



# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

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CHANGE MAKERS  
ACADEMY PROGRAM

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GUIDELINES FOR  
FACILITATORS



Erasmus+

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# INTRODUCTION

The intention of this document is to transfer some transversal knowledge to the persons who will act as Facilitators in the implementation of “Change Makers Academy” Program with youth.

“Change Makers Academy” Training Program builds on both individual and group learning, always respecting participants' needs. To achieve the learning goals, the learning process should be carefully planned and framed within the principles of Non-Formal Education and Informal Learning, Self- directed learning, Learning to learn, and Experiential Learning.

In practice, it means that a self-directed learning approach strongly supported by Facilitators, having in mind the different learning styles, with frequent reflections on experienced activities and learning process, will be fostered.

The overall goal is to give a comprehensive introduction of these key concepts that each Facilitator can further deepen according to their needs and interests.



# REMEMBERING THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

The definition of facilitation, as mentioned in the main program, is "to make it easy". The facilitator has the responsibility to plan, guide and manage a group, ensuring that the group objectives are met effectively. It's not about offering the right answers, it is about questioning, in order to guide the group in the discussion to achieve a conclusion.

To facilitate effectively, the facilitator must be objective and take a neutral stance, stepping back from its personal point of view and focus on the group process.

The "group process" is the group behaviour and the approach used to manage discussions, solve problems or make decisions, ensuring participation of all members, getting the best from them, and bringing them through to a successful conclusion.

The key responsibility of a facilitator is to create this group process and a safe and trustful learning environment in which it can flourish.

The facilitator must understand clearly the desired outcome, the background and the context, developing a strategy and a plan that addresses the target group's needs, and works towards attaining the overall goal. The role of the facilitator is multifaceted, acting as a supporter, as a source of information, and as a partner for the members of the group.



# FORMAL, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING

We can distinguish three types of learning:

- informal learning happens nearly all the time in daily life (at home, on the street, in cafés, etc.) but it is not a planned activity;
- non-formal learning is voluntary, is assisted by others and is planned;
- formal learning is structured, regulated from the outside and involves some form of certification.

Focusing on Non-formal education, it can be seen as a system outside formal education which brings together resources, people, objectives, tools and methods to produce a structured learning process.

**For the purposes of this guide, non-formal education is understood as an organised educational process which takes place alongside mainstream systems of education and training, and does not typically lead to certification. Individuals participate on a voluntary basis and as a result, the individual takes an active role in the learning process.**

Distinct from informal education where learning happens less consciously, the individual is usually aware of the fact that learns through non-formal education. Non-formal learning has proved to have enormous potential to enrich or complement formal education through its links to real-life, emphasis on social learning and learner oriented processes of critical reflection of knowledge and values.

