

Spreading our Wings towards new Winds Ceuta • Torremolinos



Her mit dem schönen Leben! Flensburg • Hamburg



Spielräume – Youth Work creates Open Spaces for youth Participation and learning Democracy Hamburq



Up4Change -Down2Action Liverpool



All different, all equal, still relevant? Budapest



Take 5 for Europe #createyoureurope

# e.p.a. • european playwork association







Annual Report 202

#### Introduction:

e.p.a, young people, partners and the team in Hamburg began the year 2022, in the hope of being able to celebrate face-to-face international exchanges and seminars, that had been postponed several times.

In January we invited the groups from Kiev, Tyumen-Kurgan, Liverpool, Sofia, Turku and Lisbon to Hamburg. February the 24th came: Russia's invasion of Ukraine horrified, stunned and challenged all of us. The young people's anticipation of seeing each other again and getting to know each other was abruptly interrupted. The war forced many of 'our' young people to flee. And the force of the hate propaganda also hit us and pushed us to the limits of our transnational youth work for understanding and democratic coexistence.

So it seems all the more like a miracle that our East-West encounter in the summer was possible. We were joined by a group of young refugees from Mariupol, Kherson, Kijiv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Dnipro, who had arrived in Hamburg and grew into the role of hosts together with a beautifully diverse group from Hamburg.

We thank Jugend für Europa Team in Bonn, the Erasmus+ National Agency, who supported our ideas and recognised the Hamburg based Ukraine group as participants in the Erasmus+ programme.

And we thank even more all those who were involved in bringing together young people who had to involuntarily leave their homes (from Ukraine, Syria, Guinea, Congo, Angola, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan) - under a wide horizon, learning from each other, playing, discovering and embracing universal Human Rights ...

We could end 2022 in hope and *Vorfreude* of seeing each other again in e.p.a. International Youth Exchanges in Lisboa and Serra da Estrela - the Star Mountains and in Tettenborn and Hamburg in summer 2023!

e.p.a. Team Hamburg, February 2023

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#### Europa JUGEND Büro



For more than 30 years, e.p.a. has been running the Europa JUGEND Büro as a youth drop-in service in Hamburg, with open access to opportunities for European youth mobility and intercultural youth co-operation, creating local visibility for current European themes, youth initiatives, and voluntary services. All through the year, we informed and advised young people on international mobility projects during consultation meetings in our office or online, as well as on European fairs and through presentations at schools and colleges.

Through this work we encouraged committed youth workers and organisations to become involved in international youth work, informing them about European funding, training and intercultural methodology.

➤ europajugendbuero.hamburg



# **Eurodesk Networking**



With the Europa JUGEND Büro, e.p.a is an active and long-term Eurodesk partner and multipliers centre. The e.p.a. staff is trained and regularly updated by Eurodesk in consulting young people on international mobility programmes by the EU and the Council of Europe, also national programmes. We take part in the annual network meeting with all other Eurodesk multipliers in Germany, as well as online meetings and trainings throughout the year that are offered to partners of the German and the European network.

> eurodesk.eu



# Eurodesk Multipliers' seminar in Brussels

We were invited by Eurodesk Germany to participate in the annual Eurodesk Multipliers' seminar in Brussels with partners from all over Europe. In three days, we networked and learned from the different representatives and from Eurodesk Brussels Link (EBL), the coordinators of the international network.

We took part in different workshops about topics i.e. group facilitation and creative digital content. Some partners presented pitches about good practices



from their countries where we presented the EuroPeers network of former ESC volunteers. In the Eurodesk Awards Ceremony, some projects from the network got awarded for their special efforts in local activities.

## Annual Eurodesk Meeting in Würzburg

In June, the whole German Eurodesk Network came together for three days for the Annual Network Meeting in Würzburg. We got to know the various different organisations (from local authorities to youth centres) represented in the network, learned from other partners' good practises and discussed ideas for future activities. Through the method of *Appreciative Inquiry*, we brainstormed in groups what the future of the network could look like.

During the meeting the German National Agency provided some input about the current state of play of Erasmus+ and the European Year of Youth and e.p.a. took the opportunity to highlight the work of the CoE and EYF. We also learned from the Canadian Embassy about Work and Travel regulations in Canada, one of the most popular options of young people to go abroad.



#### Bravel: Dockville and Polaris Convention

With the Bravel campaign related to Eurodesk Germany, we had a stall about international mobility opportunities for young people at the Dockville festival (a music and arts festival) and the Polaris Convention (focused on gaming, anime and digital media), both in Hamburg. Together with ESC volunteers and EuroPeers, we informed and advised many young people about possibilities like international voluntary services, Work and Travel, AuPair and young people's opportunities to become pro-active in civil society.



# Eurodesk seminar for 'mobility guides'

Eurodesk offers regular seminars for 'mobility guides' who advise young people on how to organise a stay abroad, e.g. with funded programmes. We as experienced Eurodesk partner offered such a seminar in Hamburg in September 2022 to 11 multipliers from different places in Germany working with young people, e.g. in schools, as careers advisors or job centres. In a two days very intense training, they learned about different international mobility opportunities for 16-30 year olds and how to access those. In role plays all participants could test their gained knowledge.

## **European Solidarity Corps**

This year, e.p.a. welcomed new young people from different countries in Hamburg as volunteers with the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), an EU-funded



voluntary service for young people aged 18-30 years. Since e.p.a. is active as a sending, coordinating and hosting organisation, we are able to bring young people to Hamburg but also to send young people from Germany to other European countries. In 2022, we sent three people to France and Lithuania, and one volunteer accomplished the ESC service in Hungary.

#### Volunteers at e.p.a.

Our volunteers were actively involved in our 2022 projects: they supported logistics and organisation, facilitated workshops and games during our youth exchange in Hamburg and the three seminars. One of their tasks was to organise meetings of our youth group in Hamburg that hosted the youth exchange. They also regularly take care for a very welcoming office environment and maintain our garden area that was used for many group meetings and small events during the year.



They also took part in local activities, e.g. our Northern German youth dialog conference "Take 5", the European week in Hamburg and they shared their ESC experiences in schools. Moreover, they created visual content for e.p.a.'s social media platforms.

Our e.p.a. volunteer Saif from Tunis who started his ESC in 2021, successfully finished his service in March 2022.

Our volunteer Jay from Petrozavodsk (Russia) ended his ESC in November 2022 and went on our seminar at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe in Budapest as an active team member afterwards.

Benyamin from Teheran/Thessaloniki joined us as our new volunteer with the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) in February 2022.



#### e.p.a. as a coordinating ESC organisation

Currently, e.p.a. is coordinating ESC volunteers for our partners in Hamburg Abenteuerspielplatz Am Brunnenhof (adventure playground 'Baui') and for the Arbeitsgemeinschaft freier Jugendverbände (AGfJ). The Baui had their first e.p.a. volunteer María from Granada in 2021 and in 2022 their second volunteer Eralda from Tirana joined, playing and discovering with children on the playground.

From 2022, the AGfJ has their first two volunteers: Saliha from Sinop/Turkey joined in collaboration with the IJEL, the Internationaler Jugendverband Europa-Lateinamerika, and

Nastja from St. Petersburg joined in collaboration with *MitOst*. Both are active in international youth work and organising local events with their communities in Hamburg and beyond.

### European Week Hamburg



For e.p.a. and especially our Hamburg project the Europa JUGEND Büro, the European Week in Hamburg, taking place yearly during the month of May, is a great opportunity to open its doors even wider for young people and invite them to discover more about (European) youth mobility and European topics concerning their lives. Each year we come up with different events to use the stage of the European Week and reach even more (young) people than we normally do.

