



The nonformal

education laboratory

Gathering of methods and tools

Cover

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The nonformal education laboratory; Gathering of methods and instruments

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Nonformal education laboratory - Today is a good day for nonformal!

“Laboratory, laboratories, sn. (informally, lab) - a facility that provides controlled conditions in which scientific research, experiments and measurement may be performed. The title of laboratory is also used for certain other facilities where the processes or equipment used are similar to those in scientific laboratories (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laboratory>)



similar to those in scientific laboratories

In other words, at Gura Portiței, Tulcea County, between 6th-12th of July 2009, resource persons and participants gathered in order to experience different nonformal education methods and instruments.

Why a laboratory? Because it is in a lab that one can do the best experiments and find the most successful formulas with the greatest impact, that could have a changing effect.

Why nonformal education? Because it is a must! Because it is a vital part of the lifelong learning process and because it deserves to be shown to the public.

Why a nonformal education laboratory? Because we wanted to:

- increase the visibility of nonformal education methods used in/for youth projects
- offer a platform for exchanging good practices
- create a framework for implementing and further developing nonformal education methods

We hope that this first edition of the Nonformal education laboratory is just the first step in a long range of nonformal events!

Dear readers,

It might seem atypical and unsuitable to start this introduction talking about what this publication is not. But in order to start in a...nonformal way, I will say that it is not a book, nor a booklet, not a handbook, nor a study, not even a guide. It has a bit from all and, through its message, has the rigor, charm, horizon and strength of all of them. At least, this is what we like to think, bearing in mind the fact that we are exploring, throughout its pages, a topic which changes incredibly fast, with an undeniable impact, a special beauty, but still a topic not taken into consideration in a structured way.

Nonformal education.

You can extract from the following pages information about the nonformal education. You will find some nonformal education methods described . You will find out how you can put these methods in practice in your projects. Most important, we hope that you will find in these pages some inspiration.

We wish that you would find ideas and feel the incitement to transform these ideas into initiatives and in this way, together, we could outline what nonformal education is.

Because this book-booklet-handbook-study-guide comes in a context and has behind it and especially ahead of it, events and campaigns to promote and recognize nonformal education as a key component of the education.

This collection was published as a result of an event organized by the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training, with the financial support of the European Commission through the Youth in Action Programme: the Nonformal education laboratory. During the one-week event various nonformal education methods were presented and experienced and they are all described here. Certainly, this was just the beginning and, as I said, there are many things that we wish to accomplish in the future in this field.

And if you are wondering how come this initiative comes from ANPCDEFP, a public body managing European programmes... the answer is: “Thanks to you!”. Working with young people implementing nonformal education projects - and not only with them -, seeing the results that these initiatives can have on the participants and the communities involved, we realized that together we can do much more.

We believe in what we do and we hope that you will rediscover throughout these pages things to believe in, too!

Today is a good day for nonformal!

Monica Calota
Director of ANPCDEFP

Hello and welcome aboard the ANPCDEFP aircraft, destination Europe!

The time to destination is 7 years (2007 to 2013) and during this time our services will be worth approximately 885 millions Euro.

And since we want to offer you a very diverse and participative European flight, please pay attention to our presentation:

- at 1.1 m we will reach Youth exchanges, which offer an opportunity for groups of young people from different countries to meet and learn about each other's cultures
- at 1.2 m we will reach Youth initiatives, which support group projects designed at local, regional and national level in order to develop youth initiative, enterprise and creativity and to enhance cooperation and exchanges of experiences
- at 1.3 m we will have Youth democracy projects, which support young people's participation in the democratic life of their local, regional or national community, and at international level
- at 2.m we will find the European Voluntary Service, which aims to support young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the European Union.

at 3.1 m you will have Cooperation with Neighbouring Countries of the European Union, which supports youth exchange projects and training and networking projects in the youth field with countries outside the EU

- at 4.3 m we will reach Training and networking projects of those active in youth work and youth organizations, which support the training of those active in the field of youth as well as activities which may lead to long-lasting quality projects, partnerships and networks
- at 5.1 m we will offer you Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy, which supports cooperation, seminars and a Structured Dialogue between young people, those active in youth work and those responsible for youth policy

For further information, the Youth in Action crew is pleased to be at your disposal.

Thank you for choosing our company and we wish you a nice project implementation!

Nonformal education: General context

Why do we learn? Until when do we learn? What learning methods are there? Relevant questions, that we should all consider more. This could be the first step towards becoming aware of the fact that education cannot be understood as a process that happens exclusively at school. There is no age limit to acquire knowledge and skills. On the contrary, we develop ourselves in extremely varied contexts: by working in an NGO, by reading a book, by debating on a movie. All these are learning situations, even though this is not the usual meaning we attach to the word.

