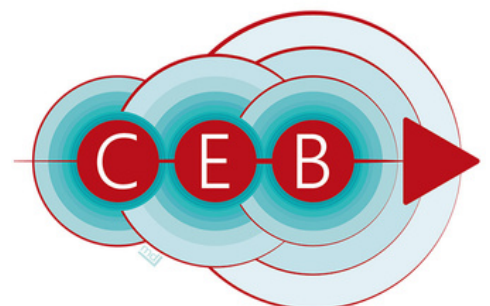


THE USE OF COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY IN INCLUSIVE ADULT EDUCATION



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COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY
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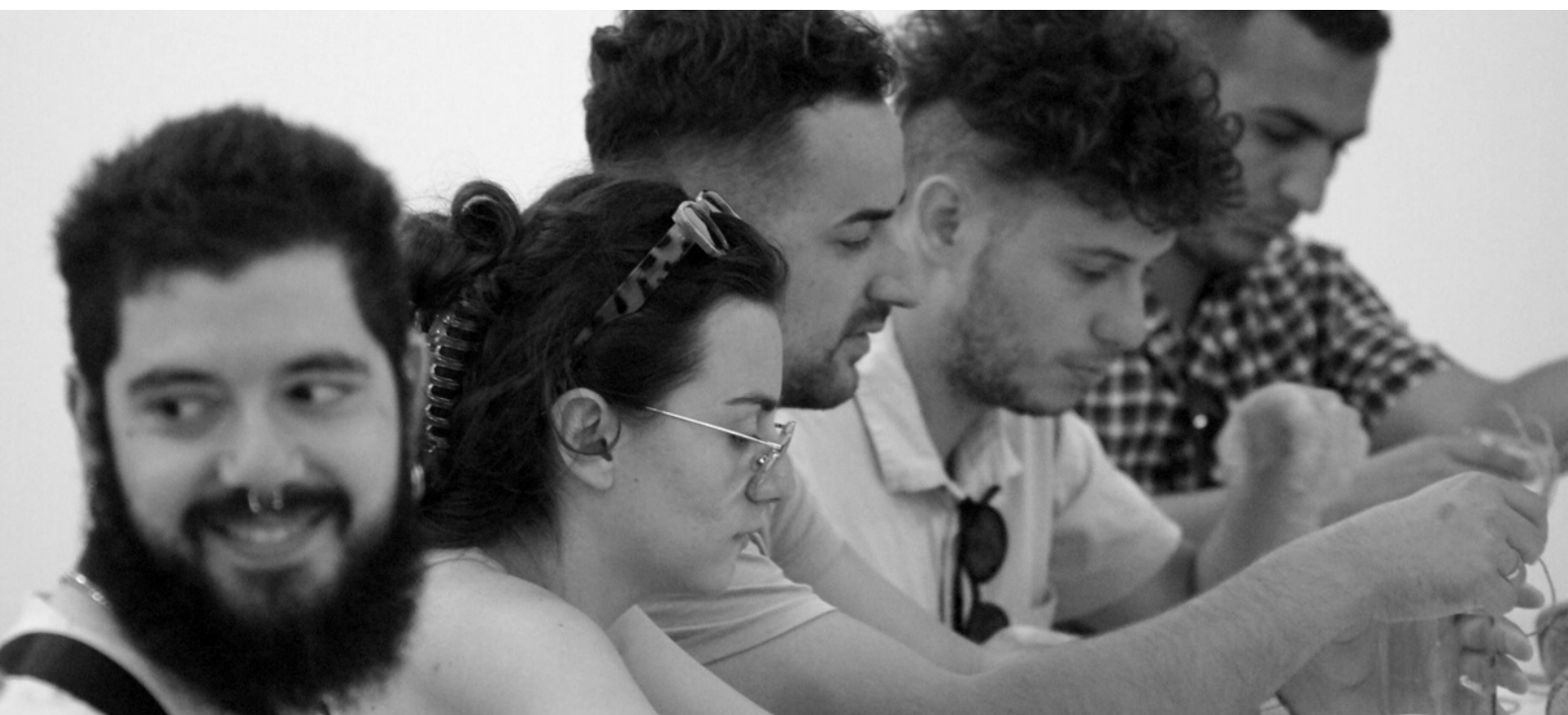
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INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of the project Collaborative Economy without Barriers - CEB, a three year strategic partnership between 5 organizations working with people with disabilities from Italy, Germany, Romania, Portugal and Macedonia.

