



# RIDE

Resources for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality

## Good Practice Directory

Antonija Braculj, Steve Bullock (Eds.)



Grant Agreement No. 2015- 2-UK01-KA205-014061



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
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Please find below an overview of the Case Studies and specific target groups of the projects/organisations presented:

TARGET GROUPS	ORGANISATION / PROJECT / PROGRAM	COUNTRY
Youth with disabilities	Association Glo Active	United Kingdom
	Association The Land of Harmony Foundation	Slovakia
Young parents	Association Young Gloucestershire -ViParents project	United Kingdom
Youth with behavioural problems	Association Storm	Slovakia
	Association Status:M – Be a man -change a world project	Croatia
Young Roma	Young men’s Christian Association - Local association Revuca program	Slovakia
Youth from alternative care	Association Play – Contact program	Croatia
Youth with malignant disease	Association Firefly – Firefly Youth program	Croatia
Youth from ethnic minorities	Association CESIE – Tandem Now project	Italy
Young migrants	Association CESIE – ALCE project and INSART project	Italy
Unemployed youth	Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre - Applied Entrepreneurship Training for Young Entrepreneurs project	Turkey
Young prisoners	Community Volunteers Foundation - We all look at the same sky project	Turkey
All young people	Association The Rock	United Kingdom
	Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre -Kindness tree project of the youth project	Turkey

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Good Practice Directory is the second element of the comprehensive RIDE Toolbox. It was conceived as a collection of fifteen case studies that will evoke examples of good practices in youth work, with an emphasis on principles of inclusion, diversity and equality (IDE).

In the previous Toolbox element “Principles and approaches report”, it was concluded that IDE principles have different meanings in different countries, that organisations implement them in their own, unique way and that individuals have their own understanding of these concepts. So, the idea behind a good practice directory was to show how IDE principles live in practice, how are they understood and how are they implemented in five different countries (United Kingdom, Turkey, Slovakia, Croatia and Italy).

You will probably notice a lot of diversity in this directory and we can tell you right away - it was done on purpose. We wanted to explore both an organisation’s work and work on particular programs or projects. Likewise, we decided to write about examples that are seeking to develop approaches for inclusion of all young people in the organisation’s work and examples that are seeking to work with specific identified issues. And last, but not least, we wanted to keep our own style of writing in order to celebrate our individual approach to “storytelling” and the process of exploration.

However, our case studies have one thing in common – the focus on the practical application. Through them, we wanted to give you insight into the life of organisations and projects (from the beginning to the present day; from starting point till realization). We talked with youth workers, organisation leaders and young people who shared their personal stories, learning journeys and activities; who gave a lot of useful advice for people who are directly involved in youth work. Also, we talked about different groups of young people with fewer opportunities in order to make them more visible as a population with specific needs and hopefully inspire other organisations to include them in their everyday work. We are most grateful for the availability, responsiveness and shared passion of all these people.

We hope that you will find our examples interesting, inspiring and useful!

*Team RIDE*

## 2. CASE STUDIES FROM UNITED KINGDOM

### 2.1. GLO ACTIVE

#### Abstract:

**Glo Active** is an organisation that is committed to supporting children and young people with their individual needs, have fun, learn and further develop in knowing who they are. They work with a range of young people with disabilities but also with young people who do not have any disabilities and where possible, mix everyone together. Throughout the year, they put on many different activities for these young people either on a Saturday (All Starz), during the week (Social Groups) or on residential. They are also developing further support for those who may be isolated by a disability, for those who either care for others, or who have a disability themselves.

### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Glo Active was set up in 2011 as a community interest company, which is a type of company introduced by the United Kingdom government in 2005, designed for social enterprises that want to use their profits and assets for the public good. Therefore, Glo Active is not a charity. It has 3 directors who oversee the running of the activities that it undertakes, two of which have a background in youth work. Through previous youth work roles, the directors became aware that there were many young people who had disabilities who needed support, as did their families. They also knew that there were young people who would benefit from becoming part of a youth group and so they decided to set up their company in order to support as many of those as possible who would benefit from their efforts. They run a mix of activities and seek to mix those with disabilities and those without.

#### Mission of the organisation

Glo Active has the following specific aims and objectives:

- To provide enjoyable, educational and fun activities
- To be fully inclusive and reach all young people
- To fill some of the gaps in youth provision left by recent Government cuts
- To become a centre of excellence and leaders in the youth work sector
- To provide parents and carers with reliable respite and support
- To offer quality volunteering opportunities

- To expand our services and create employment opportunities
- To increase after school club provision across the county

## Principles in youth work

The approach that they use in order to achieve the mission is through a UK youth work approach based on the 4 cornerstones of youth work which means that their focus is educational based though the use of informal and non-formal methods, empowering, focused on equality of opportunity and the participation of all.

Also, the approach they have is to ensure that the activities that they undertake are suitable for all no matter what their personal situation is. Therefore, the activities they take are meant to ensure everyone has the maximum amount of fun and can engage with them at their level. The approach is not to inhibit a person or team so that there is a level 'playing field' but rather celebrate all that a person can do in their own way.



This organisation has been successful in integrating those with and without disabilities in their activities. Reasons for their success include staff members who are making a point to welcome everyone who attends and to ensure that all feel included, relaxed and free to enjoy themselves. Furthermore, they have found that they have attracted young people who may be

linked with an existing club member who wishes to access their activities. Also, they have found that able bodied young people are just as in need of their services as those with a disability. They have especially seen advances in self-confidence develop in those who have attended without a disability. The fact their premises is located in a community and used by other organisations has meant that there has been some cross over of young people between different organisations using the same building as they have seen the groups taking place.

Their work is underpinned by all the necessary legal and regulatory policies and procedures required. These include policies, which cover – behaviour management, confidentiality, data protection, engagement, equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, lone working, protection of vulnerable adults and safeguarding.

Whilst this organisation clearly has a specific inclusion, diversity and equality policy (IDE), the ethos of IDE is manifested clearly in the passion of the directors who are actively engaged in every area of the project summed up in their tag line **'Fuelled by**

**Passion, backed by expertise.'** Their heart for IDE clearly is communicated to all participants and staff, ensuring everyone knows that "Everybody's welcome, everybody's accepted." Therefore, whilst they may be given a report about a person from an agency or professional supporting a person with their needs, they will not let such a report cloud their impression of an individual as their experience is that often people who attend their activities may behave differently than elsewhere because of the environment which is created through the staff team.

Safety again is paramount for such an organisation but some organisations may feel prohibited from exploring possible developmental opportunities because of the associated risks. The directors at Glo Active, whilst understanding the importance of safety, are willing to explore possibilities and "wanting to give things a go" if at all feasible. As such, they have found that by exposing the members of the groups to a mix of diverse experiences, this has had a good developmental effect on those who have attended.

### Management of the organisation

The organisation has 10-part time members of staff, 3 full time members of staff (but not necessarily paid) and 37 volunteers. Most of these staff members started as volunteers, who have been recruited through attending and seeing what happens and then choose to support the activities. Some have come along as a result of a family member attending a session. Some volunteers have been University students, whilst some have been members of the community wanting to make a difference. All staff are mentored and trained to work with those who attend, under the supervision of the directors, who are very much 'hands on' and are actively involved in all aspects of the work undertaken.

The directors are keen to ensure that they understand the reasons why the volunteers is wanting to support these groups and ascertain what they wish to get out of it personally. This is because the directors want such volunteers to be able to achieve their goals as well as support the project, so that everyone gains from their input.

They recruit to their activities through their reputation, through good reports from young people and their parents/carers/professionals, as well as their online presence and the fact that they are involved in establishing and maintaining many networks with other professionals/organisations in the area.

### Partnerships

Glo Active place a great importance on time invested in relationships with people and different organisations. Such relationships are making a difference to them as they are finding that their services are being mentioned to possible people and their families

who might benefit. Such ‘signposting’ has been notable from a local specialist disability school. In the UK, there is a mix of provision in terms of schooling. Those with disabilities can choose to go to either a school and integrate with those without disabilities or choose to go to a school that caters specifically for those with a range of disabilities. A local specialist school noted that:

“The club enables children to integrate with main stream children and have a fun time. It also provides an opportunity for parents and carers of these children to spend valuable time with siblings or have time to do shopping or have a cup of tea knowing their child is safe and having their individual needs met, including their personal care needs.”

A specialist disability worker responsible for supporting families and individuals with disabilities also stated:

“All the children involved have told their teachers/parents and carers how much they have enjoyed the activities on offer, and the families feel confident that their children are being well cared for in a safe fun environment, which then gives them valuable time for themselves or with their other children.”

Such recommendations allow Glo Active’s activities to benefit more people and for Glo Active to potentially access funds which may accompany a person who may start attending.

## Funding

Glo Active believes it is important to ensure that their activities are based on a need and that the programs are self-financing and sustainable. Therefore, funding comes through three routes:

- *From the participants* - participants pay a membership fee every 6 months which effectively pays for Glo Active’s use of the building; each participant also pays an amount each session which then pays for the staff
- *From grants/funding bids* - the organisation has secured some large grants given by some national donors because funders appreciate the work that they undertake
- *From assessments/personalized budgets* - Each young person with a disability requires a certain level of support, given his or her individual needs. Therefore, Glo Active has a sliding scale ranging from low support per person per day, through to medium, to high support per person per day. This amount is paid from the money those with a disability receive from the state.

Finance is always a need and whilst these activities are sustainable, the directors are yet to earn a full time wage for all the work that they undertake. In the future, if money wasn’t an issue, they would like to employ someone who would support and develop the skills, knowledge and wellbeing of the staff and volunteers much more.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM



There is a mix of activities for those aged 8 and above which seek to incorporate as many as possible. Overall the organisation works with appropriately 200 people.

These include:

### **Saturday Starz**

The Saturday Starz club is open to all children and young people, both with and without disabilities, and runs every Saturday at Redwell Centre. That is community centre at the heart of the Matson community in Gloucester, UK. Matson is a specific area of Gloucester, which has a high number of social housing, ranked in the top 10% of areas showing high levels of deprivation. The centre has lots of rooms such as a sports hall, games hall, kitchens, craft and dance studios as well as offices – ideal for the activities that they wish to provide for young people upwards.

The Saturday Starz club, due to popularity, separated their groups of children and young people by age. One week, there are groups for 8-12 year olds and other week, there are groups for 12-18 year olds. The focus of this group is personal development, teamwork caring, taking responsibility, commitment and leadership. The club starts at 11am and runs till 3pm and includes time for socializing, lunch and activities like sports (both Indoor and outdoor), cookery, arts and crafts, competitions and games, films and gaming, day trips e.g. rock climbing, sailing, etc.

### **Social groups**

The social groups occur throughout the week with a different focus each day. They are for those 16 plus and occur between 10-4pm Tuesday to Thursday. Each day has a different focus, for example:

- On Tuesday, the focus is on independence so participants are planning menus, budgeting, shopping for ingredients and then cooking.
- On Wednesday, the focus is on fun and fitness. Activities of this group may undertake Inclusive cricket, drama, storytelling, singing in a choir or Botcha/Bowls.
- On Thursday, the focus is on personal development, especially as Glo Active is developing a partnership with the local community allotments and are working with elderly allotment owners who are guiding the social group members on the best way to grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables.

### **Group Residentials**

Glo Active is committed to take those they work with away on a weekend at a holiday park. In the UK, there are holiday parks where you can go and experience lots of activities and entertainment all at one place. Taking groups away to such places has proven to be a great success as they have seen participants grow and develop in many ways. For those who attend Saturday Starz (see above) this occurs once a year, for those in the other groups such a weekend is organised approximately every 3 months.

The aims for such weekends are to foster further personal learning and development in the participants through engagement in a fun, safe and supportive environment.

### Other Activities

As a result of their work with those with disabilities, the team at Glo Active has become aware that there are people who undertake care for others with disabilities or health issues who may feel isolated, due to their caring responsibilities. Likewise, those who have a disability and maybe housebound also may feel isolated. Therefore, the team from Glo Active are also developing a support network for these people to ensure there is a high quality support service provided to all who need this care and support.

### Outcomes of the program and participation of young people

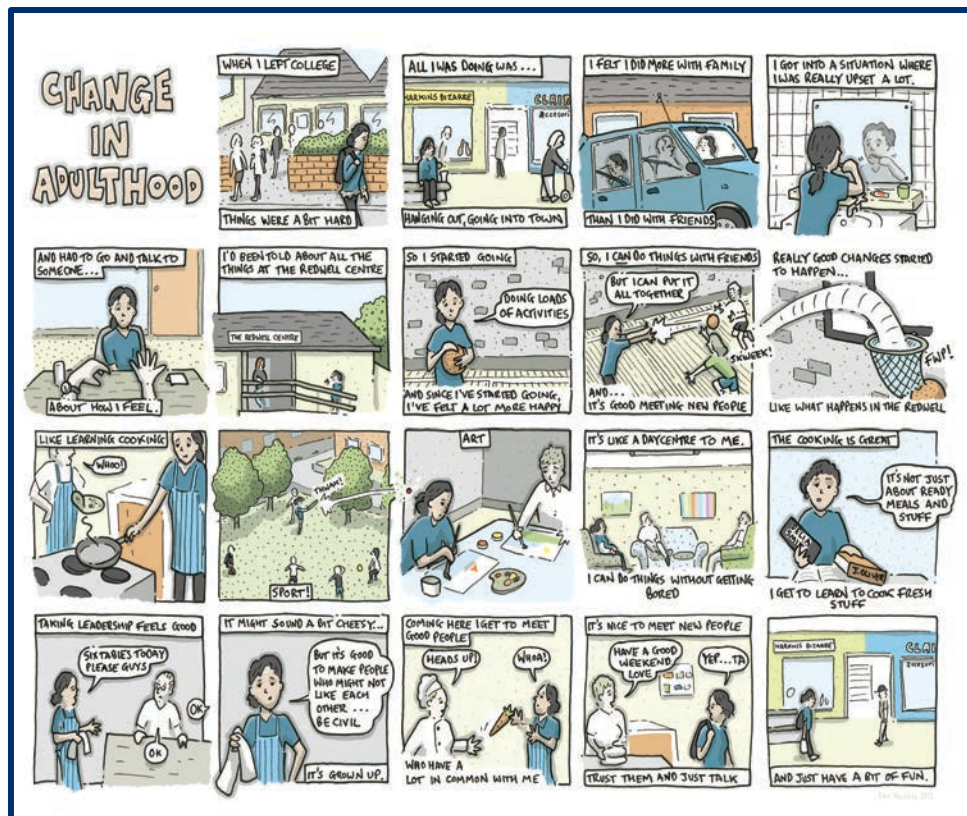
The measurement and capturing of outcomes is an area for further development. However, the staff continually see all participants take developmental steps forward appropriate to them as an individual which are noted and captured.

For example a young person who had attended their activities stated:

What Glo Active means to me:

- Go forward and be the best you can be, grow with pride and confidence
- Love to live with laughter and pride
- Overcome barriers, now one else dared to
- Absolutely awesome friendships and memories to last a lifetime
- Creatively capturing individual potential
- Talking with me and allowing me the time to find myself
- Investing in people not £
- Visualizing the future of true equality

The experiences of young people who use Glo Active services were captured through cartoon strips as well. Below is an example of someone's story of how they came to be part of Glo Active and the wider community centre and what it has done for them:



## Awards

Glo Active were winners of the community project award for the 2015 heart of Gloucestershire Community awards. These awards acknowledged people who go above and beyond the call of duty to make the county of Gloucestershire, UK work for others.



## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- Never turn anyone away
- Always be aware that there may be hidden reasons why people behave or act as they do so it is important to have an open attitude
- Always have a welcoming and positive attitude in the face of challenges
- Foster a good relationship with families
- Determine the needs of individuals quickly and meet their needs – note every person is different.
- Help everyone, including staff/volunteers to get out what they want
- Look after the self – develop a good and healthy life balance
- Be committed to the long term sustainable projects
- Foster strong relationships with people and organisations in the wider workforce.

For further information please contact Glo Active on email: [info.glo-active@gmail.com](mailto:info.glo-active@gmail.com) or check website on <http://glo-active.co.uk/>.

## 2.2. THE ROCK

### Abstract:

**The Rock** is a project based in a set of old church buildings, which have been redesigned to cater for the needs of young people. The Rock works during the day with young people who may find traditional education challenging and works in the evening with young people from the local community who wish to engage with the wide selection of activities on offer. The Rock is a faith-based organisation but works with all as it seeks to demonstrate the importance and uniqueness of everyone as understood from their faith perspective.

### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

The Rock was formed as a charity in 2008. with Christian foundations, backed by the Diocese of Gloucester which resulted in them leasing a church and hall which had recently been closed due to a dwindling congregation. The charity then renovated the church hall to create various youth friendly spaces so that it could be used for projects during the day and night. In recent years, this development has continued to the church building, where the chairs have been taken out, a new floor put in so that it provides an excellent multipurpose space to be used in various ways.



As the Rock use a previous church site, the church building holds a very prominent position within the locality and can be easily seen in the area. As such, the Rock seeks to use its position to reach out to all local young people to provide them with a place that they feel is theirs, which is safe and where they can be themselves doing activities that they want to, which help them develop. However, over the years the Rock has developed a particular specialty for those young people who have or are at risk from disengaging from education and seeks to provide a specific service to them via the local schools.



## Mission of the organisation

Mission of The Rock which is to provide an inspiring Christian youth work context for young people, regardless of faith or background, to engage with challenging activities, learn essential life skills and to develop their spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing.

The age group that The Rock works with includes young people aged 10-18 years. Those in this group experience key transition points in their lives especially in terms of education (as young people move from primary school to secondary school at aged 11 years and then young people may leave secondary school to go somewhere else at 16 years of age). Over the years, the Rock has been paid by schools to work with pupils who find the traditional format of school hard or those young people who are experiencing specific difficulties in their lives which makes them not want to engage fully with formal education.

The young people work with appropriately 300 young people who need this extra educational support. The Rock also works with approximately 200 young people each year in their sessions in the evening where they welcome all young people in the community who want to attend to come and be part of The Rock's activities. This is classed as 'open' youth work as the activities are open to all, the young people can choose to just turn up and engage with the activities when they want to, without having to agree to attend a certain amount of sessions in advance.

## Principles in youth work

As The Rock took over a church building, which the local community held in high regard, it continually seeks to build strong relationships with individuals, groups and organisations in the community in order to help the community understand the work that it does. It has done this through developing a community café and ensuring there is an annual gathering around the war memorial at the church. However, this community "bridge building" is acknowledged to take plenty of time and patience, which needs to be factored in.

The Rock respects all the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity by ensuring that young people are consulted about each project and the potential program so that there is a 'buy in' from the young people themselves and activities are run to cater for all the young people who may attend. This is further cemented in place by the strong team of qualified and well trained staff who abide by the UK Professional Youth Work value base and code of ethical practice, which holds the principles of inclusion, diversity and equality in high regard, to be applied on every occasion.



Whilst, all young people are encouraged to attend and participate, staff often have to challenge young people in regards to their attitudes to those from different backgrounds. This is often the case, with all youth projects and is an accepted important element of the social educational work undertaken through The Rock by the staff.

The organisation itself holds to the legislative requirements under UK law and seeks to ensure it has a well-balanced workforce in regards to gender and ethnicity.

Such principles are put into practice regularly as explained by The Rock's CEO:

"Our work with a local secondary school (for those young people 12-16+) includes many young people from diverse ethnic and language backgrounds. Through our mixture of informal engagement work undertaken in the school at lunchtimes (called detached work) and the opportunity to provide team building activities with all pupils in their first year, we have been able to engage effectively with over 20 young people who have recently moved to the UK. Our approach of ensuring we connect widely through detached lunchtime work with a local school has a number of phases: positive introduction, story sharing, reflection on achievements & challenges and learning for the future. This approach has meant that we have been able to recognize the challenges these young people face, affirm their resilience and resourcefulness and learn key lessons to support other young people in similar situations."

## Management of the organisation

To support this mission statement, The Rock has various employed youth workers. These include 5 graduate level qualified youth workers, a qualified teacher with a Masters in Community Education, and a worker with a basic youth work qualification, plus various volunteers and students from the University of Gloucestershire.

## Partnership

Whilst the Rock undertakes the work it was set up to do, it also sees the value of working in partnership with others. Partners can bring new opportunities for young people the Rock works with, they can enable more people to experience and hear about the work of the Rock and such partnerships can help develop the work further through opening up further funding streams.

The Rock has good partnerships with The Diocese of Gloucester and Cheltenham Deanery (both Church of England), many local churches, St Peter's and The Moors Big Local (National Lottery), The University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham Borough Council, the police, social care agencies, local businesses and many more.

An example at the moment is a new partnership developing which is seeking to use the wider Heritage resources of Cheltenham to help the engagement, education and development of young people, which could provide many new opportunities for young people and communities that The Rock works with.

## Funding

The Rock has developed a broad base of income streams over recent years. Key areas include: income from a range of educational support work, grants from trusts and other organisations, regular donations from local churches, giving from individual donors, income from premises hire and fundraising events.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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### DAY TIME ACTIVITIES

The Rock aims to provide early intervention to young people and multiple opportunities for support and engagement. Educational engagement is seen as being key to young people fulfilling their potential and their wider health and wellbeing, given the increasing numbers of young people who struggle to engage with the formal education system. Schools refer some of their pupils to the Rock for specific one to one and group support. The Rock then works with the young people on particular projects to work on specific areas of development, using different activities. These activities may include team building and sports, digital photography, film making, archery, mountain biking mechanics and cooking in order to help young people to work well with others, to solve problems and to become better at learning new skills. These activities will vary depending on the young people involved.

### EVENING ACTIVITIES

There are various evening activities open for all young people to attend and are often different to those who attend during the day. These include the following:

#### TNT

TNT stands for Tuesday night transition and offers young people who are aged from 11 to 14 a time to meet with friends, undertake a variety of activities and learn together in a fun environment between 6-7.30pm. This club especially seeks to support those who are changing schools. They state that in this club *“You might be stuffing marshmallows in your mouth or playing Dodgeball. You could be cooking up a treat in the kitchen or locked in a fierce Guitar Hero battle on the wii or maybe just chilling and hanging out with friends old and new.”*



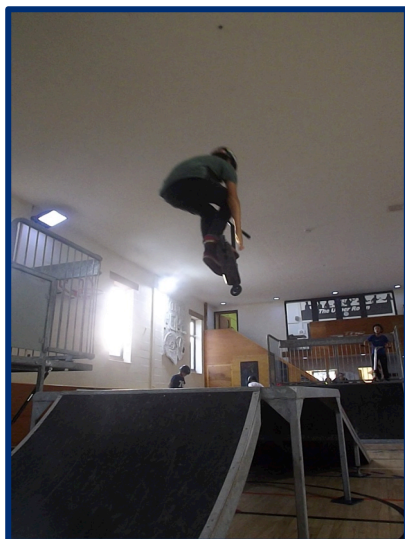
### Space 51

This is an open youth group for those aged 14-16 who are approaching their exams at school. The sessions are run between 7-8.30pm and seek to support young people who want a safe, supportive and fun environment to relax and enjoy themselves in. The program is designed with the young people and may include activities such as cookery, sports, dance, films, drama and discussions.



### SAS

This stands for Scoot and Skate and takes place in the church hall each Thursday between 6-7.30pm. It is designed for those who are 11-18 who are interested in scootering and/or skateboarding. Through the use of removable indoor skate ramps it provides a safe, supervised environment for young people to develop their skills, networks and confidence further.



### **Holiday Projects**

The Rock also undertakes projects during the school holidays, for example, the Activate Holiday project.

