



WELLCORE

GOOD PRACTICES



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Defoin

Highlights e.V.
MIND, TECH, LIFELONG LEARNING



WELLCORE project

WELLCORE is a European Strategic Partnership project composed by 4 partners SCIARA A.P.S. - E.T.S. (Italy), DEFOIN (Spain), Impact Drive (Bulgaria) and Highlights e.V. (Germany) that will be working for the next 18 months on the topic of WELL being, mental health, COnection and Resilience with the following objectives:

- Set wellbeing foundations and share wellbeing resources and good practices in youth work
- Develop a training programme for Youth workers and youth organisations to facilitate wellbeing improvement processes
- Support trainers and youth worker on the implementation of the wellbeing training program at a national level
- Facilitate synergies and develop guidance among the organisations and stakeholders that conform the Youth Work Ecosystem

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Project partners



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NATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

in European
countries



The Flowers of Asclepius: Cultivating Wellbeing through Culture



Italy, Emilia-Romagna



13 November 2025



One-day seminar (09:00 – 17:00)



<https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/notizie/2025/fiori-di-asclepio>



Italian

Promoted and coordinated by the **Regione Emilia-Romagna – Settore Innovazione nei servizi sanitari e sociali**, within the framework of the project Dialoghi internazionali.

The event involved public institutions, universities, cultural organisations, healthcare services, third-sector organisations, and international experts active in the field of cultural welfare and social prescribing.

Summary

Flowers of Asclepius: Cultivating Wellbeing through Culture is a multidisciplinary seminar dedicated to cultural welfare, understood as an intersectoral model that promotes individual and collective wellbeing through artistic, cultural, and heritage-based practices.

The event responds to the growing recognition, at European and international level, of the role of culture and the arts in health promotion, prevention, social inclusion, and community cohesion. Drawing on scientific evidence, European policy frameworks, and concrete practices, the seminar creates a space for dialogue between the health, social, cultural, and educational sectors.

By combining institutional perspectives, academic contributions, and hands-on experiences, the event aims to move beyond fragmented interventions and contribute to the development of systemic and integrated approaches linking culture, health, and social policies.

Objectives

The meeting aims to highlight concrete experiences of cultural welfare and social prescription, promoting well-being and combating marginalization. Through dialogue between public institutions and civil society, the aim is to promote integration between health, social, and cultural systems.

The debate offers useful insights for comparing European and national objectives, helping to guide regional policies on the issue.

Target group

The event is aimed at all professionals in the health, social, socio-health, and cultural fields, with the aim of reflecting on and proposing ideas on how to promote integration between the institutional systems of health, social policies, and arts and culture.

Professionals involved

The event *Flowers of Asclepius: Cultivating Wellbeing through Culture* involved a wide range of professionals from different sectors, reflecting the intersectoral nature of cultural welfare.

Public policy and institutional professionals

Representatives and policymakers from the Regione Emilia-Romagna, working in the fields of health, social services, culture, and welfare, contributed to the strategic and policy-oriented perspective of the event.

Health and social care professionals

Medical doctors, healthcare professionals, social workers, and professionals from health and social services participated actively. The event was officially accredited for ECM (health professions) and OASER (social workers), ensuring professional recognition and continuing education.



Academics and researchers

University professors and researchers in sociology, cultural studies, health humanities, and social sciences provided scientific evidence, theoretical frameworks, and research-based insights on cultural welfare and the relationship between arts, health, and wellbeing.

Cultural and creative professionals

Artists, theatre practitioners, cultural managers, and creative facilitators shared practical experiences and methodologies using arts, performance, and cultural heritage as tools for wellbeing, inclusion, and community care.

Third sector and community organisations

Representatives from NGOs, cultural associations, foundations, and networks active in welfare, culture, and social innovation contributed case studies, local practices, and community-based approaches.

International experts

Professionals from European and international contexts (including universities, hospitals, and cultural organisations) enriched the event with comparative perspectives and cross-border experiences in cultural welfare and social prescribing.



Main activities

The event is structured around a combination of knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, and participatory methodologies, articulated as follows:

Plenary sessions and keynote contributions

Presentation of national and international experiences in cultural welfare, social prescribing, and arts-based wellbeing practices, involving policymakers, academics, and practitioners. These sessions provide a shared conceptual framework and evidence-based grounding for cultural welfare.



Round tables and thematic sessions

Moderated discussions bringing together representatives from public institutions, cultural organisations, universities, healthcare services, and international partners. The sessions explore concrete practices, cross-sector collaboration models, and emerging ecosystems connecting culture and care.

Participatory workshops and panels

Afternoon sessions based on social innovation techniques, designed to actively involve participants in discussing specific themes such as:

- culture as a tool for community care,
- rethinking cultural and care spaces,
- social prescribing and interdisciplinary collaboration.







These activities foster peer exchange, network-building, and the generation of new ideas and partnerships.



Artistic and performative contributions

Integration of artistic moments and creative facilitation to embody the principles of cultural welfare and demonstrate the practical impact of arts-based approaches on wellbeing.

Results and highlights

-  Strengthened cross-sector dialogue between health, social, and cultural systems
-  Increased awareness of cultural welfare as a strategic tool for health promotion and social inclusion
-  Exchange of replicable practices and models at national and international level
-  Creation of new professional networks and collaborations among institutions, practitioners, and organisations
-  Contribution to the alignment of regional policies with European frameworks on culture, health, and wellbeing
-  Accreditation for ECM (health professionals) and OASER (social workers), reinforcing professional recognition and uptake

Possible European projection

The initiative has strong potential for replication and European projection as a reference model for policy-oriented cultural welfare events.

- The seminar format can be **replicated at local, regional, and European level**, adapting themes and stakeholders to different contexts.
- The interdisciplinary approach supports **systemic integration** between culture, health, and social policies, aligned with EU strategies on wellbeing and social inclusion.
- The involvement of international speakers and networks facilitates **European knowledge exchange** and future cooperation.
- Insights and practices emerging from the event can inform **policy development, training programmes, and future projects** in the field of cultural welfare and social prescribing.

