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## **F.R.I.D.A.S. - Fundamental Rights in Daily Actions of Social workers**

### ***First project newsletter***

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

We are excited to introduce **F.R.I.D.A.S.**, a groundbreaking **international project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (KA2 Cooperation partnerships in higher education)** dedicated to enhancing the real-world **application of human rights in social work education and practice**. This initiative brings together 4 European universities and an Italian-based NGO in a collaborative partnership aimed at upholding the EU common values of equality, inclusion, non-discrimination and democratic participation, as well as fostering innovative learning and teaching methods and approaches.

Get ready to dive deeper! In the following sections, we will take you through F.R.I.D.A.S.' inspiring goals and key activities, while also introducing the project's partners that are driving its transformative actions.

### **Background**

Social workers play a vital role in identifying human rights violations and advocating for individuals to have their rights fulfilled. This critical responsibility is emphasised by international organisations such as the UN and the EU. However, across many European countries, there are still **noticeable shortcomings as regards human rights' integration in the education of future social workers**, which may hinder their ability to effectively recognise and respond to violations in

their daily professional practice.

## Purpose and Goals

Through the F.R.I.D.A.S. project, the partnership commits to:

- **Empowering students** to strengthen their competences in **understanding the role of human rights and its impact** on their well-being, learning, and professional activities;
- **Enhancing students' transversal skills**, such as empathy, lateral thinking, teamwork, and critical reflection;
- **Improving students' awareness and ability to detect and tackle human rights violations** and discriminations in their future professional career, and as well as countering biases in their relationship with patients;
- **Fostering professional development** for both academic and administrative staff in human rights competences, thereby cultivating inclusive learning and working environments;
- **Encouraging collaboration** among partners **to exchange best practices** and ensuring the sustainability of project results, specifically human rights-based educational patterns and a community of reference to establish and elevate professional ethical standards.

## Upcoming milestones

Over the next three years (2024-2027), the F.R.I.D.A.S. project will take several actions towards achieving its intended objectives. As a first step, all partner countries (Norway, Albania, Italy, and Spain) will research and compile **exemplary case studies on human rights violations, discrimination, and phobias in social work**, drawing from field experts' input and first-hand experience. Each partner will contribute 10 cases, resulting in a total 40 insightful examples that will lay the groundwork for the educational material that will be produced in the future. These valuable resources will be **available for free download on our soon-to-be-launched website**.

The curated collection of real-life cases will offer social work students more than just academic content - it will challenge their perspective and broaden their understanding of what social work truly stands for. Grounded in the values of human dignity and fundamental freedoms, it will encourage them to think beyond the narrow confines of individual care and consider how **social work can be a powerful agent of change**.

The other project's awaited milestones include:

- A **competence framework on human rights for future social workers** with the purpose of embedding human rights and democratic principles into existing academic curricula of social work education in partner countries through the implementation of cross-disciplinary approached and innovative pedagogies;
- **Teaching modules on human rights and the human rights-based approach** in the training course for students, offering them the opportunity to gain both practical and theoretical knowledge and appreciate how human rights are intrinsic to social work practices;
- The set-up of a **virtual community for students and practitioners** to defend human rights and disseminate internationally a human rights-based approach in social work, ultimately igniting positive change within the wider society and the communities they serve.

## Target Group

The F.R.I.D.A.S. project directly targets **higher education social work students**, from their second year of studies to those preparing for their final dissertation and qualifying as future social workers. They will be introduced to a wealth of resources that will help them incorporate human rights perspectives into their practice.

Nonetheless, the benefits of the project also extend to **practicing social workers**, who will not only play a crucial role in shaping the real-life case studies and the didactic content at large but will also gain new insights that can be applied in their daily work with vulnerable communities and individuals. One of the most valuable aspects for them will be the chance to engage with and share experiences with international peers through a dedicated virtual community of practice.

Beyond these groups, F.R.I.D.A.S.' interventions will have a significant impact on a wider range of indirect beneficiaries. As a result of their proactive participation in the elaboration of a human rights-centred competence framework and a set of teaching modules, **university professors and other academic staff** will adopt non-formal and experiential methods, creating a more inclusive learning environment.

Lastly, by strengthening personnel's capacity to deliver effective and human rights-responsive services through ad hoc training, both **public and private**

**organisations** will significantly improve the living conditions of their **end-users**  
**and** **local** **communities**.

## **The Partnership**

The partnership consists of four tertiary-level higher education institutions and one non profit organisation from Italy, Spain, Albania, and Norway, combining sound expertise in human rights education, interdisciplinary professional intervention in social work and community development.

### Coordinating partner

1. **Università degli Studi Roma Tre**, Department of Education - Italy
  - Andrea Bilotti, Project Coordinator
  - Melissa Tomassini, Project Manager
  - Cecilia De Baggis, Researcher

### Partners

2. **Universidad de Granada**, Department of Social Work and Social Services - Spain
  - Aranzazu Gallego Molinero, Full Professor
3. **Universiteti i Shkodres "Luigj Gurakuqi"**, Department of Psychology and Social Work - Albania
  - Visar Dizdari, Lecturer
4. **Norges Teknisk Naturvitenskapelige Universitet NTNU**, Department of Social Work - Norway
  - Ann Kristin Alseth, Assistant Professor
  - Malin Fævelen, Researcher
5. **RE.DU Rete educare ai diritti umani** - Italy
  - Silvia Volpi, Project Manager & Trainer
  - Stefania Zamparelli, President & Project Assistant
  - Alessandra Viviani, Trainer



The F.R.I.D.A.S. partnership convened for the first time at Roma Tre University on October 28-29, 2024, for the **kick-off meeting**, which marked the official launch of our journey to develop concrete tools that will better equip social work students to protect and advocate for human rights. The meeting was a unique occasion for partners to connect in person, deepen mutual understanding, and establish a common vision and work plan to materialise F.R.I.D.A.S.' objectives. Through interactive team-building sessions, we **set the stage** for cohesive and good working relationships that will drive our next steps forward.

The meeting also served as a platform for initiating critical discussions on the project's thematic areas of intervention: partners began to **shape the direction of our human rights-focused interventions** and conduct a context-bound needs assessment to ensure that our work is rooted in key perspectives of social work and human rights. Additionally, we co-defined our approach for selecting and developing case studies, ensuring that input from every partner was duly taken into account.

Building on the momentum and enthusiasm of the kick-off meeting, we are eager to continue advancing human rights and social justice principles in social work and engaging with relevant stakeholders and professionals.

## Get in Touch

For any inquiries or to contribute to our research with your first-person experience, reach out to us at [fridas@uniroma3.it](mailto:fridas@uniroma3.it)

We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress and outcomes.  
Thank you for your interest and support!

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