

# Newsletter

August 2015



Erasmus+

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Together  
Against  
Poverty



# Erasmus+

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*From 22nd September 2015 for all the week, in Turin, Vol.To is hosting the section called "Short term joint staff mobility". Five days of training and workshops that will involve staff from the partner organisations to examine in deep the theme of the poverty and social exclusion and to develop the tools needed to act during the second year of the TAP project. 17 staff members are expected from abroad, moreover 3 people form Vol.To will be involved during the work.*

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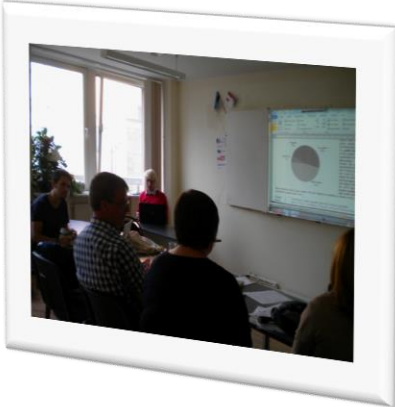
In July during the meeting in Tallinn the project team has agreed the agenda and planned a series of workshops that will be managed by each different partners and that will allow the group to go through the problem of poverty thanks to the results of the first year of the project. In fact, the objective of Mobility is, on one hand, to present the first results: 2 research about poverty and welfare policies and, on the other hand, from these as starting point, to develop the first draft of the methodologies/curricula that are going to be the final result of the second year.

Vol.To expected to involve the Voluntary Organisation, inviting them to attend the one morning meeting and, if they wish, to present their projects. There will be special sessions of Life Management, realized by Leido, and "filed visits" to the institutions that deal with poverty and social exclusion in Turin.



## 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTNERS' MEETING OF ERASMUS+: TAP-TOGETHER AGAINST POVERTY

*Meeting was organized in Estonia on 20th / 21st July, 2015.*



It started with the city tour led by host partner organization MITRA. Then partners started the actual work with reviewing O1 (analysis of poverty and social exclusion) and O2 (analysis of social security models). O1 – the publication is translated to English, small corrections are needed, and the publication is ready for evaluation by external experts. After gathering feedback, CEES will make necessary changes and the publication will be ready for translation to national languages and for printing.

O2, which had been sent to the partners prior to the Tallinn meeting, was then discussed. As the majority of the partners disagreed with both the structure and the overall quality of the product, and questioned the connection between the methodology (esp. hypotheses) and the data collection & processing, having concluded that the methodology was too ambitious. The discussions were geared towards reviewing the methodology in terms of what was or may have been actually the joint understanding of the goals of the research, the procedure for data collection and processing. The structure should begin with introduction and methodology. Partners decided to focus the research on the questions, which could be sensibly answered using the data that was collected via the questionnaire.



Then CWEP presented the Repository. Partners discussed the structure of the product. Partners also made initial planning of workshops O3 and O4 and agreed that the training methodologies (i.e. curricula) should take into account the results of the research – keeping in mind the recommendations included in the O1 and O2 publications.

Dissemination discussion was about project leaflet, poster and the next newsletter. Partners decided to place information about “Effects of Dissemination” under “Impact of the activity” in AdminProject.

Partners discussed interim report, which covered the period 01.09.2014 – 31.07.2015 and LTTA workshop in Torino, which should serve to exchange knowledge and prepare methodology of the workshops in all partners’ countries. Partners agreed that each

organisation will carry out a session on a specific subject

during LTTA workshop.

CILSDGC prepared an online questionnaire evaluating the meeting in Tallinn. CWEP will prepare questionnaire to evaluate the project internally by project partners.

It was confirmed that the next TAP project partners meeting will be held on 18th – 19th of February 2016 in Madrid.

## ESTONIA: TRAININGS TOGETHER WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CHANGES OF POLICY ON THE STATE LEVEL

10 representatives of social aid and assistance institutions were interviewed in Estonia within the framework of "TAP - Together against poverty" project. Here are some thoughts of two respondents.

**Tatjana Moroz:** "Our vocational School of Economics provides training courses for unemployed people few years. It is a project and it is implemented with Department of unemployment. Their officers sent us participants who are interested to start own business as entrepreneurs.