Resources and materials

Program of the event: <https://assr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/notizie/2025/fiori-di-asclepio>

HIPPOCAMPUS: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing among Young People through Yoga



Spain, Salamanca



01 october 2017 - 30 november 2019



Two years project



<https://hippocampusproject.eu/>



<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2017-2-ES02-KA205-009942>



Spanish, English, Italian, Norwegian, French

Universidad de Salamanca (Spain) as coordinator, in collaboration with I.E.S Venancio Blanco (Spain), Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet (Norway), Oxfam Italia Onlus (Italy), Teen Yoga Foundation (UK), and Youth for Exchange and Understanding International AISBL (Belgium).

Summary

HIPPOCAMPUS is a neuro-educational intervention designed to boost the physical and mental well-being of young people through a specialized yoga-based framework. Recognizing that chronic stress and social disadvantage often impair a young person's motivation, the project delivers multiple 8-week "Active Self-Care" programmes. By reaching over 750 participants across schools and youth associations, including young people themselves as well as staff members, the project transforms yoga from an exclusive practice into an accessible tool for emotional regulation and resilience

Objectives

The main aim of the project was to develop and implement a range of techniques derived from yoga in order to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of young people, especially disadvantaged youth.

- **Restore motivation:** tackle the neurological impacts of stress on the prefrontal cortex to help young people re-engage with education and life goals.
- **Standardize yoga-based youth work and wellbeing** with the development of the Hippocampus Programme, a comprehensive documentation suite that includes case studies, session plans, and strategic implementation advice and guides for diverse youth contexts.

With this approach, the initiative aims to **democratize wellness**, breaking down financial and social barriers to ensure disadvantaged youth have equal access to high-quality mindfulness and physical health tools.

Development of a dedicated **support mobile app** to allow participants to track and share their progress, exchange experiences, access resources and receive updates and suggestions relating to their group (daily postures, reminders, etc).

Target group

Youth workers, schoolteachers, disadvantaged youth

Professionals involved

Teachers, trainers from all partner organisations



Main activities

This project is structured around the creation and delivery of a specialized 8-week intervention to introduce young people to the concept of active self-care (the Hippocampus programme).

Design of two distinct programmes

To ensure age-appropriate and context-specific engagement: one tailored for schoolteachers and youth workers, and another specific for adolescents and young people.



5-day intensive training course

Development of a 5-day intensive training course for yoga teachers and educators, equipping them with the specific pedagogical skills required to deliver the Hippocampus syllabus.

Comprehensive manual

Publishing of a comprehensive manual that serves as a permanent resource for both instructors and teachers, and students (practice materials).






Yuva Yoga mobile app

Development of the Yuva Yoga mobile app (available on iOS and Android), which acts as a virtual community and resource hub for daily postures, reminders, and experience-sharing from home.

Results and highlights

The HIPPOCAMPUS project yielded significant evidence that a structured, yoga-based intervention can fundamentally improve the mental health and engagement of young people, particularly those in high-stress or disadvantaged environments. The results were measured through a combination of questionnaires (completed by 72 staff and 260 youth) and qualitative interviews:

- 
 Participants reported a marked increase in general life satisfaction and mental wellness, with a significant drop in “perceived stress” levels and a reduction in sleep-related problems, with participants reporting it was easier to fall and stay asleep.
- 
 Reports of increased clarity of thinking, optimism, self-confidence, calmness, and energy levels, while decreasing nervousness and anger. Additionally, there seemed to be a positive effect in emotional self-regulation, a heightened awareness towards the physical signs of stress before they become overwhelming.
- 
 Teachers reported noting that the sessions helped “reset” the classroom, leading to better academic focus in the hours following the practice

Possible European projection

Through its activity-based approach of wellbeing, the Hippocampus project is built for long-term sustainability and cross-border expansion. Through the creation of the Yuva Yoga app, the initiative removes geographical barriers. While the physical training took place in five countries, the app allows any youth organisation in Europe to adopt the practice, making the project’s impact potentially limitless.

Additionally, the 8-week programme format can be easily integrated into a national physical education curricula or extracurricular activities across EU member states. The methodology developed for disadvantaged youth can be adapted for other vulnerable groups, such as young refugees or those in the juvenile justice system, offering a low-cost, high-impact tool for youth wellbeing

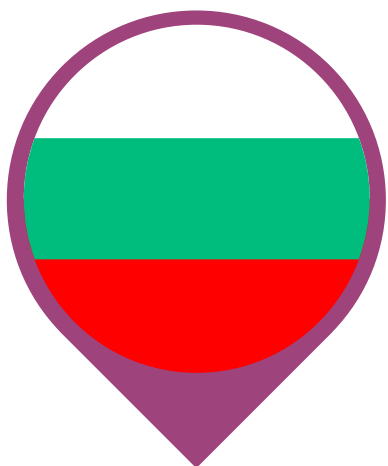
Resources and materials

In the project’s website, you can find additional information on the programme, including guidelines, cards to implement the 8-week program, the link to the Yuva Yoga app, and additional multiplier events.

In the following link you can find information about the pilot experiences in the programme:
<https://hippocampusproject.eu/2019/10/08/videos-about-the-pilots-experiences/>



WomenBridges: Connecting opportunities for young women



Bulgaria (Greece and Austria)



01 march 2022 - 01 march 2023



One year project



<https://www.impactdrive.eu/womenbridges>



Bulgarian, English

Coordinated by Impact Drive Foundation (Bulgaria) and partners: Soziale Zukunft Verein zur Förderung der Integration behinderter Menschen (Jamba Austria, Austria) and Women Do Business (Greece)

Summary

WomenBridges provides a comprehensive approach and concrete methodology to support the career paths of young women, especially those in vulnerable situations to achieve economic independence and employment. At the same time, it develops the competencies of youth workers and NGO teams in implementing this approach. Initially developed as a small-scale support and dialogue initiative, WomenBridges gradually expanded into a larger, multi-layered program responding to the real needs expressed by women themselves.

