



DDP-YD/ETD (2023) 57

Budapest, 9 March 2023

## Training Course on Essentials of Non-Formal Education

for organisers and facilitators of study sessions and of international projects supported by the European Youth Foundation

European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
6-11 February 2023



## Activity Report

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## Executive Summary

The 2023 edition of the training course on Essentials of Non-Formal Education built on the experience of last year and envisaged to ensure a qualitative implementation of non-formal education activities during the upcoming study sessions or EYF-funded projects. The course took place from 6 to 11 of February 2023 and was hosted in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. It was co-organised by the European Youth Foundation and the Education and Training division and brought together 34 participants from 20 countries. The participants were trainers, facilitators or organisers of upcoming study sessions held in the European Youth Centres or international activities/workplans receiving support of the EYF, and in a position to transfer the knowledge gained during the training to the teams carrying out these activities in the next years. They had some previous experience with non-formal education methodology (as trainers, facilitators or participants) and motivation to further develop their competences. The course enabled participants to explore basic non-formal education concepts and processes - facilitation, programme design, evaluation, learning theories - as well as Council of Europe tools and principles, including the Manual for Facilitators and the quality standards in non-formal education. The course was evaluated as generally successful. Most participants reported that they plan to bring new knowledge to their teams when planning upcoming activities. For the Youth Department, the course proved to be a good opportunity to connect with organisations who are planning study sessions and international activities with EYF support.

## Aim and objectives

The aim of the training course was to increase the capacities of youth organisations to carry out international intercultural non-formal educational activities with a multiplying effect for their members.

The objectives defined in order to achieve this aim were the following:

- To create a common understanding of the essential approaches and methodologies in non-formal education as applied in the European Youth Centres and by the European Youth Foundation, and to support the quality of activities and their connection to the mission of the Council of Europe
- To strengthen competences in using non-formal education with young people in international projects, including the key understanding, skills and attitudes required for running intercultural educational activities
- To get familiar with the relevant tools and manuals produced by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and reflect on their practical use in upcoming activities
- To reflect on and plan how to ensure quality non-formal education in future youth activities, including how to ensure that they have a multiplying effect
- To share inspiring practices on implementation of study sessions and EYF supported international activities and annual work plans

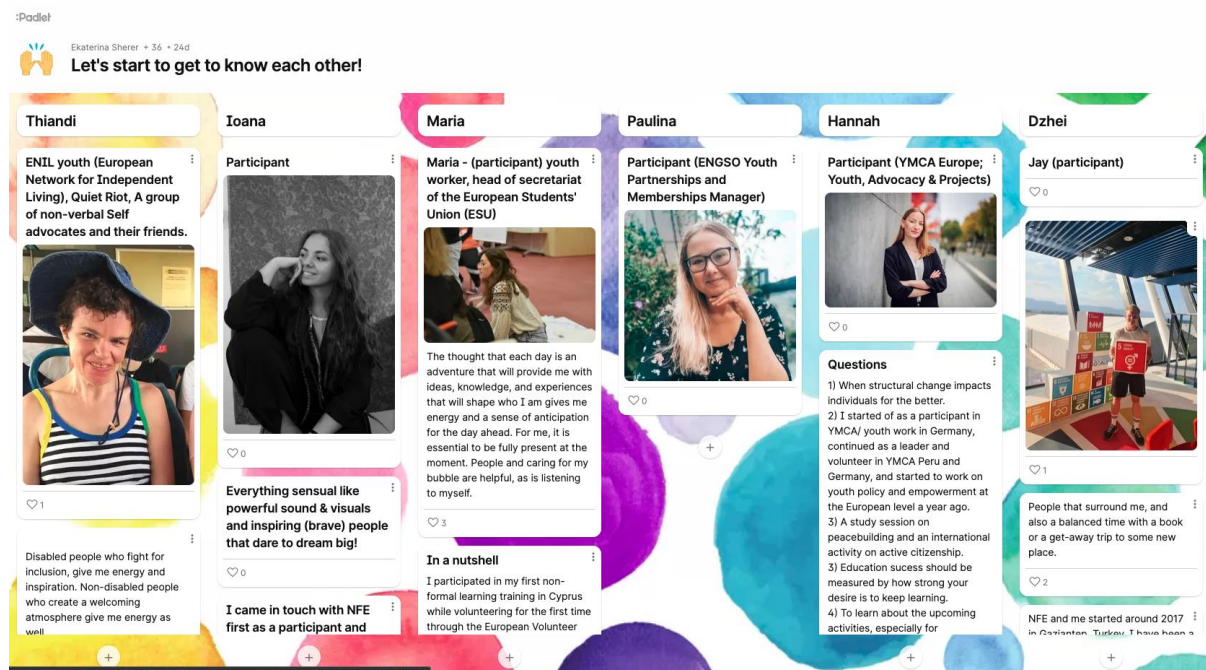
## Diversity of the group of participants

