



Erasmus+

TIME TO MAKE LOVE SPEECH

14-10 SEPTEMBER 2017
KAUNAS, LITHUANIA

E-BOOKLET ON
FIGHTING HATE SPEECH
AND MAKE LOVE SPEECH



**Make Love
Speech**



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INTRODUCTION

Erasmus+ Training Course **Time to Make Love Speech** (acronym TMLS) took place in Kaunas, Lithuania on 4-10 September of 2017. Project's mission was to raise social awareness of hate speech and show youth workers the means how they could tackle that

INSPIRATION

People of different races, cultures, sexual orientations and religions are often enduring intolerance, verbal abuse & harassment, which results in decreasing their self-esteem & eventually their exclusion from the society (according to RED network). Even though the EU acts towards eliminating these wrongs, countries, such as Lithuania, Germany, Spain, UK, Turkey and Italy still face different forms of substantial hate speech. Where everything begins? With the hate speech. It is so common that people are used to it and they ignore offensive words. However, words can easily turn into something worse— aggression.

We believe that this problem could be best tackled by creating positive movement towards love speech. To facilitate the creation of such movement, project "Time to Make Love Speech" (acronym TMLS) was carried out in Kaunas, 2017.

PARTICIPANTS

30 youth workers from Lithuania, Germany Spain, United Kingdom, Turkey and Italy gathered to discuss and search for solutions to prevent hate speech and how to reverse it into 'love speech'. Since participants gathered for this project were youth workers, overall knowledge and experience in dealing with hate speech was extensive, which ensured fluent exchange of good practises of initiatives fighting against hate speech.

Please note that the contents of this e-booklet represents only the views of its authors (see last section) and not those of the European Commission, Erasmus+ or related European bodies/institutions.



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The main intention of this e-booklet is to provide insights on to how happiness induced activities can have positive effect on locals. As stated in the introduction (see above), there are real-life examples, that indeed show the benefits of such approach. To give an all-around overview on it, the booklet relies on:

- The afore mentioned examples;
- Workshops created and delivered by the participants of TMLS;

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

It is worth mentioning that there could be more and better examples than Danish højskole (DH) (in English: folk high school). For instance, the whole education system of Finland is another case of alternative approach to teaching and studying. Yet, for simplicity, only the former will be looked at extensively.

From <http://www.danishfolkhighschools.com>:

"Danish folk high schools offer non-formal adult education. Most students are between 18 and 24 years old and the length of a typical stay is 4 months. You sleep, eat, study and spend your spare time at the school. There are no academic requirements for admittance and there are no exams - but you will get a diploma as a proof of your attendance."

For those more involved with Erasmus+ programme and its key actions (KA) (especially, KA1 and KA3) (further referred to as E+), the definition of DH should look familiar (except for the fact that E+ duration is much shorter, ranging from 5 to 14 days on average). For those, who are not, the key elements of E+ are listed below:

- Non-formal education;
- Focus on interaction of participants;
- Trainer and trainees are at the same level;
- Activities involve everyone;
- No tests/exams;
- Education process matters, just as much as the results.



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Such approach to education is in more general terms dubbed as non-formal education (NFE). It is clear that the whole idea of it is very different from what is usually seen in the classrooms around Europe. However, the results in real-life are evident. Finnish (who rely on NFE) vs American (or indeed any other European nation) PISA standardised tests (more here: <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/>) on science and maths results may be seen in the figure 1.

The graph clearly shows that NFE beats more standard education even in such hard subjects as maths and science. This allows to make the first conclusion:

NFE produces results that are similar or better than standard education.