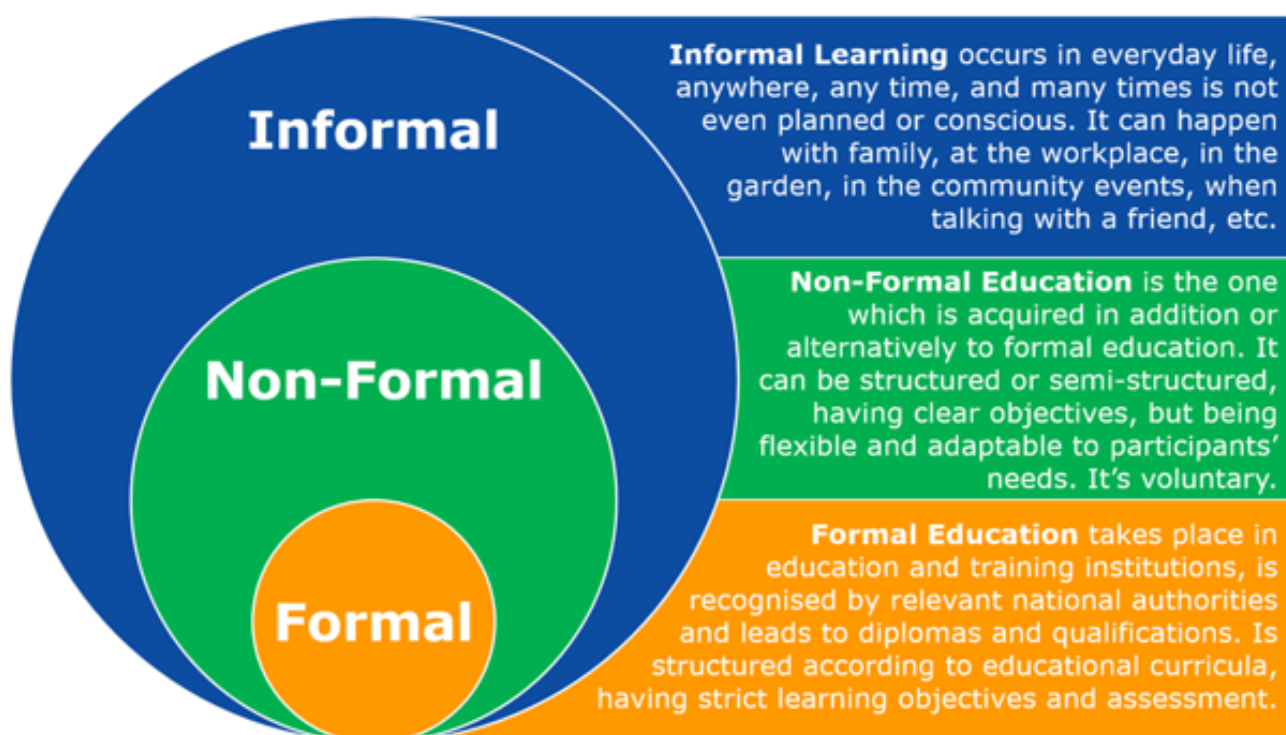
## Principles of Non-Formal Education

- **Voluntary participation.**
- **Safe learning environment**, which has to have certain autonomy (separateness), so that people are safe to experiment and test themselves without any greater chance of harming themselves or others. It should also be an environment where people can take full responsibility for their actions. Non-formal education process and safe environment created by the trainers and facilitators gives a chance to not only develop professional competencies, but also work on personal development and taking responsibility. And, is an area where artificial competitive tension is highly avoided.
- **Active participation in the learning process.** Activeness is achieved by devoting time to name and perceive one's personal experience.
- **Holistic principle.** This principle means adopting a holistic attitude towards people, educative goals and work methods. Neither feelings, nor mind, nor physiology are ignored and attention is paid to a single person, as well as to the group and the subject. The goal is to relate experience gained during the educative process to reality. Non-formal education combines emotional, physical, intellectual methods that ensure all-round development of a personality.
- **Learning through experience.** The process of non-formal education is based on experience, which only becomes meaningful when it is well perceived and consciously realized. Therefore, experience is discussed (reflected on) and named, conclusions are made, given sense and applied in real life.





- **Open and non-formal communication.** Non-formal education is a safe process, where people can be themselves by sharing their life experience, revealing their weak sides without fear of making mistakes and acknowledging them.
- **Group oriented learning.** We work with what the group gives us. Combining non-formal education methodology with a learner-centred approach means that special attention is given to the learners or participants in a training course, always considering the needs of the participants and the social context in which they find themselves, allowing personal action and change. It gives space for individual and group activities, time for self-reflection, self-assessment and group evaluation.



