



*Empower the young with talking objects is a 3-year Erasmus+ funded project. It runs from 2024-2027.*

*Together with partners from Portugal, the Netherlands, and Belgium, we are developing activities for children aged 4-8 years and training for teachers on topics such as climate change and active citizenship.*

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## Key values

### How we empower the young

**One of the core values at the heart of the Empower the Young project is *empowering*. But what does that mean in practice?**

Within ETY, empowering is about helping children feel that they *can* make a difference. We approach global themes like climate change and citizenship in a way that is hopeful, age-appropriate, and close to children's own experiences. Instead of focusing on problems alone, we emphasise what children *can do* — in their classroom, at home, or in their community.

We bring this to life through playful and interactive learning experiences. Children explore topics through storytelling, hands-on activities, and conversations guided by open-ended questions. Tools like the Tellmie help to spark curiosity and invite children to share ideas, reflect, and think together. This creates space for children to take ownership of their learning and to see that their thoughts and actions matter.

At the same time, we support teachers and educators with concrete tools and guidance on how to facilitate these conversations. By combining structure with flexibility, educators can

respond to children's ideas, encourage initiative, and build confidence step by step.

In this way, empowering is not just about what children learn, but about how they experience learning: as something they are part of, something they can influence, and something they can carry forward beyond the classroom.

"They really picked up on the idea of reusing waste! It continued in the classroom afterwards. Paper taken out of the recycling bin: *We can still use this!*"

~ Teacher about the tested workshop

## First test results

**The first testing round of the Tellmie prototype has officially taken place and what an exciting step it was! Across the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal, children met Tellmie for the very first time, in both schools and museum settings.**

And the response? Immediate curiosity and enthusiasm. Children were eager to touch, hold, and interact with Tellmie, often laughing, asking questions, and fully engaging in the activities. In many cases, they didn't just listen to Tellmie's story, they wanted to help, think along, and share their own ideas.

Educators also saw the added value right away. Tellmie helped to capture attention and made it





easier to start conversations about topics like climate change in a way that felt accessible and engaging for young children.




Of course, testing also means learning. We discovered that shorter, simpler language works best, that timing and flexibility in interaction are key, and that Tellmie can play an even stronger role throughout the entire activity.

All in all, this first round showed exactly what we hoped for: Tellmie has the power to spark curiosity, connection, and meaningful conversations. We're excited to take these insights forward and continue improving together.




beacon settings, volume, and enable administrators to update audio, languages, and tour content.

We are also exploring improvements in interaction design for workshops, to make user actions more fun and intuitive for all users.

Several questions remain open. Like how we make interactions like pausing or repeating audio work in practice? And what is the ideal role of Tellmie within workshops? These points will be addressed together with partners in the next phase.

How did you like meeting the Tellmie?				
				
	I liked it a lot	It was okay	I didn't like it	Number responses
Total	79.83%	18.45%	1.72%	233
Workshop	78.47%	20.10%	1.44%	209
Tour	91.67%	4.17%	4.17%	24

How did you like helping the Tellmie today?				
				
	I liked it a lot	It was okay	I didn't like it	Number responses
Total	76.85%	21.76%	8.33%	216
Workshop	75.00%	24.48%	0.52%	192
Tour	91.67%	0.00%	8.33%	24

## Tellmies Tech

**After testing, we will be refining the Tellmie prototype into production Tellmies with a focus on usability, durability, and flexibility.**

Key updates include making the furware smaller and lighter, using fully washable materials, improving the stability of the tech module for better interaction, and repositioning key elements such as the eyes. At the same time, we aim to support a wider variety of materials and visual identities across partners, while balancing this with practical considerations.

On the technical side, we are introducing a way to conveniently choose activities, allow adjustments to



"The physical interaction with Tellmie is really fun."

~ Parent about the tested tour





"Fun and engaging for children, easy for the teacher to use."

~ Teacher about the tested workshop

## Teacher training

### **Empower the Young with Talking Objects: Training for Educational Professionals**

Are you working with children aged 4 to 8 and looking for new ways to spark curiosity, agency, and meaningful conversations on global challenges? Join our upcoming training *Empower the Young with Talking Objects!* A hands-on, inspiring session based on the latest insights from our European project.

Discover how playful technology, interactive objects, and creative learning strategies can help young children explore global challenges, express themselves, and feel truly empowered. You'll experience the innovative *Tellmies*, exchange ideas with fellow educators, and walk away with activities you can use immediately in your classroom, museum, or learning environment.

The first training sessions are scheduled at Naturalis on Monday, September 29 and Friday, October 9, 2026. Would you like to be notified as soon as registration opens? Leave your email address [here](#).

Trainings will be held in Portugal and Belgium too.

**Stay tuned for the official dates and registration link!**

## Progress Report: Good!

We are very happy to have received great feedback from the Erasmus+ team on our progress report about this project. The overall score of our report was 'good.' This means we have got a 'green' flag and can continue. Whoohoo!

We quote: "*The Progress Report shows in a very well-written way what progress has been achieved in the first project year. The report gives a clear insight in the progress made so far. The beneficiary shows that the project is well on its way and the planned activities and results have been carried out.*" With this feedback we feel confident and proud to continue.



"Fun and encourages interaction, talks about climate change in a light-hearted way!"

~ Parent about the tested tour