Me and my colleagues teach unemployed people how to write business plans and how to apply for financial support to EAS (Estonian Department for Development). Unfortunately, very few got financial support for their ideas. But our trainings help unemployed to be more self-confident, they learn where and how they can apply for financial support for their future business. We empower people, try to show that they are not alone with their problems.

We started to work with groups, now we organise also personal consultations. Unfortunately, we don't have enough financial support from the state. Not all unemployed who want to come to our school can come. Department of unemployment has not enough money for all of them. Only registered unemployed can participate in trainings and they are selected by Department officers.

There are many schools and companies in Estonia which provide training courses for unemployed registered in the Department of unemployment.

There are jobs for people with existing competences, not enough jobs in Estonia for them, so people go abroad where have jobs and better salaries. At the same time, there are jobs in Estonia but no people with competences. It is a gap between education, competences and labour market.

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*The main barrier to tackling poverty and social exclusion are limited financial resources for unemployed who want to start own business. In my opinion the most effective services provided for the poor and socially excluded people and people at risk are trainings together with financial support. They don't work separately.*

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**Margarita Tsernogorova:** “I am member of Tallinn City Council and I met with many poor people and try to help them in different ways using possible resources. I don't report about that. I also support poor as private person: I paid food for 60 families, for example. City Council has not enough resources to deal with poverty.

There are many different services but they do not solve problem of poverty. I know that some individuals and companies help people in needs. There are few Food Banks in Estonia. As one of example of ‘Good Practice’ in terms of working with the poor and socially excluded people and people at risk I can mention Radiola company which donated to city budget 10 000 EUR for food for poor children.

The most effective services provided for the poor and socially excluded people are creation of new jobs and financial support. Personally I made few proposals during the City Council meetings to find money in the city budget to solve social problems. But we need changes on the state level. We need new policy. Only new government and new tax system can change the situation.“



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## WHAT DO POLICY-MAKERS PERCEIVE TO BE THE TOP CAUSES OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION AMID THE EU'S EFFORTS TO FIGHT THESE SOCIAL PHENOMENA?

To learn about *how policy-makers perceive the causes of poverty* in Romania, within our TAP project, we asked 10 people (including two head officers of a Social Protection Direction in a large city, a regional representative of a central government office, an expert for developing European Social Funds projects working for a local public administration office, a counsellor, a social protection policy evaluator, four social workers) which *economic* factors, and which *social* factors, respectively they thought were the most likely causes of poverty and social exclusion. On average, our respondents ranked *seven economic* factors we suggested from 1 (most likely) to 7 (least likely) as follows: 1 - unemployment of a household member; 2 - source of earned income (from farming, pension, other social benefits); 3 - low effectiveness of labour market institutions; 4 - household debt; 5 - employment based on civil law contracts or part-time employment; 6 - low rate of growth or decline in the level of GDP; 7 - interest rate policy of central bank.

As for the *social* factors responsible for the poverty and social exclusion, out of the seven options we provided, our respondents thought that (1) the low level of education was the most likely cause, followed by (2) a difficult family situation – e.g. many children or single parenthood. The factors ranked in the middle were (3) lack of practical skills and qualifications, (4-5) disability and living in small urban or rural areas. (6) A sense of helplessness and lack of entrepreneurship together with (7) alienation and lack of desire to use the help of relevant institutions were thought to be the least likely social causes.

The European Union aims to support 20 million people to get out of poverty and social exclusion (see the Europe 2020 strategy). Of this, Romania's target is to reduce the number of people in poverty and social exclusion by 580,000. This figure is quite likely connected to increasing the employment rate to 70% (in 2014, this figure was at 65.7%).

(<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>)



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Therefore, unemployment on the one hand, and the low level of education, on the other hand, are perceived as the top causes of poverty and social exclusion.

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Employment, however, does not necessarily mean a way out of poverty: the Research Service of the European Parliament has found that in-work poverty affected 9.1% of the working age EU population in 2012 (<http://epthinktank.eu/2014/08/13/in-work-poverty-in-the-eu/>). Nonetheless, unemployment and low levels of education have been found to be connected especially in large urban

areas: where unemployment is high, lower levels of education than sought for on the labour market seem to provide an answer as to why (see, for example, the findings of a study conducted in 2012 by J. Rothwell for the Brookings Institution).

