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**-Youth Mediator -
A non-formal qualification in youth field in line with new European
common competence standards**

Erasmus+ EU Programme 2014-2020
Key Action 2 Strategic Partnerships for Youth
Project Number 2015-3-HU02-KA205-001223

**Intellectual Output O6 – Policy recommendations
Activity 1 (O6/A1) - Definition of Policy Recommendations**

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(drafted by the applicant *LAURUS Fejlesztő Intézet Kft.*)

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Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Youth

Project Title: Youth Mediator -A non-formal qualification in youth field in line with new European common competence standards

Project number: 2015-3-HU02-KA205-001223

Project duration: 18 months, 1st January 2016 – 30th June 2017

Project Partners

Hungary (Coordinator)

LAURUS Fejlesztő Intézet Kft.

Hungary (Partner Organisation)

AFS Magyarország Nemzetközi Csereprogram Alapítvány

Hungary (Partner Organisation)

Rábaköz Ifjúságáért Egyesület

Italy (Partner Organisation)

Aris Formazione e Ricerca

Spain (Partner Organisation)

European Consulting Education, s.l.

Preface

Mediation is one of a variety to solve conflict in peaceful way based on voluntary participation of the parties. It's a procedure in which an intermediary without adjudicatory powers (mediator) systematically facilitates communication between parties with the aim of enabling the parties themselves to take responsibility for resolving their dispute.

Derived from the Anglo-Saxon system mediation takes more and more places among peaceful conflict resolution in Hungary and the surrounding countries thanks to the success of its usage in last 15 years.

The state legislation and the EU directives go the direction to relieve the courts and call the parties who are in conflict to solve their dispute in peaceful way using alternative dispute resolution, mainly mediation.

In EU "Directive 2008/52/EC of the EU Parliament and of the Council on Certain Aspects of Mediation in Civil and Commercial Matters" (Mediation Directive) provides a framework for cross-border mediation and its aim is to motivate member states to use mediation for solving conflicts. Mediation Directive obliges member states to train mediators and to ensure high quality of mediation.

Despite its proven and multiple benefits, mediation in civil and commercial matters is still used in less than 1% of cases in EU based on a study, which solicited the views of up to 816 experts from all over. However there were bad results, statistics states that the number of mediation per year in Italy and Spain (among, Germany, Netherlands, UK) is above 10.000, in Hungary it's between 5.000, and there are 13 more EU countries where there's less than 500 mediations per year.

There are more and more researches about the positive impact of introduction of youth mediation and need for these programs, however, is still in its infancy period and has not been introduced commonly and there's no specialized mediator trainings yet in youth field. The current strategic partnership program for youth has the purpose to develop and test Youth Mediator - a non-formal qualification in youth field in line with new European common competence standards.

We created our own research to measure how well-known mediation is among youth and their needs for solving conflicts through mediation. Our questionnaire was filled out by 374 persons and 100% of them thought that it would be necessary to solve problems, conflicts among young people with the help of a young, independent person (more results of the research and the questionnaires

are attached to the e-form). A research like the Hungarian one was carried out also in the partners' countries with similar conclusions.

During the Youth Mediator program the involved partners jointly set up a training program for "Youth Mediator" that allows professionals, youth workers and youth to learn necessary skills in order to mediate in youth conflicts. Best practices had been transferred from each member countries considering different cultural environment and legislation on mediation and training programs. This was essential in order to execute an effective and successful program that can be implemented in long term and could reach positive effect on youth.

Overall, development of youth mediation program and youth mediators, and participation of youth workers and youth coordinated internationally happened during the project with the aim to reduce the tension in youth and youth workers, to have less conflict and develop the existing disputes resolution using peaceful mediation and constructive problem solving. The program thereby started the way for effecting the lives of all youth and youth workers' emotional and mental well-being who were involved in the project and who had been trained as "Youth Mediator" and of people who will work with in future.

The set of "policy recommendations" proposed by this document is addressed to the appropriate sectoral and territorial decision-makers at local, regional, national and European level, since having institutional competence or sectoral relevance on formal and non-formal education, and on mediation and youth related activities: in other words, public institutions competent in youth and mediation, and social partners and professional organizations in this very specific field.

In fact, these decision-makers are key actors in the process of endorsement and implementation at sectoral and territorial level of the results coming from the European ERASMUS+ project "YOUTH MEDIATOR", focused on Development and testing of Youth Mediator non-formal qualification in youth field in line with new European common competence standards and on transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications of people operating in youth and mediation sector, applying the European tools and frameworks European Qualification Framework - EQF, and Youthpass.

