

“A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE BY THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS

“A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE BY THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS



Special Edition by Anna Elmi Foundation
Intercultural
DIALOGUE



FREE PRESS

The 35th Edition

Intercultural Dialogue
by Michael Magee and Livia Kallmeyer

The Mediterranean basin has always been the womb of civilization from which prominent cultures were born, flourished and for centuries coexisted and interacted. It is a sacred place of great religions and the birthplace of important scientists and people of spirit. But at the same time, it was and often is a field of battles and hostile conflicts.

For almost two decades, the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), that I have the honor of being co-head for the last seven years, has been working to bridge diversity and promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, human rights and peaceful problem-solving.

The tradition of the Foundation is the implementation of a FORUM every 3 years. Civil society organizations, academics, people of politics

and culture have the opportunity to participate and formulate new ideas and proposals for the future of Foundation's member countries.

Due to the pandemic, FORUM 2020 was canceled and replaced by an online Marathon of actions, seminars and activities. In this context, this issue, which I am pleased to preface/prologue, is dedicated to the ALF. It is a patchwork of articles by young and thinking people that touch upon the principles, values and pillars of the Foundation, while articles by members of the Greek ALF network are also hosted.

The texts are a spiritual and freedom of thought product of the authors exclusively.

Enjoy!

Aristodimos Paraschou
Co-Head Anna Lindh Foundation Hellas, and head of USB

Balkan Beats, a part of Balkan Hotspot

Balkan Hotspot is the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) of "United Societies of Balkans", a NGO founded in Thessaloniki in 2008 by a team of active young people.

The Balkans and Eastern Europe are geographical regions with many cultural features which offer a broad spectrum of actions and youth involvement initiatives. The organization was created as a response to the pressure of con-

stant changes in the Balkan and Eastern European region and under the need for the creation of a better social environment.

Key areas of the organization's activities concern the defense of human rights, the organization of youth exchanges and training courses, which will bring young people from Balkans and Europe together, the organization of local educational seminars and multimedia production.

United Societies of Balkans is a Non Governmental Organization, founded in Thessaloniki in 2008, by a team of active young people. The organization was created as a response to the pressure of constant changes in the Balkan and Eastern European region and under the need for the creation of a better social environment. Key areas of the organization's activities concern the defense of human rights, the organization of youth exchanges and training courses, which will bring young people from Balkans and Europe together, the organization of local educational seminars and multimedia production (webradio, videos, documentaries).

UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS, NGO
9, Alamanas str., Agios Pavlos, Thessaloniki
Tel./Fax: +30 2310 215 629 | www.usbngo.gr
www.balkanhotspot.org

Main goals of the organization

- To promote the values of non formal learning, volunteering, active citizenship and democracy for the creation of a better future for European youth.
- To promote human rights, solidarity and respect for diversity.
- To build healthy cooperation bridges between countries of the Balkan area and that of Eastern Europe with the rest of Europe.
- To locate and multiply the special cultural attributes of our societies.
- The break down of prejudices and stereotypes between Balkan countries.

Property of Balkan Beats

The United Societies of Balkans, NGO, does not necessarily share the opinions expressed in Balkan Beats. It is illegal to reproduce any part of this publication without referring to the source.

This magazine is distributed free of charge.

Contents

Special

04

The Anna Lindh Foundation:
The network that unites the
Mediterranean

Volunteer Life

AROUND THE WORLD

06

When a High School
classroom becomes a
theatre play

09

Erasmus Plus is not a
programme, it's a family
where dreams come true.

12

EU Diversity Month:
Disability and Volunteering

14

Intercultural Cooking

Local Life

GREECE

15

Fostering social inclusion
of Refugees in Greece:
volunteerism, community
action and HEIs initiatives

18

Young Mediterranean
Voices: an inspiration for
the Black Sea region

20

The Anna Lindh Foundation
in Greece

22

Translation initiatives and
intercultural dialogue
in Rhodes, Greece

25

HOSCARs 2021:
Welcommon Hostel is
named one of the best
hostels in the world

Out Of The Borders

THE BALKANS AND
BEYOND

28

Tradition as a tool for
social intervention

31

Multiculturalism and
integration through
education

34

Intercultural Dialogue and
Young People's Future

38

Who was Anna Lindh?

40

Multicultural brain-wiring:
the psychological effects of
learning a new culture

45

Slavs supporting Slavs

48

Eurovision: more than just a
music contest

Mix Fix

51

Mare Humanitas

"The Anna Lindh Foundation: The network that unites the Mediterranean

by Marco Scarangella

"History of the foundation

"Throughout history, the Mediterranean Sea has always had the dual role of a barrier and a bridge between the peoples and cultures present on its coasts. The main challenge for this area has always been integrating the mosaic of different societies around this sea. In the 21st century, this has not changed; on the contrary, the increase of intolerance, radicalism and unequal living conditions among Mediterranean countries are among the most remarkable trials ever to be faced. The Anna Lindh Foundation fits into this complicated, but at the same time culturally rich context.

"This institution was founded in November 2004 and is the first to establish the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, a political agreement made in 1995 between the European Union and Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Syria and Turkey. The organisation was created by 37 member countries, who finance it with the help of the European Union.

"The Anna Lindh Foundation, which has grown over the years to the current 42 member states, was created to promote cultural, social and spiritual dialogue between the participating countries and encourage a spirit of mutual ac-

ceptance and respect. Thus, it was decided to name the Foundation Anna Lindh, in honour of the Swedish Foreign Minister who was murdered in 2003. In fact, during her career, she promoted cooperation between peoples and called for respect for international laws and human rights.

"Another symbolic decision taken by the member countries was to locate the Foundation's headquarters in Alexandria, Egypt, specifically in the Library of the city and the Swedish Institute. This makes it the first Euro-Mediterranean institution situated out of the EU.

"Principles and objectives of the foundation

"The Foundation's priority is to bring together people and organisations from the two sides



Anna Lindh, when she was Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

© Multimedia Centre
European Parliament



Anna Lindh Foundation's Logo

© Anna Lindh Foundation

of the Mediterranean, focusing on people's development through education and training. The members' goal is to use dialogue to combat racism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination and ensure freedom of expression and respect for human rights. In particular, the social groups to which the Foundation pays attention are young people and migrants.

•• The Foundation acts as a Network of Networks composed of over 4000 civil society organisations around all the member countries. The ALF Network of Networks members is diverse, including NGOs, public institutions, foundations, local and regional authorities, individuals and private organisations, which are active in different areas essential for human and social dialogue, such as Education, Culture, Arts, Intercultural Learning, Religion and Spirituality, Urban Spaces and Citizenship, Migration, Media and Public Opinion.

•• The Network

•• The role of national networks in each Member State is significant, as they can work more efficiently thanks to the close cooperation of local public and private cultural institutions. The Foundation's work is supported by regional and international partners such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations, the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, ALECSO, ISESCO, EMUNI, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

•• Each National Network is coordinated by focal point institutions named Heads of Networks. They work for ensuring coordination, consultation and mobilisation inside the National Network, for facilitating the development and implementation of common actions among member organisations or across Networks, for involving the participating countries in the Foundation's programmes and projects, and for strengthening the cooperation between the Heads of Network and the ALF Headquarters.

•• Joining the Anna Lindh Foundation Network is relatively simple. If an organisation wishes to join the network, it simply needs to belong to one of the 42 member countries and work in fields such as intercultural relations, heritage, religion, research, human rights, democracy and community development, arts, youth and education, gender, environment and sustainable development, and media.

•• Then the organisation will have to fill in and send the application form for the membership and wait for the Heads of Network to whom the application will be sent, take the decision about admission.

<https://www.alfhellas.gr/en>



Elisabeth Guigou, president of
Anna Lindh Foundation

© Multimedia Centre
European Parliament

“When a High School classroom becomes a theatre play

by Laura Andrés Tallardà

“Fundació Catalunya Voluntaria and Artixoc, with the support of the Spanish network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, carry out the workshops ‘Turn your back on violence’ in a High School class and playground.

“Playgrounds are the place where children and teenagers dream, play, grow and take a rest from their classes. But in Barcelona, a playground from a High School in the Sants-Montjuïc district, also becomes a special ‘experiment’. Students can improve competencies like expressing themselves in a non-violent way or active listening through different activities.

“On the other hand, the classroom of students becomes a theater play, while creating spaces

to put into practice pedagogical tools that are based on creativity and free expression, as well as on the interests, experiences and teamwork capacity of the students.

“The activity takes place between the months of February and May 2021 in a center of high complexity for 24 hours in total, and allows discovering and recognizing relevant aspects of communication, acting, knowledge of the self and one’s own emotions, words, gestures and feelings, with the aim of focusing on how to develop the skills to express oneself in a non-violent way, listen actively, communicate peacefully and prevent and manage conflict situations. This will help the participants to have more resources to prevent violence and fight against the various forms of discrimination and bullying, inside and outside the classroom.

“The interesting part is that the initiative implies different ways to learn, communicate, and different competencies. Knowledge and abilities are not the same. Nowadays, it is possible to learn in a creative way. In their case, it implies commenting and receiving comments in a non-violent way, or being able to take the



initiative", Lluç Martí, Project Manager in Fundació Catalunya Voluntària, who is in charge of a part of the program, explains.

• The students have done activities in the playground to work on specific attitudes. "For example, active listening, which was one of the fields where the participants had more problems with. They were placed in partners and they had to play: they had to listen to their partner with a percentage of active listening (20, 50, 80 or 100%) and after they also had to guess the percentage of active listening of their partner", Martí exemplifies.

• Scenes that become a mirror of daily violence

• With the coronavirus pandemic, there has been an increase in the violent attitudes of a part of the students. More and more children



are victims of hate, bullying, and violence online because of the coronavirus pandemic, a new United Nations report said. But violence sometimes also takes place in homes. According to the experts, without access to the support networks such as educators, friends and extended families, students usually find at school, some children have been stranded in abusive homes with no place to turn for help as



schools are locked down to control the spread of the coronavirus.

“Playgrounds have also become one of the main sources of violence among students. ‘‘We realized with some High School teachers that in the playground there was more violence than usually. The fact that students have to always be in bubbles was not good in their daily life’’, Àgia Luna, director of Artixoc and responsible for the theater part of the activity, explains. Artixoc is an NGO from Barcelona that uses art as a tool for education and social transformation.

“This activity becomes an antidote to prevent and fight violence among students and to raise awareness. The goal is that the scenes that the students create become a mirror of the violence they experience. ‘The theater scene that the students from 4th of ESO (who are 15-16 years old), recorded, was about daily violence, that they live, abuses on social networks, in the playground or even outside from the school’, Luna states.

“The students film the scenes they create with their phones and the best will be selected and translated. ‘With this activity, students also learn to act, public speaking without being too shy, emotional intelligence... it helps them grow’, Luna adds.

“An international perspective

“Once completed, the results of the initiative will be presented in Belgium and Morocco. The workshops are part of the initiative of the Spanish network of the Anna Lindh Foundation (European Institute of the Mediterranean) entitled ‘Educate in Diversity-Building Citizenship’.

“The initiative has the collaboration of the entity Mediterranean Editors and Translators, which

will edit the digital pedagogical dossier with the lessons learned from the workshops and will translate the videos into different languages, collaborating in the dissemination of the activity.

“The workshops are part of an exchange of experiences and practices with other similar initiatives taking place in Belgium and Morocco. Their results will be presented in an international event in Safi (Morocco) in June 2021. The videos and plays done by the students will be shown, and the participants will encourage other educational centers and youth organizations to carry out the activity.

“Acting is so much more real than life”

“The poet and playwright Oscar Wilde said ‘I love acting. It is so much more real than life.’ Theater allows us to create other worlds, but it also can become an accurate radiography of our own world. ‘Turn your back on violence’ will help the students to use their imagination, but it will also allow them to reflect on their life and on their actions, and to become active citizens to improve the world they are surrounded by.



Erasmus Plus is not a programme, it's a family where dreams come true.

History of a young dreamer.

by Filippo Massariol

• When I left for my first project, I was having one of the worst periods of my life. At that moment I didn't even know what to expect, I just knew that all the things would be worth it to be better than I was.

• I had never traveled before and I was absolutely unable to take care of myself. But I felt inside me that root that often remains hidden or sunk from the ground above, but that is growing deep inside you and tries to say: *"A' bello hai finito de piangerte addosso? - Come on' man when you gonna stop crying about your own mistakes? Come out of the box and become who you are."*

• Since the first day of my short-term EVS in Croatia, I had a great time! It 's like when you live for years inside a nightmare in which you feel imprisoned, but suddenly you discover a light that is made of the same substance as you.

"It was not just a cultural exchange, it was The Cultural Exchange."



