

# A Place for Youth in Mediterranean EEA: Social and Sharing Economy for NEETs

Newsletter #1

March 2019

## Projecting the Project



In November 2018, a journey begun; a common effort between 12 partners from 4 Mediterranean countries funded by the EEA and Norway Grants to investigate the characteristics of the youth unemployment and explore sustainable solutions. The project under the title “A place for Youth in Mediterranean EEA: Social and Sharing Economy for NEETs” (YOUTHShare) combines an in-depth analysis of the contemporary unemployment with piloting custom-made solutions. The ultimate purpose of the project is to create a paradigm for policy makers, local authorities and chambers, businesses and other public or private stakeholders for producing sustainable jobs in disadvantaged regions.

Many regions of the Southern Europe are among the most hard-hit by the economic crisis. Nevertheless, unemployment was not affected only by the crisis. It is almost a structural feature of regions like Central and Northern Greece, Southern Italy, Cyprus and Spain.

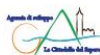
Moreover, among the general unemployed population in those countries, persons that are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) and especially those in the age between 25 and 29 years old face pressing economic, and social problems. In addition to that, the special geography of the area creates a “toxic mix”. On the one hand those regions are the entry points of the mixed migration flows which, through the management of the humanitarian issues, add to the economic pressure. On the other hand, the insularity and the mountainous environment hinder mobility, communication and resource management.

The YOUTHShare project aims to tackle those issues with socially innovative solutions. The crisis, apart from problems, has also revealed resilient economic sectors such as the agrifood, waste management and tourism. Building on that knowledge and coupled with transnational cooperation and coordinated interventions, YOUTHShare project will develop new empirically-grounded solutions in:

- Training social groups (women and migrants NEETs) in locally resilient sectors
- Enhancing their employability in social entrepreneurship and platform economy
- Establishing long-lasting labour market impact by involving stakeholders, research and Employment Centres.

YOUTHShare will employ a holistic methodology that unravels from local to global and back. It mobilizes local resilient niches coupled with properly adapted good practices. YOUTHShare project's interventions aim at boosting NEETs potential in the job market through sharing and social economy.

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment

The YOUTHShare project is implemented by a consortium consisting of 12 partners organised in three groups along with the support offered by an expertise partner:

### **Universities and Research Organisations**



University of the Aegean, Greece – Lead Partner

Neapolis University Pafos, Cyprus

Catholic University of Murcia, Spain

Sistema Turismo, Italy

### **Training and Consulting Organisation**



Network for Employment and Social Care, Greece

Centre for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology, Cyprus

GAL La Cittadella del Sapere, Italy

Educational Association for Integration and Equality, Spain

### **Chambers and Enterprise Networking Organisations**



Social Cooperatives' Network of Central Macedonia, Greece

Cyprus Authority for Cooperative Societies, Cyprus

Territorial Association Communita Montana Alto Basso, Italy

### **Expertise Partner**



Fafo, Institute for Labour and Social Research, Norway

Implemented By



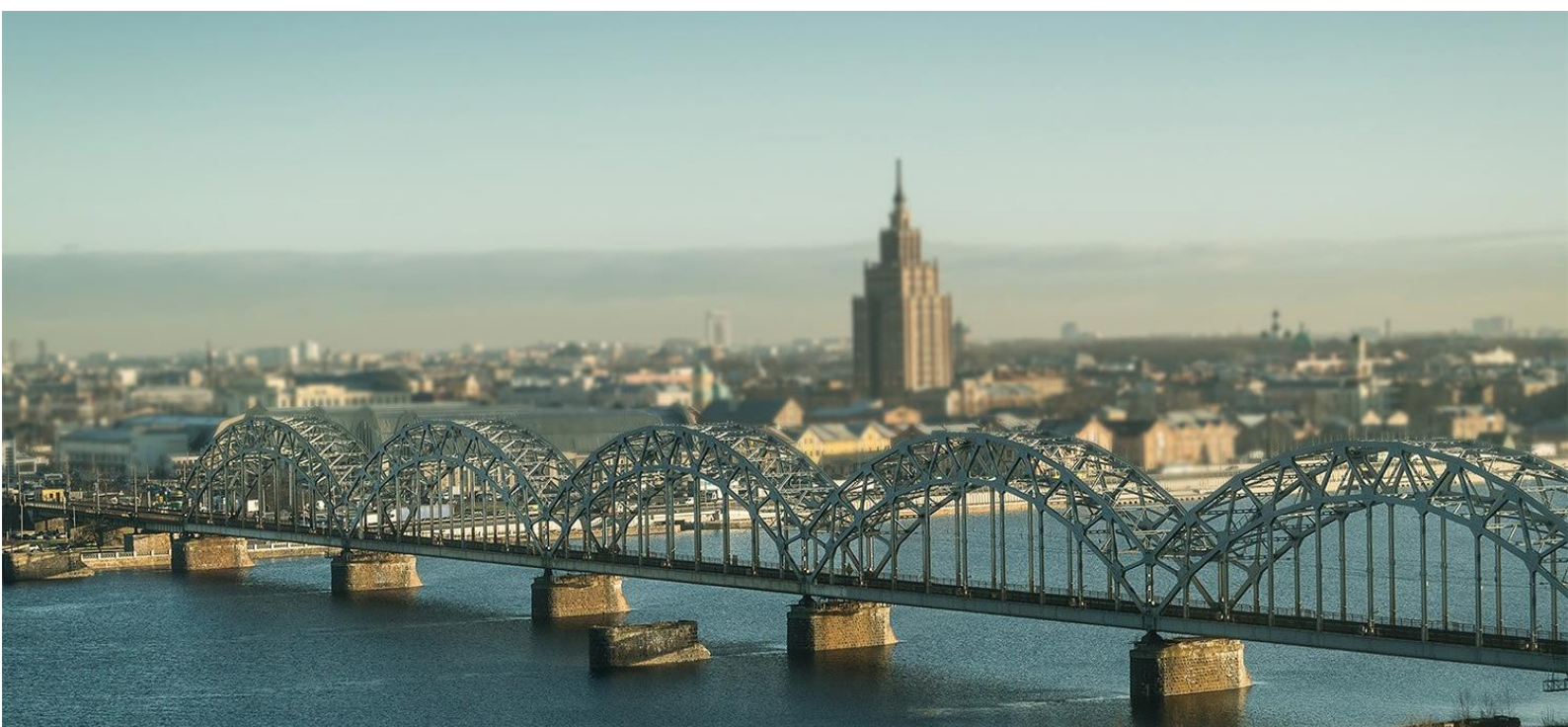
The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment

# EEA and Norway Grants

The project “A Place for Youth in Mediterranean EEA: Social and Sharing Economy for NEETs” (YOUTHShare) is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. It's budget amounting at 2.125.185,33€ will be covered by the above Financial Mechanism at a rate of 84,48%.

The EEA and Norway Grants represent the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway towards a green, competitive and inclusive Europe.

There are two overall objectives: the reduction of economic and social disparities in Europe, and the strengthening of the bilateral relations between the donor countries and 15 European Union countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics. The three donor countries cooperate closely with the European Union through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). The donors have provided €3.3 billion through consecutive grant schemes between 1994 and 2014.



For the period 2014-2021, the EEA and Norway Grants amount to €2.8 billion. The priorities for this period are:

- #1 Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness
- #2 Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction
- #3 Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy
- #4 Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance and Fundamental Rights
- #5 Justice and Home Affairs

Eligibility for the Grants mirror the criteria set for the European Union Cohesion Fund aimed at member countries where the Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90% of the European Union average.

The EEA and Norway Grants scheme consists of two financial mechanisms. The EEA Grants are jointly financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, whose contributions are based on their GDP. Norway Grants are financed solely by Norway.

Until the end of the end of the previous finance period (2009-2014) the EEA and Norway Grants have funded 7 075 projects 88% of completed projects have had positive effects that are likely to continue beyond the funding period.

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment



## The Scientific Issue

# Understanding Social Economy

One of the intervention axes of the YOUTHShare project for the labour market integration of the NEETs is that of social economy.

Social economy is neither a new term nor a new business model. It develops across the history of entrepreneurship as a form parallel to the typical business models. What differentiates the social economy stakeholders from other type of enterprises is a set of common features:

### # Primacy of the individual and the social objective over capital

The basic assets of such companies are the members of the company and its employees. The whole enterprise revolves around their prosperity in the expense of the capital, as long as and to the degree that such efforts remain sustainable.

### # Voluntary and open membership

Social economy stakeholders are by default open to new members. Since there is a primacy in the human rather than any other kind of capital, the growth of those enterprises is measured in the expansion of the human capital.

### # Democratic governance

A necessary prerequisite of the open membership is the democratic governance. The rule “one share equals to one vote” coupled with the fact that one person can have only one share, leads to inclusive and participatory policies in the management of the enterprise.

