

YOU-ROPE

*Youth Rites of Passage in Europe*

An abstract line drawing featuring several stylized human figures. One figure on the left is drinking from a cup. Another figure in the center is holding a paintbrush. A third figure on the right is holding a book. There are also icons of a computer monitor and a smartphone. The drawing is composed of simple black outlines and is overlaid with large, textured green and blue shapes. The word 'Guidelines' is written in a large, bold, black font across the center of the image.

# Guidelines

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ERASMUS PLUS – KA2 Strategic Partnership for Youth Cooperation for  
innovation and the exchange of good practices

# Organization involved in the project



YOU-ROPE Youth Rites of Passage in Europe



Center For Youth and Community, Inc.



ECTE- European Center in Training For Employment



ETCS Cooperativa



Centro Machiavelli Training Agency Florence



Cepiss Cooperativa per il Sociale



LabCom Ricerca e Azione per il benessere psicosociale



Psiterra

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# Introduction

The model aims to identify and implement positive rites of passages involving young people, their parents, families and communities and to engage policy makers and youth workers/educators, making participants aware about the important role of rites of passage, by designing and improving shared positive “rites of passage experiences” (ROPEs) (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014; [www.gjcopp.org](http://www.gjcopp.org); [www.rope.org](http://www.rope.org); Blumenkrantz, 2016). The model of intervention is aimed to promote a sense of individual’s belonging to the community and to strengthen communities through the enhancement of community-oriented, culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate rites of passages guiding and supporting children’s transition from adolescence to adult life. The rite of passage experience is an element of intergenerational bonding, which allows positive growth (Blumenkrantz, 2016). The YOU-ROPE project was inspired by a model of intervention conceived by Prof. David Blumenkrantz (1981; 2016), is funded by the European Community, through the ERASMUS PLUS Program KA2 Strategic - Youth Partnerships, and is carried out simultaneously in Florence (Italy), Barcelona (Spain), Iasi (Romania) and Rethymno (Greece), involving in each country around 300 adolescents and 50 significant adults.

The aim of the project is to introduce YOU-ROPE partners to the theory and practice of rites of passage as a narrative story of youth and community development that strengthens communities and guides and supports children to adulthood. The project is designed to enhance the quality in youth work, by promoting the cooperation of institutions working with young people and by improving the participation of adolescents in designing significant growth experiences in line with their personal values, cultural heritage, and with a shared EU approach. The narrative based approach of youth and community development through rites of passage ensures that young people acquire the knowledge, values and capacity to be actively engaged as responsible citizens in modern multi-cultural democratic societies. The work was organized in two phases: the first (I.O.1), a qualitative research, in which the meanings related to the experience of becoming adults in our society were discussed with adolescents and adults; the second (I.O. 3), in which participatory pathways with groups of adolescents and adults were realized in each town involved in the project to experience the value of rites of passage as elements of positive growth in the community.

The guidelines obtained as a final product of the project are conceived as case studies shared to inform youth workers and professionals of key aspects of the creation of inclusive rites of passage that strengthen a positive sense of community and influence social inclusion.

The Guidelines were created accordingly to the research carried out during the I.O.1. They are divided into modules in order to be useful and effective for a heterogeneous target group of professionals.

The following chapters resume what emerged during the implementation of the YOU-ROPE project. The book follows both the project's phases, namely Intellectual Output No. 1 (I.O.1), in which the theoretical model was first studied and subsequently investigated within the European local communities on the theme of rites of passage through a narrative approach and with a survey with qualitative methods. The second part of the project, Intellectual Output No. 03 (I.O.3), during which psycho-educational pathways were developed for adolescents and significant adults, based on findings of the previous phase. At the end, some of the findings are also discussed with reference to the innovative framework of The Competences for Democratic Culture, a useful guide of skills and competences to be developed in educational contexts with children to promote a democratic culture, published by Council of Europe.

The sequence of topics covered in these guidelines is reported as follows. A preface to the guidelines written by Professor David Blumenkrantz, who is the creator of the Youth & Community Development through Rites of Passage (Rite of Passage Experience) model, by which the YOU-ROPE project was inspired. The first chapter describes the theoretical background of the Youth & Community Development through Rites of Passage (Rite of Passage Experience) model and delves into some specific models that have been adopted to implement testing activities in each country. In particular, the Forum Theatre in Barcelona, techniques inspired from psychodrama in Florence, the Tree of Life derived from the narrative approach in Iasi, the myth as a metaphor for growth in Rethymno.

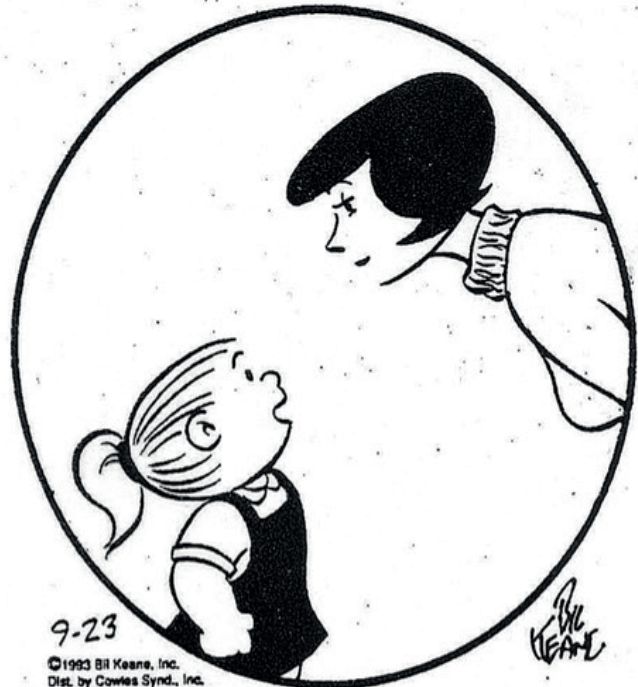
The second chapter briefly describes how the research conducted on Rites of Passage was implemented in the project. The experience narrated by the participants are exemplified as case studies. Some practical tips on how to organize interventions that enhance the role of rites as a moment of positive growth are presented. In the next paragraph (Testing Activities), the routes taken in each of the four European cities are described: Barcelona, Florence, Iasi and Rethymno.

The last paragraph of this chapter is dedicated to the description of what happened during the international meeting held in Florence from 1st to 6th April 2019, which was attended by students and educators involved in each country. The third chapter shows the conclusions that are drawn from what has been achieved. Each project partners' reflections on the importance of the project are also reported. The last paragraph highlights the fundamental elements to keep in mind when organizing an intervention according to the model developed in the YOU-ROPE project. In the appendix, a re-reading of the indicators for effective interventions according to the framework of Democratic Culture Skills are shown.

We would like to thank the people who made this project possible. First of all, Prof. David Blumenkrantz, who stimulated and supported the professionals involved and was always present despite the temporal and spacial divide that exists between the United States of America and Europe.

Then, the professionals of each partner organization, who worked and collaborated going way beyond the tasks they had by contract. Finally, the teachers, educators, family members of the students who participated in the project experience. And, of course, a special thanks to the girls and boys who put themselves on a challenge, becoming the heroes of the meta-myth that has been the YOU-ROPE project.

## **Family Circus / By BIL KEANE**



**“When do I stop bein’ a girl and become a female person?”**

# Preface

David Blumenkrantz

Change the story, change the future  
Preparing a community of educators,  
youth workers, parents and others  
to support a youth's rite of passage  
from childhood to adulthood.

Nurturing our children's healthy growth and development is a central task for every society. It is essential that young people acquire the knowledge, values and capacity to be actively engaged as responsible citizens in modern multi-cultural democratic societies. The future of our society and the entire planet will depend on how effectively we transmit the necessary knowledge, values, ethics and critical understanding that informs and guides their behavior.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, YOU-ROPE has undertaken an innovative initiative that is a first step in learning about youth and community development through rites of passage (Blumenkrantz, 2016). Rites of passage have historically been the central way our species has transmitted knowledge and values essential to our survival. Leading authorities on youth and community development have provided clear evidence that the absence of community-oriented, culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate rites of passage have contributed to many of the problems that youth, their families and communities face today.

In the absence of authentic and potent community-oriented rites of passage, youth seeking a sense of belonging - a personal identity - with meanings and purposes, turn to other sources, like, as an example, terrorist groups, who offer very powerful initiations and rites of passage.. The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (Judge, 1994) declared "the absence of rites of passage leads to a serious breakdown in the process of maturing as a person."

The evidence is clear: for thousands of years rites of passage have been humanity's primary individual and community process for managing changes throughout the course of one's lifetime. From ceremonies and rituals at birth to weddings and funerals, all of these rites of passage have served to strengthen the bonds of community and support an individual's transition. Perhaps most important are the initiation and rites of passage that are essential for a child's transition to adulthood.

Through a process of exploration, experimentation, evaluation, and adaptation the YOU-ROPE development team has taken a first step to learn about rites of passage as a narrative framework for youth and community development. YOU-ROPE Partners recognize that a rites of passage narrative, featuring design principles consistent with those promulgated in youth and community development through rites of passage, provides learning experiences of the world and the society in which they live. This process ensures that young people acquire the knowledge, values and capacity to be responsible citizens in modern, diverse, democratic societies and promotes a democratic culture among our citizens.

YOU-ROPE activities can be further adapted to emphasize an intercultural/European dimension by encouraging participants to reflect on important European Union issues and to involve them in identifying common values in different countries, despite cultural differences. A robust and integrated rite of passage design can strengthen youth's sense of belonging to a common European Union and as a means for them to be initiated into adulthood and active European citizenship. These case studies seek to inform policymakers, practitioners, teachers, youth workers, parents and others about the promising opportunities available by adopting a whole systems approach of youth and community development through rites of passage.

The following steps can build on the initial work of the YOU-ROPE project and advance it throughout the European Union.

\*Develop practitioner's competencies through direct experience in the initiatory process and rite of passage experience. "You can only bring someone as far as you have been yourself." This guiding principle is an essential prerequisite to establish and continually adapt and improve authentic rites of passage.

\* Help teacher candidates, educators, youth workers, agency personnel and others to set the stage for rites of passage by guiding them through a rigorous course of study in the art and science of initiation and rites of passage.

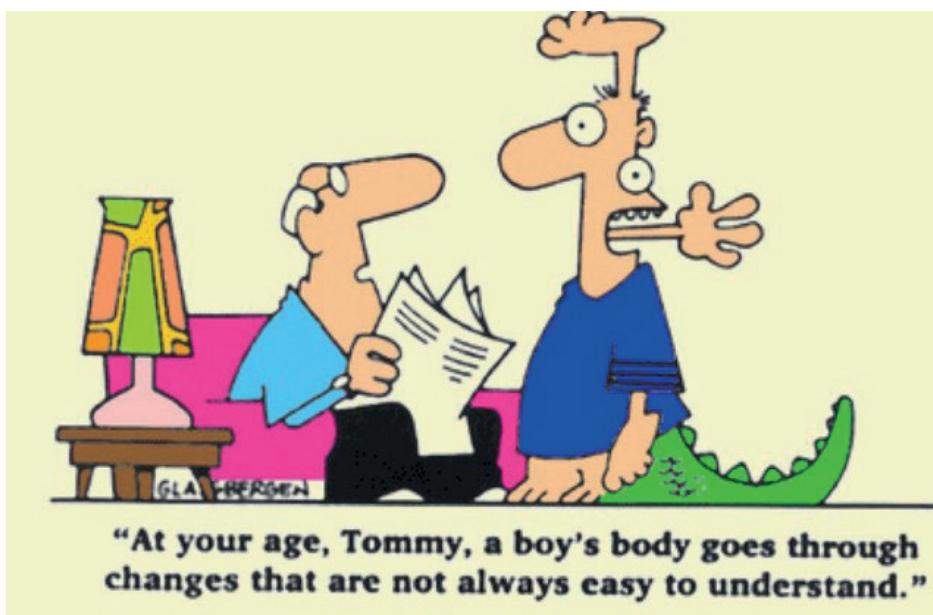
\* Authentic and potent rites of passage are not an intellectual exercise exclusively conducted in a classroom setting. The primary program design components, implemented over a number of years require exposure to ordeals, challenges, and connection with nature, culture and ancestors, time alone in silence for reflection, gender specific and separate activities and experiencing non-ordinary states of reality. Participants can incorporate lessons learned by providing service to others and the community, which has prepared a place for their emerging adulthood.