Meeting random peaceful dogs
in Ohrid, North Makedonia

© Filippo Massariol

• We lived in a hostel in the suburbs of Zagreb, the capital. Every night, I remember that people from all over the world used to come and enrich me and indelicate me with a new culture, or maybe with the thing that creates more value and balance within ourselves: diversity. Unfortunately, it wasn't a great project at a professional level, but in life you don't learn the important things with a piece of paper, you learn them by living.

• I learned to let go and live intensely every day surrounded by people who love me... so much, that I think I learned in 2 months what I had forgotten in 20 years.

• I learned to be eco-sustainable and that every little gesture is important to help us and the planet. I have also understood that you don't have to be afraid to throw yourself into life, and that as a wise woman said to me a few days

ago stacce¹ – get dealt with, don't be afraid. Because even if life slaps you, today we are still here, and we still have the power to smile and change things.

“Once back home, I resisted for about a month, then I left for a youth exchange, in a country where I never thought I would go: Tunisia. It was not just a cultural exchange, it was The Cultural Exchange. I finally understood what the Erasmus Plus program was really like (the project was well-organized this time), and I finally managed to get out of my insecurity and expose myself to the public without fear. I remember that I was not shy anymore, and that I kept on talking to so many people. “You speak later at the presentation that you are the bravest one!” and I stood there and was like “But are you talking to me?” I couldn't believe that there was a version of Filippo that was not shy and awkward, and I was so happy that from then on I didn't want to stop traveling and discovering myself.

“The spirit has three metamorphoses, from camel to Lion and from Lion to baby.”

“Friedrich Nietzsche in “Thus Zarathustra spoke” said “The spirit has three metamorphoses, from camel to Lion and from Lion to baby.” At that moment I had finally managed to get rid of my camel; and from my skin a solid fur with its mane was beginning to come out.

“So I did 6 other youth exchanges in Macedonia, Slovakia, Spain and Italy. After having learnt a lot and had a really great time, I made a discovery! A great discovery, as if the Archangel Gabriel had come down to Earth to communicate something to me.

¹ / 'statʃe/ or stuh-chew. A colloquial Italian Roman expression to convey the idea of “Accept what happened and deal with it as good as you can.”

“I had always despised Italy, because the place where I was born never gave me any kind of satisfaction. But as I traveled and met people from other places in my country, I finally realized that there was not only one Italy, and that the beauty of my country is just that: the fact that it is so different and varied that it pushes you to discover it by becoming a better person.

“In 20 years I hadn't done anything else but regret about myself, and follow some absurd rules that should make us civilized people, when in reality they enslave us. I didn't even take the opportunity to enjoy the fact that I am Italian and I am lucky to be a citizen in such a beautiful country. I left again from home, and went to live in Rome for about a year.

“On the streets of Rome I found the light-heartedness and serenity that I had never been able to find in the north of Italy where I am from. I finally felt part of my country but not only... let's not let the borders define us! We are all part of this planet and there should not be foreigners but only brothers and sisters.

“After a long time spent between travel and madness, I went back home for a while. Then the quarantine arrived. We think that bad times are to be avoided because they hurt us. Probably whoever said this was not out-of the box enough to realize the idiocy he was talking about. I think that what happens is inevitable and that whatever bad things happen can only be an opportunity to stand up even stronger.



“La T con la mano è da dove veniamo”

© Filippo Massariol



Curry afternoons in Navarinou

© Filippo Massariol

- The pandemic gave me the chance to reflect and better understand what I wanted to do in life, so in summer I found this ESC in Thessaloniki. I'm good at writing and I've always wanted and still want to turn my art into a job. So without thinking even twice I joined it and left for Greece. I am really happy with what I am doing and I am satisfied to be part of this big family that is the Erasmus Plus program and my wonderful Anagnostara Dekatria, the place where I live. I think it is not just a program and not just a house, it's a magic cave where fairy tales happen. I'm thankful to be here and to all my companions that sustained and supported me through this wonderful journey.
- For me this is a lifestyle and an open dialogue that pushes us to improve ourselves for a better future every day!
- Chronicle of an anonymous dreamer, this message will be destroyed in 3,2,1...

EU Diversity Month: Disability and Volunteering

A chance for inclusivity and awareness

by Dimitris Chatoglou

May 2021 is EU Diversity Month and the European Commission aims at raising awareness for issues of diversity, as well as motivate individuals, organisations and companies to promote diversity in their own way in the workplace and in their respective communities throughout Europe. The concept of diversity covers an array of issues. From gender equality, generational gap, the systemic acceptance of members of the LGBTQIA+ community, to issues of equal rights regardless of one's race, nationality, and disability.

The exclusion of disabled people

The latter is an issue of great importance since it concerns a slice of the population that remains significantly disenfranchised from the labor market and does not enjoy equal opportunities in job seeking as well as in contending for a job opening. For this reason, the active

endeavour to minimise, as much as possible, the limitations to equal access to the labour market for people with disabilities is a step towards dignity, social justice and acceptance of the Diverse.

In their way towards vocational integration and inclusion with no limitations, people with



disabilities face a challenge in terms of developing skills necessary to become competitive in the job market, the lack of which can create a vicious circle that poses many barriers in their search. However, through volunteering, people with disabilities can develop important practical and social skills that can substantially boost their professional profile as potential candidates for a job opening.

"Through volunteering, people with disabilities can develop important practical and social skills that can substantially boost their professional profile as potential candidates for a job opening."

Contrary to the common belief that people with disabilities are mere beneficiaries of volunteering activities, many people with disabilities wish, as much as anyone, to contribute to our society. Volunteering has obvious and tangible advantages in the personal development of a person with disabilities that wants to involve themselves in volunteering activities. For example, the experience that they get in various scenarios and the improvement of skills that they would otherwise not get, had they not decided to volunteer. Additionally, volunteering is a great chance for networking and can open doors to volunteers, that they otherwise might not have gotten. Beyond those advantages though, there is something even more substantial; volunteers choose to devote their time and skills in activities that mean something to them, that make them feel useful to their communities and, at the end of the day, they see that their contribution has gone on to do good. And even though such benefits apply to all volunteers, whether they have disabilities or not, a few of them get to experience what it's like to work together with a person with disabilities.

Working for more Diversity in the workspace

EU's Diversity Month is, therefore, a great chance to consider and act towards the eradication of discrimination in the workplace, the acceptance of diversity in our society and the fair and equal access to everyone. Starting off with increasing the inclusivity of volunteering activities is a good first step and ethelon is already working towards this path through its activities and tools.

Since 2016, ethelon has been organising "Career Fair 4.all", a career day for people with disabilities. Through "Career Fair 4.all", people with disabilities have free access to training in ways they can improve their professional profile, while also having the chance to meet and talk with representatives of big corporations, with the possibility of an interview.

Ethelon is a non-profit organisation that aims at promoting the values of volunteering in Greek society. Through a set of activities, events and initiatives, we motivate and connect people, groups, institutions and companies with NGOs, seeking the development of synergies between them based on volunteering. Learn more about ethelon at www.ethelon.org.



“Intercultural Cooking

by Magdaléna Kokonezis

“Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures, which allows for a better understanding of each person’s perception of the world.”

“What is the thing that brings people together the most, even though they are from different cultures? The food of course! This is why, as part of my volunteering in Thessaloniki in a center for refugee women (Irida women center), I had the idea of creating a cookbook bringing together recipes from all the countries represented in Irida.

“My goal was to spread as much as possible this intercultural dialogue between the Greek people and the refugees present in Greece around an area that speaks to everyone: cooking. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic I was not lucky enough to be able to continue this project, which is very important to me, but I was still able to live this experience with a few women.

“Discussing, exchanging, talking about the history that each recipe represents, buying the ingredients and cooking with these women was a total discovery for me. I was able to realize that even if we do not share a common language, it is still possible to understand each other

through things that we love and that animate us. Cooking and tasting these dishes made me travel through different countries and gain a better understanding of certain cultures.

“Dialogue can take place in so many different ways, sometimes even without saying a word, just with a glance, but in my opinion it is when this dialogue is intercultural that it takes on its full meaning.



Adjara Kone, one of the guests of Irida Center

“Fostering social inclusion of Refugees in Greece: volunteerism, community action and HEIs initiatives

by Stefanos Katsoulis
Director of Thessaloniki Youth Club for UNESCO

“Since 2015, thousands of refugees have arrived in Greece, either aiming to settle down in the country or move to other EU member states. Despite the harsh conditions usually met at the island reception centres, the delays in the asylum applications procedure and the ambiguous practices adopted by the Greek governments, there are some actions, cases and examples that tend to promote social inclusion of refugees in the country.”

“At the national level, social inclusion policy falls within the mandate of the Ministry for Migration Policy, which is primarily authorized to draft the country’s strategy and workplan on the issue. The provision for the establishment of Greek Councils for Integration of Migrants in all municipalities as of 2016¹ should be mentioned among the efforts to decentralize the Greek social inclusion policy. These Councils are supposed to act as consultative bodies at municipal levels, including elected counsellors as well as representatives with migrant backgrounds. However, only a few councils have been created so far. Additionally, the revised “National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals”, that was finalized in 2019²,

foresees the cooperation and involvement of all levels of government (central, regional, and local) and actors (organisations, NGOs, public/private sector), and highlights the key role that the local authorities should play in the integration process.

“At regional and local levels, the Cities Network for Integration (CNI) was established in 2018, as an intermunicipal network led by Greek municipalities with the purpose of designing and exchanging good practices in the field of integration of migrants and refugees. It aims to strengthen social cohesion through coordinated actions and interventions at local and national level. So far, seventeen Greek municipalities have joined the CNI.

¹ Law No. 4430/2016

² <http://www.opengov.gr/immigration/?p=801>



“However, most of the successful initiatives for the promotion of social inclusion are good practices developed by community stakeholders (NGOs, civil-society stakeholders, groups of individuals) and, to some extent, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) either at the local level or those that fall within the scope of plurilateral EU funded initiatives. The main challenges that have to be overcome in these cases are: (i) the difficulty to expand the locally implemented actions in order to increase the capacity to involve refugees who live in other regions on one hand, and (ii) the continuation of funding when an EU funded project comes to an end on the other.

ΟΜΙΛΟΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ UNESCO ΝΕΩΝ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ



club
Youth
thessaloniki

THESSALONIKI YOUTH CLUB FOR UNESCO

“Social inclusion is a concept that puts emphasis on the right of individuals to participate in the life of their communities³. Volunteerism could provide a potential approach to achieve social inclusion, fulfilling refugees’ imperative social need to participate in the local communities and to feel that they matter to others, fostering their state of belonging and empowerment.⁴ Civil society organizations and individual stakeholders are all capable of proactive targeting of refugees, involving them in volunteerism. If this happens, more inclusive societies can emerge. In addition, including refugees as volunteers within the academic community can lead to the development of their language and vocational skills and increase their self-esteem. Therefore, volunteering within HEIs can help refugees to get engaged in the civic life of the communities, providing for their social inclusion.

“Several noteworthy examples of endeavors implemented by HEIs and community actors are included in the Refugees Welcome Map of the “TOGETHER” project.⁵ Within the framework of “TOGETHER” project, seven partner institutions, universities and civil society organisations, from three different Mediterranean countries (Greece, Italy and Portugal) have studied

³ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/social-inclusion>

⁴ United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Report on Volunteerism and Social Inclusion [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Booklet_SWVR_Social_Inclusion.pdf]

⁵ <https://together.pixel-online.org/refumap.php>

the main questions related to the possibility of building more inclusive HIEs by favouring the enrolment of refugees and migrants with international protection status. “TOGETHER” project has two main objectives: a) to develop social responsibility of Higher Education students providing them with intercultural and civic competences and raising their awareness on integration of refugees and b) to raise awareness of Higher Education staff members, by providing specific instruments, knowledge and skills for a more inclusive Higher education environment. The main project results include: i) the development of the Refugees Welcome Map, identifying the integration activities carried out investigating regulatory measures undertaken directly by universities, ii) the production of an e-learning package, providing University students with the skills to develop their potential civic role in promoting integration of refugees and finally and iii) the creation of a set of Guidelines addressed to Higher education staff, resulting in the improvement of their capacity of planning and implementing strategies for the integration of refugees.