For the year 2022 we planned different events that finally could take place live and face-to-face. On 4th of May we invited young people to come to visit our

office without appointment and provide them the information for going abroad from our mobility advisors. Another event that we organised within the framework of European Week Hamburg with our partner "Baui" was the European games night on the 5th of May. We learned more about the continent and different cultures in a playful way.

Together with our ESC volunteers and the EuroPeers, a network of former European volunteers, we organised the clean up action at the Elbstrand Övelgönne. In the evening after the hard work we had a barbecue in our garden.

# European Year of Youth



The EU declared 2022 the European Year of Youth as a recognition of the sacrifices that young people have made during the pandemic with a special attention on the young generation. With our youth conference "Hamburg & Europe in your hands", which took place on 1st December in Hamburg, we and local partners (the Hamburg authority, the



Hamburg Youth Council, EuropaUnion, Young European Federalists) rounded this year off.

About 80 participants took the opportunity to enter into a direct exchange with politicians and experts, contributing their ideas and visions for Hamburg and Europe. In different dialogue forums - prepared with participation of young people, we focussed on the following topics: *Inclusive Societies*, *Sustainable Green Europe* and *Future and Intergenerational* 

Justice ... all related to the European Youth Goals. During the subsequent plenary discussion, the results of the dialogue forums were presented by young participants, responded by the political representatives.

### Erasmus+ 35 years



On 8th December, we celebrated 35 years of the Erasmus+ Programme. Together with our partner EuropaUnion/Infopoint Europa, multipliers and young people, we talked about the history of the programme and its opportunities. We shared our knowledge and experience and presented a poster exhibition with personal "Erasmus-stories", prepared and designed by young people who took part in our youth exchanges, seminars and the European Solidarity Corps in Hamburg or abroad.

# Future development of the network

In 2022, we were informed, that the Erasmus+ programme had listened to the needs of NGYOs and proposed a three year accreditation process. This would mean, we could plan and support the expectations of our European young people with confidence. We also hope

for a somewhat leaner and time-saving administration, which will hopefully free up some resources for direct youth and project work.

The exclusion of UK participants in Erasmus+ after Brexit is still a big issue ... not with the European Youth Foundation, who continue to support the involvement of UK



residents. After decades of intensive and fruitful cooperation with the members of the network and the participation of young people from the UK, we will need creative ideas and additional efforts to maintain this level and to continue.

We were delighted at the spontaneity of EYF proposals for activities with Ukraine young people and look forward to developing with our Hamburg group an exciting and meaningful programme in 2023.

### Outlook for the next three years

We put in two very promising project applications towards the end of the year. To be ACCREDITED by the Erasmus programme, which gives us 3 years guaranteed activities and the new Civil Society Cooperation Grant, again for a possible three years support towards Network development, and at this point of writing the report we know that our application was successful! Therefore, we will work with some new guidelines and under new conditions for our projects that are hopefully less bureaucratic, with more time and resources to support and provide training activities for our network partners, to create face-to-face activities with and for young people around Europe and beyond.

### e.p.a. Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place during our 'Spielräume' seminar in Hamburg at the same venue, a very nice room at the Horner Rennbahn



Youth Hostel. Over 30 people from 17 network partners attended, also young people living in Hamburg who took part in youth exchanges this year and in the past. We received the Annual Report and agreed the Annual Accounts. We confirmed the elected board members of the Charity and looked back at the activities of this year, the pandemic and its effect on our work. We looked forward to new horizons: the youth exchange in Portugal in summer 2023 and our Maltese friends invited us to a seminar at the end of 2023. We introduced Leni from Greece as our new colleague from November 2021, and our two ESC volunteers Jay and Benyamin.

# Seminar in Liverpool

"Up4Change, Down2Action

– means, methods and motivation for new youth initiatives"

23rd-30th April 2022



"Up4Change - Down2Action" was a seminar on project development for young people active in their communities. Our network partners from Finland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Slovenia, Malta and Romania each sent two young people as participants, as well as the local hosting group Up4Change from Liverpool. The aim of the project was to strengthen young people in their efforts to develop and establish projects and youth initiatives for participation, democracy and Human Rights.



