

ERASMUS+ YOUTH WORKER MOBILITY PROJECT

“Empower Youth Participation” Training course

In this document, you will find implemented 7 days (16. – 22.08.2023) training program activities description. Non-formal education training course held in Balvu city (Latvia) gather 26 participants from Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Spain, Türkiye, Romania, Greece and Latvia, two experienced trainers - Sergejs Andrejevs (Latvia) and Kristīna Kastronovo (Latvia).

Objectives of the project “Empower Youth Participation”:

- Motivate to promote the principles of youth participation across all activities done by youth workers,
- Competence support young people to develop and implement activities, youth projects with a quality youth participation dimension,
- Increase youth workers awareness of the impact of the youth participatory activities on youth participation in democratic life,
- Dedicate attention to the participation in democratic life of young people with fewer opportunities,
- Get acquainted and develop non-formal education tools to increase the quality of youth participation in activities for youth.

“Funded/Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, European Commission or [name of the granting authority (Agency for International Programs for Youth)]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

More information about the project you can find:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2023-1-LV02-KA153-YOU-000122466>

Program:

TIME / DATE	15/08/2023	16/08/2023	17/08/2023	18/08/2023	19/08/2023	20/08/2023	21/08/2023	22/08/2023	23/08/2023	
	0 st Day	1 st Day	2 nd Day	3 rd Day	4 th Day	5 th Day	6 th Day	7 th Day	8 th Day	
08:30- 09:30		BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST		
09:30 - 11:00	Arrival of participants	Introduction, getting to know each other	Participation, Glossary elevator	Guest speaker or Youth center	Forms of youth participation	Youth Participation Round Talk	Initiative simulation	Presenting participation activity	Departure of participants	
11:00 - 11:30		Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break		Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00		Introduction of the program Expectation, contribution, concerns	Own participation	Municipality's simulation	Theories of youth participation	Case studies	Initiative simulation	Presenting participation activity		
13:00 – 14:00		LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH		
14:00 - 15:30		Team building	Being civically engaged - competent youth worker/trainer	Municipality's simulation	Free time	Exchange of good practices about participation	Initiative Simulation Motivation	Being civically engaged - competent youth worker/trainer - competence evaluation and further planning		
15:30 - 16:00		Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break		
16:00 – 17:00		ERASMUS+ program Principles of non Formal education	Being civically engaged - competent youth worker/trainer	Municipality's simulation	Free time	Preparing for an initiative	Preparing participation activity	Programme summary and evaluation / Final reflection , Youthpass ceremony		
17:00 – 17:30		Evaluation groups	Evaluation groups	Evaluation groups		Evaluation groups	Evaluation groups			
18:00 – 19:00		DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER		DINNER
21:00 - 00:00			Free evening	Intercultural evening	Music for the sunset	Movie night	Table game evening	Free evening		Goodbye party

Day 1

1.session - Introduction, getting to know each other

Learning outcomes

Development of group dynamics, knowledge about other participants in a group.

Description of activity

First circle, each person need to say name, from which country there are coming and last participation activity where participants participated.

Learning names – each participant have time to think how present their name for others that other can remember – it can be story, song, picture etc.

Speed dating “Participation passport”– each participant makes a small magazine or a passport of origami, where in each page participants has to write answers on various questions about person participation – e.g. When was the last time I helped somebody? What I find unfair in my community? What do I dream about? etc. During the music playing the participants walk around and meet each other exchanging answers on particular questions and pages offered by the trainer.

Materials needed

Pens, pencils, A4 papers

Comments

2.session - Introduction of the program, Expectation, contribution, concerns

Learning outcomes

Getting to know about own and other motivation, making training course more participatory.

Description of activity

Trainer introduces the program and answers participants questions.

Each participant in different colours Post-it write their expectations, contributions and concerns, discuss them in groups of four and each group presents summary.

Setting up “participation rules” – rules how to make our training more participatory.

Materials needed

Pens, Post-it, computer, projector

Comments

3.session - Team building

Learning outcomes

Development of group dynamics, learning to be together

Description of activity

“Hide and seek participation challenge”. Participants work in groups and each group gets one secret object that it has to associate with participation. Each group has to decide where and how to hide the object and to create a story about it, a map and instructions on how to solve the puzzle and find the object. So, they create challenges for each other, the groups exchange the challenges and solve each others ‘puzzles. The workshop finishes with a reflection not only about the team building, but also on how participatory it was and which associations have been created about participation.