•• Another example is the “Meet Me” initiative⁶, implemented by Thessaloniki Youth Club for UNESCO (Greece) within the framework of Fac- es of Migration project that is funded by the EU DEAR programme. The project is based on the development of an online platform which provides a language learning toolkit for migrants and refugees, promoting social inclusion of

⁶ <https://www.meetme-project.gr/>

refugees through their blending with young locals. The project’s goal is to create an online community, where refugees can self-register and match with local volunteer tutors, taking part in peer-to-peer online language courses. “Meet Me” also offers educational material and ideas for tutors working at schools, NGOs and other educational environments. The project envisions the realization of SDG No 4 on quality education for all and SDG No 10 on reducing inequalities through the promotion of inclusive education, the development of linguistic skills and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

“Volunteering within HEIs can help refugees to get engaged in the civic life of the communities, providing for their social inclusion.”

•• Taking into consideration the points mentioned above, for the effective social inclusion of refugees it is important to identify and consider the existing good practices, as well as to design and implement action plans and activities that will assist in raising awareness and in developing intercultural skills. Refugees will then not only feel welcome but will also develop a sense of belonging, through their engagement and interaction within the community. To this end, the Anna Lindh Foundation Network provides for an extensive source of good practices on how to build inclusive, sustainable and intercultural communities in the EuroMed region.

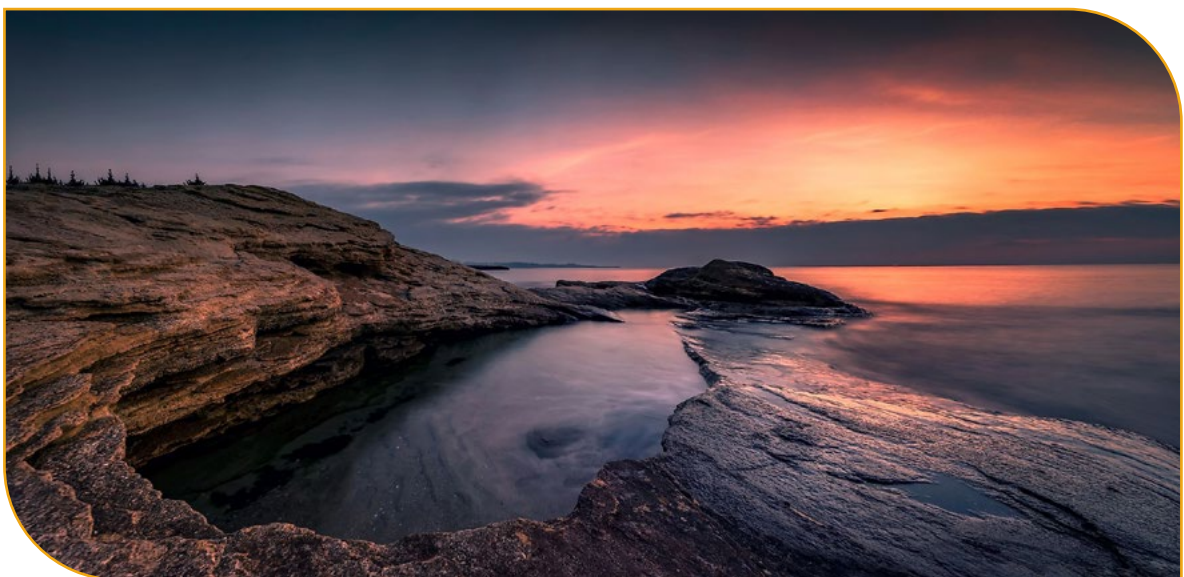
.. Young Mediterranean Voices: an inspiration for the Black Sea region

by Athina Korovesi
Head for Southern and Western Greece of the Anna Lindh Foundation Greek Network

“Young voices empowerment is one of the three main pillars of the Anna Lindh Foundation, in the framework of intercultural action. Within this context, the Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV) constitutes the flagship debate programme of the ALF, aiming to connect civil society, education and policy-makers across the South Mediterranean and Europe. The programme is funded by the European Commission and provides opportunities to open doors for young influencers to shape policy and media narratives.”

“Building on more than five years investment in the field, as well as established networks, pioneering methodologies and independent research, the overall objective of the Young Mediterranean Voices programme is to **empower young people** to enhance a culture of dialogue, to contribute to public policy and shape media dis-courses, and to create a shared understanding with peers across the Mediterranean on how to address issues of common concern to their communities.”

“Even if the programme focuses on the Mediterranean region, the idea for its implementation comes from the widely acclaimed programme **Young Arab Voices** (YAV), that was launched in



© Worldatlas.com

Alexandria in 2011 by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the British Council - to other parts of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

- The creation of these two channels of youth interaction and young people engagement with policy-makers, constitutes a source of continuous inspiration for other geographical areas. Following this thought, the Black Sea region could be respectively an ideal hub for youth interaction, as multiple human-centered and youth-oriented initiatives are constantly being developed in the area during the last years.

•• Get the youth involved

- The **Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)**¹ gives special emphasis, among others, on the Increase of involvement of youth of the 13 BSEC Member States into scientific, technological and innovative projects and initiatives. More specifically, this is one of the general objectives of the Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology. Moreover, the WG aims to fostering

¹ The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) came into existence as a unique and promising model of multilateral political and economic initiative with the signing of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the region, on 25 June 1992. With the entry into force of its Charter on 1 May 1999, BSEC acquired international legal identity and was transformed into a full-fledged regional economic organization - the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

exchange and mobility of researchers and scientists, especially among youth, from the BSEC Member States, inter alia, through bilateral and multilateral agreements and scholarships of scientific centers (including universities) of the BSEC Region.

- The **International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)**² -BSEC's related body and acknowledged think-tank- aims through its diverse activities to enhance knowledge, empower people and enable synergies in the wider Black Sea region both within and beyond its boundaries. The ICBSS is also a member of the Anna Lindh Foundation, and in September 2019 it was elected Focal Point for Southern and Western Greece of the "Anna Lindh Foundation Greek Network.

- Under this capacity, and with the support of the European Commission and the Anna Lindh Foundation, the ICBSS as ALF member could be transformed into a hub for youth-oriented activities, inspired by the Young Mediterranean Voices and designed for the needs of the BSEC Member States. A hub that could create the new version of the **Young Voices** programme, the **"Young Black Sea Voices"**.

² The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was founded in 1998 as a non-profit organisation. It has since fulfilled a dual function a) as an independent research and training institution focusing on the wider Black Sea region, and b) as a related body of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) serving as its acknowledged think-tank. The ICBSS is located in Athens, Greece.

The Anna Lindh Foundation in Greece

by Michael Magee

“Stefanos Valianatos is one of the two heads of the Greek national network of the Anna Lindh foundation. While Stefanos is Greek, his international background stretches back to his birth in Egypt, where he was brought up. Later, he acquired a PhD in foreign policy of Arab countries after studying political science and international relations, all of which makes for a solid background in intercultural dialogue.”

“The Hellenic Foundation for Culture, of which Stefanos is the head, is an organization which comprises part of the Greek national network along with United Societies of Balkans Aris Paraschou, the president of USB is the co-head of the greek network of ALF. The three representatives of the three focal points of the foundation’s activities in Greece namely the north, south, and the islands assist and supplement the work of the two heads. The ultimate goal according to Stefanos is “to meet the challenges that exist like xenophobia, islamophobia, anti-semitism but also some common challenges in environmentalism, the state of civil society, human rights abuses and so on.”

“Together, they represent the ALF in Greece and at the same time represent the Greek network for the ALF, forming what Stefanos calls a “network of networks”, which features a wide array of different initiatives and organizations. “One of the main ideas is to view issues from different perspectives. You might see, for instance, the issue of environmental protection from the activist perspective, the legal perspective, the political perspective, or purely from a scientific perspective. So the involvement of such different institutions in the network allows you whenever possible for an activity, action, pro-

posal to build up partnerships which can have a holistic approach to certain projects.”

“Speaking about some of the activities undertaken in Greece, Stefanos says “ALF has an open call: how would you transform an incentive into an idea and how then will you create a business plan in order to make it happen?”. These social entrepreneurship workshops entail capacity building exercises, which are all about developing ideas and then putting ideas into practice. Other activities include exploring music to be found in Greece and showing its multicultural influences in order to show that benefits can be obtained from intercultural dialogue. This activity featured rebetiko, which is known as Greek music but also has a history involving Turkey, and the music of the refugees in the north of Greece. Not only music is emphasized by the ALF, but also other cultural characteristics such as architecture, as was the case in another activity where participants were shown a picture of some location in the Balkans and asked to guess where it is. This exercise seeks to emphasize the same cultural exchanges that occurred in the context of balkan music. Around the time of the Arab Spring, the Anna Lindh foundation also hosted initiatives comparing happenings on the other

side of the mediterranean to what's happening on the European side. There are many shared characteristics, such as the younger generations distrust and disagreement with authoritarian regimes, and the general societal climate, such as high unemployment.

•• Stefanos says that there is still a lot of room for improvement in the Anna Lindh Foundation's endeavours. There can always be room for more enthusiasm, which is why Stefanos says "our target is not the numbers as much as active NGO's within the network. This is why we reduced the initial numbers and wanted to only keep the most active, and now we want to increase the number but not going for quantity as much as quality". He says that the extent to which the target groups are active is also something that can be approved upon.

The corona pandemic is something which has of course not helped, but Stefanos says that this issue predates the covid situation. In fact, participants have been provided with new abilities regarding digital media that can hopefully be implemented to the advantage of ALF and its member organizations even when things go back to normal. In general, Stefanos says that more attention should be paid to the target groups needs in terms of promotion and marketing of different projects, particularly when it comes to activities in Athens where there is more competition.

•• The Anna Lindh Foundation will continue to grow in the coming years, with the next on the waiting list being Libya and North Macedonia.

<https://www.alfhellas.gr/en>



© greeka.com

Translation initiatives and intercultural dialogue in Rhodes, Greece

by Eleftheria Binikou

Translator, MA in Political, Economic and International Relations in the Mediterranean
International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes
Municipal Organization for Culture and Sports of Rhodes

“During the Euromed Conference “Translation for Dialogue” (Slovenia, 2016) the ALF explored the potential of translation as a key initiative and challenge to build dialogue among the South and the North. All those in the translation chain need to be involved as well as international organizations, and the most important thing is to encourage young people to be engaged in intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. In the International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes, a member of the Greek National Network of Euro-Mediterranean Anna Lindh Foundation, the initiative is given to young people through educational programmes including literature, creative writing and translation.

“The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) is the first institution to establish the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership focusing on bringing people together, especially people from the two shores of the Mediterranean and building cultures based on dialogue and exchange. The ALF strives to inspire intellectual, cultural and civil societies to work together, to divest themselves of any prejudice, mistrust and discriminative thoughts and actions. The ALF fosters policies to ensure the free expression of speech, respect of human rights, inclusive education, sustainable development, visibility of different cultures, literatures and arts.

“To achieve the above, the ALF favours exchange among young people so that they get to know each other, the cultural diversity, inter-

cultural awareness, cross-cultural encounters in a nutshell it favours the dialogue.

“Translation for Dialogue”

“Translation is a key vehicle to achieve intercultural communication, cooperation and dialogue. The significance of the translation was showcased in the Euromed Conference “Translation for Dialogue” (23-24 June 2016 - Piran, Slovenia) where the ALF explored and presented the main approaches for a long-term strategy aiming to establish a permanent programme supporting translations for dialogue at the Euro Mediterranean level.

“Cultural differences and stereotypes and languages are usually thought as walls that obstruct mutual and intercultural understanding,

exchanges, especially among young people, the development of active participation skills.
establishment of long-lasting relations and As the Ambassador Hatem Atallah, the former



Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation pointed out, for the Euromed Conference 'Translation for Dialogue', "the ALF has recognized the centrality of translation as a significant tool to promote better cultural understanding, prevent further rise of negative trends and contribute to creating the necessary environment of cooperation and prosperity in the Euromed region." The Translation for Dialogue Conference originally was attended by experts, cultural actors and stakeholders of the "translation chain" –publishers, authors, academics, libraries, book stores, translators, civil society organizations, foundations, public and private institutions, all promoting intercultural dialogue and emphasizing on good and innovative practices.

“One of the topics explored and discussed were the challenges to make translation an useful and important instrument for intercultural dialogue and the needs of the key actors involved in the field of translation for intercultural dialogue as well as the need to involve public and private support to channel resources and funding. In this context, the International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes, funded and run by the Municipality of Rhodes, provides a Residency Programme that offers to writers, translators and academics the proper environment to exchange ideas, forge relationships, make professional collaborations, and express their thoughts freely. It encourages the enriching experiences of travel, of interaction, of fresh stimuli and the setting up of a network of cooperation and exchanges.

“Furthermore, according to the ALF Hellas website, "education of young people and im-

migrants are priorities in the planning of the Anna Lindh Foundation." The ALF "empowers young voices by providing platforms for young people to build together more open, inclusive and resilient communities." In this context, the International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes organizes educational programmes based on literature, creative writing and literary translation for preschoolers, primary schoolers and junior high and high school students that highlight key issues such as cultural identity, cultural diversity, shared values, cross-cultural dialogue and intercultural understanding and raises awareness against discriminations, racism and xenophobia.