During the week, we looked at creating ideas, drawing a plan, researching funders, writing an application, budgeting and transparent financial procedures, involving the young people at all stages doing the project, the evaluation process, accounting and reporting, and afterwards media and dissemination and follow up.

With the confidence of the European Youth Foundation and the Oreste Zanolari Fund, we were able to offer mini grants of €300 for each successful project. As a result, 7 projects were peer group approved to be carried out.

"I learned to accept myself (seeing other people share my struggles, hardships and concerns)."

Luca, Bucharest

"I feel so happy because we came here without any type of idea of project in our minds and now we know that we can create and develop a good impact in our organisation."

Mireia, Valencia/Dudley



# International Youth Exchange in Spain

"Spreading our wings towards new winds, creating bridges, embracing rights and dignity" Ceuta - Málaga, 23th June-7th July 2022

58 participants from Ceuta/Málaga (host), Lisbon, Hamburg, Budapest, Bratislava, Maribor/Ljubljana and Liverpool took part in the Exchange which was celebrated from 23rd June -7th July. We wanted to enable young people the opportunity following two years of Pandemic isolation to unfold their "wings" to the new "winds" of possibility. Using different methodologies that encourage and enthuse young people to be part of workshops, debates, plenary meetings we worked together on the topic of the exchange "Spreading our wings towards new winds, creating bridges, embracing rights and dignity". During our first days of our International Youth Exchange in Ceuta we spend time to get to





know each other, had opportunities to dive into our main theme - and also into the Mediterranean and Atlantic and some of the participating groups successfully presented their prepared workshops.

We got some insights in the special living conditions in Ceuta: We were invited to get to know el barrio 'El Principe' and to an official reception in the posh Townhall, where Carlos Rontomé, the Councillor of Education and Culture told us about the very special living conditions in this part of Europe. We learned more about the great challenges in the Ceuta communities and could ask our questions - some of them were quiet challenging for Sr. Rontomé.

This international youth exchange empowered young people from multicultural backgrounds, strengthened their position to foster equal participation and knowledge of their rights.

"I learned more patience,
acceptance and how to be more open
to others. I got self-knowledge,
openness from this exchange and I
became more comforting towards
other culture's values and lifestyle."

Barbi, Budapest

"The simple fact that all the participants are together and share all the happy and moving moments, my heart grows from so many group feelings.

One day when we were debating in a workshop in small groups, I realized how lucky the people who are doing the exchange are and that I couldn't have been luckier."



# International Youth Exchange in Germany

"Her mit dem schönen Leben!

- Reflect our dreams, respect our diversity, embrace dignity for all" Flensburg-Hamburg , 1st -14th August 2022

Young people from all over the world who live right now in Europe came together to exchange their opinion of what is a good life under the theme 'Her mit dem schönen Leben'. This Youth Exchange brought together around 60 young people from 7 countries Portugal, Finland, Poland, Bulgaria, UK, Ukraine & Germany for 2 weeks in Flensburg and Hamburg.

During the 2 weeks, every group presented its projects and a self organised workshop on our agreed theme 'Let's make the good life'. In the beginning of this Youth Exchange we all arrived in Flensburg where we stayed for the first week. The participants got to know each other through playing games, discussions and fun activities and also celebrated birthdays and intercultural delights and traditions, like songs and dances.

For the second week, we took the train by using the amazing 9-Euro-ticket to Hamburg and continued our programme in the youth hostel of Horner Rennbahn in the east of the city. It was amazing to see how different the views of the young participants were on the same theme. What is certain, is that we all respected different opinions.



Our main goal was to create the conditions viable for the young people to think about what is a good life for them and express their way of thinking with the other participants. All participants returned to their countries with more experience, knowledge, tools and enthusiasm that they can use, share and multiply with their friends and community.

# International seminar in Hamburg

"Spielräume – youth workers opening spaces for youth participation, exploring & embracing democracy"

28th October -4th November 2022



This project brought together 33 Youth workers from 17 countries to meet for an International Seminar for one week in Hamburg in a spirit of solidarity.

After the past 2 years, when in many corners of the world, youth workers were facing shrinking spaces for democratic participation and then



suffering isolation during the pandemic, this seminar was a specially precious and appreciated opportunity to learn with and from each other, sharing good practices, knowing their commitment was recognised, feeling freshly competent, encouraged, embracing Human rights and each other! Participants gained an understanding of the important political and facilitative role of youth work for youth participation under current challenges of civil society, and collected ideas how to implement ideas in their own work.

As the Training involved participants from the Global South (Ghana, Dominican Republic, Colombia) it helped to keep up our networking beyond Europe. We very much hope that we can find and liberate funding and re-create our Tri-Continental Youth Cooperation.

"The happiest experience for me is realizing that we share many same concerns with youth workers working around the world and we somehow manage or try to find motivation on using good practises and ideas! We are not alone."

Eli, Greece

"I have widened my own perception of time, space and participation. We have always time to do the right thing and we must widen our spaces to make it happen. Democracy is fragile and we must be conscious about that each moment."

Ditmir, Albania

"I discovered e.p.a. this year, and I have learnt a huge humber of things. e.p.a. has offered me the opportunity of meeting new people, learning from them and also being a part of this amazing family. Thank you very much for this mind-blowing experience. With all of my heart thank you one more time."

Michel, Turku

"A beautiful fairytale for these days in Hamburg. Stories and inspiration. The other colleagues' experiences (who I met in this seminar)."

Zdravko, Sofia

### International seminar in Budapest

"All different, all equal! - still relevant?
20th -27th November 2022 at the European Youth Centre



Many e.p.a. projects in the past have focused on the theme 'All different - All equal', inspired by a campaign started by the Council of Europe back in 1995 that was implemented all over Europe in the following decades.

"I loved meeting everyone and making friendships I wouldn't have even imagined to make. The fact that all of these people come from all over Europe and haven't met before, but still treat each other like family always made me happy."

Gamze, Razgrad

"I learned that we all are different and unique, yet we share the same passions, values and desires. I learned that there's a colourful story behind everyone and that if you're curious and willing to listen, you'll be able to challenge your pre conditions and live richer in new knowledge and outlooks."

Karolina, Warszawa



This one-week study session with the theme "All different, all equal - still relevant? - Discovering and embracing Human Rights" took place from 20th till 27th November. The study session was prepared by 4 team members from Hungary, Russia, Finland and Germany. 29 participants, with an age range of 18-44, were young people and youth workers volunteering or working with children or young people in e.p.a. partner organisations, such as youth clubs, community centres or social work institutions.

Participants learned about the complexity of access to Human Rights, what are the faces of discrimination, xenophobia and racism and how to discover 'hidden' discrimination and learn from those who have experienced it. We explored how to react in these situations and stand up for other people's rights, e.g. through re-enacting situations with Forum theatre. We learned from, with and about each other, the different live stories and often challenging experiences of each other - and also of local people from Budapest through a Living Library. Together, we explored different methods in non-formal education that equipped participants for their local work and future projects. The participants also learned about the work of the Council of Europe, and what educational resources are available, e.g. manuals and resources on the website.

And lastly, confidently we can answer the question 'All different, all equal! - still relevant?' with a big YES! Throughout this study session, each person got to embrace their own uniqueness with an understanding that 'people are not equal, but their rights'.



# Take 5 Youth Dialogue Conference



Take 5 is a Youth Dialogue project and network cooperation of youth organisations and state authorities from the five Northern German federal states Bremen, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein. Since 2010, we have been organising youth conferences to bring together young people and politicians (MEPs, Members of the national, the regional and local parlaments) for an eye-level dialogue. The Take 5 Youth Conference is part of the EU Youth Dialogue, in which decision makers and representatives of authorities have a chance to learn about the concerns and demands of young people, in order to include them in their decisions and to strengthen the participation of young people in political decisions.

