

A Journey to Well-Being

Paphos, Cyprus

19-27 October 2024





About the project

“A Journey to Well-Being” was a youth workers mobility financed by European Commission through the Erasmus + programme. This Training Course brought together 6 organizations from European Union, IEEN - Cyprus, ASK Yourself - Romania, Young Wave - Poland, INSIEME - Italy, MTU Jazzon - Estonia, Vizioner - Bulgaria.

The main reason we started this project was that we wanted to boost youth workers' well-being and effectiveness in their daily work.

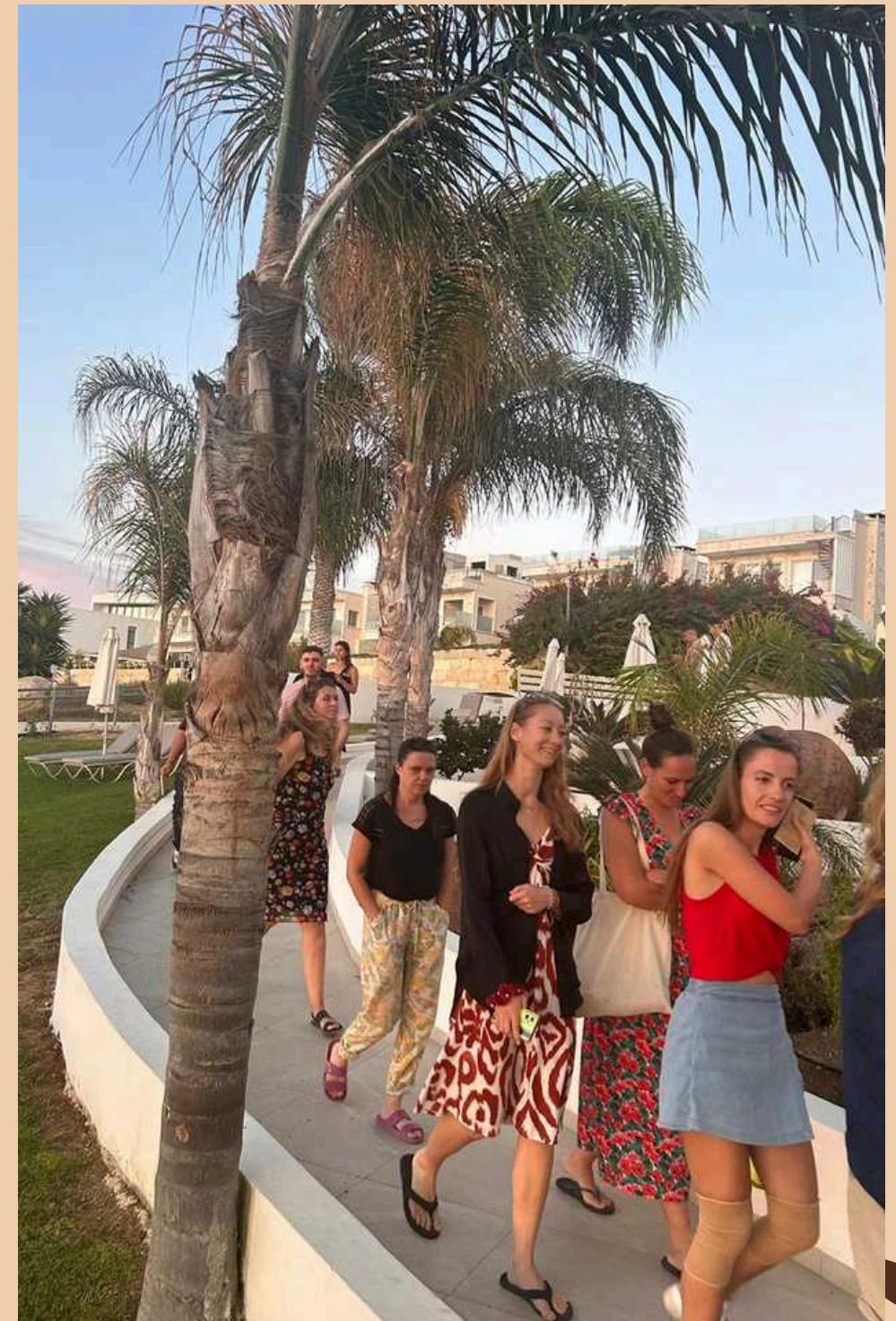
A Journey to Well-Being was an Erasmus+ project dedicated to promoting the holistic well-being of young people and youth workers across Europe. In a time marked by rising mental health challenges, social disconnection, and the demands of modern life, this project recognized well-being as a vital foundation for personal development, social inclusion, and active participation in society.