Materials needed

Pens, A4 papers, different objects

Comments

4.session - ERASMUS+ Youth, NFE

Learning outcomes

Learning about ERASMUS+ program opportunities and what is non-formal education

Description of activity

Presentation of opportunities that offers ERASMUS+ program, ERASMUS+ program priorities and feature, European Youth goals.

Non-formal education – principles and aspects of non-formal education, Kolb cycle, non-formal education methodology.

Materials needed

Flipchart paper, markers

Comments

During ERASMUS+ program presentation pay attention separate project that is for youth and Youth organisation and also project that is local and international.

Evaluation of the day

Participants need to answer on following question How was the day? Do you know more about others? How I feel in a group?

Day 2

1.session - Participation, Glossary elevator

Learning outcomes

Learn about how participation is defined and learn about words connected to participation topic

Description of activity

In a big Flipchart paper trainer is writing answers of participants what is key words of participation definition. Present participation definition from different sources.

Trainer writes on small papers different words connected to participation topic (<https://participationpool.eu/glossary/>) each participant has opportunity to choose one of them and she/he has 1 minute to explain this word to others. At the end summing up what is participation.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens

Comments

Choose those words that are more connected to participants' topic and depending on number of participants in a group

2.session - Own Participation

Learning outcomes

Explore possible participatory situation and solutions

Description of activity

Playing board game "Participative life" where is different situation of participation and participants need to choose from existing options the best solution for situation. Followed by an individual mind-map reflection on each participant's own participation level. Summing up in a big circle.

Materials needed

A4 papers, pens, prepared participatory situation and solutions.

Comments

3.session - Being civically engaged - competent youth worker/trainer

Learning outcomes

Learning about ETS model and about Being civically engaged competence, self assessment of it

Description of activity

Presenting ETS Competence Model for Trainers and Youth workers, marking that ETS Competence Model now serves as. Base for the Youthpass certificates for Youth workers and trainers; focus on “Being civically engaged competence” – individual step-by step self-assessment by it.

Materials needed

A4 papers, pens

Comments

4.session - Being civically engaged - competent youth worker/trainer (continuation)

Learning outcomes

Learn about Being civically engaged competence, self assessment of it.

Description of activity

The individual self-assessment for the circle of “being civically engaged” competence turns into development collider – in pairs participants discuss which sub competences they want to develop and what will be their steps to take during this training.

Materials needed

A4 papers, pens

Comments

Evaluation of the day

Participants need to find and bring an object that represent their day and explain how this object presents day.

Day 3

1.session - Visiting Balvi Youth centre

Learning outcomes

Learning about local forms of youth participation

Description of activity

Visiting Balvi Youth centre, discussing about youth participation in Youth centre and in municipality in general

Materials needed

Comments

2.session; 3.session; 4.session - Municipality's simulation

Learning outcomes

Learn about different actors involved in youth participation, simulate youth participation situation

Description of activity

Can be find in following internet address –

<https://360participation.com/municipalitäts-simulation/>

Materials needed

Printed tasks that are designed for this exercise, 4-5 board game units, pens, A4 paper, printer, PCs with internet access.

Comments

Evaluation of the day

Participants need to answer on following question I did..., I felt..., I learned. Results sharing in smaller groups.

Day 4

1.session - Forms of youth participation

Learning outcomes

Learn about different forms of Youth participation

Description of activity

Without giving any hints, inviting small groups of participants discuss and decide themselves which forms of youth participation they recognize. Each group has to show a small theatre sketch about their ideas.

Following discussion on how common and precise are the talks about youth participation forms. For an inspiration, the key concepts from the materials by Council of Europe are presented: “New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes” <https://edoc.coe.int/en/youth-in-europe/7625-new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision-making-processes.html>

Materials needed

A4 papers, pens, flipchart paper, markers

Comments

2.session - Theories of youth participation

Learning outcomes

Learn about different theories of Youth participation

Description of activity

Each group receives one theory or model and they need to prepare presentation for others

- Roger Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation
- Treseder's Degrees of participation model
- Decision-making models
- Levels of participation – individual, etc...
- Marc Jans and Kurt De Backer model

Discussion in a big group about usefulness of theories in practice.

Materials needed

A4 papers, pens, flipchart paper, markers

Comments

Before session trainer/facilitator need to learn about theories

3. session; 4.session – Free time to have reflection time and take of well being.

Day 5

1.session - Participation ROUND TALK

Learning outcomes

Learning about Youth participation

Description of activity

Participants are sitting in two circles, one inner and one outer. In front of each participants there are another participants in each round participants are discussing question connected to participatory topic. Later questions are discussed in bigger group.

- young people are not interested in participation;
- young people participate only when they have problems;
- local authorities support youth participation when it is politically useful for them;
- some young people do not participate for cultural reasons;
- all young people have the right to participate;

- public authorities should be responsible for the financing and implementation of policies in support of youth participation;
- non-participation is a form of participation.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens, chairs

Comments

2.session - Case studies

Learning outcomes

Learning about challenges and possible solutions in youth participation

Description of activity

Participants work in small groups. Each group comes up with a real problematic story from their practice connected to youth participation and has to describe it in a written way without presenting the solution that was applied at the time. The groups exchange papers with the cases and have to present them in a form of Forum Theatre. Common discussion in the group, summing up the usual challenges and possible solutions in youth participation.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens

Comments

Trainer/fasilitator need to be aware about Forum theater methodology and be ready explain it to participants

3.session - Exchange of good practices about participation

Learning outcomes

Learning about good practices in different countries

Description of activity

Each country presents their good practices, what they have regarding Youth participation

Materials needed

Computer, projector, A4 paper, pens

Comments

This can be us home work for participants to look for best practice before coming to training course

4.session - Preparing for initiative

Learning outcomes

Learning how to plan initiative in local community

Description of activity

Participants in small groups have to analyze the local context and plan a real-to-do initiative to be organized next day in local community. The planning has to be done by key steps (needs, aim, target group, time, place, activity, roles-task division). The trainers are available for consultations.

Materials needed

Different materials must be available

Comments

Evaluation of the day

Finding and marking oneself in a big poster with various figures, explaining the feelings and learning's of the day.

Day 6

1.session; 2.session - Initiative simulation

Learning outcomes

Learning how to implement initiative in local community

Description of activity

Participants implement their initiatives in local community, making photo and video reports.

Materials needed

Different materials must be available

Comments

3.session - Initiative evaluation

Learning outcomes

Learning how to evaluate initiative in local community

Description of activity

The groups present their photo and video reports. 3 P evaluation in groups: process, people, product.

The Persona's angle - Have the needs, interests and capabilities of the team members been sorted out? Has there been any space for the team members to discuss their wishes, feelings, willingness to work, problems, etc.?

The Procedure angle - Have the team members agreed upon the ways of making decisions, dividing responsibilities, discussing conflicts, etc.? Have the methods and principles of communication been agreed?

The Product angle - Did all the members of the team clearly know what the common goal was? To what extent has the goal been achieved? Is everybody satisfied with the result?

Turning discussion into talks on motivation. Each group receives a target group – young people, youth workers, authorities, local community. Each group has to discuss, how motivated is this target group in contributing to youth participation and what could be done for fostering it.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens

Comments

4.session – Preparing participation activity

Learning outcomes

Learning how to plan NFE participatory activity

Description of activity

In a smaller group participants look for any method which is connected to participation topic and prepare activity for next day.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens

Comments

Evaluation of the day

Participants are divided into small groups, have to discuss their mood and present it in a piece of music (can be played on Spotify/YouTube or sung by themselves).

Day 7

1.session - Presenting participation activity

Learning outcomes

Learning how to implement NFE participatory activity

Description of activity

Participants implement participatory activity, receiving Feedback from other participants and trainers.

Materials needed

Different materials must be available

Comments

During activities separate group in two subgroups

2.session - Being civically engaged - competent youth worker/trainer - competence evaluation and further planning

Learning outcomes

Evaluation of learning outcomes based on ETS competence model, setting up future plans

Description of activity

Each participant has to look back at the development collider of this competence drawn in the beginning of this course, marking what has or has not been done, which sub competences have been developed and how much. In pairs, the participants have to plan their further on practical steps back at home in developing and applying the sub competences.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens

Comments

3.session - Programme summary and evaluation

Learning outcomes

Evaluation of learning

Description of activity

The papers with the names of programme sessions are placed around the room. The participants have to walk around with a small notebook, travel around the islands of the sessions and make notes about their memories and feelings in particular sessions. Sharing in pairs. Showing Heroes' journey video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhk4N9A0oCA> and making parallels with training and asking participants what will be resolution for them.

Materials needed

A4 paper, pens

Comments

4.session - Final Reflection. Youthpass ceremony

Learning outcomes

Evaluation of learning

Description of activity

Filling in evaluation questionnaire.

