Entrepreneurship & Youth Empowerment

Competence Based Development Programme for Social Inclusion and Employment

Focus Group
Results Blended Mobility
by
UPorto Team

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CENTRO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO FORMAÇÃO INOVAÇÃO E INTERVENÇÃO EM DESPORTO CIFI2D

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Project:

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PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Problem and Needs

In a rapidly changing world, youth gaps are a growing reality. Lack of key competencies for lifelong learning, entrepreneurial mindsets, and attitudes and guidance hinder the integration of young Europeans into the labor market and society.
As a direct and indirect effect it increases:

- No. of young people experiencing social exclusion and disintegration: in 2017, the social exclusion risk rate for young people aged 16-29 was 27,7%. For the EU(28) this figure corresponded to 21.8 million young people (source: Eurostat);
- No. of young NEETs: in the EU(28), in 2017, the rate of young NEETs was 17.2% (source: Eurostat);
- No. of young unemployed people: in the EU(28), in 2017, the unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group was 20.2% and for the 25-34 age group was 25.4% (source: Pordata).

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And add situations such as integration in precarious jobs and socially deviant behavior (e.g. radicalization of behavior and violence). The scenario worsens when we talk about under-represented social groups such as ethnic minorities and migrants who face greater difficulties of social and professional insertion.

We identify, in this context, an important and neglected social problem:

- Social exclusion of young people and disintegration in the labor market as a consequence of the absence of key competencies for learning lifelong learning and entrepreneurial thinking and attitudes.

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Objectives

1. To promote the empowerment of young people through the development of key competencies for lifelong learning and the adoption of entrepreneurial thoughts and attitudes;

2. To promote youth entrepreneurship, through the transfer of knowledge and methodologies, methods and tools for starting new jobs;

3. Promote the social inclusion of young people, including socially under-represented groups (such as ethnic minorities and migrants), by creating opportunities and training for labor market integration;

4. Promote the empowerment of social agents (such as youth workers, trainers, teachers, etc.) for social inclusion work and youth entrepreneurship;

5. To promote the potentialities of the NFE methodology in the training and in the personal, social and professional development of young people;

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6. Providing educational institutions with skills for the incorporation of complementary actions to formal education for the personal, social and professional development of personal, social and professional development of young people;

7. To share existing good practices based on the intervention programme for the development of key competences for lifelong learning and adoption of entrepreneurial thoughts and attitudes that is the transition bridge between education and the labour market.

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Needs

1. To encourage the discovery of the potential of the young generations, so that they become more capable, aware, entrepreneurial, and highly skilled in adapting to social evolution and change;

2. To encourage the effective, efficient, and innovative intervention of institutions in internal and youth empowerment;

3. To promote access to opportunities, namely social and professional, with the proper guidance and transfer of common values and knowledge;

4. To create a program highly comprehensible and understood by all social agents, with potential for adaptation, scalability, and institutionalization.

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Results during the project

1. Compilation of knowledge, experiences, and current good practices that promote the resolution of the social problem;
2. Methods and tools for developing key competencies for lifelong learning and adoption of entrepreneurial thoughts and attitudes by young people based on NFE (complementing FE and EI);
3. Methods and tools based on tested practices with young people;
4. Personal, social, educational, and emotional competencies;
5. Competences of the reference framework of the EU Council Recommendations.

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Results end of the project

In addition to all the results addressed above, it is expected:

- Materialization of the project in a tangible result:
  1. EYE – Entrepreneurship & Youth Empowerment: Manual;
  2. EYE – Entrepreneurship & Youth Empowerment: Manual for Youth Workers;
- Materialization of materials for dissemination of results and the Erasmus+ program.

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Innovation

The word "innovation" is derived from the Latin verb *innovare*, which means to renew. In essence, the word has retained its meaning up until today. Innovation means to improve or to replace something, for example, a process, a product, or a service. In the context of companies, however, the term needs a definition.
The creation of value is a defining characteristic of innovation.

Organizations have several options to increase their competitiveness: they can strive for price leadership or develop a strategy of differentiation. In both cases, innovation is essential.

- Companies that choose price leadership must secure their long-term competitiveness by developing innovative, highly efficient processes. Process optimization and continuous improvement in terms of costs are important for them.

