COSIM4U DEMOCRACY

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About Our Partners

PARTNERS:
1. Lepoglava municipality (Croatia)
2. NGO Asociacija Aktyvistai (Lithuania)
3. NGO Menteşe Youth Group (Turkey)
4. NGO NOOM (Croatia)
5. Kazlų Rūda municipality (Lithuania)
6. Mugla municipality (Turkey)

MAIN OBJECTIVES:
1. To improve social and political participation, reinforce dialogue between young people and decision makers.
2. Develop teamwork and political skills for   active citizenship and give the necessary tools to execute this on a practical level.
3. To make municipal decision making process more visible and see-through.

Results of The Project:

1. Council simulator for young people;
2. Young people will be politically more aware how to be involved in the decision making process;
3. Young people could participate in the field of politics in real life by knowing the main rules and practices used in the process;
4. The awareness and possibilities of decision making process will grow among the youth;
5. The feeling of empowerment and being a part of a local association is a important part of active and equal citizenship and these things will help young people in the future.

60 participants. They are local young people ages 15-20.

The simulation is conducted from 7 steps which 6 are workshop based group activities and one is council meeting simulation.

What We Aim

The aim is to involve young people in creative learning and doing in different roles in municipal decision-making through. Young people have moved away from the decision - making process and the aim is to involve young people as well produces youth-friendly tools that enable learning for municipal decision-making and the related protocol.

work & play

The council simulator project implements a dialogue between young people and decision - makers through social and political inclusion. The project consists of six different seminar meetings, which map the living conditions of local young people and reflect them on the objectives and values of the European Youth Program. During the project, young people plan and prepare a council statement that addresses the issues they put on the agenda themselves.

Guidelines

Job Duties

1st meeting:	Introduction, introduction to the strategic goals and values of the European Youth Program.
2nd meeting:	Living conditions of young people in Kazlų Rūda , discussion and group work, Kazlų Rūda municipal strategy, public relations and information. (Strategic Values Game)
3rd meeting:	The idea of participatory budgeting, municipal finance, municipal decision-making , work shop, expert lectures
4th meeting:	Progress of the simulation, groupwork, preparation of the agenda (consultation of experts)
5th meeting:	Discussion of agenda items in own groups (group work)
6th meeting:	Authorization simulation (meeting)
7th meeting:	Final summary, evaluation of the project

The Team

Karolis, Lukrecija, Tomas, Marija, Recai, Volkan, Tamara, and Mujde

Also: Kaišiadoriai region mayor adviser Audrius Narbutas, Kaunas city council
members - Tomas Žebuolis - created council simulation and were trainers for it

Kaunas city Council members Gediminas Vasiliauskas, Donatas Bacevičius helped to test simulation; Vaida Pranarauskaitė, Tadas Šalkauskas, Karolis Stirbys, Kamilė Cibulskaitė

Simulation (workshop)

1st meeting: introduction, introduction to the strategic goals and values of the European Youth Program

To ensure a high-quality project monitoring process, partners, including Karolis, Lukrecija, Tomas, Marija, Recai, Volkan, Tamara, and Mujde, held at least 5 online meetings before the project to clarify tasks, share good practices, select target youth and policy makers, and organize a council simulation program

The five-day simulation involved 60 participants, primarily youth aged 15-17 and 6 leaders aged 20-50. Most participants had no prior Erasmus+ experience and faced financial and geographical challenges. The group comprised 23 Lithuanians, 20 Turkish, and 17 Croatians, with a gender mix of 27 females and 31 males

Activities were designed using non-formal and informal education methods, through "active participation", "learning by doing," and "problem-solving" methodologies. During the simulation, the first day included name games, an expectations and fears activity

A Youthpass activity (competences and usage), documentation introduction and collection, signatures, and team- building games

The 2nd day featured a workshop on terminology related to the topic and country presentations on youth participation.

