

# Project Report

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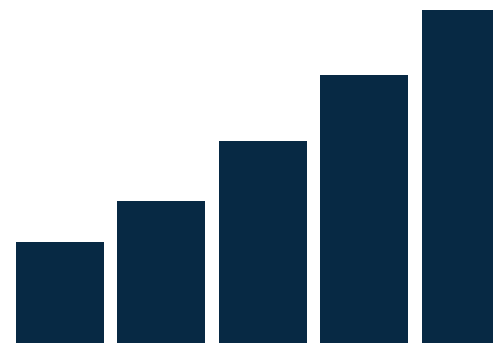
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# Introduction

The Together We Rise project was designed under the Erasmus+ DiscoverEU – Inclusion Action programme, with the aim of promoting equal opportunities in access to European mobility, non-formal learning and civic participation of young people with fewer opportunities. Implemented by the Terras do Ave School Group, in partnership with YUPI – Association for Community Development, the project responded to concrete needs identified in the territory, marked by socioeconomic vulnerabilities, reduced international experience, geographical barriers and emotional fragilities of a significant part of the young people involved.

The project's vision was based on mobility as an educational and transformative tool, capable of strengthening social inclusion, personal development and a sense of European belonging. Through real travel experiences, intercultural contact and learning through discovery, the project sought to empower young people to become more autonomous, confident and participatory, while valuing diversity, environmental sustainability and active citizenship.

The overall objectives of Together We Rise focused on:

- Promote social inclusion, ensuring the effective participation of young people with fewer opportunities, through financial support, close monitoring and methodologies adapted to their needs;
- Strengthen personal and social development, stimulating autonomy, self-confidence, individual responsibility and interpersonal skills;
- Developing key competences for the future, with a focus on digital literacy, European awareness, intercultural communication and the ability to adapt to new contexts
- To stimulate European citizenship and civic participation by promoting knowledge of the European institutions, democratic values and possibilities for youth involvement;
- Raise awareness of environmental sustainability, encouraging responsible mobility practices and critical reflection on environmental challenges and sustainable solutions.

These objectives were operationalised through a coherent set of preparedness, mobility and evaluation activities, organised into four thematic axes – Leading the Way, Building Bridges, Future Ready and Sustainable Solutions – ensuring alignment with the horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ programme and producing consistent impacts on both participants and the beneficiary organisation.

# Project Rationale

The Together We Rise project was developed within the scope of the DiscoverEU Action – Inclusion of the Erasmus+ programme, with the **central objective of promoting equal opportunities** in access to European mobility and meaningful learning experiences for young people with fewer opportunities. The project was based on the conviction that international mobility is a privileged educational tool for personal, social and civic development, particularly relevant for young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

The objectives of the project were clearly oriented towards the inclusion and empowerment of participants, highlighting, firstly, **the promotion of equitable access to European mobility**, through the elimination of financial, logistical and emotional barriers that usually limit the participation of young people with fewer opportunities. At the same time, the project aimed **to strengthen personal autonomy and self-confidence**, allowing participants to develop skills in travel management, decision-making, problem-solving and adaptation to new and culturally diverse contexts.

Another structuring objective was the **development of personal, social and intercultural skills**, which are fundamental for active inclusion in society. Through direct contact with different European realities, the project sought **to foster tolerance, respect for diversity, intercultural communication and a sense of belonging to the European Union**. The Together We Rise project also aimed **to strengthen digital literacy** and preparation for future challenges, promoting the autonomous and responsible use of digital tools associated with mobility, communication and daily management.

Additionally, the project aimed **to stimulate European citizenship and civic participation**, promoting knowledge of democratic values, the rights and duties of European citizens and opportunities for youth involvement. The environmental **sustainability dimension** was also a cross-cutting objective, encouraging responsible mobility practices, critical reflection on environmental challenges and the adoption of more sustainable behaviours.

With regard **to the benefits for participants with fewer opportunities**, the results showed significant impacts at the personal, social and educational levels. There was a **clear increase in self-esteem, personal confidence and perception of one's abilities**, as well as a greater **motivation for learning and active participation in educational and community contexts**. The mobility experience also contributed to the **reduction of social isolation**, the **expansion of relationship networks** and the **reinforcement of the feeling of inclusion and individual appreciation**.

Participants acquired transferable skills for their future path, namely **greater autonomy in international mobility contexts, improved digital literacy, greater intercultural openness** and the ability to adapt to new environments. In several cases, the experience has also contributed to the redefinition of academic and professional expectations and to a greater interest in future opportunities for mobility, volunteering and civic participation.

The Together We Rise project **consistently fulfilled its objectives**, providing **participants with fewer opportunities** with a transformative European experience, with lasting impacts on their personal, social and civic development, and **affirming international mobility as an effective tool for inclusion, empowerment and building active European citizenship**.

# Project Details

The implementation of the *Together We Rise project* was based on a **clear and structured breakdown of activities**, organised into four complementary thematic axes – *Leading the Way, Building Bridges, Future Ready* and *Sustainable Solutions*. This organisation ensured the pedagogical coherence of the project, the progressivity of learning and alignment with the horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ DiscoverEU programme, while ensuring effective management and active participation of young people in all phases of the project.