After various preparation meetings during the year with lots of opportunities for young people to create their format, the youth conference took place from 1st-3rd July 2022 in the Youth Academy Bad Segeberg. Young people from the five Northern federal states of Germany gathered together to develop ideas for Europe and work on different political topics under the motto #CreateYourEurope. The topics were collected beforehand from the young people with the use of digital tools. To name some of them: Education, Environment, Democracy and Participation, Digitalisation, Diversity and Discrimination.

> europajugendbuero.hamburg/take\_5

# Stop Loneliness - Start Volunteering

e.p.a. team members travelled to Ljubljana – Slovenia, from 28.11.2022 to 30.11.2022, for the "STOP Loneliness, START Volunteering" transnational project meeting and multiplier event, hosted by our partner organisation "Slovenian Philanthropy". The project is a response to increasing hardship amongst youth due to isolation and loneliness and offers at the very least a partial solution to this problem. The main goal is to raise awareness about volunteering as a possible means of preventing and alleviating social isolation of young people and as a source of empowerment for youth organisations and organisations involving young volunteers (research, best practice, develop quidelines, policy advice etc.).



During the meeting we had the opportunity to organise our next steps and activities, with our partner organisation from Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, Croatia and of course Slovenia.



As a part of the preparation programme we had project visits at "PLAC" an autonomous squatted zone, at "YACA-Youth Aid Center Association" and at our host organisation "Slovenska Filantropija". Another inspirational part of our meeting was a World Café where we had a discussion on loneliness, how volunteering can tackle isolation and exclusion and what volunteering - involving organisations, the stakeholders and the government - can do to support the young people.

To be continued in 2023!

# Children's Rights Project



e.p.a. team members travelled to Thessaloniki – Greece, from 21.03.2022 to 23.03.2022, for the "Children's Rights" transnational project meeting, hosted by our partner organisation ARSIS- Association for the Social Support of Youth. During the meeting we had the opportunity to organise our next activities with our partners from Belgium "Mobile School" and "Uit de Marge" and "ARSIS" in Thessaloniki. We created more activities linked on children's rights and starting to organise trainings for youth workers.

We had an amazing project visit and a play action with children with the mobile school in the city centre. We are going to share the project results at the end of the project in March 2023 with our partner organisation in many different countries and consequently spread the awareness for children rights worldwide.

> www.street-smart.be/all-children-all-rights









# e.p.a. in brief

e.p.a. is an international network of youth and community initiatives and associations with partner in over 40 countries: in Europe (including Middle-, Eastern and South Eastern Europe) in South America, CIS countries and Africa.

e.p.a. is an INGYO, registered and based as a "Freier Träger der Jugendhilfe" and charity (e.V.) in Hamburg – Germany.

e.p.a. aims to highlight, confront and challenge the problems of young people living in some of the most disadvantaged cities, areas and regions of Europe. e.p.a. endeavours to provide an opportunity for these young people to discover their potential, experience international friendship and fight against apathy, poverty and neglect.

e.p.a. achieves these aims through the activities of International Youth Exchanges, Study Visits, Training workshops, Seminars, Voluntary Service and International Meetings and in the publication of papers and activity sheets as well as advocacy of the local, regional and national governments of Europe and Europeans Organisations. e.p.a. has been involved in international Youth Work with the Council of Europe since 1977 (46 years) and with the EU with Youth exchanges since 1984 (39 years) and was one of the first NGYOs to instigate the EU YOUTH programmes.

As we look forward to an uncertain future for our young people with war, pandemics and environmental disasters we are confident, that the values shared with the Council of Europe and EYF will enable e.p.a. to continue to support young people from disadvantaged communities co-creating a Europe where we can all live together in dignity.

We would like to thank our supporters: the Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, who made it possible to further sustain, nourish and develop our network

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