Co-funded by
the European Union

KAUNAS
2024

COUNCIL
SIMULATION
FOR YOUTH

08/06/2024-
14/06/2024
KAUNAS, LITHUANIA

AKTYVISTAI   ACTIVISTS

The 3rd day focused on debates, party creation, and election campaign activities

The 4th day covered participatory budgeting, municipal finance, decision-making activities, expert workshops, mayor elections simulation, and a cultural evening.

The 5th day included a meeting with real politicians and decision-makers, task preparation for the municipality simulation, and a historical and cultural tour in Kaunas. Also featured municipal simulation activities, elections, discussions, a Youthpass competences workshop, and overall evaluation. Each day included energizers, teamwork in national and international groups, evening reflections, and coordinator and leader meetings for daily improvements.

5 DAYS, 3 COUNTRIES, 6 PARTNERS, 60 PARTICIPANTS

Each day included energizers, teamwork in national and international groups, evening reflections, and coordinator and leader meetings for daily improvements. Stakeholders and local political decision-makers, including members of the Kaunas Youth Council, contributed to the project. Trainers such as Kaišiadoriai region mayor adviser Audrius Narbutas, Kaunas city council members - Karolis Stirbys, Tomas Žebuolis - created council simulation and were trainers for it; Kaunas city Council members Gediminas Vasiliauskas, Donatas Bacevičius helped to test simulation; Vaida Pranarauskaitė, Tadas Šalkauskas, Karolis Stirbys, Kamilė Cibulskaitė initiated a discussion with participants and shared their good youth politicians experience; all vice mayors mentioned above consulted and supported in simulation creation. Participants re-engaged in municipal decision-making through creative learning, improved democratic skills, received mentorship from decision-makers, enhanced critical thinking about political issues, gained knowledge of citizenship projects, increased involvement in these initiatives, developed teamwork and political skills, and were empowered to engage actively in their communities.

The Council Simulation Program

Step 1:   Planning and Preparation

Step 2:   Assign Roles and Responsibilities

Step 3:   Develop Agendas and Materials

Step 4:   Conduct Training Sessions

Step 5:   Simulation Execution

Step 6:   Debriefing and Evaluation

Step 7:   Follow-Up

Planning and Preparation

1. Define Objectives:

- **Clarify the Goals:** What is the core learning outcome for participants? Is it to understand the dynamics of local governance, to practice democratic decision-making, or to focus on problem-solving in a civic setting? Align the simulation with broader educational or community engagement goals.

- **Specific Themes:** Identify if specific issues like urban development, environmental policies, or public safety will be highlighted during the simulation. This can help guide the agenda and participant roles.

2. Identify Participants:

- **Target Audience:** Will the participants be students from specific grades (high school/university), adults from the community, or a mixed group? Determine the diversity of participants in terms of demographics, experience with civic matters, and level of knowledge about government processes.

- **Number of Participants:** Estimate how many participants are needed for a balanced representation of city council members, officials, and the public. Consider creating a registration or application process to manage interest.

3. Form Committees/Groups:

- **City Council Members:** Assign roles to represent mayor, council members, and city staff. Consider the political structure of your city council (e.g., city manager vs. strong-mayor systems).

- **Interest Groups and Citizens:** Divide participants into groups representing various community interests (e.g., business owners, environmental advocates, labor unions, local citizens) to simulate diverse perspectives during the meeting.

- **Advisory Committees:** If the simulation focuses on complex topics like budgeting or zoning, you may also want to create advisory committees or expert panels to support decision-making.

Planning and Preparation

4. Choose a Venue:

- **Location Requirements:** Choose a venue that fits the simulation's needs. It should resemble a council chamber with seating for participants, a public gallery, a podium for presentations, and technical facilities like microphones, projectors, or recording devices.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure the venue is accessible for all participants, including individuals with disabilities. Consider virtual participation options if necessary.

5. Set a Date and Time:

- **Convenient Scheduling:** Survey participants to find a time that works for most people. Avoid major holidays or community events that may reduce attendance.
- **Duration:** Plan for enough time to cover all agenda items, ensuring space for discussion, public participation, and a debrief session. Typically, simulations may last 2-3 hours or can be split over multiple sessions.

Assign Roles and Responsibilities

1. Council Members and Mayor:

- **Role Clarification:** Provide each participant with a detailed description of their role, outlining their powers, limitations, and expected conduct during the simulation. For example, the mayor or chairperson should be familiar with the role of moderating debates and facilitating votes.
- **Role Play:** Encourage participants to think like actual council members—balancing the interests of their constituents while considering broader citywide impacts.

2. Support Staff:

- **City Clerk:** The city clerk is responsible for managing the agenda, keeping official records, and assisting with procedural matters during the meeting. The role may include taking minutes and tracking votes.
- **Legal Advisor:** This role ensures that discussions and decisions align with legal guidelines, providing clarification if any participant is unsure of legal matters or procedures.
- **City Manager:** If applicable, the city manager serves as the head of the administrative branch, offering technical advice and ensuring council directives are feasible within budget and policy constraints.

3. Public and Interest Groups:

- **Role of Citizens:** Assign individuals to represent concerned citizens who bring up local issues during the public participation portion of the meeting.
- **Interest Groups:** These participants can represent business leaders, non-profits, or activist groups. Ensure their input represents a variety of perspectives (e.g., supporting or opposing specific agenda items).

Develop Agendas and Materials

1. Create an Agenda:

- **Realistic Topics:** Include items that would be discussed in a typical city council meeting, such as new ordinances, public infrastructure projects, or budgetary decisions. Ensure these issues are relevant to the participants and engaging.
- **Structure:** Follow a formal structure, starting with opening remarks, followed by individual agenda items, public comments, and closing remarks. Indicate time limits for each item to maintain schedule discipline.

2. Background Materials:

- **Comprehensive Resources:** Prepare detailed background notes on each agenda item, including reports, data, and analysis. These materials should be distributed well in advance to give participants time to prepare.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure materials are easy to understand, particularly for participants with limited knowledge of local government or technical issues.

3. Rules of Procedure:

- **Operational Guidelines:** Develop a simple guide outlining rules for motions, debates, voting procedures, and time limits for speakers. This helps keep the simulation structured and ensures everyone understands how decisions will be made.
- **Code of Conduct:** Include guidelines on respectful communication to ensure a productive and civil discussion, particularly during contentious debates.

Conduct Training Sessions

1. Orientation:

- **Overview:** Begin with a general orientation session for all participants, explaining the purpose of the simulation, the city council structure, and the flow of the meeting.
- **Interactive:** Incorporate interactive elements such as quizzes or role-playing exercises to help participants get comfortable with their roles and responsibilities.

2. Role-Specific Training:

- **Hands-On Training:** Provide separate sessions for specific groups (e.g., council members, support staff, interest groups) to dive deeper into their tasks. Council members should practice making motions, debating, and voting, while support staff should understand record-keeping and legal advisory duties.

Simulation Execution

1. Setup:

- **Council Chamber Setup:** Arrange tables and chairs to simulate a real council chamber, with designated seating for council members, public speakers, and media (if applicable).
- **Technical Requirements:** Test all microphones, speakers, and other technical equipment before the simulation to avoid disruptions during the event.

2. Opening the Meeting:

- **Call to Order:** The mayor or chairperson formally opens the meeting, reads the agenda, and establishes the rules of procedure.
- **Introductions:** Have participants briefly introduce their roles and affiliations to establish their perspectives and authority in the debate.

3. Debate and Discussion:

- **Moderated Debate:** Council members debate agenda items, asking questions, proposing amendments, and making motions. Ensure participants follow established parliamentary procedures (e.g., Robert's Rules of Order).
- **Conflict Resolution:** Encourage participants to handle disagreements respectfully, focusing on finding solutions or compromises.

4. Public Participation:

- **Public Comments:** Allocate time for citizens and interest groups to present their concerns or opinions. Encourage thoughtful engagement with the council's decisions.
- **Limited Time:** Set time limits for each speaker to ensure everyone has a chance to contribute.

Simulation Execution

5. Decision Making:

- **Voting:** After discussions, the council votes on each agenda item. Record the results and announce them clearly.
- **Consensus:** In cases where consensus is reached without formal voting, ensure participants understand how this process works.

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Post-Meeting Discussion:

- **Reflection:** Facilitate a group discussion on how the simulation went, what participants learned, and any unexpected challenges or outcomes.
- **Constructive Feedback:** Encourage participants to share both positive experiences and areas for improvement, focusing on how their roles contributed to the outcome.

2. Feedback Collection:

- **Surveys:** Distribute surveys asking participants about their learning experiences, enjoyment, and suggestions for future simulations. Include specific questions on what worked well and what could be refined.

3. Evaluation:

- **Overall Success:** Evaluate the success of the simulation based on participant feedback, the smoothness of the execution, and the depth of engagement in discussions. Identify what can be done differently for future sessions.

Follow-Up

1. Thank You Notes:

- **Appreciation:** Send personalized thank you notes to participants, volunteers, and sponsors, acknowledging their contributions to the success of the simulation.

2. Report:

- **Documentation:** Compile a report summarizing the simulation's outcomes, key discussion points, voting results, and lessons learned. Share this with participants and stakeholders.

3. Future Planning:

- **Continuous Improvement:** Use the feedback and evaluation to adjust and improve future simulations, perhaps incorporating new topics, digital tools, or expanded participant groups.

Provided Project Results:

- **Leaflet**

- **Project video**
  https://youtu.be/m_Krea978Uo?si=QAU9JynVlFxjU-k3

- **Photo exhibition of the simulation project**
- **Simulation game guide**
- **60 post on their personal social media about project from each participant 6 post in NGO social media**

Provided Project Results:

Stronger connection between 3 countries and 6 partners Impact on participants:

85% — Improved decision making skills

90% — Youth exchange helped to Collaborate as a group on a local and international level

90% — Improved verbal communication in English

80% — Improved social skills and self-esteem

85% — Inspired in active participation in political and social life

80% — Potentially will use the knowledge agined in private/professional life

90% — Experienced an increase in sense of belonging to the European Community and knowledge about it

85% — Improved knowledge about council elections and voting system

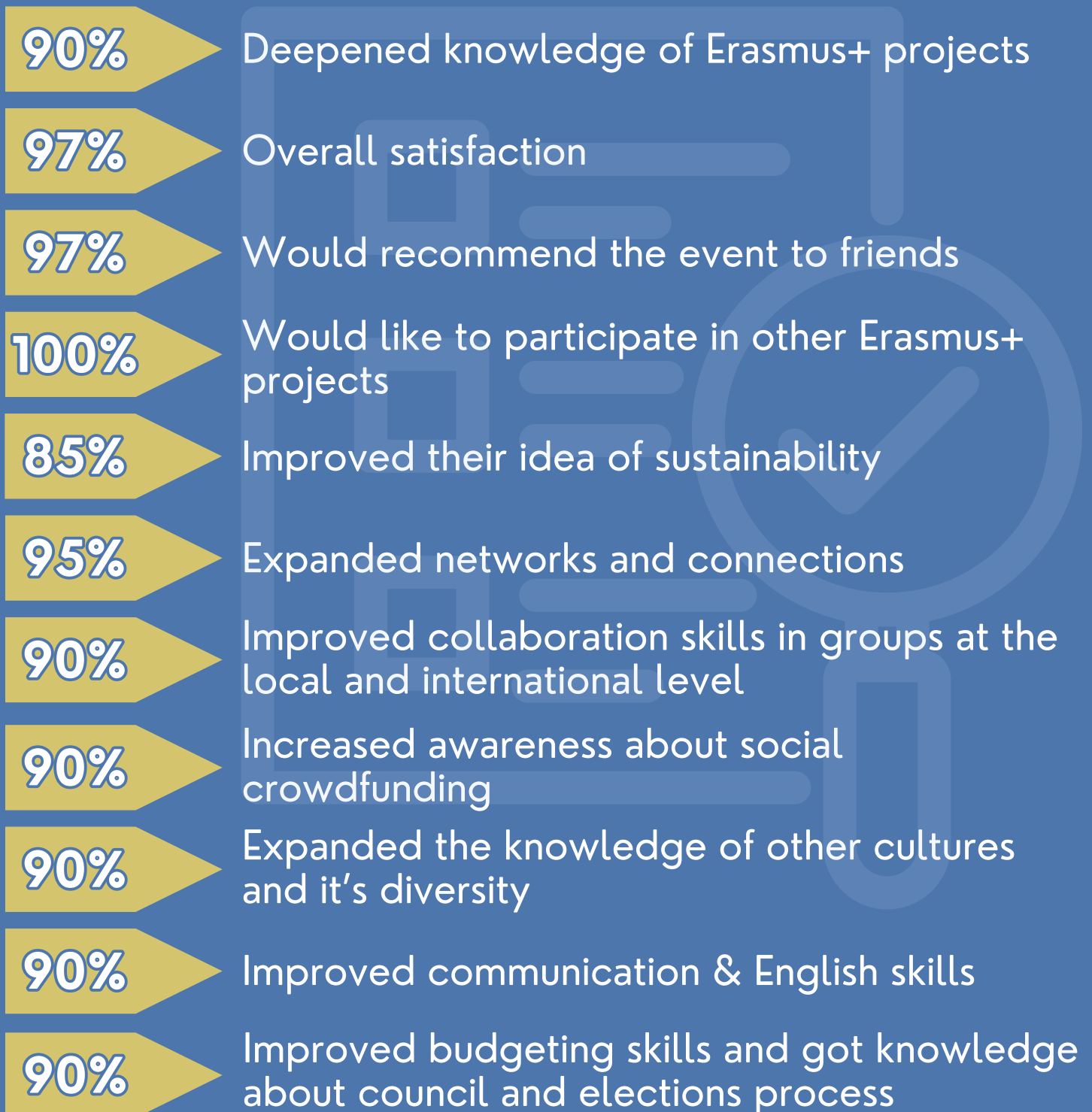**90%** — Improved basic knowledge about council functioning

85% — Improved digital skills and creativity

90% — Improved critical thinking skills

Provided Project Results:

Stronger connection between 3 countries and 6 partners Impact on participants:

90% Deepened knowledge of Erasmus+ projects

97% Overall satisfaction

97% Would recommend the event to friends

100% Would like to participate in other Erasmus+ projects

85% Improved their idea of sustainability

95% Expanded networks and connections

90% Improved collaboration skills in groups at the local and international level

90% Increased awareness about social crowdfunding

90% Expanded the knowledge of other cultures and it's diversity

90% Improved communication & English skills

90% Improved budgeting skills and got knowledge about council and elections process

Mobility Assessment as a YE quality measure

90% Comfortable environment

90% Relevance of the program

90% Appropriate work methods

85% Active participation

95% Communication

85% Organization

85% Facilities

85% Food

95% Trainers

Relevant topics adressed by COSIM4U

Democracy and inclusive democratic participation

Youth policy development

European identity, citizenship and values

PASS

After discussing it with our partners, we agreed to have each partner go through the same standard procedure:

- Participants were definite after receiving approval, and a meeting for orientation was scheduled with them.
- The duties and obligations of the group leaders were outlined before, during, and after the project.
- Participants signed an agreement.
- Under the guidance of the group leaders, participants readied themselves for the travel, geography, legal procedures, language, and activity components of the Youth Exchange.
- Prior to the activity, they purchased their airline tickets as well as health and travel insurance, which they picked up from the coordinator in accordance with their partnership agreement when they came to the activity location. Turkish participants required a visa in order to proceed with the legal process.
- They conducted research on the geography, language, culture, and social life of the host nation for geography, and each partner country participant produced a document outlining their own country's geography, culture, and social life.

The working methods
used in the project included

Online Meetings

Partners held multiple online meetings before the project to clarify tasks, share good practices, select target participants, and organize the simulation program.