The initiative is grounded in the belief that wellbeing is strengthened through dialogue, peer exchange, and shared experience. WomenBridges encourages communication at multiple levels - starting from individual reflection through simplified and focused questionnaires, moving to small facilitated group discussions, and expanding into larger community events. This progressive model allows trust to be built organically and ensures that participants' voices shape the development of the programme.

Target group

WomenBridges engaged:

- Women from diverse social, cultural, and professional backgrounds
- Young women, including ones in vulnerable situations (physical and health challenges, ethnic diversity, young mothers, etc.)
- Women interested in career development, wellbeing, and community engagement
- Youth workers, trainers, and NGO professionals working in the fields of youth, employment, wellbeing, and social inclusion.

It was an inclusive and open initiative, welcoming participants with different levels of prior experience in group work or wellbeing programmes.



Professionals involved

The initiative brought together a multidisciplinary group of professionals and facilitators, including:

- Wellbeing and psychosocial professionals: Facilitators with backgrounds in psychology, counselling, coaching, or mental health supported guided discussions, ensured emotional safety, and supported reflective processes.
- Youth workers: Youth workers played key role in designing participatory formats, moderating group discussions, and fostering inclusive and respectful dialogue.
- Trainers and moderators: Experienced moderators supported small group work, large-group discussions, and interactive formats, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- Civil society and community actors: NGO representatives and community organisers contributed perspectives on gender equality, wellbeing, and social inclusion, and supported outreach and dissemination.

Main activities

WomenBridges was structured as a **progressive participation journey**, combining reflection, dialogue, and community-building:

Needs assessment and questionnaires

Questionnaires and feedback tools that allowed women to anonymously express needs, challenges, and expectations related to wellbeing, work-life balance, mental health, and personal growth. These insights directly informed the programme design.



Thematic “Training of Trainers” for

A pilot group of youth workers from partner countries to become “Buddies”, implementing the WomenBridges program and disseminate it to their colleagues

Small group sessions (online and in person) and one-to-one mentoring

Pilot program Local Bridges with the active participation of the trained “Buddies” - facilitated small-group meetings and support groups that created safe and intimate spaces for dialogue, as well as 1-to-1 mentoring process. Participants shared experiences, listened to one another, and explored wellbeing-related topics through guided discussion, mentor support and peer exchange.



Interactive online workshops


Workshops focus on self-awareness, emotional resilience, communication, and empowerment, using participatory and non-formal education methods.


Larger community event


As trust and engagement grow, WomenBridges expands into larger events that bring together a broader community of women. These events encourage collective reflection, networking, and visibility of women’s voices.


✓ Results and highlights

The project enabled us to test and further develop a support programme for women aimed at strengthening their economic independence, empowerment, and healthy work–life balance.

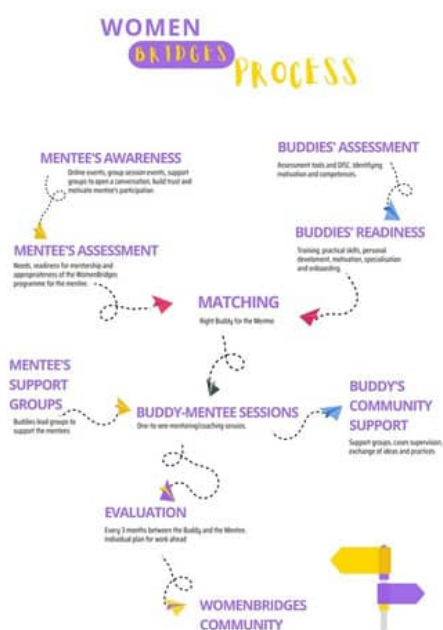


- 

Developed a methodology for supporting career development and work-life balance for young women.
- 

Delivered a Training of Trainers (learning mobility) and formed the first core group of 18 mentors (Buddies) capable of implementing the WomenBridges programme and providing support services to end beneficiaries.
- 

Enriched the training programme with two additional online sessions by leveraging emerging opportunities: LinkedIn (Austria) delivered a short training on using the platform as a tool for career development and personal branding, while White Ribbon Alliance (USA) provided training focused on community building, organising, and mobilising community members to actively raise their voices and advocate for their rights.
- 

Implemented a series of pilot activities (Local Bridges), testing different elements of the programme in the three participating countries. Over 140 women took part, together with the trained mentors. Through this process, we tested the programme flow and approaches, identified the need for more time for certain processes, drew conclusions, and adapted the methodology to better meet beneficiaries' needs.

SUPPORTING CAREER PATHS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN


METHODOLOGY GUIDE


FOR NONPROFIT AND BUSINESS PRACTITIONERS, YOUTH WORKERS AND ANYONE WILLING TO DEVELOP SUPPORT SYSTEM TO WOMEN



[HTTPS://BIT.LY/3LDXSLT](https://bit.ly/3LDXSLT)



 Developed a methodological handbook with practical guidelines and resources for implementing the programme. The handbook was actively disseminated and continues to be shared beyond the project's end among youth workers and NGO practitioners, as well as representatives of the business and education sectors working with young women and women in general.

