

Young Creators, Bold Entrepreneurs

Youth Exchange - Brochure



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Young Creators, Bold Entrepreneurs was an Erasmus+ youth mobility project designed to support young people in exploring entrepreneurship in a practical, creative and inclusive way.

The project created a safe international learning space where participants could develop ideas, build confidence, work in teams and discover that entrepreneurship is not only about starting a business, but also about taking initiative, solving problems and creating value for the community.



Through non-formal learning, intercultural exchange and hands-on activities, young people were encouraged to think boldly, test their ideas and recognise their own potential in shaping the future.



AIMS AND GOALS

The project aimed to strengthen young people's entrepreneurial mindset and practical skills.

It focused on:

- creativity and initiative
- teamwork and communication
- turning ideas into action
- problem-solving through challenges
- intercultural cooperation
- confidence and active participation

The goal was not to create “perfect entrepreneurs”, but to encourage young people to believe in their ideas and take brave first steps.

PARTICIPANTS

The project brought together young people, youth leaders and facilitators from Slovenia, Spain and Türkiye, with Austria involved in the preparatory phase.

The final group included 21 participants: 17 young people, 3 youth leaders and 1 facilitator.

Participants came from different cultural and social backgrounds, bringing diverse perspectives on entrepreneurship, youth work and local community needs. For some, this was their first international youth exchange.





WHAT IS AN ENTREPRENEURIAL HACKATHON

An entrepreneurial hackathon is a fast-paced event where teams develop solutions for real-life challenges. Traditional hackathons often last 24–72 hours and combine creativity, business thinking, design, prototyping and pitching. The goal is not to create a perfect final product, but to test ideas quickly, receive feedback and present a clear solution or concept.

HOW WE ADAPTED THE METHOD

We adapted the traditional hackathon into a shorter final event that fit the rhythm of a youth exchange.

The focus was not on competition, coding or a finished business product. Instead, participants used what they had learned during the project to respond to real challenges.

A strong emphasis was placed on communication and presentation. Participants worked in teams, developed ideas and presented them through an elevator pitch.

HOW TO USE THIS METHOD IN YOUTH WORK

A short entrepreneurial hackathon can be used as a final activity in a youth exchange, training course or local workshop.

Method format:

Duration: 4–6 hours

Format: small teams

Output: elevator pitch

Focus: learning, teamwork and presentation

Choose a real challenge connected to your organisation, project topic or local community. Divide participants into small teams and guide them through four simple steps:

1. understand the challenge
2. brainstorm solutions
3. choose one idea
4. present it through an elevator pitch

The goal is not perfection. The goal is for young people to communicate their idea clearly, explain why it matters and gain confidence in presenting.



Elevator pitches during the hackathon at Mladinski center Žalec

THE WAY WE DID IT

We turned the hackathon into a final team challenge where participants developed solutions for real issues and pitched their ideas.

Process:

1. Opening and instructions

Introduction to the aim, timeline and pitching format.



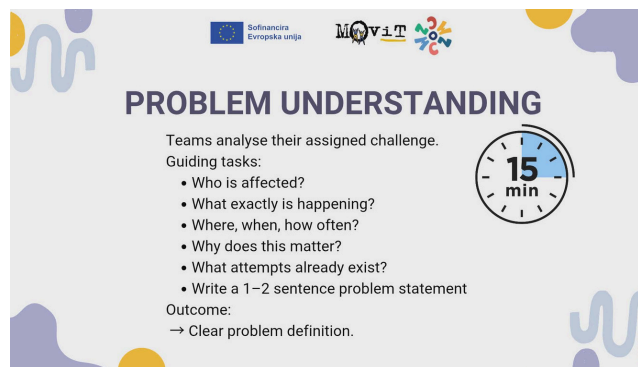
Time	Activity
0:00-0:10	Opening + instructions
0:10-0:25	Problem understanding
0:25-0:45	Idea generation
0:45-1:15	Lean Canvas creation
1:15-1:40	Presentation preparation
1:40-1:55	Pitch practice (5-minute pitch)
1:55-2:00	Closing & setup for pitching

2. Problem understanding

Teams analysed real challenges connected to Mladinski center Žalec.



