

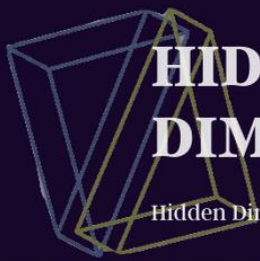


# **HIDDEN DIMENSIONS**

**Hidden Dimensions of  
Inclusion in Youth Sector**

## **COMPREHENSIVE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT: INTERVIEWS Romania**

**Association Nevo Parudimos**



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Hidden Dimensions of Inclusion in Youth Sector



Erasmus+

## COMPREHENSIVE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT: INTERVIEWS

### Romania



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Published by Association Nevo Parudimos

[office@nevoparudimos.ro](mailto:office@nevoparudimos.ro)

[+40 355 429 351](tel:+40355429351)





# COMPREHENSIVE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

## INTERVIEWS

### HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION IN THE YOUTH SECTOR

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If we remember the experiences of children and young people with disabilities about the world, there can be no doubt that the task of youth work is to support inclusion, yet it can be said that the obstacles to inclusion in youth work are poorly mapped. This is the reason why I initiated this research.

In Erasmus+ projects there are no mandatory quotas for the involvement of young people with disabilities. One of the main areas of these youth projects is the social inclusion of people with fewer opportunities (Erasmus+ Program Guide, version 3 (2021): 12-05-2021, 2021).

"Persons with reduced opportunities are persons who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, are migrants, or for reasons such as disabilities and educational difficulties or for any other reasons, including those that may give rise to discrimination according to Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to the opportunities within the program. (Erasmus+ Program Guide, Version 3 (2021): 12-05-2021, 2021, p. 321)"

#### Research questions

1. We assume that youth workers are not prepared to involve young people with disabilities in E+ projects because their daily youth services are inaccessible to young people with disabilities.

2. We assume that youth organizations do not have the necessary resources to ensure accessibility, so that young people with disabilities do not participate in their services.

3 . We hypothesize that lack of experience and lack of knowledge with young people with complex needs has a negative effect on attitudes, which is related to the low number of young people with disabilities in E+ projects.

Based on the results of the questionnaire and document analysis, we conducted interviews based on the analyzed data with 10 leaders of youth organizations (president, president,



executive director, general manager, etc.). The qualitative research consisted of conducting 10 interviews and 2 focus groups with 5 participants each

## **Methodology**

In the pursuit of understanding complex social phenomena, qualitative research methods play an instrumental role in uncovering valuable insights. The proposed interview guide, designed with meticulous care and attention to detail, was applied via telephone to a diverse group of participants to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This text delves into the process of conducting these in-depth telephone interviews, exploring the participant demographics, interview logistics, recording procedures, and data processing techniques employed to derive meaningful conclusions for the present research.

### **Participant Selection and Demographics:**

The success of any qualitative research hinges on the diversity and representativeness of the participants. To this end, a carefully curated sample of 10 individuals was chosen for the study. This group comprised individuals from various backgrounds, ages, and experiences, each bringing a unique perspective to the research. Among the participants, 6 were female, and 4 were male, ensuring a gender-balanced approach to data collection. Additionally, the participants were selected based on their relevance to the research topic, providing valuable insights that reflected a range of experiences and opinions.

### **Interview Scheduling and Consent:**

To respect the participants' time constraints and commitments, interview schedules were carefully arranged according to their availability. Flexibility in scheduling was paramount to accommodating diverse schedules, ensuring maximum participation, and promoting the willingness of participants to share openly. Before each interview, the respondents were provided with comprehensive information about the research, its purpose, and the interview process. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring that they were comfortable with the recording of their responses.

### **Recording and Data Collection:**

As the interviews were conducted over the telephone, the recording of conversations became an invaluable tool for data collection. The recording process allowed for accurate capturing of the participants' words, tone, and expressions, thereby ensuring the preservation of rich data



for thorough analysis. The participants were assured that the recordings would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for research purposes. Such transparency played a significant role in cultivating a trusting and open rapport between the researcher and participants, facilitating candid and honest responses.

#### Interview Duration and Depth:

Recognizing the value of time for both the participants and the researcher, the interviews were designed to be comprehensive yet time-efficient. On average, each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, providing ample opportunity to delve into the research topic without unduly burdening the respondents. The length of the interviews was carefully balanced to gather detailed and nuanced insights without risking participant fatigue or disinterest. The use of open-ended questions and active listening techniques allowed the participants to express their thoughts freely, contributing to the richness of the data collected.

#### Transcription and Data Processing:

Following the conclusion of the interviews, the recorded conversations were meticulously transcribed verbatim, ensuring accurate representation of the participants' responses. Transcription facilitated in-depth analysis, enabling the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and perspectives across the interviews. The researcher's careful approach to transcription preserved not only the verbal content but also non-verbal cues, providing a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences and emotions.

Once transcribed, the data underwent a rigorous process of thematic analysis. Emerging themes and patterns were meticulously coded and cross-referenced to draw insightful connections between participants' responses. The information gleaned from this process was invaluable, as it provided the basis for drawing conclusions and making evidence-based recommendations in the present research.

The application of the proposed interview guide via telephone to a diverse group of participants has proven to be an effective method of gathering in-depth insights for the present research. The careful selection of participants, the thoughtful scheduling of interviews, and the transparent recording procedures have collectively contributed to a successful data collection process. By ensuring the interviews were comprehensive yet time-efficient, and employing meticulous transcription and data processing techniques, the research derived valuable findings that will undoubtedly contribute to the broader understanding of the subject matter. The



commitment to a rigorous and ethical research approach has laid the foundation for impactful and credible research outcomes.

### **Presentation of organizations**

In the pursuit of creating an inclusive society for disabled individuals, various organizations play a pivotal role in advocating for their rights, providing support, and fostering a sense of belonging. To gain a comprehensive understanding of these organizations and the contributions of their members, a thorough and multi-dimensional approach was employed. This text delves into the intricacies of the research methodology, exploring the aspects considered during the presentation of these organizations, the survey questions posed to the respondents, and the invaluable insights gained into the organizations' profiles and the roles and expertise of their members related to disabled individuals.

#### Comprehensive Aspects Considered in Organization Presentation:

To paint an accurate and insightful picture of the organizations and their impact on the disabled community, several crucial aspects were meticulously taken into consideration. These aspects were selected to provide a holistic view of each organization's mission, history, activities, achievements, and challenges. Respondents were asked to assess and score the following dimensions:

1. **Geographical Coverage:** Understanding the reach of the organizations allowed for a grasp of their influence at the local, regional, or national level. This insight provided an understanding of the organizations' potential impact and their ability to address the unique challenges faced by disabled individuals across various areas.
2. **Founding History:** Delving into the origins of these organizations shed light on the passion and commitment of their founders, and the driving force behind their establishment. Historical context allowed for a deeper appreciation of their evolution and growth over time.
3. **Primary Field of Activity:** Identifying the core areas of focus for each organization helped delineate their specific contributions to the disabled community. It enabled a clear understanding of the diverse needs and interests that these organizations cater to.
4. **Conducted Activities and Programs:** Assessing the range of activities and programs organized by the entities showcased their dedication to serving the disabled community. These





Understanding the respondent's roles, training, experience, and knowledge provided a deeper appreciation for the expertise and commitment brought to the organizations.

This multifaceted analysis enabled a richer understanding of the vital roles these organizations play in advocating for and supporting disabled individuals. The findings derived from this research serve not only to celebrate the achievements of these organizations but also to identify areas for improvement and future development. Ultimately, this comprehensive exploration enhances our collective efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for disabled individuals, where their rights, dignity, and aspirations are championed by organizations and individuals alike.

### **Geographical area covered.**

The organizations represented in this study have established a significant presence across the country, with a reach that extends beyond their immediate locations. Their commitment to serving the disabled community has propelled them to adopt innovative strategies, leveraging technology and collaborations to expand their impact. This comprehensive text delves into the geographical reach of these organizations, identifying the counties where they operate, highlighting their multifaceted operations, and elucidating their contributions at local, regional, national, and international levels.

These organizations have overcome geographical barriers through a combination of projects, technology, and active collaboration with volunteers and stakeholders. While their headquarters may be based in specific locations, their influence is not limited by physical boundaries. By implementing projects in areas beyond their immediate vicinity, they have been able to touch the lives of individuals in far-flung regions, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and widespread support.

The geographical coverage of these organizations encompasses a diverse array of counties, with a predominant focus on several regions. In the West, counties such as Arad, Timiș, Hunedoara, and Caraș Severin bear witness to the transformative efforts of these organizations.

- ● The South-West region, comprising Mehedinți, Olt, Vâlcea, and Târgu Jiu, is another area where their impact is felt profoundly.

- ● The North-West region, encompassing Cluj, Turda, Alba, and Satu Mare, is another hub of their operations. In the Center, the city of Sibiu serves as a focal point for their initiatives.



Moreover, the nation's capital, Bucharest, located in the South region, stands witness to the remarkable work carried out by these organizations.

