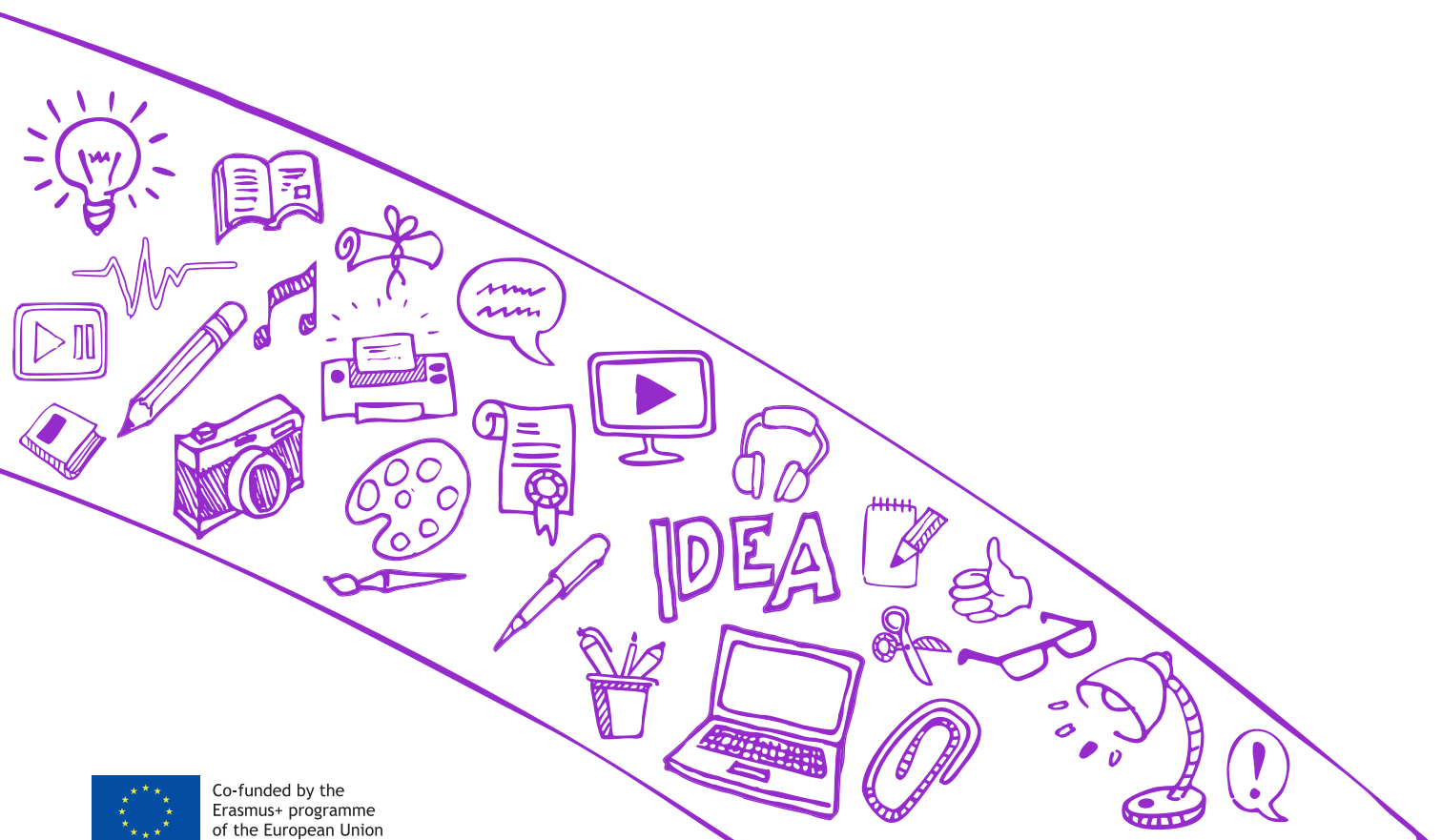


Module 7

Key steps to building your practice as youth worker



Addressing competencies

- Active listening
- Problem solving
- Building a group dynamic
- Settling disputes

Learning outcomes

- Self-assessment tools for trainers
- Pedagogic approaches and principles
- Relationship between trainers and learners
- Working in teams, strengthening group dynamic

Theoretical background

Youth work often has a strong educational purpose. Typically, the education or learning that takes place in youth work is 'non-formal' – not 'formal' and not 'informal'. Youth work and non-formal education have many characteristics in common. Nevertheless, they are not the same. So, what are the characteristics of 'non-formal' education or learning?

