

Tomorrow Starts Today

Name of the organisation

Donum Animus

Website of the organisation

<http://otlas-org.salto-youth.net/5849>

Location of the organisation

Senču prospekts 21, Garkalnes pagasts, Ropažu novads, LV-2164, LV- 2164 Ropazu novads, Latvia

E-mail address of the organisation

donum.animus@protonmail.com

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Inclusion
- Mental health and well-being of young people
- Youth work in rural areas
- Cross-sectore cooperation

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

Children and youth from the most vulnerable backgrounds in deprived communities and especially those of them with mental and physical disabilities face severe social, economic, and civic disparities as compared with their counterparts. Children and youth with mental and physical limitations in rural areas have the right to participate fully and effectively in decisions that affect their lives. Meanwhile, they are one of the most excluded ones in society, and even under normal circumstances, they are less likely to access education, are at risk of poverty, experience intersectional and multiple discrimination as a result of their gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, origin, location and legal status, among other factors. Taking into account specific needs and limitations of the target group, “Tomorrow Starts Today” activities are designed nurturing life skills and psychosocial competences to enhance personal and professional development and build self confidence so individuals can act as multipliers of the gained knowledge towards community development and diversity.

Good practice description

Nurturing life skills and psychosocial competences among the most vulnerable help to build resilience, turn uncertainty into an opportunity for growth, and embrace the unknown with confidence. Tailor made practical activities enhance creativity, self initiative, effective communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, team work, self awareness, digital competences, financial literacy etc. as well raising awareness on importance of participation at the local level among children and young people facing severe social, economic, and civic disparities as compared with their peers. The main goal of initiative is to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, disability, and various sensitive topics to promote social inclusion and diversity. Initiative "Tomorrow Starts Today" for more than a decade has been implemented by volunteers of the non governmental organization "Donum Animus" in deprived region in Latvia with EU/ NATO external border with Russia and Belarus and is the only this type of civil society initiative promoting social inclusion and empowerment of the most vulnerable children and youth in rural communities in the Post Soviet region and North Europe. Initiative is a unique example of cross sector collaboration at local, national and international level. Activities enhance personal and professional development, critical thinking, active citizenship, financial literacy, digital competences, intercultural awareness, creativity, self awareness, increase awareness on importance of participation at the local level among children and young people facing severe social, economic, and civic disparities as compared with their peers. Non Governmental organization "Donum Animus" is the only non governmental entity from Latvia with Special Consultative Status of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. "Donum Animus" is member of DYPALL Network (Developing Youth Participation at Local Level) European platform, and promotes empowerment and participation of the most vulnerable groups in decision making at the local level.

Good practice result & concrete effects

Children and youth from the most vulnerable backgrounds in deprived communities and especially those with mental and physical limitations are among the most marginalized facing severe social, economic, and civic disparities as compared with their peers. Majority of them have negative life experiences and suffer from discrimination, poverty, social exclusion and bullying, therefore initiative "Tomorrow Starts Today" is a safe space, designed in creative way to enhance personal and professional development building self confidence so individuals can act as multipliers of the gained knowledge towards community development and better understanding and acceptance of diversity. It is the very first civil society initiative implemented in Latvia to receive recognition for its unique and inclusive approach at the European Union level and promoting cross sectoral cooperation. Initiative has received recognition from education and health care professionals for its exceptional and inclusive approach and cross sector collaboration, and for significant input promoting voluntary work in Latvia.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice