

NEW ENTREPRENEUR SUCCESS STORY: TITLE

NEW ENTREPRENEUR PICTURE



NEW ENTREPRENEUR

Name: Catherine Restarick UK
Company name: Hello Sheffield
Website
Business sector Tourism
Local contact point (IO)
"Quote": (to be filled by IO)

HOST ENTREPRENEUR PICTURE



HOST ENTREPRENEUR

Athina Mourtiadou Greece
Host Organisation: Mediaterranea
Website: <https://mediaterranea.gr/>
Business sector NGO
Local contact point (IO)
"Quote": (to be filled by IO)

Exchange period: from 11/11/19 to 31/03/20

Please, answer these questions about your experience with the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme.

Could you tell us about yourself and your business plan?

For many years I had been witnessing international students, studying at the universities in Sheffield, not be as involved in cultural activities as UK students. They were not accessing the whole city and isolating themselves to the city centre and student accommodation. I felt they were missing out on what was the essence of Sheffield and the surrounding areas and what it has to offer. My idea is run tours to international students, incorporating things that give Sheffield its Cultural identity such as the The Peak District, it's many breweries and also

parks and green spaces. I was interested in what motivates international students and what holds them back from exploring further. My plan is to deliver tours at a package rate focusing on different cultural areas. I required more research into this area as a whole and also more experience working with international students and organisations.

How was your professional situation before taking part on the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme?

I had been made redundant. I was working full time in education until this point. I was wishing to pursue my business idea as a new venture. My background is in employability skills and finding students meaningful work experience.

Why did you decide to participate on this programme?

I had recently been made redundant and had been working on a business idea for some months. I was very interested in the motives of international students and their desire to study in another country and what they would want to gain from a new cultural experience. I also didn't have any idea how to apply for funding for my business and wanted to explore working with international organisations.

What activities did you undertake during your stay in (Greece)?

Met with NGO's in Thessaloniki to learn about their funding streams, management structure, online presence.

Took part in daily activities of HO

Carried out focus groups with students at the university 'City College'.

Researched into international student experience in another country

Participated in funding applications to support looking into alternative funding streams for Hello Sheffield

Delivered employability workshops and supported delivery of other events

Met with volunteers and staff from various NGO's across the city

Supported HO blog – proof reading

Support with CV writing

What skills/knowledge have you gained thanks to this programme?

It gave me a better understanding of a students need for cultural participation

It helped me understand the fundamentals of writing a funding application and how to apply for alternative funding

Strengthened by writing style/technique for international audiences ie blogs and website

Improved how I work with people from different backgrounds and cultures, understanding cultural differences

Improved delivery skills by delivering workshops and carrying out focus groups to participants of varying ages and interest in what I was doing.

By carrying out delivery to people of a different nationality it gave me the opportunity to see what it would be like to deliver information to international students which is the core purpose of my business Hello Sheffield.

Improved my time management and organisational skills

Learnt more about Greek culture and language

How have you contributed/benefited the host entrepreneur?

Trained organisation members in employability skills, ie CV writing etc

Helped with funding applications after a better understanding, including proof reading

Supported to find and access opportunities for research in relation to international learning

Created links and strengthened relationship for further projects

Proofread documents to ensure that English is correct and coherent

What are the main benefits of taking part on this programme as a new entrepreneur?

You learn not only new skills about being an entrepreneur but also how things are different in other countries. Some practices are different to the UK and I learnt that the Greeks have a more relaxed approach to business, which has its pros and cons!

You also get to meet lots of new people and experience a new culture. It helps you expand your views and look at things from a new perspective.

How did this exchange help you improve your business plan? What is your plan for the future?

It helped me to consider my business plan in light of the research that I had gathered, and whether I needed to make changes in light of this. It made me realise that there are other ways to fund projects and that it is good to work as a team, rather than just as an individual. By working as a team, you have access to more ideas and approaches on how to resolve issues etc.

Due to Covid and the loss of a parent my business idea has not progressed much further. I entered full time employment again as I needed the money to support myself and my husband. I was no longer able to dedicate much time to 'Hello Sheffield'. Now that things have stabilised again, and travel is back 'open' I have started to think about the business recently and wonder how I can incorporate progress with it whilst working full time. I have a friend in the UK who is wishing to support the venture and it is our hope that we can make it

a viable business. There is definitely a need for it in Sheffield and the research and work that I carried out in Thessaloniki supports this.

Would you recommend the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme to others? Why?

Yes, definitely! You are immersed in another culture and able to learn so many new things whilst outside your comfort zone. I made some great friends and had some great experiences that I would have not done if I had not been on the programme.

It's a chance to learn from professionals as well as learn from your own personal experiences whilst in a different environment. I strengthened lots of transferrable skills whilst doing the programme too.



Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs provides European entrepreneurs the chance to share and gain relevant business skills. As a new entrepreneur, you will learn from an experienced entrepreneur and benefit from on-the-job training in a small or medium-sized company in another participating country. As a host entrepreneur, you can benefit from fresh and innovative ideas from a motivated new entrepreneur.

Would you like to participate? You can get in touch with your [local contact point](#).