



Close your eyes Open your mind

YOUTH EXCHANGE

2026 Portugal

1st of June - 11th of June

Supported by:



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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Ananda Marga

Organised by:



Ananda Kalyani

Master Unit | the Valley of Bliss



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Dear Participants,

We are looking forward to welcome you to **“Close your eyes, Open your mind”**, a youth exchange co-funded by Erasmus+ Program. This pack contains all the important information which might be useful for you as a participant.

Please read the next chapters!

Don't hesitate to reach out in case something is not clear

This youth exchange is an opportunity to make something meaningful for you and for the world, The experience will be what you make out of it!



1. The project and activities

This youth exchange is about **closing our eyes and using other tools to strengthen our minds**. We will share daily practices to bring peace, happiness and a healthier body and minds!

- ☀️ Provide a structured approach to **learn and practice a meditation technique** with step-by-step instructions and exercises to help develop a consistent practice.
- ☀️ Share best practices to **maintain and enhance physical and mental vitality** through diet, yoga, and a balanced lifestyle.
- ☀️ **Deepen your understanding of meditation, yoga, and related lifestyles** that enhance our capacity to transform and strengthen ourselves—physically, mentally, and spiritually; **improve our relationships, and ultimately help transform our social reality**



☀️ **Stress management, emotional well-being** and the cultivation of a calm and focused mind equips young people with effective tools to manage stress, enhance resilience, and maintain a positive mindset

☀️ Clarify and highlight how personal growth enhances **civic engagement, social development, and efforts toward positive social change**

The activities will include:

☀️ **Multicultural night** with all countries presentation

☀️ **Yoga and meditation** sessions

☀️ **Activities in nature**, a nice river to splash in

☀️ **Music, fun and intercultural opportunities**

☀️ **Ice breakers activities, cooperative games, team building activities, problem solving tasks, etc.**





2. Cultural presentation

Before your arrival, please prepare a 10 minute presentation within your team about your country and culture, to share it in a multicultural night!

You can share it in different ways: music, dance, games, images, short videos, theatre, etc. If you want to bring food or drinks, we kindly ask you to bring something aligned with the local sattvic diet. Please contact us and clarify it, if needed.

This is also a great opportunity to share actions and inspirations from your city or country with the group, in relation to the theme and activities from the youth exchange.





2. 1. Open Space

We will have some “Open Space” sessions where any participant can share something they love and know about!

For example, if you play a musical instrument, you can invite the group to play with you, or share your journey, including difficulties and victories along the way.

In these open sessions, those who want to share will present, and others can choose which presentation they would like to attend.

Think about something you'd like to share and prepare pictures, videos, or any material you feel is important to bring.





Participants responsibilities

Before

Once participation is confirmed:

- **Join the Telegram group**
- **APV (advanced planning meeting)** - youth leader and at least one participant join the meeting
- **Youth leaders meeting** - all youth leaders should join to discuss the responsibilities of the youth leaders
- **Multicultural night** - prepare presentation among the team to present at the mobility
- **Prepare some energizers** to share with the big group

During

- **Present at the multicultural session**
- **Prepare pictures, text and videos** to post in the social medias about the youth exchange
- **Give daily feedback** about the activities and programme
- **Share energizers, good mood and join all activities!** :)

After

- **Complete Youthpass certificate**
- **Disseminate the event** through partner and personal social media channels.
- **Evaluate the event** through Ananda Kalyani's online questionnaire
- **Erasmus Survey** - only youth leaders
- **Complete travel reimbursement procedure**



3. Participants profile

We are searching for participants with the following profile:

- **Respectful and cooperative youths from 18-30 years old**
- **Patient with other cultures** and open minded to learn and share
- **Reasonably good English speaking skills** (if you don't, we can provide online language support by Erasmus+, an online training)
- **Gender balance**
- **High level of motivation**
- **Fewer opportunities** (participants that face barriers linked to: discrimination, educational and training systems, economic, social or geographical barriers, cultural differences, disabilities, economic obstacles, health problems)



4. Organisation and site

Ananda Marga is a global spiritual and social service organization founded in 1955. The ideology of Ananda Marga is self-realization and service to all. Both aspects complement each other, and both are necessary for a balanced and fulfilling life.