### # Combination of interests of members and the general interest

Purpose of the social economy is to cover social and common needs in a sustainable way; that is economically as well as socially and environmentally. Without the need of sponsorships or subsidies, a social economy stakeholder provides a product or service that is considered essential by its users who pay for that.

### # Application of the principles of solidarity and responsibility

The fact that on the one hand social economy stakeholders provide for the general interest and on the other hand the employees are also shareholders feed the values of solidarity among the organisation members and their common responsibility towards their enterprise.

### # Autonomous management and independence from public authorities

As a down-top effort, social economy stakeholders need to remain independent from public authorities in order to cater the general interest in the best possible way. Social economy stakeholders do not replace the State and at the same time they do not seek profit and capital accumulation. They represent the emancipation from both public and private interventions.

### # Reinvestment of the profits for sustainable development

The most crucial feature of the social economy is the constant re-investment of the profits for the development of the organisation. That allows for sustainable growth, prosperity of the human factor and catering the general interest.

Following those features, makes any legal entity a social economy stakeholder. Cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, social enterprises, paritarian institutions, ranging from micro-SMEs to large multi-national companies, are already part of the social economy disrupting the established business models.

In the EU-27, over 207,000 cooperatives were economically active in 2009, particularly active in agriculture, financial intermediation, retailing and housing. They provide direct employment to 4.7 million people and have 108 million members. In 2006 they accounted for over 4% of GDP.



Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment

## Partner Presentation

# Lead Partner – University of the Aegean

The YOUTHShare project is structured along a quadripartite division of labour. A group of universities/higher education institutions already conduct the necessary research and analysis of resilient value-chains and social characteristics of the NEETs in Mediterranean EEA. A group of vocational and training organisations will train NEETs along the guidelines developed by research, while a network of chambers, NGOs and public authorities will support the apprenticeship of the former NEETs and the development of their own social enterprises. The project is under the expertise guidance of the FAFO, Institute for Labour and Social Research in Norway.

The project is lead by the University of the Aegean, Greece. It was founded in 1984 and it is essentially a network of 6 campuses spread across islands in the Aegean Archipelago. The fractured landscape of the islands has formed the character of the university in multiple ways.



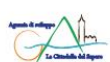
Its departments cover a wide range of scientific disciplines ranging from nutrition science (Lemnos island), geography, social and environmental sciences (Lesvos island), maritime economy, business administration and informatics (Chios island), polytechnic school (Syros island) to educational sciences and Mediterranean studies (Rhodes island).

At the same time the network of academic units in different islands set the University of the Aegean in a leading position concerning the use of ICT in education and management. The development of e-learning courses, asynchronous education, e-governance and several other research and educational projects have been applied since the early 1990s. It acts as a Regional Innovator across insular and coastal Mediterranean regions, with more than 90 research laboratories with diverse activities in several research areas, of which some are critical for the project (i.e. ICT, Sustainable Development and Environment, Education, Applied Social Sciences). Overall, the University of the Aegean not only produces innovation but depends on it.



Based on that capacity, the University of the Aegean realised since 1985 more than 2400 projects of a total budget amounting at 150 million Euros. Today, the University with an average annual turnover rising at 10 million Euros, 50% of which is directed to research, caters for more than 700 employees and 15.000 students, making it the best among the Greek universities according to the 2016 external evaluation by the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency.

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment



## News from the Project

# Kick-Off Meeting

On November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the kick-off meeting of the YOUTHShare project marked its commencement. Representatives from the 12 partners of the project gathered in Athens to organise, plan and discuss.

Hosted in the historic and inspirational “Kostis Palamas” building of the University of Athens, the intensive discourse lasted throughout the day.



During the first sessions the project, communication and financial managers took the opportunity to unravel in detail the objectives, the planning and the organisation of the project, in the respective fields, according to the Funding Operators' and the Financial Mechanism Operators' requirements.

In the second session, the local managers from each partner developed their organisation's capacities, mission and vision. They also developed the way according to which they plan to proceed with their appointed activities. That gave the opportunity for exchange of know-how, constructive feedback and development of new strategies in the implementation of the YOUTHShare project.

