An abstract graphic consisting of a large, irregular shape with a gradient from red to blue. Several grey 3D cubes are scattered around the shape, some appearing to be on top of it. The text 'MYSTIC Immersive Residential Programme Handbook' is centered within the shape.

MYSTIC Immersive Residential Programme Handbook



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Document Summary

This document provides a guide to the MYSTIC Immersive Residential Mobility Programme (IRP). It sets out the programme's objectives; how it works and what participants can expect from the programme. It provides practical details about the selection process; the programme agenda and timetable and what support will be provided to participants.

Purpose of this document

This document provides a guide to the MYSTIC Immersive Residential Mobility Programme (IRP). It sets out the programme's objectives; how it works and what participants can expect from the programme. It provides practical details about the selection process, the programme agenda and timetable and what support will be provided to participants.

What is the Mystic Residential Mobility Programme?

The Immersive Residential Mobility Programme (IRP) is a key part of the broader MYSTIC programme, the main goal of which is to transform youth workers into Community Mediators and young people with fewer opportunities into Community Leaders. The IRP is the bridging point between the MYSTIC online 'foundation' course and MYSTIC's 'Community Co-Labs'.

During the foundation course, youth workers and young people gain the necessary skills to become Community Mediators and Community Leaders. The IRP provides a practical space for these skills to be applied through an intensive one-week mobility residential programme in central Portugal.

After the residential programme, participants apply what they've learned in action research projects developed through MYSTIC's Community Co-Labs. These projects aim to address real issues relevant to young people in their communities.

The IRP aims to support youth workers and young people to recognise, explore and apply their creativity and talent. It involves critical reflection, collaborative dialogue, action learning, and co-creation, structured through a five-stage 'design thinking' process. Each day of the five-day programme focuses on a different stage.

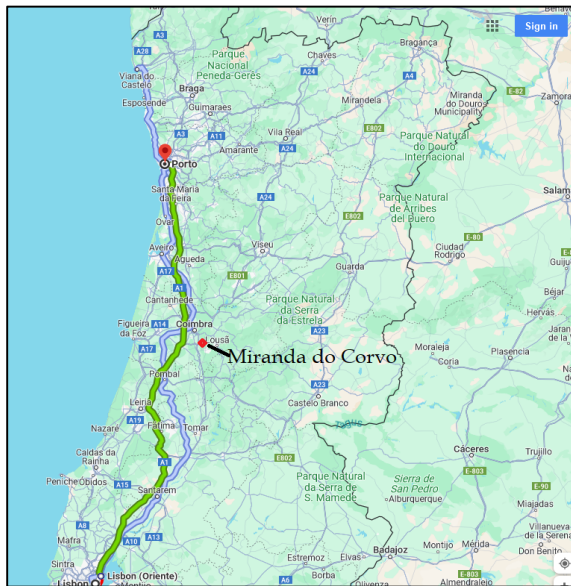
The programme content aims to reinforce the competences and learning acquired from the MYSTIC foundation course.

The immersive residential programme is scheduled for delivery **between May and July 2024**, involving a total of 50 youth workers and 50 young people from Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Romania.

Programme participants can expect to gain a wide range of benefits from taking part in the programme. A key benefit is that the programme deepens the knowledge and skills learned through the MYSTIC foundation course. In addition, participants will broaden their horizons, through meeting and working with people from different backgrounds. The programme also contributes to personal self-development, through team-working and taking part in 'out of the box' challenges.

Where will it be held?

In Miranda do Corvo. [Miranda do Corvo](#) is a municipality located in the Coimbra region of central Portugal. The nearest cities with international airports are Lisbon Airport (Humberto Delgado Airport, LIS), which is approximately 200 kilometres southwest of Miranda do Corvo, and Porto Airport (Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport, OPO) which is only 159 Kilometres northwest of Miranda do Corvo. From Lisbon or Oporto Airport, you can reach Miranda do Corvo mainly through the road system or by using public transportation such as buses or trains.