The original concept for the Active Holiday Project (AHP) came from requests from young people, and awareness by the workers at The Rock of the challenge experienced by families of being able to afford activities for their young people during the holidays. The activities provided by the project include mountain biking, archery, art, detached work, scoot and skate, cooking, and sports.

The main goals of the Active Holiday Project (AHP) is to provide affordable holiday activities to reduce social isolation and engage young people in positive activities, and to encourage young people to be more active members of their local communities.

The AHP runs for 4 weeks a year in the school holidays and has run for 3 out of the last 4 years. It is financially supported by grant funding e.g. from various local sources of funding e.g. The Big local project, local companies, and in the past it had been funded by Gloucestershire County Council.

With regard to the project's staff, there are two employed workers who are qualified youth workers and a number of volunteers and student youth workers that are involved in running the project. Each member of staff and all the volunteers and students received training prior to working with the young people on the project. This included all the team receiving induction and ongoing training support before the project started in earnest. Training depended on which activity was being undertaken with additional specialist training for such activities as mountain biking and archery.

In terms of the young people that attend the AHP, the target group is 10-16 year olds, with the focus on local young people who live within 2.5 kilometers from The Rock. In 2015, the AHP engaged with approximately 40 young people. This group was

specifically chosen as the area is economically deprived and there is little local affordable provision for what can be regarded as beneficial activities. Promotion of the project was achieved by a variety of methods which included word of mouth to young people who attended other projects that The Rock runs throughout the year, promotional literature such as flyers, Facebook entries, and outreach work to the local community. The main challenge when it came to recruitment from the promotional work was that some of the young people struggled to commit themselves to attending the project given the choice of activities. This was addressed by attempting to provide a wide range of high quality activities and kept a flexible approach.

Throughout the course of the AHP partnerships with other community organisations were made which included working with St Peter's Church, the Moors Big Local, and Gloucestershire County Council. Partnership work was relatively easy to achieve with the most important element being to ensure it was clear what each partner wanted to achieve which proved not to be a major barrier.

In terms of specific outcomes, results and successes of the project, the AHP connected with hard to reach young people at risk of criminal behaviour. It encouraged leadership in young people (5 young people encouraged to develop young leadership). Young people were motivated to develop an interest in activities they had not previously considered or tried. Throughout the duration of the project, young people also contributed suggestions and gave ideas for local community improvement and development. The project affected young people's lives and influenced their behaviour as they were able to form relationships with a range of other young people; they were able to develop responsibility and leadership skills; increase awareness of health and safety in day to day life; and become more active both physically and socially.

From a youth worker's perspective, there are a number of learning opportunities that have been gained from this project primarily that it is important to have a variety of different approaches and activities to engage with young people, as individuals have different needs and one size does not fit all.

The difficulties that the project faced during its implementation included that some events were more popular than others particularly when the project relied on a model of expecting one group to engage through the whole holiday time this was unsuccessful. To overcome this issue, they diversified the activities provided, widened the age ranges and altered times of the program, this included outreach work. There are plans for the continuation of the project in the future, if sufficient funding is secured.

## Outcomes of the program and participation of young people

Initially The Rock supported Greg (15) when he was not in mainstream education- we worked on building his confidence and overcoming anxiety, using activities such as cooking and bike maintenance. Having built mutual trust, Greg was then encouraged to volunteer as a young leader within our holiday project work – learning valuable personal lessons about leadership. He has gone on to continue in a young leadership role within our evening youth work, he has grown in confidence so much that he has even given a talk on his own struggle with anxiety to the whole group. Greg has become the first young person to achieve the Rock Gold Award. Even though Greg has successfully transitioned to a new school and we no longer support him in our daytime work, he will be able to continue to access The Rock's support over many years as a young leader and so continue to fulfill his potential.

**Case study:** Sophie (11) first became part of The Rock through our Community Café – attending with other members of her family – valuing the welcome and affordable food. Since then she has become a key part of The Rock's youth work – taking part in one of our primary to secondary transition projects, developing her confidence and group work skills. Currently she is a key advocate for young people locally – helping to plan young people's ideas events and encourage other young people to share their hopes for the local area. Importantly the Rock is able to work with her mum and her other siblings to provide sustained embedded support.

## Awards

In order to celebrate the achievement of all the young people who the Rock work with, the organisation host an awards night each year in order to recognize the successes of the young people that they work with.

There are two types of awards:

1. **Rock awards** - young people can achieve bronze silver or gold awards through taking on challenges of 5,10,20 hours - which involve development of a skill/ working with others/ supporting others.
2. **Recognition awards** – e.g. bike mechanic award, cook of the year, art award, progress awards, young person of the project award for different projects.

## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- *Keep young people at the centre and involved in planning and implementation of youth work so that they own the work and place.*
- *Be clear about priorities.*
- *Keep things varied – different projects will connect with different young people.*
- *Invest in quality activities and quality youth work teams.*



- *Value young leadership.*
- *Develop diverse income streams to help sustain the work in challenging times.*
- *Give time to thinking about communications and keep at it.*

For further information please contact Andy Macaulay on email **hello@therock.uk.com** or check website: **<http://www.therock.uk.com/>** and Facebook page: **<https://www.facebook.com/therockcheltenham/>**.

## 2.3. YOUNG GLOUCESTERSHIRE: ViParents

### Abstract:

**ViParents** is a group set up for young people who become parents from an early age. Through a regular meeting, participants can get support from other young people in similar situations and from youth workers. Through the encouragement and practical support of the youth workers, young people are directed to access specialized help and advice in order that they may become competent parents and so that they have the opportunity to develop themselves and their full potential in life.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Young Gloucestershire (YG) was established in 1989. and since that time has grown and developed. YG's vision is for young people to have the confidence motivation and skills to improve their lives. They work to achieve this vision by creating opportunities that educate, inform and inspire.

YG is formed by a number of activities/services which young people can engage with. This includes The Link, The Princes Trust, National Citizen Service (NCS), HITZ Rugby (working in partnership with Gloucestershire Rugby Club to engage in sports), generic youth club sessions and various training opportunities for young people.

YG currently works with over 1000 young people each year.

### Mission of the organisation

At the heart of YG's work, is a passion to support young people who are facing some very difficult times; whether it be a disruptive home life, caring for a family member or coping with a mental health issue. Young people can go to YG for help as through their services they will find someone to confide in, as well as practice support for them to further develop their confidence and the skills they need to further develop as individuals as well as to move into a job, education or training.

### Principles in youth work

The staff work at keeping contacts with a wide section of the community and as Gloucester has a real mix of ethnic groups and religions from across the world. However, such links can be quite challenging as some community groups are more open to engage with than others, depending on their view of pregnancy and age.

Yet, the fact remains that many young people feel that they are not accepted as they should be in society and perhaps are viewed in a negative light, especially if they become young parents. Those who attend the group wanted to make this experience positive by ensuring that the culture of the group is open, honest and welcoming to all, as they do not want to replicate the experience that they may feel in wider society.

Whilst the young people who attend seek to maintain this nonjudgmental environment, as there are youth workers present, if they perceive behaviour which goes against the inclusive, diverse and equality value base, they will then step in and challenge this.

### **Management of the organisation**

Young Gloucestershire has 8 corporate staff, 23 delivery staff plus placement students and volunteers. These staff have a variety of educational backgrounds but within the staff there are those who are degree level nationally qualified youth workers. The staff who undertake the work with young people are required to demonstrate the skills required for working with young people and are offered support through internal training in order to further develop them.

### **Funding**

Young Gloucestershire has a mix of funding streams depending on the projects including: donations, grants and service contracts/agreements with local and national commissioning bodies.

## **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

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Young Gloucestershire had discovered that young mums, dads, expecting parents and their children under 5 can experience a unique set of challenges and therefore require further help, support and advice and as such decided to set up this project. Therefore, they established a group “ViParents” that is set up for young people who become parents from an early age.

### **Mission of the project**

The ViParents group is about giving young people a place where they can come together and hang out with other young parents, share their stories, make friends and give their children room to play.

The aim is to encourage young parents to reach their full potential, access services that will help meet their family’s needs and plan for a positive future for them and their family. They also seek to challenge stereotypes that may be held of young people as a

minority group so the team seeks to show the positive side to young people through getting articles in the newspaper, on social media, on radio and fundraising events.

## Background of the project

ViParents takes place in The Link. The Link has been turned from a shop into a cozy drop in environment; with sofa's, tables, computers to access the Internet, job's papers and lots of free cups of tea! Young people are encouraged to just call in and engage with the workers and activities and access and support they need.



The Link is able to offer support, from Monday till Friday, to 16-25 year olds who are facing challenges in their lives. Predominantly the service helps those who are not in employment, education or training, but will offer advice to all young people. They know there are lots of reasons why young people might not be working or studying at the moment and are there to help young people figure out all the things that are getting in the way of your career goals.

When young people first call into The Link they meet a friendly team of staff, who will offer to sit down and have a chat with them about what they want to achieve. Together with staff young people will set tasks and goals and The Link staff will help young people to make them happen.

They also get the chance to meet people from other organisations that the Link work in partnership with. These may be local housing providers, colleges, training providers, counselors and drug & alcohol advisers.

### A young person's experience of using the Link:

H, at the age of 12 years, was placed in a residential care unit for young males due to his anger management issues and mother's long term illness. He was placed there for 2 years, before he moved on to a residential school to complete his secondary school education. Once H completed his education at the age of 16 years of age, he moved back to Gloucester with his father, living there for a year. The relationship with his father broke down after H was on the receiving end of domestic violence.

H first encountered The Link in 2014, he walked through the door to seek support in housing, declaring himself homeless, stating that he had been sofa surfing between his girlfriend and friends' houses. Youth Workers made an emergency housing referral to Gloucestershire Nightstop, which was taken up and then was swiftly housed in supported accommodation in Gloucester City Centre. The initial needs for H around housing were addressed with the support of Link Workers. His involvement at The Link also identified a lack of income and food. Youth Workers supported H in setting up benefit claims and issued an initial food bank voucher to meet the initial crisis. H settled into his supported housing and he attended The Link at least twice weekly to complete job searches, applications, financial support, employment preparation and also seeking support in other aspects of life. To support H in his quest to find work Youth Workers referred him on to a Young Gloucestershire two-week program called the STEP Program which supported him and prepared him

for interviews. He also participated in other in-house training sessions around healthy living. H found himself in arrears with supported housing, but sought support from Youth Workers at The Link. A payment plan was devised and once H completed this, he moved out of supported housing and moved back in with his mother and younger sister at the same family house.

In January 2015, H applied for a Care Apprenticeship and was successful and he was offered the care apprenticeship. The management team were very impressed with H's performance offering him a full time permanent contract at the care home.

H has come a long way after a difficult start in life and through hard work and determination has achieved his goal in life to work in the care industry. He occasionally pop's into The Link to update the Youth Workers with how he is progressing and continues to show passion and drive for his chosen career.

## Project content

ViParents have both mums and dads who attend, with and without their children. The group is open for all between the ages of 14-25 years of age. The group meets every Thursday at 12.30pm at The Link. The regular weekly size is 4-6 young people attending the group, however there are 30 young people registered.

The sessions are planned quarterly by the lead worker in consultation with the young parents attending as to what they would like to see in the group and the kinds of activities they want to engage in. For example, in the past parents have asked for sessions around managing finances, healthy eating and sourcing childcare. Staff have also planned sessions in response to their own observations around things like the importance of play and boundaries with children or establishing personal development goals in themselves and how to achieve these goals/aims/ambitions.

**the link** | **yg**  
information • advice • guidance | young Gloucestershire

# ViParents

A group for 14-25 year old mums, dads, expecting parents & their children under 5.  
Running on Thursday's 12:30pm - 2pm

April	May
<b>7th April</b> Relaxation Techniques: Being Mindful	<b>5th May</b> Positive Relationships: Separated Parents
<b>14th April</b> Sleep Techniques: Relax Your Mind	<b>12th May</b> GDASS: Visit From Claire
<b>21st April</b> Managing Worries: Effective Strategies	<b>19th May</b> Mental Health Awareness Week
<b>28th April</b> Trip! The Play Farm: Soft Play - Cheltenham	<b>26th May</b> Advice: Finance, Court & Communication

#yginpire

Day: Thursday's  
Time: 12:30pm - 2pm  
Where:  
The Link  
33 Southgate Street,  
Gloucester, GL1 1TP

For more information:  
hello@youngglos.org.uk  
01452 501008

LOTTERY FUNDED

www.youngglos.org.uk | T: 01452 501008 | The Link, 33 Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1TP

Young people from the ViParents group have been on trips together, enjoyed making lots of crafts, planned home business ideas and completed baby first aid and parenting courses.

There is a lot to get involved in if young people fancy it, or they can just have a nice cup of tea and chat. The group are also involved in fundraising most recently for a local child with physical needs and also funding for a baby unit. They will fundraise for charities, which have meaning to them as a group.

Group is staffed by 1 full time member, who is recently a degree level professionally

qualified youth worker and volunteer who has been there for 4 years and who has completed youth work foundation training. There are also other Link staff member available if additional support is needed. Further relevant training is provided as and when needed to staff.

#### **Example what a young parent may experience:**

Young people, who find themselves pregnant, will be seen by a doctor and midwives and depending on age - a youth worker. All of these professionals will provide the young person with details of the ViParents group. The young person can either decide on contacting the youth workers directly or for the youth workers to visit them at home. From then on, a young person will be supported through their pregnancy, whether they are attending the group or not by regular communication. This may be a telephone call, text, social media or visits into the Link. Staff can support parents in obtaining all of the items needed for mother and baby and the young person will also be sign posted to "New Beginnings" group, which is a young parent ante-natal group run in partnership with YG, Barnardo's, Youth Support Team and Gloucestershire NHS Midwives. This introduces the young person to the various professionals they will need to engage with and build confidence for the arrival of their baby. Once baby has arrived and the family is settled into their new routine, they will be encouraged to attend ViParents group where they can meet other parents and start to socialize. From here, support is dependent on the need of the family and staff respond to each family individually, addressing any apparent needs, such as housing, benefits and later returning to work or education and all that this entails.

#### **Funding of the project**

ViParents as part of The Link project is currently funded through grants by the UK Big Lottery program. The funding is currently in the final year of three years, worth of funding from the Big Lottery but the intention is to continue with this work and staff are in the process of writing further funding applications to enable this.

ViParents did both themselves and Young Gloucestershire proud recently when they took on the challenge to fundraise for two charities that have provided them with support.

The idea to take on such a task came during discussions at the weekly group sessions, the young parent's recognised that a number of them had been supported by local charity SCOO-B-DOO, the special care baby unit at Gloucester Royal Hospital and felt compelled to not only acknowledge this support but give back and say thank you. The young parents came up with numerous ways in which they could do this, but ultimately they knew the event had to appeal to both adults and young children alike, from this the idea of a coffee morning, raffle and toddler disco emerged.

Once plans were in place, the hard work started, designing and making raffle tickets, contacting local businesses for prizes of which they managed to secure over 50 cake donations and securing both a disco and visit from the Little Mermaid.

The young parents worked tirelessly to make the event a success and they have succeeded. The event itself was a huge success with lots of people attending, including a number of partner organisations and of course lots of children. Cake was consumed; dance moves thrown, raffle prizes drawn and most importantly money raised, in total £332.13.

#### **Partnerships**

As a result of the project working with vulnerable young people and those that need further support, YG and The Link work with an extensive range of Partners across the county of Gloucestershire which ViParents can link into to their members.



ViParents more specifically work closely with mid-wives, families first, children's centres, Gloucestershire Parent Partnership Service, school nurses and a range of other local service providers.

## Barriers and obstacles

The biggest challenge to partnership working for ViParents staff is in relation to information sharing. Pregnant under 18 years olds are automatically referred to a mid-wife, children's centres and the Youth Support Service however they are not referred to this group. Other services want information about the young people who ViParents are working with, however are not able to share information back.

Engagement of young people can be a challenge as they find this hard due to feeling judged by people and services. Identifying young people is also a challenge, which requires building very strong relationships with key professionals. The Lead worker has developed relationships and goes on some home visits to try engage young people with services.

## Outcomes of the project and participation of young people

When a young person fell pregnant at 17, she felt she had disappointed her friends and family. This is her story and how she has found the strength to make a new start:

"I walked into YG's drop-in centre by chance. I originally just wanted to try and sort out my CV. I was a really shy and unconfident person so when I walked through the door of The Link, I hadn't been prepared for the welcome and support I would receive.

"Falling pregnant at such a young age was a shock for both me and my family. But after my son was born, of course, everyone in my community loved him, however at the time I felt I had disappointed everyone and I suffered with postnatal depression.

"The staff at YG have been amazing – they really listened to me and encouraged me to do more. I have become a regular at the young parent's group and have been matched to a mentor. Together they helped me get on to a Level 2 course in Children and Young People's Workforce. As part of this, I have found a placement in a pre-school. I was proud of myself managing to do that as before I started going to YG I would have been too shy to speak to people, particularly professionals and people in suits.

"I have also moved into my own flat with my son, it's great to have our own space. YG has been there to help me access grants to furnish the property and get my finances in order. I love that YG don't do it all for me but just give me guidance when I want it.

"My life has really started to come together. I feel proud of what I have achieved over the last year and I'm excited to take the next steps. I am keen to find work that fits in with my son's childcare and my own ambitions to work with children. It's great knowing I can come into The Link whenever I need help. I really appreciate the ongoing support YG gives me."

The outcomes for these young people are very different and focused on the individual. These can relate to individuals building confidence to volunteer, get into training and employment. They can also be smaller goals of initially engaging with staff, other young parents and having knowledge to access other support services. For the majority of these young people confidence is a key aspect.

As a group they have developed bonds, trust each other which now allows the workers to step back and the young people manage the group a lot themselves.

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- Meet young people where they are at.
- Push young people forward when they are ready (moving them out of their comfort zone).
- Celebrate the small things.
- Be honest with young people– they will know when you are not.
- This work is challenging and you need to be resilient (learn to accept 'no' from young people who are not ready to engage) and not to give up.
- The role is also massively rewarding with the progress seen of the young people.
- It is essential to respond to the specific needs of the young people/child.
- It is essential that ViParents staff establish good working relationships to know what is going on with individuals and the group to then enable further/the right support.

For further information please contact Alicia Chance on email: **[Alicia.Chance@youngglos.org.uk](mailto:Alicia.Chance@youngglos.org.uk)** or visit The Link in 33 Southgate Street, Gloucester.

### 3. CASE STUDIES FROM SLOVAKIA

#### 3.1. THE LAND OF HARMONY FOUNDATION

##### Abstract:

**The Land of Harmony Foundation** is a non-governmental organisation that tackles inclusion in many different ways. Organisation works to ensure inclusion through various ways and activities like every-day afternoon clubs where young people of mixed abilities do arts, sports, hobbies, debate, cook and have fun together. It also organises trips, outings, festivals and other activities that are contributing to empowering independence, building of trust, cooperation and relationships between (young) people with and without disabilities. Hundreds of people join their activities annually. The Land of Harmony Foundation and its director have been recognised for their work by several prestigious national awards. Organisation is financially and materially supported from various sources.

#### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

The Land of Harmony Foundation is a non-governmental organisation that was formally founded in 1995 in Žilina (town in the northern-central part of Slovakia). Soňa Holúbková, the organisation's founder, has been working as a director in a residential institution for children with disabilities in Žilina. At that time, she knew very little about life and specific needs of people with disabilities and that is why she was urged to find out more. She talked with parents of children with disabilities and with children themselves and asked more about their interests, needs and thus identifying learning capacities. Soon, she realized that children and young people with disabilities, who are segregated from their peers, have less learning opportunities than those who are integrated with peers without disabilities. Gained knowledge and experience have motivated her to establish a new organisation with new approaches towards disability called the "Land of Harmony Foundation".

##### Mission of the organisation

The organisation's mission is simply "INCLUSION". Currently, the Land of Harmony Foundation organizes festivals, symposia, lectures, seminars, creative workshops, club nights, competitions and meetings for people with mental, sensual, emotional and physical disabilities.

It also supports those who live and work with disabilities as well as the general public, because its main purpose is not a direct care for people with disabilities, but the interconnection of people with and without disabilities. Therefore, their coexistence is mutually perceived as beneficial and harmonic. As the organisation believes, its activities lead to the harmony among people, the world around and inside them and bring people closer to the good, beauty, truth, love, joy, knowledge, freedom,



tolerance and respect for life. They promote the social and cultural life of people, offering substitute institutional care for people with disabilities that facilitates their integration into community. They positively shape community attitudes toward people with disabilities.

The organisation primarily works with two core target groups - **young people with and without disabilities**. A typical term used for such an approach is mixed ability groups. The organisation currently works with approximately 20 young people with disabilities. A number of young people without a disability is somewhere between 30 and 50 (depending on type of activity). The organisation isn't particularly seeking people with disability - it's well established in the community and young people and their families tend to participate by themselves. The organisation reaches out to young people without disabilities mainly in secondary schools. In 25 years of existence, the organisation has worked with approximately 3,000 - 4,000 young people. The secondary target group of the organisation are parents of young people with disabilities and society in general.

### Principles in youth work

- All people are equal.
- Everyone is beneficial (nobody is just a consumer) and has something mutually enriching to share.
- We need to speak in a way that everyone will understand.
- We are seeking opportunities in everyday life.
- We establish partnerships, network organisations and initiatives.

### Management of the organisation

Only two employees (program workers) are currently active in the organisation, one of them is working halftime. Their educational background is in helping professions with

university level of education. 10 young volunteers perform the foundation's regular activities.

The foundation, in cooperation with the town of Žilina, founded the Agency of Support Services, a separate organisation but working in close cooperation with the Land of Harmony Foundation, sharing premises and some staff. It has two active social workers; one working halftime and the founder operates halftime as director of the agency.

## Funding

The organisation is funded from multiple sources, whereas the key element is its own fundraising. The foundation (thanks to an active approach, the success of individual events and activities) manages to yearly reach out to dozens of small sponsors, many of which are doctors, but also bigger companies. Funding is also provided through other sources such as foundations or state, the European and international grants and institutions, local and regional municipality schemes, or the two-percent of taxes designation to the NGOs. Support for the organisation comes also in a form of material help, free services or co-organisation of activities and events.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Land of Harmony Foundation reaches its mission through various activities. The bases of its work are daily activities that include both people with and without disability in the afternoon. Those activities are based on the principles of non-formal and informal education, peer learning, group activities, leisure time and hobby activities, and open club/house approach with an involvement of volunteers who leads these activities according to their skills and interests. These are complemented with various other activities that are not regular but are firmly rooted in the yearly offer of the organisation. Some activities are adjusted for community of young people like weekend trips and summer camps, and some are organised for the public, like festivals.

"It is not an art to do something, but to maintain it. This is what we try to achieve with young people."

### Regular weekly skills development activities

Each day of the week is dedicated to specific activities according to the timetable set at the beginning of the year according and the interests of young people and volunteers:

- **Monday:** Long Road Club - meetings of young people in a mixed group is a place for discussion, getting to know one another, exploring ideas and share information. Main aim is just to be together and have a cozy time.



- **Tuesday:** art and performing skills.
- **Wednesday:** cooking, computing, music meetings.
- **Thursday:** dance club, English, wall climbing.
- **Friday:** archery, juggling, film club.
- **Saturday:** swimming, hiking, river rafting.
- **Sunday:** football matches.

### **Cottage Arts**

Weekend stays in the mountains once a month, during which groups of young people with and without disabilities meet in a cottage in nature, out of civilization. It is a place where they play games, create, cook and learn to live together. Thus developing their life skills, interests, communication and mutual support.

