

HEROES Sandbox Call for Community Experiments

Regulations

1. Objective

The HEROES Sandbox is a space for experimentation — a low-risk, supportive setting for students and staff across the HEROES Alliance to pilot new ideas that build individual and collective resilience. “Sandbox” here means you can test an idea, propose a project that is aligned with the HEROES values and criteria outlined below.

Selected initiatives will receive funding and mentoring to grow into small-scale, high-impact actions that foster connection, well-being, and solidarity within and across communities.

2. Scope of the Call

The HEROES Sandbox provides a flexible framework for experimentation and piloting of ideas that contribute to individual and community resilience. The scope is intentionally broad to allow for creative, transdisciplinary approaches and diverse forms of engagement across the HEROES Alliance.

Projects may be proposed in various formats, **physical or online**, including (but not limited to):

- **Workshops and Training Sessions** that build practical skills, raise awareness, or foster collective learning.
- **Participatory Meetings or Roundtables** to co-design solutions or share lived experiences across sectors and generations.
- **Digital Events** such as webinars, online courses, or virtual hackathons to engage wider audiences and test innovative concepts.
- **Local Pilots and Community Engagement Activities**, including outdoor experiences, cultural gatherings, or volunteer-based initiatives.

Focus areas may include (but are not limited to):

- **Mental Health and Emotional Resilience:** Activities aimed at promoting well-being through e.g. mindfulness, therapeutic dialogue, peer support, or reflective practices.
- **Social Inclusion and Community Connection:** Initiatives that strengthen bonds across diverse groups through e.g. dialogue, art, storytelling, or intergenerational exchange.
- **Learning and Empowerment:** Educational formats enhancing resilience-related knowledge, digital skills, or adaptive capacity in times of change.
- **Health and Lifestyle:** Programs fostering active living, nature-based healing, or inclusive wellness strategies.

- **Innovation and Co-creation:** Hands-on labs, hackathons, or design sessions that bring together multiple stakeholders to prototype and test solutions to local challenges.
- **Cultural Expression and Identity:** Artistic events, exhibitions, or performance-based activities that build shared meaning and celebrate diversity.

All proposed activities should demonstrate alignment with the core mission of enhancing resilience and be scalable, inclusive, and replicable across the Alliance.

3. Eligibility

Participation is open to all students and staff within the HEROES Alliance. Proposals must demonstrate collaboration that includes a minimum of three (3) partners. External partners, associated partners, groups and HEROESfriends are encouraged to participate, however these cannot receive funding.

4. Timeline

- **1st September 2026** Sandbox call opens
- **15th December 2026** Deadline for submissions.
- **December 2026 /January 2027** Evaluation and selection period.
- **January 2027** Announcement of selected projects
- **February 2027** Start of projects.
- **End of 2027** Final possible end date for the project

5. Selection and Support

Each institution participating in the HEROES Alliance will select between 1 and 3 projects.

Each project must include a **minimum of three HEROES partners** that will receive funding from their own institution.

Selected projects will receive financial support for eligible costs. These eligible costs include consumables, meeting and workshop materials, communication, and dissemination. The budget cannot cover travel expenses.

6. Funding Allocation

The lead institution and partner institutions may claim reimbursement for eligible project costs of up to €4,500 per project in total (up to €1,500 per partner institution), based on an approved budget.

Costs must be documented through invoices or internal financial documentation and must comply with both institutional financial regulations and the HEROES project's eligibility criteria. Expenses can only be covered or reimbursed by the home institution. Please note that money cannot be transferred among partners' institutions.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Transnational Dimension: Involvement of a minimum of three partners to ensure transnational dimension and impact.
- Potential to enhance resilience and reach a broad community.
- Innovative Character: Novelty and creativity of the approach.
- Ability to demonstrate that local resilience is supported and facilitated.

The jury, consisting of representatives from all 9 HEROES partners, can suggest changes to the proposed budget.

8. Application Process

One partner must be designated as the lead institution and submit the application. The lead institution will serve as the primary contact for all communication related to the application and the project. Responsibility for the implementation of the project, however, is shared among all project partners. At least three partners are needed per application (lead partner + two more partners).

Each project can receive up to €1.500 per institution and up to €4,500 in total.

9. Evaluation and Reporting on Implementation

At the end of the project, each team will be required to submit a brief final report reflecting on their experience and outcomes. The focus is on qualitative insights, such as what was learned, what worked, and how the initiative contributed to impact, resilience and community engagement.

The report should align with the application template and include the following elements:

- Summary of the activities carried out
- Reflections on what was learned (for the team and participants)
- Description of how the knowledge and experience were shared with peers, students, staff, or the wider community
- Suggestions for how the project might be continued, adapted, or scaled

Projects are also expected to contribute to broader knowledge exchange within the Alliance. This may include participating in a closing webinar, presenting at a HEROES semi-annual meeting, or sharing key outcomes through institutional or Alliance-wide channels (e.g., newsletters, blog posts, or workshops).

For the **final report**, teams will be asked to provide updates on these same elements in concise form, highlighting key takeaways and how the experience contributed to learning and resilience building.

10. Visibility and Acknowledgement Requirements

All project-related communication and dissemination activities must include both the HEROES logo and the “Funded by the European Union” statement. This requirement applies to all promotional materials, publications, presentations, websites, social media content, and event communications.

11. Intellectual Property

All ideas remain the intellectual property of the proposing team. However, participants agree to allow non-commercial use and dissemination within the HEROES Alliance.

12. Contact and Information

For questions or further information, you may contact your local HEROES contact:

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