During the project the learners developed soft and ICT skills needed to enter the sector of collaborative economy and developed practical craft skills that can be spent in the production and selling of their own products.

The project experience has been condensed in this report, which contains some practical guidelines and tips about how to start using collaborative economy in inclusive adult education together with some success stories, strengths and weaknesses of the project with suggestions to improve the efficacy of the proposed approach.

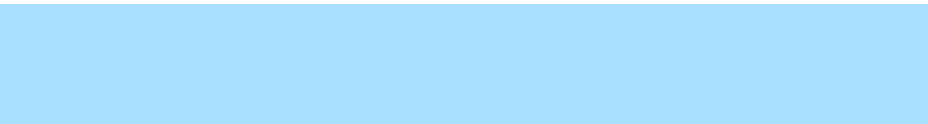


ABOUT THE PROJECT

Collaborative Economy without Barriers - CEB is a three year Strategic Partnership for the exchange of good practices among the staff of the five involved organizations - Associazione Uniamoci Onlus (Italy), Diakonisches Werk Bremen e.V. (Germany), CENTRO SOCIAL E PAROQUIAL SANTOS MARTIRES (Portugal), Fundatia Crestina Diakonia Filiala Sfantu Gheorghe (Romania), Association for sustainable development and environmental protection GO GREEN Skopje (Macedonia) – with the aim to collect a set of tools and approaches able to provide to people with disabilities the **skills** (like self-awareness, entrepreneurship, ICT, communication and know how in specific handcraft or services area) needed to enter and participate to the opportunities offered by the **field of collaborative economy**.

Collaborative Economy without Barriers contributed to find ways to lay down the barriers to:

- *Collaborative consumption*: gaining access to goods or services through bartering, renting, lending, trading, leasing, exchanging, reselling and swapping – through the organization of events or the enrollment in existing platforms,
- *Collaborative production*: groups or networks of individuals collaborate to design, produce or distribute goods – through the local and transnational activities in the partner organizations,
- *Collaborative learning*: learning experiences that are open to anyone and where people share resources and knowledge to learn together - like the virtual mobilities and the sharing of learned competences and art workshop after each blended mobility with the whole group of the project participants,

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- *Collaborative finance*: discovering crowd funding opportunities, for example.

It was realized through an **international path of exchange of good practices**, made of:

- a **meeting** among 3 educators/occupational therapists/social workers per each partner organization, to agree and create a collection of tools to guide the project activities;
- a **learning mobility** in each partner organization for 4 learners (adult people with disability and/or with social obstacles) and 2 accompanying persons aiming at acquiring relevant skills about handcrafting, green services and ICT;
- common **local workshops** addressing 15 adult people with disability and/or with social obstacles on the principles of collaborative economy, self-awareness, enrollment in on-line platforms, communication and safety.

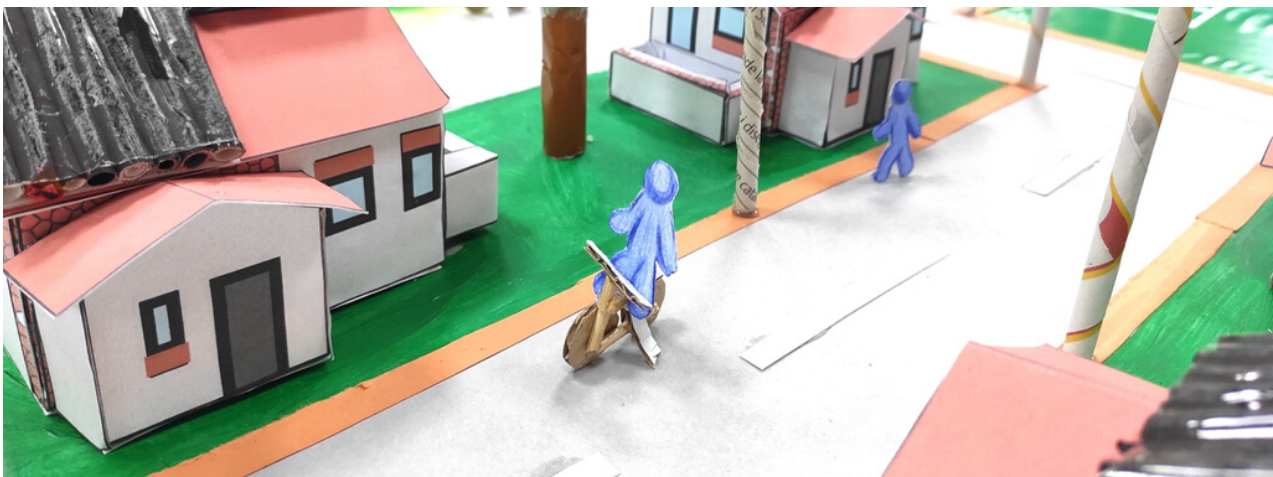
What does collaborative economy mean?

Collaborative Economy is a way to use resources by several individuals or units - either at the same time (as a room or house to sleep and live in) or one after another (as a book to read - instead of being used once or by one person and then “thrown away”).

Often, joint uses of this kind are combined in a way that a non-monetary “exchange” takes place with goods or services of the same or different kind (one book exchanged for another one, a right to use a room for some care-taking or cooking).

Some sort of in-between-agent or agency might be part of the proceedings of dealing and evaluating. This way, Collaborative Economy is regarded in general as resource-saving and as a sustainable way of use and often part of other “alternative” economy schemes that look more for “Common Benefit” / “Good Living” than for profit.

The cooperation and exchanges often take place in “communities” that organize themselves offline or online with ICT tools.



Why a collaborative economy without barriers?

The consortium users' with disability expressed on various occasions the need to feel productive in society, to get a job and to be able to satisfy their material needs autonomously.

In addition, the vast outstanding potential of the collaborative economy and the current important role of fair platforms is evident, even at EU level.

People with disabilities should have the chance (and the right) to participate in all proceedings of collaborative economy as well as in all other sectors of society.

The barriers to collaborative economy for people with disability are represented by its mainly ICT based system and by the lack of a dedicated educational path able to direct the people with disability's entrepreneurship toward adequate channels.

Barrier-free rooms and devices, ways of work and general accessibility are necessary to include them into any planning and doing.

Under favorable conditions, collaborative economies could play a very successful part in the realization of participation and inclusion for people and groups.

As the collaborative economy system is not as regulated and supervised by rules and official agencies or commissioners, there could be a lack of information and overview by persons and communities who organize initiatives of collaboration about how to reach and include persons with disability on one side and on the other side by persons with disabilities and social professionals about their possible contributions to collaborative economy structures.

People with disabilities might even doubt their capability to contribute to cooperating communities or are not aware how to proceed. Activists of collaborative economy might lack the experience to make successful invitations and offers of participation.

Both sides might lack problem-solving and self-awareness in general and practical training.

COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY WITHOUT BARRIERS' GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATORS



The project allowed to the staff members of the partner organizations (**educators, social workers and volunteers** who currently work on inclusive activities for **adults with disabilities**) to cooperate transnationally, as an European project team, collecting a series of **tools and approaches** capable of providing users with disabilities the **skills** (such as **self-awareness, IT, communication and green craft skills**) necessary to access and participate in the opportunities offered by the **sector of collaborative economy**.

Thanks to CEB, the involved staff gained a **know-how** to be employed in the maintenance of the activities stimulated by the project.

The cooperation among the transnational project team led, at the very beginning of the project, to the **identification of practical tools, activities** and useful tips about how to structure the collaborative economy project, how to organize the local activities and the definition of project method more in general: **6 guidelines** have been created with the aim of supporting the work of social workers with adult users with disabilities in connection with collaborative economy. The guidelines contain **practical tools**, with useful and practical advice that support the educators in structuring learning sessions about communication, for the development self-awareness; in managing art production workshop, instructing the learners in writing a profile in collaborative economy platforms and how to manage it; preventing risks about the use of online platforms and how to

support the users to prevent dangers; organizing collaborative economy events with the active support by disabled learners.