### **Summer Land of Harmony**

Rehabilitation stay by the sea in Croatia, which in addition to its health-improving function serves to strengthen the friendships of young people in the camp.

### **Community Festival Inter Nos (Between Us)**

The festival that enjoys diversity aims to highlight strong sides of all people, promote mutual understanding between them regardless of difference (height, weight, hair color, disability or bank-account size). In a cheerful form, it pinpoints that we are all involved in the creation of the society that appreciates diversity. This international festival offers various workshops, activities and performances of people with and without disabilities. Citizens and visitors of the town have an opportunity to experience life with certain disability, face challenges that people with disabilities face every day and thus raise awareness about their specific needs.



### **Jašidelňa Festival (1990 - 2014)**

Festival of creativity and imagination use to be organised every year and it involved more than 200 participants from different European countries and more than 200



volunteers from secondary schools of town Žilina. Inter - Nos festival is its successor. During the festival, participants could get involved into the creative workshops, short theatre performances, exhibitions, displays of specialists' works, concerts, discos, dances and games.

"When I started, I was only meeting people with disabilities, which was sad. We had to come up with something to change stereotypes, we wanted to be seen on the streets and we wanted to show that we know how to have fun and dance despite our (dis)ability" (teraz.sk, 2014).

### Activities within the Erasmus Program & Youth in Action

The foundation supports youth exchanges, the European voluntary service as a host and sending organisation, particularly focusing on activities for mixed abilities groups of people and encourage the participation of young people with disabilities.



### Sheltered Housing Project

Creation of housing units for the people with disabilities aimed at development of their autonomy and integration in independent housing, work and leisure time. This activity is individually realized by separate organisation that was co-created by the Land of Harmony Foundation called the Agency of Support Services.

### Celebration of Lights

The pre-Christmas meeting of the people from the foundation, supporters, cooperating artists, donors and journalists. It serves as a point of reflection and evaluation of the year. It includes Forrest Gump prize giving. The prize is given to the people with disabilities, who made an important step in their life during the past year, to people that helped a disabled person on his/her way to society and to the best sponsor. Special Tracy's Tiger award is given to artists who helped the most within the year.

### Barriers and obstacles

People are often afraid of interaction with people with disability. We have discovered, that it is not necessarily due to prejudices but more often because of lack of contact and experience. Therefore, it is up to us to take pro-active approach, but at the same time, we shouldn't expect too much at the beginning. It is more likely that small contacts here and there and common activities would lead to the bigger cooperation and stronger relationship. To break the ice, common activities are essential. And if you manage to add fun to it, things will go easier.

One of the most common problems that children and young people with disabilities face is overprotective parents approach. In honest effort to ensure the best for their children, parents are sometimes unaware of their full potential, which can lead to insufficient development. This moment can be turned into a strong experience. Thus, the foundation invited parents to activities in which they could witness rebirth of their children from dependence into adequate autonomy:

"Parents come and they immediately start to tie their shoelaces... whereas we want them to be independent. And those parents are always hopping around them. I taught them: whenever you come to us, put your hands in your pockets and behold what the child is capable of... you don't have to see your child as a disability. You dream about things that your child could do and your child has predispositions that could be put in use, so you can begin to dream together."

It is necessary to pay attention to the proper way of communicating with people with disability. All people want to be communicated equally and with respect. Otherwise, they either start to ignore you or they will conform completely, usually with manipulative aspect of using people to do the things for them that they can manage by themselves. None of these approaches or behaviours are good.

In our work we learnt, that if you work with people of mixed abilities within your own premises, be aware not to concentrate all your activities within them. Do not forget to create and build links to wider community - with citizens and other organisations and institutions. If you are not aware of this, you can also create segregation in your institution. Inclusion requires openness.

## Outcomes of the program and participation of young people

"Anton", client with mental disability: "I have gained a lot thanks to foundation. First of all, I have many friends here, including volunteers. I have started to live "normal" life. They supported me so I can live in my flat. They also helped me with donating furniture. The foundation helped me to be independent and they created a job for me. It is very, very important for me, that I can work and I receive salary for my work. The foundation enabled me to travel the world - I was in Belgium, Scotland, in Germany, Switzerland. And every summer I go to Croatia with them. Otherwise I would be alone and on football stadiums. It would be very sad life."

"Agnes", client with mental disability: "I have many friends in foundation. I attend its activities and go with them for a weekend trips. There, I have someone to speak with, I have opportunity for having fun with others, and I learn a lot there. I also have a possibility to travel. Otherwise I would be lonely. Cause, I do not have anybody else in my life."

## Awards

The Land of Harmony Foundation as well as its director Soňa Holúbková have been recognised for their work by several prestigious national awards like **Bridge Award 2015**, **Orange Foundation Award 2013** and **Slovak Female of the year 2013**.



## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- Change does not occur overnight - also, when it comes to inclusion. It is a long journey during which you need to prepare people for it. It's important to be patient, but at the same time not to lose sight of vision, goals and achieve their fulfillment step by step.
- Supporting inclusion is not easy and there is no specific way of doing so. Therefore, be prepared for failures - much can be learned from them. There is no need to get discouraged by setbacks. It's important to see that experience as a chance to grow personally and to learn how to make things better differently.
- If you spend more time on organizing things and activities than on real contact with people you aim to work with, think about their contribution to the mission and goal of your organisation and see if they are bringing personal fulfillment and joy. Be flexible and do not be afraid to drop even successful project and look for better ways.
- Being serious about inclusion means that we need to search for people with disability or ones who are experiencing inequality, invite them to us, offer them the opportunity to get involved - even if there is possibility that they wouldn't come back because they didn't like it.
- You need to ask yourselves - Have we visited special schools and classes? Did we also invite children and young people with disabilities? How many percent of them are in our community and how many percent in our organisation and activities?
- It is OK to be afraid of new things and people. Nobody is expecting that you will work with all people with disability in your community. Start with one, two or few - give it a try and gradually build your experiences. But who hasn't at least tried once, cannot claim that he/she takes inclusion seriously.
- It helps to have a basic knowledge about the different types of disabilities, and otherness when it comes to the youth work. However, every person has a different life, different needs and what helps them overcome difficulties is unique. It's therefore important to ask the people with disabilities (or their parents, assistants) what their specific needs are and how to access them to feel safe and be able to make the most out of the group.

- Focus on strong sides of the personality, skills. Build on what the child or young person knows, can and could handle. If someone is in a wheelchair, they won't do squats, but you can instead strengthen their hands by specific exercises - being in a wheelchair isn't automatically the reason for no physical activity etc.
- Use every available resource in the community. Do not try to provide things that are already there. For example, should someone be interested in swimming, do not think about how to build a swimming pool, but aim to provide access to it for your clients. After all, that's what inclusion is all about - integration into mainstream society.
- It is important to be aware that people with disabilities should be equal partners in everything you do, they have to be in the centre of interest and at the same time the biggest movers of what you do together in the organisation. It is important not to be afraid to do common activities with them and make gradual adjustments according to their needs, abilities etc. - most of the time, they handle more than we think.
- Very important component for working with people with disabilities is humor. It is rewarding when people with and without disabilities don't take themselves too seriously, they can make fun of one another and situations they experienced. Humor has a positive effect on human relationships, it's very beneficial for inclusion, therefore try to make your activities happy, funny, relieving and sometimes even with a bit of recession.

For further information please contact "The Land of Harmony Foundation" on email **[nkh@slovanet.sk](mailto:nkh@slovanet.sk)** or check the website: **<http://www.nkh.sk>** and Facebook page: **<https://www.facebook.com/NadaciaKrajinaHarmonie>**.

## 3.2. ASSOCIATION STORM

### Abstract:

**Association STORM** focuses on prevention of risk behaviour of various target groups. Its approach is based on harm reduction philosophy, which lowers the risks as consequences of people's behaviour, and low-threshold principles, which stands for real access of services to any client who needs it. Organisation runs five main programs: STEREO - primary prevention of risk behaviours; CIRCUS - primary prevention among "non-organised" children and young people; STEP FORWARD - secondary prevention of drug addiction through field social work with drug users and persons working in sex business; ZONA - contact (drop-in) centre for drug users, persons working in sex business and ECHO - preventive, information and awareness raising activities with general public.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

The Association STORM is a NGO founded in 2002. It is an accredited institution of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and operates in two Slovak regions - Trnava and Nitra. Teachers and students, who were enrolled in the University of Nitra and specialized in the area of social and health studies, initiated establishment of the association. The beginning of its work is rooted in the EU funded programs that supported establishment of harm reduction programs in Slovakia.

The association started with the STEP FORWARD program that focused on work with people who had already shown risky behaviour. Based on the experience from this program, the organisation decided to create a prevention program for their clients in order to prevent problems before they even occur. This is how program CIRCUS came into existence. It provides a safe environment for a community of young people from an urban neighbourhood in a form of a low-threshold centre (open club). Over time, however, it was necessary to reach out to other young people and, therefore, the STEREO program was created. Through this program the organisation began to reach out to young people in schools and it also started to execute a prevention program. Over time, STORM created other programs that are described below.



## Mission of the organisation

The mission and aims of the organisation are based on minimising of drugs use and risky behaviour that may either lead to using drugs or may be a consequence of drug taking. The organisation works in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. It focuses on creating and implementing the institute of first contact. It



also aims to network individuals and institutions interested in preventive work - contact, social and field work. The organisation prepares and distributes informational materials on prevention of addictions and risky behaviours of various target groups. The organisations enforce participation of various organisations and institutions including state and public institutions, municipalities, NGOs, from Slovakia and also from abroad and thus to

creates optimal conditions for realisation and enforcement of its aims and programs. Main principles of the organisation's work are pragmatism, humanistic values, focus on risks and harms minimising, the balance between costs and benefits and, priority of immediate objectives in its work with clients.

A different number of clients are involved in the program and there's a distinction between active and registered clients. The program's target groups are drug users, people working in the sex business, the homeless, children and young people, pupils and students, family members and the general public. There are about 1000 registered drug users and people working in the sex business and approximately 180 active clients in the STEP FORWARD program. The CIRCUS program works with around 130 - 140 individual clients, the low-threshold centre (open club) is daily visited by approximately 20 clients. In ECHO and STEREO programs, the number of clients is not monitored precisely because it's about occasional community activities. The organisation does not take detailed records about its clients in terms of names, addresses etc. as its main principle is lowering barriers for participation to minimum, especially in such sensitive issues its clients face.

## Management of the organisation

Civic association STORM has 21 permanent members, who work on the basis of a business license and/or contract. Beside program workers, the STORM team also includes 3 supervisors, 1 lawyer and 2 nurses. The organisation cooperates with external trainers in specific expert fields. Half of program workers has completed education in social work, the rest are professionals with diverse university education. The organisation also works with volunteers.

Any new worker (paid or volunteer) must undergo 60 hours of initial internal training, which is continuously provided by the association's own capacities. Training consists of lectures for knowledge building and practice in the field. The training lasts approximately six months and is provided in various themes, e.g. The Low-threshold Principles, Introduction to Social Services, Harm Reduction, etc. - for each theme the organisation had developed specific manual.

In its work, the organisation cooperates with other partners mainly with local and regional municipalities and other NGOs. The organisation is funded from various sources, especially grants from various ministries, regional and local municipalities and foundations.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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The association currently run five main programs: **STEP FORWARD, CIRCUS, STEREO, ZONE and ECHO.**

### STEP FORWARD

It is the oldest program of the association, which is carried out in towns of Nitra, Trnava and Sered'. The program focuses on improving the quality of public health and harm reduction in order to minimise consequences of risky behaviour. Target population of this program are active injecting drug users and people working in the sex business who have no interest in ending their risky behaviour. This means that the program can be used by all clients, regardless their race, religion or social status. Clients are offered with various services such as conversion services (exchanging used needles for new ones), distribution of sterile material, social services, legal advice, social assistance and information service. The whole program effectively bridges the gap between primary and tertiary care for the client. Clients can either come to the centre or workers go to the field with van - to specific place, on specific days of week and at specific time therefore clients know when and where they can get services they need.

### CIRCUS

The program was created in response to the needs of the residential urban area with many flats but little opportunities for meaningful activities of children and young people in their leisure time. After preparatory work, which lasted around half a year, the organisation established a low-threshold centre (open club) in neighbourhood called Klokočina. Currently, the centre and program itself is housed in the building of municipality community centre, at the premises of a former kindergarten. There are also other organisations and services in the same building like a gym, maternity centre etc. The institution has a lease contract with the town for 1 € per year.

The program focuses on primary prevention of socio-pathological phenomena among children and young people. It provides drop-in services in a form of low-threshold club and a field services in a form of outreach street social work in a residential area in town of Nitra. The program offers a safe alternative to the streets and street life. It gives young people an opportunity to explore new possibilities of spending their free time, different values, ways of communication and conflict resolution. Youth workers follow up contact with the target group through leisure time activities. Clients are led towards independence, responsibility and self-confidence through a positive encouraging and rewarding experience.



Additionally, the program provides clients with information and counselling, helping them to solve critical and stress situations, increase their participation and social skill development. The program engages the community and social surroundings into prevention programs.

The target group of the program consists of individuals and groups of children and young people aged 11 - 22, who experience adverse social situations, grow up in a non-stimulating environment with a lack of opportunities.

"Our residential area has 30.000 people, where young people have nothing to do in their spare time. They are either bored or go through this teen problem period they can't cope with, trying out different things they perceive as a solution to their situation... They have to change their behaviour, think differently about it. Based on a different role and different model of behaviour they see, they are offered with various possibilities that can be used in numerous ways. They are provided with an information service and motivational interview. This is a long-term work. Especially, when it comes to experimenting with drugs, vandalism, promiscuity or extremism."

### **Main tasks and objectives of CIRCUS Program:**

- to work with an unorganised youth on the principle of low-thresholds (minimising barriers to join offered space, activities and services) and harm reduction philosophy (risk reduction);
- to provide quality social services;
- to reduce socio-pathological phenomena of the target group committed on and by this group and, increase the town security by reducing minor crimes, vandalism, experimenting with drugs, sexual violence and truancy;
- to implement prevention activities and prevent the emergence of substance and none-substance abuse and addiction;
- to assist clients with crisis and stress situations solving;

- to increase participation of children and young people and to develop their personal and social skills;
- to connect the community/neighbourhood in cooperation with the community centre and to create a social network in the urban residential area of Klokočina in the town of Nitra;
- to involve the local community, parents, other organisations etc. in preventive programs of various nature.

Through the program, various services are provided, such as counselling for children and young people but also family members of clients, contact work, unorganised and organised leisure time activities, interest activities and artistic workshops etc., crisis and social intervention, assistance and guidance for other services necessary to stabilize and/or improve the current situation of the client (Employment agencies, Offices of labour, social affairs and family, courts, etc.). Within this program the organisation also organises lectures, debates, community events and interactive workshops for its clients, family members and community from neighbourhood.

Within the CIRCUS program, the organisation also works with the local community in order to strengthen it. For this reason, they organise various open events such as the Picnic of Nitra. The aim is to bring together inhabitants of this residential area, to build connections among them, to create a space for joint leisure time activities and to strengthen their community relations.

### STEREO

This program is implemented in form of primary prevention in primary and secondary schools through interactive group work and applying the harm reduction philosophy. The staff of this program brings to school's new information and knowledge related to substance and non-substance abuse and addictions, and topics that are close to not only young people, but also the whole society, e. g. the issues of alcoholism, smoking, drugs using, safe internet use, gambling, computer games, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, graffiti, bullying, sexual orientation, gender education, etc. They focus primarily on correcting wrong information and removing myths in which many young people believe.

Each prevention meeting has a fixed structure and operates according to the developed manual, which contains activities for each of the topics listed above. One prevention meeting lasts for 90 minutes (two regular school lessons). Pupils and students can also contact program workers for individual advice and counselling. The school has the option to choose from fifteen various topics.

### ZONE

This program is designed for injecting drug users and persons working in the sex business, their families, close relatives, residents of town Sered' as well as professionals and general public. It provides various services such as a drop-in centre. Program workers provide assistance to clients who are trying to stabilize and/or improve their situation, minimise harm arising from their risky behaviour, reduce the risk of blood transmitted and sexual diseases and motivate them to change. Provided services are free of charge and anonymous, focused on giving advice in various social, health and legal areas. It also provides contact work, an exchange service for used needles and distribution of material required for safer drugs application and the elimination of risky behaviour. It facilitates contact with professionals like lawyer, nurse, psychiatrist, etc., offers crisis and situational intervention, assistance with administration matters like job application, social and health support applications and documents. As many clients are homeless they can use the centre as a storage place for important personal documents and its address for delivering mails. The centre helps clients with using the telephone or a computer with an Internet connection to solve their current life, social or health situation. The centre also provides distribution of informational-educative materials, basic non-invasive medical treatment and food service (instant soups, biscuits, tea and water).

#### **ECHO**

Within this program the association carries out activities leading to awareness raising and preventive action. These are mainly short-term events carried out on a regular basis. The activity "Law for all without exception" is an example. It's based on the assumption that low awareness on human rights and law among people often leads to their violation. The main target groups are drug users and people working in sex business as they often witness human rights violation and their consequences. By raising awareness and offering support in uneasy conditions, social workers in the contact centre and on the street can help to improve life situation of clients. They have an opportunity to take advantage of the information and legal advice services. The innovative parts of the project are workshops conducted in cooperation with police in various towns. The aim of meetings is getting to know one another, sharing information, creating common points of discussion to benefit the client.



## Barriers and obstacles

In applying the IDE principles, the organisation is not specifically prepared for clients with disabilities (visual, physical etc.) and has no adapted workplace, as they have never experienced clients with this kind of specific needs. But, considering that the organisation takes so-called client centred approach, it is ready to look for solutions in case there when a client with specific needs and requirements come and want to use their services. Sometimes, the organisation is facing non-acceptance by some members of the community in which they operate. For example, some people are complaining about the noise that children and young people make during their activities in the low-threshold centre (open club). Also, the rest of the society does not



perceive drug users and people working in the sex business positively and they are usually afraid of them. However, the thing they don't understand is that these services and work with those types of clients would actually help the community by minimising the risks, spreading diseases, etc. Maybe some more information work towards the

community could help to increase understanding but still, there will be people who won't accept harm reduction approach per se.

Some young people are facing geographical obstacles because they need to travel in order to participate in the activities of the low-threshold centre. Also, some parents don't allow their children to travel on their own. As a response to this situation, the organisation strengthened street work activities and started reaching out towards children and young people so they could meet them where they are. That means that they stopped concentrating all their work solely to the centre.

One of the challenges is how to record and demonstrate the benefits of the organisation's programs and activities especially when it comes to qualitative outcomes. Another challenge is how to keep administrative work at minimum level and invest resources to direct contacts and work with clients. A major quantitative effect of programs is considered to be the rising attendance/usage of organisation's services. Qualitative signs include rising responsibility in clients' behaviour like independent preparation for school, successful graduation, resume creation, finding and applying for a job etc. Quantitative indicator monitoring is undertaken as the programs requires them, qualitative indicators aren't recorded continuously, only individually in regard to the client. But organisation staff are aware that there are different possible factors that contribute to the improvements of clients' lives.



## Outcomes of the program and participation of young people

As a result of the organisation's work in program CIRCUS, some clients gradually become more pro-social. They become volunteers in programs and activities, usually taking an assisting role in tutoring children and young people - younger than they are. They take the role of big brother or big sister. For youth workers it is a sign, that they perceive themselves as a part of community and that's why they start to help each other significantly. Becoming a big brother or a big sister is indicator of positive change that can be attributed to the long-term formation of low-threshold club and can predict future participation of active members in the next operation of the club even as a youth worker.

"Certainly we have clients, who can't function at home or adopted resistance toward authorities in schools or work, but thanks to our equal setting and attitudes, sooner or later they do not have this problem while interacting with us."

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- Apply a low-threshold approach towards young people because this approach fully respects young people as who they are. It might be uneasy at the beginning, considering that not all of young people had good role models in life and somebody to lean on. Their behaviour towards youth workers and other professionals may be "difficult" because that could be their way of testing environment, people, emerging relations... but worth to hold on...
- Work with each client individually, look at the life and situations through the eyes of young people, from their perspective. You have to keep in mind every distinct life story and experience because it shapes their behaviour. In that way, it is easier to understand their motivations and ways of coping with different situations and relations...
- Work with young people here and now. Start from their current situation and (unmet) needs.
- Work with each young person without conditions that he or she isn't able to accept or handle.
- Work on the shaping of the overall personality of young people, developing their skills that can be also used in other areas of their life.
- Let clients manage the program. Ask them what they want, expect and are interested in.

- Motivate clients through a reward system (access to additional activities, outings, etc.).
- Notice and acknowledge even the smallest progress on the client side.
- Accept various degree of involvement of young people.

For further information please contact “STORM Association” on email **[zdruzenie.storm@gmail.com](mailto:zdruzenie.storm@gmail.com)** or check website **<http://www.zdruzeniestorm.sk/kontakt.htm>**.

### 3.3. YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION: Local association YMCA Revúca

#### Abstract:

**Young Men's Christian Association** is a Christian-oriented, voluntary, non-political and not church based association, that offers service and assistance to young people in order to facilitate their harmonious personal development, including physical, mental and spiritual aspects. The local YMCA Slovakia organisation, in region Revúca, focuses on children and young people from socially disadvantage background, in particular children and young people from the local Roma community. It provides a safe space and informal leisure time programs in the low-threshold centre. The civic association is actively presented at local level and is a respected partner of the town in creation of its social and youth policy.

#### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

YMCA Slovakia is part of a worldwide movement that goes by the same name - YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). Its main purpose is holistic development of young people's personality on all levels (spiritual, mental and physical), support of healthy, promotion of responsible and joyful lifestyle based on active citizenship and mutual help and cooperation. YMCA Slovakia is a Christian-oriented, voluntary, non-political and not church based association. Its tasks are providing service and assistance to young people for harmonious development of their personality in physical, mental and spiritual areas. Its work is based on Christian ideals. It follows the domestic and foreign cultural and historical traditions. In its work, YMCA Slovakia focuses on all young people regardless of their background, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social status and political affiliation.

The YMCA has been operating in Slovakia since 1921 with 40 years break during the communism when all democratic organisations were forbidden. It renewed its activities in 1990 after the change of political regime with significant help of the global YMCA organisation. The first program of the restored organisation was "Forest YMCA" and that program was focused on building relations with nature, music and healthy lifestyle. The goal of the program was to lead children towards independence, responsibility and cooperation. Also, it promoted friendship values, empowerment of life skills and value system in general. This program worked closely with Scout movement in Slovakia. In the late 90s, the achievements of YMCA Slovakia extended to the cooperation with different Christian communities, where the YMCA represented neutral ground for creation and implementation of various programs and activities

across different churches, often with participation of people with no affiliation to church, religion or faith.

### **Mission of the organisation**

YMCA Slovakia is unique in enhancing collaboration and networking of various target groups: Christians of various denominations, young people with no religious affiliation, people of mixed ethnic background, Roma communities, people with disabilities and people with socially disadvantaged background.

The organisation helps people who are facing difficult life challenges and wants to include them into society; it supports their personal and social development (e.g. the Group Ten-Sing where young people sing, the Roma band, dance course etc.); takes preventive action against the occurrence of socio-pathological phenomena (e. g. club activities); provides assistance in education (e. g. tutoring) and in developing life skills (mother club, girls club); contributes to values education (bible study, meetings), works with long-term unemployed people; provides counselling in various areas of life as well as support in society integration etc.



