



A guide to EU-funded activities for groups of young people





How long will it take?

You must submit your application for the deadline at least three months before your planned activity.

There are five deadlines throughout the year:

- 1 February, for activities starting between 1 May and 30 September
- 1 April, for activities starting between 1 July and 30 November
- 1 June, for activities starting between 1 September and 31 January
- 1 September, for activities starting between 1 December and 30 April
- 1 November, for activities starting between 1 February and 31 July

So if you are planning to go to Italy on an exchange on 15 July, your application must be made for the 1 April deadline. The duration of the actual youth exchange must be between six and 21 days, including travel.

A youth initiative project must last between three and 18 months; a youth democracy project must last between six and 18 months.

You will have to provide your written final report to Léargas within two months of the end of your project.

So at the very least, you need to set aside six months from start to finish.



What age do you have to be?

In a youth exchange, the young people must be aged between 13 and 25.

In a youth initiative, the young people can be aged between 15 and 30; a coach must be involved in projects with young people aged between 15 and 18.

In youth democracy projects, the young people can be aged between 13 and 30.



What can you do?

You can create a project around a theme from the following topics:

anti-discrimination; arts and culture; disability; education through sport and outdoor pursuits; environment; European awareness; gender equality; health; interreligious dialogue; media and communications; minorities; rural isolation; social inclusion; urban development; youth policies; youth information.

The case studies on www.leargas.ie/youth will give you more ideas of themes and ways to explore them.



How much funding is available?

Funding amounts vary between project type.

The funding for youth exchanges is based on lump sums and fixed amounts – the Léargas Youth Work Service will give you more information on this.

For youth initiatives, funding is available up to a maximum of €10,000.

In the case of youth democracy projects, you can get up to €25,000 – the sum applied for cannot represent more than 60% of total costs.



For more information

Léargas is the National Agency for all the Youth programmes outlined here: youth exchanges, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects.

Go to www.leargas.ie/youth or contact us at:

Léargas
189 Parnell Street
Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 873 1411
Email: youth@leargas.ie



Useful resources

Other useful websites are:

Causeway
www.causewayyouth.org

Department of Education & Science
www.education.ie

EURODESK
www.eurodesk.ie

European Commission - YOUTH
http://www.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html

European Youth Portal
www.youthportal.ie

NcompasS
www.ncompass.org

SOS Volunteer Helpdesk
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/vh_evs_en.html

SALTO
www.salto-youth.net

Training Youth Net
www.training-youth.net

Youth Information Centres
www.youthinformation.ie

Youth For Europe
www.youthforeurope.org

Portumna and District Youth Development Youth Initiative

When a Youth Café opened in the area, the young people decided to make the cups, saucers and plates to stock it. At the same time, they learned about Europe, its structures and institutions, and reflected this knowledge in the designs on the crockery – and did all this in just four months!

Cheeverstown House Youth Exchange

A contact made during the Special Olympics held in Ireland in 2003 was the starting point for a group exchange of twenty young people with learning disabilities from Dublin and Sicily. Food, climate and music were some of the topics they used to explore the issue of European citizenship.

Tullaghan Development Association Ltd

Weekly meetings of the Irish coordinators ensured the success of an exchange between Hungary, Ireland, Poland and the United Kingdom, which combined sporting activities with workshops on multiculturalism, anti-racism and xenophobia. The work of the project was captured in a booklet – and a mural!

Blakestown and Mountview Youth Initiative

A “Family Day” was just one of the ways this exchange between young Irish and Portuguese people developed its theme of intercultural learning. A detailed plan for each young person formed an important part of the preparation for this event which mixed workshops with practical sport activities.

Waterford Regional Youth Service

Using mime to explore the structure of the European Union is one way to overcome language barriers in multilateral exchanges! Art was another non-verbal means of communication in this exchange project of Bulgarian, French, Irish and Spanish young people, which also looked at European identity, values, rights and responsibilities.

Transforum Alley

A contact-making seminar was the catalyst for an exchange programme of young people from Ireland and Norway. Hiking, abseiling, canoeing and camping were just some of the activities they engaged in as they examined the theme of social exclusion. An Advance Planning Visit allowed the organisers to flesh out the details of a very challenging project.

