



Lead by Nature newsletter

a material carefully crafted by the European Lead by Nature Network (ELNN) team

Long story short

It has been more than 6 months since we started the European Lead by Nature Network, and along this time a lot of good things happened. Starting from the way we organize ourselves to the international Discord Youth Hub which is growing day by day, we've got a lot of news to share with you.



You'll read about our...

Beginnings

The story behind the European Lead by Nature Network goes back in November 2022, when we decided that together we are stronger and we can have a real impact.

Purpose

We want to build a future of young leaders that are authentic, accountable, reliable and prepared to bring sustainable change in their communities.

Actions

Besides the network meetings we have for aligning our strategies and actions, we are working towards launching a Youth Report, as well as an European Projects Fair.

and of course, our Youth Community

One of our greatest achievements is bringing young people together from all around Europe on the ELNN Youth Hub server on Discord. There they can connect and learn the things they like through webinars, podcasts, challenges and workshops, but also through the Erasmus+ projects the network partners offer.



Beginnings

The idea of our network is rooted back to a Training Course in Bran, Romania, that happened in October 2022.

During this event, we acted upon and shared the concept of quality in our lives and working environments. This is especially true when it comes to partnerships and collaborations. The common need identified has been creating a long-term community of organizations led by shared values of quality, trust and sustainability at the social and environmental levels. Our Aim is to support and empower inspiration and learning.

We decided together that, first of all, we will be a community of partners where each member can find a space to learn, share and grow in synergy with the others, nourishing and valuing their work while contributing and sharing the other members' activities. We will provide the space for the creation of different activities meant to empower the youth stakeholder participation in each member's country community, to create and maintain quality partnerships, share good practices and support each other work.



Purpose

Growing the European leaders together. Inspired by nature..

We want to build a future of young leaders that are authentic, accountable, reliable and prepared to bring sustainable change in their communities.

The European Lead by Nature Network (ELNN) unites organizations that aim to enrich and enhance the lives of young individuals not just in Europe, but globally. We are committed to shaping EU policies that focus on youth empowerment, connectivity, and active involvement, all with the goal of establishing communities that prioritize inclusivity, quality education, and both personal and professional development. Our mission is to develop forward-thinking environments that stimulate curiosity, encourage leadership, and promote sustainable growth, while collaboratively generating the essential resources to meet the requirements of young people and those who work with them.

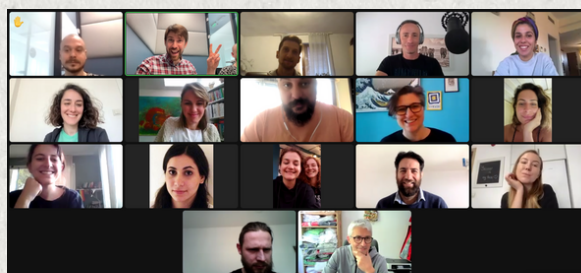
Actions

We've been busy bees during the past few months, with all the meetings and the Youth Hub launch. Each step we took leads us to our purpose and goals. Here's a timeline of what we did so far, since our partnership started.

APRIL 2023

Online Kick Off Meeting

We got together to get aligned over the goals of the project, and agree on a timeline for the further actions.



JUNE 2023

ELNN Meeting in Varna

Throughout the meeting we discussed key aspects, including the strategic plan and management structure of our network. But that's not all! We showcased various project ideas, exchange tools and knowledge to empower our network and our youth communities.

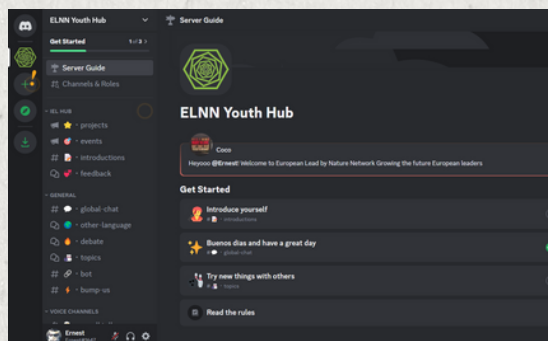


JUNE 2023

Launch of the Youth Hub on Discord

We launched a Discord Community for youth who want to continually grow both personally and professionally.