 Organised a discussion on work-life balance for working women, exploring the topic from both perspectives: personal life and the wo

Possible European projection

The initiative has Women Bridges has strong potential for replication and scaling at European level:

- The step-by-step model (questionnaires → small groups → larger events) is easily adaptable to different cultural and social contexts
- The methodology can be transferred to youth work, women's organisations, and community wellbeing programmes across Europe
- The approach aligns with EU strategies on mental health, gender equality, and social inclusion
- The initiative can inspire transnational exchanges, training activities, and peer-learning projects for youth workers and facilitators



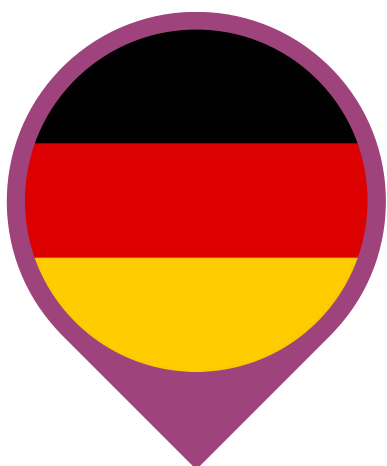
Resources and materials

Methodology Guide:

<https://www.impactdrive.eu/post/supporting-career-paths-and-work-life-balanceof-women>

Survey model: <https://en.impactdrive.eu/post/time-is-the-scarcest-resource-for-women-in-our-society-country>

Consent and Inclusivity in physical contact activities, for youth workers.



Germany



01 june 2024 - 31 may 2025



One year project



<http://www.tatamitalks.fr>



<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2024-1-FR02-KA153-YOU-000239090>



English

Partners: Asociación Cultural Espazo Corpo (Spain); Jonglirium e. V. (Germany); Lernlaber gemeinnützige UG (Germany); MOVE to Be You (Austria); Stichting Chaordica (Netherlands)

Summary

The project aimed to strengthen the skills of youth workers and professionals in the socio-educational sector with the use of body-oriented practices such as acroyoga, dance, martial arts, circus, etc. by training the participants in issues of consent, inclusivity, and communication.

The project promotes a culture of respect in physical activities by equipping participants to recognize, prevent, and respond to situations of non-consent, discrimination, or violence. Indeed, these practices, which involve physical proximity, require safe and inclusive frameworks for all audiences, particularly young people.

Objectives

The objectives of the project:

- to understand the challenges around consent (verbal, non-verbal, bias in consent, etc.)
- to integrate pedagogical tools to foster inclusion and respect for consent in youth work
- to develop an ethical professional behavior, attentive to power dynamics.
- to popularize body practices that support mental health, self-esteem, and empowerment.
- to create a European network of youth educators sharing tools and best practices.

This project addresses concrete needs identified by our partners in the various physical practices they use (Lernlabor in climbing, Coorpos in contact dance, Jonglirium in circus arts, MOVE to be You in acroyoga), especially after field experiences and surveys conducted within acroyoga communities. It also incorporated institutional recommendations (such as those of the CIIVISE and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025) and the increasing initiatives within the youth sector to adopt more ethical and inclusive practices.

The project also alignes with the key priorities of the Erasmus+ programme: inclusion, sustainable development, civic engagement, and intercultural cooperation.

The project outcomes aim to create a safe, collaborative, and democratic learning environment, where everyone can express themselves and learn through physical contact activities.



Target group

Professionals in the youth sector (youth workers, community leaders, educators, sports educators); indirectly young people.

Professionals involved



Youth workers, community leaders, sports educators

Main activities

Over the course of 10 days of international mobility, a series of activities, structured around non-formal education, was carried out. Collective living and body-based expressions were used to explore consent, power dynamics, discrimination and privilege, violence prevention, the role and behavior of youth workers.



Results and highlights

-  The project produced tangible results at various levels, measurable from the very first days of the mobility. The activities implemented quickly enabled participants to improve their communication skills, collective group management, and deepen their understanding of consent.
-  Thanks to a mid-term evaluation conducted during the mobility, we observed that 90% of the participants reported having learned new techniques or exercises that help strengthen group cohesion. All participants stated they felt capable of defining consent and identifying the necessary conditions for it to be valid.

- ❖ By the end of the training, the vast majority had improved their public speaking abilities and their capacity to establish a safe and inclusive environment during group activities. Most also felt equipped to implement tools that promote a culture of consent and to adapt their activities to meet the specific needs of participants.
- ❖ All of these skills were formally acknowledged through the Youthpass certificates issued to each participant, thus recognizing their learning achievements in ways that are valuable for their personal development, professional trajectory, and future mobility opportunities.
- ❖ The co-creation and sharing of a toolkit was also a direct outcome of the mobility and the collaborative process among participants.
- ❖ The impact of the project on both the participants and their organisations was reflected in the improvement of facilitation techniques and group management skills, thanks to the tools and methods shared during the mobility. It also reinforced their commitment to embedding values of consent and inclusivity in the activities they deliver.
- ❖ Two-thirds of participants reported that their organisations had started adopting tools and practices inspired by the mobility, and the majority have begun implementing projects or initiatives that promote consent and/or inclusivity.
- ❖ Finally, more than one in three participants expressed the intention to develop their own Erasmus+ project, which would amplify the project's long-term impact and resonance within the communities they belong to.





Possible European projection

It has been implemented with international participants. It could also be implemented or helpful in a larger scale since the practices mentioned are present in many European countries



Resources and materials

<http://www.tatamitalks.fr>

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2024-1-FR02-KA153-YOU-000239090>

European GOOD PRACTICES



Mental Health Literacy Project



Germany, Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey



01 march 2024 - 30 november 2025



Twenty months project



<https://mentalhealthliteracy.net/>



<https://www.youtube.com/@mentalhealthliteracyproject>



English

Partners: Highlights e.V. (Germany) , Navissos (Serbia), Arteam (Bulgaria), YENGEC (Turkey)

Summary

The project aims to strengthen mental health literacy among young people and youth workers across Germany, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Türkiye by addressing gaps in knowledge, stigma, and access to mental health support.

Through transnational cooperation, the project assesses current mental health literacy levels and develops an evidence-based Mental Health Literacy Educational Program tailored to the real needs of youth workers and young adults.

Key activities include research and analysis, curriculum development, international training for youth workers, and the creation of an open-access online platform with mental health educational resources.