Collaboration Tools

A folder was created for document storage, and a WhatsApp group was established for quick communication and coordination.

Zoom Sessions

Facilitated relationships between associations, created a stakeholder map, planned distribution and activity indicators, and reviewed most activities.

Non-Formal and Informal Education Methods

Activities were designed using "active participation," "learning by doing," and "problem-solving" methodologies.

Workshops and Simulations

Workshops on terminology, participatory budgeting, and municipal finance, as well as simulations of mayoral elections and council decision-making.

The working methods
used in the project included

Teamwork

Participants engaged in team-building games, debates, and group work in both national and international teams.

Expert Involvement

Trainers and local political decision-makers contributed to the project, guiding participants through simulations and discussions.

Daily Reflections

Evening reflections and daily meetings for coordinators and leaders to assess and improve the ongoing activities.

Questionnaires

Used to select motivated participants and assess their skills, experience, and expectations.

Activities

The planned activities were organized in a structured and sequential manner to ensure effective learning, engagement, and collaboration among participants.

Here's how they were organized:

1

1. Pre-Project Preparation

Online Meetings: Partners held at least five online meetings to clarify roles, share best practices, and select target youth and policymakers. They also organized the council simulation program.

Communication Channels: A cloud folder was established for document storage, and a WhatsApp group was created for quick communication among participants and organizers.

Zoom Sessions: These sessions were used to facilitate relationships between associations, create a stakeholder map, plan distribution and activity indicators, and review planned activities.

2

2. Participant Selection and Preparation

Questionnaires: Used to assess participants' motivation, language skills, project experience, expected contributions, familiarity with digital tools, and personal goals. This helped in selecting highly motivated and capable participants.

Information Pack: The host organization in Lithuania compiled a detailed information pack, including participant profiles, guidelines, accommodations, activity itinerary, and other essential details.

Activities

3

3. Simulation Program

Day 1:
Introduction Activities: Name games, an expectations and fears activity, and a Youthpass workshop (focused on competencies and usage).
Team Building: Team-building games to foster collaboration and rapport among participants.
Documentation and Signatures: Collection and introduction of necessary documentation.

Day 2:
Workshop on Terminology: A session to introduce and clarify terminology related to the project's topics.
Country Presentations: Participants gave presentations on youth participation in their respective countries.

Day 3:
Debates and Party Creation: Participants engaged in debates, formed political parties, and worked on election campaign activities.

Day 4:
Participatory Budgeting and Municipal Finance: Workshops on budgeting and financial decision-making in a municipal context.
Mayor Elections Simulation: Participants simulated mayoral elections, applying what they learned in previous sessions.
Cultural Evening: A social event to celebrate and share different cultures among participants.

Activities

3

Day 5:

Meeting with Politicians: Participants met with real politicians and decision-makers to gain insights and mentorship.

Task Preparation for Municipality Simulation: Participants prepared for the upcoming simulation activities.

Cultural and Historical Tour: A tour in Kaunas to explore the city's heritage.

Municipality Simulation Activities: Participants engaged in simulated municipal activities, including elections and discussions.

Youthpass Workshop: A session focused on evaluating and reflecting on the skills gained during the project.

Overall Evaluation: Participants and organizers evaluated the entire project, discussing successes and areas for improvement.

Activities

4

4. Daily Structure
Energizers: Short activities to boost energy and focus at the start of each day.
Teamwork: Participants worked in national and international groups to encourage collaboration and cross-cultural understanding.
Evening Reflections: Daily reflections were conducted to gather feedback and make adjustments as needed.
Coordinator and Leader Meetings: Daily meetings to review progress and implement improvements.

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5. Post-Project Activities
Dissemination: Partners were responsible for spreading the results and experiences through various channels, including social media and community events.
Follow-Up Communication: The WhatsApp group remained active for post-project communication, sharing experiences, and planning future activities.
This structured approach ensured that the activities were organized efficiently, allowing participants to gain valuable skills and experiences while contributing to the project's overall success.

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