

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS



Gender Utopia

France

7th-13th of July 2022

Association La Villa has been created in 2005 with the goal to develop and facilitate cultural education amongst youngsters and unemployed youth of the town of Gelos. Its initial goal was to recreate a roman villa using ancient technique of construction and mobilising for the project the local youth, teaching them practical knowledge, raising their interest for history and experimental archaeology in the process. Since then, the association has diversified its activities to better respond to the needs of the local youngsters and full fill its mission of cultural education. It has opened a free library containing more than a thousand books on various theme, from history to philosophy to furniture making and propose learning support for students of the area. Since the closure of the youth center in their town, Gelos, the associative life and youth activity proposition is dwindling and youngsters from the town find themselves without much to do in their free time but hang around in the park along the river, a notorious spot for homeless and drug users. So, the members from association la Villa are looking for new creative way to engage youth into constructive activities. La Villa operates in close relation with the town hall and specially the department of youth and cultural affairs and was declared of public interest in 2012.

Project Team

The project team is an international, multidisciplinary team, who is really motivated to work on this project! The trainers' team is composed of Sima* Jakob, Thomas Schallert and Cristina Debu. The whole team, including the trainers are really open-minded people and have a lot of experience in international youth work on the topics of gender, peace education, sustainability and intersectionality. They cover diverse perspectives on the topics of gender and sexuality.

Participant countries and number of places per country:

Country	Nr. of Participants
Belgium	2
Romania	2
Germany	2
Slovakia	2
Poland	2
Czech Republic	3
Spain (Brujula)	2
Spain (SCI)	1
Portugal	3
France	3
Italy	4 (2 participants, 2 accompanying persons)

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

International youth work and volunteering are not exempt from stereotypes on gender and sexuality, as all prevailing stereotypes and social constructions in society end up in our youth projects as well. Jokes about gender and sexualities (What is funny?), gendered stereotypes about labour (Who carries heavy things?), leadership, sleeping and bathroom arrangements (Which toilet do you go to if you are nonbinary?), care work (Who cooks? Who repairs? Who cleans in our youth projects?) and love (Do you have a boyfriend?) and even sexual harassment are unfortunately a reality we face in our youth projects. The challenge is then to create spaces that contradict and resist these stereotypes and types of behaviour. But not only that, the challenge is to imagine safer spaces: **What is a space without discrimination based on gender and sexuality? How could we ever create such a space in a youth project, that is more inclusive for people of all genders? What are the conditions we need for that and how can we work towards reaching such a space?** What partnerships, what methods, what attitudes do we need for that? How can we create a Gender Utopia in international youth work?

With the training “Gender Utopia”, Association La Villa and its partners want to learn and exchange around how to create safer spaces around gender in youth projects. The main aim is to develop strategies to create youth projects that are social spaces, in which everyone feels safe to be themselves, to be safe from violence, to express their gender identity and to be met with understanding if discrimination does occur.

In short: Strategies that enable youth projects to become a safe bubble of utopic gender equality, and in a second step bring these strategies to the broader society.

OBJECTIVES

“Gender Utopia” aims to fulfil the following **objectives**:

- Exchanging knowledge and experiences on how (not) to create an inclusive and safe atmosphere in youth projects (best and worst practices)
- Analysing previous experiences of youth workers around gender-based conflict from an intersectional perspective and training youth workers in conflict resolution around gender
- Experiencing experimental/experiential learning of youth workers using utopic methods and tools and promoting the use of utopic thinking for youth work
- Making youth projects more inclusive, safe and sensitive for youth with fewer opportunities by training youth workers in gender-based discrimination and in creating safer spaces
- Bringing in current feminist and queer discourses into the scene of European youth work
- Training youth workers in basics of terminology, concepts and educational methods around gender
- Training youth workers in basics of the connection of gender equality and environmental topics, especially climate justice
- **Creating a manual around gender for youth workers around Europe**

PARTICIPATION

The training course will take place in **Issor, France**, from **7th to 13th of July 2022** and it will bring together a group of **24 young people from 10 partner countries**. The project is targeting youth workers, trainers, coordinators and facilitators from all fields of non-formal education who are motivated to create safer spaces for their participants.

We also especially invite persons from marginalized perspectives, such as queer or non-binary persons or people of colour to apply.

Targeted categories:

- Youth workers active in their own communities for gender and LGBTQ+ rights;
- Coordinators and staff of partner organisations looking to initiate and already running international youth or voluntary projects (e.g. Youth Exchanges);
- Volunteers and activists of partner organisations coordinating such international youth or volunteering projects (already, or interested in the future);
- Trainers of project coordinators and youth workers;
- Trainers of (international) non-formal education projects;

PARTICIPANT'S PROFILE

- are 18+, can express themselves in (basic) English;
- **are vaccinated against COVID19** (a more detailed COVID Concept will follow a month before the Training);
- are resident of one of the countries specified in the call;
- are committed to participating during the whole training course;
- want to build/ expand their international peer network;
- are motivated to reflect on and to improve gender topics in their youth work and to put new learning into practice;
- **are committed to work on a manual for gender safe spaces in youth work**
- are motivated to disseminate and promote the project outcomes within their organisations and local communities and to develop new initiatives and projects on these topics in the future;
- are aware of power structures and be able to approach them both sensitively and critically;
- have sufficient English language skills (spoken and written);
- are committed to abstain from flying, but travel to the event via overland route instead;

INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Note: this timetable may still change according to the needs of participants

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	
M	Arrivals; Exploring the venue	Introducing the programme Hopes, expectations, fears Group agreement, Youthpass	Discrimination & Gender based discrimination Feminist, gender & queer movements	Dream Journey to Gender Utopia; Deepening the utopia and backcasting	Post Gender Utopia in Youth Projects; Gender & sexuality in Youth Projects	Manual: Introduction and Overview Work on the Manual & Outlook	Final Evaluation Departure	
A	Welcome; Opening of the project	You-topia & utopic thinking	Gender Spaces Climate Justice and Gender Justice	Utopia as a method for Youth Work FREE Afternoon	Utopias and their critics Open Space: methods exchange	Design and follow-up projects		
	Getting to know each other, Icebreakers	Reflection activities, evaluating the day						
E	Evening activities (e.g. welcome evening, games night, networking & partnership building)							

CARE WORK

Care work is a really important practice in our training as it helps the group bond on a deeper level and develop trust in one another. This is especially helpful when working with delicate topics, such as gender, increasing the confidence and safety feeling inside of the group.

During the training **participants oversee the wellbeing of the group**, by taking care of each other through **cooking and cleaning**. You will be split into smaller groups and everyday there will be different tasks that you will take care of (such as food, cleaning, and other needs of the group).

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Climate Justice and Sustainability are also the reason why we ask you to come to this training through more sustainable means of transport rather than flying (e.g. by train or bus), if somehow possible. We will give you more guidance on how you can reach the venue once you are accepted to the training.

By signing up for the project you agree with the care work and agree to do a daily task in order to contribute to the group's wellbeing.

The **meals will be VEGAN** so bring all your vegan recipes!!!



WHAT WE OFFER

Thanks to the financial support of the Council of Europe through the Erasmus+ Programme, we offer the following conditions:

- Food and accommodation during the training course will be provided;
- Travel costs will be reimbursed up to an agreed limit depending on the sending country;

We are planning to organise the training course in **Issor, Southern France**, in a **venue surrounded with nature, that offers comfort and tranquillity** needed for group building.

HOW TO APPLY

Please fill in the application form: [Gender Utopia Application form](#)

Deadline for applications is: **28th of April**

For any questions related to the application, please contact us at cirkuslabulle@gmail.com