\* A narrative of rites of passage can be integrated when teaching academic subjects. This is illustrated in the innovative and unique designs featured in each of the four case studies. Individually they provide an entrance into the language of rites of passage and a surface encounter with the initiatory experience. While diverse, they each hold a portion of the initiatory experience. From the Hero's Journey anchored in the Greek cultural myth of Odysseus, to multimedia expressions seeking and finding freedom from oppression and identity, trying on different roles in psychodramas featuring masks, to an analytical exploration in a "Tree of Life" – each method strengthened participant's and staff's fluency in the language and experience of rites of passage. Partners learning from each other and integrating their methods together is a next step in the YOU-ROPE process.

\*Develop strong university community partnerships that can strengthen a focus on the literature and scholarship related to youth and community development through rites of passage. Students engaged in a rigorous academic process can help support local community development of rites of passage through more powerful practices. This can be accomplished by creating in each country an Institute for the Study and Practice of Youth & Community Development through Rites of Passage.

An Institute would be the Place of initiation for university students (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014) while also serving as a regional training center for educators, youth workers and communities. Students could serve internships in communities that are re-establishing rites of passage. It has been demonstrated that engaging students in the initiatory process can build a foundation for prevention and subsequent therapeutic intervention. Furthermore, it has been clearly established that rites of passage are key ingredients to building and maintaining a sense of community and has been very effective at building a community's capacity to collaborate on behalf of their children.



Rites of passage may be viewed as Primal Prevention and a way to impact the climate in a particular culture and community.

*A modern day rite of passage is achieved when parents, guardians or surrogates and the community create and participate over a number of years in learning experiences which are perceived to be transformative by youth and, in fact, offer them increased status within the community, responsibilities to be in service to others and facilitate their healthy transition through adolescence.*

*The celebration of a rite of passage is renewing for the entire community which includes earth and all our relations. A child's public expression of and commitment to community's values and beliefs reinforces expectations for behaviors for the survival of the entire community and health and wellbeing of all our relations. A child's coming of age presents an opportunity for the whole community to examine, adapt and recommit themselves to their social and cultural heritage. In this light it takes a whole child to raise a village (Blumenkrantz, 1996).*

puberty & a mid-life crisis  
can hit at the same time...

depending  
on your  
life span...



# 1.Theoretical Background

Rites of passage are significant events in the lives of people and for their communities. Their value is reciprocal for both the person, receiving support and guidance during times of transition, especially the transition from child to adult, and for strengthening the sense of community and the community's capacity to adapt and insure their survival. The community also serves as the place where a child's ascension to adulthood is sanctioned and affirmed and where a place is made for them to be contributing members in a democratic society.

Van de Gennep (1909), was the first author to codify rites of passage, identifying three different stages. The first stage is called "separation", an autonomous differentiation from the values and attitudes of the family and of the dominant culture. A separation from a previous status to a new status. In the rites of passage surrounding birth one goes from unborn to being born, from birth into the physical realm to birth into the spiritual realm as with Baptism. Similar, a wedding/marriage rite of passage affirms within the community that two individuals are changing into a married couple.

In the transition from child to adult there is at the same time an identification with the peer group, which re-defines a positive sense of the self through the feeling of being part of a group.

The second phase involves crossing boundaries, especially those established by the family nucleus. In this sense we often speak of transgressions or of exceeding limits. This phase takes the name of "liminality", a place of betwixt and between, neither in one state or the other, a place of being in between. The transition from child to adult that is not made of isolation, but within their peer group of "initiates" through a series of intentional activities that may include: trials, ordeals and challenges, connection with nature, time alone for reflection, where lessons on values and ethics are learned, that inform behaviors essential for participating in a democratic society. These activities are projected towards a future in which children aspire to be stronger, happier and able to control and determine the events of their lives while recognizing their increased responsibility to their family, community and principles of a democratic society.

Rites of Passage have individual, group-based, community-based and cultural features that need to be taken into account in order to develop a positive rite of passage experience that serves not only the individual but their family and community (Blumenkrantz, 2016). The relational process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood is underlined by the research, suggesting a relational definition of the identity. That is, identity formation is influenced by cultural, contextual, community, nature and other forces, factors and entities that are in relationship to an individual. Accordingly, the adult identity may be described as migrating from earlier identity descriptions, shaped and sustained by interactions with others and cultures.

Interviews with YOU-ROPE participants revealed that rite of passage experiences based on personal features are related, for example, with being in charge for others, (*"Before this, I was crossing the streets anywhere I wanted; after I gave birth, I began to cross the streets only on pedestrian crossing. I know I have to live because I am in charge"*) or with being more aware of responsibilities (*"Now I have more responsibilities, and I feel that a lot of things have changed in me: personally, within me, about the way I think; and also, on a physical way"*). The meaning attributed to such experiences were referred to the feeling of being more independent from the family: feeling more responsible, as being able to *"influence society"*, *"being treated as an adult"* or *"take care of myself"* and understanding that behaviors have *"great consequences on the lives of others"*.

In order to be defined as rites of passage it is necessary that these experiences are recognized by the youth's family and the community of adults. And, that the youth is able to demonstrate lessons learned in the liminal phase of rite of passage experiences. This is the third phase of van Gennep's scheme that he called "incorporation". For example, parents and teachers who give confidence to the adolescents and confront them as peers, by granting greater freedom or discussing with them, even with different positions but giving value to their ability of self-reasoning. The social system must therefore enhance these acquisitions and recognize them through a celebration that formalizes the entrance into the adult world. The problem considering this globalized and hyper-connected society is that it is difficult to find spaces in which the meanings are discussed in depth: the meaning-making remain confined to the individual sphere or to the small group. This aspect poses the risk that the anthropological need for belonging to a group, if not intercepted and valued by communities, is expanded into dysfunctional, if not deviant, forms.

The role of the whole community is therefore crucial, as an ancient African saying: *"It takes a whole village to raise a child"*, to give a universal meaning to the value of growth and to ensure that individual progress is a contribution to the progress of a culture.

The rite of passage is expressed on a holistic dimension where personal, relational, environmental, social and spiritual systems are interconnected and contribute to personal growth and the cultural growth of a community (Blumenkrantz, 2016). Some key elements of this process of personal and social growth are well identified by the responses given by the participants to the research during the first phase of the YOU-ROPE project.

The relational component is frequently reported. Most important is the relationship with peers, that are like mirrors and that provide solidarity and harmony (*"I think, sincerely, that is important to have a real friend; a friend who tells you things directly. Some-one who knows you well, because he/she will understand you although you don't know how to explain yourself. He/she judges you, but for your own good"*). The acknowledgement by adults is also really important (i.e.: legal acknowledgement: the 18th birthday; the driving license; the possibility to vote). Participants also discussed about economic and working independence/autonomy (*"making a family"; "getting married"*) and traveling alone. Acquiring freedom and the possibility to have new experience, as a journey abroad, experiences in voluntarism or even the possibility to be home-alone, are reported as important acknowledgement by adults during adolescence.

Being recognized as competent and being able to handle responsibilities, as working or organizing activities for the community autonomously, was also recognized as part of a rite of passage experience; (*"Our neighborhood's youth center. It has been a great opportunity for me. Also the theatre classes, because our teacher has been an educator for me"*).

The community-oriented rite of passage is important and has common characteristics in every age and in different territorial and cultural contexts. The phases are always those of separation, liminality/transition and incorporation and also the type of event refers to universal meanings. Without personal, relational, environmental, social and spiritual dimensions rites of passage tends to be perceived as incomplete and fail to have the propulsive force for the improvement of both the person and their community. When these dimensions are present, however, it is possible to strengthen within the individual the development of a greater sense of belonging to and responsibility for the community. It is why we say: *"It takes a whole child to raise a village,"* (Blumenkrantz 2016).

An intervention of youth & community development through rites of passage aims to enhance the value of rites of passage for youth and strengthen their sense of connection to and participation in the democratic culture of a community



The community must adopt the narrative story of rites of passage as essential for their children's healthy transition to adulthood and must take into account the interaction between the different systems and groups present in the local community. Putting into circulation the stories, in narrative terms of different generations and of different cultural groups and recreating a common feeling that transcends the individual and small group dimensions so they can become universal, focusing actions towards a common goal of social improvement, a psychological sense of community and civic engagement to strengthen a culture of democracy.

The psychological sense of community is *"the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged inter-dependence with others, a willingness to maintain this inter-dependence by giving to others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure"* (Saranson, 1974, p. 157). In this perspective it is not possible to consider the person without considering his life context. . For McMillan and Chavis (1986), and McMillan (1996), sense of community is a complex construct made of affective, emotional and motivational aspects, that is based on a feeling of membership, influence (potentiality to influence members of the group), integration of needs and shared emotional connections.

In this sense, it is important to the success of rites of passage to involve the whole community in taking responsibilities for providing emotional significance and social value to the transition to adult life of young people within the narrative story of rites of passage.

What creates and solidifies the individual's bonds of belonging to their community is the sharing of languages and stories that exemplifies common values, ethics, perspectives and expectations for behaviors essential for community cohesion. For millennia the stories of the community that have created such links have been exemplified through myths and narrated through art and ritual which were a first form of theatre. As David Blumenkrantz says *"Myth speaks of the realities of what happened and was fully manifested in sacred time and space. This is one of the chief characteristics of myth, its ability to explain the origin and intricacies of sacred reality. Enacting the story of this sacred reality through rituals helps to guide the way we live. Is there any less need now, than in the past, for powerful stories that help us teach our children important lessons? Can the story of rites of passage serve as a more adequate myth for our time? Let us look at Sharpe's general properties of myth to see if and how rites of passage can serve as a more adequate myth, a story to inform and guide practices for living"* (Blumenkrantz, 2016).

Common themes can be seen throughout the myth, which, when applied to the lives of each one of the youth, help them identify in a story or in a character. These elements are fundamental in solidifying the bond between a youth's identity within their community and a character's identity within the story. Similarly, the background of the myth can help the youth better understand the history of their own community. So has to become the common links of the anthropological meanings of the different cultures. These elements are the "Logos", the discourse, the language shared between people; the "Telos" the purpose, the intent of a group or community the "Epos", the historical memory shared; the "Ethos", the values of reference of that group or community taking place in a given space or territory "Topos", and according to a certain time "Cronos" and refer to the story of a certain character who has certain roots "Genos" (Volger, 2007; Campbell, 1949). The theoretical assumptions presented are enriched by the following, in order to create the basis for organizing the experimentation of the educational pathways foreseen by the project and to identify the guidelines for putting to model the European interventions oriented to an approach using youth and community development through rites of passage theory and designs for practice.

In the subsequent paragraphs the approach adopted in each country involved in the project are presented.

## 1.1 Positive youth development through community and participatory-based applied theatre

During the 20th century, the majority of theories and explanations about adolescence period broadly agreed on defining this period as turbulent and troubled. Nowadays, existing data and evidences suggest that this period is not so obscure and shocking but, despite these scientific developments, there is still a social representation of adolescence as a negative period. This negative (and deficit-based conception) is more complemented by a more positive and asset-based approach to youth development. Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach asserts that every adolescent has the potential for a healthy and successful development (Benson, Scales, Hamilton & Sesman, 2006). PYD has also been adapted with a ROP framework (Blumenkrantz, 1986). Embracing a half-full glass approach to youth development allows the use of health and wellbeing promotion strategies, such as rites of passages.

In recent times some PYD strategies have been aligned with applied theatre practices. Terms like applied drama, applied theatre and applied performance gained currency during the 1990s, as students, academics, theatre practitioners and policy makers used them as a kind of shorthand to describe forms of dramatic activity that are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies (Nicholson, 2014). One of the themes shared by these applied forms of theatre is a focus on its intentionality, that is the aspiration to use drama to improve the lives of individuals, groups and societies. Applied theatre is primarily concerned with developing new possibilities for everyday living rather than separating theatre-going from other aspects of life, theatre can be a place where it is possible to imagine the world to be different and to develop individual, group and community assets.

Under the conceptual framework of applied theatre, community-based theatre has received relevance within PYD. The main features of community-based theatre are (Bidegain, 2010):

- An amateur practice where community members are active participants and become actors.
- Openness to any member of the community, underlining social inclusion and community integration.
- Topics, scenes, costumes, music and other features of the performance are co-designed, as a result of a participatory process with participants.
- The community as a whole, shows, by means of drama, stories about their lives within the community setting.
- Time to produce a theatrical play is needed.
- The role of facilitators is important to enhance the participatory process.
- Other community stakeholders are invited to join the play in order to discuss about the topic selected and to critically reflect on new possibilities to achieve individual, group and community wellbeing.

## 1.2 Psychodrama and creative methods

The approach underlying these pathways is experiential, that is, that aims to develop knowledge from the expression of personal experiences of the participants and through the re-elaboration of them by means of creativity. The main theoretical model behind this method is Psychodrama (Moreno, 1923). For the psychodramatic model, for both individual and group sessions, there are two related dimensions: spontaneity and creativity. Every participant is endowed with the possibility of being both spontaneous and creative. Spontaneity is a necessary condition for the creativity to be activated. It is important that both are present, as one without the other cannot activate an actual creative process based on the internal system of the individual, that connects with what happens in the here and now of its phenomenenic field. These are two aspects of the individual and group thinking process that can be educated, developed and reactivated by an appropriate facilitation. The psychodramatic methodology starts from the assumption that spontaneity can manifest itself in certain situations (use of the body, of the sense of humor, of situations of intimacy and connection with the others, etc.) and in every person

A good balance of spontaneity and creativity leads, on the one hand, to the ability to give adequate answers to a new and unforeseen situation, and, on the other, to be able to give a new and creative response to an old and crystalized situation. It is therefore necessary to create a physical and relational environment in which the people involved feel welcomed, free and protected in such a way that they lower their level of anxiety and cognitive control, to leave room for a so-called “spontaneous” attitude. This allows the emergence of associations and competences not related to the formal logical thought (Moreno, 1923; 1944; 1953; 1964). Moreno, resumes the philosophical contributions of Max Buber (1923) and identifies in the possibility of meeting with the other by himself (understood as the ability of the human being to enter into emotional relationship with his fellows, in an authentic and not distorted way), the key to the reading of mental health and personality balance.



The ability to meet with the others assumes that the processes of “tele” (which in Greek means “at a distance”) are active, the innate capacity of each individual to enter into emotional relationship with other human beings. Tele is different from empathy, a one-way process, because one person is empathetic towards another, but this does not necessarily apply to the other person. In tele this process is reciprocal. A psychodramatic meeting aims to develop the dimension of spontaneity-creativity able to develop synergy (tele) among the participants, in this way participants can cope with a theme starting from both the participants’ experiences and the objectives of the meeting. The structure of the session is preordained and is divided into three phases. The first is that of heating (warm-up), the second is that of action (acting or playing) and the third is that of shared reworking (Moreno, 1923; 1944; 1953; 1964). This meeting structure was then taken over by some educative approaches, particularly by those who use creative thinking to develop personal change and to improve transversal skills and competences (Jaoui, 1990).

## 1.3 The narrative approach

Using a social constructionist perspective, a narrative approach departs from structuralist concepts promoting explorations of the voices from the margins. It supports a view of “life as narrative”. In view of the social identity theories, a person would be inclined to achieve a positive, distinct identity, where the “positive and distinct identity” are contextually influenced, “as a set of collaborative social practices that vary depending on the context and interlocutors” (Moghaddam, 2006, p. 159). Narrative practices invite participants to share expressions of their life experiences promoting them as “authors of their life stories”. Narratives emerging in this way are circulated in various audiences in a respectful and honoring way shedding light onto personal identity and inviting others’ resonant narratives to richly engage in their specific community and historical context. Via externalizing conversations (White, 2007), narrative and relational identity is described as separate of problems affecting somebody’s life, “the problem is the problem, not the person” (p. 9). Life is multi-storied, and identity is a relational and contextual influenced project which can be created and re-created in interactions. Various applications of narrative principles have emerged since Michael White and David Epston proposed narrative therapy in 1990; one such approach is the “Tree of Life”, developed by Ncazelo Ncube.

## 1.4 Myths in education and counseling

The consciousness of most people is focused on the material part of the world. The spiritual dimension and the true holistic structure and composition of the human are usually not promoted enough through education. Myths served various functions in different cultures across time. One of the most common is to provide individuals with a reference to assist their psychological maturation and development. The hero on his journey to the Unknown goes through many tribulations, adventures, problems and reversals which he has to deal with. It recovers dynamics that until that moment he did not know to have, and through this potential he is transformed and fulfilled. Discovering and nourishing these potentials is what Campbell called the “pathway to bliss” (Campbell, 2004). Myths reflect on our spiritual origins, the field of unlimited and creative possibilities that we have as beings, so we can discover the hidden hero within us.

We can thus activate faith in ourselves and in our strengths, so that we can realize the plan of our soul’s journey. In myths everything is possible: trees cry and laugh, birds talk and advise and sometimes discreetly guide, homes have a voice and a soul, the woods hurt, and they do not cease to embrace. We need myths in order to believe that dragons could be killed, inner treasures could be found. The more you read Joseph Campbell, the more you realize that the hero’s journey exists in service to a larger truth, how we as humans live our own unique, individual myth. The story may be the journey, but the meaning and importance of the journey is discovering all aspects of who we are, and through that process raising our consciousness.

## 2. Rite of passages experience nowadays: how to start and organize a new rite of passage in Europe

The Intellectual Output 1 (I.O.1) of the discussed project was aimed to identify the main features of a European rite of passage experience for today's adolescents. In order to do so, partners, starting from the available literature, identified a common background form which starting the participatory discussion with the selected adolescents in the communities. This is consistent with the community-development aspect of the rite of passage model used. This background consisted mainly on the possibility to connect the three stages (i.e. separation, transition, incorporation) of the Van Gennep model (1909) on three dimensions that are easily identifiable by the involved adolescents. The 3 dimensions taken into consideration are the following:

- 1.The physical and/or mental, spiritual change – leaving one place and going to another (separation).
- 2.The testing and exploration of the new acquired skills with a group of peers to be engaged in learning, leaving old values/behaviors (liminality).

- 3.The demonstration of new skills and acknowledgement of the newly acquired skills by the local communities and the availability of a new role for the adolescents in the community in ways that strengthen a culture of democracy (incorporation).

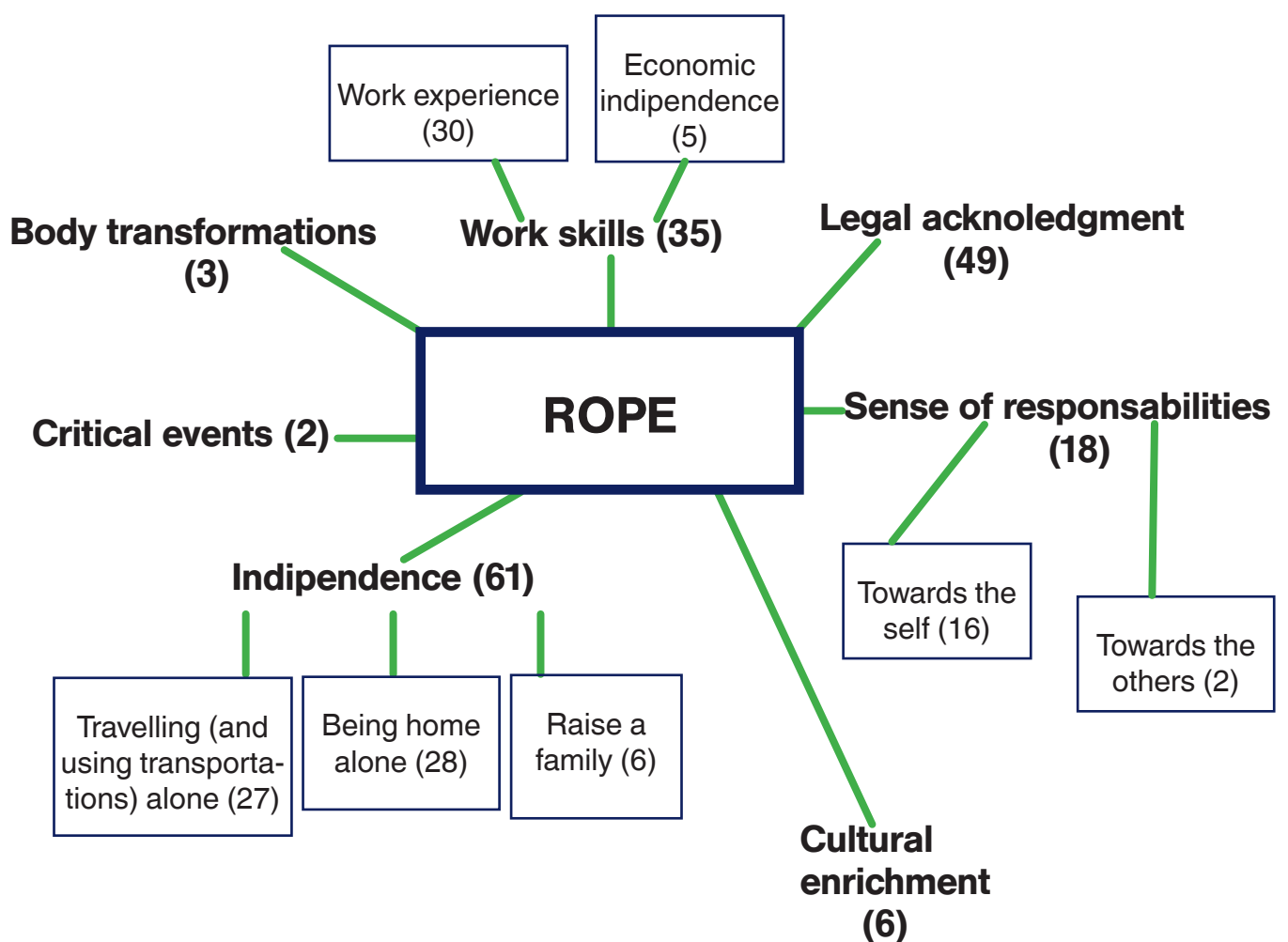
Partners of the YOU-ROPE project then agreed to approach data collection with phenomenological and qualitative methods in order to collect participants' point view about significative experience in their lives and highlight their emotions and beliefs about their rite of passage experience, starting from the research question "When did you feel yourself as an adult for the first time in your life?". Significative adults of their community were also involved in the research in order to compare findings and discuss with participants on later stages of the project (I.O.3) about the reason for the main emerged difference and to show the trans-generational nature of rite of passage experience. In this document we show only the main findings of I.O1 of the project, detailed information about the research can be found in the I.O.1 report.

## 2.1 Examples of events to be discussed as case studies

Here are reported in brief the most shared rite of passage experiences from adolescence to adulthood emerged during the research phase of the I.O.1. This is part of the community- development portion of the intervention: it begins to engage residents, youth and adults in conversations on questions that matter and provided the partnership a wider knowledge on the perceived role of rites of passage in the modern society across Europe.

- Staying home alone;
- Taking care of younger siblings;
- Moving around the city autonomously;
- Economic autonomy;
- Acquiring of new skills;
- Critical events (i.e. road accidents, family losses);
- Discovery of new things;
- Traveling alone or with peers;

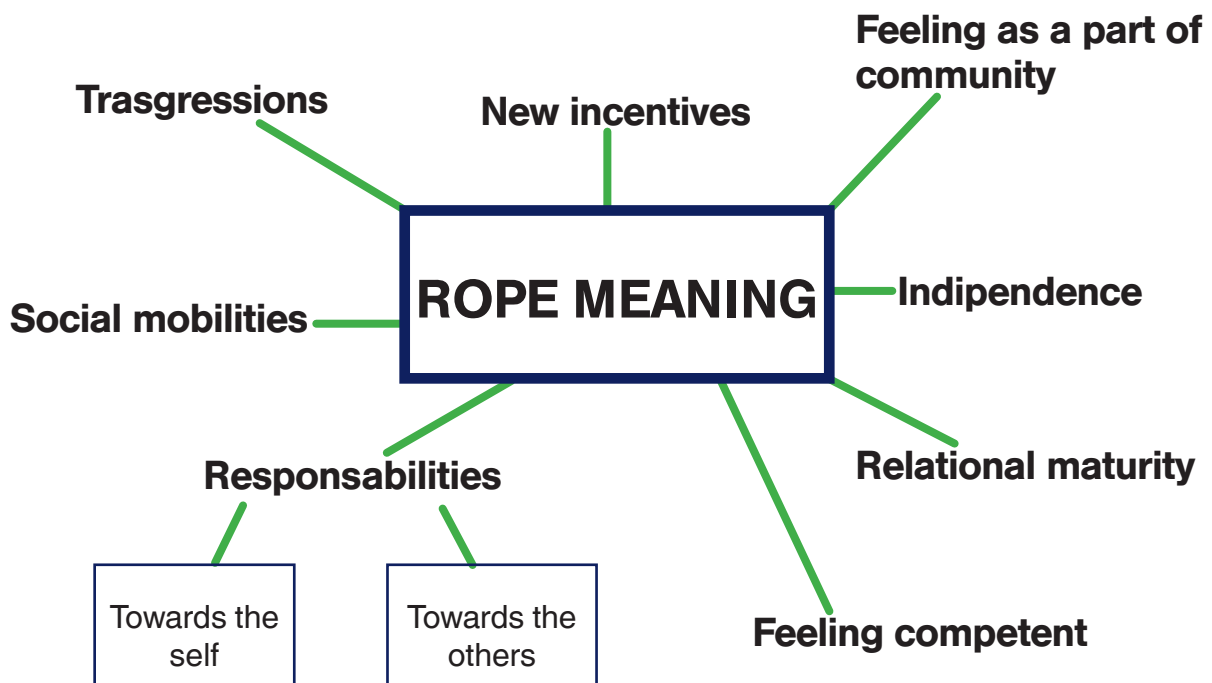




Rites of passage experiences above are shared regardless of provenience and inter-generationally, underlying an anthropological and transcultural need and sense-making process.

