Kick off Meeting
Poland
21 - 23 October 2015

Together for youth
Not in Employment
Education

Or Training
Agenda

Objectives of the Meeting

Coordination meeting in Poland was the first meeting of the partners of our project with main aim:

- to get to know each other and the organizations participating in the “Together for Neet Project”
- to set the grounds of our cooperation and to manage the expectations from each other
- to discuss and gain a common understanding around the project and the tasks that each partner have in order to have a successful project that will achieve the stated objectives
- to discuss and make decisions on practical and logistical matters of the project
In the beginning of day 1 we had the time to introduce ourselves and our organizations specifically:

Present in the meeting were:

1. Aida Ivanovic representing Prima NGO in Montenegro.
2. Nikolay Tsolov representing Free Youth Center in Bulgaria.
4. Katarzyna Kurowska representing Kzcia in Poland
5. Boris Simovski representing Studio 212 in Macedonia
6. Bora Mezexhiu representing Cnell in Albania
7. Antonis Korkontzilas representing EILD in Greece
8. Kristina Koka representing the Youth Activism Center in Kosovo
9. Marko Pali representing Cnell in Albania

Absent in the meeting were:
1. Representative of CEUD in Serbia
2. Representative of the Güroymak District Governorship in Turkey.

After getting to know each other better we found out that our consortium has a quite interesting mixture of new organizations and experienced and professionalized ones. This gave us opportunity to discuss about how can we learn from each other and how can we contribute in each other’s growth.

Amongst the mentioned ideas were:

1. To learn more about project management and funding
2. To learn about new technologies and new media
3. To support new organizations by transferring know how in youth work
4. To create a strong and sustainable cooperation for the future so that we can grow together.

More information about each partner organization can be found in the website of the project and in the partnership forms that are attached in the Trello platform.
Expectations

Setting expectations:

Between expectations that were expressed amongst the partners are the following:

1. To build a good cooperation between us by creation strong internal administrative systems
2. To work based on mutual trust and understanding and to be honest with each other
3. To ask for help from each other on time and to support each other when needed
4. To have clear objectives in the project and in the cooperation and communication between us
5. To have even distribution of tasks between partners and to have equal contribution in the project
6. To create a mixture of generations and build on the positives of intergenerational dialogue (taking into account the mixture of coordinators in our project)
7. To achieve to reach as many NEET YOUTH through our activities
8. To have high quality in our activities and to monitor the quality constantly and optimize when needed
9. Build strong communication channels between us that will facilitate the fast transfer of information – which will be extremely helpful in the case of crisis management
10. In terms of project management and communication between partners we decided that we will capitalize on the TRELLO PLATFORM that enable live view of all documents of the project, discussions between partners and organization of the tasks that each partner has to deliver together with timeline.

The trello board of the TOGETHER FOR NEET project can be found in the following link: https://trello.com/b/5GLqtsU9/together-for-neet
Understanding Capacity Building Projects under Erasmus +

There was need to go through the rules and objectives of Erasmus plus KA2 CBY so that all partners have common understanding on the funding rules and how our project is connected with the Objectives of the Erasmus plus programme and the objectives of the specific action.

All relevant info can be found in the Erasmus plus programme guide in the following link – pages 169 - 182:


One of the main topics discussed here was the part of rules of funding as Capacity building projects funding is based on real cost and unit costs, which means that for real cost activities in our case: Coordination meetings, E platform, Publication, Local Workshops and dissemination activities we need to co-finance the project by 20% and we need to provide invoices for all the real costs. Also there was need to explain that in Capacity Building Projects there is no Organizational Support Budget (except for the Mobility of youth workers) and there is no budget available for paying the cost of staff of the coordinating organization.

Besides budgeting and financial issues we had time to discuss the capacity building dimension, amongst the main ideas discussed were:

1. Lack of governmental funding in Western Balkan countries for Youth NGOs Especially when it comes to funding international activities
2. Difficulties that these youth organizations face in achieving internationalization and collaboration with EU countries
3. Hardship that the youth organizations face in advocating for marginalized youth and making their voice heard by policy makers

The western Balkans window that is financing the Capacity Building in the field of youth can support the youth organizations in Balkans to tackle the above three difficulties by supporting their internationalization and development of cooperation with other organizations across Europe, by developing their capacities to innovate and achieve results and their ability to advocate for marginalized youth in their cities/countries.
Understanding the reality of NEET in the partner Countries

Bulgaria has the higher percentage of NEET between European Union Countries large percentage of which belong to the Roma Community. Albania on the other side has a percentage of 38% of NEET youth aged between 15-24. Percentages are similar to the other Western Balkan Countries.