Miranda do Corvo has a population of just over 12,000 people. It is situated 146 km south of Porto and 200 km north of Lisbon. The University city of Coimbra is 15 km north of the town and the coastal resort of Figueira da Foz is 50 km west. The town has very good communications links with major population and tourist centres in Portugal, connecting with the A1 to Lisbon and Porto. Coimbra is on the high-speed rail link from Porto to Lisbon. A new 'Mondego Metrobus' commuter network, connecting Coimbra, Miranda and Serpins, is scheduled to open in 2024.

Source: Google maps

Most of the activities will be held at the [Parque Biológico da Serra da Lousã](https://parquebiologicoserralousa.pt/) (<https://parquebiologicoserralousa.pt/>)

The Biological Park is the largest showcase of native fauna, flora, and traditional Portuguese agro-pastoralism. It features over 300 animals from more than 60 species representative of Portugal's existing fauna. In the Wild Park, visitors can observe the Iberian wolf, brown bear, lynx, birds of prey (unable to live in the wild), wild boars, deer, and many others in habitats that closely resemble their natural environments. At the Educational Farm, visitors can learn, observe, and discuss the differences among various native species and breeds of agro-pastoralism, including cattle, sheep, pigs, horses/donkeys, poultry, and goats. ¹

¹ Source: ADFP Foundation



Source: ADFP



Source: Portugal Please

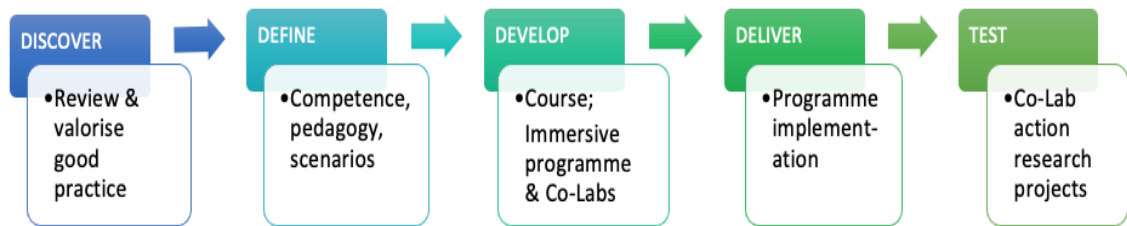
In addition to the animal and plant aspects, the Biological Park includes museum spaces, such as the Cooperage Museum, the Living Museum of Traditional Arts and Crafts, and the Mind Space Museum. One of the primary goals of the Biological Park is the employability and inclusion of individuals with physical and/or psychological disabilities. They actively participate in all animal care tasks and at the Living Museum. The Biological Park is part of the 'Club Unesco Trivium', along with the Universalist Ecumenical Temple and the Ecomuseum Mind Space, dedicated to the defence of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

What is the IRP philosophy and methodology?

The Immersive Residential Programme (IRP) is an integral component of the overall MYSTIC programme which aims, essentially, to turn youth workers into **Community Animators** and young people with fewer opportunities into **Community Leaders**.

It plays a key role in the **design thinking** approach adopted by MYSTIC, which aims to move from a 'presenting problem' to an evidence-based solution. As shown below, the essential aim of design thinking is to solve problems through 'co-creation', through a five-stage process:

- Stage 1 – the 'Discover' Stage – explores the 'presenting problem' of how to support young people with fewer opportunities to realise their talent and creativity
- Stage 2 – the 'Define' stage – defines the competences needed for Community Mediators and Leaders and the kind of learning and development support they need
- Stage 3 – the 'Develop' stage involves developing the tools needed to help youth workers and young people become Community Animators and Community Leaders.
- Stage 4 – the 'Deliver' stage – involves applying these tools through the MYSTIC online Foundation Course and the Immersive Residential Programme
- Stage 5 – the 'Test and Evaluation' stage – takes the learning from the course and IRP and applies it in community action research projects.



MYSTIC's 'Design Thinking' approach

How do I participate in the IRP ?

Access to the Immersive Residential Mobility Programme (IRP) follows **successful completion of the Online Foundation Course**. The MYSTIC partners responsible for delivering the foundation course will invite some of the course graduates to participate in the IRP. Graduates will be invited to the IRP on the basis of:

- **Demonstrated Commitment:** applicants should exhibit a genuine commitment to the objectives of the MYSTIC programme, showcasing their dedication to becoming Community Mediators or Community Leaders.
- Interest in **Community Development:** priority will be given to individuals who express a sincere interest in contributing to community development and addressing social issues through their participation in the IRP.
- **Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality:** selection will aim for a balanced representation of participants across genders to ensure equal opportunities for males, females and non-binary individuals .
- **Cultural Diversity:** MYSTIC strongly encourages cultural sensitivity and an understanding of diversity, recognizing the value of different perspectives within community settings.

What is the IPR experience like?

The essence of the immersive residential programme is to deliver a learning and development experience that will support four key things:

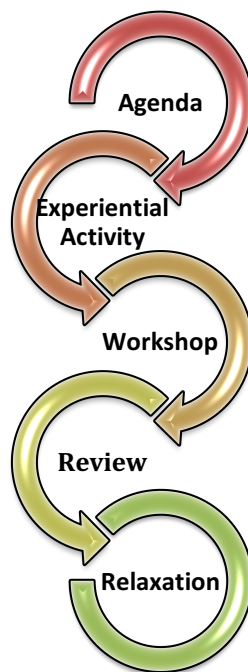
- critical reflection
- collaborative dialogue
- action learning, and
- co-creation.

The programme is delivered over 5 days, preceded by an initial travel and induction day and a reflection and review day at the end. The programme is designed to support participants on their 'learning and development journey'. This journey follows the MYSTIC 'design thinking' process, and each day has a particular theme and focus:

- Day 1. Theme: what does the 'youth landscape' look like? Participants are supported to understand and work with the factors that lead to the marginalisation of young people,

- Day 2 . Theme: which tools can I use as a Community Mediator and Leader? Participants are encouraged to set the boundaries for the action research work they will deliver in the Community Co-Labs.
- Day 3. Theme: how to design an action research project. Participants move on to working with the competences needed to design, develop and plan action research projects.
- Day 4. Theme: how to deliver a community project? The focus switches from a ‘design and planning’ focus to a ‘delivery’ focus – with a particular emphasis on understanding the challenges likely to be faced in delivering community projects.
- Day 5. Theme: will my project work? The final day focuses on reviewing, reflecting on and collectively evaluating the ideas developed over the course of the programme and their likelihood of success.

Each day follows a common structure, format and activities.



AM

Defines purpose and objective of the day, the activities implemented and the boundaries and rules – 0.5 hrs

Extra-classroom cultural and/or adventure activity aimed at illustrating the theme of the day – 3 hrs

‘Ice-breaker’ warm up. Challenge case study. Collaborative problem-based exercise – 2 hrs

PM

Group exercise reviews experience of the day, its challenges, the learning derived from it and how this could be taken forward – 0.5 hrs

Optional fun activity in the evening, including eating, drinking, culture

The daily activities in the IRP programme are designed to guide the participants through a **dynamic day of exploration, collaboration, and reflection**. Kicking off with an ‘agenda-setting’ session, the aim is to help participants get to know one another, encourage a spirit of collaboration and group support, set boundaries and rules, particularly around safety, and foster a sense of unity among participants. It provides a clear roadmap for the day, ensuring everyone is aligned to objectives and expectations. The heart of our approach lies in the project-based activity, where real-world examples and problem-solving exercises bring theoretical concepts to life.

The experiential activity takes learning beyond the classroom, immersing participants in cultural or adventure experiences that reinforce the day's theme.

The structured co-design workshop promotes collaborative problem-solving, and the day concludes with a thoughtful review and reflection session. While our methodology is rich in engagement and hands-on experiences, it also prompts critical thinking and reflection about the value of ‘immersive approaches’ in promoting lasting learning and development outcomes.

We encourage participants to actively reflect on the day's challenges and learning moments, and consider how these experiences can be meaningfully applied in their broader development journey. Each day ends with an (optional) rest and recreation activity in the evening

A typical day in the programme looks like this.