“Manifesto for Translation

“Additionally, in the Euromed Conference "Translation for Dialogue" a Manifesto for Translation was adopted in which it is determined that "in a new policy for a dynamic and ambitious Euro-Mediterranean cultural agenda, translation is one of the keys to our shared identities" and "we want this Manifesto for Translation to be a call for active mobilization in favour of a concrete policy supporting translation and cultural works in the Mediterranean." Hence, all those in the translation chain need to be involved, the European Union, foundations, Euro-Mediterranean organizations and global players included, to strive to fundraise for translation projects, networking, residences and the mobility exchange of translators, writers and publishers, promotion of awards and prizes for translation of literary works that give added value to human rights, cultural diversity and deconstruct stereotypes.

HOSCARs 2021: Welcommon Hostel is named one of the best hostels in the world

by Nikos Chrysogelos

*Hostelworld announced the winners of its 19th annual HOSCAR awards on 26 April 2021. **Welcommon Hostel** in Greece, a member of Anna Lindh Foundation, was recognised as the most extraordinary Hostel Hero by leading Online Travel Agent (OTA) which focuses on the hostel market, **Hostelworld**. The awards are assigned by expert travel judges and online votes; In the case of Welcommon Hostel, there were 20,000 votes. For 19 years, the **HOSCARs** (Hostelworld Customer Annual Ratings) have acknowledged hostels from all four corners of the globe with the highest customer reviews and ratings. This year, with the world in lockdown and travel put on hold, the awards have been restructured to recognise the incredible work hostels have been doing in their communities, and to support sustainable tourism, during the global pandemic.*

The HOSCARs provide a trusted way for the travellers to identify the experience they want from their travels, and where to find it. You can find a full list of winners in 7 categories at www.hostelworld.com/hoscars.

Welcommon Hostel has been shortlisted as a finalist in two categories:

- Hostel Hero, for our current work during COVID-19
- Extraordinary Sustainable Hostel, for our performance concerning social and green impact.
- Welcommon Hostel was also distinguished as the “best social / intercultural action of the year

in Greece during covid-19”; the competition was organized by the Greek national network of “Anna Lindh Foundation”. Since 2016, Anemos Ananeosis has been granted nine prizes, awards and distinctions for its innovative, inclusive and intercultural work.





“About Welcommon Hostel

“Why Welcommon Hostel was named as the most extraordinary Hostel Hero:

“As of June 2020, even sustainable tourism collapsed and at the same time thousands of recognized refugees and asylum seekers in Greece were left homeless in the midst of a global pandemic. Anemos Ananeosis, the social cooperative enterprise who created and runs the innovative Welcommon Hostel, **decided - despite the financial and other problems and difficulties from COVID-19 - to host a number of refugees, the most vulnerable between them**, such as survivors of sexual violence, torture and ill treatment, the elderly, people with chronic diseases, pregnant and mothers with new-born babies as well as to continue offering empowerment and intercultural courses.

“The Welcommon Hostel is a seven-floor facility building in the **center of Athens** that offers accommodation for people of all ages and places, a hostel for sustainable tourism, a proposal for accommodation of social, cultural and environmental active groups and persons during their stay in Athens. Our motto is “sleep for dreaming, be active for cultural, social and environmental /climate issues”. The Welcommon Hostel is created and run by the social cooperative Anemos Ananeosis / Wind of Renewal, established in 2014 for the promotion of **social and green innovation**, sustainable tourism, environmental and climate protection, energy transition, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

“The Welcommon Hostel is something more than just a nice hostel with social and green impact. It is also a place for social gathering and

intercultural dialogue, a center for empowerment and art, social and green innovation and economy, climate and ecological action, social and job integration for Greek locals, migrants and refugees, a social experiment for the promotion of social and ecological sustainability.

•• The aim of the Welcommon Hostel is to be a sustainable solution to host all different travellers (tourists, volunteers, erasmus students, nomads workers, newcomers, refugees). Our vision is to bring close people from all over the world without discrimination, to enable them to communicate, to interact, to be entertained and to explore the creative side of Athens. Our guests have the opportunity to participate directly and indirectly in green, social, humanitarian, intercultural and inclusive projects, events and activities. They can also contribute with their ideas and experience.

•• Feel the history of Welcommon

•• From 2016 on, Anemos Ananeosis offers interactive, inclusive, intercultural, non formal education and courses (language lessons, art, environmental and climate awareness, music) and green and social economy workshops open for all: volunteers, refugees, migrants,

travellers, nomads workers, Erasmus, locals, with the support of more than 340 volunteers from all over the world.

•• For 18 months (9/2016-2/2018) Welcommon functioned as an innovative centre for accommodation in dignity, empowerment and social inclusion of about 600 vulnerable refugees.

•• When the funding for accommodation of refugees stopped suddenly in February 2018, Anemos Ananeosis / Wind of Renewal decided to turn the building to an innovative hostel, the Welcommon Hostel, for sustainable tourism and accommodation of all the travellers without discrimination. In parallel the hostel acts as a centre for empowerment, social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, climate action, green and social innovation. Although we are facing many obstacles and difficulties, the main idea is to make the hostel financially sustainable and be able to finance through sustainable tourism our social, intercultural, climate and green activities.

•• If you've ever come into the Welcommon you probably felt that it is a special place, a place where you can meet people, learn from them... it is a community. Special place, people, values. Welcommon Hostel means welcome in common – together.



.. Tradition as a tool for social intervention

by Eirini Nanouri

.. *Choosing tradition in order to achieve social inclusion, youth empowerment and community interaction may seem as an unforeseen option, particularly if we consider that tradition is generally deemed to be an obsolete process appropriate for the previous generations. Nowadays, while trying to combat all the moral and religious stereotypes that this world has inherited after so many years of devotion to religious beliefs, customs and national traditional affairs, people, especially youngsters, appear negative to all these traditional issues and they try to abstain, insisting that this dedication to the traditional construction is a way to cause discrimination. Right or wrong, this decision is not the main goal of this article. In response to that, what should we do when our purpose is to create space for intercultural and intergenerational dialogue amongst local communities, in order to support people to become more active and use public space? Under these circumstances, tradition's multi-dimensional character is a powerful tool to use.*

.. The origin of the word tradition comes from the latin verb **tradere** that means to hand down, pass on to a successor. Tradition is the process during which the old generation tries to maintain and preserve the cultural, social and intellectual heritage of its nation intact in order to hand it down to the next generation. This transmission indicates the continuity of generations. Besides, there are many times that linguistic and religious characteristics are considered to be traditional traits. The fact is that the boundaries between the main and the official content of tradition are blurry and there is a miscellaneous reaction that people are inspired in order to excuse their acts and beliefs. There is no doubt that a lot of crimes are committed under the excuse of religion and unfortunately of tradition too. According to Theodor W. Adorno, german sociologist and philosopher of international reputation, "...**tradition is opposed to rationality, even though the one took shape in the other. Its medium is not consciousness but the pregiven, unreflect-**

ed and binding existence of social forms – the actuality of the past; unintentionally this notion of binding existence was transmitted to the intellectual/spiritual sphere". (1)

.. As a main objective to promote the promising and productive elements of tradition, 4C - Co-operate Communicate Create Change, an NGO which created the project **Inclusive Traditional Games**, co-financed by the European Union, tries to simultaneously focus on youth, inclusion, empowerment and sport as a tool for intervention and social interaction. Four organizations from four different European countries collaborate closely in this project; These are: ArousaMoza from Spain, Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM018) from Serbia, L'Orma from Italy and Right2Score Foundation (R2S) from Belgium.

.. Why are traditional games chosen? What is their role in our contemporary life? First of all, games are a creative and painless way to

implement tradition. Undoubtedly, recent decades have seen a dramatically accelerating pace in the development and adoption of new technologies, and to this day every real game has been replaced by a virtual one. Therefore, children are rarely involved in traditional games while adults are almost not at all, only under special circumstances. But we must know that games and especially traditional games that have been created in the past to educate children, are a basic and significant tool for **non-formal** education.

•• A short comment for non-formal education is remarkable. According to Mrs Triliva and Anagnostopoulou (writers of *"Non-formal education, a manual for educators and psychologists"*, Athens, 2008), non-formal education is a normal and humane process which includes the existence of teacher and school but not as the core of the procedure. This kind of education is not limited at schools and it consists of a way of every-day learning through our ability to communicate with other people and cogitate

what we have already learned by this immediate experience. We achieve non-formal education when we transmit this process in an educational level as an alternative way of learning where books and memorization are replaced by the immediate display of the person on the subject of the learning. (2)

•• In addition, games play a double role in our lives. The main difference among a game and an educational game is educational traits. As a result, a game could teach and inspire ideas, but the major goal is for the person to be simultaneously part of a recreational and an educational activity. The content of an educational game is to provide professional knowledge which could be received in other ways such as books, teaching, audio-visual material etc. Consequently, information and skills which will be attained through an educational game could be implemented in real work conditions.

•• The main purpose of *Inclusive Traditional Games* is to combine non-formal education



with tradition. People from different minorities in Greece share traditional games of their countries and discover how common the elements are. This cultural blending which is being created will experience different kinds of activities and traditional games from a great amount of countries. The main pillar of this project is cooperative and team building working, fair play, main principles of leadership and promotion of all-inclusive and traditional games and sports. The principal aim of this process is to overcome prejudice against others in different European contexts and break stereotypes by empowering local sports activities in open courts, engaging the multicultural communities. Creating local gaming events is a way to reinforce the inclusion of minority groups and improve the exchange of good practices in the field of social inclusion of the minorities, always respecting the needs of the community.

As the proliferation of technology and social media grows day by day, these needs of communities are currently expressed and widespread on these platforms. This way of expression indicates the necessity to create alternative narratives to fight extreme beliefs and stereotypes. Old ways of teaching and imparting knowledge are already dead. Using tradition as a tool in the benefit of communities instead of judging tradition for discrimination and prejudice is an alternative way to build together a

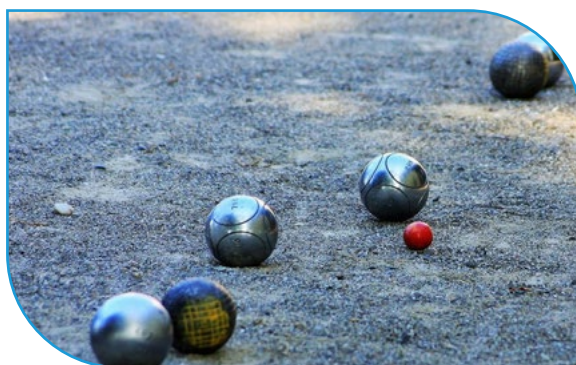
more resilient and tolerant world supporting young people to be more willing to change the future based on empathy, protection of human rights, democracy and dignity, accessibility for everyone and intercultural dialogue.

As Christopher P Scheitle and Katie E Corcoran mention, *"...regional differences in religious demography and culture could shape the discrimination experiences of individuals belonging to particular religious traditions"*. (3) In our effort to approach people from totally different and miscellaneous culture and religion as the Pakistan and the Albanian community of Greece, and many others as well, we realize how reluctant these people are to work all together, how much they appreciated our effort to approach them and the necessity to respect human rights and the willingness to overcome the obstacles of racism and descrimination, trying all together to be part of the whole and participating in common activities is really intensive and stronger than the disheartening devotion to religious and traditional affairs.

To conclude, as Malala Yusafzai -a girl from Pakistan who achieved to become the youngest owner of a Nobel prize in peace trying to attend school and combat violence against women says, *"We should not be followers of traditions that go against human rights. We are human beings, and we make traditions"*.

Bibliography

1. Theodor W. Adorno, "On Tradition", *Telos* 1992 (94), 75-82, 1992
2. Triliva and Anagnostopoulou, "Non-formal education, a manual for educators and psychologists", Athens, 2008
3. Christopher P Scheitle and Katie E Corcoran "Religious tradition and workplace religious discrimination: The moderating effects of regional context", *Social Currents* 5 (3), 283-300, 2018
4. <https://project4corg.wixsite.com/4cngo>



“ Multiculturalism and integration through education

How intercultural dialogue can foster integration of young migrants through education and school

by Sara Angioletti

“Traditionally, Europe has always seen ethnic groups from various parts of the world co-exist on its territory and European societies have commonly recognized cultural pluralization as a richness. However, a completely different attitude has been shown in recent years.

