

# **Sustainability, Transition and Resilience (SUSTRARES)**

## **Training Course for Trainers/ Youth Workers**

*Youth Worker Mobility funded by Erasmus+*  
**10-19 September, Vlachia, Evia, Greece**

### **Project Summary**

The project aims to provide concrete competencies, skills and expertise to youth workers in order to act as multipliers and sustainability agents for their localities. Since mainstream and formal education are not structured to provide the skills and competencies needed to tackle modern challenges in a crisis context, the proposed project aims to create and strengthen training paths and resources based on real-life applications for resilience, sustainability and self-sufficiency. The partnership has the concrete objective of providing open knowledge, skills and competencies for positive change in the personal lives of participants (regarding coverage of basic needs, entrepreneurship and employment), as a response to the multi-dimensional crises Europe is facing.

The youth worker mobility (10-day training course) has been developed with the main intent to encourage the active engagement of youth workers (trainers, researchers, activists, practitioners) in sustainability transition initiatives, to exchange experiences concerning the promotion of local sustainability in European countries and to provide competencies and skills to youth workers to actively engage in their local context and the employment market.

The proposed youth worker mobility will provide the opportunity to 36 youth workers and trainers from 6 different countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Croatia) to become familiar with concepts such as sustainability, self-sufficiency, transition and resilience, at both theoretical and practical levels. In the course of 10 days (excluding travel), participants will jointly carry out a programme of mixed activities (participatory seminars, practical workshops, exercises, debates, role plays, simulations, outdoor activities, public events, etc) that will enhance their skills and competencies and will allow them to experience a multicultural simulation of living in an ecological community.

The youth worker mobility will focus on non-formal experiential training (learning by doing), co-creation of DIY convivial/ frugal technologies and networking, while it will provide useful skills for employability enhancement and community engagement. Topics to be addressed during the training course include energy autonomy using renewable sources, natural housing, waste management, food self-sufficiency, agro-ecology, health self-management, participatory decision making, and cooperative entrepreneurship.

The activity will be hosted in the premises of the STAGONES Sustainability Academy ([www.stagones.org](http://www.stagones.org)) situated in Vlachia Evia, which is comprised of two 1.5 acre plots and a variety of hosting and training infrastructure constructed solely with natural material. Some activities and hosting will be provided by ESPORAS DEL SOL Sustainability Transition Hub (<https://esporasdelosol.wordpress.com/>) situated also in Vlachia. The activity will host very experienced trainers from 4 of the most active sustainability transition/ self-resilience collectives in Greece, namely Stagones, Nea Guinea, iliosporoi network and UFiT, as well as youth work trainers from the other project partners. The youth worker mobility -Sustainability, Transition and Resilience Training Course- will be realized during 10-19 September 2016.

### **Rational of the Project**

One of the most powerful ways that young entrepreneurs are able to bring about change is by challenging accepted ways of doing things and demonstrating alternatives, showing by "proof of concept" how new approaches and ideas can actually work. While some governments and large companies in many affluent countries have begun to respond to the ongoing environmental, social and cultural transition, young entrepreneurs can create innovative experiments in post-consumerist, community-based living, placing themselves at the forefront of this wave of exploration. In this respect, young entrepreneurs and youth workers are path breakers, paving the way to the future.

Today, we can observe global networks of young entrepreneurs and youth workers functioning within Sustainability Transition Initiatives. These networks contain an interesting and innovative alliance between intentional communities, with a strong focus on sustainability, and networks of traditional communities. Practitioners of these sustainability transition initiatives live within decentralized, small scale and participatory alternatives in the circular economy model: agro-ecology and permaculture, eco-villages, solidarity economy networks, producer-consumer cooperatives, decentralised renewable energy cooperatives, off-grid communities,

cycling initiatives, reuse and zero waste, diy/ repair cafes, worker and mutual aid cooperatives, zero carbon and co-housing projects. This is an illustration of the nowtopia model: "developing alternatives outside present institutions, in the present."

Many of these Sustainability Transition Initiatives are characterized by the establishment of socio-economic systems where the growth of the output is not the main objective. Instead, they expand specific techniques and convivial applications to achieve cross-cutting practical solutions, crucial to promoting harmony between and within social and ecological systems, reducing competition for strategic resources and preserving quality social spaces for residents of Europe and beyond.

Much attention is given to how conscious critical consumption and a sustainable lifestyle can promote transformation at both the individual and the social level. The main idea is that if less time is spent on formal work and consumption, more time can be dedicated to other activities which are fundamental to one's well-being, such as social relations, political participation, physical exercise, spirituality and contemplation. These lifestyles, which practice voluntary simplicity, living better with less, downshifting and slowing down life's pace, could potentially be less environmentally harmful, while contributing to resilient, self-sufficient societies.

Tackling the multidimensional crisis Europe is facing could be better achieved if both intellectual and practical transitions run in parallel. Thus, the proposed project will operate in both a theoretical and an applied perspective, aiming at providing concrete competencies, skills and expertise to youth workers in order to act as multipliers and sustainability agents in their localities.

Since mainstream and formal education are not equipped to provide the skills and competencies needed to tackle modern challenges in a crisis context, the scope of the proposed project is to create and strengthen training paths and resources based on real-life applications aiming at resilience, sustainability, self-sufficiency and a holistic way of living detached from the imperatives of economic growth as we know it.

The partnership has the concrete objective of providing open knowledge, skills and competencies for positive change in the personal lives of participants (regarding self-sufficiency of basic needs, entrepreneurship and employment), as a response to the multi-dimensional crises Europe is facing. Second, it aims to distribute and exchange these competencies beyond particular regions and countries, thus creating a framework for continuous and participatory improvement of training and youth work across Europe.