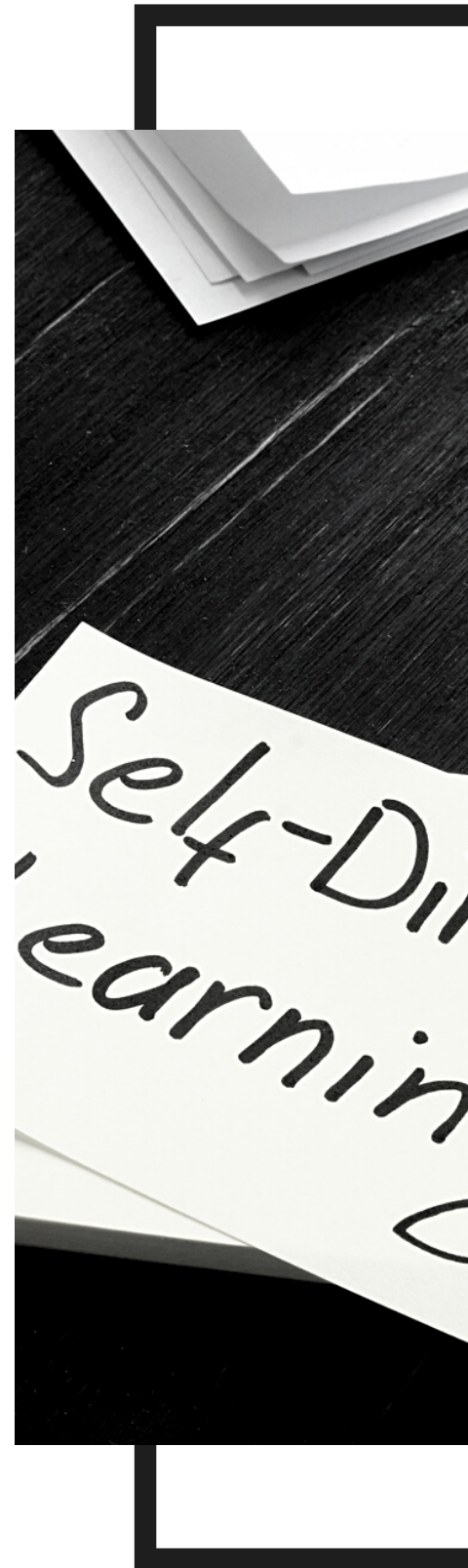
# SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Self-directed learning is not a new concept, and in fact much has been discussed about it. Some interpretations involve basically giving learners some kind of choice in their learning, but Self-directed learning is much more.

“In its broadest meaning, ‘self-directed learning’ describes a process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identify human and material resources for learning, choosing and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (M. Knowles, Principles of Andragogy, 1972)“.

This means that using a Self-Directed Learning approach, the learner takes the initiative to pursue a learning experience, defining the learning experience and being responsible for completing it. This does not exclude input from others, but the final decision is the learner’s. Self-direction doesn’t mean the learner learns alone or in isolation (which can happen in a particular learning situation), it means that is the learner who drives the learning experience, beginning with the recognition of a need to learn.

**For the purpose of “Change Makers Academy” Programme, we will understand Self-Directed Learning (SDL) as any gain in knowledge, skill or attitude pursued by the youngsters for personal reasons, employing any means, in any place, at any time, at any age. Meaning that the participants will take initiative and have responsibility for what occurs, selecting, managing and assessing their own learning through the activities.**





# LEARNING TO LEARN

‘Learning to learn’ is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one’s own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. It includes awareness of one’s learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. It means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences, in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual’s competence.

“Change Makers Academy” Training Programme is a combination of non-formal (planned and intentional) learning, and informal (unplanned and spontaneous) learning. An important part of this training is the conscious decision to leave the known environment and look for a new challenge. Learning takes place in the most diverse ways and youth will set themselves goals which they will pursue during this experience. And even if ‘Learning’ is not their main aim for participating in this programme, through the support of the facilitator, it is possible to reflect on learning experiences and to become more aware of the learning process. To raise this awareness and take responsibility for their own learning process could be a crucial ‘learning to learn’ step.

Questions which can help the youngster to reflect are:

- What does learning mean to me in general? What are my experiences so far?
- What are/were my learning goals within “Change Makers Academy” Programme? How did they change (if at all)? How will/Did I reach them?
- How do I want to learn? How did I learn?
- Which activities in the “Change Makers Academy” Programme motivated me most in my learning?
- Where did my skills and knowledge improve?
- Which methods do I want to/did I use to evaluate what I learned?
- Which learning style do I prefer: learning by doing, by reading and thinking, by observing?
- How did I explore the different ways of learning compared to learning in school or university?
- How will I use what I learned?
- How did I deal with challenges in my learning process?
- How do I motivate myself to deal with obstacles and continue learning?



# LEARNING TOOLS

'A tool is usually any physical item that can be used to achieve a particular physical result, especially if the item is not consumed in the process.

However, informally the word has also come to be used to describe a procedure or process with a specific purpose.

