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| *Programme: Erasmus+* |
| *Key Action 2: Cooperation Partnerships* |
| *KA2020: Cooperation Partnerships in youth* |
| *Call: KA220-YOU-7B6295FC* |
| *Submission deadline: 23rd of March 2022* |
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| *Project Title: Job training and Inclusion of Youth with Special Abilities through Urban Agriculture* |
| *Project Acronym: AGRiCLUSION* |
| *Project total duration: 26 months* |
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| Background (Aims, objectives & needs.) | |
| Context of the project & Needs of the target groups addressed. | According to WHO, 10% of the world’s young people (about 200 million), have some kind of disability or mental disorder. Talking about the European reality, according to the European Disability Forum, about 80 million Europeans have a disability, which makes people with disabilities the most significant minority in Europe. Even though disabled youth form a quite large part of our society, they often face discrimination and prejudice, which leads to their exclusion from the labour market and social life, sometimes even from education.  Regarding discrimination on the grounds of disability, there are several policies in EU level that have been developed, in order to fight against this social phenomenon. For example, Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam and the EU Directive on Equal Treatment in Employment, state that discrimination in the field of employment and on the grounds of disability is strictly prohibited. Even though many policies and initiatives exist to fight discrimination, still many Europeans face direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability widespread in Europe. Numbers can justify the above-mentioned feeling of European citizens. According to the most recent formal statistics, the EU unemployment rate of people with disabilities aged 20-64 is 17,1 % compared to 10,2% of people without disabilities (EPRS). It was also discovered that in some European countries the rates are extremely high, while in others are significantly low. Namely, in the Netherlands and Romania, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is lower than 7%, while in Spain is 31%, in Greece is 32,6% and in Croatia is 49%. In addition, women with disabilities and young disabled persons, who have higher support needs, are identified as more vulnerable to face discrimination and exclusion from the labour market (ANED, 2017).  The Committee on World Food Security [CFS] has acknowledged in its Multi-Year Programme of Work [MYPoW] between 2020-2023, the importance of youth participation in sustainable development, their engagement as crucial for the future of our food and the existence of a “large, untapped reservoir” of employment opportunities for youth in the agri-food sector. It has also been reported that especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an urgent need for a radical transformation of the agriculture sector by recognizing the role of youth as agents of change. When combined with the particular characteristics of youth with disabilities, the last have the chance to act in the forefront, as drivers of change, and actively promote their societal role.  Looking at the above-mentioned numbers, we can understand that the problem of unemployment of people with disabilities is quite severe in some countries and actions need to be undertaken. Many times, the issue of unemployment of this social group comes from the fact that first, young disabled do not have the necessary knowledge and skills and second, youth workers do not know how to manage the disabled youth and how to make working spaces functional for them.  The sector of Urban Agriculture allows disabled youth to develop competences and skills in the green sector and join the workforce of a fast-growing industry. The bond between nature and disabled youth can be powerful and urban agriculture can allow them to make their living funnily and creatively, by developing green sectorial skills, using their existing unique assets and enabling behavioural changes. For example, autistic people have some distinctive character traits – they are systematic, are passionate, have strong attention to detail and outstanding memory. These characteristics can help them grow in the sector of urban agriculture and develop environmental consciousness, thus perfectly aligned with the priority regarding environment and fight against climate change, integrated into the field of youth work.  In this frame, the project AGRiCLUSION aims to strengthen employability and to foster the inclusion of youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation through urban agriculture, thus supporting their integration into the labour market. We will manage to achieve this goal by creating educational content and guides, in one hand for disabled youth, which will help them enhance their knowledge and skills on urban agriculture and on the other hand for youth workers, whose goal is to promote youth employment, so to provide them with guidelines on how to manage disabled young and what modifications should do in the working spaces to facilitate them. Significant role will have the pilots and webinars that will be implemented throughout the lifetime of the project.  The development of this project will include capacity-building for both youth with special abilities and youth workers, considering them as the main target groups of the project. The project will firstly promote social inclusion of people with disabilities and enhance their employability opportunites. The project will secondly include capacity-building of youth workers, contributing to the deleopment of inclusive work environments.  Disabled youth will have the opportunity to develop new skills and improve their existing ones and thus increase the possibilities to get integrated into the labour market. Also, youths who will be directly involved in the project activities will have the opportunity to get a job training in enterprises in the sector of urban agriculture and understand how they can apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace. Youth workers will increase the quality, innovation and recognition of their work, as they will use new management methods and will enhance their commitment towards inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination and prevention of intolerance, perfectly aligned with the horizontal and specific priorities of the programme in the field of youth. |
| Objectives of the project / Intellectual Outputs | AGRiCLUSION aims to strengthen employability and foster the inclusion of youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation through urban and peri-urban agriculture. The AGRiCLUSION **project objectives** are as follows:   * Foster employability and personal development of youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation; * Promotion of sustainable and innovative ideas in the green sector, specifically in Urban and peri-urban Agriculture * Development competences in various sustainability-relevant sectors, developing green sectorial skills; * Development of innovative practices to prepare youth with disabilities to enter the labour market and increase their employability opportunities and assist youth workers to increase their innovation, quality of work and experience, also with a focus on non-discriminative and inclusive methods; * Strengthen the recruitment, professional development and capacity-building of both youth with ASD, Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation and youth workers.   All partner organizations will participate in the implementation of this project and three **intellectual outputs** will be developed:   * **ΙΟ1: AGRiCLUSION Youth Educational Guide**, which will educate young people with ASD, Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation on urban and peri-urban agriculture, and help them identify the skills and competencies needed in this sector and provide them with clear guidelines on how to develop those skills * **IO2: AGRiCLUSION Educational Guide for Youth Workers**, which will educate youth workers who are working or are planning to work with youths with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation on diversity management, how it can be applied in their activities and be connected to the sector of Urban and peri-urban Agriculture * **IO3: AGRiCLUSION Open Educational Resource**, which will be an interactive platform for youth and youth workers and which will host all material developed during the previous outputs, webinars that will be created for each chapter of the educational guides. In IO3 are foreseen also pilot tests and study visits. In order to achieve them, the partnership has decided to form working clusters among the participating organizaitons, something that will lead to exchange of knowledge and expertise and subsequently to high-quality results. |
| Project Activities | All partners will equally participate in all the activites designed for the project, depending on their areas of expertise.  During the lifecycle of the project, specific **Project Management activities** will be followed in order to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the project:     * Development of the Management Plan * Dissemination and Communication Plan * Quality Assurance Plan * Evaluation Plan and Safety and Inclusion Plan   During the implementation of the project, the active participation of young with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Syndrome Down and Psychomotor Retardation and youth workers, as the main target groups, will be ensured through:   * Conduct of **National Pilot Tests**, where participants will have the opportunity to access and evaluate the training material also through the creation of the platform’s “Ιnteraction Room” * **National Study Visits** and engagement with spot businesses in the sector of urban and peri-urban Agriculture in their cities.   **Multiplier Events and Transnational Project Meetings** will also be an integral part of the project’s implementation process, which will be held in all the partner countries and will host youth with disabilities and youth workers. During these events, the active participation of the target groups will also be ensured, strengthening the communication channels among them and their peers, actively engaging the project’s identified target groups and widely disseminating the project’s results and outputs. |
| Possible applicants | NGOs directly working with disabled youth, youth organizations and associations, care centres of youth with disabilities, enterprises or businesses in the sector of urban or peri-urban Agriculture, applying the methology of inclusive workplace, local municipalities etc. |

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