Objectives

- Assessment of current mental health literacy (MHL) levels and identification of gaps and needs among youth and youth workers.
- Development of a structured, evidence-based Mental Health Literacy Educational Program.
- Strengthening of competencies of youth workers and organizational representatives in mental health support and prevention.
- Creation of an accessible online platform with educational resources and practical tools on mental health literacy.
- Improvement of the quality and relevance of youth work through the integration of mental health literacy into formal and non-formal education.



Target group

Professionals in the youth sector (youth workers or group leaders, sports educators); indirectly also the youth they work with

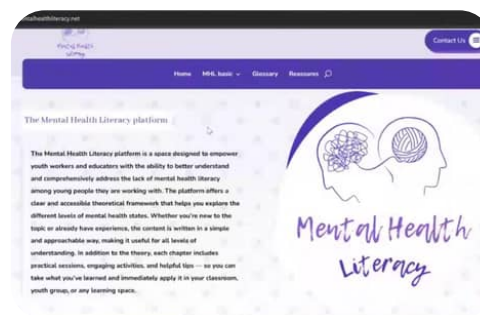
Professionals involved

Youth workers, group leaders, sports educators

Main activities

Online platform

Creation of an online platform with ready-to-use and printable materials for sessions and workshops on topics such as stress and anxiety, emotional regulation and recognition, digital well-being, screen addiction, and depression recognition.



Research

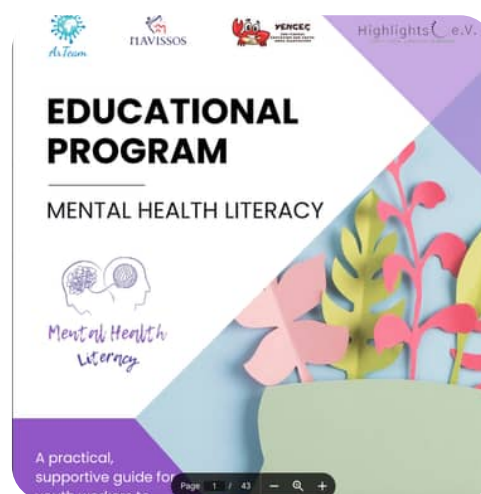
Research on the mental health literacy levels and needs of young people and youth workers.

International training

International training for youth workers, including feedback rounds on the platform and educational program.

Educational program




Development of an educational program combining theory and practice: a practical and supportive guide with ready-to-use workshop suggestions for youth workers, covering topics from basic awareness of current mental health challenges faced by young people to applied sessions on depression, online addictions, stress and anxiety management, and mental health literacy in youth work.



Final conference

Final conference addressing mental health challenges and the future of support for young people.

Results and highlights

-  An easy-to-use online platform with educational resources.
-  A professionally developed Mental Health Literacy Educational Program.
-  Increased awareness of mental health literacy and improved availability of resources.

Possible European projection

A second stage of the project focusing on further development and adaptation of materials.

Wide use of the resources in youth exchanges, volunteer trainings, and training courses for youth workers at EU level.

Resources and materials

- Platform with ready-to-use workshops: <https://mentalhealthliteracy.net/>
- Workshop materials, including “Activate Your Resilience” and “Mental Health 101 – Essential Foundations for Mental Health Literacy”:
<https://mentalhealthliteracy.net/resources/>
- Supportive YouTube videos on mindfulness, meditation, and symptom recognition:
<https://www.youtube.com/@mentalhealthliteracyproject>
- Mental Health Literacy Educational Program for Youth Workers (printable):
<https://www.canva.com/design/DAGfvUwtsq8/iJv6vR2AZ3Y06et-Pii1JA/view>
- Mental Health and Emotional Resilience Worksheet (printable):
<https://www.canva.com/design/DAGsxBvhQvw/RaieEJnUEVYyCBv7zAzqNQ/view>

Seminar on Youth Mental Health and Well-Being



France. Strasbourg, European Youth Centre



18-19 march 2025



Two days seminar



<https://www.growingyouthwork.eu/news/seminar-on-youth-mental-health-and-well-being.90/>



English

Partners: EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, JUGEND für Europa

Summary

The Seminar on Youth Mental Health and Well-Being was an EU-level event hosted by the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in March 2025. The seminar brought together youth workers, researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors to examine how the youth work sector is responding to the evolving mental health and wellbeing needs of young people across Europe.

Positioned within the broader European Youth Work Agenda, the seminar served as a platform for exchange, evidence sharing, and collaborative reflection on current trends, policy responses, and practical youth work approaches related to mental health. Discussions covered research findings, service provision models, and youth work competences, with a strong emphasis on integrating wellbeing support into everyday youth work practice rather than treating it as a separate or purely clinical issue.

Objectives

The seminar aimed to:

- Promote **cross-sector dialogue** between youth workers, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners on youth mental health and wellbeing.
- Present and discuss **preliminary research findings** on factors affecting young people's mental health at European and national levels.
- Share examples of services and approaches that support youth wellbeing in online, offline, and hybrid delivery formats.
- Identify **professional competences** needed by youth workers to support young people's wellbeing effectively.
- Strengthen the understanding of how youth work can contribute to broader wellbeing outcomes within the framework of the **European Youth Work Agenda**.

Target group

The seminar engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- Youth workers and youth practitioners seeking to integrate wellbeing into their work.
- Researchers and academics focused on the mental health and psychological wellbeing of young people.
- Policy makers and representatives from youth ministries, national agencies, and European institutions.
- Civil society organisations and youth sector actors working in mental health promotion and youth support services.





Professionals involved

The seminar featured insights and contributions from:

- Youth Partnership and European coordinators - Representatives from the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership who led the organisation and shared research and policy perspectives.
- Mental health specialists and practitioners - Experts from organisations such as UNICEF, Euro Youth Mental Health, and national wellbeing initiatives shared thematic contributions.
- National and sector representatives - Participants included coordinators of mental health youth work hubs and youth work organisations from across Europe.