### **Management of the organisation**

Currently YMCA Slovakia has 17 local branches that cover more than half of the regional administrative units of the state. Their activities are adapted to the needs of local communities and the wider surrounding area, providing children and young people with regular and occasional leisure time activities, running low-threshold centres (open clubs), community centres and support volunteering. The range of activities and programs of local organisations is formed directly in the regions according to the needs of target groups with whom they directly work. In 2015, YMCA Slovakia had 957 members, 785 of which were aged under 30. There were 10 youth workers (older than 18 years), 30 youth leaders (in between 15 - 17 years) and 50 adult volunteers who organised activities with and for children and young people. Youth leaders are raised by YMCA within its members through offering them space for their self-realization in activities and programs with which they can help and additional personal and social development activities and training.

## Partnership

YMCA cooperates with many foreign and domestic organisations. Foreign partners include: The World Alliance of YMCAs, YMCA Europe (European Alliance of YMCAs) and national YMCAs (YMCA in Czech Republic, Germany etc.). The domestic cooperating organisations include the Youth Council of Slovakia, IUVENTA - Slovak Institute of Youth, community centres (e. g. community centres "New World", Hlboké, Liptovský Mikuláš), local church organisations and municipalities.

## Funding

Activities of the organisation are funded from various sources. Significant portions of revenue are grants and projects, which YMCA Slovakia actively gets involved in. Other supporters include IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute / Ministry of Education, foreign YMCAs (e. g. from the Czech Republic or Germany), foundations and municipalities, where local YMCA organisations operate.



## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The local association YMCA Revúca, as a part of YMCA Slovakia movement, creates a safe space, where young people can spend their free time and thus minimizing the risks of socio-pathologic phenomena. The association runs a low-threshold centre (open club). Its main activity is offering informal leisure time program accompanied by specific social services. Target groups of local organisations are mostly children and young people in a difficult life situation (experiencing adverse social situations, living in difficult living conditions) as well as unorganised children and young people. Mainly, these are children and young people from the local Roma community, who lack opportunities.

## Background and implementation of the program

The YMCA Revúca began paying attention to Roma minority issues gradually. Since 1997, it started its activities by creating clubs for children and young people from majority population and those living in foster care. These gradually participated not only in club activities, but also in camps, or YMCA youth workers visited them directly in foster care homes where they lived. The first members of this organisation have grown up into current youth workers of the local organisation.

Currently, the work of the organisation is focused on Roma. In 2011, thanks to the support of Intenda foundations, the organisation set up a low-threshold centre (open club) in Jelšava - a town in central part of Slovakia with a high concentration of Roma population (about 40%), that is also organisation's seat. 60 - 80 children and young people from Jelšava and about 10 - 15 adult clients weekly use activities of the centre. 30 volunteers are involved in these activities: six volunteers from the European voluntary service, two employees of the local association YMCA Revúca and psychologist working on voluntary basis.

Through individual case work with clients and field work, youth workers from the centre are trying to help people in life situations that are difficult to manage by themselves. It could be assistance in communication with institutions, obtaining legal documents etc. Discussing and examining the client's real needs are the main instruments for this type of work. One of the means is to get closer to people and clients is field work.

"Roma people are very emotional and they very appreciate when we are open to them. When they are accepted for who they are. If I don't show my disgust for their dirty clothes... We shake hands, hug and share a food..."

"I'm learning to listen more. I'm learning to listen and talk less. To really listen more. Like, what's the background of the person, what he/she has to say and what his/her problem is. So that I'm not subject to a hasty situation evaluation without actually knowing its true purpose."

## Program activities

Regular activities realized as a part of the project could be classified according to the following areas based on content:

- Art-oriented activities,
- Club activities,
- Formation activities,
- Educational activities,
- Activities of religious nature.

### Art-oriented activities



Due to the physical and musical talent of Roma children and young people, most of the regular activities are artistic. The offered activities thus meet the needs of the target group. The group finds it appealing and interesting. Intentional choice guarantees regular participation, constant interest, involvement and participation.

**Ten-Sing - "Young sing":** children and teenagers meet once a week to practice their favorite songs which they then perform publicly.



**The dance group** enables physical expression of the corresponding age, group contact, improving self-confidence through getting to know the Roma culture.

**Drama clubs** have been running once a week since 2014. Their aim is to bring children closer to the world of emotions through various theatre techniques. They take on the role of someone else and thus perceive the situation from their perspective.

### Club activities

Club activities, so-called "clubs" are organised in accordance with the low-threshold principles and take into account the clients' age specifics. It is interesting that one of the clubs, the "YMCA tea room" is open on Friday evenings, because at that day of the week, young people hang out more and they are more likely to engage in risk behaviour so it is important to offer them structured and healthy environment for their leisure activities. Volunteers carry out the club's operation, which increases the formative influence of the organisation on the individual. This low-threshold club is open for young people who are older than 13. It takes place on Fridays from 7 to 10 pm. depending on interest of young people.

**The Games Club** is a low-threshold (open) club for children aged under 15. It's accessible once a week and lasts 2.5 hours. Children can take part in an organised program or fill their leisure time with various board games and conversations. The condition is to respect the rules, hence to spend the free time in a non-destructive manner.

### Formation activities

Formation activities fulfill several purposes: support the development of gender identity, reinforce mutual aid and self-help, they also shape Christian spirituality in terms of the association's mission.

The boy group is for boys aged 12 and above. In this group, boys spend time together and learn new practical skills that they can use in everyday life. The most important task of this group is to create a group, whose members support and assist one another.

The girl's group is exclusively for girls aged 11 and above. In this group girls are led to Christian spirituality. It builds their own perception of self-worth and the ability to set the boundaries. They talk about practical issues associated with growing up and adolescence.

Groups of older boys devote time to current topics in which they're interested in, but also learning how to build a relationship with God.

### Educational activities

**The "Healthy Behaviour" course** is a preventive-oriented activity and takes place once a month. The main task of the course is to discuss current topics that tackle problems associated with adolescence. The activity is intended to make young people able to handle situations or circumstances that can be somehow risky for them.

**Foreign language courses** are provided by international volunteers hosted through the European Voluntary Service, e. g., German language courses are attended by adults, who intend to find work in German-speaking countries. They are taking place once a week.



### Activities of religious nature

Activities of the civic association have a partially confessional nature as it is based on Christian values and the association operates on those bases. Some activities are

carried out primarily for the purpose of Christian formation, in others the emphasis on spirituality is secondary or isn't that highlighted.

Meetings are aimed at children of age from 6 to 15. They meet every Sunday for getting to know the gospel via various biblical stories. During meetings, children play and do handcrafts.

Bible study brings together those who like to get to know Christian religion and study the Bible. It is taking place once a week. In 2014, the participants decided to organize Roma Youth. Their goal is to show the Roma population in Jelšava Christian life and how a believer's life looks like.

#### **Other activities of the centre include**

- weekend events for young people in nature, hiking, climbing etc.,
- camps for boys and camps for girls,
- unconventional sports.

#### **Occasional activities:**

In addition to regular activities, the centre organizes occasional events, connected with the town's life, e.g. participation in Christmas market, Christmas concert at the community centre, preparation of cultural exchanges, workshops etc. Activities also include projects of the European Voluntary Service, First Breath, First Step, Bridges (Active citizenship and inclusion), Way Out From the Circle of Unemployment.

### **Barriers and obstacles**

The most common existential and functional problems of an organisation include:

- Lack of systematic financial support for development and program implementation (binding activities to grant funding). The issue of continuity of grants.
- The difficult process leading to successful inclusion in work and life. Common prejudices against people belonging to the Roma ethnic group.
- Increased fluctuation of volunteers and youth workers due to finding a job in a different region, country or paid work.

### **Outcomes of the program and participation of young people**

Regular participation of children in the pre-school club increases the likelihood that the child will attend regular and not special elementary school. Just the fact that children will attend a standard elementary school, increases their chances for adequate life and work. Children also get the chance of good and quality education.

"When you visit the centre, you can see how a young Roma boy can organize a group of children during a game, that group of volunteers has pre-prepared activities, they are self-organised and divide tasks among themselves. You see 15-year-olds (labelled as hopeless cases by our society) able to do all this. Many of them have attended only a special school. "Karol" is a good example. He wanted to complete differential exams to have his primary education approved, so he could attend secondary school, but he gave up due to administrative, financial and other circumstances that made his entry in the school unreachable. But after a year of his European Voluntary Service in Karlovy Vary (town in western part of the Czech republic), he was first employed as a construction worker and later he was promoted and given manager position which made him responsible for other people - a guy who completed "only" special school education, that our society can't integrate because he had been labelled as an "inappropriate"."

Thanks to the activities of YMCA Jelšava, the safe environment for children and young people was created and stabilized. Children have a safe space for healthy development that partially creates opportunities, which their family environment often cannot provide on appropriate level. One of the outcomes that show influence of the organisation on the development of young people is a visible change in their behaviour – young people who manifested aggressive and unmanageable behaviour learned how to respect the rules and control their behaviour in the centre.

"We started to trust them, to teach them responsibility. We began to build relationships with them and started to pass responsibility on them. It was interesting and encouraging to watch their gradual improvement. For example, one young Roma man from Jelšava, with a very difficult family background, who has lived in several foster care institutions throughout his life... The education that he gained has practically no value. But as a result of our work and cooperation with him, he has found a job and he is a guy who leads other people in the community. He can keep his job and is capable to lead a full-valued life."

YMCA Jelšava has great volunteer management, they are involving young people who are at least 15 years old and who are both from majority and minority population, with different social background. The organisation motivates them to attend the centre not only as service consumers, but also as those who are offering help in the centre and in Jelšava and thus actively contribute to positive changes in community. A well-suited system of education and supervision was created for them. It helps them to step out of comfort zone and their personal world, often virtual, to the world of people around them. Also, it helps them to start seeing the real world from a new perspective.

The organisation builds contacts and cooperates with social workers employed by town of Jelšava that enhanced the efficiency of provided services. The organisation's representatives were invited to the creation of social and youth policy of the town.

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- Actively listen to the real needs of young people.
- Provide positive role models from local communities (e.g. upbringing of future youth workers and volunteers from your own members) that could show that a lot of things are possible, even though it is not always easy.

- Create a secure environment based on trust, understanding and mutual help.
- Provide accurate and honest information.
- Do not give up after the first failure. Give young people a chance to successfully accomplish something. Have trust in young people. Enable them to achieve something even if it involves taking some risks, and gradually entrust them with more responsibility.
- Appreciate not only success but also effort - it is often the prerequisite of further success.
- Cooperate with Roma community on partnership base, discover and uncover their potential. Perceive young people as your equal partners not only the recipients of your help and services, let them help you and others (e.g. in centre, through volunteering), require responsibility and maturity.
- If possible, involve the whole families, involve them in partnership to improve their own environment and life.
- Naturally link young people from majority with young people from minority via joint activities and volunteering.

For further information please contact YMCA Revúca on email: **[ymcarevuca@gmail.com](mailto:ymcarevuca@gmail.com)** or check website: **<http://www.ymca.sk/miestne-zdruzenia/revuca/>** and Facebook page: **<https://www.facebook.com/ymca.revuca.>**

## 4. CASE STUDIES FROM CROATIA

### 4.1. STATUS: M: Be A Man - Change A World

#### Abstract:

Youth organisation **Status: M** is continuously working with young men on the adoption of a positive attitude towards health, gender equality and non-violence. Through the project “Be a man – change the world”, Status: M seeks to raise awareness about negative masculinity, encourage young men to think critically about socially constructed gender roles and to manifest positive behaviour, nonviolence and healthy lifestyles. The project is focused on two areas of activity: group workshops with young men who have demonstrated risky behaviour and capacity building of Social welfare centres, correctional institutions and civil society organisations for work with young men. Activities are based on “Handbook M”, which promotes non-formal methods of youth work, encourages building of social skills and raising awareness about responsibility of young men in creation of their own development.

#### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

The Youth organisation Status: M is a non-profit and non-government organisation that was established in 2010 by a team of people who have worked together since 2006 on non-formal education for young people.

The Association is creating, implementing and evaluating educational activities related to young people; advocating for the rights of young people; implementing research regarding young people and informing young people. Through these activities, they are empowering young people with life skills and necessary knowledge which could be helpful in development of their self-awareness, as individuals and members of the community, with an emphasis on values such as gender equality, tolerance and solidarity.

#### Values of the organisation:

Solidarity, respecting human rights, non-violence, tolerance, gender equality, education, encouraging healthy lifestyles, responsibility, activism.



## Mission of the organisation

Mission of Status: M is to create non-violent, healthy, tolerant and gender equal society throughout and because of contribution of young people in society. Through its activity, Status: M aims to contribute in the creation and popularization of healthy lifestyles among youth; strengthen capacity of relevant institutions, organisations and individuals who are undertaking non-formal education programs; provide support for young men who have demonstrated risky, harmful or criminal behaviour; establish dialogue and partnership between adults and youth; raise awareness among youth in the field of gender equality and to include young people in the improvement of society.

In order to achieve all organisation's goals, Status: M is:

- Organizing a number of interactive workshops, lectures, public forum, manifestations, seminars and campaigns;
- Establishing cooperation and partnership on regional and international level so they could create new methods in youth work;
- Adjusting existing capacities to the needs of young people;
- Exchanging information and experiences.

## Management of the organisation

One interesting detail about Status: M is its multidisciplinary team. Among the Association members, there is a doctor, PC technologist, sociologist, musician, psychologist, art professor, economist, social worker and a political scientist. Also, there are high school and college students, along with others. The organisation total 24 members and more than hundred volunteers.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Be a man – change the world is a three-year project that has been implemented since 2014. The Association's primary focus is on youth work with young men, the overall objective of this project is to prevent institutionalization (keeping them from correctional institutions) of young men who are users of Centres for social welfare services; and capacity building of social welfare centres, correctional institutions and civil society organisations for work with young men.

## Mission of the project

The project seeks to empower young men with social skills and new knowledge through organised workshops and individual counselling. Through workshops, youth workers strive to increase cooperation between young men and responsible institutions, strengthen awareness of their own responsibility for social functioning and encourage young men to build a positive and safe model of functioning. Likewise, emphasis is on the establishment of a positive peer group, which in this case is group of young men who passed the program and who are gathered in so called “Be a man club”. That group is encouraged to behave prosocial and to choose positive and healthy attitude and values.

On the other side, the project aims to prevent re-institutionalization of young men who were already part of the system due to their criminal behaviour. That means that



this project tries to keep young men from criminal behaviour so they don't end up in the prison or correctional institutions once again.

In the context of capacity building, youth workers and other professionals are involved in additional education about prevention work with young men. Education is provided through online

training and seminars. One of the project goals is to achieve stable and continuous cooperation with local institutions and to ensure quality implementation of the program through multisector cooperation.

## Background of the project

In Croatian society, the phrase ‘Be a man’ is used very often among young men and it usually encourages negative behaviour and reinforces socially rooted expectations of male gender. Equally, the phrase is often connected with the negative messages such as “don't cry, smash, drink, fight, drive fast” etc. Status: M, through this project, seeks to add positive meaning to this phrase, reaffirm positive masculinity and reconstruct stereotyped social expectations from men. In Status: M, the phrase is used in this way – ‘Be a man – be tolerant’, ‘Be a man – change the rules’, ‘Be a man - train your brain’, “Be a man, don't be a bully”, etc.

Young men are participating in the workshops that are based on the “Manual M”. Manual M was developed out of Young Men Initiative program by non-governmental organization CARE International and it's collaborative partners (in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and it is an adaptation of a program curriculum

(Program H) originally developed by Instituto Promundo in Brasil and its partners. In the pilot phase of YMI program (2007-2010), Manual M was translated, adjusted and experimentally implemented in 5 pilot schools (two schools in Zagreb).

“This manual is created on the assumption that young men should be seen as allies – potential or actual – and not as obstacles. That means that we are focusing on things that they are doing right rather than emphasizing things they are doing wrong.”

First workshops were suitable for the general youth population, then the focus was broaden on the young men who manifested risky and criminal behaviour. That means that workshops were implemented outside the school system and that there was a need for a different process of group gathering. Today, Centres for social welfare are sending young men who have a correctional measure of special obligations to the Status: M, and once they have sufficient number of participants, workshops and group work can start. Also, at the very beginning, all the parents are called for a meeting so they could be informed about the content of workshops, rules and responsibilities throughout the process.



So far, leaders of the workshops were professionals who have an educational background in helping professions such as psychologists, social pedagogues, social workers, but there were experienced educators with different educational backgrounds as well. Also, there are members of the Roma community who are conducting workshops in the Roma settlement as Status: M's associates. They have all been educated through the online training and seminars, and received further assistance through individual mentoring support from experienced educators. Maintaining online and face-to-face education for professionals is a sort of innovation in youth work in Croatia. The online course "Youth men initiative" provides training for youth workers, which empowers them for direct work with young men in the field of life skills, prevention of harmful behaviours and prevention of recurrence. The online tool was piloted in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and was approved by the Education and Teacher Training Agency. Moreover, this project was recognised by the Department of Justice so it represents a special measure of

psychosocial treatment, which is a clear recognition of its importance and quality. It is also recognised as professional training by the Croatian Chamber of Social Workers and Croatian Psychological Chamber.

### Project content

Activities of the project are based on “Handbook M” and they are created as a series of workshops, which are separated in five thematic sections:

1. Reasons and emotions
2. Fatherhood and caregiving
3. Sexuality and Reproductive Health
4. Preventing and Living with HIV/AIDS
5. From Violence to Peaceful Coexistence

In the thematic section **“Reasons and emotions”** youth workers are talking with young men about a lot of different topics. They are discussing topics like how process of socialization effects overall emotional and mental health of boys and men; what is the difference between gender and sex, how men express their feelings and emotions, how they can build negotiation skills, what brings them satisfaction and what encourages them to get involved in risk behaviour.

#### Example of the workshop:

Draw five columns on flipchart paper and write the following emotions as headings: Fear, Affection, Sadness, Happiness, and Anger. Ask participants to rank emotions from 1 to 5. Number 1 will represent emotion that is the easiest for participants to show, and number 5 will represent emotion that participants have the greatest difficulty expressing. After that, you can start a discussion with questions like “Why do people exaggerate or repress certain emotions? How do they learn to do this? Do you think women express certain emotions more easily than men? Why do you think this is? How do peers, family, community, media, etc. influence how men and women express emotions?”

Researches had shown that young men feel vulnerable when they have to express their emotions associated with adverse circumstances and stressful life events. That can be connected with the social expectations, which requires that "real men" must be "tough" and "brave" which eventually leads to hiding emotions like fear and sadness and rejection of seeking for help. The denial or repression of tensions and problems, as

well as having difficulties in talking about the associated emotions, may lead to the use of violence and substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

"Sometimes, when I work with young men, I use indirect questions. I don't ask directly what is their opinion on some topic because they might feel attacked or called out. In these situations, I rather ask the question "What do you think, what would your average peer say about this situation?". In these answers, young people would probably project their own thoughts which can be an excellent opportunity for raising awareness about their own attitudes and values."

In the thematic section **"Fatherhood and caregiving"** there are discussion about entrenched social constructs that define male and female roles in society, young fathers and lack of care for personal health among males. It is important to talk about these topics because young people are often stimulated to express risky behaviour in order to prove themselves in society. The idea of self-care is displaced by harmful or self-destructive lifestyles, where risk is valued higher than security. Furthermore, studies have shown that men live shorter than women, they die more often in car accidents, they consume more alcohol and die more often from overdose and suicide. Those are alarming findings that shouldn't be taken lightly.

The third thematic section **"Sexuality and Reproductive Health"** is about young men's health, adolescent pregnancy, contraceptives and the bodies of men and women. The need for these topics stems from the realization that a huge number of men, of all ages, don't have a basic knowledge about their body, sexuality and reproductive health. Moreover, there are just a few programs around the world that are tackling topic of men's sexual and reproductive health and there are even fewer of those who deal with specific problems and needs of young men.

The fourth thematic section **"Preventing and Living with HIV/AIDS"** continues on previous section and discusses topics like engagement of young men in risk sexual behaviour, sexually transmitted diseases, usage of protection during sexual intercourse, life with HIV/AIDS etc. These topics are important to discuss with young men because for them, sexual experiences are usually connected with initiation into the world of adults and manhood. Young men are usually the ones who initiate engagement into the sexual intercourse, they are more likely to make decision whether they would use protection or not, they are less aware of the risks of sexually transmitted diseases which means they are in higher risk of getting various sexual infections.

"It is wrong to say that young people are our future. They are our present and they need to understand how much power and potential they have. They need to understand that they matter."

The fifth and last thematic section is **"From Violence to Peaceful Coexistence"**. This section discusses topics like what is violence and cycle of violence, anger, intimate relationships and mutual respect between partners, the so-called men of honour, homophobia etc. Like the previous ones, this section is based on research findings and



critical thinking about social constructs and expectations. Research have shown that it is more likely that a man commits violence in the public sphere, but it is also more likely that a man will be victim of violence. On the other side, in the private sphere, it is more likely that man will be a perpetrator of violence, while women are more often the victims. The usage of violence against other men can be, among other things, a way to achieve a socially recognised status of men and way of strengthening the sense of power. Young men are often taught that a “real man” would fight if he is offended, and they are taught that it is acceptable to manifest anger and aggressive behaviour. Therefore, these workshops are based on the assumption that violence is learned behaviour and that it is gender-based. That means that young people could represent a key role in the construction of alternative definitions of masculinity; they can learn to use alternative forms of behaviour that will promote communication and mutual respect in the relationship, and not violence.

**Example of the workshop:**

Divide the participants into small groups and ask them to invent a short role play or skit. Ask two groups to present an intimate relationship – boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife – which shows scenes of violence. Ask the other groups to also present an intimate relationship but based on mutual respect. There may be conflicts or differences of opinion, but the presentation should show what respect looks like in a relationship and should not include violence. When all of the groups have had their turn, facilitate a discussion using questions like “What are the characteristics of a violent relationship? What do you think are the causes of violence in intimate relationships? When you see couples using violence, what do you normally do? What could you do?”

“Handbook M” was created for teachers, youth workers and other professionals or volunteers who work or would like to work with young men. Workshops are held once or twice a week, in 12 terms in a period from 45 minutes to 2 hours.

They can be carried out with the guys in a variety of settings, from schools and youth clubs to correctional institutions. Although the activities were originally designed for group work with young men, they can also be adjusted for work with mixed groups.

Furthermore, it is important to note that approach and methodology, in this case, is based on the so-called gender transformative approach with an emphasis on raising awareness of gender as a construct and transformation of negative masculinity into



positive one. Gender transformative approach implies that youth workers are using interventions that create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women and men in communities and address power inequities between persons of different genders.

Also, all the activities rely on a model of experiential learning which encourages young men on reviewing and analyzing their own experiences, attitudes and values in order to make positive changes in their lives and in the community in general.

### Outcomes of the project and participation of young people

For most of the young men who participated in the workshops, that was the first time they were encouraged to think critically about masculinity and violence. Both the anecdotal and empirical evidence point to the positive impact of these opportunities to question expectations of how young men should behave and to reflect on the consequences of certain behaviours and the possibilities for change. There are numerous testimonials by young men who changed their attitudes and behaviours as a result of participation. Also, evaluation study found that young men, who participated in activities, generally showed more gender equitable attitudes and decreased use of violence over time.