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment

## News from the Project

# Visibility and Communication

From November 2018 to January 2019, the partner GAL – La Cittadella del Sapere has been working on the visual identity of the the YOUTHShare project. Enzo Carnevale and the local manager of GAL, Nicola Vita, with the consultancy of the communication manager of the YOUTHShare project, upon an idea of Michalis Kavuklis produced the logo of the project and delivered the visibility kit. It consists of a wide variety of material ready to be produced by all partners of the project, establishing “brand awareness” and “spreading the word” of YOUTHShare. The visibility kit is of crucial importance since it will be the tangible medium of communication with stakeholders, NEETs and policy makers.

In February 2019 the IT co-managers of the YOUTHShare project, Ioannis Dimou and Gabriel Hiotellis, delivered the website of the project. It features all the necessary details of the project being an information point for stakeholders, NEETs, authorities and policy makers as well as a reference point for the YOUTHShare project at the same time.

The website is available at [www.youthshare-project.org](http://www.youthshare-project.org) and constantly under development. It is updated weekly with the latest developments of the project, news from related policy and research areas and opinion articles. The facebook page of the YOUTHShare project, @youthshareproject, supplements the intangible communication strategy by mirroring the updates of the website or by featuring more brief pieces of information.

The communication strategy of the YOUTHShare project unfolds through the day by day cooperation of the communication manager and operators of the project with the communication officer of the Fund Operator, Mr Mateusz Wisniewski.

The screenshot displays the YOUTHShare website and its Facebook page. The website header includes logos for Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway grants, and a navigation menu with links like YOUTHShare, About, EEA and Norway Grants, Partners, People, Deliverables, Literature, Forum, News, and Communication. The main content area features a large banner titled "A Place for Youth in Mediterranean EEA Social and Sharing Economy for NEETs", stating that the YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. Below the banner are three sections: "NEETs" (Not in Education, Employment or Training), "Social and Sharing Economy", and "Resilient Sectors". The Facebook page below shows the YOUTHShare profile, a recent post about social statistics and NEETs, and engagement metrics like 198 people reached and 22 engagements.

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment



## News from the Project

## Dissemination

From the first months of the implementation of the YOUTHShare project, an intensive dissemination strategy is being applied.

In **January 2019**, the Doctoral Researcher of the University of the Aegean, Effie Emmanouil, attended the *6th Winter Research Methodology School in Urban studies and Spatial Planning: Research Approaches and Methods* in Florence, Italy (17-18.01.2019).

Effie receives a scholarship from the YOUTHShare project, and her research contributes in the delivery of a transnational research network on employment in Mediterranean EEA. She focuses on the methodology of impact studies of employment policies.



In **March 2019**, the Communication Manager of the project, Dr Ioannis Papageorgiou, will deliver a conference presentation under the title “Beyond the Economic Miracle/Trauma: NEETs in Southern Europe” at the *7th Colloquium for Europe, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Growth* in Rhodes, Greece (19-21.03.2019). His presentation builds on political economy view on the crisis of the Southern Europe and reflects the first findings of the research conducted in the framework of the YOUTHShare project.

In **June 2019**, Athina Avagianou and Effie Emmanouil, both Doctoral Researchers receiving scholarship from the YOUTHShare project, will lead the presentations at the conference *The Social Sciences today. Dilemmas and perspectives beyond the crisis* (Mytilene, Greece 06-09.06.2019) under the titles:

- “Policies promoting Social and Sharing Economies in Mediterranean European Economic Area (MED EEA); a literature review focusing on youth unemployment and NEETs” and
- “Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the Mediterranean EU South: a study of the phenomenon for the recent crisis”

Co-authors in both presentations are members of the research team of the YOUTHShare project. More specifically, Dr Sofia Karampela, Pr. Theodoros Iosifides, Pr. Thanasis Kizos from the University of the Aegean and Dr Ioannis Pissourios from the Neapolis University Pafos prepare the first presentation; while, the second presentation is co-authored by Dr Michalis Poulimas, Dr Ioannis Papageorgiou and Pr. Stelios Gialis from the University of the Aegean.

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment



## News from the Project

# Stay Tuned

Building a strong communication bond with stakeholders, NEETs, policy makers, researchers, universities, research centres, businesses, chambers and everyone interested is vital for the project.



The YOUTHShare Newsletter is being published quarterly. Please subscribe in [www.youthshare-project.org#contact](http://www.youthshare-project.org#contact) to receive it by email.

For more frequent updates don't forget to like us on facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/youthshareproject](http://www.facebook.com/youthshareproject)



Or check the frequent updates in the news sections of our website  
[www.youthshare-project.org#news](http://www.youthshare-project.org#news)

Implemented By



The YOUTHShare project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment