

# COUNT ME IN!

## A selection of non-formal inclusive activities

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## 1. Fostering inclusion and involvement through non-formal cultural activities

*„Foster a culture in which none are excluded, and build a society in which all live together. “*

It is natural in the contemporary world to work towards a socially cohesive society where individuals with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in society and share democratic values. Social inclusion aims for a society that accepts and respects people's differences. Since social inclusion is a vision, it needs to be translated into concrete terms.<sup>1</sup>

Inclusion through culture is a part of the national policies of modern societies with the efforts being supported through different funds, including the Erasmus+ programme.

### **Estonia:**

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/estonia/89-enhancing-social-inclusion-through-culture>

### **France:**

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/france/89-enhancing-social-inclusion-through-culture>

### **Romania:**

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/fr/node/2902>

The aim of the project “The Different Colours of Us” was to select and carry out inclusive non-formal practices in different fields – culture/traditions; photography; storytelling (literature); nature; dance and music. As part of an international endeavor, all activities were related to culture as we engaged in intercultural learning every time we jointly participated in project activities.

Most of the project work was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic and the most severe lockdown periods for children and youth. In addition to regular school work, remote learning and social isolation disrupted the extracurricular activities and social relationships of students and had an overall negative impact on their social and mental wellbeing. **Non-formal inclusive practices and project work** became especially important during the period.

Please find examples of the activities organized under each mobility section on this website. The sections include task descriptions, images and videos of student work as well as Padlet e-portfolios. The main inclusive culture-related practices we used and would recommend to others as well were as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sal.design.kyushu-u.ac.jp/pdf/Handbook\\_for\\_Beginners\\_SAL.pdf](http://www.sal.design.kyushu-u.ac.jp/pdf/Handbook_for_Beginners_SAL.pdf)  
ERASMUS+ „The Different Colours of Us“  
2019-1-EE01-KA229-051575



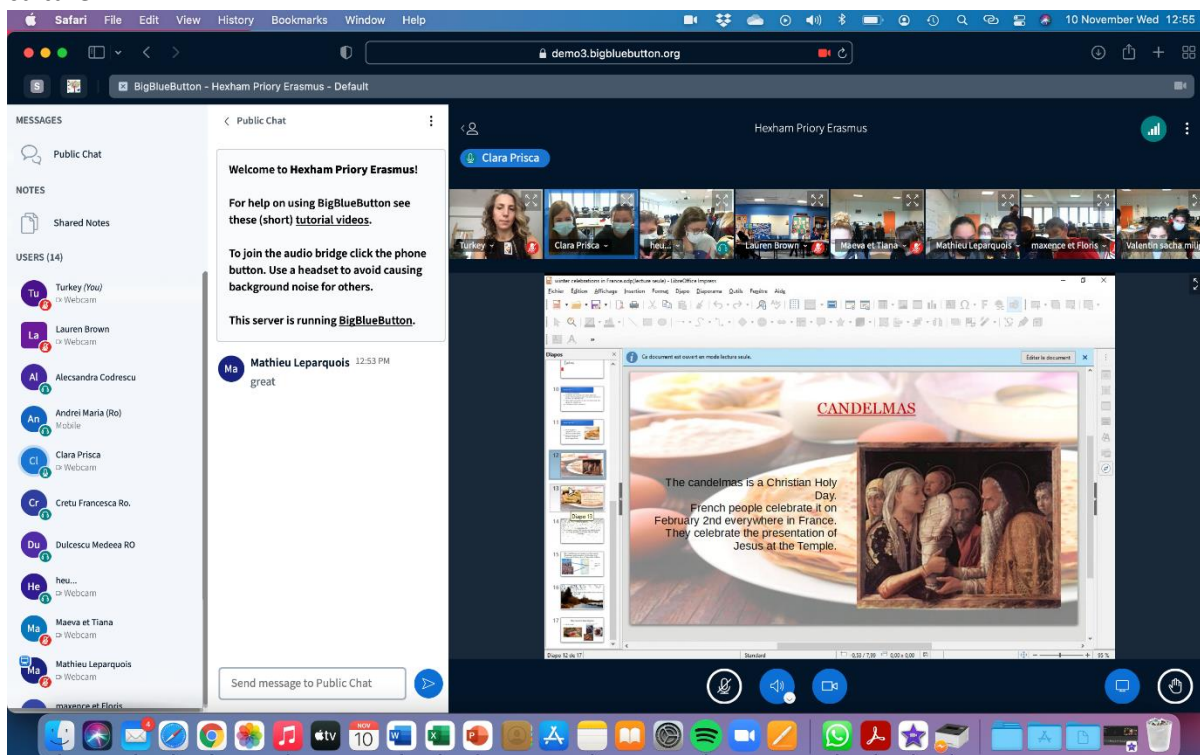
### a. Virtual meetings between students from different countries



