

# Peace Bag for EuroMed Youth



## ***The Peace Bag : on a journey to 14 countries in the EuroMed....***

24 youth workers and youth leaders. 14 countries. 1 goal – to understand peace and intercultural dialogue and how it can be translated and promoted through day to day work with young people.

A project partnership of 18 youth organizations across the EuroMed region brought together participants from 14 countries in an 8-day training on peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue.



The background and experience of the participants proved meaningful as they tried to find their way into a rather long maze of understanding *what really peace is*, and how they can work for it. It was evident how each participant's contribution was important in coming up with a **shared understanding** of the concepts of peace, conflict, dialogue, intercultural dialogue, nonformal learning, nonviolent communication, which also set the basis for the work on the toolkit that they themselves collectively developed towards the end of the training.

Throughout the training course, activities focused on non-formal and educational methodologies. It was an intercultural learning platform that created a participatory and inclusive atmosphere among participants. This process encouraged their creativity, taught them conflict transformation skills, as well as negotiation and nonviolent communication skills.

Participants collectively worked on the objectives of the program given a combination of presentations, group work, simulation exercises, individual reflection as well as fun group dynamics and games.

The training team organized more informative and 'knowledge based' sessions in cooperation with experts in the field – who engaged participants into exploring the concepts of peace, violence and conflict, as well as conflict analysis and conflict transformation.





These theoretical and conceptual sessions were later translated into practical application through nonviolent communication (NVC) examples, pair exercises using I-statements (interpersonal communication skill using statements starting with “I” as a way of taking responsibility for one’s own feelings in conflict situations), negotiation, conflict analysis tools, and role plays on real-life conflict situations among young people. These practical activities helped them to understand their role in conflicts and the different ways of dealing with them.

The training also allowed personal development through informal sessions that generated interesting ideas. Some brainstorming sessions were even held outdoor where participants, while planning on the toolkit strategy, enjoyed the relaxing ambiance of the venue, and sunny day by the Mediterranean sea.



One Sunday meeting was jointly organized with participants of a EuroMed Networking Seminar also being held in Barcelona at the same time. The 1 day joint meeting gave the participants a chance to network with other organisations and think about future collaboration and cooperation. A highlight of the day was a meeting with Anna Lindh Foundation executive director Andreu Claret, who emphasized the importance of **valuing diversity**. They

discussed issues central to youth work, from youth mobility, importance of nonformal education, to existing youth policies, as well as possible solutions to these challenges, such as blogging for intercultural understanding. Participants had to dig deeper into their minds, and answer a simple yet profound question of “...are we losing the battle in intercultural dialogue?”

In all aspects of the training, great emphasis was put into the intercultural learning process of the participants, taking into account the diversity of cultures and backgrounds of the group. The learner-centered open allowed for fruitful exchange among participants, who came from Algeria, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Romania, Tunisia and Spain, including Israel, Estonia, Ukraine, and the Philippines, represented by the organizing team. They also came up with a flipchart of phrases and expressions translated in different languages spoken by the participants, like Polish, Catalan, Arabic, Estonian, Italian, Romanian, French, including some Berber and Minnesotan! One participant from Jordan even got a *Happy Birthday* song in different languages!