What can you do?

Have you ever wanted to do something as a group, but not known how to go about it? If you are aged between 13 and 30, there are a number of activities for which you can get support – and funding – from the European Commission, with the help of the Youth Service of Léargas.

These activities include **exchanges**, where you arrange to visit, or be visited by, a group of young people from another EU country; **initiatives**, which can be a community-based project or a

transnational activity; and **democracy projects** – getting involved in dialogue with public authorities and decision makers.

This document explains what happens from start to finish. It gives practical suggestions as to what you can do, and tells you where you can get help and information. And just so you know how much fun it can be, there are lots of examples and comments from young people who've been there, done that - and enjoyed every minute!

Starting

To get started, you need an idea. So a first step could be a group brainstorming session, where anything and everything goes. Think about including people who may get involved in the project such as parents or local community members. Think about possible topics – environment, integration, drug awareness.

If you want to do an exchange, or involve a transnational partner, think about with whom and where. A youth worker or youth leader could attend a contact-making seminar, for which they would be funded by Léargas.

You can also talk to other organisations or local youth groups which have done something similar.

You can also visit the partner-finding database in www.leargas.ie/youth to look for a partner or post your group details.

“
the ... project was great fun to do and we learned new skills from it.
”

“
hopefully there'll be more projects like this.
”

Preparing

When preparing for an activity, setting out your project aims is a good first step – keep a record of these, and make sure you are always working towards them.

- Assess your skills – as individuals and as a group – and assign tasks.
- Organise team-building activities.
- Think about ways to raise additional funds and media awareness.
- Think about what will be involved: Travel? Workshops? Sports? Drama?
- If you are working with European partners, you may consider applying for a feasibility visit (Action 4 of the Youth Programme).

And don't forget to check the application deadline!

“
next time longer!
”

“
i have learned many new things, not only about these fabulous countries but also about my own country...
”

Applying

Once you have a project plan, and identified the appropriate deadline (see *How long will it take?*) you can fill out the application form – downloadable from www.leargas.ie/youth - and send it to Léargas

There will then be an assessment, which will take place either over the phone or face to face. This is to help ensure you have given all the necessary information for the Grants Selection Committee to make a decision.

If you get a 'yes' from the Grants Selection Committee, you can go to the next stage.

If you get a 'no', don't despair – you can always re-apply at the next deadline.

“ *i learned that people from other countries are the same and that i don't have to be afraid of them.* ”

“ *did you see me, i went all the way up!* ”

Developing

Now you have the go-ahead, you need to develop the project – get down to the nitty-gritty.

When will the activity take place? Where? What will you need? Who is going to be responsible for what?

If you have a partner, you can do some of this work by phone or by email. You can also organise an Advance Planning Visit as part of your project application.

Things to think about...

- Could you get a reporter along for a day or an event?
- Could you ask local businesses for support?
- Will you need to do some fund-raising?
- If yours is a youth democracy project, have you made contact with local councillors or TDs?

“ *wow all of it!* ”

“ *everything i've learned here will help me in the future, i hope.* ”

Doing

The time has come actually to do the project activities.

Now you are ready to meet your partners – if it's a transnational project – and get down to business, whatever the approved activity may be: making a movie, debating youth policy or overcoming language barriers through dance.

Have you got everything organised: accommodation, meals, meeting rooms, transport?

Have you got your workshop schedule finalised? Decided who will run each session or activity?

Will someone be videoing or photographing the activities?

Will there be media coverage?

Language barriers? Are there other ways to communicate, such as music or drama?

“ i loved learning Portuguese because it's cool, not like learning in school. ”

Finishing

The project doesn't end when the activities end. There's still stuff to be done.

You'll need to evaluate the experience, both as a group and individually.

If you've been working on a DVD, you may need to edit it, and oversee its production.

You'll have to write and submit a final report to Léargas – and perhaps to other bodies, such as a management committee or a local board.

You may want to arrange to talk to others – your school, another youth group, local media – about your project.

You might like to think about doing a new project, finding new partners, or even getting some training. The Léargas Youth Work Service can help you, once you've decided what you'd like to do next.

“ in workshops we learned that we had loads in common ”