Students from different countries met during online meetings, learnt about the other partner countries, played games, shared their thoughts and feelings on different topics. The virtual meetings created a feeling of “togetherness” and an understanding that children and youth from different countries are going through the same experience. The virtual lessons were an excellent tool to boost language-learning motivation during a period of restricted travel and the uncertainty of the future.

### b. Students/teachers introducing their own countries and culture

Students were given tasks to introduce their countries through different perspectives – the tasks included introducing one’s own country in general, one’s local town and school, aspects of one’s everyday life (homes, feelings, taste in music, etc.) as well as the traditions in each country. While students reflected on their own life and experience, they could learn about other cultures as well. Some students were also able to travel on physical mobilities, which allowed a deeper dive into a new culture.



### c. Students working on project tasks

During virtual and physical mobility weeks and throughout the project years, students worked on inclusive collaborative tasks. While creating their own projects, they learnt what the students from other countries are doing – again, cultural learning took place while working locally.

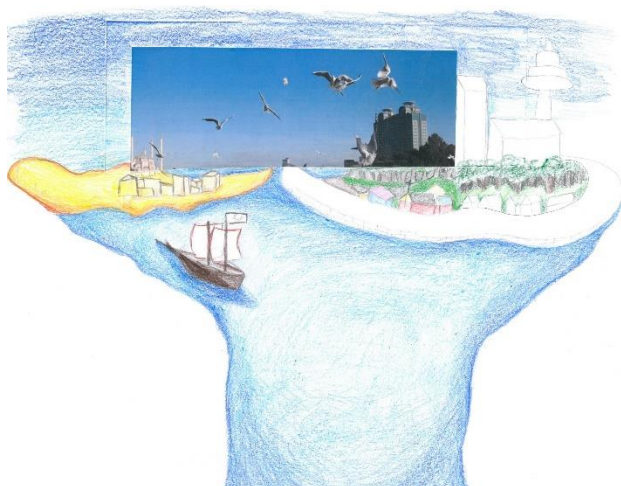
#### *SOME FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS:*

*(Oral interviews with students from Estonia / notes from the chat section of online meetings)*

- ✓ *I learnt about a new country – the young people there are super cool. It was not what I expected at all. I'd like to go for a visit as soon as I can while before, this country wasn't even on my radar!*
- ✓ *The virtual English-language meetings were so cool! I could understand everything and it was so much fun taking part in the tasks. I would do it again any time in the future!*
- ✓ *I was lucky to be able to travel. I was scared at first because I thought I was so bad at English. It turned out that I am a better communicator than I thought – I made lots of new friends!*
- ✓ *It was difficult to communicate with young people from a different culture at first, when they came to visit us during the mobility. I felt so shy and self-conscious. By the third day, I found out that the visiting students are so cool! It was a shame they had to leave so soon!*
- ✓ *It was such a treat to travel around my own country and staying in a hotel with our foreign visitors. I was disappointed at first when my mobility abroad was cancelled, but I enjoyed the replacement activities very much!*
- ✓ *I'm glad we were able to do cool Erasmus+ projects at school although we couldn't travel.*



## 2. Inclusion through nature-related activities



The most fun part of being an Erasmus' students is the opportunity to meet foreign students in their own natural living environment – to experience the temperatures, the landscapes, the smells, the homes and families, the schools... To find differences and share similarities. The nature-related theme block of this project was organized remotely. Several of the participating schools were in lockdown, but it was autumn and students were able to give us a taste of their outdoor life through videos, photos, writing and artwork.

