

FRYSHUSET



Juvenia

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH INTERNATIONALITY AS A TOOL IN YOUTH WORK?

A manual for any youth workers and youth organizations, about to start using internationality as a tool in their own work.



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How to Get Started

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Neighbours Discovering Internationality Together!

This manual booklet was written as part of Erasmus+ project called Neighbours Discovering Internationality Together! (NDIT). The project was carried out between 1-1-2024 and 30-6-2025 by two partners: Juvenia Youth Research and Development Centre from Finland and Fryshuset from Sweden.

Internationality can be a very effective tool in youth work (as proven for example by the RAY network research on European Youth Programmes, www.researchyouth.net/). However, there are many youth work organizations and youth workers that lack the knowledge, skills, courage or other resources to use international activities in their work.

Typically, there are some organizations and youth workers who are very active with international activities and projects, but many more of those who would need support in taking their first steps in internationality. This similar recognized need in both Finland and Sweden led to the design of our NDIT project.

In the project, we focused specifically on two rural regions: Etelä-Savo in Finland and Kalmar in Sweden.

We brought together groups of Finnish and Swedish youth workers who didn't have a lot of previous experience in internationality. These two groups met each other in Finland in Spring 2024 and in Sweden in Autumn 2024.

Our goals for these meetings were:

- To teach the youth workers about the different international opportunities provided by the European Union (with Erasmus+ and ESC programmes).
- To give the youth workers a possibility for networking and peer learning with colleagues who work in a similar rural context (in Sweden and in Finland).
- To give the youth workers a practical understanding and skills to get started with internationality in their own work and help them find project ideas suited for their work and organization

We wanted to collect all the tips and knowledge we gained throughout the NDIT project into this manual.

We hope it will help other youth workers and organizations to also get excited about internationality and start their own projects and activities!



Introduction of Authors

Juvenia Youth Research and Development Centre, Finland

Juvenia is part of South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences. We employ more than 30 researchers and developer experts who implement local, national and international research and development projects that focus on multidisciplinary youth research, as well as the development and evaluation of youth services and methods in the youth field. During its years of operation, Juvenia has implemented more than 80 research, development and training projects related to young people.

Our goal in Juvenia is to support equal and participatory youth by combining effective research and development work.

Our activities focus on strengthening young people's inclusion, citizenship and communality, and preventing marginalization. In the youth sector, we promote, among other things, environmental awareness, digitalization and internationalization. Juvenia is actively working with Erasmus+ programme and seeks to support the international capacity of youth organisations. We are an active member of Eurodesk network (working as an Eurodesk multiplier).

Fryshuset, Sweden

Fryshuset provides opportunities for young people to discover their passion, develop their innate abilities and help them realize their full potential, and for society to hear and consider their voice. We work in the following areas: Youth Culture, Education, Social Work, Work and Entrepreneurship.

We offer young people activities that are based on the motivation that comes from within, driven simply out of young people's desires and pleasures.

By involving young people in different processes and providing them with tools and knowledge we promote young people's empowerment in helping them shape their own future. The organization strives to achieve this by providing educational, employment and labor market programs, support to youth initiatives, information to youth and possibilities for quality spending of free time, as well as providing programmes dealing with the prevention of various types of destructive behavior, violent extremism and social exclusion.

Fryshuset is actively working on Erasmus+ partnerships as well as the European Solidarity Corps program. Fryshuset has Erasmus+ Accreditation as well as European Solidarity Corps Accreditation and a hosting, coordinating, and sending organization for the whole period of the program (up to 2027). In light of promoting youth mobility opportunities, Fryshuset is a Eurodesk local contact center (Eurodesk multiplier) that provides information and advises young people on European mobility opportunities. Fryshuset has international partnerships in many countries abroad such as Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, USA, South Korea, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Senegal, Cameroon, South Africa, Hungary, Armenia, and Kenya where we work with youth empowerment and inclusion.

