



Project Background

In the 21st century, the world has become a global community. This means that different cultural backgrounds are now readily integrating more than ever before, and young people are becoming more and more mobile. Yet, there are still existing stereotypes and prejudices towards different cultures, races, and lifestyles.

In this century, there are various forms of communications that are meant to connect people to each other. However, the most important form of communication remains talking face-to-face. For this reason, the project aimed to allow face-to-face interactions between participants of two different cultures in order to improve young people's awareness of different cultures, to promote the participation of young people and the long-term cultural cooperation.

The project idea was developed after "EuroMed" project "Footprints of Palestine", where the partners - Jūrmala Youth Initiative Centre and two CCs of the United Religions Initiative Middle East & North Africa (URI MENA) met (Quested Peace CC- Jordan and Volunteering for Peace CC- Palestine).

Date, Place and Participants

FingerPrint of Cultures Youth Exchange took place in the city of Jurmala in Latvia over a duration of 7 days. The project started on the 31st of October 2017 and ended on the 7th of November 2017.

Twenty persons took part in this exchange, ten from Jordan (9 from Quested Peace CC and 1 from Volunteering for Peace CC) and ten from Latvia from Jūrmala Youth Initiative Centre. Most participant were aged between 16 and 30 years.

Learning Methods

The project comprised non-formal learning techniques engaging participants in various fun and informative activities. Participants were actively involved in workshops, presentations, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, reflection sessions, team building activities, and energizers. All participants were encouraged to frankly express their differing opinions.



Main activities:

The program included many interactive activities, including sessions on the following topics:

- Stereotypes about different cultures
- How to overcome Cultural Barriers
- Conflict and culture
- How to manage culturally motivated conflicts
- Coexistence.
- Coexistence, Cooperation vs. Diversity
- Round-table discussion about Extremism.

Moreover, the program included a meeting with Arabic Cultural Center in Latvia, many good practices were exchanged. Also, many sports games were played and participations in public events.

Cultural Evening

The cultural evening was the opportunity given to showcase cultural presentations from the participating countries, Latvia and Jordan. Each country was invited to present a presentation and/or performance giving a sample of their culture (dance, song, cultural game, etc.). Each country had the chance to exhibit traditional costumes, instruments, dance, music, food, and so much more. The evening was both informative and enjoyable!



Workshop

A workshop was designed to teach or introduce the young attendees to the two cultures of Latvia and Jordan. During the workshop, attendees played a multiple-choice game revealing interesting facts about both, the Latvian and the Jordanian cultures.



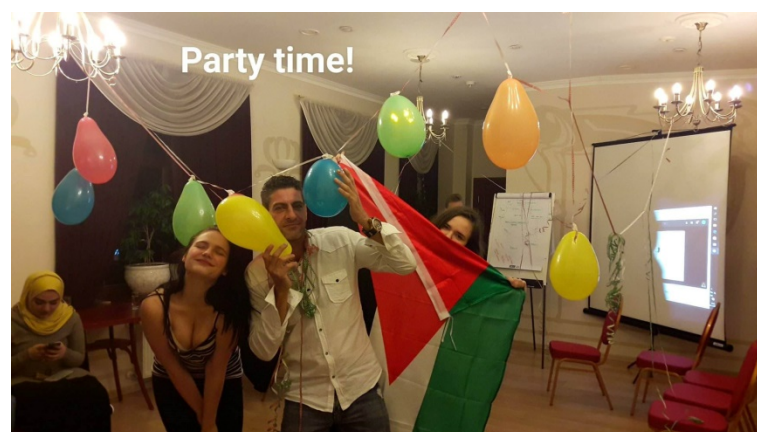
Touring Like a Local

The Jordanian participants had the opportunity to discover a hidden side of Riga on a free walking tour with the Latvian participants. The local guide whisked the participants away from Old Riga and Moscow District to lesser-known parts of central Riga. Participants visited the Central Market, flea markets and galleries, admired fine architecture and stopped by cool cafés. The Jordanians got to know the real Riga while learning about the local culture and history of this fantastic city.



Farewell Party!

Participants ended the project with a farewell party to exchange heartfelt goodbyes.



Feedback from Jordanian Participants



People from different cultures only seen through a television screen and stereotypical eyes are very different than the people you experience in person. For this reason, the Erasmus+Youth: Mobility Project has really helped us better understand ourselves and the world around us.

During our stay in Latvia, not only did we get the chance to travel, make new friends, and discover a new place, but also the chance to re-discover ourselves and become more open towards new, more tolerable, and in general more understanding of new cultures. Interacting with people from a different culture has allowed us to not only build personal relationships, but also learn about the culture from a local perspective. In return, the Latvian participants have come to understand and accept the Middle Eastern culture. A mutual respect and understanding of new cultures has flourished amongst all participants.

This experience has also brought benefits after returning to our home country, because it is much more than just traveling abroad and discovering new people; it is about building new skills and rediscovering a better version of yourself. This program also involved adapting and learning about a new environment, and this flexibility is a helpful skill for all participants before, during, and after the exchange program.

This program was not only a one-time event, but the beginning of an exchange of ideas that will continue throughout our lives. Mutual understanding between different nationalities and races is key, and we only hope our future endeavours will be as successful and remarkable as this one.