“Over the last decade, Europe has become an increasingly multicultural continent because of the migration flow towards European countries: according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), persecution, conflict and poverty forced a record one million people to flee to Europe in 2015. Approximately 972,500 people had crossed the Mediterranean Sea and over 34,000 people have crossed the land borders between Turkey and Bulgaria and Turkey and Greece, states UNHCR. Migrations have al-

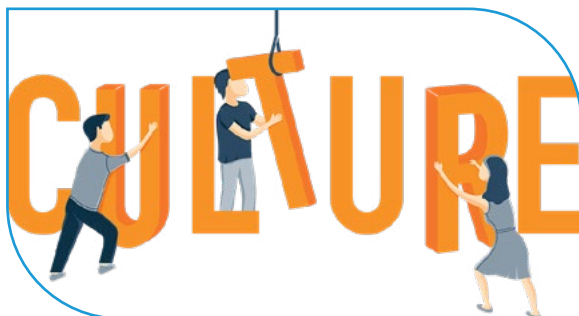


African children at school

ways occurred; people moving from one part of the globe to another for various reasons. The phenomenon that occurred in 2015, despite the fact that it was actually a humanitarian crisis, was manipulated by many media in various European countries. In fact, a large part of public opinion took the side of those who saw migrants as a danger and an invasion in their arrival.

“In such circumstances, the clash between ethnic groups from different cultural backgrounds has made tolerance and integration more and more difficult. In their book *Intercultural Dialogue in the European Education Policies*, Tuuli Lähdesmäki, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen and Susanne C. Ylönen researchers in the Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies at the University of Jyväskylä-Finland, underlined that “European societies have faced a rise in populist, nationalist, and extremist movements that have incited xenophobic, anti-immigration, racist, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobic political attitudes and actions, as well as a selective defence of ‘us’ as a mono-cultural group.”

“But what is exactly intercultural dialogue and why is it so important, especially nowadays?”



© <https://medium.com/da>

“Let’s start first of all with the definitions of culture and interculturalism.

“Culture can be defined as “shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. It can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things,” explained Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London during an interview with LiveScience.

“Interculturalism is the process or phenomenon by which people from a given culture integrate and interact with people from other cultures, customs and traditions. It is essential that both the coming and the hosting people enrich one another and get involved in the process.

“The dialogue between cultures, or intercultural dialogue, is a method to overcome the difficulties, sometimes the conflict between members of different cultural groups, due to the different possible points of view and the different forms of expression used. Therefore, it’s fundamental to recognize equal dignity of all cultures, as an essential prerequisite for building a peaceful social coexistence.

“The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001, adopted unanimously in Paris during the 31st session of the UNESCO General Confer-

ence clarifies the reasons and purposes that led to the choice of a dialogic confrontation between cultures as an important factor for development in cultural diversity. The document invites States to develop policies for the protection and enhancement of existing cultural heritages, but also to “raise awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity through education”.

•• In fact, the migration phenomenon that has affected Europe in recent years has led to the promotion of constructive coexistence between the various ethnic groups, starting with the new generations.

•• According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the number of child and young migrants (under 18 years old) all over the world rose from 24 million to 33 million in the last 20 years. This means that the presence of minors from different cultural backgrounds is very frequent in the host countries. And it is precisely in schools that the process of integration of the new generations begins.

•• Access to education and training is a universal human right, regardless of legal status. But

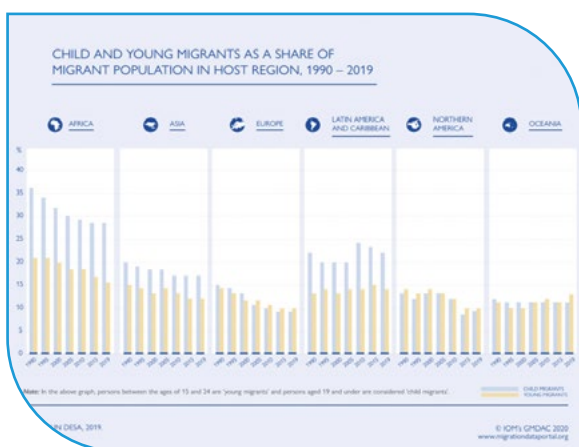


Children from different cultural backgrounds in schools

the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools can be a complex process, aiming to give children and young people access to quality education and to provide any necessary language, learning and social-emotional support. Of course intercultural education is not limited to the problems posed by the presence of foreign students at school, but extends to the complexity of the confrontation between cultures, in the European and global dimension. A global response to the phenomenon of racism in a climate of dialogue and solidarity.

•• Intercultural education hinges precisely on unity, diversity and dialectical and constructive conciliation of different groups in a multicultural society. The goal is to prevent phenomena of intolerance and racism, using multiculturalism as an opportunity for growth, exchange and productive cooperation, from an early age.

•• The values that give meaning to life are neither just in our own culture nor in the other's. Intercultural dialogue underlines the importance of both cultures being confronted analysing the differences, making sure that the members of the different groups become aware of them in an atmosphere of acceptance, tolerance and respect.



Statistics on young migrants

© UN DESA

“Intercultural Dialogue and Young People’s Future

by Nikol Nikolova

“*The Balkan Peninsula is a unique and diverse place. It’s a melting pot of many different cultures that come together to form this remarkable region. Unfortunately, historically this area has had many turbulent episodes and at present, it’s facing many challenges. This is where intercultural dialogue plays a vital role. With the creation of an increasing number of forums, youth groups and organizations in the last few decades, young people have come together to facilitate and promote the importance of such dialogues, which are essential for building a better future for the Balkans and the rest of Europe.*

“The significance of intercultural communication is undeniable. In Europe, we all try to share and embody the same values of democracy, solidarity and a common vision for progress and prosperity. Therefore, promoting the conversation between young people can be an essential and powerful tool for development. In

essence, this tool allows us to break down any linguistic, ethnic, cultural or religious barriers and it makes us more equipped with the instruments needed to move towards progress.

“It can all start with rather simple activities that are not necessarily driven by politics. Univer-



© Maria Teneva

<https://unsplash.com/photos/OL0UeBFcKXc>

sities are a prime example of this. The societies culture that exists on campus allows for constant intercultural exchange and dialogue, encouraging individuals from different backgrounds to come together. For instance, I studied Spanish and Portuguese, but I am of Bulgarian descent. I formed part of activities and events with people of Hispanic, Portuguese and Brazilian descent all the time. On top of this, our department was diverse, and thus, I was in contact with nationalities from all over the world. We took part in Portuguese and Brazilian poetry readings and talks with guest speakers from the UK, Spain and even Latin America.

"In Europe, we all try to share and embody the same values of democracy, solidarity and a common vision for progress and prosperity. Therefore, promoting the conversation between young people can be an essential and powerful tool for development."

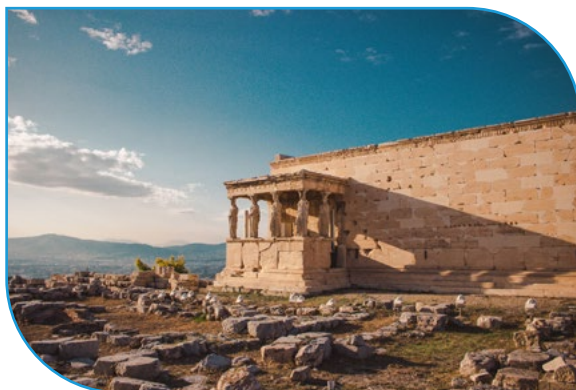
Universities across Europe are no longer homogeneous spaces with regards to the background of students and teachers. Nowadays, such instances of intercultural dialogue, be they on the topic of politics, language, literature or history, form part of the daily lives of many students. This promotes constant dialogues between different cultures, which is one of the first and most crucial steps to promote peace, tolerance and to build a multicultural community with a sense of belonging.

In fact, paragraph 53 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that "The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today's younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations".¹ Intercultural dialogue be-

¹ 2030 Agenda, paragraph 53.

tween young people is an integral component of global efforts to tackle some of the biggest challenges that we are currently facing. The Balkan region is in itself confronting some of these problems, from poverty and gender inequality to issues with economic growth and freedom of speech.

There are many notable instances of European initiatives that promote such communication. One of these is the European Youth Forum, which is an international non-profit association that aims to provide a platform for the national youth councils and international youth NGOs in Europe. This forum is constantly organizing events that bring young people together in order to facilitate discussions about crucial issues that are affecting us. Furthermore, we also have the Anna Lindh Foundation, established in memory of the Swedish Social Democratic politician with the same name, who was the Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1998 until her assassination in 2003. This organization supports dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region through various activities linked to education and youth, culture and arts, peace and co-existence and much more. In 1995, the UN General Assembly also adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, which created a framework with guidelines that aim to support and improve young people's situation globally.



© Arthur Yeti

<https://unsplash.com/photos/-zoe4nviem4>

“A notable instance of bringing young people together to discuss important topics and exchange ideas and views is the implementation of language exchanges. I have participated in several of those both at university and outside and it has been one of the most significant parts of my studies. The initial purpose of language exchanges is to sharpen your speaking skills, however, it entails a lot more than that. Through a foreign language, you get to be exposed to many beliefs, ideas and views in that culture. I not only improved my cross-cultural communication, but I also got to discuss and exchange opinions on key topics - we debated and explored climate change, tolerance in society and even feminism.

“The importance of such work is ever so high in the world right now. People are realizing more and more the role of young people in our society. Our youth are driven for change. We have seen countless examples of Balkan youth - both in the region and those living abroad - stepping up to be activists and raising awareness of important issues. This does not necessarily have to be done through being directly involved in politics. It has been done through launching

media, artistic or cultural projects in order to partake in social change.

“This can even be achieved through academic and cultural exchanges. An example of this is the prominent Erasmus+ program, which allows young people from different countries across the continent to meet, live and even work together on shared projects. This has been especially powerful for Balkan youth who have been able to promote their culture around Europe and meet others from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in order to build powerful networks. I studied abroad in Barcelona and I found that such experiences are an incredibly powerful tool for establishing connections, understanding different cultures and being part of an international system of young people that can continue facilitating the creation of an increasingly interconnected and strong Europe.

“The importance of such work is ever so high in the world right now. People are realizing more and more the role of young people in our society. Our youth are driven for change.”



© Adli Wahid

<https://unsplash.com/photos/3-QB-YKxTKY>

“Prior to leaving for my year abroad and upon returning, there were several events organized to bring different students together and encourage them to talk about their experiences abroad, expectations, lessons learnt and much more. So, in essence, I ended up in a room in London with people from different religious and cultural backgrounds, discussing their experiences in countries across Europe and Latin



© François Genon

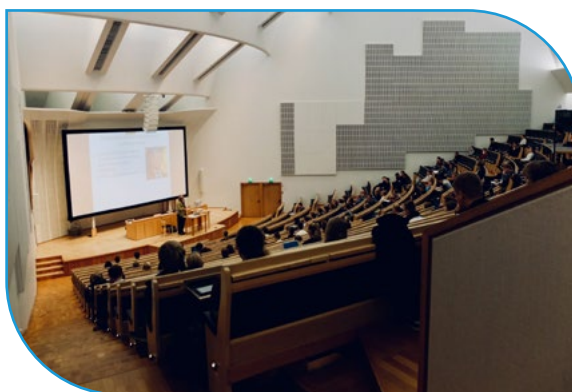
<https://unsplash.com/photos/M5luGintPvo>

America. It was one of the most diverse environments I've been in, and there were many intriguing ideas that were exchanged. Students brought up topics, such as how other countries received them, language struggles, adapting to new places and integration at their host university. Such dialogues allow us to not only understand different cultures, but they also make us open-minded towards other people's experiences and perspectives and create a safe environment, where these perspectives can be shared and valued. I truly believe this is vital as it then allows these young people to take that outside of university and promote such environments in society as a whole.

•• Our leaders often parade the idea that our youth are the future, but historically that has been rarely reflected in global politics and decision-making. Ultimately, these instances of intercultural dialogue between young people in the Balkans and the rest of Europe allow us to play some role in the decision-making pro-

cess. By getting to interact with other cultures, we can break barriers and build a global community of young people that come together to change the world for the better.

•• You may not be particularly interested in politics, but if you find an activity that you are passionate about - whether that be journalism, media, culture or the arts - you can participate in promoting intercultural communication and be part of a global network of young people, who are working towards social change every day.



© Dom Fou

<https://unsplash.com/photos/YRMWVcdyhtml>

Who was Anna Lindh?

by Livia Kallmeyer

“Ylva Anna Maria Lindh was one of the most influential figures in modern Swedish politics. She was adored for her Humanism and fight for equality. Believing that everyone had the same value, she especially stood up for the discriminated and people who were left out by the (global) society.”

“The beginning of her political path

“Born on June 19, 1957 in Enskede, Stockholm and growing up as the daughter of an artist and a teacher in a town near Enköpingen, she was already interested in politics at a very young age. With only 12 years she joined the Social Democratic Youth and became their spokesperson at the age of 13. A few years later in 1981 she became the chairwoman of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations (LSU).

“Many people were hoping to see her as the first female prime minister of Sweden”

“Following her political interests she studied Law at Uppsala and Stockholm University and got her Bachelor in 1982. In 1984 she became the first female Chairwoman of the Swedish Social Democrats Ungdomsförbund (SSU) and in the same year became a member of the Riksdag and held her position until 1985.

“From 1991 to 1994, she was serving as a city councillor for culture in Stockholm. Cultural activities had a special place in her heart and she loved to spend her free time going to the theater, opera and cinema.

“In 1991 she married the Governor of Södermanland Bo Holmberg. They seemed to have a lovely marriage and had two sons Filip and David. Even though Anna was a very known and busy politician who spent time all over the world for her job, her husband recalled how caring and kind she was, calling her children every day no matter where in she was at.



© <https://imgs.aftonbladet-cdn.se/v2/images/78f-da04d-7863-4bf7-ac89->

••More responsibility - More respect

••Coming back to the career part of her life Anna was assigned the minister for the environment from 1994-1998 she made herself a name not only in Sweden, but globally. For fearlessly challenging big companies which would continuously destroy the planet.

••Then in 1998 the Prime Minister appointed Anna Lindh Minister of State and Head of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. As human rights were at the heart of her actions, where all people are born free and equal in value and rights she spoke out against countries that were violating human rights. Even against those who were Swedish allies, which brought her respect from all over the world. She strongly supported the EU and was thriving for common foreign policy to avoid threatening conflicts. Many people were hoping to see her as the first female prime minister of Sweden in some years.

••She also played a key role in the campaign, which wanted to implement the Euro in Sweden.

"As human rights were at the heart of her actions, where all people are born free and equal in value and rights she spoke out against countries that were violating human rights."

••Tragically, she was attacked with a knife in 2003 while she was shopping in a City mall of Stockholm. The following day the 11th of September she died of the consequences in the hospital. It was a shock for the whole country and her death stood in stark contrast to what she believed in and fought for - an open society where people could stay in public places without worry, express their opinions, be respected regardless of ethnicity, gender or religion.

••She herself expressed on the 15 March 1986 at the funeral of the former politician Olof Palme:

"A person can be killed, but ideas cannot"

••Anna Lindh bears in remembrance

••And she was right. After her death there were streets named in her honor, prizes, scholarships, schools and memorials all over the world, from Budapest to Costa Rica. Furthermore, the Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, USA established a professorship in global leadership and political science in memory of Anna Lindh.

••Moreover, the Anna Lindh Foundation was created. The Foundation focuses on the dialogue between the European Union and its Mediterranean Partner countries. Their goal is to create more inclusive, empathetic and resilient societies by empowering young voices and building a movement for dialogue. Anna's engagement for an equal partnership between the North and South, is a guiding principle of their work.

••Therefore, Anna's inspiring ideas of peace and human rights and actions to achieve those goals, will keep spreading all over the world and in the heads and hearts of people.

<https://www.alfhellas.gr/en>



**Anna Lindh
Foundation**
— EUROMED —

“ Multicultural brain-wiring: the psychological effects of learning a new culture

by Bernardo Machado

“How multicultural inputs interact with the brain and the behavioural consequences that follow, are still poorly understood matters. Notably, they are of great importance for health, educational, team management, and legal purposes, especially given that cultural admixture has been increasing. The aim of the present work is to provide a multi-disciplinary review on the subject, in which behavioural data is linked to brain imaging research whenever possible. The focus lies on bicultural individuals, as they represent the simplest form of the phenomenon to be analysed. This task comprises a journey through cultural priming and cultural frame switching; migration and personality shifts; and cultural metacognition.

“Introduction

“In the globalised World, it can be a benefit to better understand how the internalization of a second culture occurs in the brain, as well as the behavioural outcomes to expect both during the initial period of the acculturation process and throughout the lifespan of an individual. In other words, to unravel brain plasticity towards culture and its consequences. The current cross-cultural research comprising neural and behavioural aspects, suggests that there are differences between cultures regarding cognitive biases, perceptions of the self, language and music processing, neural recruitment on numerical and visuospatial tasks [1, 2], among others. However, such accounts are almost exclusive to comparisons between the so-called Western and East Asian cultures. Still, they are relevant to consider, because they indicate that culture is somehow wiring our brain [3], as the existence of a sensible period for acculturation also supports [4]. Noteworthy, Han and Ma [2] advanced the **culture-behaviour-brain loop model**, in which posits that, by contextualiz-

ing behaviour, culture shapes the brain, which, by its turn, may fit or modify culture through the voluntary behaviours it guides. Remains the questions: how do inputs from a second culture are kept in the loop? – and this is precisely what the present work seeks to answer. Strangely, very few efforts have been made to test contrasts between monocultural X and Y with bicultural XY individuals [5], which is a paramount piece to understand the mentioned cultural contrasts.

“A final clarification must be made: biculturalism is not, by any means, a straightforward phenomenon. One may be bicultural only regarding some particular trait, or a restricted set of traits. Moreover, the level of **bicultural identity integration** (BII) increases its complexity: whereas people low on BII integrate separately two, probably conflicting, cultural identities, those high on BII are told to have a single blended cultural identity [6]. Additionally, specific behavioural outcomes can be expected depending on the BII score [7]. Before proceeding, it is worth to cite Ambady and Barucha's [1]

description of the relation between culture and the brain:

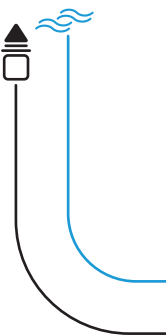
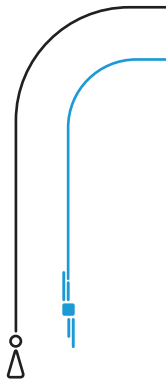
“Cultural practices adapt to neural constraints, and the brain adapts to cultural practice. Other circuits are wired as a result of learning, particularly implicit learning. In this latter respect, the brain is a cultural sponge – indeed, possibly, the organ of culture. It internalizes the structural regularities of its environment within the parameters of innate and developmental constraints, and it employs these internalized representations to facilitate interaction with the physical and social world.”

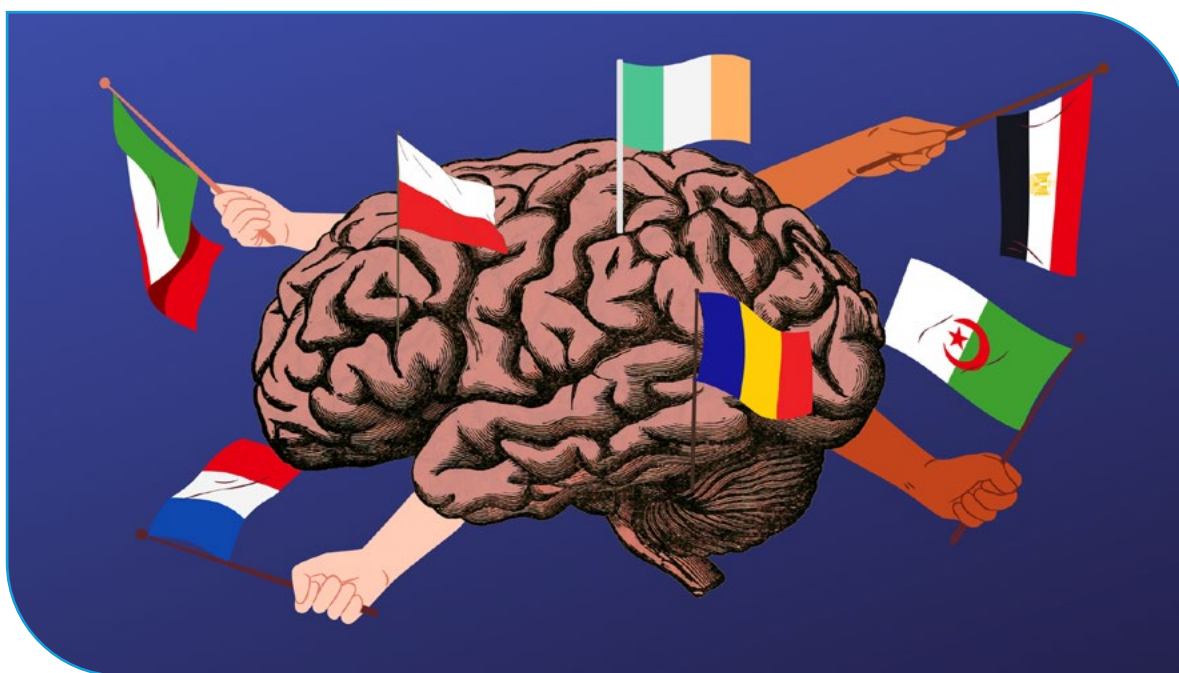
Can cultural priming dissect brain wiring?

There are behavioural paradigms attributed to the individualist Western cultures, which contrast with those of the collectivistic East Asian ones. For instance, when interpreting a given social event, the first group tends to focus on internal attributions, while the latter relies more on external aspects [8]. Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martínez [9] proposed the term **cultural frame switching** in a revision of experiments documenting that bicultural individuals store different behavioural patterns, ready to respond to stimuli from specific cultures. This concept followed assumptions from the cultural constructivist approach: rather than being internalized as a general mentality, culture is a dispersed system of meanings; which can be fed with information from distinct cultures, even if that may generate internal conflicts. One of the studies they mention [10] consisted of several experiments with bicultural Hong Kong Chinese students, who were randomly exposed to one of three primes: pictures of Amer-

ican icons, of Chinese icons, and six drawings of geometric pictures (control). Then, when processing a common image, participants in the American-prime condition engaged in less external attributions than those in the Chinese-prime condition, as expected. Importantly, the control group showed intermediate levels of the behavioural measure. Furthermore, neuroimaging research seems to support the dual response capacity of bicultural individuals [11]; while at the same time indicating that to the between-cultures behavioural differences corresponds a characteristic pattern of brain activation [12]. “The reported research makes it very tempting to conclude that internalizing a second culture produces alterations in the brain, which will determine disparate behavioural pathways, whose activation depends on specific cultural cues within the surrounding environment”. However, several issues must be taken into account...

First: the described priming effect is not straightforward. It was shown that individuals low on BII were **cultural reactant**, exhibiting a contrast effect, as opposed to the assimilation effect; meaning they behaved American-like when exposed to the Chinese primes, and **vice versa** [6]. However, when the cultural primes were negative stereotypic words, the pattern inverted – with the low BII group responding congruently and the high BII one incongruently [13]. Hence, it is possible that these contrast effects can be explained by general cognitive processes, such as seeking distance from cues perceived as antagonistic [14], rather than culture-specific wiring causes. Second: cultural variation in functional and structural brain arrangements may be partially due to genetic fac-





tors [15]. Finally, there are meta-analysis studies suggesting that the reported cross-cultural differences may not be as large and systematic as assumed [16]. In fact, a study from Chiao and colleagues [17] gave further support to this claim. They presented a sample of native Japanese and American Caucasian participants in which, during a self-judgement task, 70% of those who behaved individualistically were Japanese, while around 64% of Caucasians fell into the collectivistic group, contrarily to what would be expected from the supposedly cultural-characteristic behaviours. The reported neuroimaging results revealed main effects of collectivism and individualism at the individual level, but not from cultural affiliation.

“Unfortunately, data gathered so far in this framework are hardly comparable due to contrasting methodologies, poor descriptions of the populations sampled, lack of knowledge regarding causality, and possible confounding effects on stimuli endorsement [18]. Nevertheless, cultural priming assimilation effects on bi-cultural individuals have also been described in aesthetic judgments [19] and memory tasks regarding faces from different ethnicities [20, 21].

Importantly, the latter found clear behavioural differences between mono- and bicultural participants, as the priming technique sorted no effect on the monocultural group. Thus, despite being difficult to draw safe conclusions on the current ground, there are pieces of evidence pointing to the existence of a complex brain plasticity towards culture.

“Has acculturation changed me?

“The adaptation to a second culture is psychologically challenging, and the potential distress it can cause is designated **acculturative stress** [22]. Within the current literature it is possible to find examples of shifts concerning behavioural and psychological aspects, attributed to the acculturation process. Mesoudi [23] made a review showing a trend within migrant populations to approach, across generations, the host society's patterns for several traits, such as religiosity, collectivism, trust, self-esteem, and social closeness. However, an essential piece of the puzzle is missing: there seems to be no study presenting comparisons between those who remain in the country of origin and the first-generation migrants. In other words,

the origin of the axis is missing, making it very difficult to understand the extent to which acculturation can produce changes through the lifespan of an individual.

•• Still, studies of personality combining the Big Five Personality Traits [24] with language tests, can provide further clues. Chen and Bond [25] showed that Chinese-English bilinguals tended to place themselves between Cantonese and English native speakers across several personality dimensions, although closer to the former group, that of their origins. Furthermore, they presented an analysis relying on the ratings of external observers, while the participants were interacting with four different interlocutors. The experimental design consisted of Ethnicity (Chinese/Caucasian) x Language (Cantonese/English) and it revealed a significant interaction effect, suggesting that participants seek to adapt to the perceived prototypic personality of the interlocutor. Bringing back the mentioned priming technique, further evidence can be extracted for the occurrence of personality shifts in bicultural individuals. In an experiment run by Mok and Morris [26], bicultural East Asian-American participants with high BII, primed with Asian vignettes, scored lower on the self-reported need for uniqueness and extraversion than those in the American-prime condition. Meaning they reacted congruently to the stimulus. Contrastingly, low BII individuals exhibited the opposite patterns.

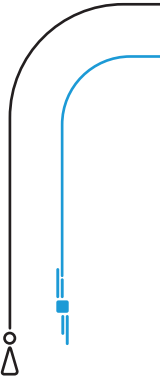
•• Are there any specific mental abilities related with multiculturalism?


•• One of the few comparisons between bicultural and monocultural individuals has pointed out that the former group tends to exhibit cultural representations with higher cognitive complex-

ity [27]. Further on, cultural metacognition is the capacity to consider how the cultural background may influence one's behaviour. This mental ability proved to be paramount to make multicultural teams function properly, working as a social glue [28]. Together with cultural frame switching, they constitute the cognitive elements underlying the *bicultural competence*, defined by Hong [29] as the:

•• "(...) bicultural's ability to draw upon cultural knowledge and cross-cultural abilities (such as adapting one's behavior [sic.] and communicating across cultures) to effectively switch cultural frames and apply cultural metacognition to disparate cultural contexts in order to work successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds toward [sic.] a desired organizational outcome."


•• This author defends that, from the perspective of international management, across all the BII scale, bicultural individuals have unique positive contributions to give – namely, in conflict mediation and boundaries spanning. Interestingly, there are pieces of evidence suggesting that individuals with low BII have even more cognitively complex cultural representations than those high on BII [28]. Furthermore, Maddux, Adam, and Galinsky [30] found a positive correlation between multicultural learning with both idea flexibility and creative insight in American and French university students, but only when they lived abroad. Nonetheless, other studies report mixed results with a series of pros and cons detected in several verbal and visual tasks, depending on the order of acquisition of the two cultures considered [31]. Additionally, others argue that only when the two cultures are well blended does the domain-general creativity enhancement arises [32]. Accord-





ing to Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, and Jonsen [33], culturally diverse teams tend to be creative and satisfactory, though prone to conflict and social integration problems. The authors added that, while satisfaction depends on the team size, the risk of conflict is affected by the complexity of the task. Overall, this suggests that bicultural individuals are potentially exposed to an innovative and rewarding environment, in which social interactions may be quite cognitively demanding. It is in this ground of challenges and opportunities that cultural metacognition flourishes. Unfortunately, mostly because of the absence of brain imaging data, this mental faculty remains poorly understood.

Conclusion



There are many pieces of evidence suggesting that learning a second culture has a broad impact on Human psychology. In fact, our personality seems to present a certain cultural flexibility. For example, bicultural individuals seem to adjust to the perceived prototypical personality of a given interlocutor, according to the language being spoken [24]. Additionally, it is known that behavioural shifts occur across generations, with the descendants of migrants successively approaching the patterns of the receiving population [22]. Unfortunately, the extension of this effect through the lifespan of a single individual is poorly understood. Having a certain psychological malleability is paramount to navigate between distinct cultural worlds, and bicultural individuals seem to exhibit the capacity to store distinct behavioural pathways. Because these patterns are triggered by cultural-specific cues, this mental ability has been designated **cultural frame switching**. Accordingly, brain imaging research points out that cultural frame switching translates into disparate brain activation patterns [11, 12]. Thus, multiculturalism seemingly affects brain function as well. Together with **cultural meta-**

cognition, this psychological feature constitutes the **bicultural competence** – which international management research denotes to be an essential skill to make multicultural teams function properly [27]. These characteristics probably cannot be developed merely through studying other cultures. Rather, they may require a complete exposure to a different cultural environment, as documented when testing the advantages on idea flexibility and creativity originated from multicultural learning [28].

Worth noting, enculturation effects have also been detected in aesthetic judgement [19] and facial memory [20, 21]. Interestingly, the latter case presents one of the few direct, behavioural contrasts found between mono- and bicultural participants – in which the cultural priming technique sorted effects exclusively regarding the second group. Another important comparison concerns cultural metacognition: monocultural individuals seem to have less cognitively complex cultural representations than their bicultural peers [26]. Still, future research should focus on further dissecting behavioural differences between these two groups. Additionally, because not all combinations of cultures may produce equal results, a wider range of cultures should be included in the battery of analyses. Overall, all the mentioned information should be considered carefully, as it is frequently made in the bases of pre-established cultural patterns of behaviour – which do not always prove to be consistent [16, 17]. Also, there might be confounding effects derived from genetic factors [15]. Finally, mechanisms such as the cultural frame switching are not linear, as they dramatically change depending on how the individuals have integrated both cultures [6, 13].

The References can be consulted in the blog, where the article will be published as well.

Multicultural brain-wiring will consist of two parts.

.. Slavs supporting Slavs

by Katarzyna Ciszewska

Every religion has a dark history. Christianity in the Middle Ages had the darkest period in some ways. Christians were converting to their religion and it wasn't always peaceful. The Slavs were Christianized in waves from the 7th to 12th century and with that, the process of replacing their old Slavic rituals and traditions began.

..What is a conversion?

..South Slavs adopted Christianity in the 9th century, the East Slavs in the 10th and the West Slavs between the 9th and 12th century. But what is conversion? If we look in the dictionary there are two meanings

..1. "the process of converting something from one thing to another"

..2. "a process in which someone changes to a new religion or belief".

..In other words, to convert someone is to persuade another person to change their religion. So along with that urging the Slavs to get rid of their traditions, beliefs, mythology and rituals. In general, methods can be divided into several variants. The first one is forceful and the second one is related to the mind. The first one is associated with force, because it is most often used in various fights, tortures, etc.



Christianization of Poland

© Jan Matejko

..The second one is related to the mind and to the psychological approach to a person of a different faith, discussion at least between two people, calm transmission of logical arguments on the topic of faith. During the Middle Ages there were many ways of Christianization. The most common were invasions, crusades and similar ways of attacking countries that were not in the Christian community. What followed was an army going with the clergy, who began evangelization on the people, which remained after the teachings by sword and fire. Later on, there was the taking over of temples or their destruction. There was also vandalism associated with the burning of sacred groves. However, what I would like to focus on most is how Christianization affected the traditions of the Slavs, their magical practices and especially their slow disappearance over the centuries.

..Young Slavs unite

..Let's move a few centuries into the future. The young generations were brought up in the Christian religion from an early age. Almost all Slavs are baptized, although only a small part of them practices this religion or even identifies with it. Children are taught not to believe in "superstitions" because it will make God angry with them. What goes along with superstitions are all the traditions, myths and beliefs that have been ingrained in our traditions for centuries. What makes these countries the most affected by Christianity? Unfortunately, it is much relat-

ed to our past, partitions, war, communism... For a long time God was the only hope to regain freedom and it was him who gave people strength to fight.

“Nowadays, Slavic youth are slowly trying to reconnect with their heritage. People are beginning to learn about their culture, which has been demonized for years. For many, it is a beautiful journey to understand what their country really is and what it entails. I think it also helps bring Slavs closer together, which is very important in these times when we need as much support as possible.

“Let’s look at some examples. We needed to help each other when women in Poland were



© Maxim Kuleshov



© Yakovlev & Aleeva

fighting for their rights, when there were protests around the main cities in Ukraine and Belarus as this led to many violations of human rights. Or even when the United States set another set of sanctions on Russia and people lost their jobs and their children were forced to support their families financially. Because of this, it seems to me that the Slavs began to put aside their disagreements and join together to fight injustices. We all just want to support each other.

“Slavic witchcraft

“What is most inspiring about going back to your roots is the Slavic magic. Slavic witchcraft is a sophisticated practice that requires intellectual and philosophical effort and represents

the power of human will. It is for people who are curious about the unknown, not for those who are afraid of mysteries and taboos. Witchcraft attracts the most motivated and intelligent. For example, Russian witchcraft is based on the interventions of gods, spirits and forces of nature into the lives of ordinary people and the ability to control these forces. Russians have used witchcraft to achieve their goals for many centuries. Magic was an integral part of the pagan traditions practiced by our ancestors. It was supposed to help in everyday life, heal and free from negative energy. People did not want to accept the new faith, which was very different from paganism, and for good reason. The authorities tried to influence the most sacred and intimate thing: faith. Christian saints began to replace Slavic pagan gods, but the old gods were always there. Our ancestors used all kinds of magic - from spells and charms to incantations designed to help in business and during battles.

•• Many Christians continue to practice pagan traditions in an attempt to change their meaning to something less "harmful" in their opinion. Even at Easter, when the resurrection of Christ



"Burning of Marzanna"

is celebrated, pagan beliefs are present, such as painting eggs. There are many beliefs tied to eggs in Slavic cultures, for example them bringing protection from evil and good luck. The egg, a symbol of life, is beautified with decorations reminiscent of nature's fertility.

•• December is the time of the winter "All Souls' Day". It was believed that on Christmas Eve the souls of the dead visited the living. Therefore, in the not so distant past, on Christmas Eve, chairs, benches, and tables were blown on before one sat down on them so that the spirits would be removed from them. The dead had to be accommodated and fed. For this reason the tables were left empty. Sometimes the tables were not even cleared after the Christmas Eve supper so that the spirits would not run out of food. Or even the ritual of Morana/Marzanna drowning on the first day of calendar spring. People gather to join the ancient Slavic pagan ritual celebrating the death of Winter and the birth of Spring. Morana (Marzanna in Polish, Marena in Russian and Mara in Ukrainian) is a pagan Slavic goddess associated with winter and death.

•• Faith dualism

•• This has led to the unique phenomenon of "faith dualism," which is still ongoing. There is no reason to judge this compilation in terms of good or bad. It simply shows the originality and uniqueness of Slavic culture. To this day, every part of our life is saturated with remnants of paganism. What is certain is that young Slavs are currently more than ever trying to support each other and reclaim their culture.

“ Eurovision: more than just a music contest

by Àlex Sánchez Aragón

“How many times have you listened the sentence “and the 12 points go to...”? Yes, at least once per year, as long as you are not one of the rare human species that spend six months of their lives every year following the Eurovision season.

“Founded in 1956, the TV Contest unites music, culture, European values and breathtaking show performances in one night. What started as an experiment to broadcast a music festival across the six founder members after the sec-

ond world war in Europe, ended up becoming the biggest TV show in history.

“As a Eurovision fan myself, or “eurofan”, as we are called, I have always been attracted by the key role of the song’s language during the



1974 Eurovision Song Contest Winners, ABBA

© European Broadcast Union (EBU)

contest. The rules about which language each participant should use have changed during the years. Let's have a quick look over it.

••The rules over the language

••The first rule was applied in 1965, after ten editions of the Contest when there was no criteria regarding the language of the songs. In the mid sixties, it was imposed that the participants should sing in one of the official languages of the country they were representing.

••But in 1973, until 1976, this rule was removed, and competitors could sing again in any language, with English becoming the protagonist of the night. Artists like ABBA took advantage of this important change, and with the classical hit "Waterloo", conquered the love of Europe and became one of the most famous music bands ever thanks to the contest in 1974.

••In 1977 and for 22 years, the European Broadcast Union (the organization who produces the festival every year), re-introduced the national language restriction. Therefore, the only countries that could sing in English were Ireland, United Kingdom and Malta. But from 1999 onward, a free choice of language was allowed again, and so far, things have not changed.

••During the 21st century, therefore, artists have had the opportunity to experiment on their performances and use language as a tool to reach a greater audience and, perhaps, take the trophy home. But if the contest was born in the fifties with the objective of bringing countries back together and heal previous wounds, national languages seem the perfect way to express each country in the best way.