The third objective is to strengthen existing organic, or informal, networks of people and communities across Europe, which are looking for new and different ways of organizing their lives in the context of the crisis (by introducing a stronger ecological dimension into their daily lives and novel ways to provide for local needs). At the same time, the project will increase the capacity and international dimension of partner organizations so as to better respond to the needs of their volunteers and youth workers. Finally, the project is directed towards raising participants' awareness and understanding of other cultures and countries, offering them the opportunity to build networks of international contacts and develop a sense of European citizenship and identity.

### **Partnership**

The group of partners consist of the following associations:

The host organisation, **ILIOSPOROI NETWORK** (Greece), is a grassroots association of practitioners, trainers and activists on ecology, sustainability and social justice, established in 2004. The association has been very active in sustainability transition and cooperative economy initiatives by organizing training events, info sessions, festivals, conferences and awareness campaigns; by arranging the production of documentaries, books and training material; and lately by co-developing sustainability transition initiatives in the countryside.

- **FDS ONLUS** (Italy): La Fabbrica del Sole Onlus is a non-profit organisation whose aim is promoting ecology, solidarity, integration, cultural plurality, social and ecological innovation, as well as citizen empowerment and participation. They have extensive experience in organizing training sessions, workshops, seminars, campaigns, educational actions in schools, convivial discussions, exhibitions, cineforums and public events.

- **GAIA** (Portugal) has been active since 1996 in a number of environmental, activist, and ecological issues in various urban and rural areas. GAIA regularly shows documentaries, hosts discussions, and organises hands-on workshops on themes relevant to this application.

- **LA BARACCA** (Spain) was created in Gran Canarias, in order to investigate and apply new ways of sustainable living, boosting youth employment and “regenerate” abandon land plots. They have considerable experience as sustainability trainers on DIY and reuse, water harvesting and natural filtering, organic farming and animal raising together with expertise on training for self-sufficiency, education and event production management.

- **TTW** (Germany) is a community based Transition initiative, part of the German Transition Town network. They have experience in project development, capacity building and community planning.

- **ZMAG** (Croatia) is an NGO that hosts organic gardeners, practitioners of environmentally friendly technologies, permaculture designers, academic researchers and social activists. The main purpose of the organisation is to provide non-formal education and training for the utilization of environmentally sound technologies in agriculture, housing and energy production.

Moreover the realization of the training course will be supported by seven external trainers from Stagones, Nea Guinea and UFiT associations.

**Table of activities below:**

Activity Programme		
Timetable	Activities	Non-formal and informal learning methods used
DAY 1		
AM	Introductions, presentation of the activity (objectives, programme)	ice breakers, energizers, building trust and group building exercises, name game
	Presentation of learning outcomes, round of expectations	Brainstorming, mind mapping, world cafe
PM	From sustainability to eco-social transformation: the case of eco-communities	Presentation of Stagones Sustainability Academy
	welcome party	intercultural event
DAY 2		
AM	Energy autonomy from renewables: from theory to practice	info session by Nea Guinea, energizers
	Energy autonomy from renewables: from theory to practice	participatory workshop by Nea Guinea, exchange of best practices
PM	how to make a solar heater	participatory workshop by UfiT
	Greek culture night	intercultural event
DAY 3		
AM	Shelter: Natural housing	Study Visit to Stagones workshop area & info session, energizers
	Shelter: how to make cob and straw-bale houses	participatory workshop by Stagones, group building exercise
PM	Shelter: how to make cob and straw-bale houses	participatory workshop, group building exercise
	Spanish culture night	intercultural event
DAY 4		
AM	Visit to water spring	outdoor activity, energizer and group building exercise
PM	Food cultivation (Permaculture, CSA, seed bank)	info session and exchange of best practices
	Italian culture night	intercultural event
DAY 5		
AM	DIY and appropriate/ convivial technologies	info session and exchange of best practices, energizers
	Food/ herb processing and storage	participatory workshop by Stagones
PM	Visit to Gionati beach & voluntary clean-up	outdoor activity, energizer and group building exercise
	Portuguese culture night	intercultural event
DAY 6		
AM	Self-management of health: natural remedies, herbs	info session by Nea Guinea, energizers
	Self-management of health: natural remedies, herbs	participatory workshop by Nea Guinea and Stagones
PM	Visit to an old water-mill and Vlachia village	outdoor activity
	Mid evaluation / reflection session	evaluation and feedback, evaluation scoreboard, questionnaire
DAY 7		
AM	Waste: how to make compost from organic waste	participatory workshop by Nea Guinea, energizers
	Waste: how to make compost from organic waste	participatory workshop
PM	how to make a solar heater	participatory workshop by UfiT
	Croatian culture night	intercultural event
DAY 8		
AM	Visit to Makris Gialos beach and voluntary clean up	outdoor activity, energizer and group building exercise
PM	Decision making (community visioning, future search and dragon dreaming)	simulation exercise with iliosporoi network, role playing, conflict management
	German culture night	intercultural event
DAY 9		
AM	Training the trainers (participatory training and experiential learning)	simulation exercises, team building activities
	Training the trainers (participatory training and experiential learning)	simulation exercises, team building activities
PM	Follow up projects, steps ahead	brainstorming, mind-mapping, deliberation, participatory planning
	Preparation of public event	group work, artistic expression
DAY 10		
AM	Social engagement and cooperative entrepreneurship	info session with iliosporoi network and exchange of best practices
	Networking	group work, simulation exercise
PM	Info session on Erasmus+ and YouthPass, Final Evaluation	info session, evaluation and feedback, evaluation scoreboard, questionnaire
	Farewell cross-cultural party – public event in Vlachia cultural center	intercultural public event

**For more information contact:**

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