#### One of the participants shared his story:

“First time I heard about Status: M, I was in my second year of high school. Boys from Status: M organised great, low budget, guerilla action and they have drawn my attention with pamphlets which were mentioning kayaking, paintball, excursions etc., so I signed up for the first workshop and never showed up. Next year, whole guerilla action was on higher level and there were bunch of my acquaintances who were amazed with the program and who persuaded me to join in. I must admit, I decided to get involved because they were promising us free pizzas, hamburgers, juices and crackers on every workshop. First time I came to collect my free pizza, I heard the lecture and that was it, love was born. I was so enthusiastic that I didn’t miss a single workshop and my effort was rewarded in a form of future cooperation with Status: M – they offered me a job after I had finished high school. The most valuable thing I got through the program was the awareness of me being right – I was right that you don’t have to be violent and drink to be a ‘real man’. And society was trying to convince me differently all the time. It was so refreshing to be in such a healthy environment and I was finally able to empower myself as a responsible man conscious of his actions. Also, I have noticed that

my friends started to make changes in their own attitudes and values due to our discussions and that's when I realized that this program is so powerful that could make a huge difference in the society.'''

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- There has to be a positive approach towards young people, even in the small details. For example, code of conduct in the group can be called collective agreement rather than group policy.
- In youth work with young people who manifest criminal behaviour, there shouldn't be focus on crimes and mistakes they made in past. Focus should be on the present and the future. It is important to empower young people with skills they need during intense transition period from adolescence to adulthood.
- In youth work, relationship between young person and youth worker is extremely important. It is important that youth worker represent a model that young person can look up to, with whom young person can talk openly and sincerely.
- Youth workers must always question themselves and think about ways to motivate young people and encourage them to openly and actively participate in activities. Also, youth workers should always ask for feedback from young people and see what they could do even better.
- It is important to understand young people, the environment they come from, the experience they have gained. It is important to understand the world they are currently living in and always pay attention to the things that matter to them.
- Youth workers must truly believe in the things they are saying.
- It is important that activities are fun, that atmosphere is relaxed and that youth worker uses humor in their work.

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## 4.2. ASSOCIATION PLAY: Contact - Centre for the Empowerment of Young People from Alternative Care

### Abstract:

The **Contact - Centre** for the empowerment of young people from alternative care is the first, long term and comprehensive program that aims to improve the level of social inclusion of children and young people from alternative care. "Contact" consists of three main segments. The first one focuses on the empowerment of children and young people from alternative care; the second segment focuses on the empowerment of professionals and the third segment is focused on research and advocacy activities. According to the observations of the experts from Association Play and evaluation results, it can be noticed that children and young people who were involved in this program show faster and better adaptation to the new environment, they establish better relationships with other people and feel more prepared for independent life.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Play is a Croatian non-profit organisation that was established in 1999. The association was founded by experts of the helping profession who have noticed that the society wasn't adequately responding to the needs of youth at risk which resulted in the development of unacceptable behaviour and ineffective problem solving models. Also, they have noticed that parents and teachers had difficulties in dealing with young people who manifested problems in the behaviour which motivated them to provide help and support in order to overcome their difficulties and a sense of helplessness.

### Mission of the organisation

The main objective of its work is to provide rehabilitation, education, psycho-social and pedagogical help for young people at risk, their families and professionals who work with them in order to improve the quality of their lives and society in general.

Vision: "A society in which each individual knows, use and develop their potential so they could be active, productive and satisfied participants of the community."

All activities and services are provided in three key program areas: behavioural problems, social inclusion and mental health. Services can be combined according to the needs and interests of users.

Play is working continuously on sensitizing the community and decision makers to the problems of marginalized children and youth through research and different types of public activities.

### Management of the organisation

Experts of the helping profession have been conducting programs and activities on a voluntary basis for many years. Today, Play has 8 employees and they implement around 16 projects per year. Play is partly financed from its own funds, while the rest of the support is received from the City of Zagreb, National Foundation for Civil Society Development, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and other donors. The key element that contributes to the long-term quality of Play's work and its recognition from donors is continuous development of services based on the needs of the community and users. Also, they evaluate their work regularly and maintain professional standards.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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“Contact” is the first, long term, comprehensive program in Croatia that aims to improve the level of social inclusion of children and young people from alternative care. Those are children and young people who are moved from their home and placed in alternative forms of care (children's care homes, correctional institutions or foster family) in order to rehabilitate and/or strengthen them for independent life. Such an intervention can be triggered due to several reasons – if they live in unacceptable and inadequate family circumstances, if they show unacceptable behaviour themselves, if they commit criminal offenses or if any other bio-psycho-social factor adversely affects their behaviour.

### Mission of the program

Young people from alternative care are facing different risks and problems. They are expected to be fully independent at age of 18 which means that their maturation process is accelerated and more intense in comparison with maturation of their peers. Furthermore, they are often stigmatized, socially isolated and have sense of inferiority. They have insufficiently developed social and independent living skills because, within the institution, they usually live in an unreal situation where everything is done for them (cooking, paying bills, laundry...) so they turn into passive recipients of services. These perceived risks have become the cornerstone of the program which seeks to empower young people with competencies and skills that are essential for independent living. Likewise, program seeks to facilitate their access to education, employment, health, social services and leisure activities in order to reach equality of opportunity for all.

Comprehensiveness of this program is reflected through the involvement of all relevant actors that can contribute to the improvement of young people's lives. That is why this program offers education and support for professionals and volunteers who are working directly with young people and aims to improve national and local policies that could enable access to all services in the community for youngsters from alternative care.

#### **Values and principles of the “Contact”:**

- Development in accordance with the results of the needs analyses research
- Comprehensiveness and integrity
- Start off with the current situation and gradually expand the horizons
- Foster and develop honest and supportive relationships which is the most important tool in youth work
- Continuity and flexibility
- Accessibility and availability
- Respect individuality
- Empowerment
- Application of the highest possible level of youth participation
- Being a part of the community

#### **Background of the program**

“Contact” is derived from the graduate research of Sunčana Kusturin who is a social worker formerly employed in the Association Play. Her thesis examined the needs of young people who were staying in correctional institutions. It was shown that young people, who have experience of staying in those types of institutions, face the biggest problems and fears when entering or exiting the institution.

In the beginning, “Contact” was implemented through a series of workshops (mainly with method of group work) that aimed to strengthen young people who recently came to the institution and young people who were leaving it. Today, 14 years later, “Contact” has a much broader scope of action and it includes a lot more activities, young people from various institutions (not just from correctional institutions), various areas of work and a wide range of experts.

So far, “Contact” has included 1121 users of whom 881 were children and young people from alternative care. “Contact” is carried out in cooperation and partnership with a number of institutions and organisations - such as the social welfare centres, relevant ministries, City of Zagreb, the Croatian Employment Service, civil society organisations

that work with young people and for young people, etc. They all have the same goal – to develop and offer an even wider and better support for youth from alternative care as well as development of quality network of community services.



In the process of implementation of the program, while establishing cooperation and partnerships and networking in general, leaders of the program did not encounter major difficulties. But some of the identified challenges were lack of systematic financial support to the development and implementation of the program; high fluctuation of the program staff considering that the program has been running for many years now; diffusion of responsibility of stakeholders (they are not sure when the responsibility of one stakeholder ends and responsibility of another begins); and insufficient recognition of young people from alternative care as quality and competitive workforce in the labour market by employers.

## Program content

Activities of the program are divided into **three segments**:

1. Strengthening of children and young people from alternative care
2. Empowering professionals
3. Research, advocacy activities and public awareness



## 1. Strengthening of children and young people from alternative care

Empowering children and young people from alternative care is carried out through individual and/or group psycho-socio-educational support. The first step in this process is to arrange an initial interview with young person to gather information about their life situation and their needs. That helps to adjust program activities as much as possible to the individual needs of each user.

During several months (which refers to the length of the program), program experts are working on development of life skills (communication and interpersonal skills, conflict resolution skills, critical thinking, respect for self and others, etc.) with young people who have just arrived in the institution.

On the other side, program staff are working on the development of competencies required for independent living with young people who are leaving an institution (finding and keeping a job, managing finances, search and maintenance of housing, health care, the organisation of free time, lifelong learning, etc.). Individual support is most used by young people who came out of alternative care.

"Individual support is very useful and instructive to me. Youth workers have helped help me a lot during my life, not only with job seeking, but with all the problems that I had. I got ideas, advices... If I need something, I can always show up, if I need clothes or just a friendly chat."

Besides individual and group support, this program offers information services which are extremely important because it was shown that young people from alternative care don't have quality access to the information and they don't know where to search for them. So, Association Play offers free internet access, computers and free phone calls; there is an info line for young people where they can get an advice or an answers to their questions and an internal Facebook profile that really seems to be a useful tool in youth work. The Facebook profile is a great platform for sharing relevant information about job offers, accommodation, cultural events, education; and at the same time, it allows two-way communication and prompt prevention of potentially risky situations.

Furthermore, Association is putting a great effort in the production of educational brochures, publications and manuals that can inform young people. One of them is



manual “Okvirko” that helps young people from alternative care to raise awareness about their strengths and it guides them through the process of accessing necessary knowledge and developing skills and attitudes. For example, it guides them through the topics like employment, finance, housing, education, health, practical skills, social network and support system, free time, involvement in the community and personal development.

Besides “Okvirko”, there is another educational brochure called "Catapult". Through this brochure, young people can get practical information on how to write a resume, how to make an ID card, how to apply for jobs, how to rent an apartment, how to develop good eating habits and so on. Also, there is brochure called "Reflections on independent living" in which young people from alternative care share their most intimate thoughts about their current life and the future ahead of them. Similar stories can be seen on a website “Jump into life” that was created and managed by youth. While creating those practical resources for young people, professionals and volunteers, Play had one goal – to help remove barriers that can prevent young people from fulfilling their potential, and assure equal access to the services in the community and facilitate their adjustment to all life circumstances. Perhaps, it is useful to mention that all those manuals, brochures and publications are available online but they are written only on Croatian language.

It is important to mention that “Contact” is trying to provide different types of services for young people. For example, service of a personal mentor, which is conceived as an upgraded individual support (in addition to individual support). Also, there is a service called peer helper which connects young person from alternative care with young person who is currently leading an independent life, has high level of motivation and competence in helping others with similar life path.

The basic methodology used in this program is non-formal education with an emphasis on experiential learning. Youth workers are using a great number of creative methods and techniques in their work, such as role playing, discussions, writing, interactive games, films, etc.

"Young people sometimes have a great expectation from us experts and sometimes they don't develop a sense of their own responsibility. They expect us to be their extended hand and to do things for them. Yes,

sometimes we will do things for them or with them. But the ultimate goal is to teach them how to do things on their own."

Also, once or twice during the year, Contact experts organize excursion or theme event for young people from all over the Croatia who are leaving an institution soon. The main goals are to expand their social network and to prepare them for independent life.



## 2. Empowering professionals

The second segment of program relates to the empowerment of the experts who are working directly with young people, through **education** (training for the implementation of the program in practice, training in youth work), **supervision** (support, exchange of experiences, developing new skills, mental health care) and **information** (manuals and an educational movies produced during the implementation of the program). Personal mentors, school officials and employers are also included in education and training because they are considered to be an important factor in developing an inclusive environment for youth from alternative care.

"In youth work it is important to continuously reflect on the boundaries in the relationship with young people and to question your role, as a youth worker, in their lives. Boundaries should be flexible. An individualized approach is required and it depends on the situation, on the needs of young people, but also, it depends on the expert who is working with young people while keeping in mind his professionalism."

## 3. Research, advocacy activities and public awareness

The third segment of the program refers to the research and advocacy activities implemented through thematic meetings with representatives of institutions, networking meetings, public forums, conferences and round tables. As a product of numerous meetings, youth workers produced materials such as "Guidelines for

meeting the needs of young people who came out of the system of alternative care" and "Guidelines for development of inclusive working environment". Those are attempts to create an inclusive environment for young people who deserve to experience social equality even though they didn't have the same starting position as most of their peers. With advocacy efforts, youth workers are making this specific population more visible and they are making society more emphatic and aware of importance of their inclusion.

### Outcomes of the program and participation of young people

When the leaders of the program asked young people to single out benefits from their participation in “Contact”, they emphasized practical topics such as searching for an apartment and a job, writing job applications, tips related to the job interview and budgeting. Also, they singled out the topics that are related to communication and establishing relationships with others.

#### Some of the impressions from the participants:

“In March 2016, Association Play organised an educational three day trip. I met a cool and unforgettable group of people. We went out together, participated in workshops, played board games, watched movies and so on. Our youth workers were cheerful and smiling and they saw potential in each and every one of us, they didn't see us as problematic kids from alternative care. I learned a lot about independent living...I met new people, found new friends (I hope we will stay in touch). I would suggest these trips to everybody because that is great place for learning and gathering useful information. And don't forget, you are never alone, there is always somebody who cares!”

#### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- In youth work, it is always important to listen to the needs of young people.
- We should be ready to maintain relations with young people from alternative care because they have difficulties establishing trust. It's very difficult to them to go through parting.
- We need to emphasize strengths of young people from alternative care.
- We must involve young people from alternative care in decision-making processes and take them seriously.

- It is important to enable young people to make mistakes and to try again.
- Young person should be seen as a whole person, with all of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- Youth worker doesn't know what's best for young people. Decisions and choices have to be theirs. Even if they are sometimes wrong.
- Youth work should be about exercising patience, tolerance and a lot of understanding. If you want to provide adequate support to young people, you have to be a professional, but at the same time authentic, sincere and yourself.

For further information please contact Association Play on e-mail: **[udruga.igra@udrugaignra.hr](mailto:udruga.igra@udrugaignra.hr)** or check website: **[www.udrugaignra.hr](http://www.udrugaignra.hr)** and Facebook page: **<https://www.facebook.com/igra.play/?fref=ts>**.

### 4.3. ASSOCIATION FIREFLY: Young Firefly

#### Abstract:

**Firefly** is non-governmental organization that provides support for children, young people and families who are facing malignant diseases. Members of the organization saw great potential in young people who have completed their treatment because their experience and gained strength can be helpful for children and young people who are undergoing treatment and for those who are returning back to the society after the treatment. That led to the creation of Firefly Youth, a group of young people, aged from 16 to 29, who have shared experience of facing malignant disease. Since their establishment, they have implemented different activities that raised awareness about their needs and supported young people in making society more inclusive.

### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Firefly is a non-governmental and non-profit civic organization that was founded in 2000. by the parents of children with malignant diseases and doctors who wanted to assist and provide support for children, young people and families who faced malignant diseases.

#### Mission of the organisation

In its effort to help children, youth and families, Firefly offers a variety of services, organizes and conducts various activities. The Association provides and organizes long-term and short-term free accommodation for families of sick children who are treated outside their local communities. Psychological support is provided through group meetings, individual counseling, psychotherapy and through meetings with therapeutic dog. Furthermore, the Association offers a variety of training in fields that are related to malignant diseases, they organize rehabilitation camps, joint trips and meetings of parents, they mediate in the realization of certain benefits that can help in reduction of financial costs which can be pretty high during hospital treatment.

“Firefly” strives to provide comprehensive support for the families who are facing with malignant diseases. Our wish is to provide help for parents so they are able to put whole their strengths and energy into supporting of their child and to avoid further difficulties related to the treatment, that are often psychological and material nature.

Association is collaborating with various health, education and other expert's association and they are operating at a national, regional and international levels.



Considering that one of the objectives of Fireflies is to improve the rights of children and youth with malignant diseases, it is important to mention that Association is working devotedly in field of advocacy and lobbying. They are trying to achieve greater involvement of volunteers in the health care system, put the focus on rights of hospitalized children and young people and develop guidelines for conduct and communication of medical staff in particularly sensitive and difficult cases.

Employees of the Association often organize public actions, they develop and distribute a large number of publications, worksheets for children and youth, documentaries, educational films and themed cartoons. Some examples of publications are: leaflet *“How to prepare a child for doctor examination and hospitalization”*; brochure *“How to deal with malignant diseases”*; interactive picture book *“Life is not always a day at the beach”* and the documentary *“Firefly children”* which was filmed at the rehabilitation camp.

Firefly is investing its resources in the recruitment, motivation and training of young people who have completed their treatment and whose experience and gained strength can be helpful for those who are undergoing treatment and for those who are returning to their life after treatment. The result of that investment and enthusiasm, among other things, are Firefly Youth.

### Management of the organisation

Firefly has seven employees and they all cover different fields of work. They are – executive director, office manager, project manager for innovative community programs who is also certified gestalt psychotherapist for children; leader and coordinator of the projects for parents of children with malignant diseases; project associate, administrative project associate and social worker.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Firefly Youth are group of young people, aged between 16 and 29 years, who were treated for malignant disease in childhood or adolescence. These young people need a long-term monitoring, support and training which Firefly seeks to ensure through activities of this program. The group Firefly Youth includes young survivor and volunteers who participate equally in the activities of the group and they are one of the biggest cancer survivors group in Europe with such active involvement of members during the year.

### Mission of the program

The goal of the program Firefly Youth is to alleviate period of treatment for children and young people or its aftermath, through continuous raising awareness about their

needs and specific conditions and through organizing different activities that will be implemented by young people themselves. Also, program aims to help young people in accepting their own experiences, strengthening their competences and making youth with malignant diseases more visible on national, regional and international level.

### **Motto of Firefly Youth:**

Ease, awake and connect!

“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.” C.G. Jung

## **Background of the program**



Gathering of Firefly Youth started in May 2013. All young people, aged from 16 to 29, who had experience of treatment for malignant diseases were invited to join the group. Soon after, they launched closed Facebook group in order to improve communication and reach a much larger number of young people, including those who live outside Zagreb.

After establishing groups in physical and virtual spaces, Firefly Youth started to conduct regular meetings and implement numerous activities. Later, they broaden their methods of reaching their target group. For example, they contact parents or young people from medical base and ask if they want to join the group. Also, some young people are introduced with the group activities while undergoing treatment.

It should be emphasized that every young person should be approached individually, because they are all facing their disease and treatment differently and they need to have enough time to work their experience through, even if it is question of years.

“It is not easy to approach a group of young people immediately after you finish your treatment. Usually, a certain period of time needs to pass before you are even able to accept what happened to you and what you have gone through. In fact, the best time for introduction of group activities is while young people are still in treatment because they can see how strong we are and how empowered we are because of our experience. That could also be a great starting position for building friendly relationship between volunteers and young people.”

## **Program content**

All young people who access to Firefly Youth have one goal – to help children and young people who are currently undergoing their treatment. Despite the large age

range of group members, their interaction and cooperation is very successful because of their common experience and equal treatment, regardless of age.

Since Firefly Youth were established, they have organized numerous meetings where they discussed ideas about necessary activities for those who are now in treatment and for those who have completed their treatment. They have explored activities from other countries and set up contacts with young people in order to promote mobility; they have explored the strengths of young people, opportunities and challenging areas; they have arranged joint trainings, excursions, sports activities, projects and have produced promotional films and songs.



An example of an inclusive project, which was designed and implemented by Firefly Youth, was called **"A little light of hope"**. The project had several aims – to increase competences of all children/young people in school so they could cope with difficult circumstances and events; to create conditions for persistent development of child or young person during treatment and to provide support during return period in school and social environment. In other words, this project aimed to assist in the preparation of school environment for the return of the child/young person after the treatment. Activities and trainings of this project were created for young people from class, school employees and parents of colleagues from the class.

Firefly youth decided to work on this project because they knew, from their personal experience, that return in the school environment, after months of absence, can be very demanding and challenging. Young people often feel excitement because they are coming back to school, but at the same time, they sense fear because they worry about compensation of missed classes and they don't know whether they will be accepted from peers and professors or they will be rejected due to changes in their appearance. Also, other students are faced with the fact that these diseases exist and are often confused about it. They don't understand specific effects of the treatment and what is actually happening with their friends/classmate.

This project was consisted of workshops that were implemented by Firefly Youth. But, before they got engaged with implementation, they had to undertake internal training in order to feel more empowered for public speaking and honest opening about their experience. That internal training is consisted of three modules. On first module they discuss all important medical terms; on second module they talk about all possible

activities that could be implemented with children and youth; and on third module, there are working on self-empowerment.

“Children, and especially young people, have an urge to share their story and experience, because it helps them to understand it, accept it and share their emotions. That is why it is important to listen to them, no matter how many times you’ve heard the same story.”

Throughout the project, Firefly Youth have conducted 27 workshops in 19 schools, which included 832 students, 23 parents and 123 school employees. Also, they have produced guidelines for classmates and teachers, which could be useful while preparing school environment for the return of child/young person after treatment.

#### Some guidelines for school employees:

- **Students shouldn’t be encouraged not to think about sick colleague** because that situation could be nice opportunity to equip young people with adequate skills and attitude, which could help them in coping with other difficult situations in life.
- **Students should have all necessary information** about disease, process of treatment and physical changes that their sick classmate would go through. If school employees don’t feel confident enough, they should call somebody who will be more adequate for that type of conversation.
- **A sick classmate should be mentioned from time to time.** It is good to remember some shared moments and to express happiness and expectance about his /her return.
- **Students should be encouraged to stay in contact with the sick classmate** – they can send letters, drawings, make phone calls, talk via Skype, create Facebook group in which they can share all the things from the classroom so that the sick classmate could be well informed and included.
- **Students should be allowed to express their concerns about the sick classmate’s return openly and sincerely.** They need to be informed about all possible physical limitations that sick classmate can have, and they need to come up with common agreement about how they will help him/her and how will they offer support during period of adjustment to school environment.
- **Students who came back from treatment should have the opportunity to share** his/her story, knowledge and experience with other students, but only if he/her wants to.

#### Some guidelines for students:

- **Collect all the information you need** so you could understand what is happening to your colleague, how the treatment is working and what possible changes would it cause.
- **Draw and write about your feelings,** you don’t have to share it with others if you don’t want to, but it will help you to shape your thoughts and emotions, which has curative effect.

- **Give the sense of belonging to the sick classmate**, tell him/her that he/she is important and valuable as person and that he/she has respect from others. Sick classmates don't need pity or seemly messages and the last thing he/she needs is ignorance and isolation. That's why you need to communicate with him/her with sincere interest, personal tone and with willingness to cope with an answer.
- **You should send messages that encourage a sense of belonging** to the class, team, group, such as: "We count on you", "You belong with us even though you are not with us at this moment", "We want you here once you get better" and so on.
- **Organize warm and cheerful welcome gesture** once your sick classmate returns to the class.
- Help and care from others, in a situation when the sick student wants to do something by himself/herself, can be interpreted as humiliation. On the other side, a lack of support in needy situations can be interpreted as rejection. Generally, **if you are not sure what is right thing to do, just ask the student what he/she needs**, that is the best guidepost for support that he/she really needs.

With this project, Firefly Youth started to build more inclusive school environment for sick young people. The thing they want to ensure in the future is equal access to the knowledge during education process. It is known that young people, who are undertaking treatment, are absent from school for months which makes it very hard to compensate everything they missed. That is why Firefly Youth are putting a lot of effort in advocacy for their rights. Therefore, they have developed recommendations that were included in the "Bylaw on primary and secondary education of students with disabilities" created by Ministry of science and education. It remains to be seen how will they be implemented in the practice.



Besides project, Firefly Youth made another big step forward – in 2015. they organized the first International Convention of young people who were treated for malignant diseases named **“A little light of hope”**. The Convention brought together 50 young people from 11 European countries and it was organized under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization. Convention had several aims – to build partnership between young people on international level; to improve competences of the young people who faced malignant disease through different lectures, workshops and exchange of experience and to sensitize professional and general public about needs of this specific population.



Another interesting and valuable activity that Firefly Youth did was campaign that lasted during the week of raising awareness of malignant disease in childhood. Personal stories of children and young people were shared on Facebook page that has over 48.000 followers (posts have reached 650 000 different people in September 2016). Besides sensitization of the general public, the main goal of the campaign was to send message to all those children, young people and parents who are facing malignant disease, that hard period of treatment will pass, that it is possible to bring life back in order and that it is possible to achieve goals and dreams despite the illness.