The group of selected participants was very diverse; while some of them represented international organisations that were organising their study sessions in one of the Council of Europe's Youth Centres, others were nominated by youth organisations that were planning or expecting to implement EYF-funded activities (international activities or workplans). Similarly,

some participants had been working with non-formal education for more than 5 years, however, the majority had only recently started being involved in non-formal learning activities. The roles of participants in their own organisations varied from volunteers that were involved punctually in projects to experienced trainers and facilitators or staff members.

## Training Storyline - the training's flow in action

In order to prepare for the learning journey of this training course, participants were invited to join the Council of Europe's online learning platform. There, a series of tools enabled them to get to know each other virtually as well as to (re)discover and/or test their knowledge about study sessions and the European Youth Foundation.



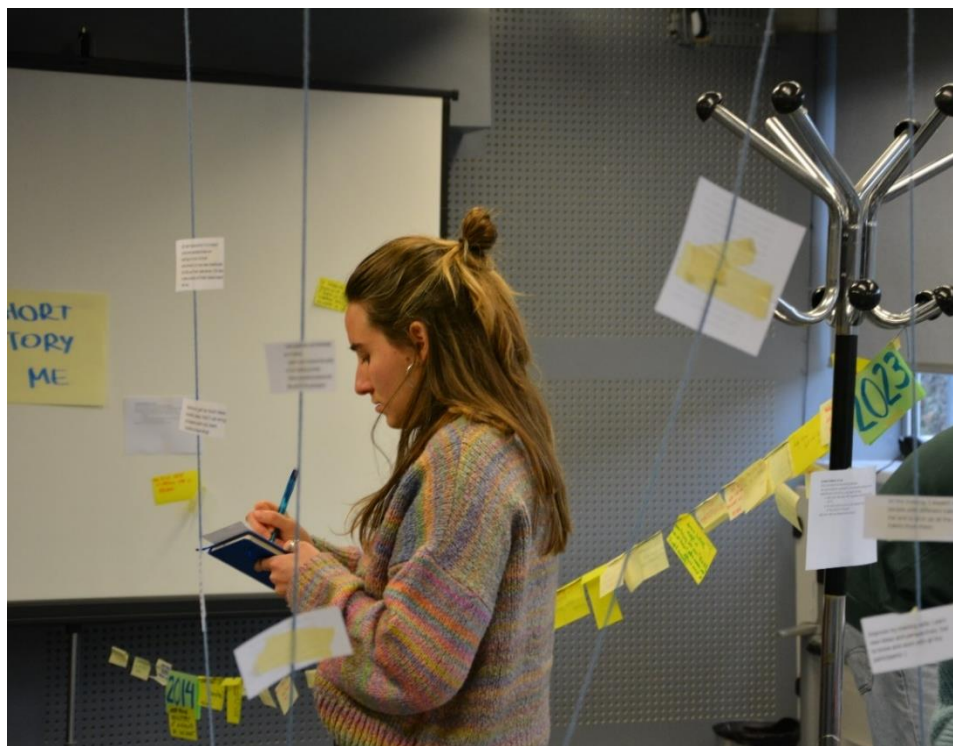
In the evening of the arrival day, the training team met participants in EYCS and proposed them a few name games and ice-breakers.

The **first training day** aimed at introducing participants to the course, to a few key non-formal education concepts as well as to get to know each other and the organisations they represented. The official introduction carried out by Rui Gomes, head of the Education and Training division and Gordana Berjan, head of the European Youth Foundation, provided participants with key information in relation to the background of the course as well as to the work of the Council of Europe in the field of youth and the cooperation between the two Council of Europe divisions.