Our objectives were:

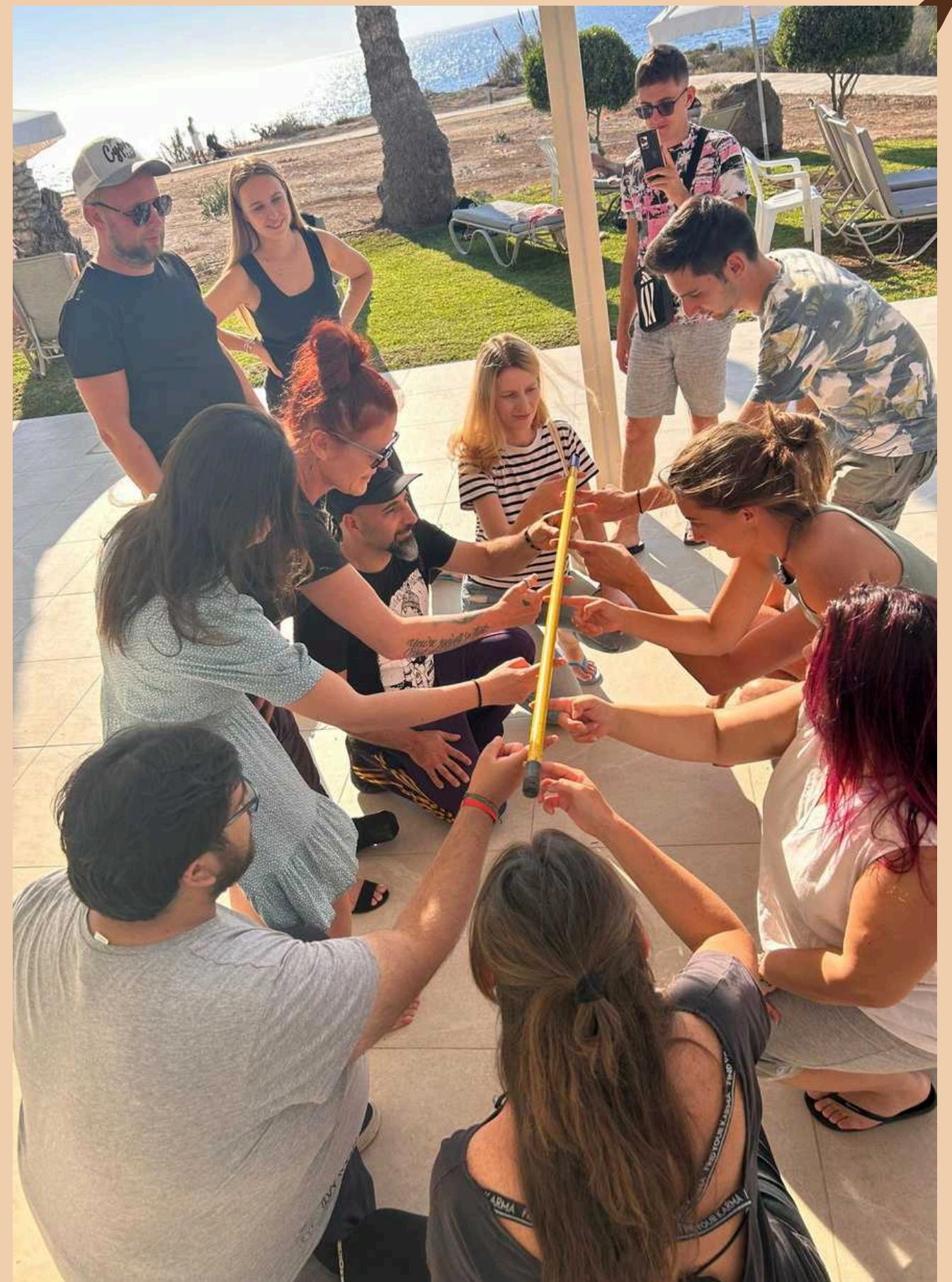
1. Improve the knowledge about the well-being concept.
2. Help our participants implement a minimum of 5 happiness boosting strategies and non-formal methods in order to increase their happiness/well-being at the workplace.
3. Help our youth workers develop their self-confidence, time-management and planning skills.





