YOUTH EXCHANGE

music for mental health

Ebooklet

Youth Exchange

Šibenik, Croatia

03/10 - 11/10/2024

M4ME

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

AGENCY FOR MOBILITY AND EU PROGRAMMI

Co-funded by the European Union

ARGONAUTA

MISSION

“Music for Mental Health” project will bring young people to Croatia to work together on the topic of mental health through music. The main goal of this project is to bring 34 young people and from 6 different countries to inspire each other with methods for improving their personal well-being and to share them in their local communities. The goal is to raise awareness about the current state of mental health in their communities and boost their emotional and physical state through creativity and activities including dances and sports.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote cultural diversity and intercultural learning while living and working in mixed nationalities.
- Raise awareness about the current mental health of young people through the exploration of experiences in their local communities, reducing the stigma about taboo topics.
- Reflect on the effect that arts like music have on mental wellbeing, overcoming negative attitudes as well as boosting confidence and self-esteem of the participants.
- Learn how to express themselves more effectively, creatively and enhance their emotional and physical state through dancing and sportive workshops.
- Provide a space to prepare a show and perform it in front of the local community to show the results of the exchange.

DAY 1

The first day was dedicated to icebreaking and team building games. We started by getting to know each other through music and dancing games, and then we drew each other’s portraits. In the afternoon we were split into international teams, creating our own bands and performing unique songs. Right after that we made a community agreement to make sure our days went by blissfully. The day ended with a welcoming night by the Croatian team where we connected even more through playing team games and sharing our experiences.





DAY 2





On the second day of the M4ME project, participants engaged in a series of interactive workshops focused on cultural expression and personal well-being. The day began with a Croatian workshop titled "Cultural Identity Through Arts," where groups presented traditional music and dance from non-participating countries. This was followed by a Turkish-led session called "Music & Emotions with Drawing" where participants expressed their feelings through art while listening to various music. In the afternoon, the Greek workshop on "Stress Management Techniques" introduced yoga and free movement to help participants relax. The evening concluded with the first intercultural night, featuring Greece and Portugal.

DAY 3

We started day 3 with our daily diary. We wrote about our feelings and drew our roller-coaster of emotions! That activity was followed by three national workshops, starting with the Portuguese Musical Storytelling where we analyzed and interpreted popular songs. After lunch we went on with the Spanish workshop, where we listened to different songs and drew in pairs, letting the music guide our pencils and creativity! The last workshop was the North Macedonian one, that was about expressing ourselves through song writing. To finish the day, we had the North Macedonian and Turkish Cultural Evenings!







DAY 4

On this day we went to the beautiful city of Zadar. We visited the monumental Sea Organ which produces a melody from the waves of the sea. We also visited the beautiful Church of St. Donatus and the ancient Forum. After some sightseeing, we were divided into groups and played Mission Impossible, but we actually made it possible. From that game we learned many things about Croatia. As some of us headed to the sea, feeling the salty breeze on our faces, others set out to explore the city's alleys and vibrant markets. Our time together was a mosaic of exploration, laughter, and friendship, a day filled with memories that will be remembered forever.











M4ME

DAY 5

The day kicked of with the mid-term evaluation where we reflected on the previous days. We continued the day with some sports, where the participants showed their best. Then the the brainstorming process for the performance in Šibenik began. Just before the cultural evening, we organized a little surprise for our dear facilitator’s birthday Juan. The day ended with an intercultural evening, during which the Spanish and Croatian teams showcased their rich cultures through dance, music, history, and delicious cuisine.