The meaning associated with rite of passage experiences are, as above, regardless of provenience and inter-generationally referred to a need for:

- Independence;
- Responsibility;
- Legal acknowledgement;
- Religious/spiritual meanings;
- Curiosity;
- Change (both physical and psychological);
- Transgressive behaviors;
- Acquiring new skills;
- Cultural enrichment;



## 2.2 Ideas for conducting events that come from the I.O.1

Together with the findings obtained from I.O.1, partners of YOU-ROPE project, thanks to the phenomenological and qualitative approach to the research, collected a series of indication on how to conduct events with adolescents. Here those are reported in brief.

- Sessions should take place in wide and quiet settings: large rooms without tables and obstructions.
- Experiential and practical methods should be implemented, by means of a creative and participatory approach.
- Narrative approach is also fundamental: starting from participants' experience and their feelings as the ROPE took action. Sharing of experiences creates an effective communication and a direct involvement.
- A mixed composition of the group (in terms of both age and personal stories) creates a better setting for ROPE's elaboration, providing new resources for the sense-making process.
- Theater-based group experiences (using also performative tools as drawing, music and writing) are extremely useful for sharing individual, relational and cultural features of personal experiences such as ROPEs.

## 2.3 Testing activities

At the end of I.O.1, in each country involved in the YOU-ROPE project the Testing Activities included in I.O.3 were implemented. In each country a number of adolescents were selected in order to begin a series of formative meetings with peers and facilitators and researcher of the YOU-ROPE project. During the Testing Activity in each country, participants discussed about the role and the meaning related to rites of passage in their lives and, with different approach, collected their reflections with innovative methods in order to introduce them to peers coming from the other countries involved in the project during the International Teaching and Learning Activity in Florence.



## 2.3.1 Testing activities in Barcelona

The theoretical assumptions of Youth Positive Development and ROPE were developed using a Community-based theatre methodological approach. Four main stages were set to develop the participatory process:

- Community engagement workshops (x2): An open call to youth within the community setting was done. Youth previously engaged in Intellectual Output 1 activities where prioritized to be reached out. Two open workshops were developed to set up the participants' group to be engaged during the next stages of the participatory process. During the two workshops expectations, goals, commitment and other issues among participants were raised.
- Group Cohesion workshops (x3): Once the group was set in the previous stage, three workshops were delivered to facilitate (1) mutual knowledge among participants; (2) getting to know theatrical skills and other expressive assets among the participants; and (3) group building exercises and games.
- Dramaturgic production (x6): Using results from Intellectual output 1 about what means to become an adult, and new contributions from the participants generated using image theatre and other drama games, initial contents to address the theatrical play were collected. The theoretical assumption about the rite of passage process (Van de Gennep, 1909): separation – liminality – incorporation was used to organize the contents generated into a dramaturgic structure. Sessions were used to produce collaboratively scenes to be tested and added to the theatrical production. The participants proposed costumes, songs and other resources as an ongoing creative process that allowed setting session by session the final theatrical play.



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- Rehearsals workshops (x2): Once the dramaturgic structure and scenes were set up, rehearsals exercises and games were used to achieve trust and confidence among the participants.
- Theatrical play within the community setting (25th of April): After the LTA experiential, a presentation was done at the Community Center, more than 45 adults attended the play and participate in a final discussion about what means to become an adult and how adult community members could positively escort youth in coming of age.

All workshop sessions were structured using a three steps process: (1) warm-up games; (2) Actions depending the main goal of the stage; and (3) Close-down exercises to relax.



**Number of workshops:** 13 sessions of 2 hours length.

**Number of participants:** 13 participants (one of them could not join the LTA activity) between 14 to 18 years old.

**Gender of participants:** 4 males 7 females

## 2.3.2 Testing activities in Florence

The Italian testing activity were organized following the framework of the rite of passage (Van de Gennep, 1909) and the narrative structure of the myth, the heroes journey (Campbell, 1949). The aim of the activity was to create a myth that is generated by the creativity of the participants, who shared their stories by means of the creation of a character, a superhero with a mask and special powers, and a plot. The story of each character is the projection of emotional experiences, attitudes, values, desires and fears of participants and represents the phase of liminality, in which youth are challenged to overcome their limits and to come in contact with something that transcends their own individuality. The stories of each participant have then been discussed and merged in a meta-myth created by the connection of the individual stories of the participants, representing the phase of separation from each ones' roots and the coming of a new journey with peers. At the end of the testing activity, the shared story (myth) is staged in front of an audience (representing the local community/village), simulating the incorporation phase of a rite of passage. The myth is staged as a ritual with a cathartic function that allows participants to experience a new and personal initiatory rite shared with peers.

It has been treated through psycho-dramatic activities, such as the ones that use body language to express emotions and behaviors (Boal, 1980; Mazzini and Talamonti, 2011). By means of these techniques the participants expressed the meanings related to becoming adults through body gestures. The second session (always part of the separation phase), was focused on the word. Through brainstorming and free associations of ideas, the participants created a shared definition of rite of passage. Both sessions represented, following the scheme above, the separation phase of the passage. From the third to the seventh session participants came out of their daily identity to create their own masks, their mythological hero with special powers and weak points, as a representation of the liminality phase. From the fifth session some representatives of the local community (teachers, educators and grandparents) were invited. They were also asked to create their masks and stories, representing a significant rite of passage of their lives, and shared them with the young participants: a new narrative arose, a meta-myth fruit of the common stories of the young people and the local community merged together in the final performance. In the eighth session the performance was represented to the community and the participants had the opportunity to have a discussion with their own community, to celebrate and explain what they learned with this creative and performative experience.

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This session represented the phase of the incorporation of the rite of passage. The methodological structure of the activities was the psychodramatic one. Each session was structured with three phases of work: the first was the warm-up phase, in which there was a ritual-playful activity, aimed at entering the open and relaxed climate necessary for the activation of creative thought. The second phase, the one of the acting, in which the central activity was carried out, such as the construction of the mask or the writing of the hero's stories. In the third one, the one of the sharing, the participants discussed their feelings and the acquisition of new knowledge, together with the facilitators. Each session was closed with a ritual of group greeting. According to the model of the psychodrama, both the conductor and the co-conductors have realized the same activities proposed to the participants, thus carrying out both the guide and accompaniment function, but also that of comparison and auxiliary-me for the participants.



**Number of workshops:** 8 sessions of 2 hours and half each.

**Number of participants:** 20 participants between 16 to 19 years old.

**Gender of participants:** 18 males 2 females

- Session 1: the body of the hero
- Session 2: the word the hero
- Session 3: the mask of the hero
- Session 4: the story of the hero
- Session 5: the heroes meet the community
- Session 6 and 7: the creation of the meta-myth (common story)
- Session 8: the celebration



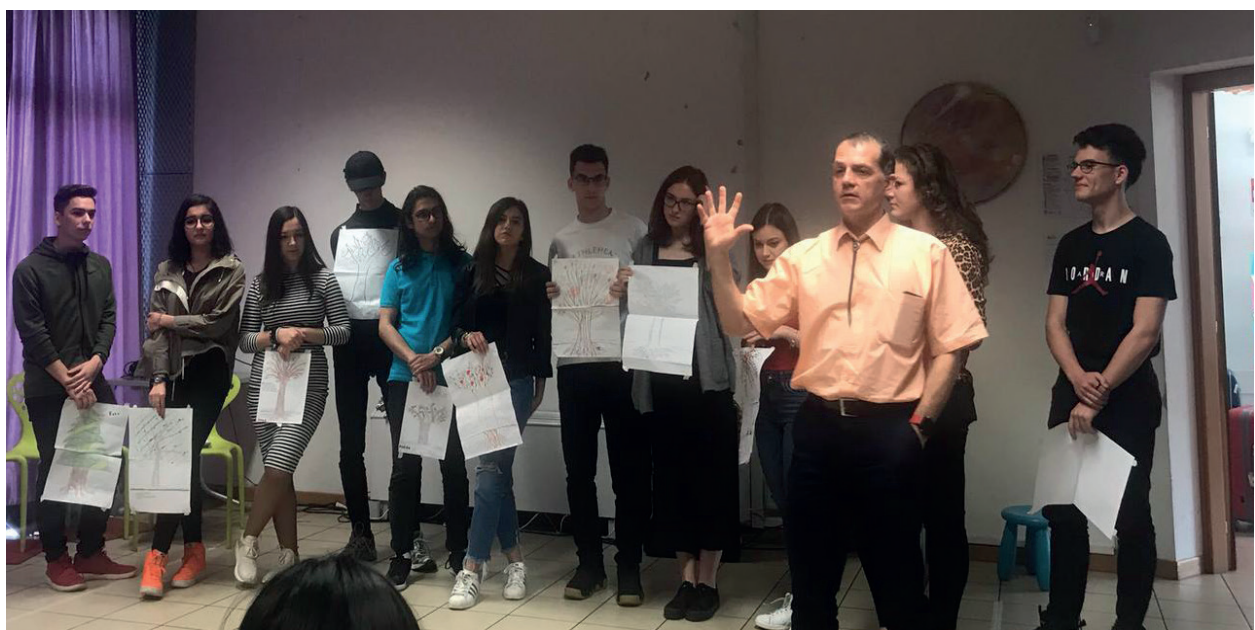
### 2.3.3 Testing activities in Iasi

The Tree of Life (ToL) practice invites the participants to share aspects of their life following non-structuralist identity descriptions attached to areas of a drawing of a tree (roots, ground, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits), engaging them into re-authoring stories that are connected via narrative interviewing in a group setting. The engagement of the participants with relevant personal values, principles and commitments are rendered visible in the reflections of the “outsider witness” participants emphasizing the commonality of value-based and value-laden human aspirations that go beyond personal and historical contexts. Sharing rich descriptions of personal identity forges affiliative stories of communality and knits areas of shared values and desirable principles for living

The ToL practice may be understood as a vehicle for a journey for shared identities, and a restauration of community related identities while promoting and preserving human dignity to all involved.

Realizing the ToL posters, individually, the participants aggregate a ToL Gallery representing and ad-hoc “Forest of Life” which is “visited” by all participants. A definitional ceremony type conversation concluded the workshop with certificates being awarded at the end. There were two meetings, 8 hours each, participating 11 young adults, students (6 female students, 5 male students), 2 school counselors, and 2 Psiterra consultants.

After Florence mobility another meeting with the student participants and Psiterra staff was organized (4 hours).



## **Iasi narrative workshops**

- 2 sessions, 8 hours each
- 11 participants, 16-19years
- 5 males 6 females
- 2 professionals / school counselor
- 2 facilitators

## **Iasi follow-up narrative workshops**

- 1 session, 4 hours
- 11 participants, 16-19years
- 5 males 6 females
- 2 facilitators

## **Workshops' themes**

1. Presentation of the Project. Initial meeting. Getting to know each other, presentation of the Project, aims, activities, timeline; signing consent forms – parents, organizers (Psiterra Association), teacher-counselors, youth.

2. Team development. Workshop at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi. Ice-breakers in expanding getting to know each other and Tree of Life (ToL) practice. Taking turns, after the individual work on their ToL, each participant was interviewed narratively by the Psiterra facilitator. A shared “Forest of Life” gallery was performed. In the end, a “definitional ceremony” narrative practice emerged. Certificates were crafted by the participants’ themselves and were ceremonially offered in the end, along with the ToL posters created.

3. Reflecting on ToL experience. Workshop at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi with the aim of reflecting upon the ToL experiences and creating a new group narrative which was transformed into a script for a videoclip. The Psiterra team had a facilitating, organizing and documenting role. The film making project was organized and enacted entirely with youth leadership and participation.



## 2.3.4 Testing activities in Rethymno

We realized eight 3-hours workshops with adolescents relying on the theoretical assumption that classic myths survive generation after generation because we believe they teach people how to perceive and respond to the surrounding world. Myths in Greece supply a set of embodied metaphors to live by and reflect on. So, we worked on the relationship between myth, metaphor, self-awareness, communication and team bonding. We chose Odysseus's myth (Greek: 'Οδυσσεύς, Latin: Ulysses) a legendary Greek king of Ithaca and the hero of Homer's epic poem the Odyssey. This epic describes his travails, which lasted for 10 years, as he tries to return home after the Trojan War and reassert his place as rightful king of Ithaca. We used the myth as a metaphor for the journey (transition) to adulthood, asking the participants to reflect (individually and as a team) on Odysseus' wanderings

"Which are the challenges of coming into age? What needs to be learned? Which are the skills to be gained? Who could help?" were some of the questions to discuss on each of our meetings. When Odysseus, for example, sails on and visits the witch-goddess Circe, she turns half of his men into swine. *"Is it that when somebody looks at you as a pig, you start behaving / feeling as a pig? Did somebody make you feel ashamed for your feelings or thoughts?"*

Using metaphors like the above, the participants shared and tried to synthesize a common perspective on the issues that emerged like conflict resolution skills, mental health and sexual education. All the workshops were beginning with a warming up activity and ending with an enactment, the combination of which is going to be a performance presented at Florence.



## Workshops' themes

1. Presentation of the Programme. Meeting each other. The participants were given a hero - name and they should find their match, without talking (e.g. Ulysses should find Penelope, Hera should find Zeus). Goals & Expectations.

2. Team Bonding. Brainstorming on "Adulthood" – Which are the skills / attitudes the adolescents find helpful in their transition to adulthood. Different meanings for values like Responsibility or Independency. Building Trust Activity (The deaf leads the blind)

3. Reflecting on a myth. What Ulysses journey means for the team. Adulthood: An experience or a process? Pick up one of Ulysses' adventure and share why this was important for you.

4. Captured by the Cyclops Polyphemus. Trust Exercise: Will you catch me if I fall? Which are the qualities that a relationship should entail to feel safe?

5. Sirens. Which are our role models? How the community could help transition to adulthood? Bringing in our meeting something that represents adulthood (song, picture...).

6.a. Monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis: Our inner voices - Trying to understand myself. 6.b. Circe: Other people gaze – How other people's opinion affect my thoughts / feelings / behavior.

7. Calypso: Conflict resolution at school or family. Parents, also, invited. Communication skills Exercise.

8. Ithaca: Evaluation, Final Discussion about our trip, Preparation for travelling at Florence.

**Number of workshops:** 8 sessions of 3 hours each.

**Number of participants:** 12 participants 17 years old.

**Gender of participants:** 8 males 4 females

## 2.4 The International Learning Teaching Activity in Florence

The national practices based on local methodologies adopted for the testing activities were discussed by the partnership and then, starting from the outcomes, an International Learning and Teaching Activity (LTA) was planned. The LTA organized in Florence was intended as a common platform for the participants to share experiences, presentations and performances of the testing activities in each country, as well as a reflection on Rite Of Passage Experience conceptualization and philosophy with the important contribution of David Blumenkrantz – both in person and with a wide array of documentation (video, text, and imagery) supporting the ROPE initiation. Young people involved in the project, together with youth workers, traveled to Florence to meet and work together to build a European Rite of Passage experience based on the knowledge acquired in the testing activity realized in Barcelona, Florence, Iasi and Rethymno. The process gradually emerged and culminated with an expression of togetherness, humanity, and joy of living.



The metaphors of the journey, of the union with peers facing the same challenges, of the re-connection with an universal dimension of humanity, united all the participants, regardless of age, professional expertise, parental role. The inspirational experience in Florence acted as a trigger to promote participants' ability to influence theirs' and others' lives, together with the significant members of their communities in a shared and empowering pathway towards adulthood. Participants discussed together about their meanings for transformation, transition, sense of freedom and responsibility and, by adopting some of the methodologies experienced during the testing activities, realized a performance ("From Darkness to Light") to share their rite of passage experience with their new community of Europeans participating in, and strengthening, a democratic society. As shown in the summary of the answers to the question: *"What means to you to become an adult?"* given through the word cloud, findings emerged during I.O.1 are highlighted and confirmed in the LTA.





The aspects perceived as more important to become an adult by adolescents, developed by overcoming the challenges necessary to complete the transition from childhood to adulthood, are the sense of responsibility, respect, understood as a positive attention and consideration for the needs of the self, of others and of the environment, and independence, intended as the possibility of making autonomous choices for their lives. They were also followed by values considered fundamental, such as trust, both towards themselves and others, the capacity of understanding others and open-mindedness. At the end of the International meeting participants reportedly came back to their homes with a brand-new set of answers and tools but also with new questions, as how to integrate the experienced change in their lives and how to introduce this new potential into the world. Answers to those questions are difficult to find at any stage of everyone's lives, but after this experience of sharing, engagement and growth the young participants explored the importance of (among others) connecting with the others, to reflect on their selves, reciprocate for developing a more satisfying approach to life and to growth (Blumenkrantz, 2016).



### 3. Conclusions

In the YOU-ROPE project, a model of intervention aimed at using rites of passage in adolescence was developed as a tool to promote a sense of belonging to the community and to prevent forms of youth distress. As reported in the introduction, the project is inspired by the Rite of Passage Experience (ROPE) exemplar of the youth and community development through rites of passage model realized by D. Blumenkrantz. The basic assumption is that rites of passage are fundamental processes essential for the positive growth of individuals as well as strengthening one's culture and community. They sanction the overcoming of the stages of growth in relation to the cultural uses and traditions of a society and a cultural and/or religious group. They are important because they help to identify the boundaries of social roles and define the values, attitudes and actions of each stage of life within a given culture. ROPEs are acts, trials or ceremonies in which a person is challenged with a "test" that needs to be overcome with skills and functions that he has not yet experienced. Rites are a symbol of the individual sphere, of relationships with peers, with family members and with their roots, with their community and with their whole existence. They are transmitted through generations and, even today, rites of passage are important for adolescents to fulfill their need to be recognized as new adults.

As reported in the introduction, rites can still be considered as a fundamental element for the positive growth, but if they are deprived of their meaning, young people tend to search new rites, not recognized by their communities, that becomes rites of marginalization. It is therefore responsibility of adults to give value to their experiences, to give them confidence when facing their challenges, and, once they have passed them successfully, recognize and celebrate them. In particular, schools are the main settings in which such contents can be experienced and discussed. For this reason, the partnership chose to involve them in the realization of the project. Thanks to this kind of intervention, the young people involved became protagonists in the communities of their schools, first of all to discuss and deepen the meaning of the rites of passage between the various stages of life as a tool of personal growth and of the community. In the first phase of the project, the topic was discussed as a phenomenological survey on rites of passage. At the beginning of the activities, the territorial network of the areas of the four cities involved in the project was mapped in order to identify the educative entities to be involved in the project.



Group and individual interviews were conducted with key-persons of the community involved, family members, educators and teachers in particular, to raise awareness of the issue and to discuss with them about the meaning that rites of passage have nowadays and how they can be re-enhanced in contemporary society. Interactive workshops have been also carried out in some classes, involving also the teachers. Students also delved into the topics of identifying which events they consider important to become adults and what is important about those events for themselves, their families, and their community. Starting from the contents that emerged, four in-depth courses (Testing Activities) were organized in the four cities involved in the project, addressed to a group of about 15 students each. As we saw, the four paths followed different methodological models: one with the forum theater, one with psychodrama, one with the tree of life and one with the myth of the odyssey. The final part of each path was aimed to the creation of a performance to stage the rites of passage, using different languages that combine the psychological approach with the expressive and creative methods, such as the representation of myths, the narration with the symbolism of the tree, forum theater and psychodrama



Every testing activity referred to the theoretical model of rites of passage in adolescence, already developed by D. Blumenkrantz (Rope.org).

The project itself, in a certain way, represented in the implementation of its phases, the project itself represented a myth within which the participants went through the phases of the “hero’s journey”; that is, it went through the phases of detachment from the family, traditions and the world known, to face challenges that confront him with his potential and with his limitations, in which he faces ambiguous and potentially dangerous situations that make him stronger and able to face important trials not only for himself but also for the benefit of his family and community. When he comes home he has grown, evolved and thanks to the tests passed, he also helped others to feel better. For this reason, he is welcomed and celebrated on his return (Campbell, 1949). The way in which the project not only as a metaphor, but through the choice of the theoretical and methodological approach, allowed the participants, primarily students, but also educators and teachers, to retrace the phases of the transition from childhood to adult life is represented by the development of teenage skills through rites of passage. In this way, the YOU -ROPE project became a community in which a “meta-myth” took place, in which the participants carried out a new and shared rite of passage.

In other words, thanks to the project activities, the children tested their autonomy, their responsibilities, the freedom to make choices without the control of adults and the ability to take care of and carry out activities that benefits others. The basic theoretical approach was the narrative one, it is assumed that the fabric that connects and creates the bonds of a community, are the stories that relate people’s life experiences. The emotions that are transmitted, the attitudes that manifest themselves, the values that emerge are the result of the stories that create a shared memory that forms the basis for the construction of identity and that guides the possibilities of future development.

The survey, aimed to define and analyze the rites of passage of contemporary communities, was planned as to re-create circles around the fire in which the myths of that community were told. Group meetings (focus groups and interactive workshops) were then organized in which participants told others about the experiences and events in which they felt themselves adults for the first time (see Chapter 2). The emerged stories were very similar to each others and, even in the specific differences, they always reported to certain nodal aspects that allowed to retrace the phases of separation, liminality and transition.

By doing so, they also highlighted the acquisition of skills such as sense of responsibility for others, autonomy and freedom. As already pointed out by Blumentkrantz (2016; rope.org) *“Youth and Community Development through Rites of Passage is a reciprocity between the individual and their community”*, in the sense that by the stories that are narrated in a community, young people connect with values and ethics of their community and with the whole environment. In this sense, rites of passage are narrated with shared and universal elements that transcend temporal and spatial specificities, common to humans.

We referred to the methodological earthy model rope.org (Blumenkrantz, 2016), already validated in the United States and other parts of the world. The model identifies 20 key elements to carry out an educational intervention able to recreate the phases of the rite of passage in the local community. First of all, it refers to the telling of stories (*“What’s the story?”*) that exemplify the deeds of local heroes, but then it highlights the aspects related to the inner and personal growth of both children and their educators/parents.

Especially when it says *“You can only bring someone as far as you’ve been yourself”*, the aspects of reciprocity is emphasized, not only with peers, but especially with adults, who first have to question and engage in confrontation with young people. It is therefore referred to the relational level: from the relationships between people, to the relationship with the communities. At the end it underlines the need for the growth to be completed. The reference is to a holistic and systemic vision in which subjective, relational, social, cultural and transcultural levels are integrated, as well as the relationship with the environment. According to this, for a rite to be a rite of passage, there must be balance between each element and a positive change to both the individuals and the environment<sup>1</sup>. The stories that the participants told us were the basis for creating a common feeling and vision on rites of passage within the “YOU-ROPE” community.

Intellectual Output 1 was the birth and growth phase of a community, by sharing stories of growth towards adulthood, a common language was structured that valued cultural differences and specificities of the approach of each group involved in the project.

<sup>1</sup>For more information about “Trinity of Inquiry into action” go to: Take Action: Village Elders, within [www.rope.org](http://www.rope.org).