CHALLENGES
1. Attracting youth aged 15–20 to Youth Centre Žalec (no high school in town).
2. Integration of immigrants; rising violence; lack of intervention from official services.
3. Contradiction within Youth Centre Žalec: “slightly problematic” youth are accepted in the daily centre, but are thrown out of the café.
4. Geographical spread and low accessibility: young people live far from the Youth Centre, poor transport, low engagement.



PROBLEM UNDERSTANDING

Teams analyse their assigned challenge.

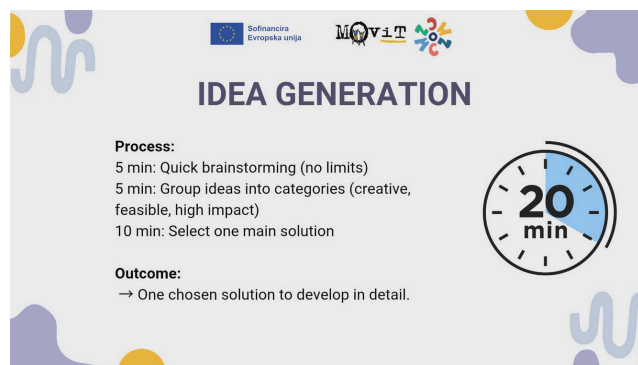
Guiding tasks:

- Who is affected?
- What exactly is happening?
- Where, when, how often?
- Why does this matter?
- What attempts already exist?
- Write a 1–2 sentence problem statement

Outcome:
→ Clear problem definition.

3. Idea generation

Participants brainstormed solutions and selected one idea.



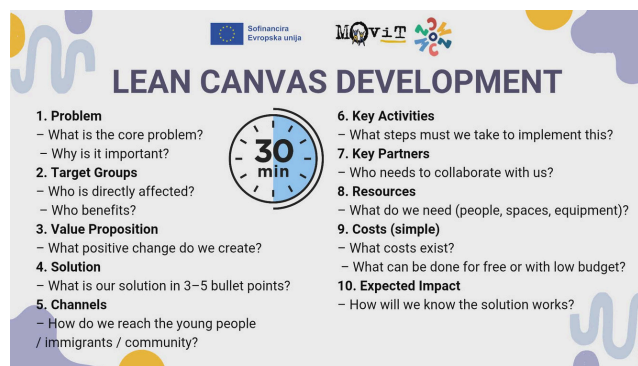
IDEA GENERATION

Process:
5 min: Quick brainstorming (no limits)
5 min: Group ideas into categories (creative, feasible, high impact)
10 min: Select one main solution

Outcome:
→ One chosen solution to develop in detail.

4. Lean Canvas development

Teams shaped their concept using a simplified Lean Canvas.




LEAN CANVAS DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Problem**
 - What is the core problem?
 - Why is it important?
- 2. Target Groups**
 - Who is directly affected?
 - Who benefits?
- 3. Value Proposition**
 - What positive change do we create?
- 4. Solution**
 - What is our solution in 3–5 bullet points?
- 5. Channels**
 - How do we reach the young people / immigrants / community?
- 6. Key Activities**
 - What steps must we take to implement this?
- 7. Key Partners**
 - Who needs to collaborate with us?
- 8. Resources**
 - What do we need (people, spaces, equipment)?
- 9. Costs (simple)**
 - What costs exist?
 - What can be done for free or with low budget?
- 10. Expected Impact**
 - How will we know the solution works?

5. Pitch preparation

Participants prepared a short presentation of their solution.



PRESENTATION PREPARATION

Teams design a 6–8 slide presentation in PowerPoint or Canva.

Recommended slide order:

1. Team name + challenge
2. WHY this problem matters
3. Problem description
4. Proposed solution
5. How it works (key activities)
6. Resources + partners
7. Expected impact
8. Closing slide

6. Final elevator pitches

Teams presented their ideas to the jury and received feedback.



PITCH PREPARATION

Teams practice the 5-minute pitch.

Pitch format (Start with WHY):

1. WHY – the emotional or community reason
2. WHAT – the solution
3. HOW – how it works
4. LEAN CANVAS summary – problem, target group, value
5. ASK – what support/resources they need
6. Strong closing line

Hackathon concept and presentation:
Anja Debeljak

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

1. Attracting young people to the Youth Centre

Challenge:

How can Mladinski center Žalec attract young people aged 15–20, especially since there is no high school in town?



Solution idea: Future Youth Connect

The team proposed an Inspired Persona Strategy, based on involving successful former participants of the Youth Centre — for example musicians, dancers, artists and other young role models — whose real-life stories can inspire and attract new young people.

YOUNG PEOPLE AS CO-CREATORS

Fresh perspectives.

Practical ideas.

Local impact.

2. Integration of immigrants and community safety

Challenge:

How can the Mladinski center Žalec support better integration of immigrants and respond to rising violence or lack of support from official services?



Solution idea: 2gether We Cook

The team proposed community cultural and gastronomy events that bring people together through food, language exchange, sport and shared traditions. To make the activities more attractive for younger generations, they included gamification and game-based methods.

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

3. Inclusion of “slightly problematic” youth

Challenge:

How can the Mladinski center Žalec respond to the contradiction that some young people are accepted in the daily centre but excluded from the café?



Solution idea: Coffee for Everyone

The team proposed creating a safe and inclusive space where young people can be heard, especially those who are often seen as “the problem.” Through coffee-based meetings, workshops and conversations supported by social workers, the idea aims to build mutual understanding, respect and trust. The message is simple: coffee is for everyone, and so is the Youth Centre.

YOUNG PEOPLE AS CO-CREATORS

Fresh perspectives.

Practical ideas.

Local impact.

4. Accessibility and low engagement

Challenge:

How can the Mladinski center Žalec reach young people who live far away, have poor transport options or are less engaged?



Solution idea: Flamenco Kids

The team proposed a flexible accessibility approach for young people who face transport barriers or are less engaged. Their idea starts with listening to young people’s interests, then adapting activities and access support around their needs. This includes car-sharing through families, teachers and the local community, more virtual activities, a mobile youth centre approach and a website with practical logistics information.

ZERO TO HERO CHALLENGE

WHAT IS THE “FROM ZERO TO HERO” CHALLENGE?

The From Zero to Hero Challenge is a practical entrepreneurial activity where teams start with one simple object and try to exchange it for items of higher value. In our project, participants started with one pencil in Ljubljana. They approached people, presented their idea, negotiated exchanges and thought about the value of different objects.

The challenge helped participants practise courage, communication, negotiation, creativity, teamwork and entrepreneurial thinking in a real-life environment.



Zero to Hero challenge in Ljubljana

HOW TO USE IT?

Duration: 1.5–3 hours

Format: small teams

Starting point: one simple object

Output: exchanged items + reflection

Focus: communication, negotiation and value creation

Give each team the same simple object and a clear time limit. Their task is to exchange it for something of higher value in a safe public space.

After the activity, reflect together:

- What worked?
- What was difficult?
- How did you explain your idea?
- What did you learn about value?

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

Being in Slovenia and experiencing its beautiful nature was truly refreshing. I really appreciated the opportunity to design our own workshops and gained valuable experience in video creation, campaign development and workshop design.

The team was amazing, and the hospitality of the Slovenian participants and trainers made us feel very welcome. The coordination was also excellent, especially with logistics, as our arrival and departure went smoothly.

I would be very happy to join again in the future. Thank you for everything!

Mert

I came to the project without expectations, as it was a completely new experience for me. I did not really know what I was stepping into. I could never have imagined what the project would bring.

We had a safe space where we could be free and be ourselves, regardless of race, nationality, religion or beliefs. We were simply us. We were able to build on the knowledge we already had and gain many new skills and insights.

From frightened individuals, we became a community where we could radiate our energy, become a family, make new friends and create memories that will shine in our hearts forever.

Klara

This project was truly a space where I felt at home while also being surrounded by opportunities to grow. The safe and supportive environment allowed me to express my potential freely and confidently.

Through the ideas we created and the projects we developed together, I gained new perspectives and discovered different ways of thinking. It was not only productive but also genuinely enjoyable. In fact, this experience even inspired me while shaping my 2026 motto: "Move boldly, burn brighter."

I'm really grateful to have been part of such a meaningful and empowering journey.

Enes





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