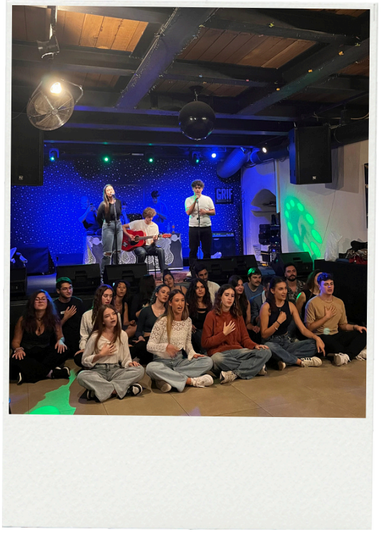


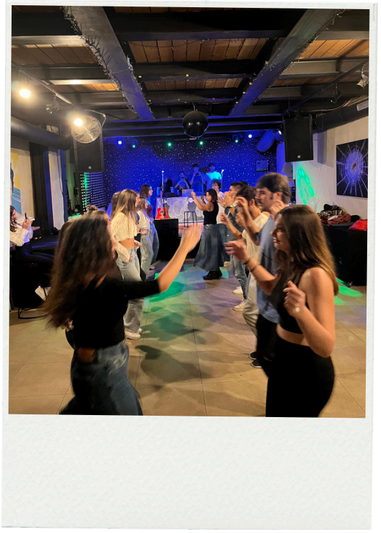


DAY 6

All countries chose and prepared their own cultural dance and song. Then, each group shared what they had prepared with others. After that, we rehearsed these shows together before heading to the venue in Šibenik, where we had our final performance. We presented the shows we had prepared collectively and recorded our performance. It was a beautiful day, and we would like to thank everyone involved for this memorable experience.









DAY 7

This was the last working day. We started by writing in our diary of emotions for the last time and talking about our experience. We spent some time working on the booklet and on the interviews. A part of the program was reserved for the presentation of thr European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ opportunities and about the Youth Pass. To finish the day, we revealed our secret friends and we had our farewell party!





Croatian workshop

Cultural Identity Through Arts





The Croatian workshop started with an energizing activity to engage participants. Learning by doing was the main method used in approaching this topic. Participants were divided into groups to conduct research on traditional music and dance from a country that was not represented at the workshop. The workshop was concluded with presentations from each group, followed by a collective discussion. Reflections on the participants' experiences were shared, highlighting insights gained regarding cultural diversity and the substantial role of music in embodying the identity of each culture.



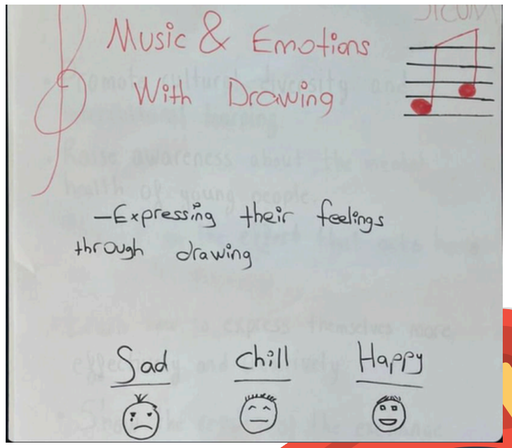


Turkish workshop

Music & Emotions with Drawing



We started the day with a game of musical chairs to energize everyone. After the energizer game, the group was divided in smaller teams and where asked to draw their emotions while listening to different pieces of music. We played three different tracks (sad, chill, happy). After each type, we reflected on their emotions.







Greek workshop

Stress management through music and movement





The Greek worskshop aimed at showcasing how music and movement can provide a calming and meditative healing experience. We wanted to create a space where we could calm down and communicate through moving, stretching and dancing. To achieve this we started with an energiser called "hee-ha-ho" in order to get comfortable, then we did some stretches and mobility excercises to loosen up and finished with various dance exercises which touched on both the personal and the social aspects of dancing. We explored creativity through free dancing and interacting with one another. The workshop ended with a fun group dance.



Portuguese workshop

Musical Storytelling











The Portuguese workshop was about Musical Storytelling, so the participants were divided in six teams and each had a different song to analyze. They listened to the song and read the lyrics, to study how the artists expressed themselves and told a story through music. At the end, each group presented what they had discussed and it was very interesting to get to profoundly know those songs and to talk about song writing as a way of telling a story and expressing our emotions in a deep and complex manner, while raising awareness for mental health and several issues.

North Macedonian workshop

Songwriting for self expression



The workshop had in focus songwriting as a way of self expression. Divided in groups, the participants had to create their own original song in a specific genre, while using predetermined words that needed to be incorporated into their lyrics. With this workshop, everyone discovered new things about their genre and the way such songs are made. Creativity was at a high level and the overall mental health improved instantly. Each performance was excellent!





Spanish workshop

The spanish team strived to enhance the creativity of all the participants of the project. Starting off with a guided meditation, and working through our visions, feelings and tried to calm ourselves. After that, we got in pairs, put on different Spanish songs and tried to draw based on the feelings they provoked in us. In the end, we finished off our workshop with sharing emotions and providing a feedback not only to others but mostly to ourselves.







INTERVIEWS

What brings you here?

“My friend had been in the last project, it was Moving for Mental Health, with Argonauta. She recommended me this project and told me that she learned so much about mental health and how to improve it, so I was excited to get into this one.” - **Luna (North Macedonia)**

“I found this project on social media and was interested in it because music is a really important part of my life. I thought this would be a good opportunity to get to know new people and share our passion for music.” - **Andrea (Spain)**

“For me it’s all about the topic. I’m interested in psychology in general, especially mental health, and music is a big part of my life. I listen to music everyday, so combining those two passions of mine is like a dream topic for me.” - **Naomi (Croatia)**

“I related to the topic. Dancing and music are stress relieve techniques for me so I wanted to share that with other people and see what different ways we have to do this.” - **Lydia (Greece)**

INTERVIEWS

What were your expectations?

"I expected to learn a lot about the topic. I'm getting more interested in the topic of mental health, since the world we live in is a bit crazy and people's mental health get worse. I think this project will be helpful, not just for me but also for the peple around me." - **Gordan (Croatia)**

"I've already done 4 different projects and I loved all of them so I wanted to repeat the experience to meet new people, meet a new country. The topic was also very captivating because I love music and dancing and I think mental health is very important, so it made all sense and I decided to come." - **Frederica (Portugal)**

"Truth is, I came here without any expectations because sometimes our expectations may ruin the reality. But this reality was amazing." - **Magda (Spain)**

"To learn about music and how it affects mental health" - **Giorgos (Greece)**

INTERVIEWS

What did you learn here?

“A lot of lessons about solidarity and friendship between countries. Stuff I believed but I’ve never gotten to see in practice because I’ve never met that much people from other countries.” - **Stavros (Greece).**

“I learned a lot about other countries and cultures. I got the amazing opportunity to speak to people from other countries. I learned to express myself in ways I’ve never done before and also learned about how other people express themselves.” - **Joao (Portugal)**

Especially in the Portuguese lyric workshop, because I usually just listen to music and don’t pay attention to the lyrics, and for me it was a whole new experience to see how music can affect us if we truly understand what’s happening. - **Josip (Croatia)**

“Getting to know about different cultures and not just by reading about them, but by interacting with the people from that cultures.“ - **Lydia (Greece).**

INTERVIEWS

What was your favourite aspect about this YE?

"I met new people, I learned new languages and also the performance in Sibenik was really good. I had so much fun: dances, music... everything." - **Aleyna (Turkey).**

"Definitely the performance that we had. Also the aspect of meeting a lot of new people here. You make connections and learn from them." - **Deni (Croatia)**

"Probably the friendships that we made through this project. We met people from all around the world and we get along together by talking with each others, dancing and sharing some common music tastes." - **Anja (North Macedonia).**

"The people. Everyone was so nice and I felt warmly welcomed. I would highly recommend it to everyone." - **Jaime (Spain)**

"We met so many different people with different cultures, but even tho our societies and lifes are so different we always have something in common, even the dumbest things" - **Tiago (Portugal)**

Learning outcomes

During the project, we explored how music can boost our mental health. We found that expressing ourselves through music and dancing, especially as a team, made us feel more united. We picked up some skills for taking charge at work, in group settings, and with friends, while also learning to inspire others to use music in their lives to help their mental well-being. We got better at handling stress and dealing with our emotions through creativity, singing, and moving around. Plus, we dove into different cultures by checking out traditional music and dance, showing off the diversity of everyone involved. Dancing and expressing ourselves musically helped us manage stress and work through conflicts. Getting empowered through music really pumped up our confidence and team vibe, which is super important both in work and social situations. Being proactive and encouraging others made us all more effective and improved our group dynamics. Overall, using music and dance to express our feelings and manage stress really contributed to our well-being, and learning about different cultures helped us connect better with others in both social and professional settings.



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