#### Variability in Coverage: Headquarters, Projects, and Volunteer Engagement

Each organization showcases distinct patterns of geographical coverage. While some organizations may have their headquarters situated in specific counties, they transcend these physical locations by implementing projects and initiatives in various regions. This approach enables them to extend their reach and address the unique needs of diverse communities.

Furthermore, these organizations actively involve volunteers and collaborators from different geographical areas. This participation is not restricted by proximity, as volunteers contribute their time, efforts, and expertise from various parts of the country. The engagement of volunteers from different regions not only enhances the organizations' outreach but also fosters a sense of collective responsibility towards the disabled community.

While the primary focus of these organizations may be local, their significance extends far beyond county lines. By successfully implementing projects in multiple regions, they have achieved a national presence, elevating their influence and reputation across the country. The ability to navigate and collaborate at both local and national levels reflects the depth of their commitment to the cause of disabled individuals.

Moreover, the impact of some organizations is not confined to national borders alone. Through strategic partnerships and initiatives, they have ventured into international realms, contributing to global discussions on disability rights and inclusivity. Their ability to transcend national boundaries demonstrates a profound dedication to promoting disability rights on a global scale.

The represented organizations stand as exemplars of dedication, innovation, and inclusivity. Their wide geographical reach, facilitated by technology, collaboration, and volunteer engagement, underscores their commitment to serving the disabled community effectively. The diverse counties they operate in, along with their multifaceted operations at local, regional, national, and even international levels, signify their profound impact and influence. The enduring efforts of these organizations pave the way for a more inclusive society, where the rights and aspirations of disabled individuals are embraced and championed with unwavering commitment.



## **How exactly the organization was established.**

The organizations surveyed in this qualitative study exhibit a fascinating tapestry of establishment periods, reflecting Romania's dynamic engagement with the European Union and international programs. Their diverse motivations for inception highlight a profound sense of community need and a collective desire to effect positive change. This comprehensive text delves into the various establishment periods of these organizations, shedding light on the distinct stages of Romania's involvement with the EU. Additionally, it explores the multifaceted reasons behind their creation, which range from addressing community gaps to advocating for environmental causes and providing enriching experiences for children and young people.

### **Varied Establishment Periods:**

The establishment periods of these organizations offer glimpses into Romania's evolving relationship with the European Union and international programs. Some organizations commenced their activities as early as 2003-2004, a time when such forms were relatively scarce nationwide. At that juncture, Romania was still on the path to EU accession, and the foundations of these organizations were laid amidst a transformative period of national development. These early pioneers had the foresight to recognize the importance of fostering community-driven initiatives and advocacy for social causes.

Conversely, there are relatively recent organizations established in 2019-2020, just before the onset of the pandemic. Their emergence coincided with a time when Romania's integration into the EU was more firmly established, and international programs gained prominence in shaping local initiatives. These organizations represent a new wave of activists and change-makers, harnessing the power of technology and global connectivity to further their causes.

Interestingly, two organizations established in 2007 and 2016 only initiated their actual activities in 2017, showcasing a gradual approach to organizational development. For one of them, the delay was deliberate, as it allowed for a decade of accumulated field experience and a comprehensive understanding of organizational dynamics. This approach highlights the importance of careful planning and thoughtful execution, ensuring that the organizations were fully prepared to create a meaningful impact.

Respondents: A Tapestry of Experience



The respondents contributing to these organizations exhibit a rich tapestry of experience and implication. Among them are individuals with extensive engagement of 19-20 years, exemplifying steadfast commitment to the cause. These seasoned veterans bring a wealth of knowledge and insight, having witnessed the evolution of the organizations and the broader societal changes they have catalyzed.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are respondents with a relatively shorter involvement of 3-4 years. While their tenure might be briefer, their contributions are no less significant. These individuals infuse fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and innovation, ensuring that the organizations remain dynamic and adaptive to contemporary challenges.

### Diverse Motivations: A Kaleidoscope of Community Impact

The motivations behind the establishment of these organizations are as diverse as the causes they champion. At the core of their inception lies a profound sense of community need and a desire to create transformative change. Some initiators identified specific gaps in their communities, sparking a sense of urgency to take action and address those shortcomings. In response, they established organizations to provide opportunities and support where they were previously lacking.

In other cases, individuals were driven to establish organizational frameworks to facilitate the realization of their ideas and initiatives. Faced with limitations in implementation, they proactively laid the groundwork for community actions, creating platforms to foster positive change.

Motivations also varied based on the issues these organizations sought to address. Some were inspired by environmental causes, dedicating their efforts to advocating for sustainable practices and ecological conservation. Others focused on nurturing the cultural aspects of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity, striving to preserve and celebrate their unique heritage.

Furthermore, personal experiences and prior involvement as youth workers sparked new ideas and kindled the desire to initiate and develop projects. In one poignant example, a parent motivated by their own child's needs extended their support to other children and young people with Down syndrome. This profound personal connection resulted in a broader impact, reaching individuals who either had the syndrome themselves or had a family member living with it.

The Power of Like-Minded Initiators:



In many instances, the establishment of these organizations was driven by visionary individuals with initiative and passion. Their dedication and determination attracted like-minded individuals who shared similar goals and aspirations. These collective forces came together, forming the strong foundations of these organizations with a common objective – to contribute to the transformation of society for the better.

The journey of these Romanian organizations is an inspiring challenge to the NGO sector's growth and engagement with the European Union and international programs. The varied establishment periods reveal the evolving landscape of social change and community-driven initiatives. The diverse motivations behind their inception underscore a profound sense of community need and a desire to create a positive impact. As these organizations continue to thrive, the confluence of experience and leadership ensures that they will remain at the forefront of transformative change in Romania, leaving a legacy of empowerment and inclusivity for generations to come.

## **Activities and programs**

### **The field of activity of the organizations**

The Field of Activity of Romanian Organizations: Fostering Youth Empowerment, Diversity, and Environmental Responsibility

The organizations surveyed in this qualitative study display a diverse range of approaches and focus areas in their endeavors. This comprehensive synthesis delves into the distinct categories these organizations can be grouped into based on their approaches and focuses. While some organizations concentrate on specific categories of people or issues, others adopt an opportunistic approach, seizing available project opportunities. The primary emphasis of most organizations lies in empowering young individuals, while others take on unique missions, such as preserving Roma culture. Education and training emerge as a common thread among these organizations, alongside a shared commitment to environmental responsibility. Additionally, a remarkable organization stands out, offering support and opportunities for young people to explore the NGO environment and develop their projects.



## Categorization of Organizations: Fostering Empowerment and Adaptability

The organizations surveyed can be broadly categorized into two groups, each defined by their approach and focus. The first group is characterized by organizations with a specific target audience or a well-defined set of problems they aim to address. These organizations channel their efforts towards empowering young individuals facing reduced opportunities or those belonging to disadvantaged groups. Among these groups are young people from rural areas, Roma ethnicity, individuals with disabilities, and children residing in placement and protection centers. By directing their efforts towards these specific demographics, these organizations make significant strides in fostering inclusion, empowerment, and social upliftment.

In contrast, the second group of organizations adopts an opportunistic approach, dynamically adapting their activities based on available project opportunities. This flexible and responsive approach allows them to seize diverse opportunities, opening doors to various impactful initiatives aligned with their overarching mission.

## Empowering Young People: A Shared Focus

The common thread that binds most of these organizations is their primary focus on empowering young individuals. Recognizing the potential and promise of the youth, these organizations actively engage with young people and provide them with the necessary support and resources to succeed. The commitment to youth empowerment is evident in the numerous programs and initiatives designed specifically for young individuals. By investing in the growth, education, and development of young people, these organizations are instrumental in shaping the leaders of tomorrow and driving positive change in society.

## Targeting Specific Demographics: Inclusion and Cultural Preservation

Within the spectrum of youth empowerment, some organizations take a more targeted approach, focusing on specific demographics. For instance, one organization stands out with a dedicated mission to preserve Roma culture and promote education as a means of integration and inclusion. This unique initiative strives to preserve authentic elements of identity while fostering a sense of pride and belonging among individuals of Roma ethnicity. By leveraging education as a tool for integration, this organization extends opportunities for marginalized communities, promoting social cohesion and understanding.

## Importance of Education and Training: Nurturing Responsible Change-Makers



Education and training emerge as pivotal elements in the activities of these organizations. Recognizing the importance of nurturing responsible change-makers, many organizations offer programs for teachers and youth workers. By providing proper training to those working with young individuals, these organizations ensure that the facilitators are well-equipped to make a meaningful impact on the lives of the youth they serve.

Additionally, several organizations involve young people in recycling and environmental initiatives, fostering a sense of responsibility towards the environment. These connected levels of education and environmental involvement create a well-rounded approach to youth development, nurturing socially conscious individuals who understand their role in creating a sustainable future.

### Encouraging Personal Growth: Supportive Environment for Young Innovators

One organization within this diverse landscape stands out for its unique approach to supporting young individuals interested in exploring the NGO environment. By providing a supportive ecosystem, this organization empowers young innovators to develop projects aligned with their passions and interests. Encouraging personal growth and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, this organization allows young people to unleash their creativity and explore their potential while receiving guidance and support from experienced mentors.