The main results produced during the YOUTH MEDITOR project life-cycle (January 2016 – June 2017), are the followings:

Youth Mediator Training Curriculum (New non-formal qualification in line with new European common competence standards) (May 2017)

Definition and formalisation at European level (June 2016) of the Memorandum of Understanding – MoU for the Youth Mediator qualification in the mediation and youth sector, relating to the specific bran new professional figure of Youth Mediation, described in terms of learning outcomes (unit/s, parts of unit/s), and establishing the European correspondence for the assessment, transfer, and accumulation processes of learning outcomes achieved in formal, informal and non formal contexts.

In effect, at the aim of MoU enforcement at territorial and sectoral level, which is essential to give to interested professionals and trainees the effective possibility to obtain putting in transparency and recognition of acquired learning outcomes described by the MoU, it's needed that in each country it proceeds the process of MoU adhesion by competent and interested key actors, started within the project with the adhesion of project partners and associated organisations: representative youth and educational organisations, also SMEs, of youth sector at national, regional and local level (in Hungary LAURUS Fejlesztő Intézet Kft. and Rábaköz Ifjúságáért Egyesület; in Italy Aris Formazione e Ricerca; in Spain European Consulting Education, s.l.), private associations competent in youth and mediation matter at national level (AFS Magyarország Nemzetközi Csereprogram Alapítvány).

The involvement in the MoU of new competent and/or interested key actors is strongly needed because the will of them has a direct influence on the possibility and on the extension of envisaged process: e.g., the participation of public institutions competent in youth field and non-formal education will determine the territorial extension of MoU provisions application, while the participation of sectoral social partners and non-formal training providers is fundamental to ensure to interested professionals and trainees concrete opportunities of application of MoU provisions in terms of recognition and certification of achieved related learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences), in compliance with national and regional rules on certification ways and procedures, formal, non-formal and informal learning validation, qualification bodies.

Memorandum of Understanding for new non-formal qualification

"Youth Mediator"

Background

The current Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter MoU) is a formal agreement between project partners and other interested public institutions competent on youth, youth work, mediation and non-formal education. The Memorandum of Understanding had been created by the consortium to be signed by partners and by competent and / or interested organizations in each participating country.

General and specific objectives of the MoU

For the purposes of the Memorandum of Understanding - MoU, the **general objectives** which apply are those described above.

- For the purposes of the Memorandum of Understanding - MoU, the **specific objectives** which apply are those described by the Key Action 2 Strategic Partnerships for Youth project (KA2 SP Youth) "**Youth Mediator - Development and testing of Youth Mediator - a non-formal qualification in youth field in line with new European common competence standards**", underway within the EU Erasmus+ Programme 2014-2020.

As yet, the project implementation process has been centred on the preparation of the useful documentation at the aim of the Memorandum of Understanding – MoU signature, particularly the design of the new European common competence standard for youth mediation.

Form and content of the MoU

Participants

The MoU is an agreement open to all the interested organisations and in particular to mediation, education and training organisations, particularly those offering learning opportunities in youth and mediation field, youth organisations, community and civil society organisations active in youth field, and institutions having competence on youth, at European, national, regional and local level, starting from the partners of the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Strategic Partnerships for Youth project "*Youth Mediator*", and the stakeholders of them.

Purpose of the MoU

For applying MoU in the participating countries to learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal learning context, relating to concerned learning outcomes and qualification, this MoU establishes that each participant:

- accepts each other's status as interested actors and/or competent institutions;
- accepts each other's quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures as satisfactory for the purposes of credit transfer and/or assessment, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes;
- agrees the conditions for the operation of the partnership, such as objectives, duration and arrangements for review of the MoU;
- agrees on the comparability of qualification concerned for the purposes of assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, using EQF to establish the reference levels;
- identifies other actors and competent institutions that may be involved in the process concerned and their functions.

Ratification and effectiveness of the MoU

This MoU has been duly executed and signed by an official representative of each of signatories. MoU shall come into effect for each party from the date of its signature.

Results of joint-staff training event

Based on the first hand experience partnership gained during the first pilot testing, the followings are to be highlighted:

1. There is a high demand for Youth Mediators so we are on a good path
2. The training hours should be increased to 120 hours altogether (70 hours personal training + 50 hours home study, case study etc.)
3. We should learn from the experience of youth workers
4. Youth conflicts can happen online e.g.. online bullying, we should take it to consideration
5. We should cooperate with you organizations, youth workers there would like to be Youth Mediators and come for our training, furthermore there organization could pay them for youth mediation work
6. Accreditation of the training would be very useful in every country
7. Youth Mediator Training program should be a Trade Mark
8. The new generation has different conflicts then the elder, not even their parents understand them - we should mention it on the training
9. Stress reduction and Self-awareness would be very useful for the youth we are working with
10. Supervision for Youth Mediators is important - maybe it should be a part of our training
11. We should be careful with the fee of the Youth Mediator training since the youth workers, teachers, social workers etc. who would come for the training have less financial possibilities for the payment and/or we should cooperate with civil organizations and foundations who would pay the training fee
12. We should try to get EU foundation for Train The Trainer Program
13. We should cooperate with universities and maybe your training program could be a part of their youth trainings
14. We should register our company and personal profile on Salto-Youth.net website

Results of 2nd line pilot testing

Based on the first hand experience partnership and participating young people gained during the 2nd line pilot testing, the followings are to be highlighted:

1. Conflicts of young people are the most of conflicts among each other and with teachers and parents. They have different interest, values and goals, that creates more disputes.
2. Young people have also more and more new type of conflicts, etc. internet bullying that need to be handled.
3. Inner conflicts, aggressivity is also a problem, young people should learn how to manage stress and conflicts.
4. Communication skills are not developed in the school and at home, youngsters don't really know how to communicate in an assertive way.
5. Mediation is a very effective way to solve conflicts between young people in a very short period of time.
6. Improve social and emotional learning environment in school and community is also an important goal.
7. Mediation helps developing responsibility and courage to solve conflicts.
8. Mediation is also a tool of developing emotional intelligence that is one of the most important skill nowadays to handle everyday situations.
9. Mediation can also help in drug conflicts and smaller criminal case as a restorative procedure.
10. As an effect of mediation young people can prevent future conflicts, they learn how to communicate about their feelings and needs in a peaceful way.

Conclusions

Youth Mediation is a highly important service in youth field since young people have more and more conflicts in their life. Mediation is a very effective tool to handle these conflicts in a peaceful way, it also develops the emotional intelligence and communication skills of the involved parties and can help to prevent future conflicts. Training of Youth Mediators should based on these needs.

European common curriculum for new non-formal qualification "Youth Mediator"

Learning hours

70 hours training day (25 hours theoretical study + 45 hours practical study)

20 hours personal studying at home (theoretical study)

15 hours case study exercise (practical study)

15 hours writing of the final essay (theoretical study)

Altogether: *120 hours*

Theoretical part: 50%

Practical part: 50%

Number of the participants in the training group

5-30 people

Training Units of the training days

1. Ethical principles of mediation (4 hours)

Ethical principles in mediation

Legislations of mediation

EU directives and domestic legislations relating to mediation

Balance, equal treatment and non-discrimination of parties during mediation

2. Mediation process and its professional prerequisites (6 hours)

The difference between dispute and conflict

The nature of conflicts

The mediation process

Difference between mediation and other problem solving methods

Rights and obligations of parties involved in the mediation

The role of self-awareness and self-reflection in the mediation process

Personality types in mediation

3. Professional relationships in mediation (15 hours)

Confidentiality obligation and responsibility in mediation

The atmosphere of trust and neutrality in mediation

Mediator competencies and skills

Honesty and personal integrity during mediation

Handling emotions during mediation

Cooperation in mediation

4. Effective communication in mediation (15 hours)

Active listening and understanding

Communication types (aggressive, passive, assertive and manipulative communication)

Non-verbal communication

Non-violent communication technique

Effective questioning in mediation, question types

Creating balance in mediation

Special situations during mediation sessions

5. Effectiveness and facilitation of an agreement (10 hours)

Positive communication in mediation

The role of the mediator at the creation of the final agreement

Necessary elements of the final agreement

Creation of final agreement

Closing the mediation process

Follow up in mediation

6. Specifics related to youth field (10 hours)

Communication in the youth field

Field competence in the youth field

Specifics of youth mediation

Practicing of Youth Mediation

7. Working as a mediator + country specific knowledge and requirements of Youth Mediation (10 hours)

Practicing a profession as employed or self-employed

Manage the professional activity in youth mediation

Country specific knowledge for being a Youth Mediator

Summary of the Training Program

Attainable competencies

The youth mediator...

- Is able to comply with the ethical principles and legislations of mediation and respect human dignity, values and rights
- Provides balance during disputes, the equal relation of parties to the dispute, and is obligated to help all parties equally in respect of the mediation process
- Emotionally stable and able to carry out balanced work
- Is able to debate, to keep different views separately, not to draw into a different subject with the background knowledge
- Is able to keep the mediation process under control
- Is able to handle hierarchy between youth and teachers/parents
- Shows a cooperative stance toward parties, complies with the obligation to provide information and process data
- Has professional knowledge relating to mediation
- Is able to identify potential local partners and build relationship with them
- Has a strong intercultural competency (empathy, identity awareness, self-confidence, cross-cultural competence, etc.)
- Is able to build the atmosphere of trust and preserve his/her neutrality, as well as apply differentiated treatment
- Is present and flexible during the mediation process and follows the pace of the moment
- Relates to his/her insights and trusts the inner knowledge of people – „follows his/her instincts”
- Faces strong emotional situations with confidence, handles his/her own feelings properly and does not let the customers' feelings to overcome
- Has a systematic mindset and is able to apply pragmatic
- Is able to ask questions that do not imply and do not include value judgement

- Is able to recognize, reveal and analyze social problems
- Is able to communicate in an effective and adequate way during mediation and use a kind of language, which has the most positive impact on clients
- Is able to build a non-directive, supporting conversation
- Is able to create a working environment in which the parties are equal, listen to each other, talk to each other and the mediator with respect
- Is able to express well understandable phrases in written context
- Is able to communicate with various communication situations
- Is able to focus on common interests and internal resources
- Is able to help clarity and positive communication
- Is able to support the effectiveness of the mediation process
- Is able to plan the problem solving process
- Is able to draft and write the final agreement
- Is able to communicate effectively and assertively with youngsters
- Is able to understand situations and issues that are of concern to youngsters
- Is able to remain neutral toward young parties in the mediation process and help them to achieve an agreement
- Is able to use tools of situation practices and creative tasks
- Understands the specialities of the youth field
- Is able to communicate with youth

Requirements and necessary pre-studies, skills for the participation

- Above 18 years
- Is able to communicate in Hungarian/English/Italian/Spanish (min. level B2 CEFR -Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
- Has experience and / or education degree in one of the fields: youth field, social field, pedagogy, psychology, coaching, mediation, training, law
- Has good communication skills
- Has basic self-awareness
- Is able to listen to others
- Has empathy and system thinking

Training curriculum could be built in other professions and qualifications

- teachers
- coaches
- mediators in other fields
- youth workers
- social workers
- lawyers

Examination

Requirements for the examination:

- Fulfillment of the 7 training modules
- 15 hours case study (mediation session in youth field)
- Writing of the final essay (about the principles and procedure of mediation including the case study experiences)

Type of the examination: Oral exam

Duration of the examination: 2 hours

Base of the qualification: 50% Final essay - 50% Oral exam

Certificate qualifications

excellent

satisfactory

fail

Personal and material tools

Personal tools:

- 1 trainer for the training days who has a diploma in Mediation and Mediation practice (at least 5 cases)
- 2 teachers for the oral examination who have a diploma in Mediation and competent in Youth Field

Material tools:

- classroom for 5-30 people
- chairs
- writing-tables
- flip chart board
- laptop
- projector
- stationery tools
- training hand-outs

Policy recommendations

- 1) The European Union is supporting, by specific common principles and tools (in particular, European Qualification Framework - EQF, Youthpass), the transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications: the application of these principles and tools, by public institutions competent in non-formal education in youth field and by sectoral social partners of employees and of employers in the specific European territorial and sectoral contexts, is very important for workers and trainees, since the concrete possibility of transparency and recognition of achieved learning outcomes is a requisite to allow an effective perspective of mobility beyond the borders of national (and also regional, in the EU countries – like Italy - in which the legislative competence on qualification and certification matter is attributed to the Regions) non-formal educational systems, the barriers to mobility within a specific non-formal training system and in particular across the economic activity sectors, the obstacles outside the educational system and in particular those related to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired in informal and non formal contexts.
- 2) Since the experimental application and implementation of the European common principles and tools for transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications are supported by the EU through specific financing instruments within the European program (in particular the new Erasmus+ program), it's very important that the public institutions competent in youth field and the sectoral social partners on non-formal education learn from the results of the realised experimentations, and also try to take part to these program.

3) Considering that the EU programs supporting the experimental application and implementation of the European common principles and tools for transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications, are conceived to sustain multilateral interventions integrating various kind of competent and interested public and private organisations in different EU countries, the participation in these programs requires a networking approach, able to gather the relevant key actors: public institutions competent in youth field and non-formal education, social partners of concerned sector, and also training providers (and, if the program allows interventions at academic level, public institutions competent in HE - Higher Education and HE providers too). Furthermore, if the intervention concerns a specific relevant issue (as youth mediation in YOUTH MEDIATOR project) this networking approach needs to be enlarged also to public institutions competent on the specific issue. Besides, considering YOUTH MEDIATOR project results, this networking approach could in perspective involve the coordination bodies gathering the relevant key actors' typologies in non-formal education and youth mediation sector at regional/national/European level.

Concrete suggestions for public bodies, key actors:

- Discover the brand new, internationally developed Youth Mediator non-formal Training Curriculum
- Getting to know the standard and country specific competence areas needed for becoming a professional Youth Mediator
- Using and/or adapting, integrating the elements of brand new Youth Mediator Training Curriculum into the curriculum of other, already existing formal and non-formal qualifications in the field of youth, mediation and related fields
- Integrating and/or adapting the elements of brand new Youth Mediator Training Curriculum into the subject of form master's class in Primary and High Schools in Hungary.