We've got debates, weekly events, webinars, workshops, a podcast, wellbeing challenges, as well as trainings on themes like Skills of the Future, Inclusion & Diversity, and Active Citizenship.



JUNE 2023

Website Launch

On the website you can find information about our vision, mission, values, and goals, as well as about each partner of the network.



Ever since June, we focused on growing our Discord Youth Hub.



Youth Community



We want to dedicate this whole section to our volunteers, who joined us right in the beginning of July 2023, and have been working a lot to grow and engage the community ever since. We don't have enough words of appreciation to thank them for their hard work and dedication to this project.

Right from the beginning we knew that a team of motivated volunteers is essential to our mission of growing this community. They are helping us everyday to bring those passionate young people on board, from managing entirely the Social Media channels of the project, to coming up with creative engagement ideas for Discord, hosting podcasts, creating bold designs and making sure the server stays a safe space for everyone who joins.

Special credits to Isabella Andreea Ivanof, who helped writing this section.

So it started with a teambuilding in Brasov, Romania...

Because it is very important to know what every volunteer is expecting and to have them engaged and work together as a team, rather than individually.



The teambuilding was followed by all these activities on Discord:

Debates

on topics such as the impact of cartoon for children, the introduction of sex education as a subject in highschool, as well as the importance of environmental protection over economical development.

A wellbeing set of challenge for youth

HOPE is an experimental well-being tool created by the participants of the Erasmus+ KA1 project "Chakras". They created 18 challenges divided into 3 categories: BODY (cold showers; running; sleeping beauty; dance out your emotions; intuitive dancing; stretching), MIND (calm your mind; journaling; mindful walking; emotional intelligence) & SOUL (art of playfulness); gratitude journaling; connection games; boost your creativity; forgiveness; gratitude; good food; meditation)

Podcasts

We've got not just 1, but 2 podcasts that are both hosted by Medeea Maria Drăgan. [Driven by Passion](#) and [The Cultural Canvas](#) bring along youngsters from all around Europe, that managed to succeed in their areas, no matter if it is sports, education, literature, social activism or anything else.



Driven By Passion

Listen UP ELNN!

26 Aug • 1 hr 57 mins

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In this episode, Medeea has a sparkling conversation with Isa, a 🎬 cinephile girl who is also into 📖 literature and 🤝 volunteering. They talked about the beauty of writing and some controversial books and films, as "Lolita", by Vladimir Nabokov or the well known "Fight Club", directed by David Fincher. In the same time, the two teenagers talked about their experiences with volunteering and why it is important to take action in your community.

Send in a voice message:

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/listen-up-elnn/message>



The Cultural Canvas

Listen UP ELNN!

26 Aug • 1 hr 57 mins

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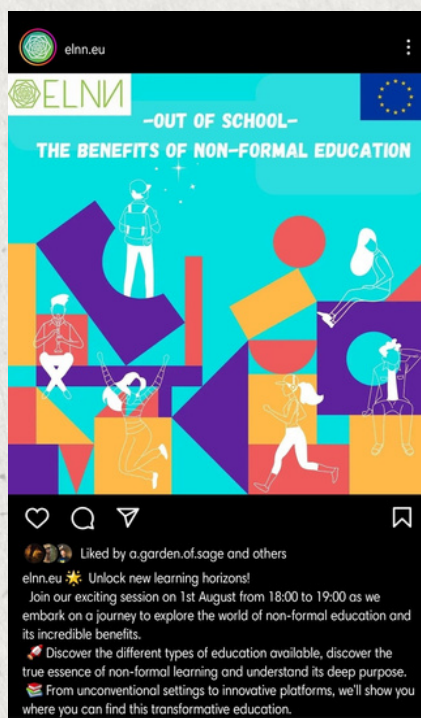
In this episode, 🗣 Medeea has a fascinating conversation with Andrei Maliș, a rower from Romania's national team 🇷🇴 studying in the United States.

They talked about the cultural and educational differences between the two countries 🌐, how to have a champion's mindset 🏆, life as a student abroad 🎒, and performance sport 🏊.

The two young people's conversation contains lots of useful advice, book and film recommendations, and intriguing stories 📖.

Webinars

We are intending to do as many webinars as possible, relevant for the needs of the youths. So far, we hosted two of them, one focusing on the [Benefits of Nonformal Education](#) and the other one on [Leadership Essentials](#). The people who attended were highschool students, and the feedback we received from them was very positive.



Leisure with a twist

We are also using this server to give youth across Europe the chance to connect in an informal way as well, through the movie nights, game nights, as well as small talks about topics they like.

We've also got channels where we share nice memories from the places we visit, or quotes and thoughts from the books we read.

We also noticed that youth enjoy foreign languages, so we created special channels for them to practice their language skills in french, spanish or turkish. Other languages are to be added.

#TrippyCanlbiza - Connecting offline with the Romanian community

Our Community Managers, Cosmin and Costi, came up with this crazy idea of going around Romania to talk to the young people about our Discord Youth Hub. They took another 4 volunteers with them, and jumped in the first train to Bucharest. 14 cities later, they got new friends, and our server got over 100 more youth leaders on board, eager to connect with like minded people from all around Europe.





Last, but not least...

We asked some of our volunteers about their experience since they joined the ELNN project team. Here's what they said:

Medeea Maria Drăgan

When I discovered the opportunity to volunteer for ELNN I immediately said I had to take it because I knew it would help me grow and develop greatly. It was a little difficult at first to get used to all the platforms we work on, but I knew I had people to learn from. I'm grateful for the team I have. They are very friendly and communicative and with them it is much easier to achieve the goals of this project.



I really enjoyed it and it motivated me to work on some skills that I know I will need in the future. A good example would be communication. I host a podcast made up of two series (one with young people from the community and one with personalities) and having to host it every two weeks challenges me to develop this skill. From finding guests to the episode itself, it all involves communication. I can even say that I enjoy organizing events on Discord. I'm currently preparing a book club and a poetry night and hope it will be successful.

I can also say that I have found my place in the European Lead by Nature Network team because we work on the basis of very fair principles that promote equality and respect for colleagues. Everyone's opinions were always listened to without exception and no one could be superior to anyone else. ELNN is a very good environment for all young people looking to help the community, but also to help themselves.

I can conclude by saying that I am so happy to be a volunteer in this project, knowing how important youth development and non-formal education is. ELNN is a project of my heart that I don't want to give up and I want to continue to be more and more involved and dedicated.



Isabella Andreea Ivanof

For me, this experience represents not only a great opportunity for my future, even though I've been dreaming of going into Erasmus+ projects since I was around twelve years old, but it is a dream come true for the fact that I can work with passion alongside my best friends. The first time I was confronted with this project, I did not really understand how much of a great idea it truly is.



But now, after almost half a year in this project, I can really sustain the fact that this project had an amazing impact on me. I can say that because of all the webinars I took part in, I evolved as a leader, but also as a friend, since this project made me get in touch with diverse people, who have got a load of truly mesmerizing thought both in their heads and souls. At the same time, by using Discord I am able to talk with people from all the countries imaginable or unimaginable from the earth.

As a conclusion, I want to express that I am truly grateful to be a part of this team, to feel like I am a part of a beautiful story that child me could have only dreamed of. But it is for sure not a dream, but a beautiful reality that will grow bigger and bigger.

Denisa Maria Bordeianu

Being a volunteer in the ELNN project is one of the best decisions. Through this project I had the opportunity to meet wonderful people from whom I can learn a lot of fantastic things, it gives me the freedom to express myself without being judged and accordingly encourages me to say what I feel and what I think and to say what I think I want.



This volunteering not only developed my communication skills, but also increased my ability to offer support and to understand more deeply the needs of those around me. Also, it opened doors for me to a diverse and friendly community. Each project had in common the team spirit and the desire to make the world a better place. This volunteering also developed my leadership and organizational skills. ELNN gave me the courage to accept new challenges and try new things, it helped me perfect my marketing skills.

This project has so far given me very beautiful memories that I will never forget!

Ok, now that we reached to the end of the newsletter, let's connect on our platforms!

We suggest this order:



Wanna learn more about the project? Go to our [website](#).