



Youth Employability Competences

Advisory Youth Board Member



Background

Megan is a member of the advisory youth board organised and facilitated by Ballymun Job Centre who are based in an economically and socially deprived area on the outskirts of Dublin, Ireland. Aged 22, Megan lives locally. She completed a FETAC level 5 course in business administration and is currently looking for work in this area. Megan was doing voluntary work as a receptionist/administrator with Ballymun Job Centre to gain some work experience, however, this had to stop when the pandemic hit. Megan is actively looking for a job as an administrator but is finding it difficult due to her lack of work experience and many businesses still having staff working from home as per national COVID 19 guidelines.

Interview

In Megan's words:

From participating in the advisory group I have learned that I am more capable of social interaction than I previously thought. I was able to get conversations going and take part in them in minutes. The part of the module I liked best was taking part in the opinion sharing process with the other members of the group because not only did I feel included but I also got to hear and consider the others' opinions.

I am motivated to be an active participant by knowing that I am helping to create and improve future YEC Erasmus+ projects but am also motivated by the chance it's given me to develop my soft skills. I see value in the panel in the fact that I am aware of how my own and the group's contributions will be used and that I understand the vitality of getting young people's opinions in a project aimed at improving their lives.

The main barrier for me when I first took part in the panel was the need to become comfortable sharing my opinion with strangers. This was a meaningful challenge to me as I am highly self-conscious. I got over my anxieties by remaining calm and just being myself while making sure to listen to others without seeming too passive and speaking up whenever I felt the need to.

I have become more motivated not just to apply for jobs but also to live life and develop a work-life balance. I am trying to develop myself further in all areas of development, especially the ones I recognised that I need to develop more during the workshops. Even with the pandemic, I still haven't given up looking for jobs. I recently managed to land a three-month administrative position with An Post, which has given me some great experience in office administration. I plan to take this with me to my next office admin job with the PCERS and from there on keep growing.

When I was at An Post my colleagues observed that I was never afraid to ask them for help if I was struggling in my job. I attribute this skill to what I learned in my YEC Erasmus+ sessions as my experiences talking with the other members helped get me used to the idea of stepping outside of my comfort zone.

I hope that by continuing to participate in the group I will further develop the skills we previously touched on and become more confident in work and life. I would also like to base my future development on feedback from recent YEC projects to develop new skills based on what has been observed by our projects.

Conclusions

Being a part of the advisory board has obviously developed both Megan's communication skills and also her confidence around interacting with others. This particularly applies to communicating with people she doesn't know which has already supported her within a work environment, adding to her professionalism within the world of work. She also appears to have grown a sense of her own value, believing that she has something to offer, which in turn has increased her motivation.