Following this meaningful introduction to the background of the training and the work carried out by the Council of Europe, participants were invited to take part in a series of getting to know each other activities that allowed them to learn more about each other and their motivation to take part in the course. The objectives and the programme of the training course were also presented and participants shared what they expected to learn throughout the week.

The first session closed with a few remarks on the methodology, notably the active participation and responsibility towards one's own learning that are beneficial in non-formal settings, or the curiosity and openness that may enable them to go deeper in certain topics or discover new ones. With the mood and the pace of the group taking off, the session before lunch was dedicated to further building the team and the Swamp exercise provided the right dynamics and circumstances for the group to experience and reflect on the main conditions for group members to work effectively together throughout the week.

After the lunch break, participants had the honour to be present for the inauguration of the Museum of Discoveries that displayed an exquisite collection of interactive art pieces that became alive once the first visitor stepped inside. The exhibition spaces offered particular attractions ranging from "A history of me" - where participants could share their story on their involvement in NFE - to "Futuristica Expectations" - where they were invited to observe their own contribution during the online learning and to answer 3 new questions - or from the "NFE Connecting People" mindmap to the "Is this a priority?" corner where they could explore the connections between the Council of Europe's Youth Department priorities with their own work. Before dinner, participants had the opportunity to also get to know each other on a professional level through an exchange; they shared with each other information about their organisations, their upcoming activities, the main areas of work they are passionate about and the story of how they got involved in non-formal education. The daily reflection process was also introduced and participants were invited to reflect in small groups on how their day went, what they have learned and what they still need. The day close with intercultural storytelling evening that allowed everyone interested to share a poem, a story or a song that resonated very much with them and their culture. The use of this approach proved particularly important in the process of group bonding as it invited people to treat each other with openness and allowed people to get to know each other on a deeper level. Though several participants brought with them snacks, these were kept and shared during the coffee and tea breaks of the week.



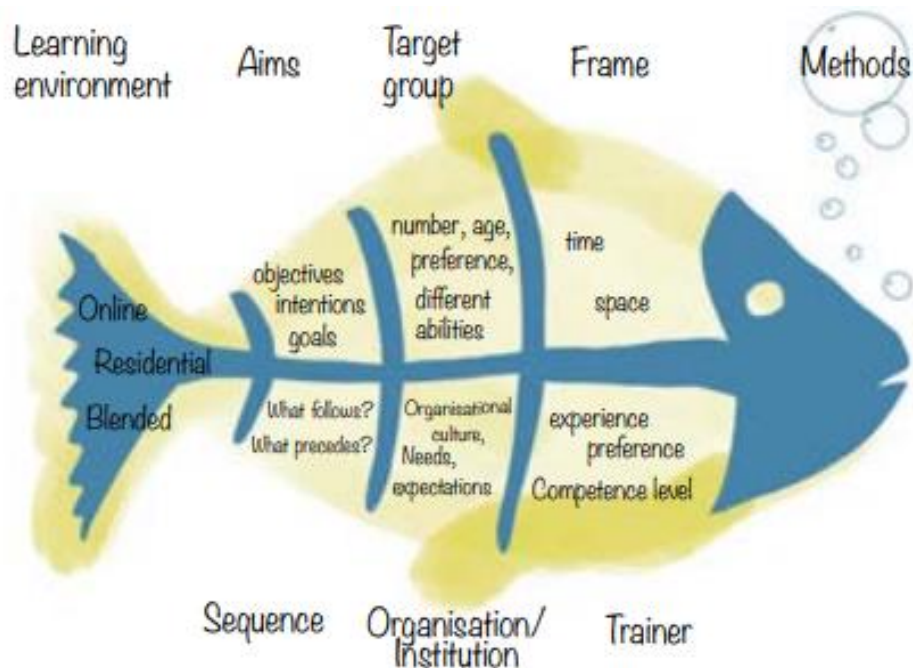




The **second day** of the course saw participants in the roles of alien researchers that arrived on Earth in order to explore and understand the different approaches to education that humans use. As such, they explored in an experiential and interactive way three different learning settings (formal, non-formal and informal) and were invited to reflect on what sets these apart. With the research concluded, participants were also introduced to the NFE main principles. Following this imagination exercise, participants dived in the process of understanding adult learning and shared their own experiences with joyful, fruitful and with long lasting learning, identifying factors that support learning and discovering the pyramid of learning.

