

# OBJECTIVE 04

To support the exchange of good practice, allowing the creation and expansion of citizen networks, initiatives and platforms, including support for voluntarism



# THEATRE FOR UNITY

## MARAŞ-DER



Photo Credit: Maraş-Der



### THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Facilitation of a theatre training for a group of 40 young people.

Performance of the play, "Tabuu", in Famagusta on 16 November 2017, in Nicosia on 18 November 2017, and a five-minute performance during the Open Door Festival on 21 October 2017.

Visits to relevant duty bearers to inform them about the action and exchange ideas regarding youth in Varosha/Maraş.

### ABOUT MARAŞ-DER

Maraş-Der, established in 2010, aims to develop the cultural, economic and social sectors of the Varosha/ Maraş region in Famagusta. The members describe themselves as the firsts of their kind in terms of inclusivity as the members cooperate together regardless of their hometown or ethnic background. The association welcomes all residents of the area.

### STORY OF THE ACTION

Maraş-Der, through the action "Theatre for Unity", aimed to use experimental theater to address the pressing issues of Cyprus. They chose Varosha/Maraş, Famagusta, as a microcosm for the island because these issues, such as escalating populism, nationalism, and intolerance, are becoming increasingly poignant due to social, economic, and political conditions. They believe that experimental theatre can be a tool to increase social integration and decrease discrimination among different groups of people including Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots, international students and members of other communities living in Cyprus.



"We chose experimental theatre because it has evolved as a democratic process, where the show is a collective decision of all those involved, unlike the traditional hierarchical roles about writing, performing, and directing. We have provided experimental theatre training to a group of young people, aged sixteen to twenty-six, from Varosha/Maraş, Famagusta, Nicosia, Turkey, and the Sudan. The aim of the training was to improve the theatre skills of individuals, create a space for co-learning, increase the social integration between different groups, and make everyone ready to perform on stage. The training and the shows were a unique experience for all the participants, as none of them had participated in theatre before."

Ali Furkan Çetiner



During the implementation of the action, the team collaborated with different stakeholders and volunteers by utilizing their equipment, venues and services for both practices and shows. The "Tabuu" play performed in Famagusta on 16 November 2017, Nicosia on 18 November 2017, and a five-minute performance at the Open Door Festival on 21 October 2017.

Their multilingual (Turkish, English and Arabic) and multicultural play, "Taboo", also raised interest from diverse media outlets, from local tv or radio programmes to online media channels. Utilizing this opportunity, the team was able to promote their play to a wider audience, raising awareness on the emerging issues of disadvantaged youth, and underlying the importance of tolerance, social integration, and diversity. The action worked successfully as a self-development tool for its target group.

TO FIND MORE ABOUT THE ACTION

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This Project is funded by the European Union.



### RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The action, from its design to its implementation, has been shaped by tolerance, multiculturalism, social integration, and diversity. It succeeded in empowering the youth, promoting cooperation with different actors in society, encouraging social integration and becoming the voice of the youth living in the area. The youth supported by the action held meetings with representatives from local bodies to discuss their demands and intentions, highlighting the importance of taking measures to support social inclusion. Last but not least, young people involved in the implementation of the action developed self-esteem, and learned the tools to advocate for their rights.



Photo Credit: Maraş-Der

### WHAT'S NEXT?

The Hayal Theatre is planning to prepare and present two new theatre shows, and maintain their financial sustainability. They are also aiming to partner with a theatre group in Europe, to create links and gain experience.

"Being on stage helped develop the self-confidence of each member of the team. The participatory approach of the training created a safe space, which resulted in mutual learning, appreciating diversity, increasing the language skills of individuals, and learning from different cultures. As an outcome, we learned the importance of volunteerism, and promoted it to a wider group of people. To reflect our motivation and belief in what we were doing, we named our group 'Hayal Tiyatrosu', which translates to "Dream Theatre" in English. It was a dream that became a tangible action, proving that when there is effort, cooperation and will, anything is possible."

Ali Furkan Çetiner



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