Non-formal Education Methods





Wheel of Life

Notes:

- Balance is personal and unique to each individual - what may be satisfying or balanced for some may be stressful or boring for others.
- This exercise raises a person's awareness and allows the client to plan a life that is more satisfying and closer to their definition of balance. It also helps clarify priorities for goal-setting.
- Balance must be assessed over time. A regular check-in (eg. with this exercise) can highlight useful patterns and help your clients learn even more about themselves. You can do this with them, or recommend they do it for themselves.
- Another option is for the participant to ask someone who knows them well to complete the scores for them (sometimes it's helpful to see an outside perception of your life 'balance'). Important: This must be someone they trust and whose opinion they value - and remember that others may have hidden agendas.

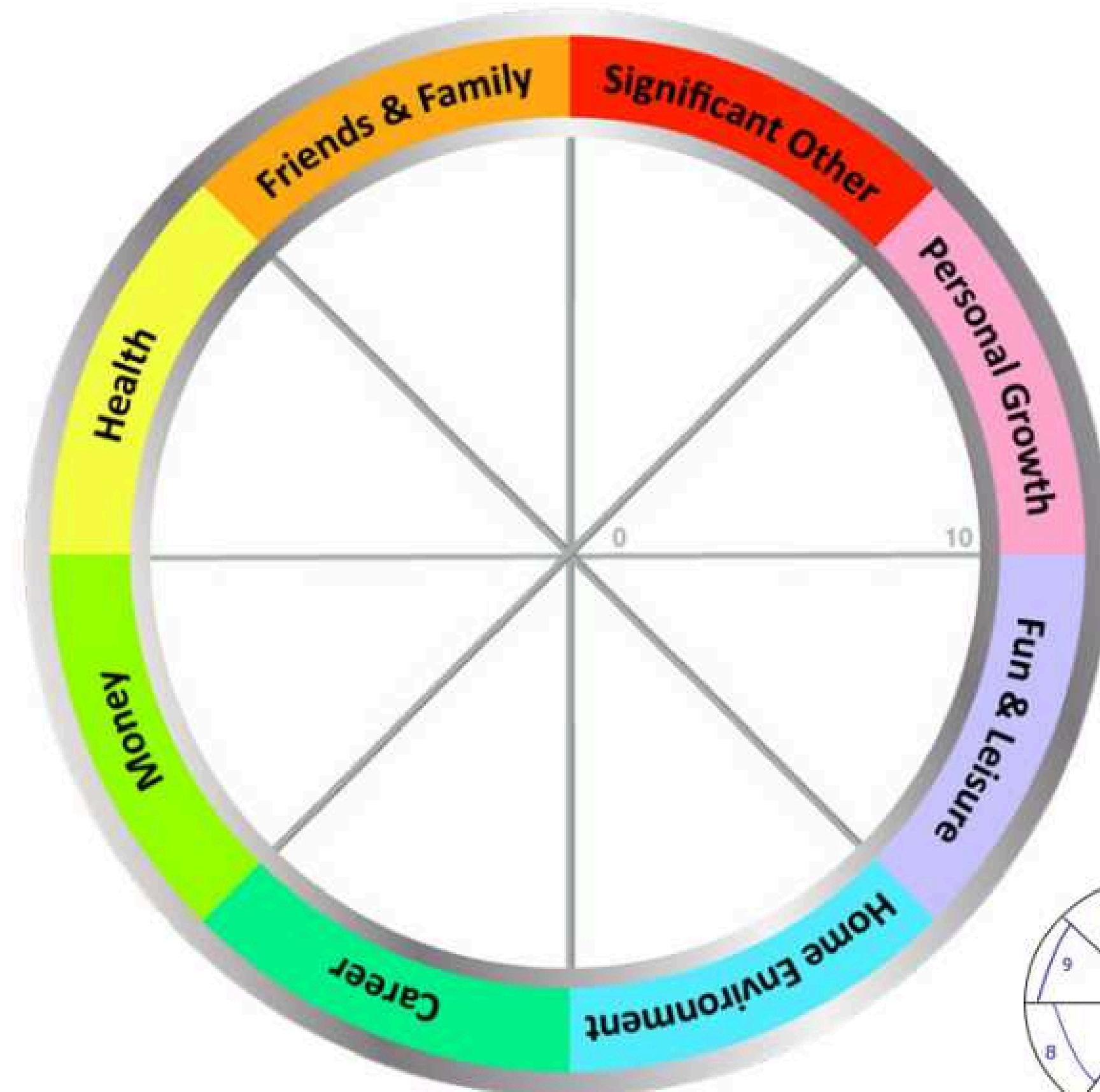
Detailed Instructions for facilitator:

1. Ask your participants to review the 8 categories on their Wheel of Life. The categories should together create a view of a balanced life for them. If necessary they can split category segments to add in something that is missing, or re-label an area to make it more meaningful for them. Examples of changes are:

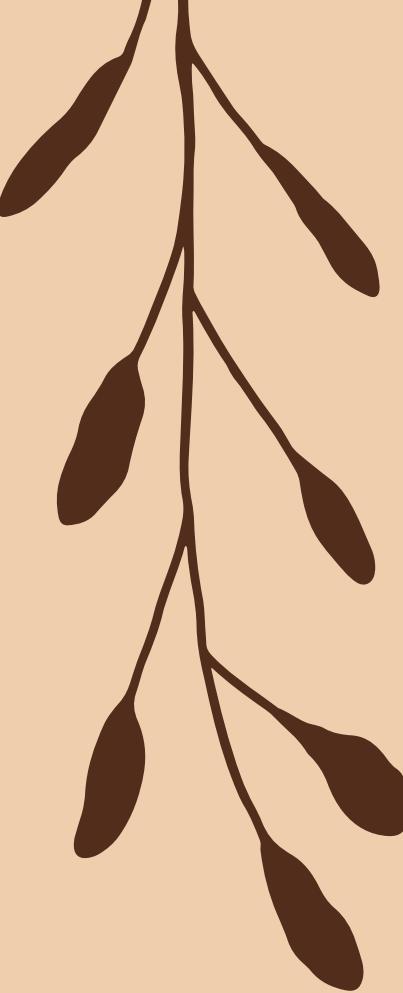
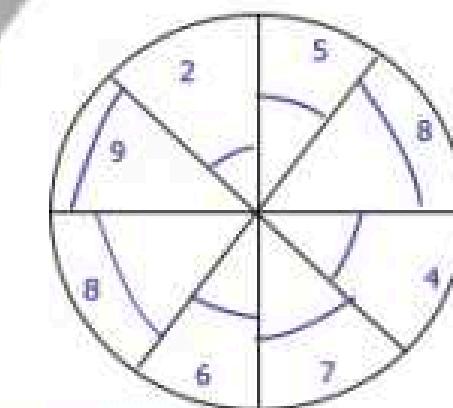
- a. **Family and Friends:** Split "Family and Friends" into separate categories.
- b. **Significant Other:** Changing the category name to "Dating", "Relationship" or "Life Partner".
- c. **Career:** Changing the category name to "Motherhood", "Work", "Business" or "Volunteering".
- d. **Finances:** Changing the category name to "Money", "Financial Security" or "Financial Wellbeing".
- e. **Health:** The category name could be split or changed to "Emotional", "Physical", "Fitness", "Spiritual" or "Wellbeing".
- f. **Home Environment:** The category could split or change to "Work Environment" for career or business clients.
- g. **Fun & Leisure:** The category name could change to "Recreation"

Your Name: _____

Today's Date: _____



EXAMPLE



h. Personal Growth: The category name could change to "Learning", "Self-Development" or "Spiritual"

i. Other categories to add could include "Security", "Service", "Leadership", "Achievement" or "Community".