The session after lunch focused on experiential learning and, before being introduced to Kolb's Learning Cycle, participants took part in the "Take a Step Forward" activity from Compass. This served as a springboard both to the theoretical input as well as to the last session of the day that focused on debriefing. After the introduction of a debriefing model (What? So What? Now What?), participants worked in small groups and were tasked to build their own sequences of questions that would help them unpack the learning of those participating in such activities.

After a short "house designing" exercise that kicked off the **third day**, that intended to point out the importance of objectives, participants were invited to reflect on how clarity or ambiguity influences the way we understand and work with objectives. Following the presentation of several characteristics of objectives (T-kit on Project Management) and a metaphor that can be used when formulating them, participants had the opportunity to review the objectives of the activities they were expected to be involved in - study sessions or EYF funded projects. The session after the morning coffee break enabled participants to identify key elements that distinguish methods from methodology by participating in a skit displayed by the team of trainers. They also reflected about the considerations necessary when choosing a method and the challenges they face when doing so and were introduced to the Fish metaphor (T-Kit on Training Essentials) that can be used in this case.



Participants spent the afternoon discovering Strasbourg or resting after these first three intense days.

Given that all participants were expected to implement international youth projects either as facilitators or as organisers, the morning of the **fourth day** was dedicated to reflecting on ethnocentrism, intercultural and cultural sensitivity. This was achieved by immersing participants in the reality of 'Sleepyville' (find the exercise 'A mosque in Sleepyville' [here](#)) and exposing them to several theoretical concepts, including the Iceberg model of culture and the Bennet Model of Intercultural Sensitivity ([T-Kit on Intercultural learning](#)). The afternoon focused on reflection on competences and attitudes for the facilitation of NFE activities, on the role of the facilitator and participants were able to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement.

The **fifth day**, labelled "Quality", allowed participants to deepen their understanding of the political and thematic priorities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Several elements of the quality standards were discussed and participants were invited to connect them with their work, to imagine their application during the activities they will be responsible for and to reflect on the relationships between quality, organisational culture and the team of facilitators. Before lunch, through the use of a World Cafe, participants were hosted by EYF and ETD staff and further explored various dimensions of EYF's work and of study sessions. The afternoon remained focused on quality and zoomed in on the process of designing a programme flow. Participants were presented a set of objectives based on which, following a short input on Flow design (T-Kit 6 on Training Essentials), they were asked to build a programme flow. Before the end of the day, with this fresh experience in mind, they were given the possibility to work on the programmes of their study sessions or EYF funded projects and to consult trainers if needed.

The **sixth, and last day**, covered several elements that were meant to complete and conclude the participants' learning experiences. Firstly, the issues of impact, multiplication and follow up were raised. A visual explanation of the multiplication process chain as well as the concept of false metrics were presented and helped participants in their reflection on the potential impact of their activities. These were accompanied by a reflection on the learning resulting from the training course and on setting up a personal action plan for the weeks to come. The tool fair before lunch highlighted key Council of Europe resources (tools and manuals) that are available and that can be used by participants when implementing their future projects. After being invited to start reflecting on inspiring examples of their practices the day before, the session after lunch was dedicated to sharing such practices with each other. The final reflection process saw participants meeting one last time in the reflection groups format before the training ended with a final oral and written evaluation.

### Flow of the days





## Results of the evaluation

This section of the report presents some key information from the main results of the training course's evaluation.

### **General overview of the participants' evaluations**

Most participants (27 out of 34) of shared their evaluation with the trainers' and organisers' team and the overall evaluation was very positive. In numbers, the general level of satisfaction with the course scored an average of 4.44 points out of 5 was. Similarly, the extent to which participants' expectations were met recorded an average of 4.59 points, while the achievement of the training objectives was rated on average at 4.64.

