

## Four actions reports during “Love in Action” by ELIX

### 1. To Love or not to Love

Love in Action outdoor event and how Athenians reacted to it.

On Valentine’s Day, 14th of February participants of Youth Exchange “**Love in Action**” visited the Monastiraki Square in Athens to perform the outdoor event. Participants were divided into groups and every group had a different activity to perform, varying from free hugs and kisses to good wishes and singing-dancing on the square. Activities were prepared the day before and designed by the participants. As activities were different the outcomes varied from positive to less positive. The activity took part quite early in the morning and the square was not as crowded as it was in the afternoon. In some way it is good, because this way it was easier to catch the attention on the other hand it was harder to find people who were interested. During the evaluation of outdoor activity it came clear that not all Athenians were interested in our activity and we could not make their day more special. Some of the reasons were skeptic attitudes towards Valentines’s Day, not enough communication and explanation of what we were doing that created confusion about our activity. The participants had chance to meet and communicate with local people and to find about their feelings and attitudes towards Valentines's Day. Thanks to positive and negative attitudes locals had for Valentne's day now the participants also have wider opinion about that special day. In general it can be said that the activity probably gave more to the participants than to the citizens.

### 2. Questioning Love

Youth exchange participants ask Athenians about different types of love.

On the 16th of February participants of Youth Exchange started the day with making questionnaires about different types of love. There were 4 different groups and they were divided by different types of love. As the main idea for the morning session was to ask people questions and fill the questionnaires participants were all over the city to find about what Athenians think about different types of love. I was in a group that had love between and for friends. We decided to go to the seaside, to find out what people think about their friends, who is a friend for them, how many friends they have and is friendship between two genders possible. On the seaside there was a lot of different people, some were swimming and sun bathing when the other were wearing winter clothes and just walking around. As there were a lot of different people, we got a lot of different opinions and thoughts about friendship. In the afternoon session all participants came together and made posters to express what they found out and to describe a local citizen. The profile of an Athenian gave something like a sad, unemployed man, who sucks at driving and tries to give the guilt someone else. But he was also funny, full of knowledge and caring. As I said, you could hardly make a more cliché profile.

### **3. Smile and other will smile with you.**

What 2 young men are feeling interviewing a refugee in Athens?

This morning we, the participant of the youth exchange Love in Action, went to visit the Doctors of the world, an organisation to make some experience and volunteers to make.

There we met B., who is coming from Congo, and what really impressed us was not only the story she shared with us but moreover her smile.

B. left Congo 6 months ago without her 2 children although she gave a huge amount of money to the boatman.

She found herself in a refugee camp where she stayed for 6 months. Later, while she was on the road she s been arrested by the police to whom she had to prove her health issues. After that she was brought to a hospital in Athens. That's how she met the Doctors of the World and could be hosted in the social center.

Right now B. has no idea what s coming next. A person has to be really strong if she leaves her to children, friends and home country behind her. She told us that everything she has now in life is God. We guess that's her source of strength. The most impressive thing that touch us is that she is still fighting.

So, next time when we're thinking about throwing everything away or giving up, we'll surely remember her story.

### **4. An unexpected party**

Today the participants of "Love in Action" went out during the morning to make a survey about the citizens of Athens. They spread into different places of the city like Syntagma square or the national park.

One group of them spontaneously took part in a parade next to Syntagma square, which turned out to be a nationalist one.

Howsoever, after that, together with Alex and Emily (both Athenians), whom they met in the living library one day before, the group made some different actions like taking people for a dance, lying on the ground to form a heart, crossing the street in funny ways or climbing trees. All fun, but the highlight happened only when they were on the way to the hotel Exarchion.

They came across a boutique on Ermou street. In there, there was a party going on. Tilemachos (facilitator of the program) said for fun that they should join it.

Although a woman told them to stay out Karl (a participant) just went in. The rest of the group followed. They danced, spread love and had fun. The people working in that boutique laughed a lot and they were amazed by that spontaneous company.

As fast as it started it ended.

You can see these actions and the party at