“It means a lot to the parents if they have a chance to talk to somebody who had same diagnosis as their child. Answer to the simplest question for them could be incredible relief and motivation for further fight.”

So far, Firefly Youth included 60 young people in their activities, they gathered 123 young people from Croatia in their closed Facebook group and they included 11 Firefly Youth in the active organization of well-known Firefly’s rehabilitation camp. Through program, they encourage volunteering and participation of young people and that is why, before every meeting, young people prepare healthy snacks for group, space for activities, organize ice breaking and energizer games, make group photos etc.

### Outcomes of the program and participation of young people

Young people are encouraged to organize and implement some of the group activities, and if there is a need for professional lectures and sessions, they always call experts who are willing to share their knowledge, experience and skills with young people on certain topic.



### Firefly Youth's personal story:

"As a young person who was treated for malignant disease, I wanted to forget that part of my life and move on. I didn't want to talk about it, it would have been so embarrassing if somebody had found out I had had cancer. Seven years after my treatment, Zoran from Association "Firefly" called me and asked me to come to the meeting, to have conversation with parents whose children were in the process of treatment and to help them with my experience. I agreed and went to the meeting.

For those parents, it was a relief to see a young healthy person, who went through exact same thing like their child. After I saw their faces full of joy, I knew that that is the place where I belong. I decided to give all of me and help as much as I could. Through participation in the workshops and through volunteering, I knew I was helping other people, but in a fact, I got even more for myself. All of a sudden, I was not ashamed of my past, I could openly talk about it and how it helped me to become stronger person with higher self-confidence. Now, with that strength, I am ready to welcome all new challenges in my life with a smile."

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- In youth work, it is extremely important to get to know young people and to listen to their needs. With recognition of their true needs, we have chance to build relationship and encourage them on better engagement.
- You always have to be honest and relaxed when working with youth. Sometimes, the desire to protect them and the need to hide the truth from them can be harmful.
- It is important that the meetings are structured and that topics are constructive, but we should always insist on non-formal gathering as well. Sometimes you can reach out to young people and socialize even more through non-formal approach.
- Not all of the young people are willing to give something into the group. Somebody will give more, others will give less, and we should be fine with it.
- Young people who have experienced treatment for malignant diseases are particularly vulnerable group. In contact with them we have to be gentle, give them as much as time they need and be satisfied with all outcomes.
- We should always encourage young people on active participation. The easiest way is to do something instead of them, but that is not the point. The goal is to make a self-sustaining group.
- If group doesn't connect easily, it is always a good idea to organize joint trip. Sometimes, you need nothing more than day off and good will.

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## 5. CASE STUDIES FROM ITALY

### 5.1. CESIE: TANDEM NOW - Mentoring and Vocational Assistance for Migrant Youth

#### Abstract:

**TANDEM NOW – Mentoring and Vocational Assistance for Migrant Youth** developed a blended mentoring program for migrant youth. The mentors involved were adults with a migrant background, who could function as a role model for young migrant mentees. Mentors received a specific training in preparation of the mentoring process. The nature of the mentoring was a combination of face-to-face meetings with online meetings. The evaluation showed that mentors enjoyed learning new skills and supporting a young person; and mentees said that the mentoring helped them to overcome difficulties and find new motivation and new ideas for their future education and employment.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

CESIE is a European centre of studies and initiatives established in 2001, inspired by the work and theories of the sociologist and social activist Danilo Dolci (1924-1997).

CESIE's vision: "The world is only one creature"

CESIE is located in Palermo, Sicily, in the centre of the city, which can be characterized as one of the most disadvantaged urban zones of the city. There are a number of social problems such as lack of employment opportunities, the presence of an organised crime organisation (the Sicilian Mafia), drug trafficking, drug abuse, and generally a low educational level. Many young people are early school leavers, and frequently become parents as teenagers. The centre of Palermo has also become multicultural in the last years: many migrants from different African and Asian countries live here.

#### Mission of the organisation

CESIE's mission is to promote growth through innovative and participative educational approaches. Its vision, the world being only one creature, is symbolized by the organisation's logo: a globe in the form of a pomegranate, turned upside down. The pomegranate symbolizes the 'fruitful' unity of people and groups growing together under the same peel. CESIE's pomegranate grows on all types of grounds becoming thus a symbol of prosperity in education. The organisation breaks with an ethnocentric global drive and focuses on individuals and diversity. Doing so, it applies the innovative

educational non-violent methods of Danilo Dolci. CESIE's world is upside-down: building on its experience and coherently to its story, it experiences the possibility to overturn dynamics and approaches, aiming at a smarter and more sustainable worldwide future educational cooperation.

In its work, CESIE addresses a variety of people and groups: children and young people, women and men, older people, (young) entrepreneurs, researchers, professionals in social services, teachers, educators and youth workers, migrants and minorities, people with special needs, civil society organisations, training providers and public authorities.

CESIE dedicates special attention to young people with fewer opportunities, i.e. those having a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face different kinds of social, cultural, educational, health, geographical and economic obstacles. Its aim is to provide opportunities to these young people, providing them access to formal and non-formal education, to transnational mobility, to participation and active citizenship, with the ultimate goal to empower and include them in society at large.

### Management of the organisation

CESIE's 40 staff members are international and multicultural and characterized by a wide range of profiles, skills and qualifications. The staff is thus a very concrete and positive example of intercultural understanding and open European values. CESIE also relies on more than 50 external experts, including sociologists, psychologists, researchers, professors, trainers, social workers, health professionals, and others. Equally important is the contribution of numerous interns and volunteers, involved in activities at our organisation and supporting third-sector partners at local level.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

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In many European countries migrant youth or young people from ethnic minorities do not have any role models in future-oriented fields throughout their job careers, neither within their families nor in their social contexts. If at all, they tend to take up traditional job trainings and jobs, as they and their families do not consider other options for various reasons. Therefore it is considered crucial to offer youngsters mentors from their own ethnic communities who accompany them on their way to a successful VET and job career.

## Mission of the project

- Create role models for migrant youth or youth from ethnic minorities throughout their vocational career
- Contribute to the effective training of mentors by understanding the needs of young people and local contexts
- Develop ‘blended mentoring’ (a mix of face-to-face and online activities) enabling mentoring to be easily integrated into career counselling

## Background of the project

The project was a European “Transfer of Innovation” project. This means that good practice – mentoring for migrants by migrant role models – was further developed and transferred to other European countries. The original “Tandem” project had been developed and tested in Austria. The aim of the TANDEM NOW project was to transfer the mentoring technique to other European countries, adding an innovative element: the blended mentoring, where face-to-face meetings between mentor and mentee were combined with virtual meetings carried out thanks to the use of new technologies and social media.

The project was co-funded by the Lifelong Learning Program of the European Commission and had the duration of two years: it started in December 2012 and ended in November 2014. As this was a European project, a European partnership between seven organisations was built. Throughout the project, every partner had specific tasks and was responsible for the implementation of the mentoring activities at local level (including recruitment of mentors and mentees, organisation of training, organisation of events and follow-up activities to the mentoring process). The division of tasks allowed drawing on the experience of different partners; the local implementation of the program in each partner country allowed adaptation of the mentoring program to the local context. All activities were implemented effectively and successfully in terms of fulfilling all of the activities described in the proposal. The project also obtained a high degree of positive feedback regarding the quality of the TANDEM NOW Blended-Mentoring-Package.

In all seven countries, 69 adult mentors and 70 young mentees participated in the project. Locally in Palermo, CESIE involved 11 mentors and 11 mentees. Mentors had Tunisian, Moroccan, Nigerian, Bangladesh, Pakistani, Mauritian and Senegalese migrant background; young people (mentees) were between 15 and 18 years old and came from Guinea, Libya, Bangladesh, Gambia, Mauritius.

## Project contents

In Palermo the project was implemented as follows: 13 mentors were recruited and enrolled as volunteers. They were adult migrant people from diverse countries with different professions: a lawyer, cultural-linguistic mediators, interpreters, educators and trainers. The training of volunteer mentors and the organisation of the mentoring process (matching between mentors and mentees, organisation of common events and follow-up) was followed mainly by two project managers from CESIE, both of them having experience in working with young people, including young people with migrant background.

The volunteer mentors were specifically prepared for their tasks: within the project a “Curriculum” was developed in order to prepare a mentor for their upcoming tasks: it consisted of a comprehensive introduction to the blended mentoring concept as well as qualification in relevant topics, such as intercultural issues, communication and social media. CESIE organised six meetings with mentors in little groups, so that the preparation was quite intensive.



More in detail, the training for mentors was structured as follows:

- The starting point of each training is Chapter 1 of the Curriculum, “Mentoring”: this part contains compact information on the TANDEM NOW concept in general and on the course of the mentoring process in particular. Practical methods are used in the training to prepare the mentors for their role and tasks, and they learn about the different tools (e.g. self-assessment, resources, etc.) they can use in their work with mentees.
- Chapter 2 of the Curriculum, “Social media”, first offers a theoretical introduction and an overview of the subject. In what follows, different methods are presented which are helpful for handling social media and offer a critical discussion of the subject.



- In Chapter 3, “Intercultural sensitivity”, there is a short theoretical introduction to the term “culture” and “intercultural trainings” as well as practical intercultural exercises.

Two main target groups were involved in the project:

- Mentors from migrant backgrounds; they functioned as role models due to their success and career history. Mentors participated in the training of Mentors, tested and evaluated the Curriculum for TANDEM NOW training of mentors and the developed TANDEM NOW Blended-Mentoring-Package
- Mentees: youngsters with migrant background/from ethnic minorities who tested and evaluated the TANDEM NOW Blended-Mentoring-Package.

The idea of the project is based on the observation that many migrant youth or youth from ethnic minorities in most European countries do not have any role models throughout their vocational and professional career, which is the reason why many young migrants tend to finish only the compulsory education without aiming for specialist vocational education or higher education. For these young people, receiving advice from an older, successful mentor with a similar background, can make a real difference.



In Palermo, most of the young mentees had arrived only shortly before in Italy, having thus many questions regarding education, the labour market and Italian society in general, and being very interested in getting to know people.

For the recruitment of mentors and mentees in Palermo, CESIE published a call for participation on its website and social media, and contacted people it already knew via e-mail and phone. Further, CESIE locally cooperated with different reception centres for migrants: Comunità Stellaria, Comunità La Mimosa, La Casa San Francesco, and two not for profit organisations working with migrant people: Centro Astalli and La danza delle ombre.

The piloting process of the mentoring program started after completion of the training program for mentors. It had the duration of five months and was structured as follows:

1. **An Opening Event** was organised to launch the mentoring process: at this event, mentors and mentees met for the first time. Energizers and games were used to

break the ice between participants; and the mentors were matched with their mentees.

2. **Blended-Mentoring meetings:** mentors and mentees carried out a number of meetings, both face-to-face and online. The number and duration of meetings differed between the mentor-mentee pairs and depending on the type of meeting – face-to-face meetings had usually a duration between 1 and 2 hours, while online meetings were much shorter, around 15-20 minutes. The meetings were structured and supported by the tools provided in the Blended Mentoring Folder, which included exercises to be done together and Reflective Diaries for mentors and mentees. Mentors kept track of all meetings through monitoring sheets, where they briefly described the data and contents of the meetings. Some mentoring pairs met in the CESIE premises.
3. **Conclusion event:** at the end of the Blended-Mentoring Program, a final event was organised, where the project results were presented and participants of the mentoring program shared their experiences.

The project aimed to support the inclusion of young migrants through mentoring with adult migrants coming from a similar background. Mentors were specifically prepared for the mentoring process: during the preparatory training they reflected on their role as mentors and were prepared for intercultural encounters. This ensured the respect of the principles of inclusion, diversity and equality.

### Outcomes of the project and participation of young people

Within the TANDEM NOW project the products were adapted to the needs of the young migrants and to their respective regional contexts. In addition to the development of social competences, the project took into consideration the respective situation of the employment market for each of the youngsters. In the course of the piloting process the adapted materials were implemented in the training of the mentors and in the mentoring activities offered to the youngsters. Thus, the materials were evaluated and translated in other languages by the consortium.

Two specific outcomes were tested:

- The TANDEM NOW Blended-Mentoring-Folder, including amongst other the Reflective Diary
- The Curriculum for TANDEM NOW training of Mentors

The TANDEM NOW mentoring program created a great opportunity for young people from migrant backgrounds/ethnic minorities facing difficulties to enter the labour market to acquire new skills, increase their confidence and motivation in order to pursue their career and education goals. Importantly, positive relationships were

formed offering young people a support network and the opportunity to meet new people.

In Italy, the implementation of the piloting experienced some delay due to the festival of Ramadan. Many of the mentors and mentees were Muslim and therefore some of the activities started later than planned due to the limited availability among the group during the month of Ramadan. Some mentees also left the program before the end of the pilot due to finding seasonal work outside the city. New mentees were recruited; however, this caused a delay in the start of some of the mentoring relationships.

The evaluation and feedback of the mentoring program in Italy showed that all the mentoring pairs used the traditional method of face-to-face meetings to communicate with each other. For some mentor-mentee pairs, this was the preferred method of communication over online communication or social media.



Mentors mentioned some difficulties they had during the mentoring process: these were related to the limited timeframe, sometimes to limited language skills of the mentees, causing communication problems, and limited access mentees had to social media. The focus of the mentoring process on education and employment was not always the main focus for the mentees, as they had other urgent issues to solve first. This meant that not all mentor-mentee pairs addressed this topic as originally foreseen. However, even if education and employment were not key aspect for all, overall the established relationships were seen as positive.

Critical points young mentees remarked at the end of the program included: Difficulties to find the time to meet regularly with the mentor; difficulties to access computer; language difficulties, especially understanding written Italian; preference to have more face-to-face meetings.

In Italy, all local organisations (reception centres and NGOs) involved in the project expressed serious interest in using the Blended Mentoring Program. The products with detailed descriptions for every step of the mentoring process are translated in Italian

and always available electronically on CESIE's website, as well as in other languages on the TANDEM NOW website.

Young migrant mentees were interviewed after the project about their experience and their suggestions. One of the mentees said:

"I decided to become a mentee to meet new people. I am new to this country and this community so it is a nice way to meet different people whilst getting support. I received a lot of motivational talks and encouragement from my mentor, which I really valued. We talked about the things I want and I need from life and what I have to strive for to make a better life for myself. [...] mentoring is a good thing to get involved in. Particularly if you are facing difficulties and do not have a good support network, it is a good way to gain assistance and advice. You can learn from someone else's experiences that may have faced the same difficulties as you."

Other comments from mentees included:

"I have overcome difficult situations"

"It is nice to have someone who listens to my situation"

"I have improved my Italian"

"I would like to have more meetings and to continue the program"

### TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL YOUTH WORK

- Assess the motivation of participants: A lesson learnt from the Tandem Now project is that for this kind of project it is very important to carefully assess the motivation of participants, both of mentors and mentees, as otherwise the risk of dropouts is very high. Motivation could be also increased by adapting the program even better to the local context – for example, in Palermo the focus on career and educational advice was not as important as would have been general advice and inclusion efforts for the young mentee.
- Some training for mentees would have been advisable, as well as following better the mentoring process, e.g. by organizing more common meetings, group mentoring or similar.
- It is important to provide a concrete incentive to young participants – the objective of career and professional mentoring proved to be too abstract for some of them. An incentive could be, for example, the possibility to participate at a mobility experience abroad.
- Recommendations for training of mentors: use case studies for the illustration of contents.

- Recommendations for mentoring material: integrating more visual tools can support mentees with low language skills.
- Be flexible in the delivery of the mentoring guidelines.
- For the blended mentoring it would be recommended to set up a specific online portal with online resources (e.g. games, video case studies and exercises) to be used during the mentoring. This would encourage both mentors and mentees to use more online mentoring, as often it was difficult to motivate both parties to use social media

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## 5.2. CESIE: ALCE – Appetite for Learning Comes with Eating Project

### Abstract:

**ALCE – Appetite for Learning Comes with Eating** was a two-year European project bringing together two groups of women: young migrant women and senior native women. The project used the exchange about culinary traditions, natural curative methods and common cooking sessions to break down barriers between young people and older people and the wider community. The women designed and created a common recipe book, containing descriptions of natural curative remedies, traditional recipes from different cultures, and also “fusion recipes”, which combine elements of different culinary traditions and cultures.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

CESIE is a European centre of studies and initiatives established in 2001, inspired by the work and theories of the sociologist and social activist Danilo Dolci (1924-1997).

CESIE’s vision: “The world is only one creature”

CESIE is located in Palermo, Sicily, in the centre of the city, which can be characterized as one of the most disadvantaged urban zones of the city. There are a number of social problems such as lack of employment opportunities, the presence of organised crime organisation (the Sicilian Mafia), drug trafficking, drug abuse, and generally a low educational level. Many young people are early school leavers, and frequently become parents as teenagers. The centre of Palermo has also become multicultural in the last years: many migrants from different African and Asian countries live here.

### Mission of the organisation

CESIE’s mission is to promote growth through innovative and participative educational approaches. Its vision, the world being only one creature, is symbolized by the organisation’s logo: a globe in the form of a pomegranate, turned upside down. The pomegranate symbolizes the ‘fruitful’ unity of people and groups growing together under the same peel. CESIE’s pomegranate grows on all types of grounds becoming thus a symbol of prosperity in education. The organisation breaks with an ethnocentric global drive and focuses on individuals and diversity. Doing so, it applies the innovative educational non-violent methods of Danilo Dolci. CESIE’s world is upside-down: building on its experience and coherently to its story, it experiences the possibility to



overturn dynamics and approaches, aiming at a smarter and more sustainable worldwide future educational cooperation.

In its work, CESIE addresses a variety of people and groups: children and young people, women and men, older people, (young) entrepreneurs, researchers, professionals in social services, teachers, educators and youth workers, migrants and minorities, people with special needs, civil society organisations, training providers and public authorities.

CESIE dedicates special attention to young people with fewer opportunities, i.e. those having a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face different kinds of social, cultural, educational, health, geographical and economic obstacles. Its aim is to provide opportunities to these young people, providing them access to formal and non-formal education, to transnational mobility, to participation and active citizenship, with the ultimate goal to empower and include them in society at large.

### **Management of the organisation**

CESIE's 40 staff members are international and multicultural and characterized by a wide range of profiles, skills and qualifications. The staff is thus a very concrete and positive example of intercultural understanding and open European values. CESIE also relies on more than 50 external experts, including sociologists, psychologists, researchers, professors, trainers, social workers, health professionals, and others. Equally important is the contribution of numerous interns and volunteers, involved in activities at our organisation and supporting third-sector partners at local level.

## **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

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ALCE – Appetite for Learning Comes with Eating was a project bringing together two target groups through the exchange of food traditions and natural curative methods: native senior women and young migrant women.

### **Mission of the project**

The aim of the project was to break social isolation and facilitate an intercultural and intergenerational dialogue between the two groups suffering of multiple discrimination. The project also aimed to encourage adult learning through the recognition and validation of the competences (literacy, civic and entrepreneurial skills) acquired by the women.

## Background of the project

The idea for ALCE project came from one European partner of the project who was already involving local communities and migrants through analysis of culinary traditions and common cooking sessions. They had created a Food festival involving migrant communities.

ALCE had the duration of two years and ran from November 2012 to end of October 2014. It was a project funded by the European Commission's Grundtvig action under the Lifelong Learning Programme. Five partner organisations from Italy, United Kingdom, Austria, France and Lithuania were involved in the project. CESIE already had experience working with youth and with migrant communities. In this field, CESIE and the European partners of ALCE project had already worked together before in other European projects. Only for one of the partners it was the first collaboration: they were involved, as they had already worked with elderly people. All in all, the cooperation in the project was very good.

100 women from young migrant and senior native communities across the 5 countries were involved in the project through a series of non-formal learning activities as part of a training course. The project also supported the learning mobilities of 20 women to participate in learning activities in another European country. 350 community members were engaged through a Cultural Roadmap of events which took place in each country and celebrated culinary and curative traditions and fusion intercultural recipes.

In Italy, a total of 25 participants were involved in the ALCE project: 14 migrant women and 11 native senior women.

## Project content

In Italy, the ALCE team was composed by two coordinators and project managers and a trainer, all of them with professional experience in this kind of projects.

The target groups of the project were senior native women and young migrant women. The motivation for selecting these target groups was to increase awareness of multiculturalism in Europe and of a cultural diversity to be considered. Further, the aim was to raise awareness about the discrimination of young migrant and senior woman. The combination of situations of senior women who have knowledge and time, and young migrant women in need of integration worked really well. Senior women usually do not participate in social life and especially not in educational activities. The project was thus an opportunity for both of the groups.

CESIE involved local organisations to recruit target groups. At the beginning of the project it created promotional material and contacted organisations working with

migrants, with women and, for the first time, organisations working with elderly people. CESIE established two new partnerships with local organisations: with an organisation working with women who had serious health problems; and with a “pasticceria”, a pastry shop, which became the place where cooking workshops took place.

The ALCE project started with the study of the following five fundamental notions:

- Equal gender equality
- Intergeneration intercultural learning
- Multiple discriminations
- Sustainable development
- Cultural knowledge transmission

Each partner organisation prepared a workshop on one of the fundamental notions, including a theoretical background and practical activities based on non-formal methods. Then, a “Training of Trainers” course was organised to share expertise among the group of trainers on the five fundamental notions. The aim was to transfer the knowledge and the methodology to be used for the following project activity, the Adult Learning Training Course, to set up the evaluation and monitoring process, and to plan the involvement of target groups. The results and findings of the “Training of Trainers” played an important role in determining the specific content of the guidelines for the Adult Learning Training Course with its seven modules.

The core activity of the ALCE project was the creation and implementation of the Adult Learning Training Course with seven modules. The activities of the course were based on non-formal methods that allowed young and senior women to get to know each other, communicate and exchange on the same level. One of the young participants said, in fact, after the project: “We didn’t have any difficulty in relating to each other; no distinction was made between us and what I noticed was that the trainer adopted a very natural approach in bringing senior and young people together.”



The principles of inclusion, diversity and equality were at the core of this project and were taken into consideration already during project planning phase. The basic idea of the project was to foster the inclusion of young migrant and senior local women through accessible educational activities, as both of the groups are rather

marginalized in society and participate rarely in such activities. The methods adopted and especially the topic of culinary traditions and natural curative methods to which all

participating women, young and senior, could relate to ensured equal participation and meetings at eye level between the participants. At the same time diversity was recognised as an important principle : the project provided the opportunity to get to know women from a diverse background, and the activities gave space to share diverse experiences and diverse cultural traditions among participants.

The Italian trainer said the following about her experience working with young and senior women:

“What an intense experience...cooking, group work, learning, trips, recipes, organizing the event and a lot of talk! ALCE women taught me how essential it is to let people from different cultures just be together and share, to realize that actually there is not so much difference here and there in this world. ALCE affected my professional life. I improved my flexibility and capacity of solving urgent situations, developed a more learner oriented approach and the capacity to deal with such a diverse group. I also developed a big interest in the topics of transmission of intangible heritage and active citizenship.”



### **Module 1: Community Mapping and Intercultural Dialogue**

The activities of this module included: Introduction of the participants from different cultures, team-building games based on recognition of the differences within the group, creating a map of our own reality.

### **Module 2: Learning on Culinary Traditions and Natural Curative Methods**

In this module, participants shared stories about kitchen tools related to traditions and personal memories. They cooked together and presented recipes and natural curative remedies.

### **Module 3: Knowledge Transmission**

This module stimulated learners to share their knowledge about traditional cooking, natural remedies and personal stories related to family, childhood events and other important stories. Participants created new multicultural recipes, so called “fusion recipes”.