In metaphorical terms, the children, thanks to the activities of the first part of the project, reached the limit of growth in which the hero is forced to leave to pass those tests. The Intellectual Output 3, in which Testing Activities were realized, is the metaphor of the journey, of the liminality phase, in which the hero has crossed the border of his own village to venture to places where he will experience unknown and unpredictable challenges. In this sense, the students who participated, left the safe and well-known place of their school classes, to deepen the issues related to growth with new methods and tools. They met new fellow travelers and relied on the facilitators, who represented the wise or the magicians who at some point meets the hero and on who is relied their return to home. The final and most important stage of their journeys, for the amount and complexity of the tests to be overcome, was represented by the International Learning and Teaching Activity. During the week of meeting between young people and the adults who realized the four paths, each group showed to the others what was achieved and discussed the meaning of each experience.

Links within each of the four groups have been strengthened and a strong sense of belonging to the YOU-ROPE project group has been created. The activities carried out were framed in the reference model of the rites of passage. Even the week of the meeting followed the structure of the rite. It was first of all created a sense of belonging that gave each participant the tangible feeling of being part of a larger community by means of warming up and group building activities. On the second day each group staged a performance, as the first test to be overcome, so that the specific characteristics of each member of the four groups came to light. Over the next few days, the four groups mingled and put their skills to the test, to carry on their journey towards the end of the meetings and the celebration of their growth. The actual celebration, as the incorporation phase, took place after the return to home of each delegation. Each group made a meeting with their community (schools, classmates, family and community members) and showed their achievements through a performance and a discussion with them.



This public dissemination meetings, carried out by both the young people and the adults, represented the celebration of the return to home of the heroes of the myths. After the conclusion of the activities, the project partners, together with the stakeholders and a representative of the youth involved, analyzed what was achieved during the internal seminars and multiplier events, in order to identify the fundamental elements for the creation of educational pathways that use the concept of rite of passage to foster the positive growth and the sense of community of young people. The results were linked to the democratic culture skills identified by the Council of Europe as key elements for promoting the positive growth of young people within the European Community. The project was able to positively influence the four areas of the CDC: attitudes, values, knowledge and critical understanding. With partners of the project, the narrative method was also sought to analyze the project. Each organisation of the partnership was asked to describe why the project was important for them. Below we report a summary of what has been said.



## 3.1 Why are the Guidelines important for the partners?

### 3.1.1 From ETCS Barcelona

We envisage these guidelines about what are Rites of Passage and how to implement them involving young people and significant adults as a useful and powerful tool to achieve a real positive youth development.

Adolescence is a period of life that could be defined as a culturally diverse and plural transition process in between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence encompasses unique processes and personal experiences that never will happen again, paradoxically adolescence is a fragile and intensive life period among human beings. This period is characterized by high intensity of personal and group experiences shaping our identity and relationships, strong social pressure to achieve goals and physical and psychological transformations.

To understand youth a systemic approach needs to be taken into account. Four systems are relevant to complexly understand youth development: (1) family; (2) Peers; (3) Educational System; and (4) Community setting. Rites of Passage have the potential to address adolescence challenges interconnecting all systems and, very importantly, allowing a central role for youngsters themselves.

Many mainstream approaches to youth development are top-down oriented rather than bottom – up or participatory-based. Among these approaches adults and professionals play a central role within service providing and educational settings, these approaches are of great value when emergencies and/or psychosocial stress are there. However, it is important to bear in mind the need to not over “pathologise” this period of life and implement more bottom-up oriented action, Rites of Passages can play an important role on this agenda.



## 3.1.2 From LabCom Firenze

With this project we tried to give a cultural sense to educational and experiential path-ways aimed to the development of the sense of community. The model developed by prof. Blumenkrantz in the United States has the ability to create a theoretical and methodological framework for community development interventions that involve young people, parents, teachers and local communities. The key to these interventions is the use of a fundamental aspect of culture from the anthropological point of view: The Rite of Passage as a founding element of the intergenerational bond of the community. In this sense it re-lates an anthropological approach with a psychological one.

This model, that now for more than forty years is being used in the United States, was poorly known in Europe. With the YOU-ROPE project, we wanted to test it in Europe in order to adapt it and transfer innovative aspects in the European context.

The Guidelines aim to introduce policy-makers and others to concepts related to the practice of youth and community development through rites of passage and transfer skills for implementation of such practices to professionals in the psycho-educational sector in Europe. The fact of having linked the results of the experimentation to the competences for a Democratic Culture highlights how this model is useful to make the education for European citizenship of young people effective.

## 3.1.3 From Centro Machiavelli Firenze

When in 2015 Ms. Laura Remaschi talked to us for the first time about Mr. David G. Blumenkrantz and his Youth and Community Development through Rites of Passage, exemplified in ROPE concept, introducing the rites of passage from adolescence to adulthood as issue for developing an European project, We firstly felt the necessity to make an historical-anthropological and cultural research for understanding more clearly the subject.

Facing this topic, whoever meets it has immediately the clear impression to be in contact with an extra-ordinarily innovative project idea and, at the same time, to deal with an anthropologically primordial concept. In fact, what is striking about You-Rope is that those who know it feel the immediate necessity to understand more in deep the meaning of a rite of passage and its importance in marking moments of growth per each of us.

This research has led us to discover that today among young people the practice of initiation rites is more and more fragmented, occasional and that, where present, these rites are often not recognized by their belonging communities.

All this creates a sense of bewilderment, of loss of identifying values, of anomie, which cause a general cultural impoverishment in favor of the economy and technology, which are predominant. But technology is totally uncaring toward human feelings, it looks at development not at progress, which is instead the cultural growth of people and communities.

Having seen in this idea a valid answer to this cultural impoverishment, we accepted with enthusiasm to give our contribution in developing the project proposal contents and in putting together the cultural differences of the involved Countries: Italy, Greece, Romania, Spain. And is exactly this cultural mixture that defines the bursting strength of YOU-ROPE that, thanks to the work of the partners, allowed us to start from the concept of Mr. Blumenkrantz' ROPE for building a European model of initiation and passage' rites.

A model well summarized in these Guidelines that give to the users the opportunity to co-create and to promote rites of passage converging in a shared identity, in common ethical behaviors aimed at the involvement of other individuals in initiation practices strongly helpful for identifying and for attesting the same roots and the same values of belonging in the different involved countries, for the benefit of a felt and active European citizenship.

By the way of EUROPA word, it has a strong assonance with EUPORIA, which define a set of rituals that facilitate the transition from an age to another age in Ancient Greece.

Thus, YOU-ROPE appears at the same time innovative and archaic due to its close linking with the rites and territories concerned, a unique emotional journey that allowed to make an effective cultural mixture of the involved communities. In fact, the pathway that led to its implementation has been exciting and surprising because it has led to the rediscovery and the cultural re-appropriation of rites and spaces removed by the recent memory. This re-appropriation represents also the re-discovery of a multicultural identity to be transferred to future generations with all its constellation of values.

*Our diversity is our strength!* is the motto of #EuropeDay2019. And since 1957 the Union has brought together many Europeans to work jointly for peace and prosperity. Europe has been the most belliscose continent ever, generating two world wars in the last century. So, we invented the European Union, wherein young people, new generations can move freely looking for new opportunities.

Having been able to generate synergy among the differences of the partner' countries it means that we have given a contribution to the shaping of a European conscience and active citizenship among all those involved.

Therefore, we are grateful for this experience - both exciting and extremely engaging - to all partners, to those who were able to narrate, those who worked to develop and enhance the collected and produced outputs and, finally, to those who contributed to its success.

### 3.1.4 From Cepiss Firenze

The YOU-ROPE project, Rites of Passage in Europe, has represented for the Cepiss Cooperative a way to compare oneself with some keywords: exchange practices, sharing, searching for balance, call into a question, playing, transmission, knowledge and culture, openness, individuality/community, attention, young/adult. This is a relevant aspect for a social enterprise, especially when is carried out in a trans-national perspective, in view of the expected confrontation. As educators and as “adults working with young people”, we believe that the knowledge transmission is an end in itself if not substantiated by a continuous research and by a called into question of one’s own knowledge and practices. For the Cepiss Cooperative, the YOU-ROPE Project involvement has represented: undertake a new challenge in order to enrich our experience, in terms of contents and operational strategies. However, the educational and training field in which we are engaged, implies a constantly research and called into a question: the confrontation about a topic declined in a framework other than that of origin; the need to find a balance between personalities and ways of acting; find a way to achieve a replicable unicum, starting from different habit. Substantially, the project’s educators had to get involved, break down their own preconceptions and have an open mind. They had to get involved with the participants and with the proposed activities, in an attempt to grasp the deep theme.

Finally, they had the opportunity to measure themselves up to new situations, in order to create a strong organizational structure to guarantee the final paper. The challenge undertaken by participating at the YOU-ROPE project, has enriched both those who have been directly involved and those who were not directly involved: the promoters were the forerunners to start similar projects in the future. One of the key elements of this project is represented by a specific workshop: a laboratory proposed to young people in schools on community development through a creative and dramatization process, which evokes the rites of passage. The workshop was structured in 3 parts and is about creating a group in 3 points:

- 1) Analyze the BODY: the rite’s practice and physical aspect
- 2) Reflect on WORDS: to analyze in an immediately form the rite of passage words
- 3) Realize a MASK, to collect wishes and fears, dreams and anxieties of rites of passage and then stage a story to bring out the identity and growth of the individual, in the creative perspective of being able to become “community”.

This workshop, for our social enterprise, represents an important practice to use both for internal dynamics (in working groups) both to work with young people to in order to develop a community through mutual “creative” knowledge.

### 3.1.5 From Pisiterra Iasi

This YOU-ROPE Project allowed the gradual construction of a community of participants – the adolescents themselves, the Psiterra project team – including the teacher counselors from the participating schools, the local education public system management involved in partnering with Psiterra, as well as the local university (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, UAIC), and views its sustainability in continuing the process inviting the parents, colleagues, and friends of those involved, from the community, to engage in a larger “Iasi-ROPE”, in the near future. Our aim, along with our partners’ (Iasi County School Inspectorate and UAIC), is to consolidate the experimentation of ROPE including it in continuous education training of teacher-counselors and school principals, teachers, and parent’s group and associations, at school level, and identifying potential organizations who may be willing to engage with and explore ROPE-related projects and activities.

Connecting this to the engagement and direct contributions of our student youth involved, it is a vision of trans-generational continuity, focusing on the new generations of youth who would benefit as they are invited in the core of this process which we may call “Hope for ROPE”.

### 3.1.6 From ECTE Rethymno

With this project we had the opportunity to explore how we could elaborate community-oriented Rite of Passage experiences, meaningful to adolescents, exploiting an American theoretical model and fostering European citizenship values. The non-formal learning context gave us the principles of our workshops' implementation, focusing on the Person-Centered Approach, developed by the American psychologist Carl Rogers and adapted in several innovative educational settings promoting experiential, whole person learning. The Guidelines are a description of our experience, but also a road map with the necessary information to youth workers and professionals interested in applying the ROPEs model within their working environment that can positively influence youth marginalization and social inclusion.



## 3.2 Why the model is important

For young people it has important value because it allows to make new experiences and makes it grow personally, identity and culturally. He encouraged him, represented a moment of separation from family life and developed his own decision-making skills. Some students didn't even know what anthropology was, it was a discovery. Particularly for a practical, practical vocational school, to have a cross-cultural growth. The group work done in a different way, develops creativity, willingness to express and listen, ability to compare and group collaboration. It gives the young people the opportunity to see that things can be done in other ways as well. From a cue to see that you can have other skills or possibilities, especially in those situations where there have been problems. Anything that brings you into contact with realities other than your own is useful.