Main activities

Presentation of research findings

Preliminary results from ongoing European research on young people's mental health and wellbeing were shared, highlighting factors such as socio-economic



Thematic discussions and reflections

Panels and facilitated discussions explored what youth work can realistically contribute to wellbeing support, and what competences youth workers need to engage meaningfully with mental health topics.

Practice and service exchange

Participants presented examples of mental health and wellbeing services, including both online and offline formats, illustrating how different entities are responding to young people's needs.










Cross-sector dialogue

The seminar deliberately created space for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to discuss policy implications, current gaps in service provision, and strategies for collaboration.

✔ Results and highlights

-  Strengthened the understanding of youth mental health as a multidimensional challenge that intersects with socio-economic, educational, and community factors.
-  Enhanced cross-sector exchange between youth work practice, research, and policy.
-  Shared insights on how youth work contributes to wellbeing beyond formal clinical support, emphasising trust, resilience, and everyday support.
-  Identification of key professional competences for youth workers in wellbeing support and referral.
-  Visibility for wellbeing as an integral component of the European Youth Work Agenda.





Possible European projection

The seminar contributes to long-term developments in European youth work:

- Insights can be integrated into youth worker training and professional development, including Erasmus+ mobility and capacity-building activities.
- Discussions support the development of tools and resources (e.g., upcoming T-kits and research outputs) to assist practitioners across Europe.
- The event strengthens the case for increased collaboration between education, health, employment, and youth sectors to address wellbeing holistically.
- Outcomes can inform national and European policy dialogues on mental health and youth support systems, aligning with EU Youth Strategy priorities.



Resources and materials

- Article: <https://www.growingyouthwork.eu/news/seminar-on-youth-mental-health-and-well-being.90/>
- Event page (Youth Partnership): <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/seminar-on-youth-mental-health-and-well-being>

Connection Vibes



Romania, Italy and Cyprus



01 October 2024 - 31 December 2025



Two years project



<https://connectionvibes.eu/>



English, Romanian, Italian, Greek

Partners: Schimbare cu Sens (Romania); Youmore (Italy); The Serendipitous Black Cloud (Cyprus)

Summary

Connection Vibes emerged from the growing need to create meaningful, authentic connections among young people in a world shaped by digital isolation, migration, and cultural differences.

Recognizing the challenges faced by youth in forming deep relationships, this Erasmus+ project focuses on fostering understanding, empathy, and active citizenship to bridge divides and build inclusive communities.

Objectives

- **Develop innovative tools for deep connection:** Create three tools (a card game, a gamebook, and a soulful conversation manual) to facilitate meaningful connections among youth from diverse backgrounds, fostering intercultural understanding and overcoming barriers to inclusion.
- **Training for Educators and Youth Workers:** Provide comprehensive training for 12 youth workers and teachers across partner countries. This training equipped them with methodologies and tools to create inclusive environments and lead connection-focused activities.

- **Community building:** Apply the developed tools and trained methodologies in 12 local communities of the participant countries, gathering insights and feedback for refinement and measuring impact of our tools, in order to shape our final results so they have a real power of changing the way young people connect and grow together.
- **Raise awareness:** The 12 communities are only the beginning. They conducted three awareness campaigns, going to wider audiences. They want not just to promote the tools we create, but also emphasize the importance of giving youth the right tools and space to connect, no matter their background or how different they are to one another.
- **Foster social inclusion:** Address challenges such as migrant integration, digital isolation, and barriers to participation by promoting empathy, understanding, and active citizenship.

Target group

Young people and Youth workers

Professionals involved

Youth workers and Psychologists

Main activities

The Connection Vibes project, funded by the EU under Erasmus+ (KA210-YOU 2024-1-RO01-KA210-YOU-000250404), focuses on empowering young people and youth workers to foster meaningful connections across cultures and social contexts. The core activities include:

Development of innovative tools to facilitate deep human connection among youth from diverse backgrounds

Including a social card game, a gamebook, and a manual for nurturing soulful conversations for use in youth settings. These tools are designed to help overcome digital isolation, cultural divides, and barriers to inclusion.





Training activities for youth workers and educators

Aiming to equip at least 12 professionals with methodologies and facilitation skills to apply the tools effectively and create inclusive environments in youth work practice.

Community implementation and piloting

Where the tools and methods are tested and applied in at least 12 local communities across partner countries (e.g., Romania, Italy, Cyprus), gathering feedback to improve and support local engagement.



Awareness-raising campaigns

To promote the importance of authentic connection, empathy, and active citizenship beyond the immediate project partners, engaging wider European audiences.

Local events and pop-up game sessions




Where youth and local stakeholders experience the tools firsthand and reflect on the outcomes together.



✓ Results and highlights



Social Card Game: A dynamic card game designed to break barriers and foster meaningful connections. Through storytelling-based gameplay, players share experiences, overcome challenges, and earn points while building genuine relationships. Perfect for groups of 2 or more, our game will be accessible and portable.

-  **Rule Book:** An essential companion to our card game, the Game Book outlines engaging ways to play while fostering meaningful connections. It will include the game mechanics, the points economy, as well as tips and tricks on how to make the most of it while truly sparking meaningful connections, based on empathy.
-  **Beyond the Game:** A facilitator's manual to the ConnectiON Vibes card game, Beyond the Cards is a practical playbook for youth workers and educators. It covers session flow, group dynamics, and emotional safety. With checklists, phrases, and tools, it ensures the game becomes a powerful experience of trust and belonging.
-  **Unlocking Connection:** A guidebook for facilitators and educators that explores the deeper principles behind meaningful conversations. It blends theory, tools, and practices for creating safe spaces, empathy, and presence. Designed as a completing resource to the ConnectiON Vibes game, it helps transform dialogue into real, lasting human connection.





