

Reflection on Training Course “Self-Care Strategies for Sustainable Youth Work”

Period: 11–18 May 2025

Place: Narva, Estonia

Organizer: VitaTiim NGO (Youth NGO)

In May 2025, two representatives from Center for innovation and development INOS, took part in the international training course “*Self-Care Strategies for Sustainable Youth Work*” held in Narva, Estonia. This event brought together 19 youth workers from across Europe to explore and develop practical approaches for integrating self-care into youth work environments. The training responded to a growing need within the sector, acknowledging that youth workers, while deeply committed to their mission, are often exposed to stress, emotional fatigue, and burnout.



The main objective of the training was to equip participants with concrete self-care strategies that support long-term well-being and sustainability in youth work. The program emphasized the importance of self-awareness, emotional resilience, boundary setting, and creating healthy routines. It also aimed to inspire youth workers to reflect on their roles, share best practices, and develop individual and organizational strategies to maintain a balance between their professional responsibilities and personal needs.

Throughout the week, the training adopted an experiential and participatory approach. The agenda was structured around five main dimensions of self-care: mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual. These themes were explored through a mix of workshops, discussions, mindfulness practices, and creative exercises. Sessions included yoga, breathwork, guided meditations, art therapy, group reflection, and peer exchange activities.



Participants were encouraged to identify their own stressors, explore tools for emotional regulation and stress management, and co-create strategies that could be applied within their organizations or communities. A significant part of the training was dedicated to helping participants develop a personalized self-care action plan, something that could be realistically integrated into their everyday lives.



In addition to personal growth, the training provided a space for collaboration and intercultural exchange. Youth workers from different countries and backgrounds contributed diverse perspectives, creating a supportive learning community and fostering future partnerships. One of the key outcomes was the realization that investing in the well-being of youth workers is not just a personal necessity, but a professional responsibility.

As a result of our participation, INOS gained valuable tools and techniques that will be implement in our work and. The training reaffirmed the importance of sustainability, not only in our projects and communities but also within ourselves. It highlighted that effective and impactful youth work begins with a healthy and balanced practitioner.





This experience inspired us to initiate conversations about self-care in our own organization and explore ways to incorporate these practices into our work culture. We plan to organize local follow-up sessions to disseminate the knowledge and insights that we gained.

The training in Narva was not only professionally enriching but personally transformative. It offered a rare opportunity to pause, reflect, and re-center, reminding us all that self-care is not a luxury, but a foundation for sustainable youth engagement.

An important aspect of the training was its rich intercultural dimension. We had the valuable opportunity to learn about Estonia, its traditions, lifestyle, and cultural heritage through organized cultural activities and informal exchanges. This cultural immersion added depth to the overall experience and fostered a greater appreciation for the host country.

Equally enriching was the interaction with fellow participants from various European countries, each bringing unique perspectives, experiences, and customs. This diverse environment not only enhanced mutual understanding but also created space for meaningful networking. Throughout the training, numerous ideas for future collaboration emerged, laying the groundwork for potential cross-border projects and long-term partnerships in the field of youth work and well-being.