The guidelines include:

- How to structure learning sessions about communication.
- How to develop self-awareness.
- How to manage art production workshops.
- How to instruct the learners in writing a profile in collaborative economy platforms and how to manage it
- Risks about the use of online platforms - How to support the users to prevent dangers.
- How to organize collaborative economy events with the active support by disabled learners.
- How to create a Portfolio

They are freely downloadable

at the following link:

<https://partnershipceb.blogspot.com/p/resources.html>



The last guideline - **How to create a portfolio** - has been developed during the project by the Portuguese partner:

Portfolio is a **pre-document before the curriculum vitae** that allows the social and health professionals to get to know the users more and better, **discovering more even about their wishes and desires**; it is useful to guide the participants to **find the specific performance they could propose in collaborative economy settings** (es. being a tourist guide, managing workshops, producing and selling handicrafts, taking care of a garden etc.).

In the same web page there is a **collection of practical validated tools to be used to guide the users with disability in the discovery and improvement of their craft abilities: art and upcycled crafts, candle casting, recycled paper workshop, biological soaps etc.**

ACTIVITIES' EXAMPLES

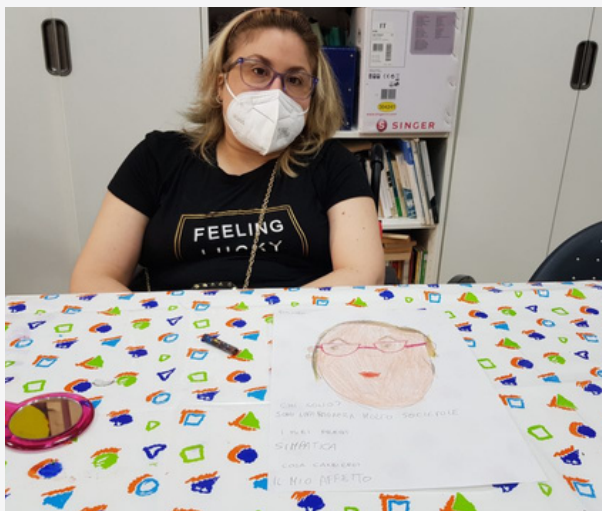
From the guideline: "How to develop self-awareness"

My self-portrait

This exercise is indicated especially for persons not used to activity of self-reflection and it may be used as a good beginning of introspection.

Ask to the learners to draw or to paint their self-portrait, let them free to choose the technique they prefer and do not give other instructions to not influence the process of elaboration and creation.

Only when the self-portraits are quite done educators can stimulate the reflection on a deep observation of themselves, leading it to the inner side of the person. Some questions that can help to start this process of introspection could be: how I feel with myself? Am I angry with myself? Do I love my self? Am I proud of me? Should I change something?



"A good exercise to start being introspective, it allows us to see in graphic form the representation we have of ourselves. Some participants had difficulties with the delivery, as they could not or did not want to draw themselves, but someone else. Others have produced very realistic self-portraits, demonstrating that they have a very integrated and concrete conception of themselves."

Italian educator's experience

Rate your self

Prepare a document containing a list of values, qualities and abilities and ask the learners to evaluate, in a scale from 1 to 10, their position. Use their personal evaluation to highlight their strengths and weaknesses, develop a discussion with the learners and work on their strengths to enhance them and on their weaknesses to swing them

If you were a business product

Educators ask to the learners to imagine: "if you were a business product what would you like to be?"

The learners can imagine to be a biscuit, a car, a brush, it could be everything.

