



## **SMART PRACTICE -EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Department of Management of the Faculty of Economics and Management, the Department of Education of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Centre of Entrepreneurship Practices at Vytautas Magnus university have started to implement the ERASMUS+ strategic partnership project “Smart Practice -Empowering Entrepreneurial Skills in Higher Education“, No. 2015-1-LT01-KA203-013477. Project is being implemented by six partners from four European countries: Lithuania, Finland, Italy and Cyprus. The project coordinator – Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Lithuania; the project partners: Vytautas Magnus university, Lithuania; The European University Cyprus, Cyprus; consulting and training organization Eurosuccess Consulting, Cyprus; Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Finland, and the University of Verona, Italy.

The overall project goal is to increase higher education quality so that HE graduates acquired the right skills for employability and were more prepared for labour market. The project seeks to strengthen cooperation between universities and enterprises and other social partners, encouraging young people (students) develop transversal skills (decision-making, problem-solving, creativity and other) shaping them into entrepreneurial individuals. The project is based on innovative approaches to internships. One of these approaches refers to application of work-integrated learning (WIL) . WIL application in HE is related to such theory and practice integrating activities as problem-based, experiential, inquiry learning, team-work, practice scenarios, active learning methods, service-learning, cooperative learning, etc. In most cases the aim of these methods is to provide opportunities for learner to develop competences and skills essential in professional career context, i.e. both for employability and professional career development.

While achieving the project goal the following activities will be implemented and intellectual outcomes will be produced:

- Analysis of good practices on innovative approaches to internship in HE in partner as well as other countries. The main objective of the analysis is to have the state of the art report based on case studies on the best world practices which can be integrated and applied in the project partner institutions.
- The methodology of smart practice. The methodology will serve as guidelines for developing and integrating innovative approaches to internship in HEIs. The developed methodology will be piloted in each partner country with at least 3 multidisciplinary students' teams.
- The handbook on smart practice results. It will be the toolkit including the products, developed during the smart practice activities: research reports, problem-solving



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SMART  
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strategies, marketing plans, etc., as well as the feedback of the methodology

The main project target group is university students. Project through the real problem-solving scenarios and activities is targeted to develop university students' practical skills and know-how, strengthen their entrepreneurial mindsets and competences which are relevant for successful functioning in the labour market. The second target group of the project is university academic staff and business representatives. Innovative approach to internship that will be elaborated and piloted during the project will not only strengthen university and business cooperation links, but also contribute to developing educators' professional profile (in relation to entrepreneurship skills), tutoring and mentoring skills of university academic staff as well as those of business representatives. At least 36 students, 16 tutors (HEIs educators) and 12 mentors (representatives from business enterprises) will directly participate and benefit from project activities. More than 200 project target group members will participate in multiplier events.

In a broader sense the project will positively contribute to the solution of a number of interrelated issues that are high on the political agenda in EU and member countries: quality and modernization of higher education, youth unemployment, developing entrepreneurial skills, fostering HE and business cooperation. The methodology of smart practice will promote changes and innovations in implementing internships and students' practical skills development, contribute to better HE quality and conformity of HE to labour market needs. The methodology applied in the project will promote science and business synergy and create appropriate conditions for interaction of scientists, students and business entities.

implementation team members (students, university and business representatives).