

# Rethinking Cooperating Sharing

French-German-Armenian-Turkish youth exchange  
First phase from 18/11/2017 to 25/11/2017 in Marseille



## The idea of the project

The move towards the world of globalization and the erosion of boundaries of cross-national communication urges the need of removing the socio-political obstacles for direct communication. The lack of direct communication between the citizens of different nations and cultures creates an atmosphere of mistrust, ignorance and intolerance. The communication gap is oftentimes manipulated by the political powers for propaganda and tension preservation. Hence, the lesser the opportunities for the society for direct communication and dialogue, the lesser their opportunities for participation in decision making and bringing a change. Thus, we see the need for creating a free space and for utilizing a new medium for people from Armenia, France, Germany and Turkey so that they can jointly produce, and share, with each other more realistic representations of stories. In this way, such representations promote mutual understanding and contribute to cultural exchange by giving voice to pure human stories.

Turkey and Armenia shared a common cultural heritage in the same geography for many centuries. Nevertheless, the people of Turkey and Armenia have both inherited the heavy luggage of the troubled past. For the last 2 decades, the border between these 2 countries is closed, something that not only disregards the interests of the people but also hinders a healthy climate of information flow and cultural exchange. Under such circumstances, the rhetoric in both countries is often limited to a standard official discourse, which is very negative, one-sided, accommodates disinformation and very often misses the human stories. On the other hand, France and Germany share an equally difficult past, but have succeeded to establish a peaceful relationship over the last decades. The political and societal work of reconciliation is often seen as exemplary. Nevertheless, this work has to be continued with each new generation and especially considering the developments over the last years showing an increase of nationalist and patriotic tendencies and a growing hostility against immigrants and refugees.

All these tendencies can be observed and are supported in the public, political and media discourse. It's therefore essential to give young people the opportunity to confront their opinions which are mainly based on second-hand information, with direct, face-to-face experiences.

On this personal and concrete level, the goal is to think not only about the national history that links all 4 countries, but also to develop new relationships and perspectives for a better, common future. To reach this goal, we see the need for creating an opportunity and space for young people from Armenia, France, Germany and Turkey to communicate, to share, to

work together during four project phases. The overall project goal is to contribute to the dialogue between these countries through dissemination of human stories and by encouraging cooperation and active citizenship.

The first exchange will bring together 24 participants from Armenia, France, Germany and Turkey during one week in November 2017 in Marseille. It will be dedicated to getting to know each other, the workshops will have the objective to break the ice, to learn words in the languages present and to develop a group dynamic that permits to work together on a sensible subject like the difficult parts of the history between the countries and recent conflicts.

During the following phase in Armenia, Germany and Turkey in 2018, the same participants will work in creative workshops and focus more on the development of the common production. At the same time, there will be workshops that introduce them to media and digital tools they can use. Linguistic and group building exercises will be continued. In a final public event, they will show their production to a local public in order to share their work and their ideas on society and increase the impact and visibility of the project. The participants will organize this event.

### **The objectives of the project are:**

- To help young people from the neighboring countries to recognize each other's history, cultures, traditions, and find shared values as well as differences between them, as a basis for understanding, friendship and acceptance; through giving them the chance to work, and live together and to create common experiences.
- To contribute to an increase of tolerance and acceptance amongst Turkish, Armenian, French and German young people and towards each other's origins by means of conducting various joint activities.
- To develop the media and social networking skills of young people and to raise their awareness on the alternative media tools for self-expression by means of providing them fundamental skills on blogging, photography storytelling and social media. These competences are essential for the formation of active citizens and political participation as well as a critical approach towards the world.
- To support the intercultural dialogue between the participants in order to increase mutual understanding, solidarity and friendship. Intercultural dialogue and methods allow the deconstruction of stereotypes and unfounded judgements as well as the valorization of cultural and social diversity in this world of globalization.

### **How the activities are implemented**

All methods used in this exchange project will reflect non-formal education goals and methods in contrast to academic education. These alternative methods are more adequate to reach the project's goals as they permit the active involvement of the participants and give them a lot of responsibility concerning their own learning process.

In every youth exchange project, we provide a framework for intercultural learning using creative and interactive methods. Therefore, we build our program according to an architecture that has proven successful in our past projects:

- Verbal and non-verbal exercises with the objective to create first relations between the participants, to discover the languages and people present, to start the communication process and to install confidence between the participants;



- Decryption and decoding methods, intercultural exercises permitting the discovery of their own culture and the cultures of the others;
- Language exercises and games in order to sensitize the participants to learn other languages.

### **Who can participate?**

The project is designed for young people from 18-25 years old who will be the multipliers of the project results and outcomes after the project's completion. The project will bring together 6 youngsters from each country who want to reflect about the history and future between the four countries, confront their ideas and create new and lasting tools for communication between the youths of these countries.

Important criteria that will guide the selection of the participants are the following:

*youngsters that didn't have a lot of travelling experiences, who don't have the habit to leave their neighborhood or city, who are in a difficult social situation and would profit of this experience in order to confront their ideas and experiences with a different point of view. But also, youngsters who would profit of this project in order to gain self-confidence and autonomy that would help them to progress in their personal and professional projects.*

### **UTC – Marseille**

"Une Terre Culturelle" is an association which was founded in 2002 and that is responsible for developing mobility projects dedicated to the youth. That can be international youth exchanges (the majority of the participants are those having lesser opportunities, affiliated to partner social centers), all as training seminars destined to workers in the socio-cultural sector who work with young people. The organization pursues the idea of a long-lasting social development, going to facing different forms of racism and other prejudices while encouraging and conveying the encountering of diversities, all while allowing the youth to access international mobility or by training professionals to the creation of such projects.

### **In cooperation with**

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