The field of activity of the Romanian organizations surveyed encompasses a rich tapestry of empowerment, diversity, and environmental responsibility. Through their distinctive approaches and focuses, these organizations strive to create positive change and uplift the youth of Romania. By targeting specific demographics and adopting adaptive strategies, they embody the spirit of inclusivity and resilience. The shared emphasis on youth empowerment, education, and environmental consciousness cements their commitment to shaping a brighter future for Romania. Within this dynamic landscape, each organization plays a vital role in fostering a society where young individuals are equipped with the tools to thrive and become catalysts for transformative change.

- ● **The main achievements**

- ● Impressive organizational successes encompassing various areas:

- ● Exponential Growth and Sustainability: Two organizations experienced significant growth, transitioning from project-based survival to sustainable operations. This progress enabled the employment of full-time staff, marking a crucial moment of expansion.



**Empowering Young People:** Both organizations achieved success by involving a large number of young individuals. One organization empowered young people with disabilities, providing them opportunities in international projects and facilitating their integration into the labor market. The other organization supported approximately 900 young Roma students through the Second Chance program, offering mediation, educational support, and fostering relationships between the institution and the community.

**Community-Level Impact:** Successful projects generated remarkable results at the community level, reflecting the organizations' formative, learning, and evolving processes. Notably, the organizations addressed crucial needs and made a positive impact where change was most required.

**National Recognition and Influence:** One organization's achievements were recognized nationally, with their projects gaining widespread media coverage. The impactful initiatives inspired others and indirectly influenced the national discourse.

**Partnerships and Local Engagement:** Collaboration with local authorities in implementing the youth capital program showcased the organization's credibility and resulted in cultural activities benefiting young people at the city level. The partnerships brought recognition, visibility, and enhanced community engagement.

**Guiding and Educating Peers:** A respondent's success stemmed from rallying like-minded individuals who prioritize contributing to the education and guidance of their peers. By promoting positive values and choices, they aimed to improve society as a whole and positively impact the perception of the Roma community.

**Strength of the Team:** Another respondent emphasized the importance of a strong team, harnessing the collective experience, vision, and expertise of each member. As the organization expands, their impact and influence increase, further bolstering their ability to achieve visible results.

Overall, these organizations' remarkable successes encompassed exponential growth, inclusion, community impact, national recognition, partnership building, and empowering young people, showcasing their commitment to making a positive difference in society.



## The main challenges

### Navigating Challenges and Embracing Opportunities: Organizations Working with Young People, Cultural Factors, and Financial Constraints

Organizations dedicated to working with young individuals, particularly from the Roma community, play a vital role in fostering inclusivity and empowerment. However, they encounter a plethora of challenges, ranging from cultural barriers to financial constraints. This comprehensive text delves into the multifaceted challenges faced by these organizations and explores the cultural factors that contribute to these difficulties. Additionally, it highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on organizational work, both presenting challenges and unlocking new opportunities. The crucial need for a legislative framework to support coaching and mentoring for aspiring NGOs is emphasized, along with the necessity for a more supportive mindset within Romanian society. This discussion underscores the significance of addressing cultural, financial, and mentoring challenges while promoting continuity, seriousness, punctuality, and support in the organizational and societal context.

#### Cultural Challenges: The Importance of Continuity and Awareness

Working with young individuals from the Roma community brings unique challenges for organizations. One of the prominent hurdles is the inconsistency and lack of seriousness exhibited by some members of the Roma community. These challenges can prove to be disheartening for organizations, as their efforts may not yield the desired impact if the support received is not continuous. Overcoming these challenges requires an in-depth awareness of cultural factors that contribute to such behaviors, as well as a genuine acceptance of diversity. It is essential to find culturally sensitive solutions that can address barriers and foster a sense of trust and collaboration between organizations and the Roma community.

#### Financial Constraints: Perseverance, Ingenuity, and Co-Financing Strategies

The financial aspect of organizational work presents significant challenges, particularly for grassroots and smaller organizations. Many organizations struggle to secure adequate funding for their projects, leading to the need for staggered financing and co-financing arrangements. Navigating these financial obstacles demands perseverance, ingenuity, and insistence on pursuing various funding opportunities. Organizations must develop strategic financial plans to ensure the successful completion of their projects and the continuity of their initiatives. Despite these challenges, organizations working with young individuals display remarkable





resilience, resourcefulness, and determination in their quest to create positive change in the communities they serve.

### The Impact of COVID-19: Efficiency Concerns and Broader Collaborations

The COVID-19 pandemic has had both adverse effects and unexpected opportunities for organizations. Conducting activities online has raised concerns about efficiency and impact, as face-to-face interactions are often seen as more engaging and effective. However, embracing virtual platforms has also enabled organizations to reach a broader audience and facilitate collaborations at higher levels, both nationally and globally. Newer organizations have found creative ways to adapt to the pandemic's constraints, relying on portfolio realization, writing Erasmus projects, and conducting information campaigns. However, they have also faced challenges, such as the lack of sufficient mentoring and support from experienced individuals in the NGO field.

### The Need for Legislative Support: Enhancing Mentoring and Guidance

To further strengthen the NGO ecosystem, there is an urgent need for a legislative framework that supports coaching and mentoring for aspiring organizations. Such support would expedite and enhance the results of their efforts, providing valuable guidance and expertise to navigate challenges effectively. Empowering newer organizations with the insights and experiences of established NGOs would foster an environment of collaboration and mutual growth. By promoting a culture of mentoring and support, the NGO sector can collectively work towards sustainable and impactful initiatives.

### The Psychology of Romanian Society: Fostering Supportiveness

The current psychology of the Romanian people is described as lacking in supportiveness, with individuals often left to manage on their own. However, there are inspiring examples of organizational leaders who embody dedication and perseverance in the face of challenges. An exemplary illustration is that of an organization president who, despite various obstacles, offered her own home as a space for activities, showcasing the unwavering commitment and passion for creating positive change. This highlights the need for a more supportive mindset within Romanian society, where individuals, organizations, and institutions come together to uplift and empower one another.

Organizations working with young individuals, particularly those from the Roma community, play a crucial role in fostering empowerment, inclusion, and positive change. However, they



encounter a range of challenges, encompassing cultural barriers, financial constraints, and the need for mentoring and legislative support. In the face of these difficulties, organizations display remarkable resilience, resourcefulness, and dedication. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented both challenges and opportunities, prompting organizations to embrace digital solutions and broaden their collaborations. To ensure the sustainability and growth of the NGO sector, there is a pressing need for legislative measures that support coaching and mentoring for aspiring organizations. Moreover, fostering a more supportive mindset within Romanian society can lead to a thriving ecosystem where organizations, individuals, and communities come together to drive transformative change. In promoting continuity, seriousness, punctuality, and support, these organizations pave the way for a brighter and more inclusive future for Romania.

### **Respondent's occupation/role in the organization**

#### **Diverse Roles and Inspirational Figures: A Comprehensive Overview of NGOs and Their Impact**

The insights obtained from respondents shed light on the diverse roles individuals play within NGOs and the powerful influence of passionate leaders in inspiring and mobilizing others. This comprehensive text explores the multifaceted landscape of NGOs, highlighting the dedication of some respondents who are solely dedicated to their respective organizations, while others balance their organizational roles with parallel employment. Additionally, it delves into the collective initiatives that led to the establishment of certain organizations, where individuals shared common perspectives and sought to drive positive changes within their communities. The contagious passion exhibited within the NGO field serves as a catalyst for others, prompting individuals to overcome their inhibitions and contribute to the greater societal impact. Sharing achievements is recognized as crucial for expanding their reach and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.

#### **Diverse Roles Within NGOs: Presidents, Collaborative Teams, and Executive Directors**

- ● The respondents' involvement within NGOs exhibits a diverse array of roles, each contributing to the organizations' overarching missions. While some individuals are fully dedicated to their respective organizations, devoting their time and energy solely to their organizational roles, others juggle their involvement with parallel employment. This diversity in dedication reflects the multifaceted nature of the NGO sector, accommodating individuals with various commitments and responsibilities.



Within the realm of organizational structure, most respondents hold the position of president within their respective NGOs. As presidents, they assume leadership roles, guiding the organizations with their vision and expertise. Collaborative teamwork is also prevalent among certain organizations, where members pool their skills and perspectives to develop projects and implement initiatives collectively.

However, some respondents take on the challenge of working alone in their endeavors, bearing the responsibility of generating ideas and implementing initiatives independently. These individuals demonstrate exceptional determination and resourcefulness, effectively managing all aspects of their projects. The ability to take full ownership of their ideas and bring them to fruition highlights the entrepreneurial spirit and dedication present within the NGO sector.

### Inspirational Figures and Collective Initiatives: Driving Societal Impact

Many of the organizations included in the study were established through collective initiatives, with individuals coming together based on shared perspectives and a desire to effect positive changes within their communities. The fusion of diverse experiences and expertise fosters a fertile ground for creativity and innovation, enabling these organizations to tackle societal challenges with a multifaceted approach. Participants recognized that their professional and life experiences could be channeled effectively towards creating a meaningful societal impact through NGOs. This collective initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration in driving transformative change.

### The responsibility of the NGO Field: Inspiring and Motivating Others

The NGO field exudes a responsibility that has the remarkable ability to inspire and motivate others to become involved. Many respondents highlighted the pivotal role played by passionate leaders and inspirational figures who ignited their interest in contributing to NGOs. These leaders serve as beacons of dedication, commitment, and social responsibility, inspiring individuals who may have lacked the courage to take the leap until they encountered such influential figures. The transformative power of these passionate individuals creates a ripple effect, mobilizing others to actively participate in the pursuit of noble causes.

### The Significance of Shared Achievements: Inspiring Others to Follow

Acknowledging the importance of shared achievements, respondents emphasize the value of showcasing their successes. Sharing accomplishments allows NGOs to expand their reach, gain recognition, and inspire others to follow their path. By presenting achievements as tangible



examples of the impact that can be achieved, these organizations serve as beacons of inspiration for aspiring changemakers. This transparency fosters a culture of learning and collaboration, enabling others to learn from successful projects and replicate effective strategies in their own initiatives.

The world of NGOs is a dynamic and diverse landscape, with individuals playing various roles and dedicating their time and passion to drive positive change within their communities. The respondents' experiences showcase the power of collective initiatives and the transformative influence of passionate leaders. The contagious passion exhibited within the NGO field serves as a powerful catalyst, inspiring others to overcome inhibitions and contribute to the greater societal impact. As these organizations continue to share their achievements and inspire others, they pave the way for a more inclusive, compassionate, and collaborative society. The multifaceted roles within NGOs and the unwavering dedication of passionate individuals reinforce the significance of their efforts in creating a better world for all.

### **Respondents' experience**

#### The Significance of Experience and Soft Skills in the Realm of NGOs: Nurturing Personal Fulfillment and Successful Initiatives

The insights obtained from respondents shed light on the interplay between experience, soft skills, and personal fulfillment within the context of NGOs. This comprehensive text explores the importance of experience in the NGO sector, highlighting that while prior knowledge is not a prerequisite, a willingness to learn and make a significant impact is crucial. The role of soft skills, such as collaboration, teamwork, and constant learning, emerges as the underlying foundation for successful NGO operations. The diverse paths individuals take in establishing and operating NGOs underscore the significance of personal fulfillment, teamwork, and a growth mindset in leading transformative initiatives.

#### The Role of Experience: A Willingness to Learn and Make a Difference

Respondents revealed that previous experience in the NGO sector is not a mandatory requirement for impactful work within communities. While some individuals had insider knowledge gained from previous involvement in other organizations, others embarked on their journeys with little prior knowledge but a strong willingness to learn, progress, and effect positive change. Their passion and dedication allowed them to overcome barriers and leave a lasting impact on their communities.



For those with prior organizational experience, starting their own initiatives was relatively easier, as they were familiar with the workings of NGOs, funding processes, and anticipated challenges. This insider knowledge empowered them to navigate the complexities of NGO operations with greater ease, inspiring them to initiate their own projects and lead with confidence. Positive past experiences encouraged them to forge ahead in the same direction, taking charge of their destinies and launching new projects with different teams and positions, such as founders or co-founders.

### Soft Skills: The Pillars of Successful NGO Operations

The essence of successful NGO operations lies in the cultivation and utilization of essential soft skills. Collaboration and teamwork are considered pivotal aspects in the effective functioning of NGOs. The significance of a high-performing team, composed of individuals with expertise in their respective fields, was emphasized by respondents. This cohesive teamwork ensures that diverse perspectives and skills are brought together, fostering innovative solutions to address societal challenges.

Respondents highlighted the value of continuous learning and personal improvement. Even individuals with extensive studies continued to participate in various training courses, recognizing the constant opportunity for growth and the importance of sharing knowledge with others. For some respondents, creating an environment to materialize their accumulated information and expertise became a driving force in their work within NGOs. This work environment provided stability and professional development in a field that brought both professional satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

### Personal Fulfillment and Growth Mindset: Keys to Overcoming Obstacles

Individuals without prior experience in the NGO sector demonstrated a remarkable ability to learn and adapt along the way, persevering in their endeavors despite obstacles. Their strong initiative and belief that change starts at the grassroots level empowered them to make significant contributions to the desired transformation. This sense of personal fulfillment and dedication became the driving force behind their commitment to their initiatives.

Within this context, the quality of collaboration and the individuals with whom one works were considered more important than quantity. The ability to build strong relationships, foster teamwork, and embrace a growth mindset were highlighted as essential attributes for success in the NGO sector.



The realm of NGOs thrives on a delicate interplay of experience, soft skills, and personal fulfillment. While prior experience in the NGO sector can be beneficial, it is not a prerequisite for making a significant impact. The willingness to learn, progress, and effect positive change plays a pivotal role in driving transformative initiatives. Soft skills, such as collaboration, teamwork, continuous learning, and personal fulfillment, form the underlying foundation for successful NGO operations.

Individuals with diverse paths and backgrounds come together to create impactful projects and effect positive change in their communities. The common thread uniting these individuals is their dedication to making a difference and their belief in the power of collective efforts. The growth mindset, the value of continuous learning, and the cultivation of strong relationships underscore the importance of personal fulfillment and teamwork in leading successful initiatives within the NGO sector. As these organizations continue to evolve, embracing the power of experience, soft skills, and passion will pave the way for a brighter and more inclusive future.

### **Respondents' acquired knowledge about disabilities and people with disabilities**

#### **Empowering Young People with Disabilities: Challenges, Approaches, and the Role of Educators, Parents, and Organizations**

This detailed text delves into the experiences and initiatives of organizations working with young people, particularly those with disabilities. The challenges they encounter and the various approaches taken by respondents to provide support and create opportunities for these individuals are highlighted. From the initial struggles faced by organizations targeting young people with disabilities to the transformative impact of educators, parents, and dedicated organizations, this text explores the journey towards inclusion and empowerment. Learning through hands-on experiences and international collaborations emerges as a crucial aspect of addressing the needs of young people with disabilities, emphasizing the significant role of educators, parents, and organizations in creating supportive environments and promoting inclusive practices in schools and society.

#### **Overcoming Initial Challenges: Learning through Hands-On Activities and International Collaborations**

Organizations targeting young people with disabilities often faced initial challenges due to a lack of resources and guidance on managing such situations. However, they displayed



remarkable resilience and determination, learning through hands-on activities and experiences. As their understanding of the needs of young people with disabilities grew, some organizations formed partnerships with foreign organizations to exchange knowledge and develop effective methodologies for working with these individuals. This international collaboration proved instrumental in enhancing their approach and expanding their impact.

### The Role of Experienced Educators: Creating Supportive Environments for Growth

Respondents with experience in special needs education played a vital role in creating supportive environments for young people with disabilities. Drawing on their expertise, they offered valuable frameworks, conditions, and contexts for growth, fostering an inclusive and nurturing atmosphere. These experienced educators became deeply involved in helping young individuals with special needs, unlocking their potential and empowering them to thrive in various aspects of life. Their dedication and commitment served as guiding lights, inspiring others to follow suit.

### Discovering Unexpected Paths: Serendipitous Inspirations

Some respondents, who initially did not intend to work with young people with disabilities, discovered along their journey that they could bring hope and empowerment to this underserved group. Serendipitous inspirations led them to tailor their approaches specifically to meet the needs of young people with different disabilities, resulting in unexpected positive outcomes. Such personal realizations showcased the transformative power of compassion, adaptability, and open-mindedness in making a profound impact on the lives of young individuals with disabilities.

### Parental Experiences Driving Initiatives: Extending Efforts for a Greater Cause

The experiences of parents of children with disabilities played a significant role in driving the initiatives of some respondents. Having learned valuable skills and strategies to support their own children, these parents extended their efforts to help other young people facing similar challenges. Their personal journeys of overcoming obstacles and advocating for their children's rights inspired them to create organizations that provided a myriad of activities and support, including competitions, trips, and regular creative and sports activities for children with disabilities. These parents demonstrated the power of parental advocacy and the indomitable spirit of caregivers.



## Breaking Barriers: The Importance of Understanding and Inclusion

Working with young people with special needs was acknowledged as a challenging task, primarily due to the barriers imposed by others who may lack understanding of how to approach and interact with them. However, it was strongly emphasized that these individuals desire to be treated as normal people, beyond their disabilities. To provide the necessary support, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of their specific impairments and needs, in order to offer tailored assistance that genuinely improves their lives. By breaking down these barriers, organizations and individuals can create an environment where young people with disabilities can flourish and reach their full potential.

## The Role of Educators in Classroom Inclusion: Influencing Attitudes and Approaches

The integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools was addressed, highlighting the pivotal role of educators in their classroom inclusion. Educators' approach and relationships with special needs children serve as a model for other students, influencing their attitudes and approaches towards inclusivity. By fostering an inclusive environment in classrooms, educators become agents of change, nurturing empathy, compassion, and understanding among all students.

The journey towards empowering young people with disabilities is marked by challenges, resilience, and transformative impact. Organizations working in this realm demonstrate the power of learning through hands-on experiences and international collaborations, as they continuously enhance their approaches and expand their impact. The crucial role of experienced educators and parents in creating supportive environments and offering specialized assistance cannot be overstated. The discovery of unexpected paths and serendipitous inspirations underscores the importance of compassion, adaptability, and open-mindedness in creating positive change. Breaking barriers and promoting understanding and inclusion are essential for nurturing an environment where young people with disabilities can thrive and reach their full potential. Educators, parents, and dedicated organizations serve as driving forces, shaping a future where all young individuals, regardless of their abilities, can lead fulfilling lives and contribute meaningfully to society. Through their collective efforts, they pave the way for a more inclusive and compassionate world.





## **Experience gained in the course of activity in relation to people living with disabilities**

### **Nurturing Positive Changes: Experiences and Challenges of Organizations Working with People with Disabilities**

This in-depth approach explores the experiences and observations of organizations dedicated to working with people with disabilities. It highlights the unique development process and challenges faced by this target group, as well as the concerted efforts made to create inclusive environments and promote societal acceptance. These organizations recognize that progress and results in empowering individuals with disabilities take time to manifest. However, their satisfaction and motivation stem from witnessing the transformative changes in the lives of these individuals. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the specific needs of people with disabilities, fostering cultural development, and providing controlled exposure to encourage acceptance by society. It also delves into the challenges and valuable lessons learned by these organizations, emphasizing the need for care, empathy, and an open mindset in achieving fantastic results.

### **The Journey of Empowerment: Unveiling Unique Development Process**

Organizations working with people with disabilities understand that the journey of empowerment for these individuals is unique and requires dedicated effort and support. Unlike natural growth and maturation, transformations for people with disabilities demand continuous and targeted interventions. Progress may not be linear, but each step forward is a cause for celebration. Witnessing positive changes in the lives of those they serve motivates these organizations to persist in their mission, knowing that their work has a profound impact on the individuals they support.

### **Distinctions and Individual Needs: Tailoring Support for All**

A crucial distinction is made between individuals who are born with disabilities and those who acquire disabilities later in life. The learning process and support required for each group differ significantly. It is essential to recognize that each person has their own rhythm and specific needs. Organizations strive to teach individuals with disabilities to embrace opportunities and lead as normal a life as possible, breaking barriers and dispelling misconceptions about their capabilities.

### **Addressing Cultural Aspects: Inclusivity through Cultural Products**



In their pursuit of inclusivity, some organizations create cultural products, such as plays, specifically designed for deaf individuals. By engaging deaf actors and an audience with similar needs, they promote a sense of equality and exposure, providing opportunities for cultural development and expression. Controlled exposure of young people with disabilities is considered beneficial for both the individuals and society at large. Trips and outings are organized to encourage their acceptance and integration. However, communication barriers exist, leading to frustration and avoidance on both sides. The organizations are actively seeking ways to bridge this communication gap, recognizing its significance in fostering mutual understanding and acceptance.

### Challenges and Lessons Learned: Embracing Solutions and Empathy

Some organizations may feel limited in their ability to support disabled individuals fully, and in such cases, they refer them to competent authorities and occasionally involve them in socialization activities. Working with individuals with severe disabilities presents unique challenges that require specialized support and expertise. Lessons learned from these experiences include the importance of seeking solutions, practicing demonstrated empathy, and recognizing that disability is not an impediment to achieving greatness. Solutions can be found in any situation, and working with individuals with disabilities requires an approach based on affection, empathy, and an open mindset to achieve fantastic results.

### Promoting Visibility and Inclusion: Changing Societal Perceptions

The organizations stress the need for individuals working with people with disabilities to open up, engage with care and affection, and promote their visibility and inclusion in society. Changing societal perceptions and involving people with disabilities in various aspects of life become crucial in making them feel valued and useful members of the community. Responsiveness and recognizing the potential for valuable lessons in every interaction are therefore important, as they contribute to the effective management of future situations.

The experiences and observations of organizations working with people with disabilities underscore the unique development process and challenges faced by this target group. The dedicated efforts to create inclusive environments and promote societal acceptance are driven by the satisfaction and motivation derived from witnessing transformative changes in the lives of these individuals. Organizations recognize the importance of addressing the specific needs of people with disabilities, fostering cultural development, and providing controlled exposure to encourage acceptance by society. Challenges are met with determination, seeking solutions



and practicing empathy to overcome obstacles. The emphasis on care, empathy, and an open mindset in working with individuals with disabilities contributes to the achievement of fantastic results. By promoting visibility and inclusion, these organizations play a pivotal role in changing societal perceptions and creating a more inclusive and compassionate world for all.

## **Experience with the services you typically provide to young people with disabilities**

### Empowering Young People with Disabilities: A Diverse Range of Tailored Services

This comprehensive synthesis explores the array of services offered to young people with disabilities by different organizations. While some organizations actively provide support through various projects and activities, others are still building their experience in working with this target group. However, the synthesis reveals a prevailing openness and willingness among organizations to broaden their horizons and cater to the specific needs of young people with disabilities. Collaboration with specialized NGOs engaged in similar work is also seen as a valuable approach to enhance the support provided. The services offered are carefully tailored to address the unique requirements of these young individuals, spanning areas such as career guidance, personal development courses, leadership training, social inclusion initiatives, and access to cultural activities. Moreover, the significance of awareness campaigns, inclusive approaches, and fostering a sense of belonging within the target group is highlighted throughout this text.

### A Multifaceted Approach: Tailored Services for Specific Needs

The services offered to young people with disabilities encompass a broad spectrum of support and guidance, each carefully tailored to meet the specific needs and requirements of the individual. From career guidance to personal development courses and leadership training, these services are designed to empower young people with disabilities to overcome challenges and achieve their aspirations. Additionally, initiatives aimed at promoting social inclusion and access to cultural activities are instrumental in enriching their lives and fostering a sense of belonging within the community.

### Volunteering Projects: Active Participation and Skill Development

Volunteering projects form an integral part of the support system for young people with disabilities. Some organizations host international volunteers with disabilities and,



reciprocally, send volunteers with disabilities abroad. These projects offer valuable opportunities for skill development and experiential learning, contributing to their journey as active and engaged citizens. Youth exchanges further strengthen their understanding of diverse cultures and foster meaningful connections.

### Raising Awareness: Fostering Understanding and Inclusion

The synthesis emphasizes the importance of awareness campaigns in fostering empathy and understanding among young individuals, particularly in helping children comprehend the lives of visually impaired individuals. By creating a more compassionate and inclusive environment, these campaigns pave the way for increased acceptance and support for those with disabilities.

### Inclusive Approaches: Working with Mixed Groups

One organization stands out for its innovative approach to inclusion, choosing to work with mixed groups rather than segregating individuals with disabilities. This inclusive strategy has proven to be more effective, fostering a sense of unity and mutual understanding among participants. Moreover, the organization offers psychological support to ensure a safe and nurturing environment, especially for those with psychiatric conditions, further enhancing the overall well-being of the participants.

### Empowering Young People with Down Syndrome: Promoting Socialization and Belonging

Services provided to young people with Down syndrome focus on enhancing their socialization skills and promoting a sense of belonging. While career guidance or preparation for the labor market may have limited applicability, associations concentrate on creative activities such as work techniques, melody therapy, art therapy, dance, sports activities, and fitness. These activities not only enrich their lives but also foster meaningful connections and a sense of belonging within the community.

This synthesis sheds light on the diverse range of services offered to young people with disabilities, showcasing the efforts made by different organizations to cater to their specific needs and requirements. The array of support, encompassing career guidance, personal development courses, leadership training, social inclusion initiatives, and access to cultural activities, demonstrates the commitment of these organizations to empowering young individuals with disabilities. Collaborative efforts with specialized NGOs and awareness campaigns are pivotal in fostering empathy and understanding, ensuring a more inclusive society. Inclusive approaches, working with mixed groups, and offering psychological support



further contribute to creating safe and nurturing environments for young people with disabilities. The services provided to young individuals with Down syndrome prioritize socialization and belonging, encouraging them to lead fulfilling lives and become active members of their communities. By embracing diversity and inclusivity, these organizations make a significant impact in empowering and enriching the lives of young people with disabilities, promoting a future built on acceptance, compassion, and mutual support.

### **Competences related to career guidance and preparation for the labor market acquired by the young people with whom the organizations work**

#### The Transformative Power of Interaction: Nurturing Skills and Growth in Young People

This detailed approach delves into the significance of interaction in the developmental journey of young people. Interacting with others plays a crucial role in honing essential communication skills, understanding group dynamics, fostering cooperation, negotiation, and building meaningful relationships. Activities that involve group exposure evoke emotions, trust issues, and personal challenges, all of which contribute to the growth of social competence, including tolerance and cultural awareness. The first phase of development centers on acquiring these skills and learning about different cultures. Subsequent project participation allows young individuals to develop project-specific skills, such as giving and receiving feedback, conflict management, problem-solving, and decision-making. These experiences create awareness of the importance of such skills in their future professions, particularly those involving interpersonal interactions. For young people with disabilities, participation in projects in other countries and exposure to diverse experiences prove particularly valuable. The transformative effects of these experiences are observed upon their return, as they must integrate, communicate, and navigate various situations. It becomes essential to guide them in recognizing their personal growth and maintaining a trajectory of progress beyond high school, where support from teachers and counselors might no longer be available. Some associations continue to mentor these young individuals even after they finish school, ensuring their sustained development. While soft skills are the primary focus, respondents mention the development of hard skills such as foreign language proficiency, digital literacy, and project management. In cases where disabilities limit the realization of activities and the acquisition of extensive knowledge, emphasis is placed on societal presentation and behavior in various situations and contexts.

#### Developing Essential Skills: Acquiring Communication and Interpersonal Competence



Interaction with diverse individuals plays a pivotal role in developing essential skills for young people. Throughout their journey, they acquire effective communication skills, learn to navigate group dynamics, and cultivate the art of cooperation and negotiation. The activities they engage in, often involving group exposure, evoke a range of emotions, trust issues, and personal challenges, contributing to their overall growth and adaptability. Moreover, these experiences foster social competence, which includes the nurturing of tolerance and cultural awareness, essential attributes for thriving in an increasingly interconnected world.

### The Journey of Skill Development: From General Social Competence to Project-Specific Skills

The first phase of development focuses on acquiring general social competence and an understanding of various cultures. As young individuals progress, they engage in project participation, which allows them to develop project-specific skills. This phase includes learning to give and receive feedback effectively, managing conflicts with grace, and honing problem-solving and decision-making abilities. These skills prove crucial in their future professions, especially those that involve significant interpersonal interactions. By gaining awareness of the importance of these skills, young individuals are better prepared to navigate the challenges of their chosen career paths.

### Empowering Young People with Disabilities: Transformative Effects of International Experiences

For young people with disabilities, participating in projects abroad and experiencing different cultures holds particular value. These international experiences have transformative effects, as they expose these individuals to new environments, diverse perspectives, and various societal norms. Upon their return, they must integrate these experiences into their daily lives, communicating and navigating through diverse situations. Guiding them in recognizing their personal growth becomes essential, especially as they transition beyond high school, where the support from teachers and counselors may no longer be readily available. Some associations extend their mentorship to ensure these young individuals continue on a trajectory of progress and self-discovery.

### Beyond Soft Skills: Hard Skills and Personal Development

While the focus primarily remains on developing soft skills, one respondent highlights the value of nurturing hard skills as well. Young individuals may develop foreign language proficiency, particularly in languages like English or French, which can enhance their



opportunities in a globalized world. Additionally, fostering digital literacy ensures they remain adaptable in an increasingly technology-driven landscape. Furthermore, certain projects might afford them the opportunity to explore project management skills, which are essential for leading and coordinating initiatives effectively.

### Overcoming Limitations: Emphasizing Societal Presentation and Behavior

For young people with disabilities whose conditions may limit the realization of certain activities and extensive knowledge acquisition, emphasis is placed on societal presentation and behavior in various situations and contexts. Encouraging them to develop skills that empower them to navigate society confidently proves invaluable, as it ensures their integration and meaningful participation in social settings.

The transformative power of interaction is evident in the developmental journey of young individuals, particularly when working with people with disabilities. The process of acquiring communication skills, understanding group dynamics, and cultivating cooperation and negotiation fosters social competence, a vital asset in today's interconnected world. Project participation allows them to develop project-specific skills that are crucial in their future professions. International experiences hold particular value for young people with disabilities, expanding their perspectives and fostering personal growth. Guiding them in recognizing their progress beyond high school ensures continued development and self-discovery. While soft skills remain the primary focus, the importance of nurturing hard skills, such as foreign language proficiency and digital literacy, is acknowledged. Emphasizing societal presentation and behavior empowers young individuals to overcome limitations and participate fully in society. In conclusion, interaction serves as a powerful catalyst in empowering young people, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to navigate life's challenges and embrace a future filled with possibilities.

### **Financial resources of the organization. Who and how are youth activities funded**

#### Securing Financial Resources: Challenges and Strategies for Sustainability in NGOs

- This detailed approach delves into the synthesis of funding sources for organizations, shedding light on the challenges they face in sustaining financial stability. The most frequently mentioned sources of funding include funds from the European Commission, particularly through programs like Erasmus plus, which are deemed the most substantial and reliable. Additionally, non-reimbursable financing from local authorities, such as the mayor's office or



the County Council, is mentioned, often covering costs for small, specific activities with short durations. Surprisingly, only a few organizations receive income from the 3.5% payroll tax campaigns. Sponsorship income from companies or individuals is relatively uncommon, with only a handful of organizations receiving such support. The most consistent and secure financial resources come from winning projects proposed for various funding opportunities. However, the inconsistency and unpredictability of funding present significant challenges for many organizations, making it difficult to maintain permanent employees. As a result, they often resort to hiring individuals for short-term periods while a project is underway, and heavily rely on volunteers to support their operations. This text explores the intricacies of funding challenges faced by NGOs and the strategies employed for financial sustainability.

#### Financial Sources and Their Significance:

The synthesis highlights the diverse sources of funding that organizations seek to sustain their operations. The funds from the European Commission, particularly through programs like Erasmus plus, are lauded as the most substantial and reliable sources. These funds empower organizations to undertake ambitious projects and provide comprehensive support to their target groups. Non-reimbursable financing from local authorities, such as the mayor's office or the County Council, is also mentioned, often proving instrumental in covering expenses for small, targeted activities with short durations. This funding enables organizations to address specific community needs promptly and efficiently. Surprisingly, only a few organizations receive income from the 3.5% payroll tax campaigns, indicating a potential avenue for growth and collaboration with businesses and individuals willing to contribute to social causes.

#### Challenges in Obtaining Sponsorship Income:

The synthesis reveals that sponsorship income from companies or individuals is relatively uncommon, with only a handful of organizations receiving such support. Securing sponsorships presents unique challenges, including competition for limited funds and the need to effectively communicate the organization's impact to potential sponsors. Organizations may need to explore creative approaches to attract sponsorships, such as building mutually beneficial partnerships or demonstrating alignment with corporate social responsibility goals.

#### Financial Sustainability: Strategies and Roadblocks:

The most consistent and secure financial resources for organizations come from winning projects proposed for various funding opportunities. While this funding is essential for the





realization of their projects, the inconsistency and unpredictability of financial support present significant challenges for many NGOs. The reliance on project-based funding may lead to difficulties in maintaining permanent employees, as projects have finite durations. Consequently, organizations often resort to hiring individuals for short-term periods during active projects, leading to a revolving door of personnel. The financial instability can impact the organization's ability to offer long-term career prospects for dedicated employees.

#### Harnessing the Power of Volunteers:

To mitigate the challenges posed by funding unpredictability, many organizations heavily rely on volunteers to support their operations. Volunteers play a vital role in providing essential services and contributing their time, skills, and passion to the organization's mission. Their dedication and commitment form a cornerstone of the organization's ability to serve the community effectively. However, depending heavily on volunteers may also lead to concerns about consistency and professional expertise, as volunteers may have other commitments and varying skill levels.

#### Strategic Planning for Financial Stability:

To achieve financial sustainability, organizations must engage in strategic planning and diversify their funding sources. They can explore partnerships with businesses and individuals for sponsorship opportunities, leveraging the power of corporate social responsibility initiatives. Additionally, seeking grants and donations from private foundations or philanthropic organizations can provide a more stable and reliable income stream. Organizations can also focus on building relationships with local authorities and leveraging their support for non-reimbursable financing. Moreover, long-term planning and capacity-building initiatives can strengthen the organization's ability to secure funding for sustained projects and employee retention.

This synthesis illuminates the complexities of funding sources for organizations and the challenges they encounter in achieving financial sustainability. While funds from the European Commission and non-reimbursable financing offer essential support, sponsorship income remains relatively uncommon, warranting innovative approaches to engage potential sponsors. The inconsistency of funding from project-based sources underscores the importance of strategic planning and diversification of funding streams. Organizations' reliance on volunteers showcases their dedication to the cause, but also emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to maintain consistent service delivery. By adopting strategic planning, building partnerships,



and exploring diverse funding opportunities, NGOs can enhance their financial stability and continue making a meaningful impact on the communities they serve.

### **Beneficiaries of the services provided by the organization**

#### **Empowering Marginalized Youth: The Impact of Two Organizations on Diverse Groups**

This detailed approach explores the profound influence of two organizations that indirectly impact approximately 1000 individuals through their final products, such as performances or representations, as well as through information and promotional campaigns. While not all of these individuals have disabilities, the organizations primarily serve young people with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those from the Roma ethnicity. The age range of the beneficiaries varies from approximately 12 to 19 for young people with disabilities and 13 to 35 for individuals from the Roma ethnicity. This text sheds light on the unique approaches of these organizations, their collaborative efforts, and their dedication to empowering marginalized youth.

#### **Organization 1: Collaborative and Inclusive Approach**

The first organization employs a collaborative and inclusive approach, indirectly impacting hundreds of individuals through their final products, which often include performances, representations, or public events. They do not have a specific pool of young people, instead collaborating with partner organizations and recommending participants based on specific needs and requests. This approach allows them to reach a diverse range of beneficiaries, including young people with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and individuals from the Roma ethnicity. By engaging with various partner organizations, they can tailor their initiatives to address the specific needs of different communities effectively.