The main characteristics of NEET youth in our countries are that they have basic level of education, they spend their time staying around the neighbourhood (mainly in marginalized areas of the cities) engaging themselves in illegal activities. Some of the partners said that NEET are or can cause major social issues in urban spaces as they tend to radicalize themselves through religions or extremists political views.

Other issues mentioned were: these young people are not in employment education or training so the main question that raise is how do they spend their time. These young people are permanently passive and one of the main approaches in integrating them is to support them in building positive habits.

In Greece, affected by the economic crisis 45-58% of youth are unemployed and great percentage of them are NEET. Lately however it is observed a new trend where young people make it their job to find a job! This has resulted in a rise in volunteering rates as a way to stay active. However many young people from Greece choose to immigrate in other EU countries (15%).

Social entrepreneurship measures seem to be quite successful in some countries in dealing with NEET however the conclusion of our discussion was that Social Economy can function only in a country where real economy is quite strong. Moreover it is hard for these initiatives to survive without government support.

However in Western Balkan Countries where the capacity of organizations to leverage funding from Government and also face difficulties in advocating for policy change caused by low capacity of the Civil Society organizations.

Legislation, Educational system, economic situation, political will, lack of creativity and the diversity inside the NEET group are faces of the same problem which affect the current situation and make it challenging to find a solution. However we do recognize that the cross sectoral approach of this project can provide us with great insights to what can be a possible long term solution.
Main Objectives

The main objective of the project is to create synergies between diversified stakeholders (education institutions, youth sector, labor market) in order to explore together effective measures and interventions for the better reintegration of NEET youth in society, education and labor market.

Specific Objectives

To gain together better understanding of the NEET issue by sharing previous successful interventions and understanding each sector’s role in the problem solving.

To equip those involved with NEET youth work with skills and competencies to better support this vulnerable target group.

To co develop innovative models of intervention methods – tools – programmes.

To explore further funding opportunities and develop a long term cooperation for future projects.

To share the results, products and findings of the project with the relevant target groups in our countries and across Europe.

Discussions and thoughts:

The main topics discussed were the importance and relevance of the cross sectoral approach and the challenges that come with it in terms of implementing the project. This project is an “experiment” of what will happened when we create the space for dialogue and using collective intelligence tools. The aim and objectives of the project are to use these tools to create tools, solution strategies and to support the creation of long term synergies and cooperation between these sectors.
Activities & Tasks Distribution

1. Coordination meetings

To support the monitoring and well management of the project the coordinators of each partner organization will meet in the beginning, middle and end of the project lifetime. With main objective to evaluate the achievements of the project so far, to plan the next activities and coordinate our actions. The three coordination meetings will take place in Poland – Romania – Bulgaria. The tasks of the 3 partners that are hosting the activities are:

• To organize the logistical parts such as food, accommodation and local transport and meeting room
• To arrange the participation of the partners in one external event in the city where we can present our project or to organize themselves a multiplier / dissemination event.
• To inform all the participants about how to arrive to the hotel and / or the meeting room
• To inform the coordinator about the budgetary issues regarding the expenses of the meetings.

The task of the other partners are to send one representative of their organization that is responsible for decision making in the organization possibly the same person in the three meetings and facilitate their preparation and support to be able to deliver the tasks as a coordinator of this specific project. Moreover regarding the reimbursement to provide the coordinator with all the necessary documents (boarding passes, tickets, e-tickets, invoices) of the trip.

2. Mobility of youth workers

The mobility of youth workers is the central activity of the project as will not only bring together representatives from all sectors relevant to the NEET and promote creative dialogue between them it will create important outputs: tools, methods and strategies that can be used in everyday situations of NEET practitioners and stakeholders.