### **Module 4: Ideation of the Book**

In this module, participants designed and created the recipe book about Culinary traditions and natural curative methods.

### **Modules 5 and 6: How to Create a Cultural Event**

This module was about the planning, organisation and promotion of cultural events. Participants used the competences acquired during the previous modules in order to plan, exchange ideas, distribute roles and responsibilities, calculate costs and coordinate an event promoting culinary traditions. Module 5 supported the group to start working on creating the event. Afterwards some of the learners attended the European training course in another country where they met women from the other partner countries also planning the cultural event. Together, the international group shared ideas on how to deliver the events across the partner countries called the “Roadmap of cultural events” and improved their knowledge with learners from the other groups. For Module 6, participants gathered again in their own countries to continue preparing for the event, enriched by the new inputs from the European training course.

### **Module 7: Evaluation of Modules and Local Event**

In order to evaluate the personal impact of the training course and the learning outcomes of participants, this module was dedicated to review, analyze and assess the overall training course and its modules.

After the Adult Learning Training Course, 15 native and migrant women took part in Learning Mobilities and delivered cooking workshops in another partner country. The participants put together all the recipes in a book, which was then published.

The “European road map of cultural events” was organised by all women together, they were the protagonists of the events. Each event in each partner country hosted two participants from each country, in the same period but not on the same days.

These cultural events were organised in each country to create the opportunity for 100 women to put in practice knowledge and skills acquired during the educational process of the training course, by leading cooking workshops and organizing the event. The events also involved local communities and raised awareness about culinary traditions and natural remedies from European communities. Thus, the intangible patrimony was promoted, and the Book of recipes was presented and distributed to the participants of the events.

The only problem that occurred during the implementation of the project was that due to problems with the documents one of the migrant participants could not participate at the international mobility and attend one of the cultural events. It was an unpleasant issue that inhibited respect of the equality principle.



## Outcomes of the project and participation of young people

ALCE enabled migrant and native senior women to re-enter into the educational sphere and led to better interaction, solidarity and wellbeing of these women. The women increased their key competences and developed practical skills, increased social inclusion and confidence to re-enter education and work sphere.

The project created an opportunity for five adult educators to improve their competences in the educational field and learn, exchange and develop innovative methodologies for the work with multicultural and multigenerational groups.



One of the young migrant participants was interviewed about her involvement in the project. She was informed about the project by the Project Manager of the ALCE project in CESIE and after the info day, she was immediately interested. She is passionate for cooking, even if the cooking was just a part of the project.

She was interested in meeting and learning from other people of different ages and from different cultures, and in participating in a project running at international level. She appreciated particularly the opportunity to get to know older women, as there are usually no contacts between young and older women outside the family context. She keeps the recipe book in her house like a treasure. She has stayed in touch with other participants through the Facebook group. She has tried some of the recipes. All in all, the whole project has been organised perfectly, so she does not have any specific further suggestion for the implementation of activities.

### Learning Outcomes – statements from participants:

“People from different backgrounds and nationalities have many things in common, but at the same time are all different and unique people with different ways to think and to see life”;

“Elderly people are younger than what we imagine”;

“Many new recipes”;

“To make presentations and to work in a team”;

“The beauty of being all different women and each one having her own force.”

The exchanged knowledge and ideas were gathered in the “ALTC Guidelines” for the training course. The Training Course increased professional experience and tested a



new and innovative methodology in the field of intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.

The Book of recipes is available in 5 languages and additional recipes are available on the project website. One of the traditional recipes, “Artichokes ‘alla villanella’ with potatoes” from the ALCE Recipe Book, has been included in the EXPO Milano 2015 official collection of traditional recipes from all over the world, Expo world recipes.

The ALCE project facilitated encounters between women from different ages (14 to 75 years old in Palermo). It was a very interesting opportunity for young participants to meet elderly people and to realise their different views of life and traditions. The involvement of the women has been a great opportunity for them to increase key competences and learn about other cultures living in their local community.

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- **Identifying Participants’ Needs:** The trainer should ensure that learners’ needs are reviewed and identified before enrolling the learners into the course. The assessment benefits the trainer, helps the learners to identify their own learning goals and motivation to participate in the course.
- **Not getting too attached to the group of learners:** The target group of migrant and senior women are identified as vulnerable and coming from the most marginalized communities. With this in mind, the women may be experiencing other issues outside of the project. It is important during the delivery of the training to make a connection with the women and to develop trust – a good relationship between teacher and learner is important for learning and development. However, you should instill boundaries to avoid situations in which you could become their ‘counsellor’ or ‘mentor’. You should refer your learners onto other relevant agencies that can provide the support you will not have the capacity to do within the training course.
- **Creating group dynamics:** This is one of the most important factors at the beginning of the project. As the participants don’t know each other and often are for the first time in a situation where they come into contact with different cultures and backgrounds, it is essential that they feel as part of the group. Help participants to bond with each other by providing open discussions and activities

which will help them to know each other better, team work activities and by starting each session with a group building game.

- Giving space to everyone but keeping the situation under control: At the beginning of the training course it is important to discuss some general rules and wishes for how the women will act with each other and what their ideas are if something is not working well (e.g. if someone is talking do not interrupt, respect everyone, do not judge). Ground rules should be created by the whole group at the start of the training. It is important to revisit these rules and update them during the whole process. Use a timer to control presentation time to support keeping the situation under control.
- Generating good discussion with the learners: It is important to give everyone in the group the opportunity to say something during the discussions. Encourage shy persons and be strict with those who like to dominate. Encourage interaction through the group exercises and activities. Ensure you include ice breakers and group building games to bring the group closer together and to help generate good discussion afterwards.
- Keeping learners engaged during each session: An overview of the whole program can help to brace oneself for the whole training which is important, because the participants know what they can expect. It is important to show learners from the start the advantages of participating in each session and the whole program: improvement of skills, gaining new competences, enjoying interesting activities, bonding with new people etc. Each session should highlight the learning achievements and reinforce what they have achieved in each workshop.
- The learners are different and everyone learns differently: Not everyone learns the same way so it is important to mix your activities to incorporate different learning styles within the group, a mix of different learning methods is a crucial factor during the training. Be flexible in your training delivery and regardless of your training preference, don't rely on one type of approach otherwise you risk your sessions being non-inclusive and disengaging to the learner. Effective trainers are flexible in their teaching and can motivate their learners. The more styles you include, the better the learning experience will be for your learners.

- Sustaining the value of non-formal education when participants come from a social context very focused on formal education: It is important to highlight the competences from non-formal education that they have gained during the training and ensure they have an understanding of what they gained and that it happened in a non-formal way. Also explain to learners that: the competences you gain in non-formal education are recognised by the EU. Non-formal education is fun and easy way to develop competences important for professional and future life.
- Meeting country specific requirements: It is important to learn and analyze your country requirements before you start to deliver the training. Consider the content of each session and think about the legal requirements and codes of practices regarding cooking, public events, health and safety, access needs, working with vulnerable adults that exist in your country. How will this impact and influence your training? Are there any additional training, materials, support that you should provide?

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### 5.3. CESIE: INSART - Youth Integration through Art and Interculturality

#### Abstract:

**INSART – Youth integration through art and interculturality** was a European project that used arts and intercultural dialogue for the integration of young people aged from 16 and 25 years, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including migrant backgrounds. Different forms of art and methods were used for this purpose, and CESIE used dance for its local workshop. Evaluations and feedback showed that young people had gained various skills through the project activities, which are relevant for their future employability.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

CESIE is a European centre of studies and initiatives established in 2001, inspired by the work and theories of the sociologist and social activist Danilo Dolci (1924-1997).

CESIE's vision: "The world is only one creature"

CESIE is located in Palermo, Sicily, in the centre of the city, which can be characterized as one of the most disadvantaged urban zones of the city. There are a number of social problems such as lack of employment opportunities, the presence of an organised crime organisation (the Sicilian Mafia), drug trafficking, drug abuse, and generally a low educational level. Many young people are early school leavers, and frequently become parents as teenagers. The centre of Palermo has also become multicultural in the last years: many migrants from different African and Asian countries live here.

### Mission of the organisation

CESIE's mission is to promote growth through innovative and participative educational approaches. Its vision, the world being only one creature, is symbolized by the organisation's logo: a globe in the form of a pomegranate, turned upside down. The pomegranate symbolizes the 'fruitful' unity of people and groups growing together under the same peel. CESIE's pomegranate grows on all types of grounds becoming thus a symbol of prosperity in education. The organisation breaks with an ethnocentric global drive and focuses on individuals and diversity. Doing so, it applies the innovative educational non-violent methods of Danilo Dolci. CESIE's world is upside-down: building on its experience and coherently to its story, it experiences the possibility to overturn dynamics and approaches, aiming at a smarter and more sustainable worldwide future educational cooperation.

In its work, CESIE addresses a variety of people and groups: children and young people, women and men, older people, (young) entrepreneurs, researchers, professionals in social services, teachers, educators and youth workers, migrants and minorities, people with special needs, civil society organisations, training providers and public authorities.

CESIE dedicates special attention to young people with fewer opportunities, i.e. those having a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face different kinds of social, cultural, educational, health, geographical and economic obstacles. Its aim is to provide opportunities to these young people, providing them access to formal and non-formal education, to transnational mobility, to participation and active citizenship, with the ultimate goal to empower and include them in society at large.

### Management of the organisation

CESIE's 40 staff members are international and multicultural and characterized by a wide range of profiles, skills and qualifications. The staff is thus a very concrete and positive example of intercultural understanding and open European values. CESIE also relies on more than 50 external experts, including sociologists, psychologists, researchers, professors, trainers, social workers, health professionals, and others. Equally important is the contribution of numerous interns and volunteers, involved in activities at our organisation and supporting third-sector partners at local level.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

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INSART was an innovative project using an artistic mediation methodology as a powerful tool to raise self-awareness and self-confidence of young people from disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds.

### Mission of the project

The aim of the project was to support young people to develop their non-cognitive skills within a non-formal or informal environment, helping them to find their way in life and in the labour market through the process and the experience of “making art”. The INSART methodology was transferred in local and international workshops to adult trainers and youth workers.



In short, the main objectives of the INSART project were:

- Integrating and making complementary, classic professional social inclusion methods with a more efficient methodology, innovative and more oriented to young people aged 16-25 years and coming from disadvantaged background, possibly “Not in education, employment, or training” (NEET);
- Motivating targeted young people in order to facilitate their access to employment;
- Training Adult trainers and teachers in new tools fostering inclusion.

### Background of the project

INSART was a European project developed in cooperation with organisations coming from five different European countries, and funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. It had the duration of two years and was implemented (with a break of some months) between December 2013 and May 2016.

The original project idea was developed by Elan Interculturel, the French partner based in Paris. The organisation was already working with PARACOMAND'ART, a company in Belgium, where the artist Werner Moron created a methodology to work with people to develop artistic creativity using two “pillars”: the real path and the imaginary path. The idea for INSART project was to collaborate and use this methodology with disadvantaged young people, with young migrants and refugee communities, who do not have the skills and the necessary self-confidence to access the employment market. Each partner used the same basic methodology, applying it, however, to different art forms – visual art, dance therapy, theatre and film making, and photography and drawing.

The project involved organisations from the following countries: Germany, Belgium, United Kingdom, France and Italy. Each partner had worked before with Elan Interculturel in other projects, mostly focusing on intercultural dialogue and on artistic expression. In this project, intercultural dialogue and artistic expression were linked for the first time. The collaboration between the organisations was very good, because



all of them had a lot of experience, and all had been working with the target group of disadvantaged people before.

Each partner organisation organised local workshops for young people, using a different form of art as a basis. For the workshops, the partner organisations collaborated with local organisations working with marginalized people. In total, 70 young people were involved in the project at international level. At the body movement workshops CESIE organised in Palermo 17 young people between 18 to 25 years participated.

## Project content

### The main project activities included:

**Exploring networks and good practice:** the project partners drafted a study on stakeholders involved in integration of disadvantaged young people and their use of artistic approach.

**Methodological preparation:** A week of residence training for partner organisations was organised where the two methodological pillars were introduced.

**Experimentation – Creation of pilot sessions:** The pilot sessions proposed artistic workshops to 70 young people from disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds across the different partner countries in Paris, Berlin, Palermo and Liverpool. Some young people from each country participated also in the final international conference in Berlin.

**Creation of two training courses for adult trainers and educators:** A one-day training course was organised at local level in all partner countries in Paris, Berlin, Palermo and Liverpool to give participants new skills and resources for their personal and professional development to develop innovative methods of engagement for youth. The second training titled “Art mediation and Interculturality” was held at international level in Berlin and was organised for trainers, educators, artists, youth workers interested in the intersection of art and interculturality, in making art a source of developing motivation, engagement and autonomy.

Each partner country has organised local workshops - in Paris, partners organised theatre and film-making workshop; in Berlin, photography and drawing workshop; in Palermo, body movement workshop and in Liverpool, visual art workshop.

The artistic mediation methodology of the INSART project is based on two methodological pillars:

- **Intercultural Approach:** this approach, and in particular intercultural psychology, acknowledges the existence of multiple cultural identities in Europe and the

absence of acknowledgement of some depreciated cultural identities. The approach recognizes cultural differences and their involvement in the creation of pedagogical interventions. In this perspective, diversity is seen as a resource in the education process.

- **Art Mediation:** this method has been developed by artist Werner Moron and his Paracommand'arts team using art as a method to inspire and motivate young people intimately. In particular, two methodological elements developed by Paracommand'arts have been used and adapted by the INSART project: "Real path / Imaginary path" and the "Active principles of Art". The first step of this methodology consists of observing in the most neutral way the own personal being – the “real path”. Then participants are asked to use their imagination to transform, add, change the real path – in other words, create an “imaginary path”, which they express through arts, photography, dance, drama, music etc. To do this, you also need the interaction with the others, and this path makes the artistic process. Also, it supports the development of the person because it can really help you to go beyond your limits, the way you perceive yourself in the real way: if you perceive yourself in an imaginary way, everything is possible somehow. Participants are guided by artists to the active principles of arts: in a dance workshop, for example, participants will be usually led through an empirical discovery of the body, space, movement and rhythm.

### Body movement workshops implemented by CESIE

The main people involved at CESIE in the project were professionals: two project managers from CESIE supporting the whole program, and a professional educator of young people and artist facilitator in the field of dance and movement expression.

Since the beginning of the project CESIE's project manager started to get in contact with local partners during the research to obtain information about the best way to involve young people through arts. CESIE worked in the area of Ballaró in the centre of Palermo with social community centres, who were already working with refugees, migrants, unemployed young people.

After the research, CESIE organised a meeting to present the project to local responsible persons of the centres and asked them to propose users of their centre for the workshops. Then CESIE contacted the young people directly. CESIE also developed a social media promotion of the project on a Facebook page. In that way, the participants could get in touch at any moment.

The 17 young people participating at the local body movement workshops were young local people without employment and young people from migrant communities, from Non-EU countries: Ghana, Iran, Bangladesh, Gambia, Ukraine. All participants came



from very disadvantaged situations: they lacked employment, opportunities, general guidance, skills and education. Most of the young people were looking for a job, but also for an opportunity to get involved, to get in touch with new people and experiences, and to acquire new skills in the non-formal education field.

CESIE has already done a lot of projects with this target group. It is easy to reach young people for the first day, but the challenge is to keep their motivation and their presence during the entire project. With INSART young people were engaged until the end, because the project was something different for them, it was a very creative way to work.

The INSART workshop in Palermo had the duration of one month; the meetings were three or four times a week, three hours per day, so the rhythm was very intense. This aspect was very important, because the young people stayed motivated along the way. For the location, CESIE collaborated with a local theatre. Thus, there was a professional space to create the right atmosphere for the workshop.

The body movement workshop was organised in the following four phases:

### **1st: Phase - Group building activities: expression through movement in order to create the group.**

The 1st Phase was very important to build the group and create a safe space where the participants felt secure and free to express themselves.

### **2nd Phase - Central Phase: Real path -imaginary path**

In the Central Phase participants worked on the real path – imaginary path, and on the search for a token word that summarizes both versions of the story. The token word and the imaginary path were the basis for participants' own artistic creations, on which rhythms and movements were built on.

### **3rd Phase - Creation of Performances**

In this phase the participants were organised in three groups to elaborate performances based on their token words. It was surprising that most of the young people chose the topic of “the home” or the “need of a home” for their performances.

#### 4th Phase - Performance in the street and recording

Finally, participants performed on the street. It was very exciting for them to show what they were working on and interesting to see the reaction of the people. The performances were filmed and published on the internet. This stage is important as it contributes to the real and symbolic recognition of the artworks as "art".

The local artistic workshops were organised in a multicultural context where the artist-facilitator paid a lot of attention to establishing a close contact with participants and to their cultural diversity. This was done, for example, by creating a choreography made up of movements of traditional dances of participants' countries of origin. At the end of each workshop a moment of verbal sharing was dedicated to comment and understand the movements, the stories that inspired them, etc. This encouraged participants to promote their cultural backgrounds by exploring them and transmitting their cultural heritage to other learners through dance and music.

The artist-facilitator did not give so much technique corrections, she did not intervene so much, as the participants were not professional dancers, and it was important to give them self-confidence and the possibility to express themselves freely. Also, the artist-facilitator adapted the program at any time depending on the mood of the group.

To ensure that this project respected the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity the work with the local partners was very important to reach the target group and cooperate with the responsible persons of the young participants who really knew their needs. Then, during the workshops, it was important to make sure that everybody felt equal and comfortable. Communication was a challenge, i.e. to manage a group with different languages. However, this was facilitated through the use of body language: while performing dance movements, everybody felt included and the language barriers did not exist anymore.



It was important to take into consideration the different cultural backgrounds. In particular, in dance, this concerned the touch between others, the eye contact, and the respect between participants. To make sure that everyone was very comfortable with each other, there was a lot of work done since the beginning: particular exercises and team building activities made sure that the environment was friendly, welcoming, safe and that nobody felt under pressure.

### Outcomes of the project

The results of the various evaluations with the young people carried out across each country after the INSART pilot workshops showed that the young people had developed skills that promoted their employability.

“When you work with dance you really touch the human part of participants, you are just working with human beings, working in an empty space, with no filters anymore. This was the real power of this project.”  
(Artist-facilitator)



Alongside the feedback from participants, the artist-facilitators used observation grids to monitor the learning process of the young participants. Young participants at the various workshops gained more self-confidence, increased their self-awareness and made a particular experience of intercultural exchange. The work on creativity and on the capacity to interact with new realities, as well as the acquired awareness of places or situations, in which you can feel appreciated or not, created a motivational mechanism among the young people. This will help them in the process of social and professional integration.

“I noted how there were differences amongst participants in this workshop...But they were not real differences. We were all like a big family in this workshop!” (statement by one of the Italian participants)

### Participation of young people

We interviewed two participants about their involvement and experience with the project. One of the participants said that when the workshop started she was in a



period of wonderings about her live and she needed to be in contact with different people. The activities of the project were interesting for her, and she felt very comfortable since the beginning. Another participant was a volunteer at CESIE, and she was asked to help only for one time with the workshop, but at the end she stayed until the end because it was very interesting to deepen knowledge about integration of young people and to gain these competences.

CESIE asked the young participants to come, to forget about limits and fears, to go with the flow and get close to the others participants through dance – basically, to be open-minded. As a result, the young people took part in a new learning experience. At the beginning they were confused about their personal situation: they were shy, and also lacked self-confidence. After the project, they felt happy to be able to create something with other young people, to develop their skills, and to meet other cultures. They really enjoyed dancing. They felt more open-minded and motivated to try new things and take part in new projects. The project had a positive influence on their behaviour, especially on their self-confidence.

#### **Learning outcomes of young participants:**

“The contact with the others, from other countries.”

“All the wonderings in life are the same for others young people.”

“The sharing with the others, to make the others’ stories and reality the own. You cannot judge people if you understand only one person. Be able to be close to more people from different backgrounds.”

“Personal development, the project influenced me to choose a job.”

“Artistic methods work the best, art (music, dance, etc.), football and food.”

“Awareness of your own body.”

#### **Suggestions for youth workers by young people:**

- It’s important to make participants feel comfortable, in a safe space.
- Avoid saying at the beginning that all workshops will be in Italian, as it could make feel most of the participants excluded. The facilitator was making some translation, talking different languages, mostly English and Italian, in order to include everyone and make it really easy, so you did not feel that the language was a barrier.
- Give space for decisions to the participants. The artist-facilitator was asking and suggesting all the time. This way, the participants really felt that it was their own work.
- Use all the resources from the group. Show participants their skills and give them freedom to use them.
- Prepare simple activities, using also open spaces, go outside.
- Short time of the project and an intense rhythm of meetings keep the group focused.



- The number of participants, around 15, is a very good number.
- Organize an intercultural exchange of snacks during the breaks.

### TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK

- Art is a great way to bridge gaps, break down barriers, bring people together. Let young people reflect on their movements and tell their story.
- Keep in mind cultural differences and make sure that everybody feels comfortable and safe in every situation. You should plan enough time at the beginning for the group building process.
- Do not concentrate too much on technique and make sure that young people have the space and self-confidence to express themselves freely.
- Use Art, use dance, experiment with that, use new methodologies, do not be afraid.
- Creativity is a great output for young people.
- Be open minded and flexible to adapt your program according to the mood of the group, but still keep in mind your road: you are the trainer.

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### 6.1. ÖZGEÇAN ASLAN YOUTH CENTRE: Kindness Tree Project of the Youth

#### Abstract:

**Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre** is the institution that aims to enable all young citizens, aged between 12 and 29, for active participation in the society. This youth centre is providing opportunities for young people to spend their leisure time in line with their interests, wishes and talents within the scope of social, cultural, artistic and sports activities. Through the “Kindness Tree Project of the Youth”, the Youth Centre promotes volunteering as a tool for active participation and creating

#### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre in Antalya was founded on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and it is one of 255 youth centres that are operating in 81 provinces in Turkey. The first youth centre was established in 1969. by General Directorate of Youth and Sports. Since then, the number of youth centres grew rapidly and they are all equipped with modern facilities thanks to the establishment of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Although recently open, Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre offers services for 700 young people. It aims to enable all young citizens, aged between 12 and 29, active participation in the society. The centre’s vision is to empower young people who love their countries, who are capable of questioning, who are devoted to national values and who have internalized the notions of republican democracy.

#### Mission of the organisation

Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre’s goal is to enable all young citizens for active participation in the society. Their mission is to organize various activities that would address the needs and interest of young people. According to that, they are trying to improve beneficial, questioning, creative, uniting talents of young people, in accordance with the principles of Atatürk, and they want to ensure their volunteering participation in social life. One of the goals of the organisation is to create spaces where young people could socialize with their peers and adopt values, such as love, respect, tolerance and politeness. Likewise, they are putting a lot of effort in exchange programs so they are supporting development of the project in cooperation with members of youth centres in other provinces and international youth centres as well. Furthermore, one of the objectives is to promote personalities of young people,

support their inclusion into society and development in general by providing assistance, guidance and counselling. In order to make young people more active, Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre is providing them with an opportunity to be informed about decision-making and implementation processes and enables them to actively participate in these processes.

Structure of the institution is separated into 3 pillars:

1. **Youth Centre Academia** – young people can participate in - workshop about values, language, religious sciences, innovations, social sciences and personal development.
2. **Club** – young people can participate in social, cultural and sports activities (Handicrafts Club, Music Club, Project Club, Environment Club etc.)
3. **Hall Programs** – young people can gather with professionals, authors and poets.

### Management of the organisation

Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre has 12 employees in total. 8 of these employees are graduates of different departments at universities (computer engineering, business management, public administration, physical education teaching etc.), 1 of them is a team leader; 1 of them is a sociologist and 3 of them are games masters.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project “Kindness Tree Project of the Youth” aims to identify and provide assistance to all individuals or groups, especially those from a disadvantage background and those who are not active, through volunteering and the organisation of various events. This project targets all young people aged between 6 and 29 who are willing to volunteer and be active in the society, but when it comes to the youth leaders, there is no age limit.

### Mission of the project

This project aims to:

- Raise awareness of Turkish young people about local and global problems
- Raise an aware and well-informed generation
- Enable young people to take an active part in the solution of the problem
- Make sure that young people maintain an effective communication with everyone from all segments of the society, particularly with their peers
- Develop a sense of responsibility among young people towards the community
- Establish a continuous participation in volunteering activities

- Empower young people to actively participate in activities that are carried out for young people, notably in the activities of youth centres within the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

## Background of the project

The project was launched in 2013 by a group of team leaders who are responsible for development of projects like this in the Youth Centre. It has been implementing in 81 provinces around Turkey and it is funded from public resources. The Youth Centre has established stable and fruitful cooperation with governmental bodies, local governments, non-governmental organisations and local supporters in the provinces.

“There is no limit to the kindness one can offer, whether it is little or much!”

Each year, on the beginning of the project activities, youth leaders are having meetings and briefings and they are developing and expanding project activities for whole year. Youth leaders are including young people in this process and they are asking for their opinion and ideas related to the group plan. Also, young people are informed about the infrastructure of youth centre, non-governmental organisations and different groups that are active in social life. Likewise, they are enrolled in the training that raises awareness about the importance of volunteering.

This project represents common ground for all youth centres in Turkey because it has been implementing in all of them trying to include disadvantaged young people into the society.

Across the country, **28.120 young people** have participated in the “Kindness Tree Project of the Youth” and spent **289.101 hours** offering their kindness. They were reached through social media, announcements that were made for the youth members of the centre and stands that were set in institutions like dormitories and universities.

## Project content

There are several different scopes tackled during this project:

1. Environment
2. Public health
3. Security
4. Literacy and Trainings
5. Disaster Relief
6. Development of the society
7. Assistance for children
8. Assistance for elderly

## 9. Assistance for those in need

### Conduction of studies

#### 1. Environment

Within the scope of environment, young people can engage in different activities. They can promote national and international environmental programs; participate in recycling and environmental campaigns and organize their own; organize seminars that would raise awareness about environmental protection and animal rights; plant trees and collect acorns; make exhibitions where they would present their drawings dedicated to the environment; build a bridge between nature and human beings and carry out work in villages in order to build clean spaces that are ready for living.

Example of one project that was conducted in this field, was a project that aimed to collect waste that was piled up along the sea shore. Young volunteers gathered together, collected waste materials and shared all about their activities via social media to warn on this issue.



#### 2. Public health

In a field of public health, young people can engage in voluntary activities in hospital, organisations and/or institutions where young people receive treatment due to various reasons; they can provide assistance to community health campaigns; participate in sports and healthy living activities in public spaces; supply and distribute healthcare devices (blood glucose meter, blood pressure monitor, glasses, hearing aid etc.) and organize campaigns that promotes health care supply (blood donation, medication and healthcare material supply, anti-smoking campaigns and campaigns for bird/swine flu).

#### 3. Security

In this field, young people can conduct informative activities that would speak up about water safety, protection from fire, accidents that could happen at home and in the traffic (bicycle safety).

#### 4. Literacy and training

Young people who have interest in this area, can provide literacy assistance to the children or elderly people who didn't have a chance to receive proper education; they can provide help for young people in case they have any problem with their school; promote concept of pen pals among young members of youth centres and volunteers in other youth centres; teach Turkish language to the foreign students and promote recognition of Turkish language in general; organize knowledge contests and assist various reading activities.

#### 5. Disaster Relief

Young people can raise awareness about disaster relief and become so called "disaster volunteers", they can attend activities that are related to this topic and speak with other young people about this issue.

#### 6. Development of the society

Activities that are connected with this topic aim at improvement and development of the community. If young people want to contribute to the development of the society, they can organize projects and aid campaigns for disabled people or for people with disadvantage background; they can engage in work of Ministry of Youth and Sports and make their voice heard; they can give lectures in the youth centre on voluntary services and prepare activities that would celebrate special days and holidays. Also, young people can engage in work of different non-governmental organisations that are organising socially beneficial activities and build practice of social solidarity.

Example of the activities within this scope was celebration of "World Down Syndrome Day" (March 21st). Young volunteers gathered together in Youth Camp in Duacı to raise awareness about special needs that people with Down syndrome have. Young people spend the whole day with them playing games like football, basketball and miniature golf. Also, scouts from Akdeniz Dinamik Gençlik İzcilik ve Spor Kulübü (Mediterranean Dynamic Youth Scouting and Sports Club) taught people with Down syndrome how to set up a tent and shared scout rules with them. All activities aimed at social inclusion of this specific population.





### 7. Assistance for children

Young people, who like to be around children, can make their lives better in so many ways – they can organize different activities in children’s home, care houses and other places where children without adequate parent care live; they can speak up about children’s rights; visit children of martyrs; help children with learning problems; baby-sit for free; visit children who are undergoing treatment and donate books, clothing, toys and school material to those who need them the most.

### 8. Assistance for elderly

Young people, who like to be around older people, can raise the quality of their life in different ways – they can visit older people at their homes or nursing homes and equip them with thing they need; prepare fun and entertainment activities; shop instead of them and help them with transportation.



### 9. Assistance for those in need

Even though a lot of previously mentioned activities had humanitarian character, this field of activities is specifically that. If young people want to express their kindness through selfless giving, they can organize aid campaigns or even open stores to

provide and distribute food packages and clothing for the families in need. Also, young people can support the work of national and international social service organisations committed to assisting those in need.

### **Other activities**

Beside all the activities mentioned above, young people can engage in activities that are conducted by important organisations such as Unesco, Unicef, Unep and Wagggs. They can organize activities that will promote their work or actively participate in the activities that are held by named organisations. Likewise, young people can take part in the activities of Ministry of youth and Sports and other public institutions. They can contribute in preparing activities for International Peace Day, Millennium Development Goals, and make an impact in decision making process on European level.

### **Outcomes of the project and participation of young people**

Through this project, volunteering activities became like a habit, it wasn't just a one-time activity. Every person in the community had a chance to observe activities that were conducted by young people which increased visibility of the voluntary engagement. During time, more and more young people decided to join in and follow positive example of their peers. In their free time, they decided to spread kindness.

**"Kindness Tree Project of the Youth belongs to the youth"**

Every year between October and May, the project is evaluated based on its project data and concrete outputs. Leaders of the project discuss weaknesses of the process and they are continuously working on its improvement and development in order to secure its existence in years to come.

### **TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK**

- Be open to and nonjudgmental about young people's insights and suggestions. Let them know that their involvement is important.
- Integrate young people into group and coalition efforts.
- In order to work effectively, you will need to be organised.

For further information, please contact Turan Zeynel Akdağ on email: [zeynel.akdag@gsb.gov.tr](mailto:zeynel.akdag@gsb.gov.tr).

## 6.2. THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS FOUNDATION: We Look at the Same Sky

### Abstract:

The Community Volunteers Foundation was created to offer opportunities and possibilities for young people that would mobilize them and use their energy for improvement of society. The Foundation enables young people to participate voluntarily in social responsibility projects and helps them to become independent, self-reliant and confident. In order to reach its mission, Foundation established cooperation with HSBC Bank and created project called “We look at the same sky”. The main purpose of project is to prevent young people in prisons from recommitting crimes and support them in their inclusion and resocialization into the society.

### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

The Community Volunteers Foundation was established in December 2002. and it includes young people aged from 15 to 24 in its work. Foundation is promoting social responsibility through voluntary activities and it influences on personal development of young people. Young people are encouraged to conduct projects themselves and they are trying to reach various audiences within the community such as children and elderly people. All the activities conducted by the Community Volunteers Foundation are endorsed regularly on a monthly basis by contribution made from selective corporate institutions.

“We have taken this road, without intention to criticize, to contribute to the change. Therefore, we are maintaining with our work towards transforming the energy of youth into social benefits.”

In 2015, within all four corners of Turkey, with the involvement of **60.761 young volunteers** carrying out **1.468 local, national, and international** social responsibility projects/events/campaigns, the Community Volunteers ensured the active participation of local residents with the use of local resources. In general, the Foundation works with approximately **40,000 young people** on a yearly basis, and achieves a numeric statistic as the result of calculating the number of young people supported and thus generating services in return. This can also be expressed as approximately **7.000** active young people.

## Mission of the organisation

Foundation aims to:

- Achieve social peace, solidarity, and change under the leadership of young people
- Accomplish various social service projects under the leadership of young people and guidance of adults
- Ensure participation, guidance and support of adult volunteers who believe in the motivational synergy with young people and who can make moral and financial contributions for a social cause
- Contribute to the development of young people who can produce solutions for problems surrounding them, who are confident, determined and sensitive
- Raise social responsibility and awareness within the community

### Principles of the organisation:

Respect Towards Differences; Transparency and accountability; Local participation; Teamwork; Lifelong learning; Entrepreneurship.

In order to improve learning methods for young people, the organisation has developed learning system called “The 5 Key Learning System”. The components of this form of education contains volunteering, human rights, discrimination, gender, peace, civil society, democracy, project, teamwork and communication. Apart from these, non- formal training methods are adjusted to the needs of young people. Also, young people are informed about scholarships, internships, national and international mobilization opportunities and they have a chance to meet Foundations board of directors and talk to them.

## Management of the organisation

There are 51 employees in the organisation, they are working in various thematic areas such as human right, team work and youth work. They are continuously working on personal development and that is why they participate in different educations and trainings. Not only are they working on their own development, but they are learning about new trends among youth as well (e.g. social media).

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project “We Look at the Same Sky” started with the following slogan: “There is no such thing as juvenile criminal, there are only juveniles who were pushed into the crime”. From this statement, it can be concluded that this project wants to support children and young people who were sent to detention centres in order to divert them

from life in crime. This project seeks to help them with their reintegration into the society and development of socially acceptable behaviour. There is a big difference between realities in the incarceration and regular community and that is why those children and young people need further assistance and guidance in adoption of some basic life principles.



### Mission of the project

The main goal of the project is to prevent incarcerated children and young people from recommitting crimes and support them in social reintegration. Other goals of the project are:

- To prevent children's feeling of exclusion from society and social life,
- To enable volunteers to become role models for children and young people and become so called brothers and sisters,
- To help children and young people to continue with their education,
- To inform children and young people about opportunities that are following the imprisonment process,
- To show the children and young people that there is a chance for a different way of living,
- To create new fields of interest for children and young people
- To improve attitude of children and young people in terms of social and professional skills,
- To enable realization of children's and young people's capacities and talents,
- To encourage development of positive and peaceful attitudes and behaviours,
- To empower children and young people to build self-expression skills.



## Background of the project

The project emerged while implementing “5 Key Educational System”, precisely, during the discussions with volunteers about problems and needs within the society. The first steps of the project were taken during debates due to the number of incarcerated juveniles in Turkey. Everybody were asking themselves the same question - “Is there anything we can do for these children and young people?”. These children and young people are deprived from their liberty and excluded from society during period of adolescence, which means that they are building their identity outside the regular environment. That is why they are considered to be one of the most disadvantaged population in society.



Following meetings including discussions with various civil society organisation and exchanges of information and ideas. Volunteers received training so they could gain professional and social skills and after the training, they started with implementation of the project. After the first year of implementation, they then asked – “How can we improve the project” and that is when the project was accelerated to the national level in 2013.

With a \$420,000 grant, provided by HSBC Bank, the project was financed during the period between 2013 and 2016. Apart from this, the project became widely recognised and supported with the local visits of volunteers from the municipalities’ and communities.

“Every day after the workshop, I think to myself: I wonder if society wants me back?”

The project included nearly **1500 convicted juveniles, 400 young volunteers** and **1 project coordinator** in its activities. In 2013, project was implemented in 5 different provinces (İstanbul, Ankara, Bursa, İzmir, Konya) and it included 290 juveniles, 131 young volunteers, and 200 various workshops. In 2014, again, the project was implemented in 5 different provinces (Adana, Bursa, Ankara, İzmir, İstanbul) and it included 730 juveniles, 160 young volunteers and 235 various workshops. In 2015, in same provinces, project included 681 juveniles, 168 young volunteers and 269 various workshops.

The project has been carried out in partnership between the Community Volunteers Foundation and HSBC Bank alongside with the partners from The Ministry of Justice and The General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses. A bureaucratic process took a long time and it was the biggest problem experienced during the establishment of these partnerships. In addition, the project experienced great difficulties in securing



adequate funding. However, as a result of the faith and efforts of the project coordinator, the relevant institutions finally approved the project.

## Project content

This project was designed for juveniles aged from 12 to 18 who all come from a different geographical location, various cultural background and have different ethnic structures.

“Children were always subject of the objectification. Never have we been more children focused, anywhere or anytime in the history of the planet. In a world that is speculated by adults, we started seeing things that children may do.”

The project consisted of different activities that were implemented through different workshops. Through them, young people were provided with an education and development of the necessary skills and talents. Those workshops were based on values like solidarity, kindness, cooperation, teamwork, being anti-discriminative, and other various ethical values.



Within the scope of the project, workshops were organised once a week by the project coordinator and young volunteers. They were covering topics like:

- Painting
- Arts and Culture
- Creativity and Skills
- Cinema
- Music
- Theatre and Drama
- Sports
- First Aid
- Anger Management

Example of the workshops: within the theatre-drama workshop, children and young people wrote a play and performed it together with the young volunteers. Also, within

creativity and skills workshop, they prepared magnets which they sent to the children with leukemia as a New Year's gift.

These workshops were conducted by a group of young people who were mostly students with an educational background in helping professions (psychology, social work, sociology, education, law). Before they started working with juveniles, they had gone through proper training that was held by an experienced team of experts. Young volunteers had received knowledge about the juvenile system in Turkey, specific needs of this population, development of children and young people, children's rights, children's role in the society, prison rules, conflict resolution, planning and implementation of workshops and so on. Furthermore, young volunteers were exposed to the artificial problematic situation that they could experience inside a prison.

"When they first started coming as volunteers, we assumed that they were getting paid and had other interests involved. Now, we see them as angels, or just crazy".

Both volunteers and incarcerated youth had a hard time during establishment of trust. It takes quite some time for juveniles to trust people because they lost a faith that people would do somethings for them even though it may not be of their direct interest. But over time, young volunteers overcame these difficulties as they demonstrated that they were consistent in their visits and that they were willing to provide assistance in any way necessary.

It is important to emphasize that in these workshops, the principle of equality is very important and it represents the base for relationship between volunteers and incarcerated children and young people. No child is left behind, they are always trying to include all children, especially those with disabilities because that can make a positive impact on a whole group.

### **Outcomes of the project and participation of young people**

Outcomes of the program and possible changes were evaluated with pre-test and post-test which means that young volunteers were tested before they got engaged in the project and on the end of the project. Likewise, convicted juveniles were having discussions in a form of a focus group and they filled out self-assessment list.

"A different life is possible and we can create a positive impact for the community"

### Successful outcomes of the project are:

- Some of the young people started working as volunteers for "The Community Volunteers Foundation" after they were released
- The project has become a role model for other civilian social organisations that work with convicted juveniles.
- The project has inspired other projects (such as project called "If I could be a bird" that targeted convicted woman with children aged between 0-6).
- This project changed approach that prison staff had towards incarcerated children and young people
- This project has provided incentives for the collaboration between decision makers of non-governmental organisations.
- The project raised awareness about needs of convicted juveniles and encouraged improvement of conditions inside prison and detention institutions.
- The activities within the workshops have led to the discovery of talents amongst these children, and assisted them with practical skills which they can use upon release
- This project helped children and young people to build self-esteem, to value their own abilities and to feel as an integral part of the community.
- Some of these young people continued with their education.
- Children and young people developed their communication skills, problem solving skills, they rejected prejudice and increase patience, faith in social change and peace.
- Prison staff have begun to implement activities from the workshops in their homes with their own children.

Due to the positive outcomes and feedback from juveniles, this project would probably be implemented in the future but with some changes – there is a need for expansion of the team of experts, especially those who have knowledge about prison and it's functioning. Likewise, there is a need for higher level of psychological support that would be offered to convicted juveniles in prison, also it would be helpful to develop a mechanism that would monitor juveniles once they leave prison which could also be useful when it comes to tracking of impact and outcomes of the project.

## TIPS AND TRICKS OF YOUTH WORK

For implementators of the project:

- Project workers need to have good communication skills
- It is important to keep the motivation of young volunteer's high
- It is important to ensure the continuity of communication between project workers
- It is important to ensure exchange of information about implementation process with stakeholders
- Project workers need to have developed problem-solving skills
- Expert teams are to be in the form of a working team.

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### 6.3. ÖZGECAN ASLAN YOUTH CENTRE: The Applied Entrepreneurship Training for Young Entrepreneurs

#### Abstract:

**Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre** is the institution that aims to enable all young citizens, aged between 12 and 29, for active participation in society. This youth centre is providing opportunities for young people to spend their leisure time in line with their interests, wishes and talents within the scope of social, cultural, artistic and sports activities. The project is called “Applied Entrepreneurship Training for Young Entrepreneurs” and aims at enabling young people to unleash their entrepreneurship potentials and increase their employment rate.

#### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre in Antalya was founded on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and it is one of 255 youth centres that are operating in 81 provinces in Turkey. The first youth centre was established in 1969. by General Directorate of Youth and Sports. Since then, the number of youth centres grew rapidly and they are all equipped with modern facilities thanks to the establishment of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Although recently open, Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre offers services for 700 young people. It aims to enable all young citizens, aged between 12 and 29, for active participation in the society. The centre’s vision is to empower young people who love their countries, who are capable of questioning, who are devoted to national values and who have internalized the notions of republican democracy.

#### Mission of the organisation

Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre’s goal is to enable all young citizens for active participation in the society. Their mission is to organize various activities that would address the needs and interest of young people. According to that, they are trying to improve beneficial, questioning, creative, uniting talents of young people, in accordance with the principles of Atatürk, and they want to ensure their volunteering participation in social life. One of the goals of the organisation is to create spaces where young people could socialize with their peers and adopt values, such as love, respect, tolerance and politeness. Likewise, they are putting a lot of effort in exchange programs so they are supporting development of the project in cooperation with members of youth centres in other provinces and international youth centres as well. Furthermore, one of the objectives is to promote personalities of young people, support their inclusion into society and development in general by providing

assistance, guidance and counselling. In order to make young people more active, Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre is providing them with an opportunity to be informed about decision-making and implementation processes and enables them to actively participate in these processes.

“We have the “youth” in our centre!”

Structure of the institution is separated into 3 pillars:

1. **Youth Centre Academia** – young people can participate in - workshop about values, language, religious sciences, innovations, social sciences and personal development.
2. **Club** – young people can participate in social, cultural and sports activities (Handicrafts Club, Music Club, Project Club, Environment Club etc.)
3. **Hall Programs** – young people can gather with professionals, authors and poets.

### Management of the organisation

Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre has 12 employees in total. 8 of these employees are graduates of different departments at universities (computer engineering, business management, public administration, physical education teaching etc.), 1 of them is a team leader; 1 of them is a sociologist and 3 of them are games masters.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

“Applied Entrepreneurship Training for Young Entrepreneurs” is a project, which targets young people aged between 18 and 29. The aim of the project is to enable young people to unleash their entrepreneurship potentials in order to increase the employment rate of young people.

### Mission of the project

The main objectives of the project are:

- To promote entrepreneurship which is the major solution to the problems that Turkey is facing when it comes to development and employment,
- To unlock entrepreneurial spirit among young people,
- To increase employment rate of young people,
- To ensure an active participation of young people in youth centres,
- To empower disadvantaged young people to take an active part in social and economic life,
- To allow young people to fulfil their potentials,
- To support young people in discovering their creative abilities.



## Background of the project

The project has been launched by a Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation (KOSGEB) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports who signed of a protocol that follows evaluation proving that the project is needed. The project started with its implementation in 2013. and it is still ongoing story.

“Young,  
Entrepreneur,  
and Strong”

The project is funded by the government. Training quotas for provinces are determined each year and the event calendar is prepared in accordance with the determined quota. The expenses are covered by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in line with the number of participants in each province and their needs. In 2013, **1260 young people** benefited from the pilot implementation that was carried out in 12 provinces. So far, project has been implemented in 81 provinces of the country. A total of **5832 young trainers** were among those who benefited from the project.

In 2014 and 2015, **60 young people** benefited from the project carried out within Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre in Antalya. Cooperation was established with the Akdeniz University that offered its experts for training implementation.



## Project content

The project participants are young people, who want to start their own business, as well as university professors and volunteers. Young people, youth leaders and academics worked in cooperation in the project.

The young entrepreneurs have been reached through announcements made via social media and posters. They had to fill out prepared form, submit it online and develop their business idea.

The Applied Entrepreneurship Training for Young Entrepreneurs consists of four main modules which include 70 hours of training and workshops for free.

### 1. Module

This module consists of 8-hour training, including evaluation of entrepreneurship skills, business idea development and creativity thinking exercises.

### 2. Module

This module consists of 18-hour training, including business plan and its components (market research, marketing plan, production plan, management plan, financial planning).

### 3. Module

This module consists of 24-hour training, including workshops for further enhancement of business plan components (market research, marketing plan, production plan, management plan, financial planning).

### 4. Module

This module consists of 20-hour training, including points for designing and presentation of business plan.

The participants who have attended 80% of the training modules, are entitled to obtain certificates of participation.

## Outcomes of the project and participation of young people

Young people, who have attended this training and who participated in 80% of training modules, got certificate of participation and chance to develop their own business.



Small and Medium Industry Development Organisations gave young people 30.000 TL grant and interest free loan up to 70.000 TL. Among the applicants who have received trainings, **198** of them set up their own business thanks to the received grant. Three of the young entrepreneurs participated in the project that was carried out within Özgecan Aslan Youth Centre in Antalya.

This project made young people's dreams come true because they have achieved economic independence. In addition, through affirmative action, female entrepreneurs have been encouraged to start their own business. Having improved their entrepreneurship skills with this project, young people have been motivated to set up their own business in line with their interests, needs and skills. Furthermore, these young entrepreneurs have developed a sense of responsibility.

One of the young people, who participated in the project and who received the grant, was able to start up her dream job, a beauty salon. Another young person opened his own restaurant and stated that he is finally doing something that he always wanted to do in life, thanks to this project.



The evaluation process, carried out accordingly, is finalized with the inclusion of related young applicants in the training. However, the evaluation process requires working for long and fatiguing hours, which, in return, becomes a challenge for the evaluation committee affecting the project implementation process adversely.

Within the scope of the protocol signed between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Small and Medium Industry Development Organisations, the quotas allocated to provinces for training, are increased each year allowing many young entrepreneurs to benefit from this project.

The training provided within the scope of the project are evaluated and assessed by the young entrepreneurs at the end of the training. This process is carried out through the questionnaire that was published on the official website of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Due to the feedback of young people, necessary changes are implemented in the project.

### **TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUTH WORK**

- Tips and tricks for implementation of this project:
- Keeping the motivation of young people high,
- Project workers must have developed problem-solving skills,
- Training of young people should be given by the experts,
- Expert teams should be in the form of a working team.

For further information, please contact Turan Zeynel Akdağ on email: [zeynel.akdag@gsb.gov.tr](mailto:zeynel.akdag@gsb.gov.tr).

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