1. Ask your participants to think about what success or satisfaction would feel like for each area.

2. Now ask them to rank their level of satisfaction with each area of their life by drawing a line across each segment. Ask them to place a value between 1 (very dissatisfied) and 10 (fully satisfied) against each area to show how satisfied they are currently with each category in their life.

3. The new perimeter of the circle represents their Wheel of Life. Ask your participants, "Is it a bumpy ride?"

"Imagine this kind of wheel on your bicycle. How would it work?"

"How can we make our ride smoother?" – we can make all the bigger areas smaller – possible answer from the participants. You can reply "Imagine how small the wheel would be and how long the ride to your objectives."

"The solution is to develop the low areas to come closer to balance and a smooth ride."

1. Now, looking at the wheel here are some great questions to ask your participants to take the exercise deeper:

Identify 1-3 low areas you would like to work on.

Main questions:

1. Why are you here? (with a low mark in this specific area)

2. Where would you like to be? (What would be a 10 for you?)

3. How can you get from where you are to where you want to be? (try to write specific actions that you can do: today, this week, this month)

If time is not an issue, consider also these questions:

1. Are there any surprises for you?

2. How do you feel about your life as you look at your Wheel?

3. How do you currently spend time in these areas? How would you like to spend time in these areas?

4. What would make that a score of 10?

5. What would a score of 10 look like?

6. Which of these categories would you most like to improve?

7. How could you make space for these changes in your life?

8. What help and support might you need from others to make changes and be more satisfied with your life?

9. What change should you make first? And what change do you want to make first?

10. If there was one key action you could take that would begin to bring everything into balance, what would it be? Taking action - the final step. To wrap-up the exercise you can ask your participants to identify one action for each area, and then pick 1-3 actions to get started. You could also ask them to choose the 3 areas they most want to work on and identify an action for each.

TIP: If your participant is extremely busy or stressed try asking, "What is the smallest step you could take to get started?"



9 Well-Being Methods for Youth and Educators

1. Mindfulness & Meditation

- Guided meditation sessions
- Breathing exercises (e.g., box breathing, 4-7-8 technique)
- Body scan for relaxation
- Mindful walking or eating

2. Physical Activity

- Daily movement breaks (stretching, dance, yoga)
- Outdoor activities (hiking, team sports)
- Group fitness challenges
- Active games promoting cooperation and fun

3. Emotional Intelligence Development

- Journaling or reflective writing
- Feelings check-ins or emotion wheels
- Role-play scenarios for empathy-building
- Group discussions on vulnerability and self-expression



4. Creative Expression

- Art therapy (drawing, collage, mandalas)
- Music-based workshops (drumming circles, songwriting)
- Storytelling or poetry sessions
- Drama or improvisation games

5. Digital Well-Being

- Workshops on screen time balance
- Social media detox challenges
- Discussions on digital identity and mental health
- App recommendations for digital self-care

6. Positive Psychology Practices

- Gratitude journaling or gratitude circles
- Strengths discovery and affirmation exercises
- Acts of kindness missions
- Vision board creation for personal goals

7. Nature-Based Activities

- Eco-therapy or forest bathing
- Gardening or planting workshops
- Outdoor mindfulness walks
- Environmental awareness and its link to mental health



8. Social Connection & Community

- Peer support circles or buddy systems
- Group trust-building activities
- Volunteering or civic engagement projects
- Open space or "sharing circle" formats

9. Stress Management Techniques

- Time management and boundary-setting workshops
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Visualization and guided imagery
- Coping strategies toolkit creation



Breathing Techniques for Well-Being



Box Breathing (Square Breathing)

- **Great for stress reduction and grounding.**
- **How to do it:**
 - Inhale for 4 seconds
 - Hold for 4 seconds
 - Exhale for 4 seconds
 - Hold for 4 seconds
 - Repeat for 4-5 cycles

4-7-8 Breathing

- **Calms the nervous system and aids relaxation, especially before sleep.**
- **How to do it:**
 - Inhale through the nose for 4 seconds
 - Hold your breath for 7 seconds
 - Exhale through the mouth for 8 seconds
 - Repeat 4 times



The Importance of Yoga for Well-Being

Yoga is more than just physical exercise—it's a holistic practice that unites the body, mind, and breath. Rooted in ancient traditions, yoga offers a powerful tool for promoting mental clarity, emotional balance, and physical health. In the context of youth development and education, yoga can play a key role in building resilience, reducing stress, and fostering a deeper sense of self-awareness.

Benefits of Yoga in Well-Being Programs:

- **Mental Clarity:** Yoga improves focus, concentration, and cognitive function, making it an effective tool for managing anxiety, overthinking, and academic pressure.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Regular practice helps individuals recognize and manage emotions, reducing reactivity and enhancing emotional intelligence.
- **Stress Reduction:** Deep breathing, movement, and relaxation techniques help calm the nervous system and reduce cortisol (stress hormone) levels.
- **Physical Health:** Yoga supports strength, flexibility, posture, and body awareness, promoting overall physical well-being.
- **Social Connection:** Practicing yoga in a group fosters unity, mutual respect, and shared experience, key values in intercultural and youth exchange settings.

Yoga is also highly adaptable—accessible to people of all fitness levels and backgrounds—and can be integrated into daily routines, workshops, or outdoor activities.



Meditation Techniques for Working with Youth

1. Guided Visualization

- What it is: A narrator guides participants through a calming mental journey (e.g. a peaceful beach, forest, or safe space).
- Why it works: Stimulates imagination, creates emotional safety, and helps relieve anxiety.
- When to use: At the start or end of a session to relax or reset the mood.

2. Body Scan Meditation

- What it is: Directing attention slowly through each part of the body to notice tension or sensations.
- Why it works: Builds mind-body connection, reduces stress, and improves body awareness.
- When to use: Before physical activities, during reflection, or to ease restlessness.

3. Mindful Breathing

- What it is: Focusing attention solely on the breath, often using counts or a mantra.
- Why it works: Calms the nervous system, improves focus, and is simple to teach.
- When to use: During transitions, before challenging conversations, or to manage group energy.



5. Sound Meditation

- What it is: Focusing attention on ambient sounds (e.g. nature sounds, chimes, singing bowls, or even silence).
- Why it works: Helps with present-moment awareness, especially for those who struggle with stillness.
- When to use: Outdoors, during creative activities, or as part of sensory awareness exercises.

6. Five Senses Grounding

- What it is: Bringing awareness to one's surroundings by identifying:
 - 5 things you see
 - 4 things you can touch
 - 3 things you hear
 - 2 things you smell
 - 1 thing you taste
- Why it works: Great for managing anxiety or panic; teaches presence through sensory exploration.
- When to use: As a calming ritual or during emotional regulation training.

7. Walking Meditation

- What it is: Slow, mindful walking with attention to movement, breath, and surroundings.
- Why it works: Ideal for active youth or those who find sitting still difficult.
- When to use: Outdoors or between sessions, especially during youth exchanges or retreats.

These techniques can be introduced as short practices (5–10 minutes), adapted to the energy level of the group, and linked to themes like identity, empathy, or resilience.









PROJECT Partners

Special thanks for all those who made this project possible:

- Erasmus Plus: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en
- Cyprus National Agency: <https://www.erasmusplus.cy/>

- Project partners:

IEEN - Cyprus

ASK Yourself - Romania

Young Wave - Poland

INSIEME - Italy

MTU Jazzon - Estonia

Vizioner - Bulgaria