**Please find the ideas for tasks and e-portfolios from the project here:**

<https://thedifferentcoloursofus.weebly.com/the-colours-of-nature.html>

The activities got kids moving and thinking. They heightened student's imagination and enthusiasm, enhanced critical and creative thinking skills, empowered students and teachers. Students' stress and fatigue reduced. They realized that each individual can be successful in their own way thus became more self-confident and felt proud for their work and ideas. GTKEO enhanced group cohesion, teamwork and communication skills. The students made lifelong European friends and achieved social inclusion.

Moreover as a result of this exchange, the involved participants have become more aware of the environment and nature around them. They also learnt resource management.

### *SOME FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS:*

(Collected from the mobility feedback portfolio, plus oral interviews with students

<https://padlet.com/semaaktay9/5uravdmtumte2rv0>)

- ✓ I really liked the activities we did **together**. My favorite one was the one where we played Kahoot. I **got to learn a lot of fun things about the other counties**.
- ✓ It was a great week! Glad I participated in it! I enjoyed a lot when you showed us **videos** and we played Kahoot.
- ✓ It was great that the teachers organized more outdoor lessons – normally they have different plans and we really have to plead to be taken outside! The lessons were so much fun! We enjoyed making videos!
- ✓ Lots of kids loved the T-shirt printing activity. We did it with more classes than planned as they really enjoyed it!
- ✓ It was fun comparing the autumn weather in different countries – in some countries, it was nice and colorful while in others it rained or it was still very warm.



### 3. Inclusion through the art of photography

Photography is the perfect tool to express yourself and share your experiences and feelings with other people – the triumph of social media platforms is a testimony for that. On the other hand, it is important to educate students on the topic of photography:

- What is good photography?
- How can a photo deliver your message effectively?
- How to express yourself through a photo without too much self-exposure?
- How to edit and compose photos?
- How important it is to understand the filtering going on in social media and maintain a healthy and secure self-image.



The main tasks of the mobility were organized remotely – through completing the sent task descriptions individually and sharing the outcomes (as most schools were in lockdown), taking part in virtual meetings and participating in additional local activities organized when schools were open. This mobility also thoroughly addressed the theme of cultural clichés and efforts in art towards a more equal society. Several partners organized additional photography-related activities.

It was noteworthy that students exhibited fantastic creativity when working from home.

**You can find our list of inclusive and creative tasks here:**

<https://thedifferentcoloursofus.weebly.com/the-colours-of-photography.html>

**The games played during virtual meetings are also made available:**

<https://thedifferentcoloursofus.weebly.com/c4-virtual-games-and-activities.html>

*SOME FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS:*

(Oral discussions after the mobility)

- ✓ It was incredible how creative the students were. Some tasks seemed really complicated at first, but the students were so resourceful and delivered fantastic results.
- ✓ The students came to understand that we are all in the lockdown together – it was a comforting and uniting experience to see all the homes and rooms of



students across Europe learning from home.

- ✓ The international virtual lessons were a lot of fun and added momentum to the grind of daily remote learning.
  - ✓ Students liked the photography workshops organized and school – they learnt a lot of new useful skills.
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#### 4. Inclusion through literature, poetry, storytelling and drama

**Each culture is a story ready to be discovered, ready to be told.** The inclusive activities related to literature, poetry, biographies, story-telling and drama were spread across the entire project duration and integrated into lessons in each individual country. An additional project week focused on the stories of our cultural heritage was organized by Hexham Priory School. Each country introduced the cultural heritage of their area, children were able to learn new things and test their knowledge in quizzes and games.



The story of **Guy Fawkes** and the related Bonfire Night festivity was covered during an online lesson. The character of **Count Dracula** was investigated during the mobility in Romania. In Estonia, the local **Arvo Pärt** center was visited and the guests got to meet the noted composer. The virtual mobility week organized by France included tasks introducing the artists **Normal Rockwell** and **Banksy**. Not to mention the biographies and stories shared between teachers and students participating in the project.

#### Biographies as a tool of inclusive education<sup>2</sup>

In Waldorf schools, a method of teaching history through great biographies is cultivated in addition to traditional history-teaching. To do so, teachers find people in history who best characterize their culture and their time and the spirit of their age. Through these biographies, we help our students better understand the earlier times and the struggles and triumphs people have experienced as **a story told from a personal perspective is easier for students to relate to** than abstract history-telling.

**Biographies allow to tell the same story from different perspectives, allowing students to develop the skill of looking at problems from different points of view.** A teacher might, on one day, for example, tell the biography of Julius Caesar from the point of view of Brutus — a danger to the Senate and democracy in his unmitigated power and thrall over the people of Rome. The next day he might tell the same biography from the point of view of Marc Antony — Julius Caesar as wonderful leader, hero, friend of the people, brutally murdered by those closest to him. Or a teacher might even tell the biography of an age — The Age of the Enlightenment, for example — and tell of that age as if it were a human biography.

Who in your family was a personage to aspire to become? A grandfather who was especially funny, kind, thoughtful, dedicated, or loving? An aunt who was a nurse, a healer, much beloved by those she tended? A great-great-uncle who was instrumental in the Civil War over a century ago? All of these biographies are useful for young people. These biographies instruct, inspire, fascinate, and encourage the young. **Many have come before us, have lived and struggled, succeeded and failed, endured, and created a new life; new ideas, forged**

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<sup>2</sup> Summary from <https://www.waldorfpublishings.org/blogs/book-news/biographies-as-history-from-ages-twelve-and-older>





**new paths. All of these biographies remind teenagers that their sufferings help to build strength, that these times are not the worst that people have endured, and make people strong when met with courage.**

A selection of possible biographies and events to cover

#### *Grade 5*

Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Archimedes, Pythagoras, Demosthenes, Alcibiades

#### *Grade 6*

The first seven kings of Rome, Julius Caesar, Marcus Aurelius, Cicero, Brutus, Marc Anthony, Augustus, Spartacus, Constantine, Pliny, Nero

#### *Grade 7*

Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus, Copernicus, Ferdinand Magellan, Jacques Cartier, Johannes Kepler, Prince Henry the Navigator, Ptolemy, Samuel de Champlain, Tycho Brahe, Vasco da Gama, Sheng He

Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo, Raphael, Ghengis Khan, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare

Niccolo Machiavelli, Savonarola, Martin Luther, Henry VIII of England, Thomas Moore, Oliver Cromwell, Elizabeth I of England, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh

#### *Grade 8*

Guy Fawkes, Oliver Cromwell, Charles I, the Great Fire of London, William of Orange, Louis XIV, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, John Harrison, Eli Whitney, Lady Ishbel Godon Aberdeen, Sequoyah, Simon Bolivar, Benito Juarez, Edith Jessie Archibald, Mary Bibb, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Clara Barton

Bach, Handel, Mozart, Brahms, Liszt, Chopin, Fauré, L. Bernstein, Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, Arvo Pärt

Benjamin West, Joseph M.W. Turner, Eugene Delacroix, Tom Thompson, the Group of Seven

John Milton, William Blake, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, William Butler Yeats, Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, Mary Oliver

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### *The authors among us*

The project group of Erasmus+ “Different Colours of Us” included teachers who are authors in their own right. Teachers who publish their own literary work serve as great inspiration for their aspiring students.

Mathieu Leparquois from [Collège Charles Lemaître](#), France has published two English-language learning books, available on Amazon, for example.