Tools can be classified according to their basic functions (cutting tools, cooking tools, drawing tools, etc.) but in fact they can be creatively used to other purposes.

The non-formal education has a number of particular characteristics, and being voluntary, it happens usually in an open, attractive and flexible environment, addressing learners needs and aspirations. Though lacking some of the more common features of the formal learning environment such as curricula, validation or system assessment, nonetheless, it aims to follow coherent and constructive learning experiences.

A non-formal learning tool is something that creatively and inventively initiates or supports an action or process that leads to a learning result or outcome.

"Change Makers Academy" Training Programme provides some example tools, although, remember that tools alone have no influence. It is your task to adapt them to the context, objectives and target group, but most importantly to your own skills to turn them into something powerful!

Usually, a non-formal learning tool has the following features:

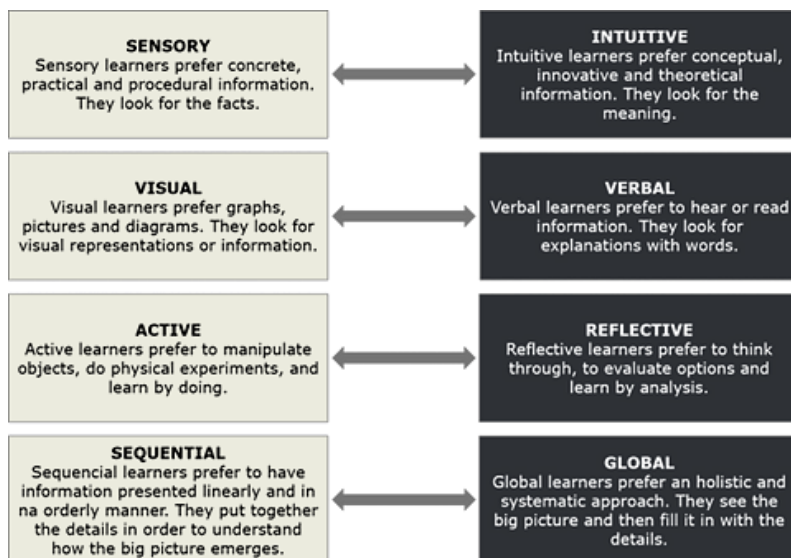
- Transferable and capable of further change and development depending on context;
- Results in identifiable learning outcomes;
- Adaptive to a variety of learning methods and approaches, for example group work, games, discussions, simulations;
- Helps participants in identifying their own learning needs and capacities;
- Engages and stimulates participants in the learning process;
- User friendly and flexible;
- Stand-alone but can also be part of or related to a broader activity.



# COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING PREFERENCES

'Every time you are facilitating/training or communicating with others, you have ideas and information which you want them to understand and learn effectively and efficiently. Learning preferences and styles vary for each person and in different situations. By considering and understanding that other people can have quite diverse learning preferences, you can improve your communication to transmit your message effectively, in a way that more people can understand, making the most out of their learning potential.

One of the most widely used models of learning styles is The Index of Learning Styles. According to this model there are four dimensions of learning styles. Think about these dimensions as a continuum line with one learning preference in the extreme left, and the other one in the extreme right. The middle of the line is the balance, and this is the key for a great learning capacity, not limiting your ability to receive and understand new information.



Your target group/audience, in this case youngsters, is likely to reveal a wide range of learning preferences, and your challenge is to communicate information in a variety of styles that addresses all and each person, helping them to achieve the learning outcomes.

Your preferred facilitation and communication methods may in fact be influenced by your own learning preferences, so it's important to understand your own learning preferences and develop skills that help you to learn and teach in a variety of ways. For example, if you prefer visual rather than verbal learning, you may tend to provide a visual learning experience for your learners, which may not be the best learning approach for them.

Be conscious of your preferences and the range of preference of your group. Provide a balanced and well-adjusted learning experience by:

- Sensory-Intuitive: Provide both hard facts and general concepts.
- Visual-Verbal: Incorporate both visual and verbal cues.
- Active-Reflective: Allow both experiential learning and time for evaluation and analysis.
- Sequential-Global: Provide detail in a structured way, as well as the big picture.



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