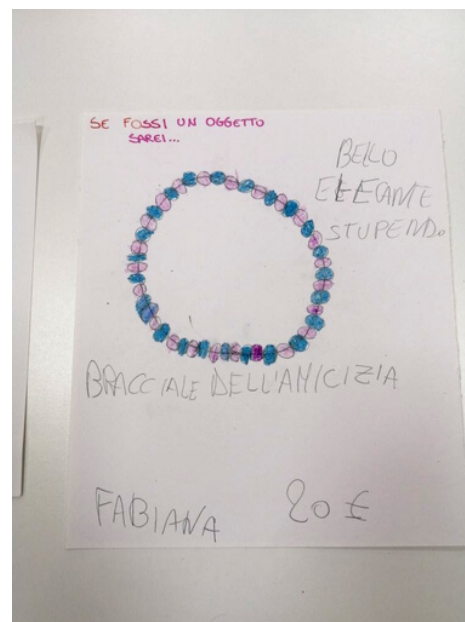
Then educators ask to the learners:

- Create a logo of yourself (Yourself = the business product).
- For how long time do you will be on the market?
- Prepare your warranty.
- What kind of services, additions, cares do you need to function properly?
- Present yourself: three things about you.
- **How much I worth?**

This exercise may be particularly indicated for people who find difficult to make introspection and to focus on themselves. The learners will choose a business product that in some way represents themselves or their wishes moving the attention from themselves to the object.

Educators should highlight strengths and weaknesses for every business product discussing with the users.

"If you were a business product" proved to be a very effective activity, even those who did not want to design had the desire to tell what product it would be."



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES' LEARNING OUTCOMES

The combination and implementation of the above mentioned activities and workshops allows the involved adults with disabilities to develop and increase skills and new knowledge on different levels (as tested on the project adult learners during the three years of the project).

Their learning outcomes are the result of a learning design based on some principles from non formal and inclusive education.

The learning process of the adult learners should be mediated by:

- the learning by doing method,
- the use of easy language,
- the right alternation among learning activities and breaks,
- a supportive approach
- a tutoring system that ensures the efficacy of the learning process and the actual application of the learning outcomes.

The project's educational path allows to the involved adult learners to develop important skills such as:

- self-awareness
- ICT skills
- communication skill
- handcraft and decor skills

These skills are necessary to enter and take advantage of collaborative economy networks, extending the fields of social inclusion for people with disability and offering them the opportunity to access the productive system of economy and to gain a transnational view of their possibilities.

They have discovered what it means to produce something that can be sold and bought.

This type of action is empowering for many of them and it introduces the possibility to enter the world of work through one's own means.

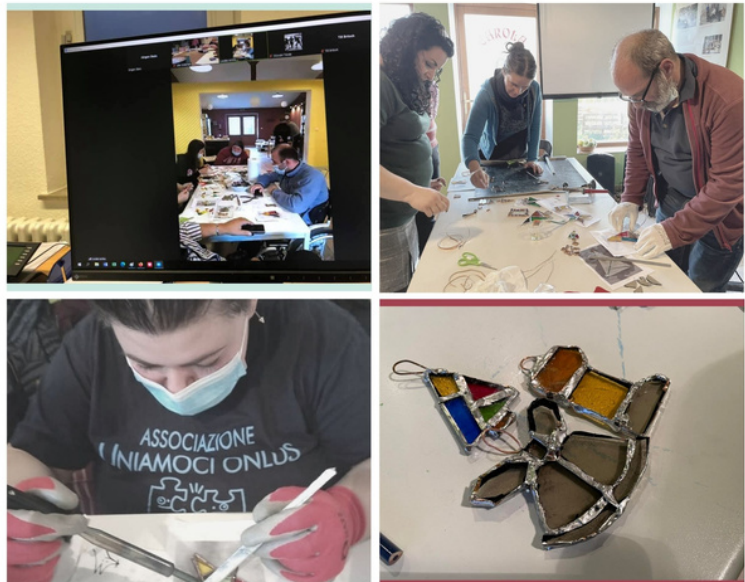
EXPERIENCES FROM THE BLENDED MOBILITIES

From the second virtual proposed by the Macedonian Partner Go Green Skopje: workshop for the re-use of plastic bottles that can be turned in colourful plant pots with the shape of animals. This activity has been fun and very creative.



The blended mobility hosted by the Romanian partner has been developed with the participants from Uniamoci Onlus physically in Sfantu Gheorge and the other connected on Zoom.

The topic of the blended mobility was the Tiffany-stained glass making technology and especially the use of this technique to create simple jewels and Christmas Tree decorations.



PARTNERSHIPS' EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

Academia dos Santos Martires - Portugal.

Academia dos Santos Martires involved a number of 20 users who benefited from specific training in the area of accessible technologies (ICT), in the area of self-knowledge through the elaboration of their portfolio.