“**Life is a Dream**”: [https://www.amazon.com/Life-is-a-dream/dp/2918373613/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crd=2CL7ICRJV1J1P&keywords=life+is+a+dream+leparquois&qid=1645553246&srefix=life+is+a+dream+leparquois%2Caps%2C164&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Life-is-a-dream/dp/2918373613/ref=sr_1_1?crd=2CL7ICRJV1J1P&keywords=life+is+a+dream+leparquois&qid=1645553246&srefix=life+is+a+dream+leparquois%2Caps%2C164&sr=8-1)

“**The Lifeboat**”: [https://www.amazon.com/The-Lifeboat/dp/2918373621/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?crd=8C1LS6OSU45D&keywords=Mathieu+Leparquois&qid=1645553095&srefix=mathieu+leparquois+%2Caps%2C144&sr=8-3](https://www.amazon.com/The-Lifeboat/dp/2918373621/ref=sr_1_3?crd=8C1LS6OSU45D&keywords=Mathieu+Leparquois&qid=1645553095&srefix=mathieu+leparquois+%2Caps%2C144&sr=8-3)

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Mathieu Leparquois was interviewed on the radio about his books twice. He also talked about how languages shape the education and future of young people and how the Erasmus+ program is a precious tool for encouraging European citizenship and the value of languages.

France Bleu : <https://www.francebleu.fr/emissions/les-normands-sont-formidables/normandie-caen/les-normands-sont-formidables-320>

RCF : A Fleur de Peau : <https://rcf.fr/culture-et-societe/a-fleur-de-peau?episode=203748>

### An inclusive approach to drama studies

An inclusive drama project is one that is carried out for the sake of what can be learned from it, rather than for the sake of theatre itself. The reason is that students can learn much more from working together on such a project than they can from classroom instruction. The main tool for such a project is the **class play** in which all students from the class participate and none is left out.



A class play is a thorough drama project in which students learn to **collaborate, project manage and share responsibility**. The roles in the play are carefully assigned according to pedagogical needs – the drama teacher considers the development needs in addition to the talents of each student. The students are also collectively responsible for the costume design and stage setup.

For further reading, please see: <https://www.amazon.com/Drama-Heart-Teaching-Steiner-Waldorf-Schools/dp/1782502696>



## 5. Dance and music as tools for inclusive education

In a way, we are ending where we should have started – as educators, we have to remember that our students are physical beings and they are only able to enjoy cooperation and engagement when in good physical shape with all of their physical needs taken care of. Our bodies were made to move to the rhythm of life. Music has played such an important role in the human experience throughout the millennia. It is therefore no surprise that students enjoyed compiling their playlists and working on introducing their favorite kind of music.

When you're a teenager, you may feel quite uncomfortable in your body. You get all dressed up for the school dance and then freeze up on the dancefloor. How to enjoy yourself to the fullest? How to dance like no one's watching when everyone seems to stare at you? Especially when you became a teenager while being stuck in isolation?

**The mobility to Estonia allowed us to try and test different activities on teenagers. These are our recommendations:**

- ✓ There were some clever people around in the olden times. Do not shy away from traditional dances. When you join together in a large circle or line up and move to the same beat, doing the same moves, you will have a fantastic time – guaranteed!
- ✓ Similarly, when you get a hall full of teens in front of a video screen doing a “Let’s Dance” routine, students will get to the groove and find the confidence to dance to their own beat later.
- ✓ Get your students working on your dance playlists collaboratively. Let them pick the theme of a dance party and decorate the hall. Make sure they are safe and on track – and get out of the way as much as possible.
- ✓ Do not neglect your body! Try out a new exciting class and find your own perfect workout. It is easier to find your own beat in life when your body is strong, flexible and healthy!
- ✓ Whenever possible, get your students together in bands and musical groups. Encourage your students to pick up a musical instrument and allow them to perform without pressure wherever they can – it’s a great tool of building self-confidence and developing creative self-expression.



**Our project gallery:**

<https://thedifferentcoloursofus.weebly.com/the-colours-of-dance-and-music.html>



## Thank You!

The project team of “The Different Colours of Us” wishes you best of luck with continuing your efforts towards a more inclusive school environment. Non-formal inclusive activities are a great supportive tool. We hope you find ideas and inspiration from our booklet, e-portfolios and website.

*Karin Merisalu, project coordinator (on behalf of the project team)*

