



SOLIDARITY PROJECTS AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: YOUR FIRST STEPS TO BEING PART OF THE CHANGE

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Empower Youth organizations through
Social Entrepreneurship in Tourism

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Solidarity Projects and Social Entrepreneurship: your first steps to being part of the change

Suppose you are keen to become a social entrepreneur in the tourism sector, working with young people with and without disabilities. In that case, Solidarity Projects are the perfect learning opportunity to acquire the skills needed to become a successful social entrepreneur through a training programme based on non-formal education techniques, by doing and learning while helping the community. Moreover, these projects are free of charge thanks to funding provided through the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), a European Union initiative that promotes solidarity and volunteering among young Europeans.



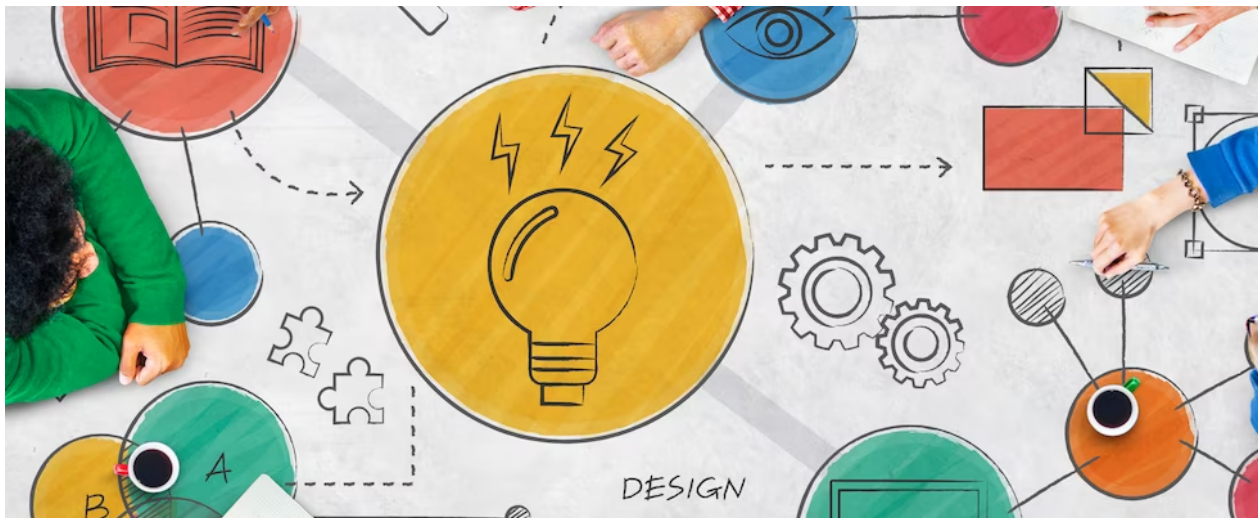
Tourism is a key industry in Europe, generating employment and contributing to economic growth. However, it also presents challenges in terms of sustainability, inclusion and community development. This is where social entrepreneurship can come into play.

In general terms, **social entrepreneurship** refers to the creation of businesses or projects that have a positive social or environmental impact. They are initiatives that seek to address social challenges and contribute to sustainable development while generating income to ensure their long-term sustainability. **Solidarity Projects**, meanwhile, are one of the key pillars of the ESC, offering young people the opportunity to contribute to society and make a difference in communities across Europe.

The combination of the Solidarity Projects (ESC) with social entrepreneurship favours the creation of a perfect scenario for the emergence of innovative ideas, playing a crucial role in the transformation of lives and the construction of a sustainable future, as well as being the space where the training process for young people involved in the necessary skills to become a successful entrepreneur will be developed.

The reason is that these solidarity projects not only allow young people **to learn** about social entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism but also allow them to **acquire** valuable skills and experiences that are essential in the business world and can be applied in future social ventures. A Solidarity Project is a **non-profit solidarity activity initiated, developed and implemented** by the young people themselves (between 18 and 30 years old) for a period of between two and twelve months. It offers a group of at least five young people the opportunity to show their solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring about positive change in their local community. The project must have a clearly identified theme that the group of young people wish to explore together and which must be translated into the concrete day-to-day

activities of the project and involve all members of the group. For these actions, the ESC also offers funding.



This is why the Solidarity Projects (ESC) perfectly complement social entrepreneurship, as it allows young people to practice in a safe and controlled environment how to turn their ideas into sustainable and scalable projects. Many young ESC participants, after their experience in the Solidarity Projects, decide to undertake social initiatives to address specific problems in their communities. These initiatives can range from the creation of social enterprises that employ people at risk of exclusion, to the implementation of innovative solutions to address environmental challenges.

For example, in the project "Activitati sportive de incluziune¹" (Romania) a group of young people identified that there was a problem of a lack of adapted spaces where people with disabilities could practice sport in a safe and integrated way in the community. Thus, people with disabilities participated in sports, tourism and recreational activities to a much lesser extent than people without disabilities. Aware that they could not change their country all at once, they decided to impact their community by developing a Solidarity Project to create an inclusive space where young people with disabilities can practice sports in the same way as non-disabled people.

Another example is the "Savsat Mountain Bike Solidarity²" project (Türkiye) organised to create human capital for the use of culture and tourism by bicycle as a tool for sustainable development at the local level, to support social and sports participation and to foster socio-cultural dialogue between the local population, administration and youth, creating European added value and enabling the region to achieve the deserved socio-economic welfare.

¹ <https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects/details/2022-1-RO01-ESC30-SOL-000070412>

² <https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects/details/2020-2-TR01-ESC31-095721>

In this way, young people living in Şavşat participate in an entrepreneurial process in which they will develop a product and a service beneficial to themselves and to society.



In short, the European Solidarity Corps plays a key role in promoting social entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. Through Solidarity Projects, young people have the opportunity to participate in initiatives that promote sustainable and community-based tourism, while gaining valuable skills and experience in social entrepreneurship. In addition, the ESC also encourages the exchange of ideas and financial support for young social entrepreneurs. This combination of factors drives the development of sustainable and socially responsible businesses in the tourism sector, thus contributing to economic growth and social well-being in Europe.

More resources:

- ★ Solidarity Projects database, to help you find your inspiration and learn from others: <https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/projects/>
- ★ European Solidarity Corps guidelines and regulations: https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/organisations/reference-documents-resources_en
- ★ Video: Project idea, team and coaching support in Solidarity Projects (Erasmus+ Youth Academy): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNd5L2ua7po>
- ★ Video: How to plan activities and budget in Solidarity Projects? (Erasmus+ Youth Academy): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf_zvXuNqOI
- ★ Video: What is a Solidarity Project? (Erasmus+ Youth Academy): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVbm8f3rFnE>
- ★ Video: Non-formal learning in a nutshell (SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xm7PioKwkGo>
- ★ Video: How to use the Youthpass for self-assessment of competencies (SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7m7m55_EQ54
- ★ Video: What can you learn from that? - The learning value of European youth projects (SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EO0AXA0ILTk>
- ★ Video: About projects and entrepreneurship (Terje Henk): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mp4LgMw08I>

Sources:

- ★ European Solidarity Corps Guide 2023 (content and logos).
- ★ Article images: this article has been designed using images from Freepik.