

Gen Z teaches

Name of the organisation

Município de Valongo

Website of the organisation

www.cm-valongo.pt

Location of the organisation

Av. 5 de Outubro 160,, 4440 Valongo Valongo, Portugal

E-mail address of the organisation

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Inclusion
- Diversity
- LGBTIQ
- Active citizenship/activism

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

The programme is designed for young people aged 16-20 and is intended to motivate them to get involved in civic activities. It does this by equipping them with the skills to prepare and carry out non-formal educational sessions on topics such as xenophobia, LGBTQIA+ and gender equality for senior citizens, while promoting intergenerational dialogue.

The main objectives are:

- Promote the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable young people to talk to seniors and promote the rights of all, without distinction, in order to contribute to a culture of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Combat harmful, discriminatory and violent narratives, such as gender inequality, xenophobia, racism, homo-bi-trans-interphobia and other forms of intolerance, to create a more inclusive and peaceful world.
- Develop young people's communication and intervention skills to challenge prejudices and stereotypes, particularly those held by older people.

Promote intergenerational dialogue and bridge-building between generations to inspire a more equitable and inclusive society.

- Promote civic engagement and foster youth associations among young people in the local community.

Good practice description

This project is the result of a young woman's application to Valongo's Participatory Youth Budgeting scheme. She imagined, designed and applied for it. As it was one of the winning projects, she was involved in its design. The implementation phase was carried out with the support of a youth umbrella

NGO: Federação de Associações Juvenis do Distrito do Porto. The municipality was responsible for publicity, advertising and participant recruitment. The project is developed in different phases:

1 – GENERAL TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Promotion of a training action on Non-Formal Education (NFE): Practical techniques and tools for approaching NFE.

Objective: To understand what Non-Formal Education is, its scope and ways of approaching it with different audiences and through different tools.

2 – TRAINING ON INCLUSIVE ISSUES

Training on issues to be addressed, using the NFE tools already internalised. Of the various possible issues, we highlight three to be addressed:

- a. Gender and Opportunity Equality;
- b. LGBTQIA+ Issues;
- c. Racism and Xenophobia

Objective: To raise awareness of an empathetic but evidence-based approach. To provide participants with unbiased knowledge about these realities, as well as communication and conflict management skills, using NFE as a basic methodology.

3 – MENTORING FOR FIELD APPLICATION

Following attendance at the training sessions referred to in Activities 1 and 2, the young people will design the Session Plans that they will later implement in the field, in collaboration with the senior community.

Objective: Outline three scripts/session plans – one for each theme addressed in Phase 2 – focusing on the techniques and specifications learned in the training sessions. These plans will form the basis for the implementation of the project in the field and for working with the senior community.

The group is mentored by experienced trainers as they develop three session plans, each specific to a theme.

4 – NON-FORMAL EDUCATION SESSIONS WITH SENIORS

Activities are developed with the city's senior population based on what the young people of Valongo have learned so far, promoting intergenerationality and idea-sharing.

Objective: To provide the senior community of Valongo with the opportunity to share stories and life experiences with young people, who will, in turn, bring current topics to the conversation for reflection and debate. Promoting spaces for sharing, reflection and debate is the way in which young people will engage with the senior community through the previously defined Session Plans. The aim is to promote common European values such as tolerance, democracy and equal opportunities.

The sessions are replicated, depending on the community's involvement in the project.

Evaluation was done in all stages of the project regarding satisfaction with the project, its development and process.

Good practice result & concrete effects

This is multi-phase project combining Non-Formal Education (NFE), inclusive thematic training, and intergenerational sessions, which has generated tangible results at several levels:

1. Empowerment of young people
 - Participants acquired practical skills in facilitation, communication, and NFE techniques.
 - They developed greater confidence in leading groups, mediating discussions, and handling sensitive topics like gender, diversity, and discrimination.
 - By preparing concrete session plans, young people moved from theory to practice, learning how to design, adapt, and implement activities responsibly.
2. Enhanced awareness and empathy on inclusive issues
 - Training sessions raised awareness of issues often seen as “abstract” or controversial.
 - Young people gained evidence-based knowledge about gender equality, LGBTQIA+ realities, and racism/xenophobia, which allowed them to discuss these topics with empathy and critical thinking.
 - They acquired strategies to address biases and conflicts constructively.
3. Mentoring as a catalyst for quality and sustainability
 - The involvement of experienced trainers during the mentoring phase ensured the quality of the outputs (session plans).
 - Mentoring created a safe environment where young people could make mistakes, receive feedback, and gradually gain autonomy.
4. Intergenerational dialogue and community impact
 - The sessions with the senior community became spaces of mutual learning. Seniors shared lived experiences and cultural memory, while young people introduced contemporary debates and European values.
 - This exchange reduced stereotypes on both sides: seniors recognized young people’s capacity for social reflection, and youth appreciated the richness of seniors’ perspectives.
 - The practice reinforced intergenerational solidarity, one of the identified needs in many European communities.
5. Promotion of European values in practice
 - Instead of simply “teaching” abstract principles, values such as tolerance, equality, diversity, and democracy were practiced concretely through shared dialogue and reflection.
 - The sessions became living laboratories of democratic participation, respect, and critical discussion.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Core principles of youth work