Day 1	
Theme	Who am I? What does the landscape look like
Agenda, task and rule setting	Present the overall concept, approach and agenda for the IRP. Catch Me'. Trust-building exercise. Co-create boundaries and rules of engagement.
Experiential activity	‘Ecumenical Temple’. A themed group activity around ‘stepping into the shoes of someone else’. Participants are tasked to apply their critical thinking skills to review the different world views represented by the faiths featured in the Temple Observatory, and identify their similarities and oppositional features. Walk down the mountain encourages group to feel safe, take risks and help each other
Structured co-design workshop	Ice-breaker: ‘Two truths and one lie’. Challenge case study: ‘LEAP’. Leap Confronting Conflict. Workshop: Apply critical thinking, data collection and analysis techniques and tools to map the lifeworld of the community in which the action research project will be delivered. Identify the key barriers that need to be overcome to engage young people in fixing what’s broken in that community, with a focus on two ‘wicked problems’: reducing conflict and creating sustainable futures for young people
Review and reflection	Key learning points from the day What were the main challenges ‘AHA’ moments – change in awareness and thinking
Optional evening activities	Yoga. Pre-dinner yoga, meditation and relaxation session.



Templo Ecumênico Universalista, Miranda do Corvo [4K]

Click on the image to open the VIDEO. Source: ADFP Foundation

Example of Experiential activity: trip to the Ecumenical Temple

The ecumenical ('universalist') temple near Miranda do Corvo was developed according to its originator, Dr Jaime Ramos, founder of ADFP, as "a tribute to all victims of fundamentalism and religious wars throughout the centuries". The Temple itself is shaped like a pyramid to invoke the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, while it can also be related to the pyramids of Egypt. The corners of the building are oriented according to the four cardinal points: North, South, East and West. On the façades, the initials of the words Bondade (B) (kindness), Moral (M) (moral) and Verdade (V) (truth) are in capital letters. Inside the temple, there is an Observatory of Religions, where visitors can find data on the 15 religions with the most followers in the world. Inside the Observatory, visitors can read the history of religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, among others. The emphasis given to religions is the same as that given to atheists. ²On the walk up the mountain to the temple is a series of stone artefacts each inscribed with a quotation from philosophers and other famous people. A trip up the mountain to the temple could be catalyst for a themed IRP group activity around 'stepping into the shoes of someone else'. Participants are tasked to apply their critical thinking skills to review the different world views represented by the faiths featured in the Observatory, identify their similarities and oppositional features. On completion of the trip, participants are tasked in an interactive workshop with collectively coming up with an idea to 'fix what's broken in their communities' - for example a gang conflict reduction project - based on what they have learned

² Source: The Portugal News, 27/12/2021

What kind of help and support will be provided?

Our commitment to participants' well-being goes beyond the educational aspect, extending to comprehensive support in safety, safeguarding, and mentoring throughout the programme. Ensuring a secure environment is paramount, and thus, we have a dedicated team of specially trained instructors. These professionals bring a wealth of experience, particularly in guiding young people through outdoor activities, such as **navigating mountains**. Their expertise includes not only the thrill of exploration but also meticulous planning to guarantee the safety of every participant.

Additionally, our programme is underpinned by a robust safeguarding framework, with strict protocols in place to create a secure and inclusive space. Our facilitators, adept in youth development, provide personalized guidance, fostering a supportive atmosphere for participants to explore, learn, and grow.

Safety Assets

Emergency Response Team:

A dedicated emergency response team will be on hand to handle any unforeseen situations. This team is well-versed in first aid, emergency medical procedures, and crisis management. Their presence ensures swift and effective responses to any health-related incidents or emergencies that may arise during the Immersive Residential Programme (IRP). Whether it's a minor injury or a more serious situation, the emergency response team is poised to provide immediate assistance and coordinate further medical support if needed.

Safety Briefings and Protocols:

Comprehensive safety briefings and protocols (risk assessments of each activity) are conducted at the beginning of the programme to familiarize participants with safety measures, evacuation procedures, and general guidelines. These briefings cover various aspects, including outdoor activities, communal living, and emergency response plans. Clear communication of safety protocols helps participants understand their role in maintaining a secure environment, and promoting a culture of awareness and responsibility throughout the IRP.

