

## **PROMoting Youth Social Entrepreneurship in the fields of health and social care**

### **PROMYSE Training, Vilnius 3/7 September 2018**

In the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme, PROMYSE is a youth-led, transnational project addressed to enhance the quality and relevance of the learning offer in education, training and youth work through the development of an interactive online self-capacitating and networking platform. It is a package focusing on unlocking the untapped potential of youth outside the labour market and on the potential of the social economy enterprises to address the social needs in the fields of health and social cares.

To ensure the curriculum adaptation of the training, and as part of the activities package of this project, two people from each partner organisation involved in the project (including myself), have had a five-day meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania. Through the innovative methodology of this project, the group of participants was integrated by staff members mingled with young interns/volunteers from five different countries partners: Lithuania, Italy, Greece, Belgium and the UK. As a result, an excellent multicultural environment boosted the cross-cultural learning and the testing of the concepts beyond national borders, both considered expected aims of this activity.

The first day of training was focused on the context situation of the partner countries, in the sphere of social economy enterprises, including different local examples of good practices. Through this overview, we could see how the definition of social economy enterprise fluctuates according to the specific country (for example, some of them include “associations” as a specific type of social economy enterprise, while others do not). Furthermore, there are some countries, as the case of Belgium, where the definition and the legal framework are different depending on the region (Flemish or French region).

From the second day, we had intensive and fruitful working days enlivened by the inspirational local initiatives and social economy enterprises that we visited: “Reach for Change” from Lithuania, which supports new entrepreneurs in the start-up of their projects; “City Laboratory”, self-management space in which the community carry out different activities for their own benefit; “National Institute for Social Integration”, where we could met two social entrepreneurship programs in the fields of health and social care (“senjoro”, that combine the care of the elderly with the employability of social workers and “social taxi”, which provides a low-cost transport service and assistance for people with physical disabilities) and “Orūs namai”, which focuses on the placement of older people in decent housing. All of them were very illustrative examples of the impetus of the social economy sector in order to meet societal needs in the health and social care sectors.

Regarding the content of the training, the theoretical part was combined with several energized exercises, encouraging the active participation of the group and to put into practice the knowledge acquired. As we got into the modules, we could learn about the different stages in the start-up of a social economy enterprise, getting a better understanding of the requirements, implications, barriers, etc., of the entrepreneurship process. Through the different exercises, we could verify the difficulties to combine the social and profit character, both essential when starting a social economy enterprise. Thus, in the star-up simulation of an enterprise aimed to provide health and social cares, the social value was much more evident than the economic/profit one.

During last day, we had a general discussion session focused on the collective learning, critical analysis and reflexions, in order to complete the evaluation process of the training. We also received the attendance certificate (CPD, Continuing Professional Development).

Personally, it was a very gratifying experience in terms of the exchange of experience, cross-cultural learning, acquired knowledge, motivation and, finally but not least, it was also a nice opportunity to meet interesting people and to enjoy the wonders of Vilnius.