



PRESS RELEASE

European Solidarity Corps ‘Move for Well-being’

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The *Institut za poticanje mladih* (Institute for Youth Power – IYP) proudly announces the launch of "**Move for Well-being**", a 10-month solidarity project funded by the **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)** that aims to promote mental health, reduce stigma, and empower communities across Croatia.

Rooted in the urgent need to address the growing mental health crisis—especially among youth—the project was born out of personal experience, research, and a desire for systemic change following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recent studies in Croatia show that **1 in 4 young people aged 16–24** have reported thoughts of self-harm, while **attempts at suicide have increased by 60%** in some age groups between 2021 and 2022. University students are reporting high levels of depression and anxiety, highlighting both the fragility of the mental health infrastructure and the urgent need for meaningful, accessible solutions.

The project was inspired by the research of **Vicko Ćudina**, a 25-year-old psychologist whose master's thesis explored the psychological impacts of the pandemic on Croatian youth. Ćudina, along with four other young changemakers from IYP, has designed a project that not only tackles mental health challenges but also fosters sustainable and community-driven solutions.

"Move for Well-being" is structured around a **two-phase approach**:

Awareness Phase (Months 1–2):

Focused on digital outreach and community visibility, this phase includes:

- Informative posts, infographics, testimonials, and tips on Instagram and Facebook
- A video podcast series, "*Chatting With*", featuring public figures sharing personal experiences with mental health
- Street interactions, live discussions, and outreach to digitally-excluded groups
- The development of a **digital self-assessment platform** inspired by the "violentmeter" model

Implementation Phase (Months 3–8):

Dedicated to direct community involvement:

- Workshops in **5–10 companies** targeting workers in high-stress environments such as retail, factories, and tourism
- School activities focused on self-awareness, stress resilience, and mindfulness for students aged 13–18 across Rijeka, Fužine, Delnice, Karlovac, and Zagreb
- **Thematic weekends** covering yoga, meditation, nutrition, and sports
- A digital mental health platform rollout, combined with live events and impact tracking through surveys and focus groups

The project aims to reach:

- **100–200 workers** through company workshops
- **60 students** directly in schools and **1,000–10,000** young people via social media
- **5,000–20,000 community members** through online campaigns and public events

Through these activities, "Move for Well-being" seeks to:

- Normalize conversations about mental health
- Reduce stigma around psychological illness
- Empower youth and workers with real, usable tools for well-being
- Encourage sustainable lifestyle choices that benefit both people and the planet

The initiative does not end with its final event. Partnerships with the **City Council of Rijeka**, regional schools, and local businesses are designed to ensure sustainability beyond the project's formal conclusion. A final public forum will be organized in partnership with the **University of Rijeka**, where project results will be shared, and young people will be invited to join future initiatives as changemakers in their own communities.

The project's success will be evaluated using pre- and post-intervention assessments, feedback from workshops, focus groups, and data collected through the new digital platform.

“Move for Well-being” is more than just a mental health project; it’s a **movement** created by and for **young people** who believe in the power of solidarity, compassion, and proactive change. It also emphasizes inclusion, diversity, and environmental sustainability—core values of the **European Solidarity Corps**.

“Mental health is not a luxury—it’s a right. With this project, we want to prove that even small communities can start meaningful conversations and make a long-lasting impact,” says Mateo Papić, project coordinator and president of Institut za poticanje mladih.

For more information, visit www.iyp-croatia.com or follow **Institut za poticanje mladih** on social media.

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