to which they could make a real impact in their local community. International students got to know their new Erasmus home and people through these activities. This experience made their Erasmus stay fun and impactful.
Description of the project	Students for city Split was a project where international and local students together helped the local community in Split. There were 4 activities organised for Split: helping in animal shelter, beach cleaning, cooking for the homeless and humanitarian painting. Helping in animal shelter – walking dogs, cleaning their cages, making toys for dogs Beach cleaning – cleaning beach in Split Cooking for homeless – cooking dinner for homeless people that live in Split Humanitarian painting – painting pictures, money from participations went to some humanitarian organisation

Mobility Cafe

Name of the project	Mobility Cafe
Organised by	ESN Porto
Country	Portugal
Number of participants	30
Goal of the project	With this activity, we expected the local community to be more engaged in the internationalisation that is happening in their city, to share their experiences abroad along with the International Students and to learn about different kinds of mobility and the opportunities that are available for them. Also, it gave International Students a chance to get to know more about our local community and share their experiences to attract the locals to also take part in the internationalisation process.
Description of the project	This activity was a Coffee Workshop along with an informal talk about mobility. We had local students that already participated in different kinds of mobility before and those that haven't done any mobility yet but would like to do one, as well as International Students who are interested in knowing more about this topic, sharing their experience, getting to know more about our local community and coffee. The workshop was given by one of our partners in their brunch restaurant. With the coffee workshop, we made the activity more interactive and we had some games and questions to provide a more informal environment making the participants more comfortable to share their experiences, thoughts and motivations regarding mobility.



Discovering Fencing

Name of the project	Discovering Fencing
Organised by	ESN Plovdiv
Country	Bulgaria
Number of participants	40
Goal of the project	The main goal of the event was to promote healthy living and physical activity by presenting a not so well-known sport - fencing. We aimed to inspire Erasmus students to broaden their horizons and to get passionate about this sport with great traditions. We hoped to inspire them to discover other less known sports. On the other hand, we believe that the local sportsmen gained additional motivation when meeting people, who are interested in their otherwise slightly neglected sport. Another goal we set was to actively promote the Erasmus programme among the students and local youth, as well as to create a setup in which they could practice foreign languages and intercultural dialogue.
Description of the project	On the occasion of the "International Day of Sport for Development and Peace" we celebrated the activity: Discovering Fencing , with the help of a local fencing club. During the activity there was physical and theoretical training related to the topic of fencing. There were different games and awards for each winner. There were some demonstrative matches between local teenagers, among whom there were some national champions. Erasmus students got the unique chance to practise fencing for the first time in their life in short matches. Coffee break and lunch break were organised on the spot. There was enough time to socialise, practise language skills and to get to know each other.



Thessalos' Trip

Name of the project	Thessalos' Trip
Organised by	ESN UTH
Country	Greece
Number of participants	52
	In Thessalos' Trip aimed to achieve the following main goals: 1) To educate all the participants about the agricultural products and services of our region by visiting different local cooperatives and agritourism destinations.
	2) To ensure the interaction between international and local students with the local community. Participants volunteered plenty of their time in this educational trip, and a constructive dialogue took place during the guided tour between the cooperatives' hosts, the international students, and the locals.
Goal of the project	3) To raise awareness about environmental issues . During the trip our target audience had the chance to be informed about alternative eco-friendly occupations and to be sensitised to the high importance of volunteering actions that are serving the cause of environmental sustainability.
	4) To apply the highest possible level of environmentally friendly practices and materials. Our transportation was done by bus, for the elimination of carbon dioxide emissions, we all carried our own reusable water bottles avoiding buying the single-use plastic ones, and we used only eco-friendly materials (e.g., biodegradable trash bags). Also, during the Trip we provided the participants some snacks and drinks bought from a vegan street food.
Description of the project	"Thessalos Trip" was a tour in different local cooperatives and agritourism destinations of Thessaly, where all the participants got in touch with the local thessalian products and were introduced to traditional, eco-friendly production methods.

More specifically, the participants experienced a guided tour in:

- 1) **the cottage industry "Rosmarino"** producing natural soaps and cosmetics from virgin olive oil and 100% pure ingredients. We had the chance to learn about the properties and uses of the high-quality olive oil soaps, and we attended a live representation of their preparation. Moreover, our visit was covered by the local media and both our local and international students joined the interview and were encouraged to talk about this new experience.
- 2) **the local family winery "Dougos Winery"** in the vale of Tempe, making wines from organic cultivation. There we followed the procedure of wine making, and gained knowledge about different production methods, grape varieties, and wine quality.
- 3) **"Ampelakia" village**, where the foundation of one of the world's first cooperatives took place in 1778. We had a stopover in its folklore museum to get into the history of this picturesque settlement.
- 4) **the "Trinity Farm"**, which consists of one of the first certified biodynamic cultivations of Greece, and is located in the thessalian plain. We waded through the farm's history, while at the same time got educated about the biodynamic cultivations and their necessity for our survival in a sustainable future. The adorable hostess served us her traditional Greek pie made of the farm's products, and in return we joyfully offered our help in the feeding of the sheep.
- 5) **The olive mill of Voliotis family** in Pelion, where we saw how the olive oil is extracted and we were informed about the eco-friendly equipment the mill is using, in order to produce high quality olive oil along with avoiding the production of harmful residues in the environment. Moreover, we were invited to taste different olive and olive oil varieties, while getting introduced to their characteristic divergences and preparation processes.
- 6) some of the amazing **natural landscapes of Pelion in "Agria"**, where we stopped for lunch by the sea. During the lunch time, the participants were encouraged to share their thoughts about the trip and gave their feedback about environmental-friendly practices of their hometowns. A productive intercultural conversation took place.

Rebuild a home

Name of the project	Rebuild a home				
Organised by	ESN Lisboa				
Country	Portugal				
Number of participants	32				
Goal of the project	One of the goals was to provide a volunteering experience during the cultural exchange that international students perform in Lisbon. Another goal was to improve the living conditions of families in need, and at the same time, to show the children and the students the importance of giving our own time to help others. Finally, we promoted an event of integration between the local community and the international students that are studying in Lisbon.				
Description of the project	This was an event where the international students were invited to restore some old furniture, for example apply new layers of polish, and paint some walls in need. This project was done in order to help families in need with poor living conditions, and this was possible thanks to Casa Pia de Lisboa (entity of education, training, fostering, and defending the rights of the children), which invited some local children to participate.				



Building Hearts Through Library

Name of the project	Building Hearts Through Library
Organised by	ESN Yeditepe
Country	Turkey
Number of participants	20
Goal of the project	International students had the opportunity to introduce their country and culture to local students and teachers. On the other hand, they experienced the happiness of volunteering at Erasmus and they will contribute to world peace by enabling many children to study.
Description of the project	We established a library for our young friends studying at Muş Bulanık Mollakent Primary School. The area where the school is located is a disadvantaged region, but we built a library and equipped it with books in order to encourage children not to grow up with a disadvantage and to read. We got the list of required books, we completed our materials and set up our library.



Thessaloniki Cultural visit

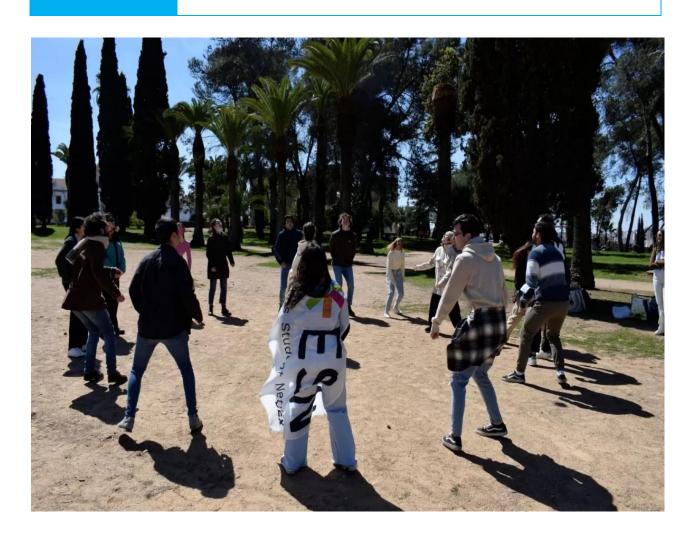
Name of the project	Thessaloniki Trip				
Organised by	ESN KAPA Athens & ESN NTUA Athens				
Country	Greece				
Number of participants	90				
Goal of the project	First of all, our primary goal was for participants to become aware of the natural and cultural heritage of the places we want to visit and, consequently, learn more about their host country or their country. Other than this, since both incoming and local students joined, we aimed for intercultural exchange between the participants so everyone feels included and integrated. This experience celebrated Greek culture in places with different cultural traits from the city they are studying. At the same time, through our activities, we wanted students to become aware of the difficulties marginalised people have been or still go through and give them a new perspective.				
Description of the project	Thessaloniki Trip was organised by ESN KAPA Athens & ESN NTUA Athens. Apart from Thessaloniki, we visited Meteora, which is unique for its rock formations. Another stop was Pozar Springs, where the participants viewed the hot springs located right next to a waterfall. Our last stop was Vergina, a small town where participants had the chance to get in touch with rural life. On the first day, we organised a city tour in collaboration with ESN Thessaloniki and promoted local food. On the second night, we hosted Dinner in the Dark, where everyone was blindfolded to get an idea of the life of a blind person. On the last day, we organised a Human Storyboard event during which participants will be allowed to listen to the stories of people who have faced prejudice as a way to step on their shoes while at the same time having the opportunity to ask them questions. Moreover, during our visits to museums or monuments, we had a volunteer who gave a tour to international students and explained everything they saw as many of these places didn't provide translated explanations.				

Promoting Good Practices Beyond Borders

Name of the project	Promoting Good Practices Beyond Borders				
Organised by	ESN UEx and ESN Évora				
Country	Spain/Portugal				
Number of participants	60				
Goal of the project	 To encourage interaction between international students and the local community. To share good practices of sustainability: ways of recycling in both countries through workshops where ideas can be exchanged about how to make shop bags with old clothes etc. To learn how to give a second life to their own old clothes (they would bring with them) by customising it, in collaboration with the shop Mamaracha Vintage which is characterised as a second hand shop and genderless, promoting also a dialgue about identity. Encourage interaction between all participants through physical activity and wellbeing by teaching different types of games that have been played for a long time in our region. Encourage collaboration with animal shelters. Enjoy a day of cultural enrichment with all the participants. Create a intercultural dialogue about internationalisation. 				
Description of the project	This was a joint project with the Portuguese section ESN Évora that consisted of two days together where we carried out joint activities. These activities were focused on Social Impact and sharing practices between the two sections involving: the local community of both cities and university students, ESN volunteers and international students.				

The project consisted of two parts:

- 1) Organise a day to spend together and carry out activities covering ESN causes such as sustainability, inclusion, culture, health and wellbeing. On this day volunteers and international students from Évora came to Extremadura, specifically to the delegation of Badajoz to establish a first link between sections and with the local community. Thus, several activities corresponding to Social Impact were to be carried out such as: tourist tour, sustainability workshop in collaboration with a second hand shop, walking dogs from a shelter, cultural tandem, traditional Extremaduran games and international lunch.
- 2) Day trip to Évora, where the local section organised other activities in which both volunteers and international students of ESN UEx participated.



Rural Erasmus in Schools Boal

Name of the project	Rural Erasmus in Schools Boal				
Organised by	ESN Oviedo				
Country	Spain				
Number of participants	40				
Goal of the project	 Increase the skills of ESN Oviedo volunteers and organisation for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds: To make Asturian rural society aware of our belonging to a world full of opportunities and cultures that they have the possibility of taking advantage of and discovering. Bring people with different cultures and origins closer to the inhabitants of the rural world, involving the local society as much as possible. Promotion of interculturality, non-discrimination and internationalisation in local sections Take the cultural diversity of our world known to children and young people in rural Asturian areas, valuing it with respect. Develop an inter and transcultural attitude with the students and inhabitants of the area. Value Asturian culture and make it known as one more that enriches the cultural mosaic of our country. 				
Description of the project	Rural Erasmus in Schools was held at Rural School of Boal, a council with less than 2000 inhabitants located in the western zone of the Principality of Asturias (Spain). The assistants were two ESN Oviedo volunteers and 8 Erasmus students of different nationalities: France, Italy, Germany and Sri Lanka. Erasmus students showed the teenagers the curiosities about their countries such as location, food, traditions, road trips, general information They were speaking English and French.				

The teenagers taught Erasmus students Asturian traditional games and they prepared a City Tour around Boal.

The purpose of this activity was to work for the causes of ESN Education and Culture in more disadvantaged areas due to the geographical location and the null presence of the international environment that exists in the big cities and, specifically, for the Erasmus students in Rural Schools.

Formative Events for Erasmus

Name of the project	(Projects Formative Events for Erasmus)
Organised by	ESN Barcelona
Country	Spain
Number of participants	37
	Our project began from the need of raising awareness in social causes for ErasmusStudents. From the starting concept of the regular training events within the Network, we aimed to give international students the opportunity to have a multidisciplinary point of view of our local society to create an impact in their behaviour and lifestyle.
Goal of the project	Our main idea was to create an agenda in social causes where the students got to know different local organisations and got involved in mind-changing workshops and activities. Our main targets were Feminism, LGBTQ+ Community, Sustainability, Social Impact, Cultural Diversity. We wanted these topics to be tackled in a very dynamic way, in which the participants could actively interact and discuss.
	This event consisted of a small trip to Caldes d'Estrac, a seaside city outside of Barcelona. Both coordinators and participants took a train from Barcelona and commuted to the place where all activities took place: a rural house full of sports facilities and a swimming pool. We presented the ESN causes to our participants and told them that the
Description of the project	weekend would be all about having fun while learning about the ESN causes and about each other (thus, fostering intercultural conversations that naturally happened even outside of scheduled activities, as expected). We had different workshops:
	 LGBTQ+ workshop: a volunteer from the association 'Ahora Dónde - Le Refuge' gave us a presentation about how they support and shelter young LGBTQ+ people that were rejected by

their family. This also prompted discussions after the presentation.

- Healthy Cooking Workshop: we split in groups and made vegan and nutritious choc chip cookies.
- Dance Workshop: we had a sweaty and fun zumba session that everyone loved
- Volleyball matches: the house had great facilities for sports, so some participants played some friendly matches there.



Social Inclusion Training

Name of the project	Social Inclusion Training
Organised by	ESN Panteion
Country	Greece
Number of participants	100
Goal of the project	The goal of our activity was mainly to raise awareness and educate the students on inclusive ways of expression and interaction with the communities and at the same time give them the tools to be able to create safe and inclusive environments themselves, where everyone will feel free to speak out about their own experiences. At the end of the event everyone was in a position to identify related obstacles in their own environments and work on their solutions.
Description of the project	The Social Inclusion Training Event was a two-day training during which both local and international students had the opportunity to participate in different seminars, workshops and activities, all regarding social inclusion and how to apply it in education/work environments and in daily life. We covered topics such as Human Rights, LGBTQ+ Rights, Inclusion of People with Disabilities, Gender Equality, as well as raising awareness over marginalised Communities. Apart from educational workshops, we hosted activities like Dinner in The Dark, Labyrinth of Senses, Human Storyboard etc. in cooperation with other NGOs that we already have a partnership with. The event took place in Panteion University with the support of our International Relations Office.

Social Angels for the Environment

Name of the project	Social Angels for the Environment		
Organised by	ESN Coimbra		
Country	Portugal		
Number of participants	55		
Goal of the project	This activity was thought out with 3 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations in mind. These were (n12.) Responsible consumption and production, (n13.) Climate action and (n15.) Life on land. The main aim and objectives of this event was to foster active citizenship and volunteering. Here, they could also share their culture and languages while breaking down barriers and stereotypes. Thus, we aimed to promote the integration of foreigners in the local community, while showing them the variety of our natural heritage and our geographical particularities. At the same time it aimed to raise awareness about environmental conservation and to foster deeper connections between international students and nature during their mobility programme.		
Description of the project	The project was a one day trip to a nearby forest, where international students volunteered their time and participated in this initiative. The purpose would be not only to plant trees, but also to manage invasive species of plants in the region of Coimbra, in collaboration with the association "Plantar uma Árvore". With this, we wanted to achieve an ideal environment where both local and international students work as one in preserving our beautiful natural heritage while getting to know one another, providing an opportunity to do so which they otherwise wouldn't have. Furthermore, we also raised awareness of climate change and sustainable consumption and how these small contributions can have a huge impact on a larger scale. Moreover, in the second part of the day, we had a guided tour through the National Park where they could enjoy the landscape and learn sustainable practices at the same time.		

SIEM - Local Phase Implementation Report

After-school and creative recycling

Name of the project

After-school and creative recycling

Organised by

ESN Foggia

Country

Italy

Number of participants

22

Goal of the project

The main goal was to offer services to children who otherwise couldn't afford them and would spend their time most surely in the street, with all the dangers connected to it. On the other hand, we also offered the international students a way to gain some extra ECTS (if their sending institution recognises the volunteering activity) by issuing them a certificate. The pupils can take advantage of having native speaker teachers when doing homework, and in leisure activities they mainly learned how to reduce waste and recycle, as well as of all the benefits related to mental well-being that follow from keeping themselves busy in manual activities. Their parents were also relieved that their children were in such a safe and stimulating environment while they can't look after them.

Description of the project

We provided help for pupils of elementary and middle school, whose families can't afford private lessons, in doing homework or in general have a safe place to spend free time in leisure activities while their parents are at work, or if they leave for work before school hours (or come back after it). We do it regularly together with a local association at their venue, in the middle of both semesters, when we are sure that both our volunteers and the international students are free (thus not close to welcome weeks or exams), usually once per week (sometimes twice if needed), according to the availability of all the parts involved and the needs of the children.



SIEM micro-grant project

Name of the project	Multicultural Exchangeable Experiences				
Organised by	ESN Piraeus				
Country	Greece				
Number of participants	30				
Goal of the project	 The goals of the activities were: integration of the incoming students in the local community understanding of the importance of our multicultural reality gaining knowledge through actively volunteering The expected outcomes are combating any existing cultural stereotypes, learning new skills and getting closer. 				
Description of the project	 The project consisted of two days with plenty of cultural themed activities. The first day was a Greek one and it consisted of: Acropolis Museum visit Greek traditional dances lesson (professional dancers of Municipality of Piraeus or local students taught the incoming students traditional Greek dances) Greek language lesson: special edition (many special phrases and words were taught) Greek taverna night (a night in a Greek restaurant with traditional dishes) The second day was a multicultural one and there were: Traditional dances classes from several countries (the incoming students taught local students traditional dances from their countries) Several languages games (e.g. tandem) Intercultural dinner (the incoming students cooked a traditional dish from their country) 				