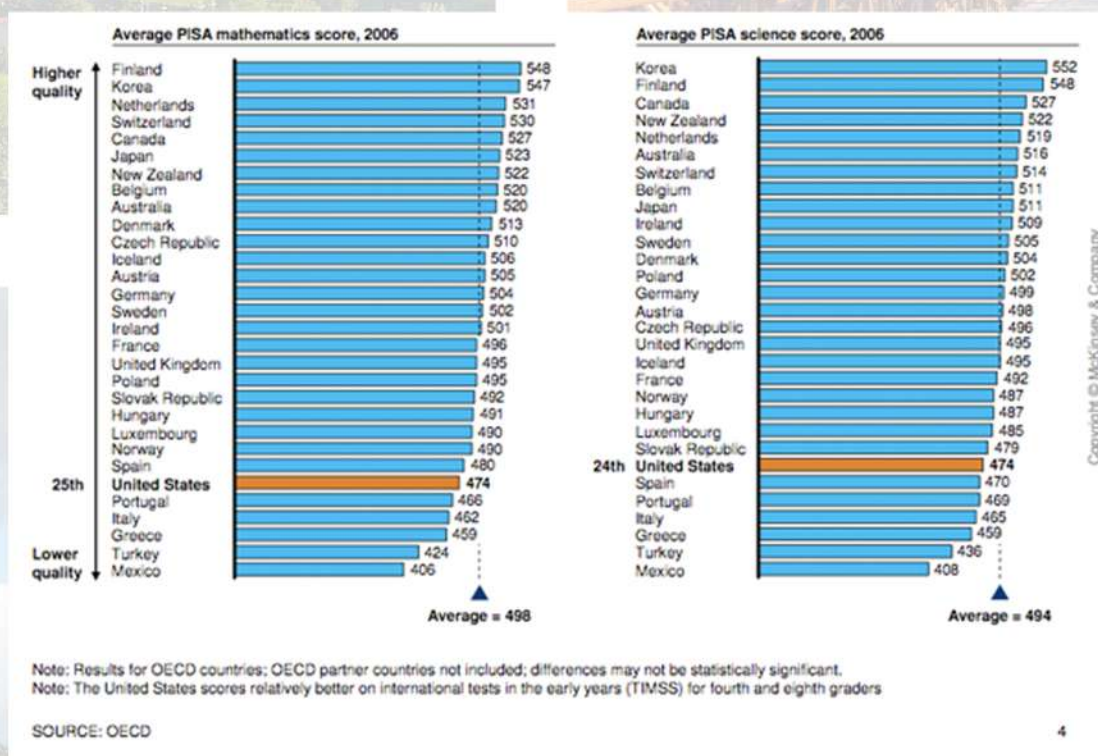


Figure 1: PISA standardised tests result

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TMLS WORKSHOPS AND SOCIAL INITIATIVES

TMLS acted as a start-up idea for international movement for spreading positivity and negating hate speech. Of course, this was agreed between participants mutually beforehand. As not all the participants were experts of the field of human rights / No Hate Speech, guest speakers were invited to present these topics and current initiatives, targeted towards fighting hate speech.

After interactive discussions and workshops on how each participating country fights hate speech and protects human / victim rights, participants had a day to create a plan on how to fight hate speech and spread positivity speech. As the plan was created, during the same mobility, participants had to carry it out to assess to what extent it had an effect on locals.



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"FREE HUGS"

During the mobility, participants noticed, that locals are keeping their distance between one another and even though some pairs of people seemed like close friends, they had a feeling of neutrality.

Furthermore, participants were starting to wander - "When was the last time you hugged a stranger?". We provided a simple answer – "Why not do it during the project?". As such, with brighter than sun smiles and colourful as rainbow balloons of all shapes and forms we went to the streets of Kaunas with a simple, yet amazing mission – hug Kaunas (or as many people as possible). This was done to spread positivity and the essence of being close to one another. Pictures of how the activity was done can be seen **HERE**.

"EYE CONTACT"

After the huge success of the above written social action, participants tried to create new ways to engage locals and promote positivity and close-relations. After watching some motivational videos, we came to the conclusion that the best way to bridge the gap between the strangers – eye contact.

After making some promotional posters participants gathered in a town square, sat down on the grass and invited people to experience something unique. At first locals were puzzled by what they saw but this feeling was followed by curiosity which grew to great success and interest of everyone around. Pictures can be seen in Facebook page of the movement!

"LOVE TUNNEL"

"Love is in the air" is a famous quote followed by colourful spring bloom. We decided to apply this saying to the colourful autumn and introduce locals to the love tunnel. Blindfolded locals had to go in a straight line while feeling the warmth and touch of others. Through this tunnel we wanted to show how people lost touch with one another and how easy we can regain it. Participants of the project and participants of the tunnel were really happy with the turnout and as one of them said: "I didn't expect the touch of a stranger to be so comforting and warm".

RESULTS

Even though the project action has ended, result dissemination continues. The press-releases both in Lithuanian and English have been already shared on numerous sources:

- <https://www.facebook.com/europeanintegrationgroup/posts/1489393121138103>
- Lithuanian: <https://www.delfi.lt/pilietis/naujienos/dziaugsmu-ir-meile-kaune-dalijosi-tarptautinis-jaunimas.d?id=75722995>

Various videos and other material on social initiatives, no-hate speech movement and human rights actions can be found in the project's webpage:

- <https://refugees.lt/time-make-love-speech>

However, the biggest impact of the project is felt on the participants and partner organisations:

- 1) Project photos created were shared or are/have been used as their profile pictures on social networks,
- 2) Facebook chat and group created during the action is still alive and full of ideas for further work,
- 3) Public Facebook page, where all the ideas and initiatives, carried out in all participating countries, was created to share with the public. To show that the project was inspirational and incentivised the youth to work for its goals, selected quotes of the participants are provided below:

"Best project I have been on! The training was very productive and although it was intense learning, I feel it has been a great mix of practical activities with different people"

***"It was an outstanding experience!
The smiles and hugs I received from the locals were the warmest
(even though it was cold during some days)
and I really felt that this project made a huge difference in their daily lives!"***



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PROJECT EVALUATION

The increase of participating youth workers' knowledge on the topic was a key objective of the Training Course. At the same time, it was necessary to ensure that they are enjoying the process. This way it was expected that the results would be the best.