Possible European projection

The Connection Vibes project has significant potential for development and wider European impact:

- Multiplication in youth communities: The tools (card game, gamebook, conversation manual) are freely downloadable and easily adaptable for local youth work contexts across Europe, enabling youth organisations to run connection-focused activities independently.
- Training replication: The training modules developed for educators and youth workers can be delivered in other countries or integrated into existing youth work curricula and workshops, scaling capacity within the European youth sector.
- Awareness campaigns: The planned awareness campaigns can be expanded beyond the initial partner countries (Romania, Italy, Cyprus) to involve broader networks of NGOs, schools, and youth centres, strengthening the project's European visibility and reach.
- Ambassador and community network: By engaging participants as ambassadors, Connection Vibes can leverage grassroots networks to initiate pop-up events and trainings in new regions and communities, fostering a European movement dedicated to social inclusion



Resources and materials

- Social Card Game – https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WyOxcXfOK1izNAmhlaX1By8l3FhU_PwA
- Rule Book (Gamebook) – https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WyOxcXfOK1izNAmhlaX1By8l3FhU_PwA
- Beyond the Game Manual – <https://connectionvibes.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Beyond-the-Cards-The-Facilitators-Guide-to-ConnectiON-Vibes-Card-Game.pdf>
- Unlocking Connection Guidebook – <https://connectionvibes.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Unlocking-Connection-Facilitators-Guidebook.pdf>

Additionally, the site includes blogs, newsletters, and event information to support ongoing learning, community involvement, and updates on project development.

Mental Health in Young People (Mind over Matter)



Estonia, France, Greece,
Italy, Norway and United
Kingdom.



01 september 2020 - 31 august 2022



Two years project



[https://erasmus-
plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/20
20-1-UK01-KA229-079092](https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-1-UK01-KA229-079092)



English (Estonian, French, Greek, Italian,
Norwegian).

The Isle of Wight College (UK) as coordinator, in collaboration with Gausdal videregående skole (Norway), Geniko Lykeio Arfaron (Greece), I.I.S. "P. SRAFFA" (Italy), Lycee Condorcet (France), and Tallina Polütehnikum (Estonia).

Summary

Driven by alarming data regarding cyberbullying, self-harm, and low mental health literacy, this project brings together six European nations to bridge the gap between struggling students and support systems. Recognizing that students often turn to teachers and peers in times of crisis, the initiative implements a robust training framework. By equipping staff with diagnostic tools and empowering students as "Mental Health Ambassadors", the project aims to reduce early school abandonment, improve academic achievement, and foster a culture of well-being that extends from the classroom to the wider community.

Objectives

The project's focus is educator empowerment and peer-to-peer support. It is guided by six core goals:

- Identify the key triggers for mental health issues in young people aged 15+.
- Recognise how and why these issues manifest themselves in young people.
- Compare data concerning the triggers and how they manifest themselves across partner institutions to identify regional vs. universal trends.
- Equip teachers and other school and college staff with the tools to recognise vulnerable students and advise them how and when to seek help.
- Develop student ambassadors to work with their peers to help them to recognise the issues and challenges that face them and discover the mechanisms which might help them to address these challenges the best.
- Develop a range of materials and resources for teachers, staff and students to use to help young people overcome these issues and early leaving.

Target group

Teachers and students' peers.

Professionals involved

Colleges and educational institutions staff (researchers, teachers, professors and project managers)



Main activities

This project is structured into research, training, and implementation phases:

Transnational Research & Data Mapping

Conducting local and national surveys to identify mental health triggers and support gaps, creating a comprehensive picture of youth well-being in Europe.

- **Year 1: Institutional Capacity Building.** Training a core group of 5+ staff members from every educational institution in mental health issues, working with a pilot group of 5-10 students to provide guidance and support.
- **Year 2: Peer-to-Peer Support.** 10 student ambassadors per partner institution receive similar training to offer relatable, peer-led support to a second pilot group, bridging the gap between students and authority figures.



Development of additional support tools and resources

Including a dedicated helpline, awareness-raising social media videos, and a creative performance designed to destigmatize mental health.

Mind Over Matter event in Italy

Group of 10 students (ambassadors and members of the pilot group) share their findings and perfect their resources.











Digital Dissemination & Sustainability

Launching an e-book and use of the eTwinning platform to share all developed materials and research findings with the wider European educational community.

✓ Results and highlights

-  Identified the key triggers for mental health issues in young people aged 15+ - achieved through surveys, staff training, classroom work and mobilities.
-  Recognised how and why these issues manifest themselves in young people - achieved through surveys, staff training and close working with young people.
-  Compared data concerning the triggers and how they manifest themselves across partner institutions-physical mobilities.
-  Teachers and other school and college staff equipped with the tools to recognise vulnerable students and advise them how and when to seek help - achieved through mental health first aid training.
-  Developed and trained student ambassadors to work with their peers to help them to recognise the issues and challenges.
-  Developed a range of materials and resources for teachers, students and staff to support mental health issues.

The project includes student ambassadors' feedback, confirming its success in improving mental health awareness and knowledge of support tools and skills.



Possible European projection

This project is designed for scalability and long-term impact across the European landscape. By involving six diverse nations, the project creates a “Europe-wide” picture of youth mental health. Using the eTwinning platform ensures that the methodology and results are accessible to thousands of schools across the EU, establishing a standardized framework for student support.

The “train-the-trainer” model ensures that knowledge doesn’t stay within a few individuals but permeates the entire institution. This can be multiplied further by offering the training to local clusters of schools or national educational boards. Additionally, the activities and material created is original and can be replicated within similar projects carried out in different contexts.

Resources and materials

In the Results of the Mind over Matter Project document, available on the platform, you can access a comprehensive list of activity examples carried out within the project. The following photo represents one of the materials used in the project:

#TimeToTalkDay

TRUE

OR

FALSE

Use these statements to get your young people thinking and talking about mental health problems.

Make it active by writing 'True' on a sheet of paper and 'False' on another and put them at different ends of the room.