The mobility will take place in Macedonia and the tasks of the hosting partner are:
To arrange all the logistical parts such as food, accommodation and local transport.
To organize one external event with local stakeholders that will serve as a multiplier event.
To support the participants with logistical issues: travelling and special needs they might have.

The tasks of each other partner are:
To select 3 participants from their country that are representatives of the sectors: either educational institutions or business sector or policy making or youth sector including NEET youth.
To support the preparation of these participants in terms of practical information about the transport and venue, in terms of content and in terms of methodology.

The tasks of the coordinating organization are
To provide one qualified trainer that will facilitate the activities using non formal education methods
To arrange the reimbursements and financial issues with all participants and the hosting organization
To monitor the whole activity and to ensure quality and engagement of all parts.
3. E-platform

The e-platform that will be incorporated in the official website of the project will be the virtual space that will include:

- Five webinars
- Online library that will include documentation of the project and other relevant external materials and resources
- Discussion forums

Members of the platform will be all relevant stakeholders of the project keeping in mind the cross sectoral approach and will be able to connect with each other and create content related to the NEET issue in Europe.

Tasks of the coordinating organization:
To create the initial content of the platform and the technical part of it
To monitor the usage and the content protecting the user data and rights
To manage the dissemination of the platform to all relevant stakeholders
Tasks of the partners will be to promote the platform to their members and partners and make sure that they are active in creating content

Discussions and thoughts:
The data protection and antispam measures that we will take in the e-platform is a common concern of all the partners. For that we commit to research available plug-ins and extensions that can prevent those situations. Moreover we commit to have a moderator that will manage the platform during all the project lifetime and beyond that.

Another concern of the partners is how we will keep the platform alive and how we will motivate its members to stay active and create content – for that we commit to promote frequently to our members the platform and its benefits, to use social media as a tool to promote it, to be role models and use the platform ourselves and last but not least to capitalize on plug-ins that can support the online distribution and promotion of the platform.

4. Local Capacity building Workshops

The four local workshops will be held in Greece, Kosovo, Turkey and Serbia and will act as local event with the main aim to multiply the results of the project and to disseminate its products.

The local workshops must bring together a minimum of 25 participants for different sectors relevant to the project.

Tasks of coordinating organization:
To provide the 4 hosters with all the important information and materials that are important for the realization of the workshops.
To monitor the planning and delivery of the workshops
To ensure the reimbursement of the costs made by the host organizations related to the workshops

Discussions and thoughts:
Main discussion was around the participants of the workshops and their profile.
We decided that the cross sectoral approach and methodology that we use in the project should be maintained in the local workshops as well. This means that the participants should be a mixture of educational institutions; youth sector representatives, labor market representatives, policy makers and NEET youth. We commit to maintain a balance between the number of representatives from each sector.
5. Publication
NEET TOOLKIT publication is a booklet that contains the outcomes of the project, our findings, tools and strategies created during the project. Is a tool that can be used by other organizations and consortiums working with neet youth and especially wanting to integrate the cross sectoral approach.

The publication will be divided into 2 main parts – the first of which contains general knowledge and information about NEET in Europe and state of art of projects and initiatives. The second part will include the findings of the “Together for NEET” project.

Tasks of Coordinating organization:
To assign one researcher responsible for the collection of the materials, compilation and creation of the publication.
To make relevant research and coordinate all the project activities so that quality content is created that can be included in the publication.

Tasks of partners:
To contribute with resources and knowledge they might have
To share case studies and organizational experiences from the past
To invite other stakeholders to do the above two actions.

Discussion and Thoughts:
Regarding the publication the main concerns of the partners is the fact that there are not so many cross sectoral initiatives which we can use as case studies in the toolkit. More over it is a challenge of how can we create tools and strategies that can be relevant for all the sectors involved in the project.
For the above two issues we commit to contact salto inclusion and capitalize on their publication about NEET youth. Moreover we aim to consult with all the stakeholders in order to monitor the usability of the tools and strategies we will create and to ask for feedback in the process of creating the publication.

In the session about the budget we had the opportunity to see the voices and the distribution between the partners for the tasks and activities that each of them is responsible for.