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- Companies that strive for a differentiation strategy need innovation to develop unique distinguishing features from their competitors.
- Many start-ups launch their activities by developing an innovative product or service.

Continuous innovation is, therefore, crucial for all companies. The main difference is in the focus of the innovation strategy, which varies considerably from company to company.

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Factors of innovation of the EYE project:

1. Sharing of practices, methods, and tools that incite the development of key competencies for lifelong learning and the adoption of entrepreneurial thoughts and attitudes of the target group.

How? Through the constitution of a consortium highly experienced, qualified and skilled for the themes, objectives, and methodologies of the project; through the inclusion of stakeholders who may be investors in the projects developed and through the implementation of activities that appeal to the active, conscious, critical and enterprising participation of the target groups.

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2. Appropriation of basic scientific knowledge – studied, tested, and validated in areas from social, entrepreneurial, and social innovation, to education to education, economics, engineering, etc. – which have made it possible to identify the problem, the needs and to outline the objectives, define the activities, results, and impacts.

How? Through a phase of research and identification of studies and practices currently implemented and through communication with elements of the identified areas who, through debate and active sharing of knowledge, contributed to the identification of the problem and needs..

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3. Methodologies transversality, in order to highlight the potential of each one to solve the social problem.

How? By incorporating the NFE – and all the character dynamics that encourage personal and social development, such as the get to know, ice breakers, group dynamics, reflection, sharing, debate, active construction of knowledge, personal and group evaluation, etc. – so that gaps in PE can be worked on; through the recognition of NFE in the development of skills and entrepreneurial attitudes adjusted to one's personal rhythm, expectations, and goals; through the appropriation of EF for the co-creation of materials, which are understandable and based on real knowledge and through the appropriation of EI in group dynamics so that European social values are recognised and transferred.

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4. Particular focus on under-represented social groups that face higher social and labor market exclusion situations compared to their peers. Specifically, when analyzing the youth unemployment rate, in the EU(28) in 2017, we find that the population of European origin was 16.2%, for the migrant population born in the EU it was 16.5% and that for the migrant population born outside the EU the rate increased significantly to 27.1%. When analyzing the development of early leavers from education and training for the group aged 18-24-year-olds in the EU(28) between 2008-2017, we find that young people born in a foreign country or foreign citizens are generally at higher risk of dropping out foreign citizens are overall at higher risk of leaving education and training before having completed upper secondary level (source: Eurostat)

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How? By promoting an intervention that is apt and adjusted to the current trend (and EU priorities) of integrating young people belonging from under-represented social groups and supporting the adaptation of higher education institutions to this change; through the linguistic cultural and social adaptation of the program through translation and support in creating and interpreting the content and materials developed; through regular monitoring and support in labor market integration and through the involvement of stakeholders who can be a vehicle for insertion of young people belonging to groups under-represented in the labor market.

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5. Tangibility of and free access to contents, materials, and results. The intention is to ensure that everyone, without exception, has free access free and open access to the content and materials produced so that they recognize the project, the results, and potential social impacts and the Erasmus+ program. Thus, they will be able to replicate the intervention and continuously generate new results and social impacts.

How to do it? Sharing the content, materials, and results on free, easily accessible, and understandable websites and platforms (for example, Erasmus+ results dissemination platform, etc.) and linguistic adaptation of them.

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PARTNERS OF THE PROJECT

1.   UNIVERSITY OF PORTO

Founded in 1911, UPORTO is one of the largest higher education and research institutions in Portugal with 31.309 students (19% international, including mobility), 2.436 academics & researchers, and 1.576 administrative staff. It is one of the best-positioned PT HEI in national and international rankings: Times Higher Education 2018 (401-500); QS 2018/19 (328); Leiden 2018 (145); NTU 2018 (218).

It has 14 Faculties, 1 Business School, and 60 Research Units located in 3 campuses within Porto. U.PORTO is the most south-after PT HEI among the PT applicants to the HE System (1.72 applicants per available vacancy). UPORTO is the leading producer of science in Portugal, responsible for 24,8% of the scientific production in PT.

PARTNERS OF THE PROJECT

2. DOREA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE WTF

DOREA Educational Institute is a non-profit NGO established in 2012 in Cyprus.

DOREA Educational Institute's general scope is to offer high-quality non-formal education for youth and adults, covering the three main areas of conformal education, which are socio-cultural (popular) education, education for personal development, and professional training. The professionals working at DOREA, both as staff and external trainers are specialized in delivering excellent and feasible solutions for those who wish to continue personal and professional development through life-long learning educational programs.

PARTNERS OF THE PROJECT

3.   PAR INSTITUTE

PAR Institute for developing lifelong learning (PAR Institute) is a non-profit organization founded in 2013. to promote the culture of lifelong learning, develop new educational programs, and encourage individuals to recognize their potential, abilities, and skills through education, information, and involvement in decision-making processes. The PAR Institute's focus is a youth education and education of other community members as its primary goal: the development of civil society through lifelong learning.

On those grounds, PAR Institute has developed its philosophy relying on entrepreneurship education and lifelong learning to mitigate the consequences of unemployment and make all citizens seeking work and productive expression competitive at the labor market.

PARTNERS OF THE PROJECT

4. FURIM INSTITUTE

Institute was founded in Oslo, Norway in 2013.

FURIM Institute is committed to make social impact by developing innovative solutions. We generate knowledge by utilizing evidence-based approaches in order to verify the needs and expectations of individuals and puts this knowledge into practice by designing and implementing cutting-edge products and services. The major priority is to give a chance to the ones in need by trying to analyse their needs and expectations, develop and implement solutions and make the sustainable effect of our interventions.

Main sectors: Education & Training, and Well-being & Sport.
Priority Areas: Inclusion, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Digitalization, Career and Skills

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FOCUS GROUP - WHAT IS?

A Focus group is designated as a research method of a discussion group, where data are collected during the different moments of the research process.

According to Morgan (1996, 1997), focus groups are group interviews, but it is essential to distinguish between them. The group interview involves interviewing several people simultaneously, with the emphasis placed on questions and answers between the two. However, the researcher and the participants depend on the interaction within the group based on the topics that the researcher provides. According to the author, there are three essential components: focus groups are a research method aimed at collecting data; locates the interaction in the group discussion as the source of the data; and recognizes the researcher's active role in stimulating the group's discussion for

the purpose of data collection. Thus, the focus group's key characteristic is the participants' perception and data produced by the interaction.

IKrueger and Casey (2009) also emphasize the focus of the discussion on a given subject, its contribution to the understanding of the topic of interest, and the fact that the participants who compose them have some characteristic in common and relevant to the topic under discussion.

Focus groups, when combined with other methods, can occur in different phases of the research project, such as the initial phase (e.g., generate questions for a questionnaire), the intermediate phase (e.g., helping to interpret the results obtained in a questionnaire) and the final phase (e.g., discussing the results obtained with the participants, a discussion that may lead to new insights) (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stewart et al., 2007).

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Focus groups have as their most common objectives, obtaining information on a topic of interest, generating research hypotheses, stimulating new ideas and creative concepts, diagnosing potential problems with a new program, product, or service, generating impressions about products, programs, services, institutions or other objects of interest, understanding how participants talk about a phenomenon of interest, which facilitates the development of surveys or other research instruments of a more quantitative nature, interpretation of previously obtained quantitative results, among others. In short, this research method allows us to provide data more quickly and at lower costs, thus using it for a broader and more varied analysis. Thus, both strengths and weaknesses of the focus group flow directly from its two defining aspects: trust in the investigator's focus and group interaction.

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FOCUS GROUP - TEAM

The team from the partner, University of Porto, responsible for the elaboration and analysis of the focus group was:

- Amândio Graça – Faculdade de Desporto da Universidade do Porto, Centro de Investigação, Formação, Inovação e Intervenção em Desporto (CIFI2D), Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativa (CIIE)
- Luísa Estriga – Faculdade de Desporto da Universidade do Porto, Centro de Investigação, Formação, Inovação e Intervenção em Desporto (CIFI2D)
- Paula Batista – Faculdade de Desporto da Universidade do Porto, Centro de Investigação, Formação, Inovação e Intervenção em Desporto (CIFI2D), Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativa (CIIE)
- Teresa Silva Dias – Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativa (CIIE) da Faculdade de Psicologia da Universidade do Porto

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FOCUS GROUP - RESULTS

The participants of the Blended Mobility were divided into two groups. They participated in a focus group aiming to catch their opinions to construct a group vision about the experience in this activity.

Most of the participants have master degrees or frequency at university in different fields, like veterinary medicine; economics; sociology; accounting and finance; psychology; biomedical sciences; genetic counseling; business; cultural studies; organization and management; public administration; and some of them had secondary education and were working in different fields.

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Being immersed for five days in the activity was considered an excellent experience. Since everyone comes to the training with the same objectives: to learn and discuss ideas and make projects; networking and sharing different leisure moments (the formal and informal context together); they pointed out as an advantage to be together during the whole week.

Acquisition of new skills – the participants said they acquired relevant knowledge and competencies to build and implement a project (planning and management time). The development of communication skills, like talking to each other, communicating ideas, problem–solving, understanding others' perspectives and different cultures, and negotiating and sharing ideas. "Thinking out of the box"; simplifying was also mentioned as acquisitions. For example, the project division into small steps was essential to follow the process and understand each stage of the project's development.

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Experiences during the week related to all the processes – They mentioned that the balance between the training spaces and the discussion inside the groups is good, as well as theoretical and practical moments. In general, they identified three main steps:

The first step – is to start to know each other and identify the needs in the different countries; to share some ideas and commonalities; to discuss problems and use brainstorming to make/organize the project.

The second step – thinking in a group; introducing what they are going to do – the tools, the dynamics; the organizer team was always facilitating group work.

The final moment – the presentation of the projects to all the groups and receiving feedback from them – is a critical stage because, if we cannot present a project, it is also helpful.

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The most difficult things – Time management was the most challenging thing, and, for some of them, working in a group was also difficult, but for others, it was straightforward.

Something to reflect – As teachers, we prepare good professionals with technical skills, but we do not prepare students with social skills.

All the participants agree! After finishing the course, they said that they have the knowledge but do not have social skills and practical skills to present ideas – it's missing – one group made one project about this – emotional and social skills in youngers.

To do differently after this blended mobility – they said that, after this experience, they could improve their time management; communicate better with different people; keep an open mind; and be more able to manage people, because it is not an easy thing.

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Suggestions for the future – In general, they are very satisfied; they understand what they will do from the beginning and help them manage expectations better. When the groups were formed, they considered that the facilitators should have given some more orientations related to teamwork difficulties and better organized each group's dynamics. They refer that including one more session about best practices – communalities or project leaders – can improve the activity.

The project must be framed in one community, and it is vital to understand what the needs are and the priorities of intervention. Concerning the webinars, they were mentioned to be very important for acquiring knowledge and sharing and comparing projects.

One word that characterized this week – challenging, surprising, inspiring, insightful, fun, interesting, creative.

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FOCUS GROUP - GUIDE

1. Initial questions

Mentimeter (interactive presentation software)

What is your educational background?

What did you look for in this mobility?

One word to qualify your experience in this project/mobility.

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Topics for discussion:

2.   Initial expectations

When did you see the promotion of this activity, "blended mobility" – what expectations did you think of and what led you to participate?

- ·Were the motivations more directed towards project development? Towards working with people from different countries and realities? Or just an opportunity to get to know new contexts?

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3. Experiences in the process

What do you hope to accomplish with your participation in this blended mobility?

Were the training moments well organized?

- Did the initial formation moments have clear objectives?
- Did the initial training moments allow the acquisition of tools for the development/organization of the project?

How do you consider the relationship you have established with colleagues from other countries?

- Do you want to share what the sharing of experiences was?
- And the interpersonal relationship, the group work, how were they?
- And the support you gave each other, how do you think it went?

Whenever you asked for help/guidance in developing your project, what was the support of the social agents and coordination team like?

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4.   Gains or benefits

Could you talk a little about the gains and benefits of this blended mobility?

5.   Evaluation and suggestions

What was the experience of participating in this training over these five days like?

- What did you like the most? Least?
- What value do you attach to it?
- What knowledge and skills have you developed/acquired?
- Do you have any suggestions for future projects/moments of training?

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FURIM INSTITUTE

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