Participants are sitting in a circle and pass on to each other a box of matches. Each participant has a time for sharing a short reflection to the group while a match is burning.

Participants receive first pages of Youthpass certificates, each one nominates the next one, describing the person without mentioning the name, so that the rest of the group can guess the person. Reminder about filling in the developed Youthpass competences according to the ETS model after the course.

Materials needed

Box of matches, Youthpasses

Summary from online evaluation form

In this part there will be presented answers on some questions from the evaluation form:

- Name one or more methods or session, that you liked the most

Non formal education's way such as drama to learn about local imitative, wheel of balance, ETS model, the one that we acted after we discussed and the first activity for get to know us better that was really great for getting to know ourselves and the both activities in nature because it is connected with nature more energetic and efficient I guess I liked those ones the best, local initiatives, implementing non-formal activities, the practical sections and group works, municipality simulation, the practical sections and group works, I'd say the ones that involved the local community for sure, the group presentations on participation topics with different, unconventional methods, I liked the simulation activity the most. My role was a volunteer in the youth centre. The most interesting thing in this activity was the interaction between the different teams (youngsters, municipality, etc.).

- Name 3 most important things you have learned

Speak up , self respect , confidence; Dissemination of Youth participation's ways, how to learn things more actively, how to react with multicultural group; I have the right to choose if I want to participate. About the political and educational situations in different countries. I should be more confident; Co-work, participations(more clearly) , acting skills; Participation, freedom to express my ideas; Active listening, participate more, collaborate on decision making process; Emphaty skills, autonomys learning; Importance to express myself, to think about others' thoughts, how to react working very new persons; Three important things that I have learned are: that you have to speak up, and to be more confident about your ideas, and that everyone should be heard, and that you can learn a lot of things through others experience and your experience; The youth is a very important asset of a country. How to improve my participation in activities; Theoretical knowledge of participation. Designing some projects and applying them. Simulation activities; Participating, listening, acting; Kolb's theory, adapting your way of communication according to the different targets, deal with different characters; I have to comply my behaviour with all the people in every single situation in my life. I will definitely try to imply the separation of teams by gathering each one's object. I adore the ETS model's four main competences: knowledges, skills, approaches and behaviours!; Always speak your truth, find support in community, stand against injustice; I love Erasmus, I love Latvia, Youth participation is really important for the prosperity of EU and the World as a whole.

- Did you improve your competence (knowledge, skill, attitude) regarding Participation topic?

100% of participants on this question answered Yes

- After training I am more competent for developing an understanding of youth participation theory and concepts

100% of participants on this question answered Yes

- After training I am more competent for improving the quality of the thinking and practice on youth participation

94,7% of participants on this question answered Yes

- After training I am more competent for building experience in implementing qualitative youth participation activities or projects

89,5% of participants on this question answered Yes

- *After training I am more competent for using Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes to support young people's participation*

94,7% of participants on this question answered Yes

Learning testimonies

I am thrilled to share my experiences and insights gained from the recent training course on Empowering Youth Participation, where I had the privilege of collaborating with participants from various countries. This transformative experience not only deepened my understanding of youth engagement but also enriched my cultural awareness and global perspective.

One of the most striking aspects of the training was the diverse group of participants it brought together. Engaging with individuals from different countries, each with their unique backgrounds, ideas, and viewpoints, was an invaluable opportunity. Through our discussions and collaborative activities, I realized the universal challenges faced by youth in terms of participation, but also how cultural nuances influence the approaches and solutions applied in various contexts.

The training also provided a platform for sharing experiences with fellow participants, each hailing from diverse backgrounds and contexts. Engaging in discussions, group activities, and case studies allowed me to glean insights from various viewpoints, enriching my understanding of the multi-faceted nature of youth participation. This collaborative atmosphere emphasized the importance of cross-pollination of ideas in creating effective strategies. (Alexandra)

I'm so glad for participating in this training course about Empowering Youth Participation. I've learned about different projects that are promoted in other countries (surprisingly some of these are similar in Spain). Furthermore I had the possibility to set up a project to make impact in the local community, working with my partners. During this experience I realized of the cultural and social differences between countries and communities. With a role-playing activity I learned which parts are involved in the complex process of designing projects, it's a little bit difficult to understand, however with this activity I was able to understand how is the process. Finally I learned how to apply different tools and strategies to evaluate a project and how improve it. Of course, all of this has been possible thanks of the work of all participants and the organizer through social and communicative skills in English language. (Francisco Jesús)

I learned a lot by participating in this training course about Empowering Youth Participation. I was able to meet numerous unique people from many different countries, each of them had interesting outlooks and experiences. One of the activities was a simulation of how youth centres work with the municipality and it's funding to attract young people. Participation in this activity made it very easy for me to understand how this system works in real life. Another activity was to make a project that would impact the local community, we interacted with the locals and had worthwhile connections and discussions with them.

