

## **Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange: online collaborative learning without borders**

**Belgium. 23 March, 2020.** Twenty thousand young people, educators and youth workers have benefited from Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange since its launch in 2018. Participants have built relationships with their peers from countries like Libya, Germany, Syria, Italy, Morocco, Turkey, or Finland without having to cross borders or take a plane. At a time of increasing challenges linked to mobility, this flagship European Commission initiative overcomes travelling barriers and contributes to climate change mitigation by offering an alternative to physical exchanges.

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange bridges cultural divides, giving people exposure to a variety of different world views and beliefs. With a broad reach within and far beyond Europe's borders, it offers opportunities to try out innovative teaching methods and collaborative educational programmes. Sara, educator and participant of the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Facilitation course, highlights:

***“The learning, benefits and relevance of Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange are immeasurable. With the COVID-19 outbreak, in-person classes have been suspended in Italy, and teachers have been asked to shift to online learning spaces that offer no real-time interaction. Virtual Exchange encourages the development of social relationships, cultural skills and empathy, leading to greater mutual understanding and tolerance. Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is empowering, enriching and fun!”***

The [“Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange 2018-2019 Achievements Report”](#) shows strong evidence of the project's impact. Online exchanges equipped young people with essential employability skills, including cross-communication, critical thinking, media literacy and digital competencies. A large majority of participants (71%) built positive and meaningful relationships with peers from different countries/regions through Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange activities. 91% described what they learned about people from other countries as positive, of which 31% reported a clear change from their previously-held beliefs.

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange offers an accessible, ground-breaking tool to enrich and expand the scope of the Erasmus+ programme. Young people meet once a week in an online virtual learning space, connecting participants from 44 different nationalities, to engage in facilitated discussions about global issues that matter to them. Virtual exchanges use technology to boost key skills and attitudes associated with meaningful intercultural dialogue, such as curiosity, empathy, and self-awareness around biases and stereotypes.

This Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange project is established under a contract with the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, financed by the European Union's budget, and it is implemented by a consortium composed of Search for Common Ground, Anna Lindh Foundation, UNIMED, Sharing Perspectives Foundation, Soliya, UNICollaboration, Kiron Open Higher Education, and Migration Matters.

### **For more information:**

Contact: Communications Officer: [ana.martin@annalindhfoundation.org](mailto:ana.martin@annalindhfoundation.org),

Website: <https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual>

### **Follow our Social Media channels:**

#ErasmusVirtual

Twitter: @EUErasmusPlus

Facebook: @EUErasmusPlusProgramme