The leading local development active project in Portugal is Ananda Kalyani (<https://anandakalyani.org>), an ecological research & volunteering hub, where everyone can fully realize their inner potential, in harmony with nature and the surrounding community, located on the edge of the Serra da Estrela natural reserve.

You will have the opportunity to see and experience how this project is implementing sustainable and regenerative practices for supporting personal and local development, working hand in hand with the local communities. You will also have the opportunity to learn yoga and meditation if you are interested.

Click here to get to know us better: [Ananda Kalyani - about us](#)





5. Accommodation and food

We provide single tents (some double or multiple) situated in nature with close proximity to our mountain river. We also provide isolation mats and mattresses, as well as warm sleeping bags, pillows and towels.



Immerse yourself in nature and shower under the stars or in the sun with our outdoors showers. Don't forget to bring ecological and biodegradable soaps, shampoos and creams (or buy some here) and take short showers - because we love nature.



There are several compost toilets (dry toilets) that allow us to produce high-quality compost!

We will explain more when you arrive, but as a small intro: instead of flushing, you throw ash or earth.

All the trash should be disposed according to its categories. Feel free to ask our staff for more info if needed.



**General
rubbish**



**Paper
card**



**Organic
waste**



Glass



**Cans,
plastic**



We serve healthy, vegan, and sattvic meals and snacks, made fresh with love. Most of our vegetables come from Ananda Kalyani's organic garden, and we also support local farmers as much as possible.

Within the venue, we promote a sattvic diet, and you will have the opportunity to experience it.

What is a Sattvic Diet?

A sattvic diet is a traditional yogic way of eating that helps keep your body and mind calm, clear, and energized.

It includes fresh, whole plant foods (like fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds), and avoids meat, fish, eggs, garlic, onions or processed foods.

Why? It supports mental clarity, peaceful thoughts, and a deeper meditation practice.

According to the place's philosophy, alcohol, drugs and smoking on the land are not allowed.

Please let us know of any food allergies or dietary restrictions in your application form.

6. Pack list

Please remember to bring:

- ☀ Valid ID or passport, travel tickets
- ☀ European health card or insurance
- ☀ Comfortable clothes, for outside and inside, shorts, long trousers, warm sweaters/ jackets for evening and night, long and short sleeved t-shirts; cap (hat), lip balm, sun lotion, toiletries (soap, toothpaste - all natural and biodegradable, please!)
- ☀ Earplugs - in case someone snores :) nearby;
- ☀ Swimsuit to enjoy the river!
- ☀ Flashlight, notebook, pencilcase;
- ☀ Motivation and joy!
- ☀ Think about some warm-ups, games, and stories!





Dada Mahaprajananda: Yogic monk, teacher of meditation, natural healthy lifestyle consultant, and personal counselor since 1979. He has served as the overall coordinator for Ananda Marga's yoga and personal development programs in Portugal for the past several years. Originally from the USA, Dada has over four decades of experience living and working across Europe, Asia, Australia, and parts of Africa. He brings a universal perspective and a high level of intercultural sensitivity to his work and interactions. He is also active in community service and development work, with a passion for social, economic, cultural, and environmental justice

7. Facilitation team

Jan Zijlstra is a personal and community development facilitator, coach, and social permaculture educator. He has traveled, worked, and lived in Europe, Asia, Australia, Central America, and South America, researching and learning about sustainable ways of living, community development, nature education, and more. He provides consultancy, training, and workshops for individuals, organizations, and intentional working groups seeking personal development, organizational transitions, community building activities, change and innovation management, sustainable development, ecovillage design, and permaculture design





Isabella Johansson: Isabella has an academic background in social justice, gender, migration, politics, and economics, and enjoys supporting, developing, and bridging projects and associations related to these areas. Isabella is originally from Sweden and Germany, has lived in seven different countries, is multilingual, and is now based in Paúl, Portugal. She organizes people, tasks, and processes at Ananda Kalyani to help the place grow, thrive, gain recognition, and function effectively in all its aspects. Keeps chaos away, reviews and revises events and processes to improve the valley little by little.