I really enjoyed interacting with others, I was able to learn meaningful things about their countries and culture. I was especially inspired by people who have several years of experience working with young people, they demonstrate ideas about youth participation I had never thought about, It was encouraging to see people who are so proficient in work with young people. This project was very informative and It was a delight to attend it. (Anna)

From Empowering youth project I learned many skills including communication, participation, sharing my ideas and it also increase my knowledge about culture . I meet with many people with unique way of thought . I learned about municipality, working of youth workers for local people. This motivate me to work as a youth worker for my country. (Azka)

I'll always carry with me the precious notions gathered during this Training Course. It gave me a great chance to share my experiences and struggles with participants from all over Europe and come across diverse and enlightening insights. I was able to hear about innovative practices and approaches that deepened my comprehension of youth participation and its issues. It also gave me interesting and practical ideas on how to improve as a youth worker and participate more actively myself, in order to both encourage youth engagement and effectively strive for social development.

I found the simulation activities to be an especially well thought-out method to convey complicated notions in a fun yet most functional way. I was able to learn a lot from them, and I'll make sure to organise some myself in my work with youths going forward.

I will also implement the approaches shared by some of the most experienced participants concerning problematic youths and how to best include them, always striving to be most respectful of their personalities and needs. (Claudia)

I'm thrilled to have had the opportunity to participate in this Empowering Youth Participation training course. Throughout the program, I gained valuable insights into various initiatives being promoted in different countries, and it was surprising to find similarities with some of these projects in Spain.

Additionally, I had the chance to collaborate with my partners in developing a project aimed at making a positive impact on our local community. This experience opened my eyes to the cultural and social disparities that exist between countries and communities. Through a role-playing activity, I delved into the intricate process of project design, which initially seemed somewhat challenging to grasp. However, thanks to this activity, I managed to gain a better understanding of the process.

Furthermore, I acquired knowledge on how to use several tools and strategies for project evaluation and improvement. It is important to acknowledge that all of these achievements were made possible through the collective efforts of the participants and the organisers, who demonstrated exceptional social and communication skills in the English language. (Raquel)

I really enjoyed the training course "Empowering Youth Participation", mainly because I had the opportunity to learn new things about the different cultures by interacting with people from different countries and with different backgrounds.

Secondly there have been some activities which promoted sharing ideas and comments, this also gave the possibility to bond easily with like-minded people.

Thirdly we learned how to create a socially useful activity, from the idea of what to do until the main activity, passing through relating with people in every shade. Finally I can say that this helped me a lot because I didn't think it could be possible to create an own social activity interacting with people who don't even speak your same language, but we succeeded so it's possible. (Fabio)

I truly believe this specific training course has reinforced my citizenship competences. For sure, it helped me with becoming a lot more aware of the cultural diversity in the modern-day world. Throughout the project, I have felt more and more convinced in my personal qualities: self-organisational and organisational skills, leadership approaches and certain knowledges that would help me to write a project in future, for instance. All of the previous mentioned have noticeably improved thanks to the fascinating activities we had. (Georgi)

Enthusiastic to share the insights garnered from a recent Empowering Youth Participation training course, this opportunity has truly widened my perspective. Notably, it has not only deepened my understanding of youth engagement but also broadened my cultural horizons on a global scale.

What particularly captured my attention throughout this training was the remarkable diversity among participants. Engaging in conversations with individuals from various countries, each with their distinct backgrounds and ideas, proved to be an abundant source of insights. Our discussions and collaborative endeavors unveiled a clearer understanding of the common challenges faced by young people in their participation journeys. Moreover, the profound influence of cultural factors on the solutions we formulate became evident. The training itself acted as a dynamic hub where each participant contributed a unique background and narrative. Our engagement in discussions, group activities, and case studies resembled immersing oneself in a pool of diverse perspectives. This experience firmly reinforced the notion that youth participation is inherently multifaceted. The overarching spirit of collaboration highlighted the significance of collaborative brainstorming in crafting robust strategies.