	ITALIANO	ROMANIAN	FRENCH	Arabic	ESTONIAN
HELLO	CIAO	BUNA	BONJOUR	Mashallah	TÄHELE
YOU ARE nice	SE BELLO/A	ARĂTIȚIE	Tu es plus belle	shekhet Jamil	SA NÄES
THANKS	OGGI	AZI	merci!	ilham	MA VÄLT
CHERES	SALUTE	NOROC	croix croix...	tabeizat	TERVISES
SO LOVELY	CE LĂRĂNOȘ	POARTĂ ZĂRĂȘIT	A plus!	Ma Ahlaa	NII NÄR
SEE YOU	GI VEDIAMO	NE VEDEM		Bashkofek	NÄGENIS
I love you	TI AMO	TE IUBESC	J'ETAIME	Bahibek	HA AENASTA
PEACE	PACE	PACE	PAIX	Salam	PAHU!
CONFLICT	CONFLITTO	CONFLICT	CONFLIT	Moshkileh	KOPELLET
CALL IN YOUR DEAR	SUO NEI TUOI	ÎN VISELE TALE	EQUIPEMENT DANS	bish-lameh	ANNUST GIRO
THINK YOU	GRAZIE	MULTUMESC	TES LÈVES	shokran	AIKÄH/T
you're welcome	PREGO	CO PLĂCERE	MERCI	Affan	PAHUN/PO
I don't know	SCUSO...	NUȘTIU	DERREUJ	Ma Balaraf	HA EI T
GREAT!	BENNO/BRANO!	BRUVI!	JE VE CAS PAS	Momtas	SUUREPÄÄ
SHUT UP!	MAI TACI/A	TACII!	beaucoup	Oskot!	OLE VÄLT!
BYE!	CIAO!	PA	salut	Ma'a Salamah	HEAD
GOOD NIGHT!	BUONA NOTTE!	NOAPTE BUNA!	merci!	Tasbah al-Khur	TEE!
GOOD MORNING!	BUONGIORNO!	BUNA DIMINEȘTA!	merci!	Sabah il Khair	PAIK
				shokran ilham	

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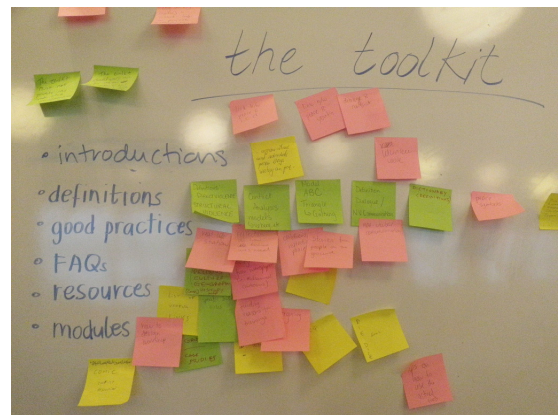
To make it even more fun, a EuroMed night was organized where each group got to present about their own countries, show off the richness of their cultures and traditions, sing songs and teach cultural dances, and of course, share delicious food and drinks that everyone enjoyed throughout the night!



On the side, real intercultural learning was also taking place, from late night karaoke sessions (with matching ABBA "Dancing Queen" and Lady Gaga song and dance numbers!), continued by a "Mafia Game" using strategical thinking skills, 2 am conversations about the Israeli-Palestinian realities, sharing responsibilities (washing dishes and cleaning chores!), to breaktime chats and early morning / late night by the beach.



On the last day of the training, a WRITING WORKSHOP was held for participants to put together everything they have learned into a visual material. Starting from the needs of each partner organization's context and experience, the toolkit slowly became a collective work of the group. Every single participant, in one way or another, contributed to making the toolkit draft from mere ideas and suggestions into practical tools that can be used. This compiled document, which reflects the hard work of each one – will travel all the way to the participants' countries and be used in their activities (Phase 2).



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As the days passed, the group grew into one as a family, and did things together even after the training had ended. The training gave the participants a renewed and more practical understanding of peace and intercultural dialogue and how it can be applied through their own work.



The group left Barcelona not just with new friends, not just with the toolkit draft, but also with new insights and future plans that will allow them to move on to the next phases of the project - knowing that the group is behind them – ready to support and inspire!

The organizing team would like to thank everyone who made this meaningful 8 days possible (and this is not counting 4 more days of being together in the Anna Lindh Forum!). We all know that from Barcelona to the next face to face meeting in Cairo, there is a lot of work ahead. But we all know that with the commitment we have all put into the project, every step of it hereafter will be meaningful and inspiring.



Now the Peace Bag toolkit's first draft is on its way to the different corners of the EuroMed.

***As A.J. Muste says...there is no way to peace but peace itself.***

***Let the journey begin!***



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