7.1 Facilitation team

In 2017, Guilherme Weishar took a Permaculture design course that changed his perspective on life. Since then, he has dedicated himself to exploring and implementing regenerative solutions that are in harmony with nature. He has completed numerous courses and workshops on topics such as bioconstruction, keyline design, regenerative agriculture, ecological regeneration, and, more recently, he has focused on agroforestry systems based on the principles of syntropic agriculture.



8. Partners



Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha



9. Travel and reimbursements

There are many ways to arrive at Ananda Kalyani. Since it is located in a rural area, there are fewer buses that cover the final part of the trip (Covilhã - Ananda Kalyani). **Please be sure to arrive on time so you don't miss the last bus**

Green Travel

For a more sustainable travel, and less impact in the environment, please choose a green travel, a trip where you do not use the planes, but you can use the train, bus, metro, bikes, car pooling, etc. Coming alone by car is not considered green travel. Carpooling and coming with friends is **green!**

[Travel guide](#)
**how to arrive and departure
from Ananda Kalyani**





Travel reimbursement max amount per distance

Travel	Contribution to the return travel costs of participants and accompanying persons from their place of origin to the venue of the activity. Below 500 km, participant will, as a general rule, travel using low emissions mean of transport. Over 500 km, participants are strongly encouraged to use a combination of different modes of transport to make their travel more sustainable. Financing mechanism: contribution to unit costs Rule of allocation: based on the travel distance and number of participants and accompanying persons The applicant must indicate the one-way air distance between the place of origin and the venue of the activity ¹⁰⁰ by using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission ¹⁰⁵ .	Travel distance	Green travel	Non-Green travel
		10 – 99 km	56 EUR	28 EUR
100 – 499 km	285 EUR	211 EUR		
500 – 1999 km	417 EUR	309 EUR		
2000 – 2999 km	535 EUR	395 EUR		
3000 – 3999 km	785 EUR	580 EUR		
4000 – 7999 km	1188 EUR	1188 EUR		
8000 km or more	1735 EUR	1735 EUR		

Please buy your tickets only after you receive your participation confirmation from us by email, following your application

Here is the link to the [distance calculator](#).



PLEASE NOTE:

- ☀ Participants must attend all the program in order to be eligible to travel reimbursement;
- ☀ Keep **ALL** tickets, invoices, boarding passes to be reimbursed
- ☀ to reduce the project's environmental footprint, participants from the closest countries will be asked to avoid flying for traveling to and from the youth exchange please let us know if this condition is stopping you to participate.



Please pay attention to the bus schedule for the final part of your journey (Covilhã - Ananda Kalyani).