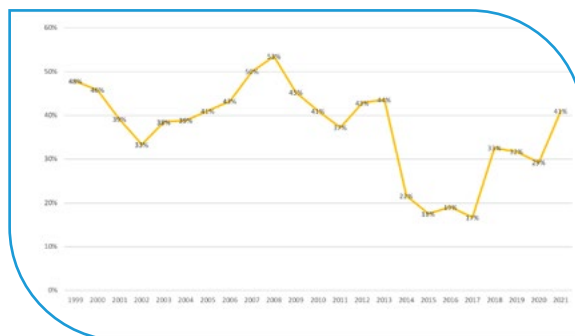
••After analyzing the implementation of English throughout the contest since 1999, some conclusions came up.

••First of all, the predominance of the British language around Europe: 67% of the songs have been sung in English since the EBU gave freedom of choice to the participant countries. Of course, this is nothing strange, considering the prominence of English in the music industry world-wide.

••However, it's interesting to analyze this graphic, which shows the percentage of countries that decided to sing in other languages throughout the last 23 years, including 2021. The "Golden age" for language diversity is the period between 2005 and 2010, when more than 40% of the countries chose other languages to perform. And the highest peak came in 2008, when more than half of the countries decided to go for their national languages, or just avoided English.

••This has an explanation: In 2007, Marija Serifovic from Serbia won the contest with the song "Molitva", sung entirely in Serbian. This meant that the following year, countries took into consideration the fact that, even when a performer sings in a minoritarian language that most of the Europeans will not understand, it can get to your heart and make you feel the message.

••This happened again in 2017, when Portugal took the trophy home with "Amar pelos dois", a beautiful ballad performed only in Portuguese. It was the first time Portugal won Eurovision, and, again, meant a turning point in the following year, when the countries performing in other languages doubled.



% of participants singing in other languages (not English)

© Àlex Sánchez Aragón

“Only twice did a song without English captivate the audience and win the contest in the last 23 years. Ukraine did so in 2002 and 2016, but mixed English with their national language.

“Language behavior around Europe

“Actually, another tendency that comes up when analyzing the use of English among the participants, is the division of the countries in geographical areas that share the same “language behavior”.

“Nordic countries such as Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, hardly ever use their languages to perform. In this group we could add Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, which have almost no trace of their languages in Eurovision history.

“On the other hand, Mediterranean countries like Spain, Portugal, France or Italy, hardly ever perform in English. This can be attributed to the spread of languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, French or Italian around the globe, and the fact that these countries have a strong music industry in their national languages, rather than in English, within their borders.

“This conclusion goes together with the tradition of Eurovision of singing in French, since the contest was born in French Speaking countries. Therefore, nowadays, countries like Belgium and Switzerland choose French over English.

“Another group of participants that are more aligned towards the “no English” behavior are the ex-Yugoslavian countries like Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia,

that normally bring their folklore to the contest together with their national languages. In the Balkan countries like Albania, Greece, North Macedonia or Bulgaria, the tendency is not as clear, shifting from English to national languages which does not lead to a conclusion.

“The power of the language for intercultural dialogue

“Although for some, Eurovision is a pop mainstream platform with no inner values, others see it as a yearly event to show the diversity and minorities in our public service media. We live in a society where our cultural environment is changing quickly, with the cross-border migration shifting the society we live in; more and more individuals are living in a multicultural normality.

“Eurovision is an event that gathers together countries that historically don't have good relations or don't share the same values. It brings together societies that have no clue about what is happening outside their borders throughout music. In the end, it's an opportunity to emphasize the power of language to spread messages of respect and diversity.

“Because Albanian, Estonian, Bulgarian or Icelandic also have the chance to shine on the stage!



The portuguese singer Salvador Sobral performing “Amar Pelos Dois” in Eurovision 2017

© RTVE

.. Mare Humanitas

by Bernardo Machado

.. There might be no other Sea in the World

.. Whose shores had the joy

.. Of having met such a great chunk

.. Of Human Diversity.

.. The origin of all these currents

.. Is the Sea's fascinating rush

.. to pay visits here and there, asking for news

.. to the people living by the shoreline.

.. These were the very same eternal currents

.. Which have been carrying our cultures,

.. allowing them to meet over and over again –

.. and it's through these exchanges that they
have flourished!

..

.. Nostrum is the duty

.. to learn to appreciate each other.

.. Nostrum is the wind of tolerance

.. Which shall finally blow on our sails!

..

.. The Sea knows us deeply –

.. Our Beauty; our most terrible actions –

.. and if it stood, instead of running

.. to the ocean, leaving us dry...

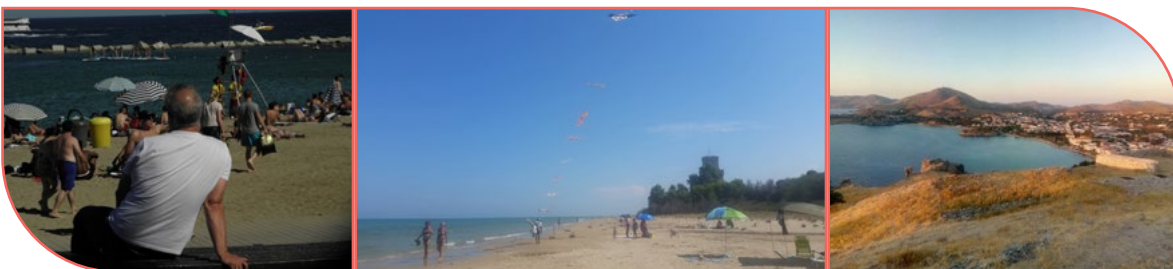
..

.. ... it's because we are worth the waiting!

.. But let us not delay ourselves any longer,

.. the time has come for our boats to hug
these waters

.. that shall be called Mare Humanitas!



"Special thanks to the members of ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION..."



"Ethelon is a not-for-profit organization which has as main mission to promote volunteerism as a principal value in greek society. Our scope is to set as benchmark of volunteering organizations in Greece connecting NGOs, volunteers and companies.

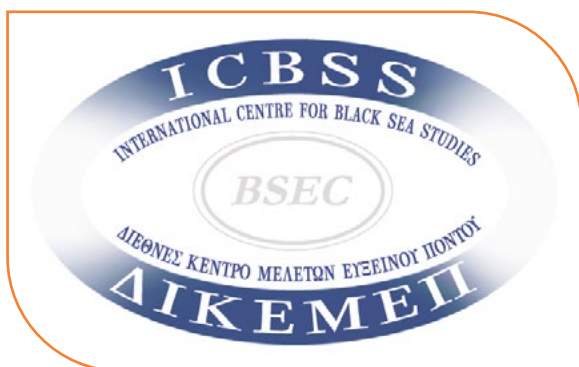
More info: www.ethelon.org



"UNESCO Youth Club of Thessaloniki is a non-profit local youth NGO. Based on the fundamental principles and objectives of UNESCO, as well as the EU, its activities can be mainly categorized in the fields of education and human rights, culture, science, information and communication. Its goal is to deploy the youth priorities and strategies of UNESCO and the EU in order to support young people, fostering their engagement within the local and European societies

More info: www.unescoyouth.gr

...that actively wrote for the special edition of BALKAN BEATS"



•• The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), founded in 1998, is an organisation of international character, governed by a Board of Directors whose members are nationals of the BSEC Member States. It has since a dual function: a) it is an independent research and training institution focusing on the wider Black Sea region, b) it is a related body of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and serves as its acknowledged think-tank. In this dual capacity the ICBSS undertakes a number of activities. Mr. Georgios Mitrakos holds the position of the Director General of the ICBSS since July 2016. On September 2019, the ICBSS and Ms. Athina Korovesi, Communications and Public Relations Manager, elected Focal Point and Head for Southern and Western Greece of the Anna Lindh Foundation Greek Network accordingly, for a three-year term.

More info: <https://icbss.org/>



•• "A House between the Seas and the Gods"

•• The International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes has been a landmark of literature and translation in the south-eastern Mediterranean region since its establishment in 1996. It operates under the auspices of UNESCO. The IWTCR is a place of reflection, study, writing, fruitful exchange of views aiming at contributing to the intercultural dialogue, the freedom of expression, the promotion of the Greek and literature from across the globe and the encouragement and support of various educational activities.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/writers.writerscenter?fref=ts>



“Wind of Renewal / Anemos Ananeosis is a social cooperative, constituted in Greece in 2014 for the promotion of social cooperative and responsible economy, social entrepreneurship, green-circular economy, incorporation of democracy and human rights in financial and social life, as well as eco-social innovation.

More info: www.anemosananeosis.gr



“4C is a NGO based in Athens with the main goal of lifelong learning through differentiated and experiential activities. Its activities are based on two pillars. The first concerns the EU, democracy and the protection of human rights. The second concerns sports, healthy lifestyle and social inclusion through sport.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/4C-Cooperate-Communicate-Create-Change-110899533841916/>



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

“The Hellenic Foundation of Culture (HFC) was established in 1992 with the unanimous consent of the Greek Parliament. By planning the organization of cultural events, the promotion of the Greek book, music and the arts, the dissemination of the Greek cinema, theater and the teaching of the Greek language at the core of its action, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture has proved that it possesses the necessary knowledge, experience, prestige and vision to promote the Greek culture both in Greece and abroad. It co-operates with university departments of Greek Studies, Greek language schools, embassies, cultural centers, museums and libraries all over the world.

More info: <https://hfc-worldwide.org/>



“United Societies of Balkans (U.S.B)” is a non-governmental organization (NGO) - a civil society organization, created in Thessaloniki in 2008, by a team of active young people, socially sensitized and with rich experience around voluntary programs. Their vision includes the youth empowerment at local, national and international level, the intercultural dialogue, the promotion of principles and values of democracy and human rights through the mobilization and mobility of young people, their assimilation into volunteer work as well as their awareness raising on social issues.

More info: www.usbngo.gr

For more Information about the Greek Network of Anna Lindh Foundation visit our website <https://www.alfhellas.gr/en>

• Anna Lindh Virtual Marathon for Dialogue

• 19th of May - 29th of June 2021

• In the framework of the 25th Celebration of the Barcelona Process and following the large mobilization made by the ALF community in preparation of MEDForum 2020, which had to be cancelled due to the outburst of COVID19, the ALF has adapted to the needs of the times: it brings together more than 3,000 civil society organizations, institutions, governments, local and regional decision-makers, entrepreneurs, young people, the media and academia in an unprecedented, large scale virtual event: the Anna Lindh Virtual Marathon for Dialogue.

For more on the program and LIVE updates, visit [here](#) & [here](#).

CONTACT ALF HELLAS

Al. Delmouzou 8, Center, Thessaloniki, 54635 +30 2310 215629 (in. 2)

info@alfhellas.gr www.alfhellas.g





The Anna Lindh Foundation VIRTUAL MARATHON

FOR DIALOGUE IN THE EUROMED

The Marathon takes place from now until the 29th of June, with the aim of highlighting the importance of intercultural dialogue to build sustainable societies in the EuroMed region."

USB TEAM



Filippo Massariol | 22 years old

Staying in Greece for seven months, until April 2021

Favorite topics are philosophy and art



Marco Scarangella | 30 years old

Staying in Greece for 7 months until April 2021

Favorite topics are politics, culture, art, food, sport



Michael McGee | 24 years old

Staying in Greece for 7 months until April 2021

Favorite Topics are journalism, politics and social issues



Alejandro Sánchez Aragón | 26 years old

Staying in Greece for 7 months until April 2021

Favorite topics are journalism, politics and social issues.



Laura Andrés Tallarda | 27 years old

Staying in Greece for 8 months until September

Favourite topics are journalism, social issues and mental health



Katarzyna Ciszewska | 19 years old

Staying in Greece for 7 months until April 2021

Favorite Topics are film studies, women and LGBT+ rights, mental health



Livia Kallmeyer | 20 years old

Staying in Greece for 7 months until September 2022

Favorite topics are Feminsim, LGBTQIA+, politics and social issues



Sara Angioletti | 25 years old

staying in Greece until April 2021

Favourite topics are relationship, culture and sustainability



Bernardo Guerra Machado | 24 years old

Staying in Greece for 7 months until April 2021

Favorite topics are cultural diversity, stories, and Life

General Directors:
Aristodimos Paraschou
Christian Cibba

Graphic Designer:
Alexandros Tagaridis

Editors:
Michael MaGee
Livia Kallmeyer



Find us:
www.balkanhotspot.org
Usb_ngo.gr



"Special thanks to the members of Anna Lindh Foundation that actively wrote for the special edition of Balkan Beats".

<https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/>

The volunteers responsible for this publication are hosted in Greece in the framework of the European ERASMUS+ Programme, European Solidarity Corps. This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views of only of the author, and the Commission can not be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.