About This Booklet

As we previously stated, internationality can be a very valuable tool in youth work. This manual booklet is meant for any youth workers and youth organizations that are curious about starting to use internationality as a tool in their own work. From these pages, you will find a lot of useful information, tips on how to find the idea for your first international activity, some examples from the youth workers who participated in the NDIIT project, as well as some useful websites and other resources.

In our NDIIT project, we focused specifically on youth work in more rural regions

(such as Etelä-Savo in Finland and Kalmar in Sweden), so the examples in this booklet come from these areas.

However, a lot of the information provided in the booklet is helpful and usable for youth workers and youth organizations in any context.

If you are a complete newcomer to internationality, we wish you welcome!

We hope this booklet will give you some step-by-step advice on how to find the right way to start using internationality in your own work. If you already have some previous experience with internationality, we hope you find from this booklet some new knowledge and ideas on how to maybe expand your international activities and perhaps try something new. Enjoy reading and best of luck on finding some inspiration!



Checklist:

Getting Started with International Activities

How can you get started with finding the right first step in using internationality as a tool in your own youth work? Here's a checklist of practical steps and points of view you should consider when you are trying to find the right approach for the first international activity or project in your organization and work!

1. Define your purpose

Why do you want to start doing international activities? Identify your goals and motivation — whether it's promoting cultural understanding, offering young people new perspectives and opportunities, or building networks and connections for your organization. Having a clear purpose from the start will guide your planning. With internationality, there are many different options available, so it's also a good idea to familiarize yourself with different funding programs like Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps to see what possibilities they can offer.

2. Know your target group

Who are the young people you work with? Understand their interests, needs, fears, and strengths. Choose international activities that are relevant and motivating for them. If you are unsure, you can always ask young people what they wish to gain from internationality!

3. Get support from your organization

You shouldn't be alone, everyone needs backup. Make sure your employer, whether it's a municipality, an association or some other organization, understands and supports your vision. Planning and starting international projects or activities takes up working hours (even more so, if you are doing it for the first time!), so the discussion about the resources and goals with your organization helps to make internationality a sustainable part of your work. You should also involve as many colleagues as possible in the planning. This way you have more ideas and potentially more excited co-workers who will help to make your first international activity real!

4. Involve the young people in planning

If possible, it's a good idea to co-create your idea for the first activity together with young people. This way you will ensure that your idea is relevant for them, and they will also have a stronger motivation to be part of it! International projects and activities are great learning opportunities for young people – and this includes also the preparation and planning phase.

5. Take advantage of the experience of other people

There's many organizations and youth workers who have done it before! You don't need to find out all the answers by yourself. If you know someone has done a lot of international youth work before, bravely reach out to them and ask for tips. Usually, people are happy to help you out in getting started. Also, in this manual you will find information about Eurodesk multipliers – organizations that specifically share information and advice about international opportunities for young people and youth work. Be sure to check them out, there might even be an Eurodesk multiplier organization quite near you!

6. Remember to celebrate and share your successes!

When you manage to get started with your international activity, tell your story to others! Share photos, experiences, and outcomes with your community. It builds local pride, inspires others, and can help secure more support for future projects and activities.

Planning Exercise:

Garden of International Activities

Purpose:

This creative planning exercise helps youth workers design their first international activity in a visual and collaborative way. You can do this by yourself or together with your colleagues. You can also do this together with young people who you work with, to get also their ideas and perspective on what your first international activity should be like.

Materials Needed:

- Large paper trees (without leaves), one per participant group
- Markers or pens
- A large wall for the paper trees
- Post-it notes (multiple colours recommended)
- Tape

Group Size:

Ideal for 4–20 participants. Everyone can work individually or participants can form small groups.

Below you can find step-by-step instructions for facilitating the exercise.



1. Set the Scene (5 minutes)

Welcome the participants and introduce the idea of planning international activities. Explain that each group will create a “tree” that symbolizes the plan for their future international activity.

2. Distribute Materials (5 minutes)

Give each participant a tree template. Stick the trees on the wall — leave space between them so they can grow with ideas!

3. Answer the Core Questions (15–20 minutes)

Ask participants to reflect on and write the answers to the following three guiding questions directly on the tree trunk:

- What do you want to do?
(Brief description of their idea for an international activity)
- For whom is this activity?
(Define your target group)
- Why do you want to do it?
(Explain the goal or motivation)

Encourage discussion within the groups as they clarify their intentions.

4. Add the Leaves – Planning the Details (20–30 minutes)

Provide participants with post-it notes (these will be the “leaves” of the tree). Ask them to write down the specific details needed to make the activity happen, one per post-it. These may include for example:

- Practical steps
(e.g., applying for funding, booking venues)
- Important dates and deadlines
- People or partners involved
- Resources or tools needed
- Any other relevant details

Instruct participants to place the post-it notes on the branches of their tree, visually “growing” their activity plan.

5. Gallery Walk – Learning from Each Other (15–20 minutes)

Once all trees are completed, invite participants to walk around the room and explore the trees created by others. Encourage them to take notes, ask questions, or discuss ideas with their peers. This is a moment to exchange inspiration.

6. Group Reflection (10–15 minutes)

Bring the group together to debrief. Possible guiding questions:

- What common themes did you notice?
- Did any new ideas or connections emerge?
- What support might be needed to make these activities a reality?



Tips for Facilitator:

- Encourage creativity—trees don't have to look perfect!
- Use different coloured post-it notes to make “the garden of trees” look pretty!
- If time allows, offer a short break between planning and the gallery walk to let ideas settle.
- Have extra materials ready for additions during the gallery walk.



My international activity

What I want to do?

For who? What is my target group?

Why I want to do the activity? What is my goal?



Experiences from participants of Neighbours Discovering Internationality Together

Minna Lunkka

Managing Director,
Uutta Elämää Group ry, Finland



Describe shortly what kind of youth work you do.

For the most part, Uutta Elämää Group organizes workshop activities and rehabilitative work training for unemployed young people aged 18-29 in Mikkeli, Finland.

What international activity are you planning to use in your youth work?

Just increasing international opportunities in the first place for young people, because in our region there is not a lot, especially for our target group. We are interested in trying youth exchanges and sending youth as ESC volunteers.

“Some trainings and seminars are an amazing opportunity for our staff to gain new skills, networks and capacity.”

Like for example I personally participated in a youth exchange training in Rome, and it was an incredible experience! As an organization, we could potentially be interested in joining bigger KA2 development project if we find the right topic and partners.

Why do you want to do the international activity? What do you hope to get out from it?

We want to offer new kinds of opportunities for youth, and we also want to try out new things. It would be amazing to enable an exchange for young people. And like I said before, these would be new opportunities in our region.

What are the biggest challenges for you starting this international activity and how do you overcome them?

One big question is what activity is suitable for our target group, because they might be facing different kinds of challenges. And if they are willing to commit enough, because some international projects might take longer time. Also, speaking English can be challenging both for young people and our staff, including myself. I guess the best way to overcome these is trying to be brave and challenge yourself to new experiences. Also, it's important to find just the right type of activity for the organization and the target group, that helps a lot.

What are your best hints for other youth workers who are thinking about their first international activity?

“Just be brave and go for it!”

I wouldn't have believed myself that I would be able to do these things, like join trainings in international groups and speak English in them, but challenging myself to do it was definitely worth it. Also, there's a lot of people who have experience in internationality, so my hint would be to ask help and advice from them.

Siiri Paavilainen

Executive Director, Mikkelin 4H, Finland



Describe shortly what kind of youth work you do.

Our NGO organizes leisure time activities for children and young people locally here in Mikkelä. Big topics are also youth entrepreneurship and employability, we try to encourage young people with their own ideas and help them to develop their skills.

What international activity are you planning to use in your youth work?

We are very excited about youth exchanges! We want both send our young people abroad and also host young people from different countries here in Finland. Also, just in general, we want to offer more possibilities for internationality for local youth.

Why do you want to do the international activity?

What do you hope to get out from it?

Our main motivation comes from the fact that in our area there's very little possibilities for young people if they are interested in internationality. We also think the international activities bring variety to our own work and they are a great way to try something new, along the activities that we already do regularly with young people.

What are the biggest challenges for you starting this international activity and how do you overcome them?

Well, at least in our case internationality means starting something new that we haven't done before, so it takes time and we need to learn new things. Arranging enough time for it can be tricky, so it's important to make sure you have long enough time to plan things properly. Examples from other organizations help a lot, but you really need to take time to find the right way to use internationality in YOUR organization.

What are your best hints for other youth workers who are thinking about their first international activity?

I would recommend starting by getting a personal experience from internationality, for example by going to an Erasmus+ training or to some exchange.

“When you get the feeling of internationality yourself, it's much easier to think about how you can get young people excited about it”

And also how you can use it in your work. By going for that first experience you get everything: information, international feeling and partners! You should also ask from more experienced people for help, for example using Eurodesk contact people!

Christopher Udden Arenander

KAA officer and coordinator at the Department of Learning and Culture, Nybro Municipality.



Describe shortly what kind of youth work you do.

I work with youth aged 16–20 who are not in education or employment, coordinating and developing initiatives under the Municipal Activity Responsibility (KAA). I plan, map, and evaluate these initiatives using evidence-based methods like Empowerment and Motivational Interviewing (MI). I collaborate closely with schools, social services, psychiatry, employment offices, and various public and private sectors.

What international activity are you planning to use in your youth work?

My aim is to gain experiences and insights from international programs and networking to inspire the youth I work with. Engaging in international collaborations and exchanges helps me learn best practices from other countries, fostering relationships with professionals globally. I also seek effective methods for involving youth in EU projects, increasing their awareness of international opportunities.

Why do you want to do the international activity? What do you hope to get out from it?

Participating internationally will deepen my understanding of systems supporting youth development. Networking internationally provides valuable insights

and collaborations beneficial to youth and society. The knowledge I gain enables me to introduce successful international practices, increasing young people's engagement and empowering them to pursue international opportunities.

What are the biggest challenges for you starting this international activity and how do you overcome them?

Here are two identified potential challenges, along with strategies for overcoming them:

Potential Challenges

- **Language barriers:** Communication with international partners may be hindered by language barriers, potentially causing misunderstandings and ineffective coordination.
- **Motivation and engagement:** Maintaining young people's motivation and engagement in long-term international projects can be challenging.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

- **Language barriers:** Employ translation and interpretation services as needed and encourage language learning among staff and youth to enhance communication skills.
- **Motivation and engagement:**

“Involve youth in the planning process”

while setting clear goals and milestones, and providing incentives and rewards to sustain their interest and participation.

What are your best hints for other youth workers who are thinking about their first international activity?

My primary recommendation is to consult colleagues at your workplace and partners, and to search online for information about international exchange opportunities for youth workers. Both Fryshuset and MUCF have extensive experience with international exchanges; seeking information from them or contacting them directly can hopefully provide valuable support. There is significant demand for youth workers knowledgeable about international work, and there are numerous opportunities with substantial EU funding for these projects. Take the chance to learn more—it has been highly rewarding for me!

Mats Gröhn Ristic

Support person at Fryshuset in Nybro.



Describe shortly what kind of youth work you do.

In my work, I work with the target group of young people and young adults between 16 and 29 years old. These young people lack employment and school and have been unemployed for at least 6 months.

In my role at Fryshuset, I map, manage, plan, coordinate and evaluate initiatives for young people. I use methodological materials. These materials, assessments and assessments are mainly based on evidence-based methods such as Empowerment and Motivational Interviewing (MI).

What international activity are you planning to use in your youth work?

I mainly collaborate with social services, psychiatry, labour market units, employment services, social insurance offices, social insurance, Fryshuset Nybro meeting place, have a high degree of collaboration with vocational schools in both the municipal and private sectors.

Why do you want to do the international activity? What do you hope to get out from it?

My goal is to gain insights that can inspire and influence the young people I work with to discover what exists within. Participating in international development programmes and networking gives me an opportunity to increase my understanding of the different systems that support young people's development and integration, as well as to learn from other countries. This includes creating relationships with professionals in the same field globally, which can lead to collaborative projects and exchanges that benefit both youth and society at large.

In the future, I see that I, together with my colleagues in Fryshuset, can build up an international EU network where these young people can break their non-self-chosen isolation by carrying out various forms of projects that in the long run strengthen and boost the individual's ability to become self-sufficient.

What are the biggest challenges for you starting this international activity and how do you overcome them?

The biggest challenges I see are language barriers and young people's belief in themselves.

- I believe that the language barrier can be bridged through pedagogically thought-out meetings between young people/young adults.
- It will be difficult to build up such safe conditions that young people dare to go.

What are your best hints for other youth workers who are thinking about their first international activity?

“The first international activity should be done in cooperation with a more experienced partner.”

Also to use their colleagues as support and the national organization.



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Practical tools, websites & resources

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What is Eurodesk?

Eurodesk is a comprehensive information service aimed at young people and those who work with them, such as youth workers and educators. Established in 1990, Eurodesk operates under the framework of the Erasmus+ program, providing information about learning mobility opportunities. The service is committed to raising awareness among the youth about the various European programs available to them, covering education, training, employment, and volunteering opportunities.

Mission and Goals

Eurodesk's primary mission is to foster and facilitate the active participation of young people in society through information and guidance. By offering access to European and international mobility programs,

Eurodesk aims to empower youth, providing them with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed decisions about their future.

The goals include:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date information about European opportunities
- Encouraging and assisting young people to participate in international learning experiences
- Supporting youth workers and organizations in their mission to guide young people

How to Access Eurodesk Services

Eurodesk services are available online and offline, through a wide network of local multipliers and information points spread across Europe. Here are the steps to find and utilize Eurodesk services:

1. **Visit the Eurodesk Website.** To start, visit the official Eurodesk website at www.eurodesk.eu. The website is a rich resource of information, offering details about various European programs, funding opportunities, and international events. It also features a search tool to find local Eurodesk centers.

2. **Use the Eurodesk Opportunity Finder.** The Opportunity Finder is a unique tool on the Eurodesk website that helps young people discover opportunities tailored to their needs and interests. By entering specific criteria such as age, country, and type of activity (e.g., volunteering, training), users can find relevant programs and opportunities.
3. **Connect with Local Eurodesk Multipliers** (such as Fryshuset and Juvenia).

Local Multipliers

Eurodesk works with a network of local multipliers, which are organizations and youth centers that provide personalized services and support. To find a local multiplier:

1. Go to the Eurodesk website and click on the “Find Eurodesk Near You” section.
2. Enter your location to get a list of nearby Eurodesk offices and multipliers. These local points can offer face-to-face consultations, workshops, and information sessions to help you navigate various European programs.
3. Contact Eurodesk Directly. If you have specific questions or need further guidance, you can contact Eurodesk directly via email or phone. Contact information is available on the Eurodesk website. Many Eurodesk offices also have social media profiles where they share updates and respond to inquiries.
4. Attend Eurodesk Events and Workshops. Eurodesk regularly organizes events, workshops, and webinars aimed at informing and engaging young people. These events are great opportunities to learn more about European mobility programs, meet other young people, and network with professionals.

Benefits of Using Eurodesk

Utilizing Eurodesk services offers numerous benefits:

- **Access to Reliable Information:** Eurodesk provides verified and up-to-date information about European opportunities.
- **Personalized Guidance:** Local multipliers offer tailored advice and support based on individual needs.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Events and workshops provide platforms to connect with like-minded individuals and professionals.
- **Enhanced Mobility:** By participating in European programs, young people can gain valuable international experience and skills.

Conclusion

Eurodesk is a vital resource for young people and youth workers looking to explore and participate in European programs. By providing comprehensive information and personalized support,

Eurodesk empowers youth to take advantage of international opportunities, enhancing their personal and professional development.

Whether you're looking for educational programs, volunteering opportunities, or training workshops, Eurodesk can guide you every step of the way.



ESC - European Solidarity Corps

What is ESC?

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) is a European Union initiative that offers young people the opportunity to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities and people across Europe.

The program focuses on solidarity, civic engagement, and international cooperation, and it's designed for young people aged 18 to 30.

This program opens up a world of opportunities for young people eager to make a difference and gain valuable experiences.

How to Find Information about ESC

Finding information about the ESC is easy with these practical tips and resources:

1. Visit the Official ESC Website

The official European Solidarity Corps website youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en is your go-to source for comprehensive information. Here, you can:

- Learn about the different types of opportunities available.
- Find out how to apply and what the requirements are.
- Read testimonials from past participants.
- Discover upcoming events and deadlines.

2. Contact Your National Agency

Every EU member state has a National Agency that manages ESC activities. They can provide personalized guidance and answer any questions you might have. Find your National Agency's contact details on the ESC website.

3. Connect with Local Eurodesk Multipliers

Local Eurodesk multipliers offer personalized support, answer questions, and help you navigate ESC opportunities in your community.

4. Join ESC Social Media Channels

Stay updated by following the ESC on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These channels often share news, stories, and opportunities, and they are a great way to connect with other young people interested in ESC.

5. Attend Information Sessions and Workshops

Many organizations and institutions host information sessions and workshops about the ESC. These events are perfect for getting detailed insights, asking questions, and meeting other interested individuals. Check with local youth centers, universities, or Eurodesk multipliers for upcoming events.

6. Explore European Youth Portal

The European Youth Portal youth.europa.eu/home_en is another valuable resource that offers detailed information about ESC and other European programs. It provides articles, FAQs, and links to relevant resources.

7. Read Participant Stories and Blogs

Hearing from past participants can give you a real sense of what to expect. Look for blogs, vlogs, and testimonials online. Many participants share their journeys, tips, and experiences on platforms like YouTube, Medium, and personal blogs.

What is Salto?

Salto, which stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities, is a network of resource centers that provide support, training, and resources for youth work and the European youth programs. Salto aims to enhance the quality of youth work and promote non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue. It operates within the framework of the European Commission's Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programs.

Finding Information as a Youth Worker

If you work with young people and are interested in Salto, there are several resources available to help you integrate Salto's opportunities into your work:

1. Salto Website

Visit the Salto resource centres' websites (www.salto-youth.net/rc/) to access a wealth of information, including training materials, toolkits, and best practices. The websites also provide information on how to apply for training courses and events.

2. Professional Networks

Join professional networks and forums for youth workers, where you can share experiences, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects related to Salto. These networks often host webinars, conferences, and workshops that can enhance your knowledge and skills.

3. Educational Institutions

Many universities and educational institutions partner with Salto and can provide valuable resources and support. Contact relevant departments at these institutions for information on how to collaborate with Salto.

4. National Agencies

Get in touch with your country's National Agency for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programs. They can provide detailed information about Salto's activities and how to incorporate them into your youth work.

5. Online Platforms

Explore online platforms dedicated to youth work and non-formal education. These platforms often feature articles, case studies, and resources related to Salto's initiatives.

Conclusion

By leveraging these resources, both young people and youth workers can access comprehensive information about Salto and

take advantage of the numerous opportunities it offers for learning, growth, and international collaboration.

Star of Europe

What is Star of Europe?

Star of Europe is an initiative aimed at providing young people and youth workers with valuable educational and cultural exchange opportunities within Europe. It focuses on promoting solidarity, inclusion, and inter-cultural dialogue through various projects and activities.

How to find information?

To find out more about Star of Europe, consider these resources:

- **Official Website:** Visit the official Star of Europe website (starofeurope.eu) for comprehensive details on programs, projects, and application processes.
- **SALTO Platform:**
www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/star-of-europe-learn-how-to-make-real-youth-exchange.12675/
- **Social Media:** Follow Star of Europe on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay updated on the latest news, events, and success stories.
- **Community Networks:** Join online forums and community groups where past and current participants share their experiences and offer advice.
- **Local Youth Centers:** Contact local youth centers or Eurodesk multipliers, who can provide personalized guidance and information on how to get involved with Star of Europe.

