

Educational Tools Exchange

The Green Elephant Foundation

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I Introduction

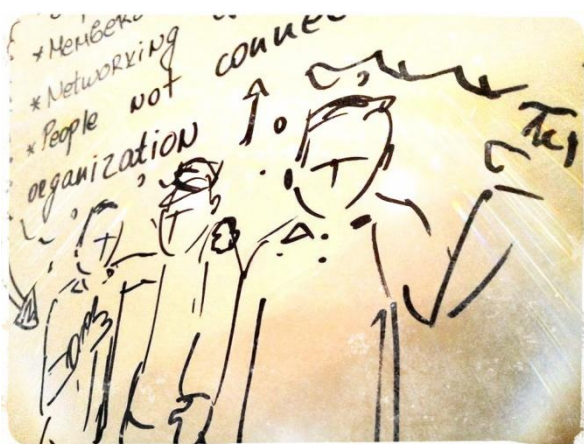
We give into Your hands e-publication “Educational Tools Exchange –overview”. This document is an overall result of participant’s work during the project time in Zakopane. Thanks to our participants creativity, motivation, action taking we – as organizers, facilitators - could implement positive results with all those actions we wanted to explore.

It has been a very efficient way of spending time due to knowledge transfer youth workers had. We have shared experience in the field of training, multicultural differences handling, informal - educational working methods. Every method has been described with an information about its core value. Our bulletin ends with a story narrated by experienced participants’ eye. Have a nice time reading!

The Authors

II The project

„Educational Tools Exchange“ is a project funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme committed to sharing professional experience of people working with the youths and learning from examples of good practice presented



participating organizations. The project led by the Green Elephant Foundation / Fundacja „Zielony Słoń” (Poland) involved partners from Latvia (Talent City), Armenia (AELL), Italy (Centoform srl.), Spain (Artenia Consulting) and FYR Macedonia (Kreaktiv). The project complies with European Union policy to give more opportunities and better quality services to the

youths. The project has been aimed to enhance professional competences of participating youth workers so they could address youth learners with more advanced tools and better approach. Within the project frameworks we have organized a main training event in Zakopane held on 25 – 31 May 2015. During these days the participating organizations presented large variety of educational tools including „Cosquillas”, „Study Circle”, „Simplicity by E.de Bono”, „Design thinking” and others. The meeting was very efficient as a learning experience both for participating trainers and partner organizations. It’s a starting point to use new tools and develop similar initiatives committed to raising quality of non-formal youth education.

In given publication you will get working methods descriptions, participants opinion, some photographic documentation.

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DESIGN THINKING METHOD

Everyone can be a designer as long as they notice things to be improved in their environment and work on how to change them. Designing as all creative processes is chaotic in real life, and therefore, such methods as design thinking has been established to help us navigate through this process.



Design thinking (DT) is a methodology to solving problems and coming up with solutions from a user-centered perspective, where it is important to get to know your user so as to design with them and not for them. It has bias for action and showing, as well as it is iterative in its nature as it

encourages testing and changing your initial ideas to reach better end-service or end-product.

In general, DT involves 5 typical stages from empathizing, defining, ideation, prototyping and testing. When approaching a difficult problem designers will first want to understand experiences and needs of their end-users. They will ask questions, trying to understand what and why, observe users while performing the activity research, etc. After putting all pieces of information together to create insights, designers





will move to brainstorming, where they come up with radical ideas to solve the problem or improve current services. They try to find such solutions that would answer the question „what if all was possible” or „what if Nike were to do it?” This leads them to creating a variety of solutions, which are then prototyped in experimentation phase. Fast and cheap prototypes are created and shared with end-users to give them opportunity to interact with the proposed solutions. Such prototypes might have a form of a storyboard, model, role play or a diagram. At this point users can give designers feedback on what works and what isn't yet quite right. This is done way before real money and time is spent, before final solution is implemented and goes live. Knowing what to change, what is exciting to users and what completely doesn't resonate with their audiences, designers go back to refine their ideas, repeating the prototype and test phases, to present the final solution that would best answer needs of all key stakeholders.



To sum up, design thinking is suitable for finding solutions to problems by understanding a particular situation (what and why), then addressing needs that are identified by a variety of solutions. Then testing them early on in the process to change and improve, while giving a user a chance to interact and give feedback, and then bring the final idea into life.

SIMPLICITY METHOD

“Simplicity is not simple” – this sentence was conclusion of whole” Simplicity” workshop participants had during “Educational Tools Exchange” in Zakopane.





Simplicity is one of the most effective Eduardo de Bono's methods. In general the aim is to simplify all the complex, everyday life processes. People in general tend to make life harder, to invent all the rules which are not always necessary. One can meet many of such examples in his life – starting from department bureaucracy ending with all the kitchenware service. Everyone should use Simplicity to assess the change we want to force in our own life environment.



Simplicity is based on 10 principles and has its own working methods.

1. You need to put a high value on simplicity

To get simplicity you have to want to get it. To want to get simplicity you have to put a high value on simplicity.

2. You must be determined to seek simplicity

People quite like simplicity if it does not cost anything but are usually unwilling to invest resources in making something more simple.

3. You need to understand the matter very well

you do not seek to understand a situation or process, your efforts will be 'simplistic' rather than simple. Simplicity before understanding is worthless.



If

4. You need to design alternatives

It is not a matter of designing the 'one right way'. It is more a matter of designing alternatives and possibilities, and then selecting one of them.



5. **You need to challenge and discard existing elements**

Everything needs to justify its continued existence. If you wish to retain something for the sake of tradition let that be a conscious decision.

6. **You need to be prepared to start over again**

In the search for Simplicity, modify if you can – start afresh if you cannot.

7. **You need to use concepts**

Concepts are the human mind's way of simplifying the world around. Warning: If you do not use concepts, then you are working with detail.

8. **You may need to break things down into smaller units**

The organization of a smaller unit is obviously simpler than the organization of a large unit. The smaller units are themselves organized to serve the larger purpose.

9. **You need to be prepared to trade off other values for simplicity**

A system that seeks to be totally comprehensive may be very complex. You may need to trade off that comprehensiveness for simplicity.

10. **You need to know for whose sake the simplicity is being designed**

A shift of complexity may mean that a system is made easier for the customer but much more complicated for the operator.



During the workshops on

Educational Tools Exchange participants took the effort to try simplify processes with which they cope in the work related time. All participants worked with Youth, some was elder, some was younger. Thanks to generation gap we faced, we also could looked up the problem of complexity as a whole, from different perspectives.

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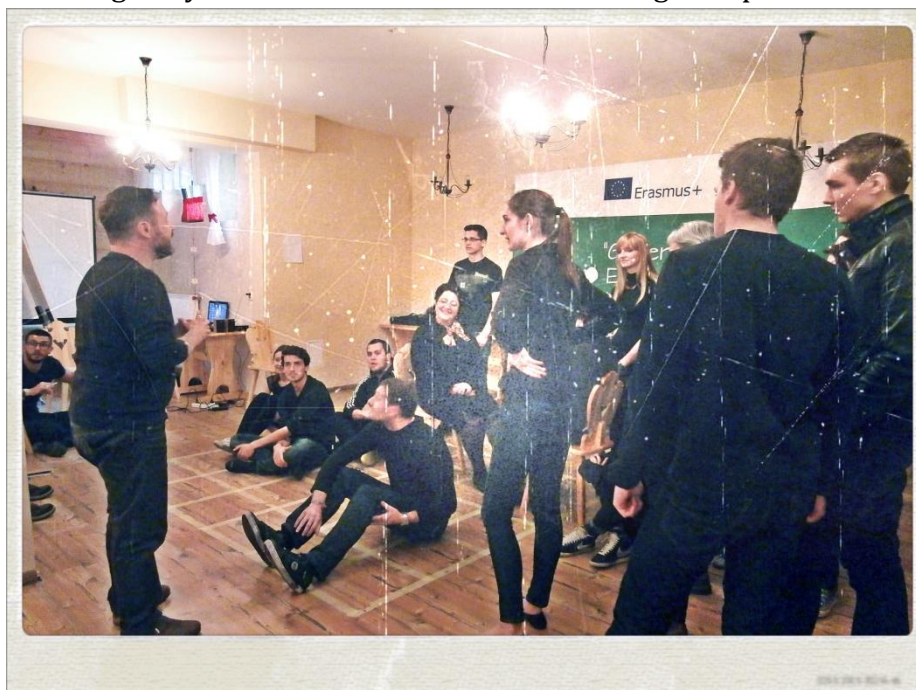
COSQUILLAS METHODOLOGY

The “Cosquillas” approach moves in parallel on two tracks, the theatrical and educational one. This meaning that the theatre workshops, thanks to the performing art and drama, pursues educational, training and social goals.

„Cosquillas theatre” use education as a tool for personal growth, before than a development tool or employability tool. This is because training cannot be separated from the fusion of two fundamental elements, motivation and technique. The success of a person is linked to the meeting of these two factors. It is not enough to be strongly motivated if you do not have appropriate technical means, on the other hand master a technique is not enough if you are not consciously working on your motivation. Personal training is a process that continue throughout life. It requires adaptability, flexibility and continuous updating of knowledge.

Main goals

The “Cosquillas theatre” uses drama activity as a tool for



personal growth fostering the acquisition of educational aims, especially in term of key and life skills. Personal training lasts throughout life and requires adaptability, flexibility and continuous updating of knowledge.

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Each person working in a theater group is responsible for his/her growth but also for the growth of the group itself.

A relevant part of the activities performed by “Cosquillas Theatre” promotes the leading role of adolescents in the creation, implementation and evaluation of paths of self -help, stimulating a significant improvement in well-being across the student’s community.

The proposed model of intervention aims at improving the school relationship, motivating young people to and providing methodological support to let them reach self-awareness and self- sufficiency.

What makes the good practice different from a “ simple “ theatre workshop is that it includes within its process, anti-dropout activities such as welcoming, fostering study,

workshops and extracurricular activities, alternative learning methods. Activities are addressed to those young people who experience difficulties, discomfort and are at risk of dropping out and can be adapted to different contexts and kind of learning. The fact that the workshop can be carried out also within a vocational training setting is an additional distinctive feature of the methodology.



Source: “Theatre”, Theatre as empowerment methodology for IVET [THE GOOD PRACTICE - RENEWED VERSION]. www.leonardo-theatre.eu

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STUDY CIRCLE METHOD

Study circle is a small group of people who meet multiple times to discuss an issue. Learners share their knowledge and experience to each other and improve key competences: problem solving, communication, listening, initiative, learning to learn. There is no one right way to do a study circle. The method is simple and suitable whether the discussion is for deeper understanding, for weighing options and making choices or for academic study.

This method has its certain steps.

1.step Learners and trainer should be positioned in circle, everybody has the same position. Value is placed not on having mastered someone else's ideas, but on generating and communicating ideas of one's own.



2.step assigning a task to the learners, who share their present knowledge about topic and decide how to get more info.

3.step putting together info, building common and shared knowledge on the topic.

4.step trainer evaluates learning achievement. The trainer acts as facilitator focusing on the main issue and encouraging the development.

5.step trainer underlines the competences that each learner displayed, promoting the reflection on the acquisition of new knowledge and of life skills used.

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Moreover Educational Tools Exchange participants willingly took part in a Multicultural Competences workshop. During case studies and role play working methods participants had opportunity to face their stereotypical thinking. Every person faced their tolerance level in reference to multicultural communication skills. One more time diversity played great role for the group to check their skills, to gain new skills, knowledge about different cultures habits, tradition.

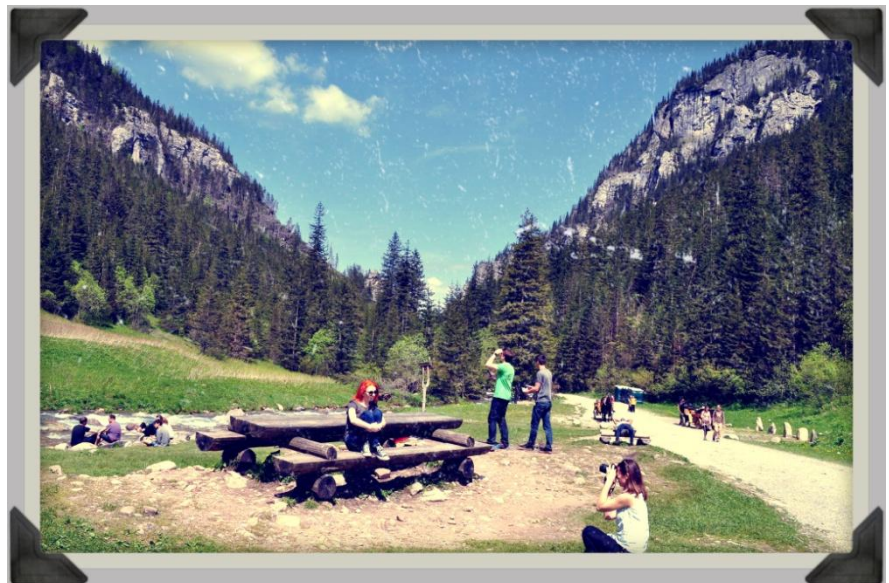
III What I gained from the project?

Agata Jakuszko-Sobočka

What I didn't gain- that would be more easy to point out. I was not bored. I have broken my stereotypes. I left my comfort zone (since few years I was not able to participate in international projects because of my limiting beliefs).

I took a chance and - that was my challenge!

I barely knew the Staff (few chats is for me still not enough to send Facebook invitation). Nevertheless I tried not to



panic (at least at first). I don't speak English perfectly and honestly I can't imagine what would happen to me if I hadn't participate in the ETE project. Right now I do another international project inspired by ETE. I'm also seriously considering moving to Barcelona

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having done few arrangements with my new friends. I got a new job and I want to take the best from the opportunity I received from ETE experience.

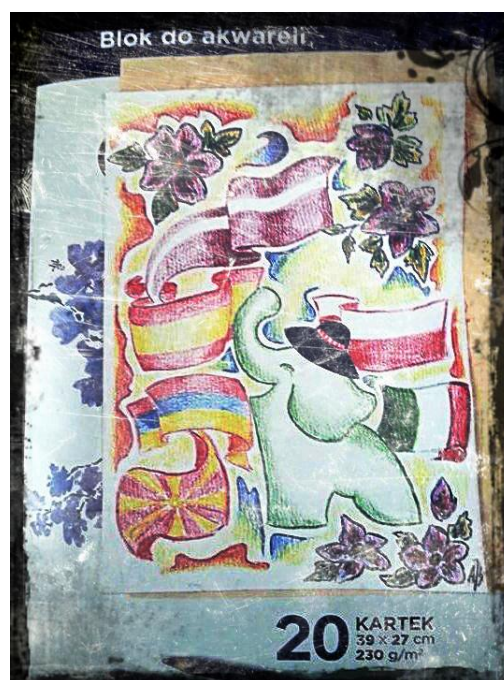
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It began in a quite normal way – we arrived to the magnificent hotel with stunning view on the most representative chain of Tatra mountains. First impression? Cheerful Organizers, comfortable room and what is the most important – amazing roommate. And the first evening of course! We all were waiting for it. The time of first official contact which was the prelude to the whole project itself. Yes, the project I participate in with all my worries and involvement.

How was it?

Colourful. Creative. Cultural...And sooooo fast! I had no idea how it's possible for time to run so quickly. Everyday we made workshops in the subject of various informal education methods. It's true, that everyone of us was trying to implement new knowledge into our own fields of expertise. Not always it was an easy way to do it, but always worth the effort.

We talked about new possibilities to implement those methods in our organizations and we had a lot of fun during the learning process. In my opinion, we learnt not only from the teachers, but also from ourselves as well. My roomie showed me how to trust myself more and be cool even if the situation is not going according to my expectations - this is crucial for a good trainer.



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The Green Elephant Foundation gave a great example of making a project with a real influence on the participants. And last, but not least – the participants, who were like a treasury of knowledge to me: their way of thinking, behavioral patterns, hours of discussions and following a new way of thinking – those were pretty new discoveries for me. Ideas ready to use in my daily life. Those people were the most important for me and I'm grateful for the chance of meeting and working with them.

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That is true - I was surprised by the intercultural differences. Despite the fact I was reading about it, still people can make a huge impression on me. And those guys definitely did it. The consequences in taking actions was extraordinary. For



instance – once we were talking about some ideas for the next project inspired by ETE, then few days later the words were transformed into concrete actions. Remarkable!

Those practical consequences I personally like the most about the ETE project. For me – it is not only three astonishing discoveries how much the group might need me. I realized how I do need those creative, open-minded and full of ideas guys from different parts of the world in order to make a real change in our hearts and minds.

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