

ERASMUS+ CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH



HEJ Youth: The Heroes Emotional Journey

Project Title: Capacitating youth workers through social arts
against gender-based violence and bullying

Implementing Partners:



Greece



• Italy



• Senegal



• Togo



• Cameroon

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WESAD's role in equipping youth workers in Cameroon to address gender-based violence and bullying through social arts



Creative tools against GBV and bullying

HEJ Youth equips youth workers and young people with innovative, arts-based tools to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) and bullying, while fostering their personal, social and civic development.

A transnational partnership between Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa

Greece

Italy

Senegal

Togo

Cameroon

The approach stimulates



Reflection



Empathy



Critical thinking



Active engagement

The Heroes Emotional Journey

Inspired by Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey: a structured narrative of transformation, powered by social theatre and social photography



Explore

gender norms and
privilege



Document

realities through
social photography



Experiment

with solutions via
forum theatre



Design

action strategies for
change



Act

community
presentations and a
Youth Manifesto

From awareness of unconscious norms → to civic action

Two interconnected levels



Level 1: Capacity building

36

youth workers

Blended programme of e-learning, webinars, mentoring and two international in-person trainings, building facilitation and mentoring skills



Level 2: Local workshops

180

young people

Trained youth workers guide youth through the stages of the journey in structured local workshops

Youth as change makers in violence-free communities

1

Community presentations

of creative outputs in
each country

2

National position papers

feeding a Youth
Manifesto Against Gender
Violence and Bullying

3

International Youth Exchange

30 young people finalise the
Manifesto and present their
creative work

Non-formal education · Social arts · Digital learning

Why this matters for young people in Cameroon



Deep-rooted gender norms

Patriarchal norms meet economic dependency and limited institutional reach, especially in rural areas.



Conflict-related trauma

Youth in the Anglophone regions face compounded risks from armed conflict.



Gaps in protection

Limited legal, psychological and shelter services, so violence is widely under-reported.

~90%

of African adolescents with mental health conditions receive no treatment

The gap HEJ Youth fills: youth workers face GBV and bullying daily but lack a structured, emotionally safe framework to respond.

HEJ Youth at a glance

Goal: strengthen youth workers' capacity to prevent and address GBV and bullying among young people with fewer opportunities

5 countries

Greece, Italy, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon

6 partner organisations

3 European, 3 African incl. WESAD

24 months

Erasmus+ Capacity Building, Youth

36 youth workers trained

6 per partner organisation

180 young people engaged

30 per country, aged 15–25

30 at the Youth Exchange

Togo, Month 18

Six partners bridging Europe and Africa

AKEP

Academy of Entrepreneurship · Greece

Coordinator; project management, quality and evaluation

Sciara Progetti

Italy

Leads methodology creation; social and forum theatre

Action Synergy

Greece

E-learning platform, digital youth work, quality assurance

PFPC

Casamance · Senegal

Coordinates training; hosts 2nd youth worker training

Femme Plus Togo

Togo

Women's rights and GBV support; hosts the Youth Exchange

WESAD

Bamenda · Cameroon

Leads dissemination and sustainability; hosts 1st training

Europe brings methodology, digital and theatre expertise; African partners bring grassroots GBV prevention and rural mobilisation. The model is co-created, not exported.

Seven stages from awareness to action

Inspired by Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, each stage pairs a step of personal change with a social-arts technique

1

The Ordinary World

Gender norm mapping & privilege walk

2

Call to Adventure

Photovoice 1: documenting injustice

3

Crossing the Threshold

Forum theatre: rehearsing responses

4

Trials, Allies & Enemies

Peer mentoring labs & strategy creation

5

The Ordeal

Photovoice 2: confronting inner truths

6

The Transformation

Public forum theatre performance

7

The Return with the Elixir

Writing the Youth Manifesto

● Stages 1–5: local workshops in each country

● Stages 6–7: International Youth Exchange in Togo

How the project unfolds over 24 months

M1–6

Build the method

Handbook, 3 learning modules, low-bandwidth e-learning platform

M6–10

Train youth workers

E-learning, 3 webinars, 5-day trainings in Cameroon & Senegal, 3 mentoring sessions

M10–16

Local youth workshops

30 young people per country, ≥20 guided hours, community exhibition

M18

Youth Exchange, Togo

24 youth + 6 youth workers; public performance and Youth Manifesto

M1–24 Dissemination & sustainability, led by WESAD

M1–24 Project management, quality and evaluation, led by AKEP

World Economy Skills and Agro Development (WESAD) NGO: rooted in rural Cameroon

Reg. No: 000117/0/MINAT/SG/DAP/SDLP/SONG/BA/TP of 22nd Nov. 2024

WESAD is a non-profit NGO based at G.R.A. Bamenda Station, with over 14 years of experience working to reduce poverty in rural communities.



Youth, women and girls' empowerment



GBV prevention, response and mitigation



Girl-child education and leadership



Food security and environmental protection

WESAD's HEJ Youth team



Ngum Fri Raissa

Trainer & mentor · 10+ years in youth mentoring and GBV advocacy



Atanga Roy

Trainer · 10+ years; social theatre for GBV and bullying prevention



Zenabou Oumarou

Mentor for youth workers · 4+ years

WESAD's role in HEJ Youth



Lead dissemination & sustainability

Dissemination strategy, visual identity, press, podcasts, video, final conference and sustainability plan (M1–24)



Host the first training in Cameroon

5-day face-to-face training for 18 youth workers, alongside the 2nd transnational partner meeting



Implement locally in Cameroon

Train 6 Cameroonian youth workers, who guide 30 young people through the journey



Bring rural reach and mentoring

Adapt the method to rural African contexts; strengthen mentoring and community outreach

€55,298

requested grant for WESAD

~12%

of the €444,778 total project grant

What we aim to achieve in Cameroon



Youth workers

- 6 trained in the HEJ methodology
- $\geq 30\%$ gain in self-assessed competences
- ≥ 2 certified trainers who can deliver it independently



Young people

- 30 aged 15–25, $\geq 60\%$ with fewer opportunities
- ≥ 20 guided hours; $\geq 30\%$ rise in awareness
- Norm maps, photovoice, forum theatre, action plans



Community

- Community presentation and exhibition
- Youth Manifesto translated and presented to local decision-makers
- ≥ 15 GBV Prevention Ambassadors in schools

Making it last beyond 24 months

WESAD-led dissemination



Dissemination strategy, logo, leaflets and posters



3 podcasts and a promotional video



Online final conference for ~50 participants



Stakeholder meetings and seminars with ≥ 20 policy makers per country

Sustainability targets (WESAD-steered)

≥ 1

training cycle per partner each year

≥ 15

GBV Prevention Ambassadors per country

5 yrs

open-access e-learning platform

$\geq 1,000$

youth workers trained over 5 years

From silence to voice: young Cameroonians as protagonists of change

Thank you

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