The policy-makers we interviewed also pointed out other factors which may lead to poverty and social exclusion, such as personal choices (e.g. early pregnancy, refusal to accept a job that pays modestly), discrimination, lack of willpower and motivation especially among the youth to seek employment, long-term reliance on social aid, mortgage, difficulties in the marriage, children left behind by their parents who go abroad in search of work, old age, etc.



## SUMMARIZING OF RESEARCH RESULTS - POVERTY – SPAIN

Within the framework of the project: "TAP - Together against poverty", in days from November 1, 2014, to March 31, 2015, 10 representatives of social aid and assistance institutions were interviewed.

CECE had collaborate closely with one of their foundation belong to one of their schools network "Senara Foundation" who

recruited the participant for the interview.

Senara Foundation is a non-profit organization that was set up in 1997 with the aim of supporting the rehabilitation works of Senara, a school in Moratalaz (Madrid, Spain). The Foundation is focused on the search of employment for people with few resources and especially for those who are at risk of social exclusion or who are disabled. For these purposes they contact social organizations and companies that demand their services achieving then their work-integration in society. They work with more than 50 social entities and 350 companies; they have been benefited from our agreements and have successfully fulfilled their expectations of covering the vacancies.



The study was to diagnose the social security model "Research methodology on the phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion". The examined institutions were associations and aid institutions. Most of the participant works as: Social Institution and NGO. Their role in this Institution are: Service Worker, Coordinator of Poverty and Social Exclusion Projects, the characteristics of the service users in terms of poverty and social exclusion are: Jobless households and Immigrants. Followed by elderly and single parenthood, women are also users of this service with 25%.



Through the research those are some conclusion:

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*The main barrier to tacking poverty and social exclusion is the lack of financial means, the economic support, waiting lists and the bureaucracy. In the other hand the greatest strengths: auto-increase financial resources, integrate more families in society and prevent poverty especially within families.*

*Regarding the entrepreneur the main barriers for the poor and socially excluded people and people at risk thereof to start their own business is the lack of adequate funds and too high non-wage labour costs.*

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Only the 25% of them knew some solutions that are applied abroad in the fight against poverty and social exclusion: Spain is not really active in the International fields, most of their activities take place at a national level, and in local communities.



## TAP BRAINSTORM MEETING WITH DUTCH EXPERTS

On July 1, 2015 the Dutch TAP project team met with four university professors and a representative of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). In a vivid brainstorm meeting the project was discussed and commented by the experts.

**Klaas Molenaar** of The Hague University of Applied Science (THUAS) runs the professorship Financial Inclusion & New Entrepreneurship. He argues that behavioural aspects are important success factors in new entrepreneurship. Furthermore some financial aid like micro credits points out to be very supportive. We can learn from such projects in other countries. Good international training material on entrepreneurship can be found on sites of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Professor **Nadja Jungmann** from Utrecht UAS is specialised in debt restructuring. She stretches that people's behaviour changes in situations of scarcity, be it financially, shortage of work or otherwise. Those situations lead to changes in the 'executive functions' of people, control functions in the brain. People become experts in short term solutions for their problems, but they lose a more and longer term view on structural ways to get out of the problematic situation they face. Reintegration projects need to take into account these phenomena to be successful.

**Louis Polstra** runs the professorship Labour Participation at Hanze UAS in Groningen. He developed a professional standard for social workers in municipalities who deal with poverty, social exclusion or joblessness of clients. Professor Polstra emphasises the need of multilevel approaches for a successful combat of poverty.

Professor **Leni Beukema**, also from Hanze UAS, runs the professorship Sustainable HRM and she is involved in the development of alternative systems of social security in The Netherlands. She points at literacy weakness as a point of concern in combating poverty.

The representative of EAPN, **Jo Bothmer**, shows a product that has been developed in a cooperative project between clients and professional social workers. In his view such cooperation can be very productive and helpful.

All experts agreed with the potential importance of the TAP-project but criticised some aspects of the research methodology such as the choice of the target groups and the number of respondents. These points will be used as input for the TAP-meeting in Italy in September.

The brainstorm meeting thus proved to be a valuable addition for the Dutch contribution in the TAP-project.



