



PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL FOR AN ERASMUS+ PROJECT

Mobility of youth workers (KA1)

Deadline: 11th of May 2021

Who are we?

[No Excuse Slovenia](#) is a youth organization in public interest that strives for positive social change and personal growth of young people. With the help of non-formal education, it encourages young people to social participation and activation of their peers. The organization promotes and advocates through various projects for sustainable development, healthy lifestyle and active citizenship of young people. We are apolitical and a non-profit organization that operates independently from private financiers. We were established in 2006 and since then we have been working on local, national and international projects.

All on board (for mental health)

Purpose of the project

The aim of the project is to address the now overwhelming mental health problems in youth. We would like to expand the knowledge and competencies of youth workers regarding mental health in general, and more specifically the mental health of youth. Mental health is still considered differently than physical health of a person. And while we don't think much about going to the doctor, we are at least a bit more hesitant when it comes to visiting a (clinical) psychologist or psychiatrist. With our project we wish to empower youth workers in the field of mental health, for them to feel more confident and prepared to deal with mental health issues while working with youth.

In recent years, we are seeing an increase in mental health problems, especially with anxiety and depression. The current pandemic has taken an even stronger toll on mental health, especially of youth. The expectations were different, there was talk about the youth not being under so much pressure with the current situation, but the reality is that it is quite the opposite. Youth has less experience in dealing with stressful situations. Their main support circle are usually their peers, with whom they have practically lost all live contact during the lockdowns. Many of them experienced challenges regarding schooling; during the first lockdown around 2000 primary school children and secondary school students were not able to be contacted by their schools; while having difficulties with technology (internet connection, no access to a computer), home environment, lack of social interaction etc.



And the whole situation has taken a serious toll on the mental health of youth. While asked about their well-being, 89% of Slovenian students reported signs of anxiety and depression and every fourth student was reporting suicidal thoughts, they also reported an increase in alcohol and psychoactive substances usage. While taking into consideration younger children, reports in Slovenia show an increase in eating disorders, anxiety disorders, depression and psychotic disorders.

The problem, however, was present before the corona crisis hit, but what the current situation did, it showed how undervalued mental health really is and how understaffed and unprepared we are to deal with all these issues. Youth workers of course can not take on the jobs of clinical psychologist and psychiatrists, but they can play a vital role in addressing the issues of mental health in youth. We believe that youth workers provide a first responder service to young people experiencing mental health issues in the same way that paramedics provide physical health services. We often provide gatekeeper services to mental health support through triaging the case and providing support until a mental health professional can take them on. We do this now, and with little or no specific mental health training. We believe that by our inaction in dealing with our young people's mental health we are, by default, causing harm to them. We are not advocating that all youth workers become mental health clinicians. We are saying that we need more than a mental health first aid certificate. We need to faithfully support our young people in all their trials and tribulations.. It is every youth worker's responsibility to become better than they are right now. Mental health is only one area we need to become more proficient in.

Activities

The project is composed of two activities (it is expected that the same participants will attend both trainings). At the first exchange, participants will gain new knowledge on the topic of mental health etc. which will then be put into practice in the meantime. During the second exchange, participants will share the experience that they gained, they will deepen the knowledge and competences. There will be further discussion on practical activities and relevant publications will be prepared.

First training:

- The training will take part in April 2022 in Slovenia
- Duration 7 days (includes arrival and departure days)
- cca. 2 participants from each organization
- Content of the training:
 - Training for youth workers on the topic of mental health, especially regarding youth,
 - training on how to address mental health while working with youth (to raise awareness, carry out trainings, etc.),

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- training on how to react/act while in contact with a suicidal (young) person.
- panel session with experts in the field of youth mental health,
- training on personal mental well-being through different techniques (mindfulness, stress management techniques, self-reflection, breathing techniques, gratitude exercises etc.),
- event “Live Library” where participants can “borrow a book” - talk to a person dealing with mental health issues to destigmatize the topic of mental health problems.
- preparation of a small project/event/campaign that the participants will carry out in the in-between period.
- profile on IG and/or TikTok where participants will prepare short videos/articles regarding youth mental health (to raise awareness) and most importantly, on how to take care of our mental health (practical steps).

Period between the trainings

- Participants will carry out a small project/event/campaign that will address the topics of the first training,
- participants will evaluate the said small project/event/campaign and think about possible improvements and effects.

Second training:

- The training will take part in September 2022 in Slovenia
- Duration 7 days (includes arrival and departure days)
- cca. 2 participants from each organization
- Content of the training:
 - Exchange of practices of the participants and their organizations, how did they implement the knowledge that they gained during the first part of the exchange program, what was the main value/effect of the activities that they carried out and where did they notice the most room for improvement,
 - panel session where experts and participants will discuss the possible projects and improvements of the carried out activities to address the mental health of young people,
 - preparation of a project that will address the issues of mental health and that will be implemented in the participating organizations,
 - preparation of materials on how to address mental health with young people (pamphlets etc.),
 - preparation of a guide-book for youth workers and other specialists that work directly with young people and need to be informed about mental health of young people.



Partnership

We are looking for partner organizations that are able to provide reliable and competent participants - youth workers - that will attend trainings and will carry out the activities planned for the pilot implementation (with the support of their organization).

Costs

All costs at the event will be covered by the organizers (accommodation, food, local travel, coffee/tea breaks), while the international travel costs from/to the venues of the seminars will be reimbursed according to the Erasmus+ rules (depending on the distance of travel origin).

Deadline

If you are interested, please fill out the attached form and send it to international@noexcuse.si no later than **by Sunday, 2nd May 2021 by the end of the day**. By Thursday 6th May you will be approached with mandates to be signed, so your reply that day will be needed.