It's a small world

Name of the project	It's a small world				
Organised by	ESN Durham				
Country	UK				
Number of participants	190				
Goal of the project	 The 'It's a small world project' had two main objectives: To promote international mobility to pupils of a young age in a way that defies classroom-bound learning. To involve current Erasmus and international students in Durham student and community life through volunteering The target group of the project was local children from IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) and ACORN indicators which would normally be eligible for similar outreach projects. The schools invited were therefore from more deprived areas in the North-East of England. The scope of the project extended from the local Durham area, to further afield such as Darlington and Middlesbrough. The age range of the pupils was set at 7-8 years of age (Year 3-4). This was in line with the project's aim of teaching children about culture at a young age, in the hope of promoting mobility in the future. 				
Description of the project	The project was held at Durham University's Sports and Wellbeing Park at the beginning of April 2022. It was approximately 4 hours long (10:00-14:00) and involved participation from 6 primary schools, who attended from 2 different counties. Around 170 children in total participated in the event. The project was facilitated by approximately 20 volunteers, including both Erasmus and International student volunteers, as well as ESN Durham section members. The event was also supported by Durham University Volunteering and Outreach. The format of the project included 4 workshops, each presenting a different culture to the children. Project Format The project consisted of 6 different workshops, representing 5 cultures				

in total. The countries represented were France, Cuba, China, Vietnam and Greece. The duration of each workshop was 45 minutes, which included time for tidying and moving to the next activity. Each school visited 4 of the 5 cultures on offer, with two different activities being provided for France. The activities available were as follows:

France

The first activity was a construction activity that saw children asked to make the tallest tower possible out of spaghetti and marshmallows. The format of the activity included: asking the children what they knew about France already, teaching them some facts about France, getting them to build the towers, and announcing the winner. The children found this a fun activity, and it provided a more hands-on activity in contrast to some of the others on offer.

Cuba

This activity involved teaching the children salsa. The instructor started the activity with an introduction to Cuba, indicating it was a Spanish-speaking country and giving some context to the country. Disney's new film Encanto was used to provide a familiar, popular and ageappropriate link to the activity, in that the instructor's abuela and abuelo taught them how to salsa.

The activity then progressed to learning the basic salsa steps, which were introduced in Spanish and then translated into English for the children. The children were given time to practice to music after the introduction of each step, which were then combined into a full routine.

China

China's workshop was split between two rooms, but the activity provided was analogous. The activity included teaching pupils some basic Chinese phrases, and showing them the alphabet. Pupils were then asked to craft and design lanterns using Chinese stickers and symbols. They were taught basic Chinese greetings.

Vietnam

Vietnam's activity included playing a game of tic tac toe, whereby 4 in a row was needed to win, followed by 3 in total for the next round. The first round detailed cultural elements from the North of Vietnam, and the second round concerned Central Vietnam. After each nought or cross was placed, a picture would show a part of Vietnam, of which the cultural relevance would then be explained. Pupils were divided into teams,

which would then nominate a team captain to play the game. The game was very informative and provided a lot of information about Vietnam. There were also lots of opportunities to ask questions throughout. The workshop finished with a relay race. Pupils were shown a picture from the powerpoint and were asked to point to whether it was from the North or Centre of Vietnam, with the winner earning a point for their team. N.B. it could have been useful to emphasise the differences between North and Central Vietnam (e.g. make the segue between the two portions of the presentation so that the final activity made more sense.)

Greece

Greece's activity included a ball game. In this session the children had the chance to engage with two games that are particularly popular in Greece, 'Apples' and 'Lice'.

Results of the local implementation phase

Our local student representatives were asked to report their initiatives on our <u>activities</u> portal. Each local organisation has an account and can track the development of their activities and describe their initiatives.

These activities were organised in 1063 cities across Europe, with the most active country being Italy (where 2349 activities were organised), followed by the Netherlands (996 activities) and Spain completing the top three with 876 activities. However, local initiatives were organised in 35 different countries, from Turkey to Iceland, and Portugal to Estonia. The city with the most activities organised is Valencia with more then 157 activities, followed by Tallinn with 146 activities on the ground, and Leiden (140) and Wagening (120) in the Netherlands as well as Milan (98), completing the top 5.

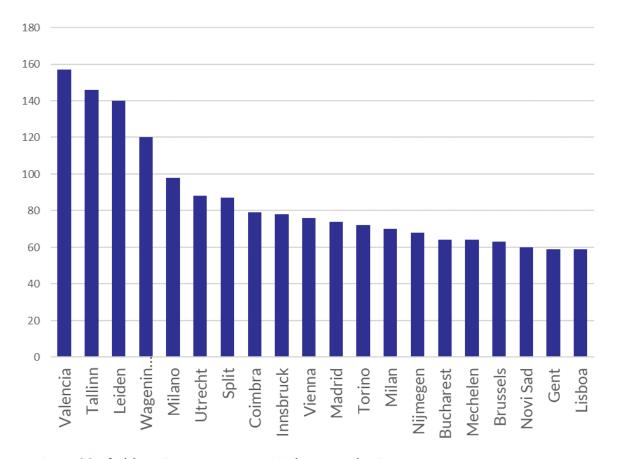


Image 1: top 20 of cities where events were being organised.

They are asked to express the objectives of the activities, define a specific goal for said activity and explain which methodology is used for the action. Each local organisation is able to follow the report of this activity as well as the overall statistics of the local organisation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional feature was added to collect information on the topic of online activities. This required additional features and information to included, as the logistical scope of said activities are different; Physical events collect data related to their location, accessibility and their environmental footprint, whereas the online activities collect data related to the online presence and accessibility.

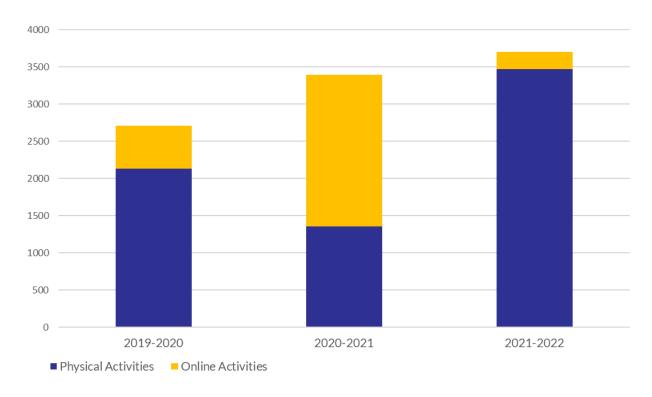


Image 2: physical and virtual activities per academic year (Aug 1st - July 31).

This can be seen in the total reported actions on the ground. In the academic year 2019-2020, which was collected as a benchmark for the project, we saw that a total of 2135 physical local activities were organised (79% of all actions), whereas 575 activities (21% of all initiatives) were organised online from March-July 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the academic year 2020-2021, a year where COVID-19 impacted a large number of student mobilities and

local outreach actions, we see that online activities was the norm; 2040 activities were organised online, which accounted for 60.1% of all activities organised, whereas 1353 actions were still organised physically (39,9% of activities).

In 2021-2022, the world was still being impacted by COVID-19, but student mobility normalised a bit more, and we can see that student organisations already started offering more initiatives physically. In this academic year, 94% of all reported initiatives were physical, where 6% of initiatives still took place virtually. There seemed to be a clear decrease of virtual activities, indicating that there might have been a clear virtual fatigue.

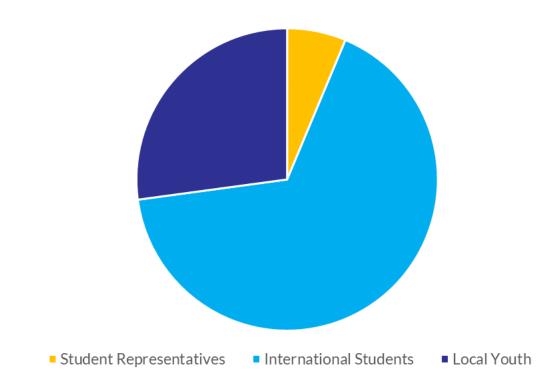


Image 2: participants breakdown.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Total Activities	2710	3393	3702
Student Representatives	10271	10308	11340

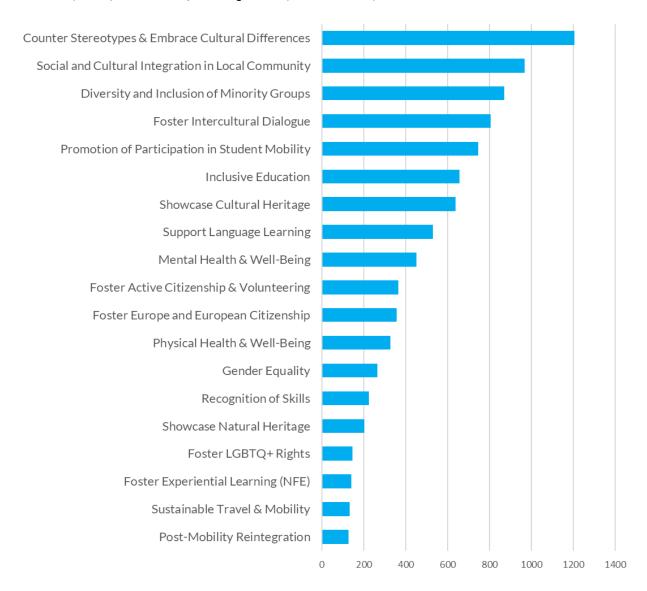
International Students	102356	80577	119398
Local Youth	81492	50014	48683
Total Participants	194119	140899	179421

In general the breakdown shows that **6%** of our actions are participated in by **student representatives** and **youth workers** that are part of **ESN**, as roughly 3 people coordinate each activity organised on the ground. **67%** of the **participants** are **International Students**, with in total 302.331 International students reached in the timespan of three years - a number that was in the rise again by 2021-2022. Roughly **27%** of **participants** were people of local communities, given that

Through these activities where students were expected to engage with the local community, we can see that this became more difficult throughout the pandemic as people were expected to remain within their social bubbles and groups were less encouraged to interact. Therefore we see there was a slight decrease in the number of interactions with local youth - reaching 48.683 young local youth in the year 2021-2022 versus the year 2019/2020 where large scale events were possible for a longer duration of the time, 81.492 young people were reached.

In total 9805 activities were reported over the timespan of 3 years, with 3474 of these projects had a focus on Inclusion & Diversity; with 1204 activities organised that tackled the topic of countering stereotypes and embracing cultural differences, and 968 6203 activities having a focus on fostering Intercultural Dialogue (805 activities), Cultural Awareness and Cultural Integration in local communities (2481 in general, with an 968 activities having an inclusion focus), whereas 4909 actions were considered activities in the field of Education & Youth, organising activities to promote participation in student mobility (745 activities) or inclusive education (675 activities) or fostering active citizenship & volunteering (638 activities). There

were also more specifically targetted activities focusing on Fostering LGBTQ+ rights (147 activities) and post mobility reintegration (127 activities).



Conclusions

The aim of the SIEM project was to organise local outreach activities that ensure engagement between local communities and international students to improve the integration of international students into the local community.

The results of the project, even in times of COVID-19, showcase that it is feasible to bring international students in touch with local communities, but that the role of local student representatives and youth workers is detrimental to the implementation of these initiatives, as an average of 10.000 volunteers per year, reach more than 10 times that number in International Students and 5 times that number in local young people. In total 302.000 International students were reached in the time span of three years, as well as 180.000 members of local communities.

The pandemic did not make this task easy, given that connecting between different communities was less advised, there was a drop in overall participation, but the initiatives of the local phases and the implementation of seed funding whereby coordinators were trained, and organisers coached, improves the engagement rate with local communities - in the end ensuring a mutual learning experience for both international students and local communities.