- Learning takes place outside the structures of the formal education system and differs from this in the way it is organised and the type of recognition this learning confers; learning is intentional and voluntary; learning aims above all to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life.
- Methodological learning features balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning; linking individual and social learning partnerships, oriented to solidarity and symmetrical teaching/learning relations; participatory and learner-centred approaches; close to real life concerns, experimental and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices.
- Values linked to personal development: autonomy; critical thinking; openness and curiosity; creativity. Values linked to social development: communication; participation and democratic citizenship; solidarity and social justice; responsibility; transformative power of conflict. Ethical values: human rights; respect for others; intercultural learning and dialogue; peace/non-violence; gender equality; inter-generational dialogue.
- Non-formal educators use participatory methods; use diversity as a positive learning tool; make critically reflective links between the concrete and the abstract, in order to both facilitate the learning process and continuously improve their quality; have knowledge about young people's lives and cultures in Europe.

Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-essentials?desktop=true>



Theoretical background (cont.)

Trainers play an important role in the trajectory of the learner throughout the non-formal training experience. Positive relationships between learners and trainers have a long-lasting impact and can contribute to learners' social and professional development.

In fact, such a positive relationship enables learners to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and promote engagement while also learning. For some learners, their relationship with the trainer may provide the stability, responsiveness and support. In this sense it is important to create opportunities for channelling this energy positively and:

- Build trust
- Provide space for sharing individual and group needs
- Create a sense of importance and empowerment of each learner and the group as a venue for empowered learning
- Offer guidance and support during the training session or during the follow-up
- Create an environment of cooperation and compliance
- Encourage learners to formulate their own learning goals based on their needs
- Adapt some part of the training to their learning goals

Learning materials

Developing skills as a trainer is mainly learning by doing as some useful resources do help, therefore go to the end of this document to find further reading into becoming a skilled and confident trainer.

Methodological explanation

Youth work usually has the following characteristics:

- **Value-driven:** youth work tries to serve the higher purposes of inclusion and social cohesion
- **Youth-centric:** youth work serves the key needs and aspirations of youth, identified by young people themselves
- **Voluntary:** youth work is not obligatory, and relies on the voluntary participation of young people
- **Developmental:** youth work aims at the personal, social and ethical development of young people
- **Self-reflective and critical:** youth work tries to make sure it is doing its best to live up to its mission
- **Relational:** youth work seeks authentic communication with young people and to contribute to sustaining viable communities.



Debriefing questions

Refer to Module 1.

Feedback

Refer to Module 1.

Guidelines for peer to peer learning and evaluation

Think about what you already knew and what you have learnt during this training. Evaluate and self-reflect on your learning moment as a trainer and please refer to the questionnaire designed to evaluate your training practice. In order to fully round the experience please use the link here to the questionnaire for learners that were part of your training. Be aware to delegate this evaluation task to your learners as part of the debriefing or feedback time allocated to your training.

Potential adaptation for face-to-face learning

Breaking Into Small Groups. “Counting off” forming groups quickly becomes boring and distracting. For variety, try some of these techniques.

- **Stickers:** Put several different stickers on nametags, handouts, or folders, then group by type.
- **Numbered Name Tags:** Divide “even” and “odd,” or by sequential numbers (e.g. 1-5, 6-10, etc.)
- **Color Coded Nametags:** Divide into same color groups and/or mixed color groups.
- **Deck of Cards:** Group members draw from the deck, or facilitator places a card face down on the table, in front of each person. Adjust the deck so that you have the correct number and mix of suits to create equal size groups.
- **Alphabetize:** Group people by the first letter of their name – A through H, I through P, etc.
- **Organization Type:** For some activities, it is useful to have people with similar jobs in groups together – recreation, education, juvenile justice, etc.

Further reading resources

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-essentials?desktop=true>

<https://www.verke.org/uploads/2021/02/d4dd3b27-digital-youth-work-practice-reflection-tool-1.pdf>

<https://infed.org/carl-rogers-core-conditions-and-education/>