On the last day, the participants were asked (among other things) to anonymously grade (from 1 to 10) their satisfaction, fun, interest and gained knowledge. The result was outstanding and has shown an average grade of 8.3 out of 10.

Such result is so far one the best ever achieved by Vsl "Integracijos Centras" in any of its Erasmus+ actions (2 as of December, 2017). It is likely due to an alternative approach to learning – focusing on the participants' happiness. Surely, it was also achieved by a mix of good management and sensible activities of the project, all of which may be found below.



Result of TMLS is one of the best ever achieved by Vsl "Integracijos Centras" in any of its Erasmus+ actions, of which there were many.

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CONCEPT & SCHEDULE

In general, TMLS had the following goals: (1) to strengthen participants' knowledge about hate speech, human rights education and legal tools; (2) to create new solutions for preventing hate speech through youth organisations; (3) to learn about "Love Speech" and how this movement could be implemented in practice; (4) to spread the idea to youth & the wider audience through youth organisations; (5) to show participants how they can effectively protect victim's rights; (6) to increase the competences & facilitate mutual collaboration on the topic of participating organizations.

To achieve these goals, a range of NFE methods developed by all the partner organisations were employed. Main activities identified forms of hate speech we are faced on a daily basis. They also contributed to the creation of non-formal education methods to share the knowledge and created the means of spreading information about the idea and movement of "Love Speech" to the public.

Youth exchange's schedule (most of the activities may be found in the sub-section below)

ACTIVITIES & EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

1. Info pack of the Training Course with all the information for project participants;
2. Current knowledge assessment, which was done in the beginning of the project;
3. Results of the current knowledge assessment;
4. Tools to teach what dangers can lack of media literacy bring and how it is used to spread hate speech:
 - Ability to spy private facebook accounts;
 - Ability to track peoples locations and travels without their knowledge;
5. 3D VR films about refugees, shared by the participants:
 - Video nr. 1;
 - Video nr. 2;
6. Basic video making rules presented during the project and the examples shown;
7. Interactive presentation on hate crimes in Lithuania;
8. Videos related to the topic that were shown in a non-formal video afternoon for the participants:
 - Video #1
 - Video #2
 - Video #3
 - Video #4
9. Make Love Speech in Lithuania Vision;
10. Make Love Speech in Lithuania Mission;
11. Project evaluation form;
12. Participants nomination form;
13. Free Hugs" initiative;
14. „Eye Contact“ initiative;
15. „Love Tunnel“ initiative;
16. Youthpass example;
17. Kaunas City Challenge;
18. Videos, shared by the participants on the topics of hate speech;
19. Practice Guidelines for LGBT Clients;
20. Presented Lithuanian initiative on fighting hate crime.



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ABOUT ORGANISERS

VSI Integracijos Centras is a non-profit non-governmental organization aimed at the social integration of minorities in Lithuania. The organization believes that the key to welfare, stability, democracy and tolerance is the successful integration of all the social and ethnic groups into society. Even though the organisation is itself young, it has simply united experienced professionals working in the sphere of integration (for more than 5 years) and volunteers from all Lithuania in order to help the minorities in Lithuania. Therefore, the experience within the organisation is high. Apart from working with other minority groups (sexual, religious, gender, age, etc.), NGO is currently focusing on ethnic minorities, mainly refugees that are constantly coming to Europe, as well as youth that have fewer opportunities (e.g. living in rural areas, having economic difficulties etc.)



Mainly the goals of the NGO are to help minorities and underprivileged youth in Lithuania and other European Union countries to: (1) integrate to the society and get accustomed to the local traditions and way of life; (2) get used to the concept of lifelong learning; (3) understand how the healthcare and other emergency services work; (4) learn the language so that communication barrier would be gone; (5) get education that they are willing to pursue; (6) organise housing; (7) create employment opportunities for youth; (8) help the youth to build new cooperations and increase their entrepreneurship skills as well as motivation for volunteering; (9) enhance the minorities' self-esteem; digital & multilingualism skills, social awareness, tolerance and other important values; (10) facilitate cooperation between different Lithuanian NGOs, youth workers and the youth and youth workers from minorities; (11) raise awareness about EU citizenship, work towards reducing youth unemployment; defend human rights and work on elimination of discrimination. At the same time we aim to inform the public about different ethnic minorities and refugee groups in order to boost tolerance to them and facilitate refugee integration. This is done by also promoting Erasmus+ projects and opportunities behind it, because it is one of the most effective ways to fight the previously mentioned problems. As the problems are really acute in all Europe, the organisation's volunteer circle is growing fast.

More on us: <https://refugees.lt>