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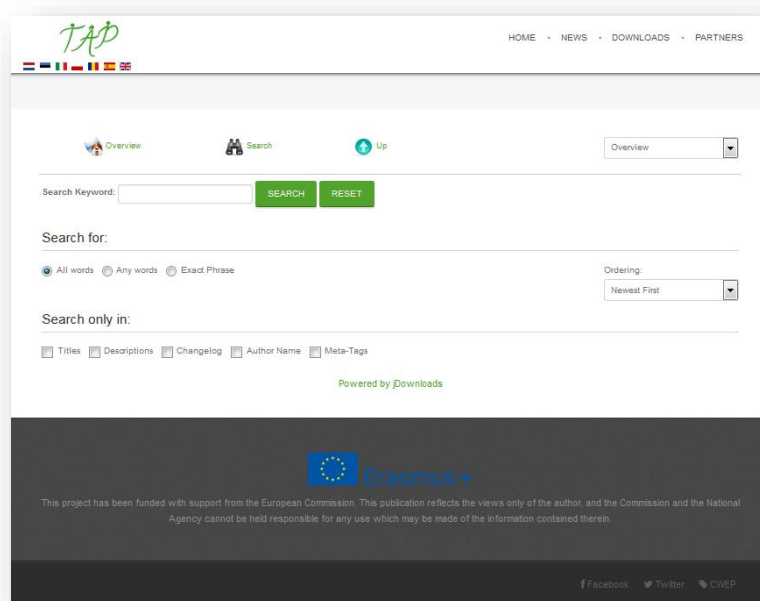
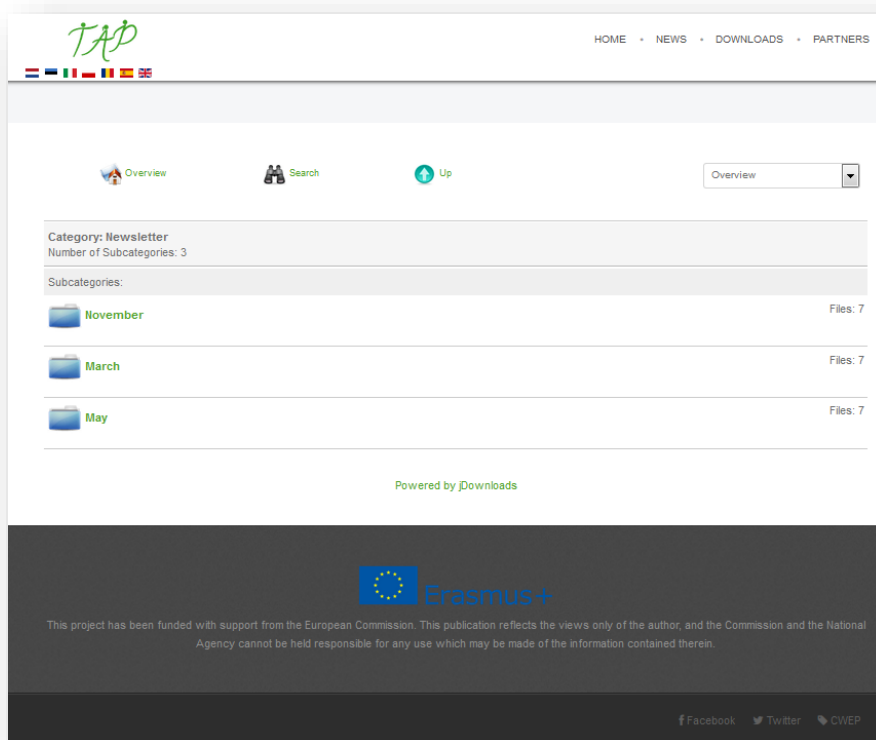
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Repository is a data storage location which can be shared with other users in a network. Repository was created mainly for fast and easy content management and for sharing resources.

In our *repository/ download section*, one can find all newsletters and final results of research carried out during the project.



The *repository/ download section* of the TAP project website is equipped with a search engine which allows fast retrieval of files. The files are organized by categories and subcategories for easy identification. If you want to access the files in the repository, you should download the selected file. Before download, the user can view information about the size of the file and the download count (i.e. how many times the files has been downloaded). You can access the content in the repository for free without having to create an account.

We invite you to visit our website at <http://tap-project.eu/>.