What it brings to the students:

- Strengthens the ability to express yourself
- Improve your ability to speak in front of an audience
- It stimulates the ability to analyze group situations
- Increases self-awareness and relationship with others
- Develop the ability to read and empathize with other people's emotions
- Increases the sense of civil liability
- Improves the ability to analyze social situations
- Improves your ability to understand different points of view from your
- Brings out different skills and skills
- Increases the ability to work in groups

What it brings to the community of adults:

- A comparison of opportunities, an exchange of practices and personal and professional enrichment. You have the opportunity to see guys who follow you in other activities with a different, more autonomous and responsible role.
- Opportunities to interact with young people in a different way
- Ability to learn about new techniques and working practices
- Opportunities to discuss current issues
- Opportunity to discover the skills and abilities of children who with ordinary activities do not emerge
- Ability to give autonomy to young people
- Opportunity to discuss social issues
- Ability to work with different professionals

## 3.3 Tips emerged from the YOU-ROPE experience from management of the group with adolescents

In order to carry out an intervention that responds to the theoretical model identified, operators in the various sectors should keep the following in consideration:

### **Focus on personal (individual) skills**

- To foster personal reflection on their own story
- To focus on gender, cultural, religious and ethnic background
- To focus on generational background
- To provide a sense of personal responsibility
- To engage each one's autonomy
- To favor personal passions, competences, and skills
- To underline the values of respect for themselves and for others

## Focus on peer group

- To lead a phenomenological approach centered on what emerges here and now in group processes.
- To have a person-centered approach focused on non-judging and non-directive facilitations. Participants need to feel accepted for what they are and not for what they have done in the past.
- To define the setting. Organize spaces with a circle setting and in a confidential and welcoming place.
- To draw up the aims, the methods and the rules of behavior (e.g. reciprocal respect, confidentiality and listening with attention to each other) from the beginning of activities with the group, providing awareness and responsibility.
- To be flexible. While being focused on the purpose of the project and on the aims of a single meeting, it is important to have a large set of instruments available, that can be adopted with the group when necessary.
- To facilitate process to promote participation and active roles
- To use active methods such as social theatre, psychodrama and narrative approach to facilitate the emotional expression.

## Focus on local community

- To promote a praxis of action-reflection. The use of practical and art driven activities for such type of participants is a first step of the awareness process: they act, they see the product of their activities and reflect on their meaning, and this led them to a deeper awareness about their story.
- To promote an intergenerational dialogue with parents, families and teachers.
- To promote a connection with stakeholders of juvenile centers and of local community. It is important to foster the link with the internal and external resources.
- To foster community development with their own participatory actions.

## **Practical advices on how to create the rite**

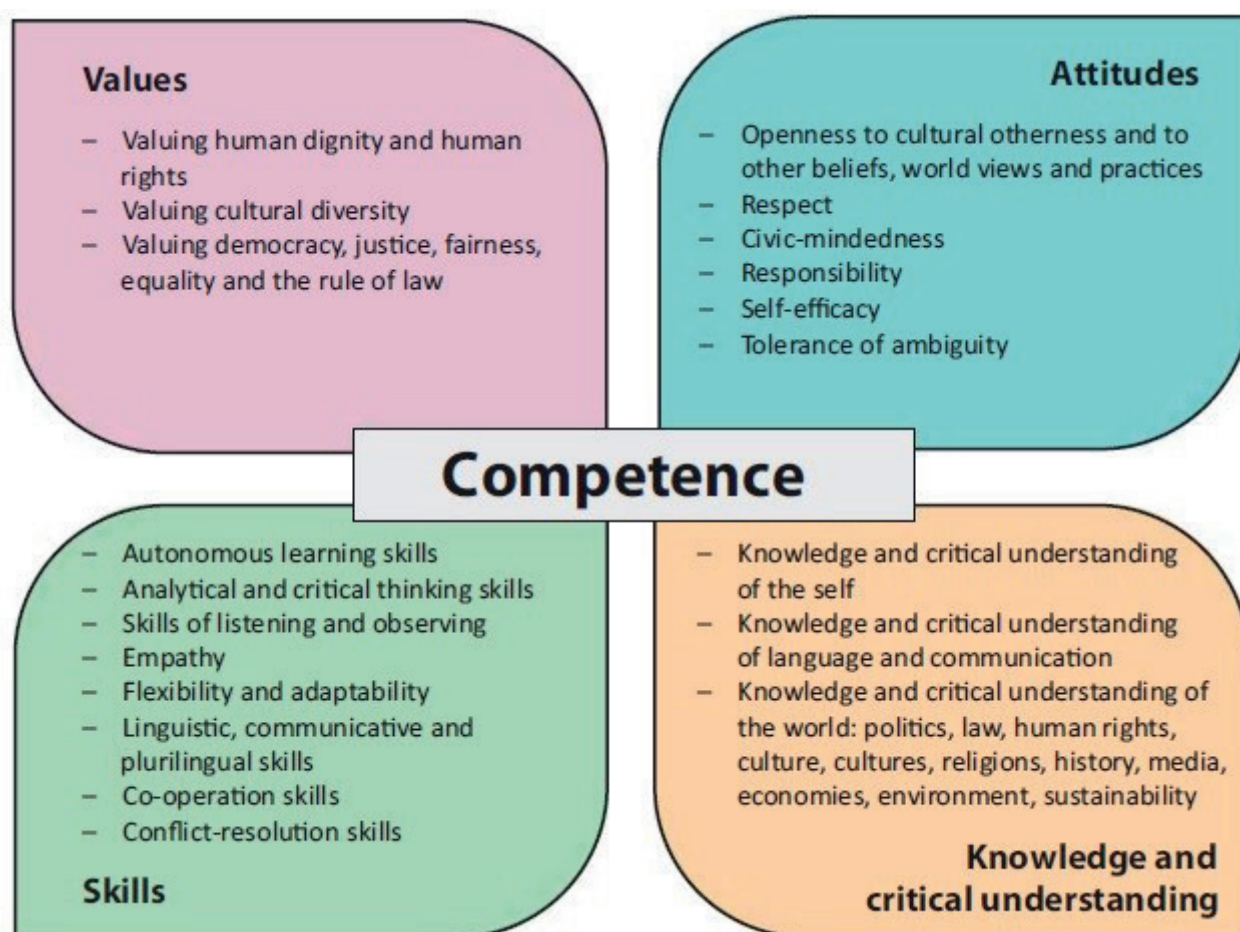
- Create debate
- Provide responsibilities
- Self-engagement of adults
- Create strong (even if conflictual) relationship
- Teach how to learn from defeats
- Guarantee respect for them and for each other in the group
- Teach how to negotiate with society
- Teach the value of hard work
- Build trust daily
- Celebrate their competencies
- Start from their passions and interests
- Be a model for coherence and bravery
- Take risks
- Stimulate social activism
- Provide competencies



## 3.4 Testing activities in connections with Competence for Democratic Culture (CDC)

In order to provide a shared European framework for professionals involved in project organization and education activities, partners of the YOU-ROPE project agreed, in extension of the approved workplan, to integrate the outcomes coming from the testing activities with the Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) adopted in the “Free to speak, safe to learn” education campaign of the Council of Europe. For the Council of Europe, key purposes of education are, beyond the preparation for labor market, the promotion of democratic citizenship, personal development, and the development of a broad, advanced knowledge base. CDC are a list of four main categories of competence (values, knowledge and critical understanding, attitudes, and skills), discussed with their components, that should be addressed in education activities to promote a democratic culture in the European Union.

Partners of the YOU-ROPE project agreed, since the testing activities conducted in each country foresaw to address some of the same competences, to discuss and integrate some of the outcomes coming from the testing activities with the recommendation coming from the Council of Europe. At the end of this document, in attachment to the guidelines emerging from the YOU-ROPE project, tables reporting this integration are reported. The essential purpose of traditional rite of passage experiences were the transmission of essential values, knowledge and skills to children as well as setting forth expectations for their behavior. These practices were performed within an entire community to ensure that youth were adequately prepared to become healthy and civically engaged adults that would contribute to strengthen their communities. These practices traced back and surviving for over 40,000 years were necessary and indispensable for the survival of our species.



Here is the link of the three Volumes of the REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE of Council of Europe. The Volumes help to understand what each competence means.

- Volume 1 Context, concepts and model: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-008318-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-1-8573-co/16807bc66c>
- Volume 2 Descriptors of competences for democratic culture: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-008418-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-2-8573-co/16807bc66d>
- Volume 3 Guidance for implementation: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-008518-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-3-8575-co/16807bc66e>

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The pictures included in this report, realised during the activities of the project are courtesy of Olmo Degl'Inocenti (ig: @olmo\_degli)

Cover picture by Jonathan Calugi



# Attachment 1.

## Testing Barcelona Activity and CDC

| Competences (Values, Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge and critical understanding)               | How they are integrated in the project  |
|---|---|
| 1. Values: Human dignity and human rights   | The right to participate as an actor of your life was a core issue throughout all the testing activity (agency). Youth have the right to participate within the community in expressing their needs, fears and assets, to become an active member.                    |
| 2. Values: Cultural diversity<br>Responsibility   | The participants' group was composed by youth of different gender, religions, ages and social economical background. This diversity was an asset to explore differences in coming of age. Also, during the LTA participants met peers coming from different cultures. |
| 3. Value: Democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law                        | Participatory-based workshops throughout the testing activity allowed youth to discuss, build consensus and fill equal within the group   |
| 4. Attitude: Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices | Community-based theatre enhance openness among participants to share feelings, personal stories, desires and assets   |

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| 5. Attitude: Respect                | In this kind of approach respect is the bases of the group process and essential to create a non-judgment environment and culture of democracy.   |
| 6. Attitude: Civic mindedness       | The rite of passage is closely linked to the relationship with the community of reference and makes you aware of the responsibility of each other and the environment in which we live. This contributes to form the sense of civic engagement and responsibility within the participants.  |
| 7. Attitude: Responsibility         | The recurrent discussions throughout the workshops of the testing prompted first-person debates about what means to become an adult, which challenges youth face and how to deal with them. Youth have rights, but at the same time duties and responsibilities these topics were conducted during dramaturgic stage  |
| 8. Attitude: Self-efficacy          | Applied theatre has the potential to enhance a sense of self-efficacy among participants when they realize acting out is something they can achieve, also when they realize, as a result of the theatrical play within the community setting that they can share and artefact with other community members, feeling the potential of being agents of change. An experience of being capable and self-efficacy is achieved |
| 9. Attitude: Tolerance of ambiguity | Ambiguity, as a synonym of uncertainty, is something inherent to the adolescent period, surely connected with the idea of liminality suggested on the theoretical assumptions mentioned above. Applied Theatre allows youth to swing into new positions, roles and social relations, experimenting new situations   |

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| 10. Skill: Autonomous learning                        | An experiential method, like applied theatre, has the potential to prompt learning in different levels: psychological, group and community level. In the psychological level. New ways to express, represent, communicate and experience life and self are generated. In the community level Collective-based knowledge and artefacts arise |
| 11. Skill: Analytical and critical thinking           | Applied theatre and participatory-based processes enhance critical thinking about self and others and contextual awareness.   |
| 12. Skill: Listening and observing                    | To collaboratively produce a theatrical play together in a group promotes self-organization and participation in the creative process. These activities rely on listening and observing skills.   |
| 13. Skill: Empathy                                    | The safe and non-judgemental environment allows free expressions of emotion and develops the ability of others to accommodate and reflect in a reciprocal way.  |
| 14. Skill: Flexibility and adaptability               | Dealing with behaviors, attitudes, emotions and values different from their own in a context of non-judgemental learning, allows youth to experience how you can accept in a flexible way different strategies and actions from your own, but equally valid in a creative way.  |
| 15. Skill: Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual | In particular during the LTA the participants were able to put into practice the linguistic and communication skills. Those who knew more foreign languages made themselves available to translate to those unfamiliar with the foreign language.   |

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| 16. Skill: Co-operation   | The participatory process contributes to nurture more affective and reproductive social relations.   |
| 17. Skill: Conflict resolution  | The participatory process challenges traditional decision making, embracing a more collaborative-based approach to pay attention of inherent conflicts in collaborative processes.   |
| 18. Knowledge & critical understanding: of the self   | Applied theatre and participatory-based processes enhance critical self and context awareness.   |
| 19. Knowledge & critical understanding: of language and communication   | Applied theatre and participatory processes allow you to put into practice and improve your communicative skills. Because the participants have to put themselves in the game in front of the others, overcome the shame, make themselves understood and confront to arrive to a common result. The whole is realized through the free and participatory group discussion.                               |
| 20. Knowledge & critical understanding: of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religious, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability | Engaging in and reflection on the rites of passage and the interrelationships between participants from different parts of the European Community highlighted the formal and normative aspects that define and maintain the integrity and uniqueness of the different cultures, but also unveils the similarities that transcends the specific differences and fosters a common European Union identity. |