Read each statement out loud and ask the young people to choose whether to stand on the 'True' sheet or 'False' sheet.

Once everyone has made their choice you can read the answer and reason. Alternatively young people can raise their hands to indicate their choice.

However you do it, have a conversation about mental health this Time to Talk Day.





STATEMENT	TRUE OR FALSE	REASON
Young people don't experience mental health problems.	False	Young people and adults both experience mental health problems. Many issues start from a very young age.
1 in 10 young people experience a mental health problem.	True	There is a chance that someone you know is experiencing a mental health problem.
There is nothing I can do to help somebody with a mental health problem.	False	You can help a friend with a mental health problem by checking up on them, spending time with them and listening to them, without judging them.
Most people who are worried about their mental health go and see a doctor.	False	In fact, only 4% of young people visit their doctor to get help with their mental health
Mental health is just like physical health.	True	Like physical health, mental health can get better and it can get worse. Look after it by connecting with people, keeping active, taking notice of things around you, learning new things and giving to others.
Many different people can help you with your mental health.	True	You can speak to a teacher, parent, carer, a health professional or someone you trust in your community.
Someone with a mental health problem can never get better.	False	Anyone with a mental health problem can make a full recovery and feel better. All they need is help and support.
It is okay to describe somebody with a mental health problem as 'crazy', 'weird', 'odd', or 'mad'.	False	This is not the right way to refer to someone with a mental health problem as it might make them feel worse. It is better to say that they have a "mental health problem", or to use a specific term like 'depressed', if you know what the problem is.

Additionally, you can access the following videos from different partner organizations:

- Italian video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AuzAz1THfU>
- French video: [Video MOM Ambassadors.mp4 - Google Drive](#)

International GOOD PRACTICES



Self Care for Youth Workers initiative



Australia, Canberra



Published on 13 May 2020.



The resource is available as an ongoing online practice and reflection tool for youth workers.



<https://youthcoalition.net/self-care-for-youth-workers/>



English

The Youth Coalition of the ACT – a peak body supporting youth work practice, sector development, and professional sustainability.

The initiative is informed by youth work practitioners and aligned with ethical youth work standards.

Summary

Self-Care for Youth Workers is an initiative developed by The Youth Coalition of the ACT that promotes holistic wellbeing and professional sustainability among youth work practitioners. The initiative emphasises that effective youth work depends not only on skills and methodologies, but also on the capacity of youth workers to care for their own wellbeing in a consistent and intentional way.

The resource presents self-care as a proactive and structured process, encouraging youth workers to reflect on their physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and professional needs. It aligns self-care with ethical youth work practice, supervision, and organisational responsibility, offering a practical framework that supports long-term engagement in the sector.

Objectives

The initiative aims to:

- Promote self-care as a core component of ethical and sustainable youth work practice
- Increase awareness of the emotional and psychological demands of youth work
- Support youth workers in developing personalised and realistic self-care plans
- Encourage reflective practice and professional supervision
- Contribute to burnout prevention and long-term professional wellbeing
- Strengthen the overall quality and sustainability of youth work delivery

Target group

The initiative is primarily addressed to:

- Youth workers, facilitators, trainers, and practitioners in formal and non-formal youth work settings
- Youth work teams and organisations seeking to integrate wellbeing into professional practice
- Sector leaders and coordinators responsible for staff wellbeing and supervision

Young people benefit indirectly through more resilient, balanced, and supported youth workers.





Professionals involved

The initiative draws on the experience and knowledge of:

- Youth work practitioners - Frontline youth workers whose lived professional experience informs the practical and realistic nature of the guidance.
- Sector development and wellbeing specialists Professionals contributing to the holistic understanding of wellbeing across personal and professional domains.
- The Youth Coalition of the ACT - As the promoting organisation, it provides strategic leadership in youth sector development, ethical practice, and professional support.



Main activities

The Self-Care for Youth Workers initiative includes the following key components:

Conceptual framework for self-care

Clear definitions of self-care and its relevance to youth work, positioning it as a planned, proactive, and reflective practice rather than a reactive response to stress.

Reflective self-care planning

Guidance for youth workers to develop, monitor, and adapt individual self-care plans, including encouragement to discuss them within supervision and team contexts.



Holistic wellbeing domains

The resource addresses multiple dimensions of wellbeing, including:






- Physical wellbeing (rest, health, movement, creativity)
- Psychological wellbeing (stress management, boundaries, workload)
- Emotional wellbeing (relationships, emotional awareness, support systems)
- Spiritual wellbeing (values, meaning, connection to nature or purpose)
- Professional wellbeing (supervision, peer support, reflective practice)

Digital and contemporary work considerations

The initiative also acknowledges the challenges of digital youth work and constant connectivity, offering reflections on maintaining boundaries and balance.



✓ Results and highlights

-  Increased recognition of self-care as a professional and ethical responsibility
-  A practical and accessible resource for youth workers across different contexts
-  Strengthened reflective practice and awareness of wellbeing needs
-  Support for burnout prevention and professional longevity
-  Relevance for both individual practitioners and youth work organisations

Possible European projection

The Self-Care for Youth Workers initiative has strong potential for adaptation and use within European youth work contexts:

- The framework can be integrated into Erasmus+ training courses, youth worker mobility projects, and capacity-building activities
- Youth organisations can embed self-care planning into supervision systems, induction processes, and organisational policies
- The initiative aligns with European priorities on mental health, wellbeing, quality youth work, and professional sustainability
- The resource can be adapted, translated, and contextualised for different national youth work systems



Resources and materials

Self-Care for Youth Workers online resource, Reflective prompts and guidance for self-care planning, References to ethical practice and professional supervision principles: <https://youthcoalition.net/self-care-for-youth-workers/>



WELLCORE



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Defoin

Highlights  e.V.
MIND, TECH, LIFELONG LEARNING

 Impact
Drive