Overall, participants shared being satisfied with the training course. While one of them reported having filled in "*the (theoretical and methodological) gaps I had when it comes to being a NFE facilitator*", another one felt "*more complete in myself now and look forward to continue learning about NFE*". The different starting points for participants were highlighted by their diverse perception of the course. Several participants pointed out that it felt as if the training was "*designed for beginners*". At the same time, other participants shared that they "*now have all the important knowledge to carry out our activities and design new impactful projects*" or that "*the sessions, meetings, debates and methods were very powerful and I dare to claim that it moved my attitudes, perceptions of certain topics in very positive way*".

"*Smooth*" and "*well organised*" were the most common adjectives used to characterise the flow of the course. Several participants pointed out its demanding nature as sessions were intense, however, they also indicated that the free time and the group environment and atmosphere balanced out the energy spent during the working part of the day. Participants also expressed divergent opinions regarding the flow; while for one participant "*the depth and intensity dropped too severely from the third day onwards*", others felt "*gradually more confident to apply my learning directly to my daily work as we went along*" or simply enjoyed the hands-on approach of the last days.

As far as the methods are concerned, participants found that they were useful, interesting, creative and enjoyable. They also shared that they were diverse, despite being repetitive. In some cases. When asked to indicate the sessions that were the most beneficial for their own learning, participants' answers covered the entire programme, with the sessions on objectives, programme design, methods and the world cafe being mentioned by most of the group.

### **Understanding of NFE**

Several participants report a raise in confidence in using NFE, as well as more concrete NFE theoretical knowledge. One participant reports "*seeing [his/her own] values*", while several other highlight having acquired new methods and approaches that they envisage using in their future projects. While three respondents report no change in their perceptions of NFE, one points out having developed a "*new understanding of the preparation part of a training process*".

### **Quality standards**

5 out of 27 participants mentioned having heard about the Council of Europe quality standards for the first time during this course. Despite of many other participants being familiar with the standards, the majority reported newly gained awareness or changes in how they understood them. One participant shares that *“instead of seeing them as a requirement, they should be seen as ways to improve the activities”*. Others mention that now they also know where to find them if needed, while one other participant reported having *“a more clear picture of the quality standards we need to focus on while preparing for an activity but [seeing them] also as a path for human rights promotion whether it is as me being an attendee, a university researcher or preparing an activity”*.

### **Objectives and flow**

Similarly to other subjects, while a few participants do not report any change in their understanding of the role of objectives and the design of a programme flow, the vast majority underline significant learning points. The pragmatic process of *“how to set objectives, how to write programmes and implement them”* is one of the common results mentioned by participants. They also indicate feeling *“better equipped to write more logical [objectives] that will be better implemented in a programme”* or *“really confident with the fundamentals”*.

### **Missing Elements**

The lack of energisers was identified by most participants and several participants expressed their desire to have more inclusive processes. The need to tackle specific human rights topics as well as to take more time to go deeper in certain aspects and concepts, along with more work in even smaller groups were also underlined. Those participants who considered themselves more experienced expressed the desire for more advanced discussions and reflections.

### **Using the learning outcomes**

The vast majority of participants (22 out of 27 who completed the survey) envisage to apply their learning in their upcoming activities, including in study sessions or EYF funded projects. Several participants shared bringing their learning to the preparatory meetings of their events taking place shortly after the training course. Almost 50% of respondents foresee sharing the newly gained competences with their teams and organisations. These results provide an indication of the training course's capacity to inspire participants and have an immediate multiplying effect.

## **Concluding points**

- The training course design and flow responded to participants' expectations and provided them with a meaningful learning experience
- The hands-on elements of the programme - objectives, methods, programme design and flow, etc. - were highly appreciated by participants
- Having the free afternoon earlier in the programme was beneficial as it allowed participants to recharge and stay connected and motivated for the rest of the course
- The training course proved to be meaningful for the entire group, despite the diversity of NFE experiences of participants



## Appendix 1: List of participants

### **Armenia**

Vergine Tadevosyan World Armenian Youth Network (WostAYN)

### **Austria**

Ioana Spataru ternYpe - International Roma Youth Network

### **Belgium**

Ambra Thana Service Civil International

Brian Donnelly IGLYO

Céline Guérin Erasmus Student Network AISBL - ESN International

Marie Melanie Beatrice Boutier EFIL - European Federation for Intercultural Learning

Marta Marzà Florensa International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International

Stanislava Stefanova AEGEE-Europe

Jean Mattijssen ELSA (The European Law Students' Association)

### **Denmark**

Paulina Godlewska ENGSO Youth

### **Estonia**

Lee Jenner Nordisk Ungdomsorganisation

### **Finland**

Alvaro Augusto Sanabria-Rangel Human Rights Education Youth Network (HREYN)

### **France**

Emilie Hornus Youth Express Network/ Réseau Express Jeunes

Eve Le Roux ATD Fourth World

### **Germany**

Dzhei Alberg european playwork association

Hannah Sauer European Alliance of YMCAs

Ilgin Pasli-Brombach

Youth Peace Ambassadors Network

### **Georgia**

Ana Mtchedlishvili

Young Friends of the Earth Europe

### **Greece**

Panagiotis Kalaitzis

Youth Social Rights Network

Paschalis Ioannidis

CONNECT International

### **Hungary**

Anna Édes-Takács

Subjective Values Foundation

József Báder

Phiren Amenca International Network

### **Italy**

Ahmed Moujoud

Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organizations (FEMYSO)

### **Montenegro**

Anđela Radovanović

Association for Education and Development

### **Netherlands**

Thiandi Grooff

European Network of Independent Living Youth Network

### **Portugal**

Antea Pamuković

DYPALL Network (Developing Youth Participation at Local Level)

Silvia Busi

FEANTSA Youth

### **Serbia**

Đorđe Živković

Edukativni centar - Kruševac

### **Slovakia**

Annamaria Psenkova

European Roma Grassroot Organisation Network - ERGO Network

### **Slovenia**

Adnana Turkić

Organizing Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU)



Mojca Čeh International Youth Health Organization (YHO)

### **Spain**

David Ruíz Sánchez World Esperanto Youth Organization (TEJO)

Maria Sierra De Las Heras European Students Union - ESU

### **Ukraine**

Yevheniia Bryhinets Cooperation and Development Network of Eastern Europe

### **Educational team**

Ekaterina Sherer, trainer/consultant

Tamar Tsatskrialashvili, trainer/consultant

Sergiu-Bogdan Imre, trainer/consultant

Emilios Charalambous, trainer/consultant

### **Council of Europe secretariat**

Rui Gomes, Head of Education and Training Division, Youth Department

Ida Kreutzman, Educational Advisor

Gordana Berjan, Head of the European Youth Foundation, Youth Department

Margit Barna, Project officer, European Youth Foundation

Katalin Ormos, Programme Assistant

## Appendix 2: Programme

### **Sunday 5 February**

Arrivals

21:00 Welcome evening

### **Monday 6 February**

9:00 Opening and welcome

- Welcome by **Rui Gomes**, head of Education and Training, Youth Department and **Gordana Berjan**, head of the European Youth Foundation
- Setting the stage

11:00 Group building and ground rules

12:30 Lunch

14:30 Discovering Council of Europe Youth Department

16:30 Who is in the room?

18:00 Evening reflection

21:00 Intercultural evening through storytelling

### **Tuesday 7 February – NFE**

9:00 Non-formal education – an introduction

11:00 How do we learn?

12:30 Lunch

14:30 Experiential learning in practice

16:30 To ask or not to ask: the art of debriefing

18:00 Evening reflection

### **Wednesday 8 February – Methods**

09:00 How to set objectives for educational activities

11:00 How to pick the right method?

12:30 Lunch

FREE AFTERNOON

**Thursday 9 February** – ICL

09:00 Exploring intercultural learning

11:00 Intercultural learning in our activities

12:30 Lunch

14:30 Being an NFE practitioner

16:30 Practical solutions to challenges in NFE

18:00 Evening reflection

**Friday 10 February** - Quality

09:00 Quality standards in the Youth Department

11:00 Specificities of study sessions and EYF-supported activities

12:30 Lunch

14:30 From objectives to programme design

16:30 Working together on upcoming activities

18:00 Evening reflection

**Saturday 11 February**

09:00 Impact, multiplication, and follow-up

11:00 Youth Department tool fair on non-formal education

12:30 Lunch

14:30 Practical and inspiring examples – what can we learn from each-other?

16:30 Closing and evaluation