Furthermore, the training provided a fertile platform for exchanging narratives with fellow participants, each representing different walks of life. Engaging in profound discussions, partaking in group activities, and delving into case studies felt akin to unearthing a treasure trove of viewpoints. This experience served to amplify my comprehension of the intricate nature of youth participation. Noteworthy is the prevailing sense of teamwork, underscoring the pivotal role of amalgamating distinct ideas in the development of effective strategies. (Gülsüm)

I have recently been in an Erasmus+ project in Balvi from August 16th to August 23th. An Erasmus is a nice opportunity to meet people from other counties and know more about their culture, but it is also an experience where you can learn new useful things for your professional life and volunteering activities.

In this project I learned methodologies and every kind of activities to improve youth participation in society and give them tools to build a better future. I am willing to put in practice what I have learned in this Erasmus+ project. (Irene)

Attending an Erasmus+ project is an unique experience. It's a process of discovery under several points of views. It provides the possibility of dealing with persons from different countries. as a consequence, the participant has to settle in a new social context, communicating mainly in a foreign language (if you're not an English native speaker). For some people, this means to challenge themself going out an area usually called comfort zone. This is not an easy way for those who are more introverted.

The training course that has taken place in Balvi was focused on how to enhance the process of participation among the youth. The main aim was to provide youth workers with

cognitive tools so as to engage the youths in the most effective way. Taking part to an Erasmus + project is a perfect way to boost your “way to participate”. So, why not learning how to prepare an effective Erasmus+ Project to give the youths the same possibility you had? (Juri)

Attending my first Erasmus+ project was a challenge and a unique experience.

I feel that the scope of this Training Course was reached because we managed to discover and to handle our abilities (and also weaknesses) in order to work in a team for each activity we participated in. One of the topic of the course was participation, therefore every time I had to be ready to take the initiative in an activity or to share some of my ideas. I also got familiarised with the concept of non-formal education.

The working environment was very different than what I was used to because of people from different countries across Europe, but not only. I realised that everyone could contribute with useful thoughts and creative ideas which escaped us from challenging moments. We managed to understand each other and to overcome obstacles in order to get the best results from our activities. Communication was a huge factor for making the things smoother and easier. (Laurentiu-Dumitru)

During the enlightening training course on youth participation held in Balvi, Latvia, spanning from August 16th to August 22nd, 2023, I underwent a transformative experience that profoundly impacted my perspective and skill set. Throughout this intensive 7-day program, I was immersed in a rich array of activities and discussions that not only broadened my horizons but also equipped me with practical tools to become an active participant in various youth initiatives.

At the heart of this training were dynamic team-building exercises that instilled in me the significance of collaboration and effective communication. These activities not only fostered a sense of camaraderie among the diverse group of 24 participants, hailing from a multitude of countries and backgrounds, but also underscored the power of unity in driving meaningful change.

A major highlight of the course was the in-depth exploration of the ERASMUS+ program, which opened up a world of possibilities for me to engage in transnational youth projects and exchanges. Delving into the program's intricacies empowered me with the knowledge and confidence to leverage its resources for fostering cross-cultural understanding and impactful collaboration among young individuals across Europe.

Furthermore, the immersion into the principles of non-formal education provided me with a fresh perspective on learning outside traditional classroom settings. This approach not only encouraged critical thinking but also nurtured a holistic understanding of various subjects, including diversity, discrimination, and intolerance within our society. This newfound understanding has invigorated my commitment to work against discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia, and racism, thus contributing to a more inclusive and harmonious world.

One of the most engaging components of the training involved a range of simulations, including a municipality's simulation and initiative simulation. These simulations offered a hands-on experience of real-world scenarios, enabling me to develop practical skills in problem-solving, decision-making, and community engagement. This experiential learning approach not only solidified my understanding of youth participation theory and concepts but also empowered me to apply these principles in real-life situations.

The comprehensive guidance provided by trainers Sergejs Andrejevs and Kristina Castronovo was invaluable. Their expertise not only enriched the theoretical knowledge shared during the course but also offered practical insights derived from their extensive experience in the field.

In conclusion, the youth participation training course in Balvi, Latvia, was a life-changing experience that deepened my appreciation for various cultures, reaffirmed my dedication to eliminating discrimination, and gave me the practical knowledge I needed to take part in youth initiatives. This experience has expanded my perspectives and equipped me to actively contribute to a society that is more inclusive and participative. My experience was enhanced by interacting with a diverse group of 24 people from various backgrounds and nations while we all worked in English. (Momoh)