Regarding ICT, it was a huge challenge because activities like those are uncommon in the lives of users so it was a big ambition to enable users to use computers daily. With this project, users were guided to a new concept of life in which the use of computers became a constant in their lives, including their mobile phone.

The search for new opportunities started to be done through the internet and the computer, and habits were even acquired to create life projects.

Those activities allowed them to extract useful information about how to enter areas of possible business.

The combined learning mobilities and the activities, before and after, contributed immensely to enrich our field of vision on aspects that could be developed at an institutional level, as evidenced by the Facebook page and blog of the CEB project.

Diakonia Bremen - Germany.

From the experience in the Diakonia Bremen social centers, involved in the CEB activities, there are three points to make for further consideration:

a) activities for the “markets” of exchange and cooperation challenge creativity and diversity of capabilities of disabled persons in a very strong way (compared, too, with the tasks they fulfill at the workplaces of people with disabilities’ arranged workshops (“Werkstätten für Menschen mit Behinderung”) and the German institutions learned a lot about such creative methods during the blended mobility activities in CEB partnership,

b) people with disability could (and are eager to) contribute to all sorts of activities for nature and climate protection, fighting pollution or

PARTNERSHIPS' EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

preventing damages - activities often included in collaborative initiative networks and ICT knowledge and capability is often required to participate in such initiative networks but is, too - when available and trained - a good way to contribute to their work, even to get key positions in their management.

Uniamoci Onlus - Italy.

Uniamoci Onlus users who were involved had the opportunity to develop different types of skills, in the field of self-awareness and communication, ICT and handcraft, having the possibility to express themselves through different activities, experiencing satisfaction for their results. They benefit from multiple workshops and the opportunity of sharing experiences and stories with participants from partnerships' NGOs. Users learned how to make crafts with their own hands, despite virtual mobilities and Covid-19 pandemic, and how to use local selling online platforms to introduce their products in the world wide web market. Some of them managed to sell their crafts during an event and to earn real money from that!

Go Green Skopje, N.Macedonia

From our experience working on this project and these activities, it is crucial to take note that all the activities were using upcycling and recycling techniques which give even better results in the sense of further education and raising awareness of the users on environmental protection. Furthermore, the products have more value and are more appreciated by the buyer who is nowadays more eco-conscious. The users we were working with were hearing impaired, but they didn't lack mental capacities or physical disabilities, so the products that they made are of high quality. They do need more inclusion in the society, and our collaboration with their institution proved it to be productive and encouraging for them. They were very fond of learning new things and developing their creativity. The next step would be to boost their entrepreneurial skills.

CONCLUSION



The dissemination activities stimulated public and stakeholders attention on the topic which could motivate all the collaborative economy initiatives to open up for a culturally-sensible dialogue and for various disadvantaged target groups to train themselves to participate in these new forms of economy, to discuss and to define their challenges, achievements and potential usefulness.

A new tool to present people with disabilities' skills and knowledge called Portfolio was introduced, that could help them in job interviews.

Because of people with disabilities' issues with the use of ICT and smartphones, continuous training should be guaranteed and training courses, especially ICT training courses, should be adapted to groups and their type of capacities.

To introduce them to collaborative economy possibilities and to reach some autonomy's levels that allows them to be their own to sell products online, a good initiative could be to train users to use digital marketing and online sales on an intensive level but it is undeniable that intellectual and physical barriers are present in the online selling systems and in the use of collaborative economy in general.

This model can contribute to economic models through inclusion of people with disabilities: an example of collaborative economy is the creation of a group of people

with disabilities as local touristic guides, making tourism accessible even in easy to understand language.

In general we can conclude that entering collaborative economy for people with disability is possible and has a lot of personal and social advantages for them, but they need an intensive preparation on several fields (from how to manage communications with “customers”, to the use of online platforms and ICT in general, to, not less important, specific art,craft or sectoral training/guidance) and a long lasting tutoring for the maintenance of those activities in view of their complete autonomy.

A work of raising social awareness on the topic of accessibility is needed for the online exchange platforms in terms of layout and management system.

THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ERASMUS+ PROJECT

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