Furthermore, this organization demonstrates flexibility in their projects, working with different groups depending on the project's objectives. While their primary focus is on empowering marginalized youth, they do not exclusively serve young people with disabilities. This approach allows them to address multiple societal challenges and create a positive impact on various vulnerable communities. By embracing diversity and inclusivity, they strive to foster a sense of belonging and empowerment among their beneficiaries.

#### **Organization 2: Empowering Youth Workers for Societal Transformation**



The second organization adopts a unique approach that prioritizes working with both young people and youth workers. They recognize that education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of society and believes that positive learning experiences for youth workers can lead to a transformative impact on the young people they engage with actively. By investing in the training and development of youth workers, this organization aims to create a ripple effect of positive change, as these trained individuals will impart the same energy and approach to the young people they work with.

Through their initiatives, this organization indirectly impacts approximately 1000 individuals, including young people with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and individuals from the Roma ethnicity. By focusing on empowering the educators and mentors themselves, they ensure that the support and guidance provided to the young beneficiaries are of the highest quality. This approach emphasizes the importance of equipping youth workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to create a nurturing and empowering environment for the young people they serve.

#### Impact on Marginalized Youth: Building Confidence and Breaking Barriers

Both organizations share a common goal of empowering marginalized youth, instilling confidence, and breaking barriers that hinder their personal growth and development. The final products, such as performances, representations, or public events, serve as platforms for the young beneficiaries to showcase their talents and abilities, fostering a sense of pride and achievement. Through these initiatives, the organizations indirectly impact the lives of hundreds of young people, offering them opportunities to express themselves and be recognized for their contributions.

For young people with disabilities, participating in these events can be transformative, as it allows them to challenge societal stereotypes and perceptions about their capabilities. The organizations provide a safe and inclusive space where young individuals can embrace their uniqueness and talents without fear of judgment. By promoting a positive and empowering atmosphere, the organizations foster a sense of belonging and self-worth among these young individuals.

Similarly, for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and the Roma ethnicity, the organizations create pathways for personal growth and societal integration. Through information and promotional campaigns, they raise awareness about the challenges faced by these communities and advocate for inclusivity and equal opportunities. By supporting the young beneficiaries in



various projects and initiatives, the organizations equip them with valuable skills and experiences that can open doors to a brighter future.

The influence of these two organizations extends far beyond the individuals directly served, indirectly impacting approximately 1000 individuals through their final products and initiatives. Their collaborative and inclusive approaches enable them to reach diverse groups, including young people with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and individuals from the Roma ethnicity. By empowering marginalized youth and investing in the development of youth workers, these organizations strive to create a lasting and transformative impact on society. Through performances, representations, and public events, they build confidence and break barriers, providing young beneficiaries with opportunities to express themselves and be recognized for their talents. Ultimately, the dedication of these organizations reflects their commitment to nurturing a generation of empowered and resilient individuals who can contribute positively to their communities and society at large.

**The conditions currently available to the associations, but also those they would need to carry out activities with young people, so as to allow support for people with disabilities.**

#### Empowering NGOs: Addressing Key Needs for Sustainable Impact

This in-depth approach explores the primary needs expressed by NGOs and the challenges they face in their journey to create positive change and impact within their communities. These needs revolve around financial stability, attracting dedicated human resources, and acquiring essential material resources. By understanding and addressing these critical aspects, NGOs can thrive and continue to make a lasting difference in the lives of their beneficiaries. We will delve into each need, understanding its significance and the impact it has on the organizations' operations and effectiveness.

#### Financial Stability: Ensuring Long-Term Viability

- One of the fundamental needs highlighted by NGOs is the requirement for annual funds to ensure financial stability within their organizations. These funds are essential for not only sustaining the payment of salaries to permanent employees but also supporting individuals who actively contribute to various activities and initiatives. The availability of reliable and consistent funding empowers NGOs to plan and execute their projects efficiently. It provides



the much-needed financial backbone that allows them to focus on their core mission and objectives.

Furthermore, NGOs emphasize the importance of financial resources to carry out projects they deem essential and impactful at the community level. These projects often target pressing community needs and create tangible and positive changes. By securing financial resources, NGOs can implement initiatives that address specific challenges and foster sustainable development in their target areas.

### Attracting Dedicated Human Resources: The Power of Volunteers

In addition to financial stability, attracting dedicated human resources is seen as crucial for NGOs. Volunteers play a pivotal role in supporting the organizations' initiatives and maximizing their impact. The commitment and dedication of these individuals are instrumental in driving the organization's mission forward. Recruiting passionate and dedicated volunteers who resonate with the organization's vision is vital for its sustainability and growth.

Human resources, especially volunteers, offer their time and efforts selflessly, contributing significantly to the organization's success. Their commitment to the cause creates a strong sense of camaraderie and purpose within the organization. By fostering a supportive and engaging environment, NGOs can attract and retain talented volunteers who become integral to the organization's functioning.

### Material Resources: Spaces for Activities and Accommodation

Material resources are also identified as a significant need for NGOs. Adequate spaces to conduct activities are essential for providing a conducive environment for workshops, events, and programs. Some NGOs express the desire to create a youth center with accommodation spaces, catering to young people participating in various projects. Such spaces enable the organization to offer a holistic approach to the development of the youth, providing not only educational and skill-building opportunities but also a safe and nurturing environment for accommodation.

Having access to more generous spaces that can better accommodate their activities empowers NGOs to optimize their efforts and impact. By having ample room to conduct their programs, they can expand their reach and cater to a larger number of beneficiaries effectively.

### Balancing Multiple Responsibilities: Time Constraints



A significant challenge faced by NGOs is the need for individuals to balance multiple responsibilities. One respondent highlighted the limitation of her own time resources, having a full-time job in addition to her involvement with the organization. This illustrates the personal sacrifices made by dedicated individuals who manage multiple commitments while actively contributing to the NGO's objectives.

Balancing multiple responsibilities can impact the level of engagement and time available for active participation in the organization. NGOs must recognize and accommodate the time constraints faced by their team members. By offering flexible opportunities for involvement, such as part-time roles or remote work options, organizations can retain valuable human resources and foster a culture of understanding and support.

#### Gratitude for Support Received: Resourcefulness and Resilience

The organization focused on young people with Down Syndrome expresses profound gratitude for any support received, regardless of its nature. This highlights their resourcefulness and resilience in making the most of the assistance they receive, given the difficulties they face in acquiring necessary materials and resources. Despite limited resources, their commitment to creating a positive impact in the lives of young people with Down Syndrome is unwavering.

In conclusion, addressing the key needs of NGOs—financial stability, attracting dedicated human resources, and acquiring essential material resources—is vital for their sustainable impact. The availability of annual funds ensures the organization's financial stability, allowing them to plan and execute impactful projects. Attracting dedicated volunteers creates a strong sense of purpose and drives the organization's mission forward. Adequate material resources, including suitable spaces, provide a conducive environment for activities and accommodation for beneficiaries.

However, NGOs also face challenges, such as individuals balancing multiple responsibilities, which can impact their level of engagement. By recognizing and accommodating such challenges, NGOs can retain valuable human resources and foster a supportive work environment. The gratitude and resourcefulness exhibited by NGOs exemplify their commitment to creating a lasting positive impact in their communities, even in the face of adversities. By addressing these needs and challenges, NGOs can continue their journey of empowerment and create a brighter future for their beneficiaries.



## Use of the term disabled person

### Embracing Inclusive Language: Prioritizing Person-First Terminologies in NGOs

This detailed approach explores the prevalent trend among organizations working with individuals with disabilities to adopt alternative terminologies instead of using the label "disabled person." The focus is on the significance of person-first language and the various terminologies that prioritize the individual rather than defining them solely by their disability. This shift in language reflects a profound commitment to promoting inclusivity, respect, and dignity for all individuals, irrespective of their unique needs or impairments.

### Person-First Language: Emphasizing the Individual

One of the striking observations in the synthesis is the organizations' preference for person-first language. This linguistic approach prioritizes recognizing the individual first, placing emphasis on their unique qualities and attributes before acknowledging any disability they may have. By using terminologies like "special persons," "persons with special requirements/needs," or "persons with special educational requirements," the organizations aim to emphasize the person's identity beyond their disability.

The choice to use person-first language stems from a desire to avoid defining individuals solely based on their disability. By highlighting the person before their disability, the organizations aim to break down stereotypes and stigmas associated with disability. This approach fosters a more respectful and inclusive understanding of the individual's humanity, recognizing their inherent worth and contributions to society.

### Shifting Away from Pejorative Language: Avoiding the Term "Handicap"

Another noteworthy aspect mentioned in the synthesis is the avoidance of the term "handicap" in favor of more respectful and inclusive language. The term "handicap" has been historically used pejoratively or inappropriately, leading to misconceptions and prejudices against individuals with disabilities. The organizations recognize the importance of using language that respects the dignity and rights of all individuals, irrespective of their abilities or challenges.