Each axis corresponded to a different mobility activity, involving small groups of young people with fewer opportunities, accompanied by responsible adults. This methodological option enabled a close and individualized follow-up, facilitating the adaptation of the rhythms, contents and methodologies to the specific needs of the participants. The activities integrated moments of preparation, implementation and evaluation in an articulated way, using methodologies of non-formal education, experiential learning and structured reflection.

The **support provided to young people with fewer opportunities** was ensured continuously and intentionally throughout the project. From the selection phase, objective and transparent criteria were applied that privileged young people in vulnerable situations, namely beneficiaries of School Social Support, young people with little experience of international mobility, emotional fragilities or geographical barriers. The selection process was conducted by a multidisciplinary committee, ensuring equity, impartiality and a focus on inclusion.

At the financial level, the project used **inclusion support mechanisms**, ensuring full coverage of travel, accommodation, food and other costs associated with mobility. This support also made it possible to respond to specific individual needs, through the acquisition of essential goods and appropriate materials, eliminating economic constraints and promoting equal conditions among all participants.

At the same time, close **pedagogical and emotional monitoring** was guaranteed, through the permanent presence of companions, the holding of thematic, logistical and emotional preparation sessions and the use of continuous monitoring tools, such as the *Daily Reports*. These mechanisms have made it possible to identify difficulties early, adjust support strategies and strengthen the well-being, confidence and security of young people, particularly those with greater fragility.

The activities were designed in an **accessible, inclusive and participatory** way, using small group work, adaptation of content and gradual promotion of autonomy. Young people were encouraged to take an active role in the organization, reflection and evaluation of the activities, reinforcing the sense of belonging, responsibility and personal appreciation.

Thus, the distribution of activities and the support provided to young people with fewer opportunities under the *Together We Rise project* reflected a structured, inclusive and focused approach to individual needs, ensuring conditions for equal participation, adequate monitoring and a significant educational impact, in full line with the objectives and quality standards of the Erasmus+ DiscoverEU programme.

# Project Management

The management of the *Together We Rise* project was developed based on a structured, participatory and continuous model, oriented towards the quality of implementation, the safety of mobilities and the active involvement of key stakeholders – young participants, companions and partners – throughout all phases of the project. The general coordination was ensured by the **Terras do Ave School Group**, in close coordination with **YUPI – Association for Community Development**, as a strategic partner of the project.

From the planning stage, clear responsibilities were defined between the coordination team, the companions and YUPI, as well as operational procedures, decision-making mechanisms and effective communication channels. This articulation ensured an implementation consistent with the project's objectives, while ensuring flexibility to respond to unforeseen events of a logistical or operational nature, without compromising the pedagogical, inclusive and security dimension.

The involvement of **the young participants** was actively and progressively promoted. Before the mobilities, the young people participated in thematic, logistical and emotional preparation sessions, promoted by the coordinating team with the contribution of YUPI, in which the objectives of the project, the operating rules, the safety procedures and the expectations of participation were clarified. These sessions contributed to strengthening trust, autonomy and a sense of belonging to the project, and were particularly relevant for young people with fewer opportunities. During the mobilities, participants were encouraged to take an active role in daily management, group organization, practical decision-making and reflection on the learnings made, promoting competences of responsibility, cooperation and leadership.

The use of continuous monitoring tools, such as the **Daily Reports**, was a central element of the engagement strategy. These allowed the collection of daily information on learning, challenges and emotional well-being, while functioning as a monitoring and structured reflection tool. The regular analysis of these records, carried out by the monitoring team in conjunction with the coordination and YUPI, made it possible to adjust support strategies in an immediate and personalized way, ensuring an adequate response to the individual needs of the participants.

The **companions** played a key role in the management and implementation of the project. They ensured a close and balanced presence, combining supervision, pedagogical support and promoting the autonomy of young people. They actively participated in the planning of activities, in the preparation of participants, in the articulation with local partners and in the daily logistics management. At the same time, YUPI contributed with its experience in non-formal education, social inclusion and youth participation, supporting the methodological definition of activities, the mediation of group dynamics and the monitoring of young people with greater fragility.

**Communication between stakeholders** was ensured on a continuous basis, using face-to-face meetings, regular briefings and organized digital channels, involving young people, companions, coordination, YUPI and families. This permanent communication made it possible to align expectations, share relevant information, anticipate risks and strengthen trust between all stakeholders.

The management also integrated a consistent component of **evaluation and continuous improvement**, through the use of quantitative and qualitative instruments, such as questionnaires, moments of joint evaluation and analysis of the records produced throughout the mobilities. The information collected was used by the coordinating team and YUPI to validate strategies, identify good practices and strengthen internal procedures, contributing to organizational development and the sustainability of future initiatives.

The management and stakeholder engagement strategies in the *Together We Rise project* were based on a structured, participatory and collaborative approach, based on effective articulation between school, YUPI, companions and young people, ensuring the active involvement of all, the quality of implementation and the achievement of the educational and social objectives of the project, in line with the quality standards of the Erasmus+ DiscoverEU programme.

# Needs and Objectives

The *Together We Rise* project was designed to respond to a clear set of **structural challenges and needs identified** among young people with fewer opportunities, resulting from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, educational fragilities, reduced exposure to international experiences and limitations in access to opportunities for civic participation and European mobility.

Among the **main challenges identified**, the **social and educational exclusion** of some young people stood out, associated with low levels of self-esteem, reduced expectations for the future and poor perception of their role as active citizens. To these factors were added **economic barriers**, which strongly condition participation in international mobility projects, as well as **geographical barriers**, particularly relevant in contexts far from large urban centres. Gaps in **digital literacy**, personal autonomy and experience in intercultural contexts have also been identified, which limit young people's ability to adapt to new environments and take full advantage of available European opportunities.

In view of these challenges, the project sought to respond to **concrete needs**, namely the need to create effective conditions of **equal access to DiscoverEU mobility**, to strengthen the educational and emotional support of young people and to provide non-formal learning experiences that would favor personal, social and civic development. It has also become clear that there is a need to promote direct contact with other European realities, to strengthen the sense of belonging to the European Union and to develop transversal skills that are essential for adult life, such as autonomy, responsibility, intercultural communication and the ability to adapt.

In this context, *Together We Rise* has defined as **its main objectives** the promotion of social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, the elimination of barriers to participation in European mobilities and the reinforcement of the integral development of the participants. The project aimed in particular **to increase autonomy and self-confidence**, develop digital and social skills, strengthen European awareness and stimulate active civic participation. The **promotion of values of diversity, solidarity and environmental sustainability was also a cross-cutting objective**, integrating responsible mobility practices and critical reflection on contemporary social and environmental challenges.

Additionally, the project aimed to strengthen the capacity of **young people to become agents of change in their communities**, providing them with tools that would allow them to transfer the learning acquired to educational, social and professional contexts. Through a structured, inclusive approach focused on individual needs, *Together We Rise* sought to consistently respond to the challenges identified, transforming needs into concrete opportunities for growth, participation and European inclusion.

# Evaluation

The evaluation of the *Together We Rise* project was designed as a **continuous, systematic and participatory process**, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods that allowed monitoring the implementation, measuring results and evaluating the impact of the project on the participants and the beneficiary organization.

Regarding the **evaluation methods**, pre- and post-tests **were applied** to all participants, with the aim of collecting comparable data before and after the mobilities. These tools focused on key dimensions such as autonomy in the context of mobility, digital literacy, personal trust, European awareness and the ability to adapt to new environments. The comparative analysis of the results showed a significant evolution of the participants throughout the project.

The **results of the post-tests** demonstrated clear and consistent improvements in most of the indicators evaluated. There was a significant increase in the perception of autonomy, with most young people expressing greater security in the use of transport, in the management of schedules, in decision-making and in the resolution of unforeseen events in the context of international mobility. A significant improvement in **digital literacy was also observed**, reflected in the more confident and autonomous use of navigation applications, electronic ticketing, digital communication and financial management tools. In terms of **personal confidence and self-esteem**, the data showed very relevant progress, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities. There was also a significant reinforcement of **knowledge about European citizenship** and the sense of belonging to the European Union.

During the implementation, the assessment was complemented by **the Daily Reports**, completed daily by the participants, which allowed the monitoring of learning, challenges and emotional well-being, while functioning as an instrument for structured reflection and continuous adjustment of support strategies. Final **satisfaction and impact questionnaires were also applied**, including the official questionnaires of the Erasmus+ Platform, which confirmed high levels of satisfaction and a very positive perception of the educational value of the project. Youthpass was used as an instrument for the recognition and consolidation of the acquired skills, allowing participants to identify significant learning in the areas of communication, social skills, digital literacy, citizenship, cultural awareness, autonomy and responsibility.

Regarding **the impact assessment**, the results showed a clearly positive overall impact. The data from the post-tests confirmed that the project effectively contributed to the personal, social and civic development of the participants, with particularly significant impacts on young people with fewer opportunities. At the organisational level, the project strengthened management practices, evidence-based assessment and inclusive monitoring, consolidating the capacity to implement European projects.

At the same time, a **structured and continuous dissemination strategy** was developed, with the aim of disseminating the results, learnings and impacts of the project to different target audiences. During the mobilities, regular content was produced, namely news and daily records, allowing the educational community, families and the general public to be informed about the development of the activities. After the end of the mobilities, the participants were involved in **dissemination actions**, including presentations to the school community, sharing testimonies, reflection sessions and dissemination of results through institutional and digital channels.

The dissemination contributed to valuing the work developed, enhancing the visibility of the Erasmus+ DiscoverEU programme and inspiring other young people to participate in future mobility and civic participation initiatives. By actively involving the participants themselves in the dissemination of the results, the project reinforced the ownership of learnings, the awareness of the impact achieved and the sustainability of the effects of *Together We Rise* beyond its implementation period.

In summary, the combination of rigorous assessment methods, clearly positive post-test results and an effective dissemination strategy has demonstrated the educational and social impact of the *Together We Rise* project, confirming its relevance as a tool for inclusion, mobility and learning under the Erasmus+ DiscoverEU programme.