Co-funded by the European Union

Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Dienstleistungen



BEYOND BARRIERS

Empathy, Wellbeing and Inclusive Europe

Dortmund, Germany

14-23.12.2026

About The Project

Beyond Barriers is an **Erasmus+ Youth Exchange** that brings together 48 young people from 8 countries (Germany, Czechia, Türkiye, North Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Spain) to explore what inclusion really means in everyday life.

The core idea is simple but powerful: exclusion is rarely caused by a person's disability or background. It's caused by the barriers society builds around them. *Attitudes, assumptions, inaccessible spaces, and the way we communicate.* Through the social model of disability, we'll learn to spot these barriers and, more importantly, to challenge them.

But this isn't a project about "helping others."
It's about developing yourself: your empathy, your emotional awareness, your ability to communicate inclusively, and practical tools for your own mental wellbeing like stress regulation and self-reflection.
We treat wellbeing as the foundation for being an active, inclusive citizen.





The Objectives

- **Promoting the Social Model of Disability:** shifting perspective from disability as a "personal medical issue" to understanding exclusion as the result of social, attitudinal, and environmental barriers - and learning to challenge them.
- **Developing Social & Emotional Competences:** building empathy, emotional intelligence and inclusive communication skills for engaging constructively in diverse groups.
- **Strengthening Mental Wellbeing as a Core Competence:** equipping participants with practical tools like self-reflection, stress regulation and emotional safety.
- **Fostering Meaningful Participation & Co-creation:** participants are co-creators, not passive recipients, contributing to all project phases.
- **Enhancing Intercultural Dialogue & European Values:** breaking down stereotypes through lived experience in mixed-nationality groups.



The Outcomes

- Deeper understanding of disability through the social model;
- Stronger empathy, perspective-taking, and inclusive communication skills;
- Practical mental wellbeing competences (stress regulation, self-reflection);
- Increased confidence in diverse groups, reduced social anxiety, greater emotional resilience;
- A strengthened sense of agency and readiness to lead social change locally;
- The Inclusion & Empathy Toolkit as an open-access digital resource with transferable methods for youth work, schools, and community settings;
- Youthpass certificates for all participants, documenting competences;
- Local follow-up activities (workshop, awareness session or peer meeting) reaching peers who haven't taken part in the mobility.

Target Group

- 48 participants from 8 countries: Germany, Czechia, Türkiye, North Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Spain;
- Each national group: 5 participants (aged 18–30) + 1 group leader without any age limit;
- 50% of participants are young people with fewer opportunities (social, economic, psychological, health-related or geographic barriers);
- 20% are young people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including invisible disabilities;
- No prior knowledge needed; selection is based on motivation to engage in a reflective learning process;
- English is the main language and will be used during all phases. However, there are no requirements for higher levels.



Activities

The programme follows a progressive flow, all through non-formal learning:

- Energizers, ice-breakers, team-building,
- Discussions, debates, and open dialogues,
- Role-plays, scenario work, theater activities,
- Teamwork and group presentations,
- Reflection and evaluation activities,
- Disability awareness – exploring the social model,
- Practical self-regulation tools,
- Visits, outdoor activities,
- And many other activities...











Accommodation

Participants will stay in Dortmund City Center. Participants will be hosted in quadruple rooms. 3 meals will be served in the hotel.

Three meals will be provided daily, along with two coffee breaks.

The hotel's restaurant offers a diverse selection of cuisines, including vegetarian and vegan options.

More information about how to get to the hotel will be shared in the WhatsApp group.

The Erasmus+ grant fully covers accommodation, meals, and the full programme.

Travel costs are reimbursed up to these limits per person (based on EU distance bands).
Click here to calculate the distance.

Budget

Green travel is choosing means of transportation with a low carbon footprint. These vehicles, which cause lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to other options, include buses, trains, and car sharing.

Travel distance	Green travel	Non-Green travel
10 – 99 km	56 EUR	28 EUR
100 – 499 km	285 EUR	211 EUR
500 – 1999 km	417 EUR	309 EUR
2000 – 2999 km	535 EUR	395 EUR

The travel types for countries:

- Czechia: 100–499 km (green travel)
- North Macedonia: 500–1999 km
- Romania: 500–1999 km
- Bulgaria: 500–1999 km
- Spain: 500–1999 km
- Poland: 500–1999 km (green travel)
- Türkiye: 2000–2999 km

Note: reimbursement requires original tickets, invoices and boarding passes. Keep every relevant document safely.

What To Bring With Yourself

Documents (essential!):

- Valid passport and national ID (check expiry dates and visa requirements where applicable)
- European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for EU participants; participants from non-EU countries may arrange private travel health insurance covering the full stay
- Travel tickets, invoices and boarding passes (keep them all for reimbursement!)

Clothes:

- Comfortable waterproof shoes for outdoor activities and the community visit
- Indoor/comfortable clothes for workshops (we'll sit on the floor sometimes!)

For the programme:

- Reusable water bottle and mug in line with our environmental practices
- Traditional food, drinks, music or games for the intercultural evenings
- Any personal medication (inform your group leader in advance of any health needs, allergies or accessibility requirements)

Practical:

- Power adapter if needed
- Personal hygiene items
- A bit of pocket money for personal expenses
- Good mood, openness and curiosity. No prior knowledge required, just motivation!



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Thank You

Let’s keep in touch:

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