By steering away from the term "handicap" and instead using person-first language or other alternative terminologies, the organizations actively contribute to creating an inclusive and accepting environment for individuals with disabilities. This linguistic shift serves as a



powerful tool in challenging societal attitudes and promoting a culture of respect and understanding.

#### Acknowledging Individual Preferences: "Person with Special Needs"

The synthesis also acknowledges that while some people may find the person-first terminologies satisfactory, others may prefer alternative phrasing. In such cases, the preference often leans toward the phrase "person with special needs." This choice reflects the belief that while individuals with disabilities may have unique requirements, they are fundamentally equal to everyone else.

By referring to these individuals as "persons with special needs," the focus remains on acknowledging and supporting their unique requirements without overshadowing their individuality. This terminology promotes an understanding that each person has distinct needs, and the organization's approach should be tailored to meet those needs while treating everyone with respect and equality.

In conclusion, the adoption of person-first language and alternative terminologies by organizations working with individuals with disabilities highlights their commitment to promoting inclusivity, respect, and dignity. By prioritizing the individual over their disability, the organizations aim to break down stereotypes and stigmas associated with disability. The avoidance of pejorative language and the preference for inclusive terms further reinforce the commitment to creating an accepting and supportive environment for all individuals.

The choice to use person-first language emphasizes the uniqueness and worth of each individual, while acknowledging and supporting their specific needs. Moreover, the acknowledgment of individual preferences in terminology demonstrates the organizations' flexibility in catering to the diverse needs and identities of their beneficiaries.

Overall, by embracing person-first language and adopting alternative terminologies, NGOs pave the way for a more inclusive and understanding society, where individuals with disabilities are recognized, respected, and valued for their contributions and strengths.

Language, as a powerful tool for shaping attitudes and perceptions, plays a pivotal role in the organizations' mission to create a more inclusive and accepting world for all.





## **The general attitude of the organization's members towards people with special needs or disabilities**

By providing diversity education courses, the organization aims to foster a different perspective and the right approach when interacting with disabled individuals. This training is particularly beneficial for volunteers and individuals without specialized backgrounds in special education.

However, it is noted that individuals with professional training or experience in special education tend to possess a natural and inclusive attitude towards disabled individuals. These individuals are described as being willing to assist and support those with fewer opportunities.

On the other hand, one respondent expressed a more limited perspective, mentioning that they would have no issue working alongside a person with a locomotor disability as long as the individual could perform the required intellectual work. This viewpoint suggests that there may be certain limitations or biases regarding the perceived capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

In a more critical observation, a respondent working at the County School Inspectorate expressed doubt about whether those responsible for helping children with severe disabilities truly understand their needs as they should. This perspective highlights potential gaps in understanding and support within the education system.

Overall, the importance of training and education to cultivate a positive attitude and inclusive approach towards individuals with disabilities. It also underscores the need for continued awareness and improvement in how society supports and accommodates those with special needs.

## **Disadvantages of people with disabilities**

The respondent argues that teachers in mainstream schools lack the necessary training and education to effectively work with disabled students. In contrast, special schools that focus on specific disabilities may provide a more tailored approach, but the drawback is that these students can become socially isolated from the wider world.

Another disadvantage mentioned is the lack of sheltered workshops that could offer suitable employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities based on their capabilities. The absence of such workshops limits their chances of finding meaningful employment and feeling



valued in society. It is emphasized that employers need to be willing to hire them and make reasonable accommodations to facilitate their integration into the workforce.

The limited access disabled people have to culture, travel and other experiences is highlighted. She emphasizes the need to actively pursue favorable contexts and opportunities to bring about change and find solutions to these challenges.

### **Opportunities for people with disabilities**

Among the answers obtained, the importance of informing, encouraging and supporting young people with disabilities to have access to available opportunities is noted. It is emphasized that not only organizations and the state should provide support, but also families play a significant role in the lives of young people with disabilities and can greatly influence their journey.

The state is encouraged to incentivize companies to be more open to hiring individuals with disabilities by offering financial assistance. This way, more companies can be motivated to consider and create opportunities for people with disabilities. NGOs are also seen as valuable opportunities for individuals with disabilities, as they are often run by proactive individuals who actively create opportunities. Thus, the NGO sector should be appreciated and supported more, as it provides important avenues for empowerment.

Furthermore, it is noted that people with disabilities are often unaware of the available opportunities and how to access them. It is crucial for them to be well-informed about the opportunities and be encouraged to pursue them, as they contribute to their personal development and growth.

Therefore the need to inform and support young people with disabilities, involve families in their journey, encourage companies to be more inclusive, appreciate and support the NGO sector and ensure that people with disabilities are aware of the opportunities available to them.

### **Stigmatization of young people with disabilities by society**

Referring to the issue of societal stigma and discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities, the majority of respondents acknowledge that people with disabilities are often marginalized and treated differently due to their differences. This leads to a sense of being excluded and draws attention to their unique behaviors. Limited access to public institutions further restricts their opportunities and hinders their ability to engage fully in various activities. Therefore, ensuring accessibility for these individuals within the community is crucial.



However, there are optimistic perspectives as well, with some respondents noting positive progress in society's perception and community engagement towards young people with disabilities. This positive evolution is attributed to the efforts of individuals and organizations that actively work towards changing the overall perception and improving the inclusion of disabled individuals.

On the other hand, a respondent expresses a more pessimistic view, highlighting the need for significant improvements in education. It is argued that outdated ideas and biases, which contradict the principles of inclusivity, acceptance, and collaboration with disadvantaged individuals, are still prevalent and passed down through generations.

### **Future plans**

#### **Fostering Social Impact: A Collective Commitment to Inclusivity and Community Engagement**

This detailed text delves into the shared aspirations and objectives of organizations working with diverse communities, including young people with disabilities. The common goal among these organizations is to increase productivity and secure funding by writing and winning more projects. Their dedication to implementing these projects within their communities reflects a deep commitment to creating a positive impact on society. Furthermore, the organizations' willingness to contribute to the community through projects and activities involving young people with disabilities demonstrates their positive attitude towards promoting inclusivity and supporting marginalized groups. This text explores the future plans and visions of these organizations, focusing on productivity, project implementation, and community engagement, all guided by a shared commitment to inclusivity and social impact.

#### **Increasing Productivity and Impactful Project Implementation:**

A primary focus for these organizations is to enhance their productivity and secure funding through the successful execution of projects. By effectively writing and winning projects, these NGOs can access the resources needed to drive their initiatives forward. The funds obtained are vital for sustaining their operations, enabling them to provide valuable services and support to their beneficiaries.

With the clear objective of positively impacting their communities, these organizations strive to implement projects that address critical needs and challenges. By focusing on projects that



align with their mission and objectives, they can make a tangible and lasting difference in the lives of the people they serve. These projects often encompass diverse areas, such as education, skill-building, social inclusion, and cultural initiatives, catering to the multifaceted needs of the community.

#### Promoting Inclusivity and Extending Support to Marginalized Groups:

What stands out remarkably is the inclusive approach adopted by these organizations, even if they do not primarily focus on individuals with disabilities. Their positive attitude towards involving young people with disabilities in their initiatives reflects a strong commitment to inclusivity and social responsibility. These organizations recognize the importance of embracing diversity and ensuring that all members of the community, including those marginalized, have equal opportunities to participate and benefit from their projects.

By extending their support to young people with disabilities, these organizations foster a sense of belonging and empowerment within this marginalized group. Inclusive projects create spaces where individuals with disabilities can develop their skills, build relationships, and actively engage in community life. This approach also contributes to breaking down barriers and reducing stigmas associated with disabilities, creating a more empathetic and understanding society.

#### Future Plans: Productivity, Project Implementation, and Community Engagement:

Looking ahead, the organizations share a collective vision centered around productivity, project implementation, and community engagement. The desire to increase productivity remains a driving force, as it allows these NGOs to amplify their impact and reach a broader audience. Through effective project management and resource allocation, they aim to maximize the outcomes of their initiatives, ensuring that they resonate positively with their target communities.

Project implementation remains a key focus for the future, with these organizations aiming to develop innovative and impactful initiatives that address emerging community needs. By continuously adapting their projects to meet evolving challenges, they remain responsive to the changing dynamics of the communities they serve. The organizations are committed to fostering sustainable development and positive change, leaving a lasting legacy within their communities.



Community engagement plays a central role in the future plans of these organizations. Their positive attitude towards involving young people with disabilities reflects their dedication to inclusivity and social cohesion. By actively engaging with the community, they create a collaborative atmosphere where stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners come together to address shared challenges and co-create solutions. Through dialogue, partnerships, and interactive programs, these NGOs aim to empower the community and ensure that their initiatives align with genuine community needs.

In conclusion, these organizations share a common vision to increase productivity, secure funding, and implement impactful projects that create a positive impact within their communities. Their positive attitude towards inclusivity and their willingness to involve young people with disabilities in their initiatives exemplify their commitment to social responsibility. By fostering inclusivity, supporting marginalized groups, and actively engaging with the community, these organizations set an inspiring example for the broader society. Moving forward, their focus on productivity, project implementation, and community engagement will pave the way for a more inclusive and empowered future for all.