The budget line for partners can be found in the trello platform.
Also we clarified the documentation that is needed for the justification of the grant and the reporting to EACEA.
Hence partners have to make sure they stay in line with the budget, collect invoices and contracts and proof of payment, boarding passes, e-tickets etc. and give all the documents to the coordinating organization for the report to EU.

Last but not least there is a challenge to be solved about the transfers of the money between the partners as the bank commissions between eu and non eu countries are very high 20-100 euros per transfer. For that reason we decided that we make payments in cash during the mobility activity and or other meetings and events.
Dissemination Plan

Important actions to be taken regarding the dissemination of the results and products of the project:

1. In each coordination meeting, the partner that is hosting has to arrange for the partners to attend an external event of minimum 25 participants and/or organize such an event with local stakeholders relevant to the project.

2. The partners should provide the coordinator with contact information about local stakeholders that will be added to the newsletter list that will be sent monthly.

3. The coordinating organization should create a press release template and send it to the partners in order to contact local media.

4. The coordinating organization will provide the partners with printed materials that are needed to promote the project such as posters and leaflets and a printed version of the publication – and partners will distribute it to their networks.

5. Don’t forget to share the project and the products on social media and websites of each partner and relevant blogs or platforms.

6. Use the project visual identity and branding that is available in the Trello platform.

7. Promote the 5 webinars that will be held online in the e-platform.

Left to discuss in the future:

Follow up projects and future cooperation between the partners.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the tasks of the coordinating organization is to create questionnaires of evaluation for each activity held and ask for constant feedback from beneficiaries, partners, stakeholders and participants in regards to the activity: logistical part, content and quality part and achievement of the goals and objectives.

The questionnaires and reports of the results will be made available on the TOGETHER for Neet e-platform, and the Trello platform for project coordination.
The external event during the kick off meeting was organized in cooperation with the Polytechnic University of Krakow, the Gymnasium no 17 of Krakow and our Polish Partner KZCIA.

All partners, representatives of the University, students and teachers of the school attended and had the opportunity to discuss about NEET youth in Europe and Western Balkans Countries.

The representative of the University presented the project that the University is running with main aim to promote Science and Technological professions to young people in High schools of the area. Amongst the activities they are running are:

- Workshops in Mathematical and computer sciences using New technologies
- Visits in the laboratories of the University (technologies, multimedia, 3d scanning, media, methodology, traffic and robotics)
- Organization of Scientists Night 2015

The coordinator of the project “Together for NEET” presented the project objectives and activities and talked about the main challenges that the NEET youth face and the consequences of the NEET phenomena in the society and economy of Europe.

The teachers and students of the school presented not only the school functions and lessons but also the extracurricular activities they organize to promote inclusion and active participation of all youngsters in the school.

Examples were:
- Marathon, Flashmobs, Volunteer Center, Career Guidance Center, Students council, activities promoting artistic expression etc.

Thoughts and discussion:

The main discussion after the presentation was directed on how can Universities, Youth organizations and school support NEET youth to reintegrate in education system, or the labor economy.

Amongst the ideas discussed was the challenge to reach these youngsters as they cannot be found in schools or other organizations.

For example we suggested that the Polytechnic university of Krakow run the same project about promoting the science professions but with underprivileged youth. In order to achieve that they will have not only to cooperate with schools and formal education institutions but also youth centers, and organizations that work with youth at risk.

Moreover we discussed with the teachers about how they prevent early school leaving. The main ideas were that they use extracurricular activities to promote the engagement and integration in school and they have a support system that provides guidance to young people that are at risk of leaving school.

Moreover we discussed that youth workers and organizations should cooperate more closely with schools and create sustainable synergies that will help exchange immediate feedback and information about youth at risk and NEET youth.
Together For Youth Not in Employment Education or Training is co-funded by the Erasmus + programme of the European Union.

The new Erasmus+ programme aims to support actions in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the period 2014-2020.

What does it support?

Erasmus + provides grants for a wide range of actions and activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The programme gives opportunities to students, trainees, staff and volunteers to spend a period abroad to increase their skills and employability. It supports organisations to work in transnational partnership and to share innovative practices in the fields of education, training and youth. The new Sport action will support grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.