## Attachment 2.

### Testing Florence Activity and CDC

| Competences (Values, Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge and critical understanding)               | How they are integrated in the project   |
|---|--|
| 1. Values: Human dignity and human rights   | During the testing activities and LTA students meet and stay together and work with peers, fostering self awareness that we have the same needs and the same dignity to have the same rights and shared responsibilities.  |
| 2. Values: Cultural diversity<br>Responsibility   | During the testing activity and LTA students meet and stay together and work with peers coming from different culture. They have opportunity to know and share similar feelings, deepening an understanding of their own culture and empathy and understand of other's cultures. |
| 3. Value: Democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law                        | During the testing activities and LTA students find out the meaning and the respect, equality, responsibility, etc...by staying in a very equal and open mind clima of the group approach.   |
| 4. Attitude: Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices | Using the method of psychodrama and creative storytelling each participant could express feelings, attitudes and beliefs in a safe and friendly environment.   |



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| 5. Attitude: Respect                | In this kind of approach the respect is the bases of the group process. In order to create a a non-judgment environment.  |
| 6. Attitude: Civic mindedness       | The rite of passage is closely linked to the relationship with the community of reference and makes you aware of the responsibility of each other and the environment in which we live. This contributes to form the civic sense of the participants.   |
| 7. Attitude: Responsibility         | The deep reflection on the meaning of the coming on age process for each youth and for one's peers and others has made participants aware how one of the fundamental aspects of the transition from adolescence to adult is the essential requirement to have a sense of responsibility towards self and others.  |
| 8. Attitude: Self-efficacy          | Through the activity testing, and the LTA and thanks to the method used. The participants came into play in the first person and experienced that by opening up to others and collaborating they helped to achieve positive results and experienced satisfaction and well-being. This has strengthened its sense of self-efficacy.  |
| 9. Attitude: Tolerance of ambiguity | The psychodrama and creative method is based on the fact that it is not possible to give information and pre-packaged instructions. But the learning process starts from the bottom, before you experience it and then through the reflections on it you get to the level of abstraction of formal thought. To do this you have to go through a phase where there is no unequivocal clarity about the information needed to carry out the tasks. This aspect makes the participants learn to face ambiguous situations. |

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| 10. Skill: Autonomous learning              | During the meetings the participants learned through self-reflection about themselves and their experience of life. Have transposed been these experiences into masks and created personal hero through their own creativity From the discussion and analysis of the group of what was done, each helped to move forward in the learning path. |
| 11. Skill: Analytical and critical thinking | The reflection on the personal, relational and community significance linked to the rites of passage, allows the participants to learn to reason critically about the reality that surrounds them and to understand that their responsible action is important for the improvement of the Society.   |
| 12. Skill: Listening and observing          | The ability to listen and observe others and the environment is developed through the techniques of psychodrama, in which everyone must interact with others through improvisation on an initial stimulus. This is possible thanks to the presence concentrated in the here and now. That develops with the attention.                         |
| 13. Skill: Empathy                          | The safe and non-judgemental environment of the group allows free expressions of emotion and develops the ability of others to accommodate and reflect in a reciprocal way.  |
| 14. Skill: Flexibility and adaptability     | Dealing with behaviors, attitudes, emotions and values different from one's own, in a context of non-judgemental learning allowed participants to experience how you can accept in a flexible way different ideas, strategies and actions from your own, and to creatively understand they are equally valid.                                  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 15. Skill: Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual                 | In particular during the LTA the participants were able to put into practice the linguistic and communication knowledge and skills. Those who knew more foreign languages made themselves available to translate to those unfamiliar with the foreign language.  |
| 16. Skill: Co-operation   | During all the activities of the project the value of equity and inclusiveness was transmitted through activities with cooperative methods and techniques of shared work. In the meetings and during the LTA, each activity was conceived to bring out the cooperative attitude of the participants.   |
| 17. Skill: Conflict resolution  | With the method of creative storytelling in which each character told the myth of his hero, they basically told how they managed to cope effectively with interpersonal and inner conflicts.   |
| 18. Knowledge & critical understanding: of the self                   | The history of coming on age and connecting it with that of the meanings of the rite of passage in the various cultures, allows the participants to have more awareness of themselves. The Psychodrama method brings out personal experiences in a creative way and makes them find new forms of personal knowledge  |
| 19. Knowledge & critical understanding: of language and communication | Applied theatre and participatory processes allow you to put into practice and improve your communicative skills. Because the participants have to put themselves in the game in front of the others, overcome the shame, make themselves understood and confront to arrive to a common result. The whole is realized through the free and participatory group discussion. |

|  |   |
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| 19. Knowledge & critical understanding:<br>of language and communication   | The psychodrama and cooperative learning method allows you to put into practice and improve your communication skills. Because the participants have to put themselves in the game in front of the others, overcome the shame, make themselves understood and confront to arrive to a common result. The whole is realized through the free and participatory group discussion. |
| 20. Knowledge & critical understanding:<br>of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religious, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability | The reflection on the rites of passage and the confrontation between participants from different parts of the European Community also highlighted the formal and normative aspects that define and create the skeleton that keeps the different cultures, but also makes them similar and that transcends the specific differences.   |

## Attachment 3.

### Testing Iasi Activity and CDC

| Competences (Values, Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge and critical understanding)               | How they are integrated in the project   |
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| 1. Values: Human dignity and human rights   | Offering space and time for self-reflection, self-presentation, and shared expressions of experiences of life without judgment or comparisons (during Tree of Life - ToL - practice and during the film-making activities).    |
| 2. Value: Democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law                        | Narrative approaches is resurrecting marginal voices offering each participant equal possibility for expression, instruments for documentation and support in engaging into the process.                                       |
| 3. Attitude: Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices | The aggregates of life stories using ToL metaphor permitted a gallery of unique, specific descriptions of experiences of adolescents' lives and their foundational supports towards adulthood.                                 |
| 4. Attitude: Respect  | The narrative methodology invites the participants into active and double listening, non-judgmental positioning in relationships, and co-creation of a shared story of life as adolescents who are in a journey to adult life. |
| 5. Attitude: Civic mindedness   | The examples of life document family, community and society constructive positions that the youth take and are willing to pursue in their adult life.  |

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| <p>6. Attitude: Responsibility</p>         | <p>The narrative approach of operationalizing `responsibility` as responsibility (the ability to respond to somebody, to describe, give reason and connect to somebody's position and context, not simply to react to situations in life) is inviting the participants into an agentic role in their lives, relationships and communities. The narratively defined responsibility is relational, and dynamic.</p>   |
| <p>7. Attitude: Self-efficacy</p>          | <p>The agentic position which is reserved for each participant who is invited to take it at all stages of the narrative process is fostering an appreciative space which strengthens self-efficacy. The use of the various audiences, outsider witnesses and definitional ceremony is contributing to scaling, supporting and maintaining the expressions of self-efficacy, starting from the acceptance, circulation, documentation, and appreciation of their narratives and their expressed identities</p> |
| <p>9. Attitude: Tolerance of ambiguity</p> | <p>The narrative engagement develops in time, has several platforms of meaning-making opportunities and, during this work, tolerance of ambiguity is exercised and the products of this process (various narratives and their identity conclusions, commitments for future actions, new hopes for the future) are the final results which is supporting the development of this important attitude.</p>   |



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| 9. Skill: Autonomous learning               | During the different phases of ToL practice there are opportunities for self-reflection, work on his own descriptions of life experiences and conclusions, and also, to be part of various audiences while connecting to what seems relevant to each person, according to their own set of preferences and priorities.   |
| 10. Skill: Analytical and critical thinking | Organizing their experiential material according to ToL metaphor, systematically giving arguments and examples, justifying claims and selections, and concluding identity-related statements are each, in part and as a whole, a variety of opportunities to train this skill.   |
| 11. Skill: Listening and observing          | Double listening (an advanced active listening skill) is invited, explained and exercised during ToL practice – listening and reflecting on what is told and, in the same time, being attentive at the effects of what is told (emotions, images, ideas which are stirred on by the told narrative); this special skill is part of what a facilitator is orchestrating and also of what the members of the audiences are invited to perform and asked to describe in the definitional ceremony which continues after ToL practice. |
| 12. Skill: Empathy                          | Among the various experiential aspects invited into the stories told, emotional experiences are privileged, also. The non-judgmental positions which permit listening, identifying, accepting and entering in resonance with an emotional expression permit the construction of narratives of empathy, humanizing the interaction and colouring the stories with emotional content.  |

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| <p>13. Skill: Flexibility and adaptability</p>               | <p>The ToL practice allows for individual surface or depth manifestation of experiences; some participants may put more emphasis on one or another aspect of the tree metaphor, may describe more in length or may even skip parts of this practice. There is no judgment arising from social comparisons since we are in a celebratory practice identifying relevant resonances which may shed new light on how we may view life, the trajectories through life, into adulthood.</p> |
| <p>14. Skill: Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual</p> | <p>Co-operation is a condition of creating `the gallery` Forest of Life (of all ToL's) and in taking the roles of person in the centre and in the audience, as well as being a team member in the film-making project.</p>  |
| <p>15. Skill: Co-operation</p>                               | <p>Since such a collaborative engagement organized around strong values of celebrating everybody's expertise of life and narrative power, little space is left for conflict to be apparent. The narrative engagement is a conflict dissolution environment since tensions are taken as unique opportunities to learn about, use, and celebrate differentness.</p>   |

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| <p>16. Knowledge &amp; critical understanding:<br/>of the self</p>   | <p>ToL product – the various key words and sentences describing foundational aspects of life and the developments towards adulthood are highly indicative of personhood viewed in a relational way, in the context of their community and history. Reflective exercises – independent and in groups – were a major vehicle for narrative identity development.</p>   |
| <p>17. Knowledge &amp; critical understanding:<br/>of language and communication</p>   | <p>The various narrative processes become platforms for different language and communication performances. We can discern the facets of each style of communication which expands the participants' understanding</p>  |
| <p>20. Knowledge &amp; critical understanding:<br/>of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religious, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability</p> | <p>The life stories rendered transparent in the various stages of the ToL and definitional ceremony practices greatly expand the knowledge and positioning on many of the aspects mentioned – not only about experiences taken from study and lectures, films or videos, but direct experiences with real world, visiting other countries, and interacting within other cultures during their childhood and adolescence, including hopes and visions for the future life of an adult, marked with such understandings.</p> |

## Attachment 4.

### Testing Rethymno Activity and CDC

| Competences (Values, Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge and critical understanding) | How they are integrated in the project   |
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| 1. Values: Human dignity and human rights                                     | The whole project was based in a “social inclusion and inclusive learning” context. During our workshops we set as priority to establish a learning environment where each participant could feel safe to express him/herself and participate in the learning process in a meaningful way. |
| 2. Attitude: Respect  | Respect is a necessary ingredient for building trust among participants, so we ensured that all the voices, experiences were heard in a non-judgmental environment.  |
| 3. Attitude: Responsibility   | A participatory mode was set in all aspects of learning and decision-making, furthering self-responsibility; bringing out the creative potential of the individual. Responsibility was the most important aspect on how adolescents gave meaning to ROPE                                   |

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| 4. Skill: Autonomous learning              | During the different phases of ToL practice there are opportunities for self-reflection, work on his own descriptions of life experiences and conclusions, and also, to be part of various audiences while connecting to what seems relevant to each person, according to their own set of preferences and priorities.   |
| 5. Skill: Analytical and critical thinking | The reflection on myths patterns linked to the rites of passage, allows the participants to learn to reason critically the reality that surrounds them but also their own personality.   |
| 6. Skill: Empathy                          | Be fully present when you are with people and tune in to non-verbal communication was a skill that we focused on.  |
| 7. Skill: Flexibility and adaptability     | The myths are a useful context in order to reflect on and discover unknown potential which enables us to make connection and build social network and accept change as a natural and avoidable part of life.   |
| 8. Skill: Co- operations                   | Effective relationships are the key component to accepting challenges and overcoming difficulties through the journey of becoming an adult, which were a main issue elaborated in team exercises.  |
| 9. Skill: Conflicts resolution             | Two main issues were addressed through our workshops: Conflicts trigger strong emotions. If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth. When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements. |

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| 10. Knowledge & critical understanding:<br>of the self  | Self-awareness a first step to goal setting. Self-awareness is being conscious of what you're good at while acknowledging what you still have yet to learn. This includes admitting when you don't have the answer and owning up to mistakes. This was a main competence that was discussed through our « journey ». |
| 11. Knowledge & critical understanding:<br>of the world: politics, law, human rights,<br>culture, cultures, religious, history,<br>media, economies, environment,<br>sustainability | Myths gives as the symbols and the archetypes we need to reflect on global issues such as religion, ecology and culture  |