From Covilhã to Paul / + (possibly) Ananda Kalyani → Ourondo

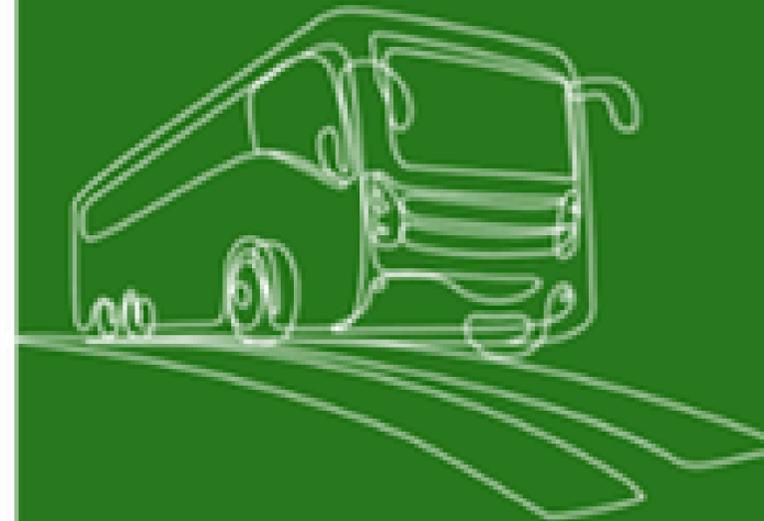
1st part: Covilhã - Paul		2nd part: Paul - AK - Ourondo		
📍 Covilhã	📍 Paul	📍 Paul	📍 ~Ananda Kalyani	📍 Ourondo
10:10 <i>All year long</i>	11:02	11:02	11:07	11:15 <i>Passes AK & Ourondo all year long</i>
13:25 <i>All year long</i>	14:17	–	–	– <i>Never passes AK & Ourondo</i>
17:05 <i>All year long</i>	17:57	17:57	18:02	18:10 <i>Passes AK & Ourondo in off-school period only</i>
18:25 <i>School period only</i>	18:59	18:59	19:04	19:12 <i>Passes AK & Ourondo in school period only</i>
18:25 <i>All year long</i>	19:34	–	–	– <i>Never passes AK & Ourondo</i>

Legend:	 All-year service
	 Seasonal service
	 No service

From Paul to Covilhã / + (possibly) Ourondo → Ananda Kalyani

1st part: Ourondo - AK - Paul			2nd part: Paul - Covilhã	
📍 Ourondo	📍 ~Ananda Kalyani	📍 Paul	📍 Paul	📍 Covilhã
–	–	–	7:00	7:52 <i>All year long</i>
7:16 <i>Passes AK & Ourondo all year long</i>	7:21	7:31	7:31	8:23 <i>All year long</i>
7:26 <i>Passes AK & Ourondo in school period only</i>	7:31	7:41	7:41	8:28 <i>School period only</i>
12:24 <i>Passes AK & Ourondo all year long</i>	12:29	12:37	12:37	13:29 <i>All year long</i>
–	–	–	14:30	15:45 <i>All year long</i>

Legend:	 All-year service
	 Seasonal service
	 No service



There is a bus stop in front of Ananda Kalyani, you can ask the driver to stop there. If you need a ride to/from Paul, please let us know in advance so we can organise logistics.



10. Youthpass

Participants are entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate from the organizer, recognizing their competence development during the activity.

To be eligible for a Youthpass, participants must attend all activities of the program.

After the mobility, each participant will receive an email to edit and add the skills and competences acquired or reinforced during the training. The signed certificate will be sent by email later.

The Youthpass certificate is recognized by the European Commission and is a valuable addition to your resume.

Youthpass

Want to learn more about Youthpass?
Follow this [link!](#)

Youthpass is a European recognition instrument for:

- ☀ Identifying and documenting learning outcomes
- ☀ Promoting individual reflection and awareness about learning, and helping to make learning outcomes visible to both the learners themselves and others
- ☀ Reinforcing reflective practices in youth work, thereby enhancing their quality and recognition
- ☀ Supporting the continued pathways of young people and youth workers and raising the visibility of the value of European engagement.



Contact Us!



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Join with Tavo Europa

Explorer Pass 2026. You are welcome to join our new educational programme for 2026!

Dive into non-formal learning exploration for a 75 euro fee that will unlock your potential to join all training courses, professional study visits, events in Lithuania and abroad until the end of the year, and also supports us to find new exciting and exclusive opportunities for community members!

Please do not pay any fee until you receive a confirmation letter to join the programme. If you want to join the project, please fill the application form, whether you have already participated or not.

Bear in mind that Tavo Europa keeps the right to send the most suitable and motivated participants to all of our projects.

For more projects:

Explore the world and learn together with the help of Tavo Europa.

Join the group with more opportunities:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/186132221744993>



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