24/7 Supervision and Support:

Participants benefit from continuous 24/7 supervision and support from experienced mentors and programme staff. This level of oversight ensures a secure and structured environment, particularly during off-hours. The supervisory team is well-versed in youth development, conflict resolution, and crisis intervention, providing a reliable safety net for participants. This support extends beyond emergencies to include emotional well-being, creating a nurturing environment where participants feel comfortable and secure throughout the IRP experience.

Info pack

One month before departure, we will send all participants an information pack designed to equip them with all the details needed for the upcoming adventure:

Route and Arrival/Pick up Instructions:

- Step-by-step directions to ensure a smooth arrival
- Information on public transportation or private options.

Detailed Programme and Daily Schedule:

- Comprehensive details on the programme, activities, and daily objectives.
- Timings, locations, and specific instructions for each session.
- Information on outdoor activities and any special requirements to prepare.

Accommodation - Comfortable Living Spaces:

- In-depth description of accommodation facilities, including images and location maps.
- Information about bedrooms, bathrooms, and common areas.
- Accessibility instructions and other supporting facilities.

Logistics and Practical Information:

- Details related to daily consumption, special dietary considerations, and food options.
- Instructions for using common facilities and any necessary equipment.
- Important information regarding the availability of healthcare services and medications.

Clothing and Necessary Equipment:

- Recommendations for weather-appropriate clothing and activity-specific attire.
- A list of equipment to bring, including any special gear if required.

Emergency Contacts and Support Team:

- Emergency numbers and contact details for the 24/7 support team during the programme.
- Special instructions in emergency situations and evacuation procedures.

Additional Information:

- Suggestions for bringing essential documents and personal items.
- Tips and tricks to maximize your experience during the programme.
- Information about social activities and networking opportunities.

Certification

Participants in the Immersive Residential Programme will be awarded a certificate of achievement, a tangible symbol of their accomplishments and growth during the programme. This certificate encapsulates the essence of their transformative journey, highlighting key aspects of their experience.

Receiving this certificate is more than an acknowledgment; it is a visual representation of the participants' dedication, achievements, and the lasting impact of their participation in the Immersive

Residential Programme. In addition, participants who have completed both the IRP programme and the MYSTIC Foundation Course will receive either a Youthpass Youth Participation certificate or a Youthpass Youth Worker Mobility certificate.

Summary of what to expect

Get ready for an exhilarating adventure at our immersive residential programme, where we've curated a dynamic learning and development experience designed to ignite your curiosity and passion! Our programme is uniquely crafted to bring to life the four sets of key activities outlined in this Guide: critical reflection, collaborative dialogue, action learning, and co-creation! In preparation for working in your own Community Co-labs.

Let's dive into the exciting activities that await you:

Critical Reflection Excursions

Immerse yourself in thought-provoking journeys of self-discovery and contemplation. Engage in activities that prompt you to ponder life's essential questions, unveiling the layers of your identity and aspirations. Picture scenic group discussions under the stars, fostering an atmosphere of introspection and mutual understanding.

Collaborative Dialogue Showdowns

Step into the arena of shared experiences! Participate in lively, interactive discussions that bridge generational and experiential gaps. Break through the barriers that separate young people and seasoned professionals. Engage in role-playing scenarios that transcend individual perspectives, paving the way for collective understanding and innovative problem-solving.

Action Learning Challenges

Brace yourself for hands-on, immersive challenges that merge learning with real-world action. Navigate through experiential adventures, team games, and collaborative problem-solving sessions. Develop practical skills and insights as you tackle scenarios relevant to the roles of Community Mediators and Leaders. It's not just learning; it's learning by doing!

Co-Creation Workshops

Unleash your creativity in our vibrant co-creation spaces. Work side by side with fellow participants, youth workers, volunteers, and our MYSTIC team members to design and storyboard groundbreaking ideas for action research projects. Engage in brainstorming sessions that transcend traditional boundaries, and witness your collective creativity come to life. These workshops serve as the incubator for innovative solutions that will later be implemented in our Community Co-Labs.