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# CHALLENGE YOURSELF AND JOIN “BRIDGE IT!” IN 2017

## We like your ideas!



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### What is Bridge it!?

Bridge it! is an empowerment programme for young people from Baltic countries (**Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania**), **Finland** and the **North-West of Russia**. It connects people and raises their interest in the Baltic region. The program is based on non-formal educational methods, stimulating the participants to develop critical thinking, diversity awareness and giving them impulses for civic involvement and a space for trying out own initiatives. The heart of Bridge It! are democratic values that live in our communication, activities and social changes we support.

### Bridge It! programme is made exactly for you, if you are...:

- At the age from 18 to 28 years old
- Coming from Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania or the North-West of Russia
- Able to communicate in English (basic knowledge for communication)
- Interested in civic initiatives (student councils, NGOs, social activities, volunteering, etc.)
- Maybe having some interesting social project ideas already
- Caring about your local communities and enjoying discussions about social topics
- Willing to challenge yourself
- Fully available to attend all the programme activities



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Starting from 2016, the core topic for the program has been "Imagined communities", developed by Benedict Anderson. He used the term **Imagined Societies** for exploring nationalism based on a belief that any community so large that its members do not know each other on a face-to-face basis must be imagined to some degree. Going further from Anderson's view on it, we see this as a roof term for many other communities - (sub)cultural, ideological, virtual etc. "Imagined communities" gives the participants a chance to contest, discuss and construct the interesting and complex identity that our target countries share.

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## The Programme Year of “Bridge It!”

Applying for the “Bridge It!” Programme means sticking with it for around 6 months. This period is full of activities, thoughts, exciting ideas, and interesting people. Roughly, it consists of 4 parts - **introduction seminar, project meeting, project work, and evaluation seminar.**

### ➤ **Step 1: Inspiration (Introduction seminar / July 2017)**

Bridge It! starts with a week-long **introduction seminar** that has a specific topic. The main aim of it is to inspire others and get inspired. The seminar will consist of non-formal education methods, int. al., conversations, discussions, presentations in various forms, role games and practical workshops. What we appreciate the most at this stage is your thoughts and exchange with others. At the end of this week, you will develop a specific idea about a smaller or bigger project, devoted to solving of one specific social problem.

There are 2 introductory seminars planned this year. Unfortunately, you may participate only in one of them, so, before choosing think which topic is closer to your heart or sounds more interesting:

#### ➤ **“Eco-communities: following a trend or a real need?”** / 5-13 July 2017 / Glubokoe, Russia

Organic food, electric cars, natural cosmetics, eco hipsters... Being Eco-friendly became trendy already a while ago. This has led many businesses review their marketing strategies in the aim of becoming ‘more environmental’. And this is not only a matter of enterprises. We as customers are affected by trends, and naturally more and more people are following the green lifestyle. Politicians do not stay behind either: Kyoto Protocol, the UN Climate change conference and etc.: But what is that all about: green PR or deep self-consciousness?

In this introductory seminar of Bridge It! programme, we would like to go deeper and explore what it really means to be environmentally friendly and how green is the status of the Baltic Sea Region? Do we have any kind of green Baltic community? And if yes, who is in and who is out? If no, should we create it? To make a full picture we would like to invite participants to discuss the topic from different angles: political, economic, social and personal!

#### ➤ **“Cultural diversity: connective rather than separative?”** / 5 – 13 July 2017 / Veliky Novgorod, Russia

Nationalism, refugee crisis, populism, marginalization and discrimination...we all know that there are cultural differences between countries, regions and ethnic groups all over the world, as well as our countries around the Baltic Sea. The notion of multicultural identity has been nevertheless a burning topic for some time now.

Coming closer to the human being in the middle of it all, it is important to understand each one’s experience in this cultural clash. Each one of us comes with a cultural background and it’s a human right to celebrate it. How can we celebrate our differences together, and not think it will weaken our own identity? How can we rebuild a new “togetherness”?

The Introduction seminar of Bridge It! programme is about challenging the concept of Baltic region identity and inviting to share participants’ own vision for it. During discussions and experience-based exercises we would like to give the chance to participants to step beyond borders and realize strengths and limitations of our cultural identities at different levels: personal, societal as well as global. Once we understand ourselves and how the mechanism of identity shaping works, it becomes much easier to find efficient ways to cooperate and live together in harmony.

## ➤ Step 2: Receiving tools (Project seminar / 14-21 August 2017/ Tartu, Estonia)

Starting from this seminar participants of both Introduction seminars will work together. When the project idea is clear, you should find ways how to implement it. In the course of this seminar, you will get basic knowledge about project management: teamwork, budget, time management, PR and so on. This week will not make you a professional manager, but it will be enough to handle your planned project activities.

## ➤ Step 3: Implementing the ideas (Project work / August - November 2017 / in your local environment)

Now it's time to put your plans in action. During the next three months, you'll implement your project according to your own schedule.

During the implementation process each project team gets support from an experienced mentor, who can give advises about practical matters as well as emotional support. In this way, you'll never be left alone because we know how challenging it can be to implement a project.

## ➤ Step 4: Look back (Evaluation seminar / 6 - 11 December 2017 / Lithuania)

Congratulations, at this stage you will have finished your project! In order to understand the real impact and success of your activities, it's important to evaluate them. Here you will discuss the problems and receive advice for the solutions, plan the future cooperation, and simply enjoy. It is a happy reunion and a start of new beginnings!

After the final seminar, the official program year is over but, we hope, nothing is over regarding your personal growth and new experiences. Although it's mostly up to you, we will also have some offers for future actions but...let's talk about it in 6 months! ☺

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## Conditions

### Accommodation and food

Both Introduction seminars will be located in the countryside in Russia. Detailed description of the premise, travel arrangements and program will follow after confirming your participation. Nevertheless, you can be sure that you will be provided with three meals daily. Wireless internet will be also available at both of the locations.



### Finances

There is **no participation fee**. Costs of the accommodation, meals and materials will be covered by the programme.

Participants are expected to buy the tickets for traveling to and from the seminar place on their own. **50% of the travel costs will be reimbursed** by the programme during the seminar. In case the participant needs to pay for a visa, these costs will be reimbursed by 100%.

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## Sounds interesting?



Fill out the online [application form](#) !  
**Application deadline: 14 May 2017**

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## Want to get more information?



[www.bridgeit.eu](http://www.bridgeit.eu)



<http://bridgeitprogram.wordpress.com> (last year's participants' blog)



<https://www.facebook.com/bridgeitprogram/>



<http://vk.com/bridgeit>



Contact our coordinator Sabine Jermaloviča at [sabiine.j@gmail.com](mailto:sabiine.j@gmail.com)

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