Education gains new meanings and it is not just school alone that is responsible for it. There is no monopoly on this, since education happens in different environments and with different actors involved.

This is not an attempt to undermine the role of school in the institutional meaning of the word. School is the basis of the educational system. This is the undeniable truth. This is just an attempt to prove that the basis is even more valuable if something is built on it. And this is where nonformal and informal education appear. These are three notions that complement each other: formal, nonformal, informal.

If formal (official) education happens in an educational institution (school, university etc.) in a continuous way and informal education - although intentional - is very little structured, nonformal education is defined as any educational activity that does not exactly correspond to the definition of formal education.

Nonformal education can happen inside and outside the institutional frame and addresses people of all ages. According to different national contexts, it can cover educational programmes meant at adult literacy, basic education for those who dropped out of school, improving life skills, improving performances at work, as well as general culture. Nonformal education programmes do not necessarily conform to the “step by step” system and their duration can differ (according to International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 1007, approved by UNESCO).

Nonformal education develops beyond the formal (official) curriculum. Its strength resides in the fact that the “learner” is in the center of the teaching process. It is not compulsory, which means that the individual wants to learn or is drawn towards learning by another type of motivation, in which he/she is continuously stimulated.

In nonformal education, responsibility belongs to society as a whole. The approach is personalized, focused on clear needs. It is flexible, but follows certain learning objectives. This motivates and at the same time empowers the learner. The focus is on improving the competencies level and especially on personal development, acquiring life skills and becoming an active citizen. In addition to that, it leads to the development of a new set of competencies that can be easily transferred to the labor market.

Nonformal education is not specific to a certain age group and does not involve graduating a certain level of education in order to get to the next one.

The main actors are the participants in the process of nonformal education. Experiential learning is a key element, since the participants are involved directly and actively, and the competencies they already have represent an important ingredient with the help of which they can learn from each other, peer to peer.

Having flexible and varied themes, nonformal education suggests to its participants diverse and attractive activities, according to their interests, particular skills and aspirations. In this way, it contributes to enlarging and enriching the general culture of those involved, facilitating intercultural learning, tolerance, supporting disadvantaged categories and offering the possibility of discovering and exploiting diverse capacities and talents.

How do we know if the nonformal education methods are useful? How is “quality” defined in nonformal education? Peter Lauritzen, the coordinator of the Youth Department in the Directorate for Youth and Sport from the Council of Europe concluded that, in order for a process of nonformal learning to be of high quality, it has to:

- have clear aims and objectives
- have proper physical and material learning means
- have trained personnel (either volunteers, or paid employees)
- be focused on the learner
- be focused on identifying solutions
- use a variety of methods
- be a balance between individual and group learning
- allocate a proper period of time for learning, relaxing, as well as individual time
- create a space for socializing and reflection on the way it influences the learning process
- allow time for self-reflection
- evaluate the progress and the difficulties that come up
- be evaluated individually and at the group level

Nonformal education has two aspects that could be perceived as disadvantages. Its too large flexibility (including the flexibility of the methods used) can act as a double-edged knife; it leads to reaching short-term objectives that are not sustainable in the long run. It's particularly because of this that it is so difficult to implement a recognition system of the competencies acquired in this way.

Still, this should not discourage us, but, on the contrary, stimulate us to find solutions.

Nonformal education: European context

Even though nonformal education does not have a generally accepted definition at European level, the subject gives rise to much debate. From government representatives and local authorities to representatives of European institutions, more and more decision makers act so that nonformal education has an accurate image.

These are the current challenges at European level: promotion and recognition of nonformal education. Several steps have been undertaken with the aim of pointing out the complementarities between formal and nonformal education, of creating validation and recognition systems and of allocating the necessary resources. This attempt to create a common approach at European level is, nevertheless, based on quite different national contexts.

France has been seriously questioning the idea of whether being “scolocentrique” is desirable. This is the reason why extracurricular activities are extremely well developed by the State itself.

In Lithuania, nonformal education is seen as part of the state policy, as the element that develops young people’s social competencies. The declared aim of nonformal education is to educate intelligent individuals that are capable of producing creative and feasible solutions and of getting involved in public life. The complementarity between formal, nonformal and informal education is regulated by the law on education.

The Netherlands have, in their turn, a long tradition of nonformal education, which is generally regarded as young people's leisure time. Many of the youth activities develop in partnership with schools and lately the focus is on young people's participation in public life.

Poland has a national strategy on youth, for the period 2003-2012, and one of the major components this strategy refers to is nonformal education.

If, for some countries, nonformal education represents an element of education policies, there also are countries in which the initiative in this field generally comes from NGOs or from the private sector and it is only now that strategies regarding formal-nonformal-informal education are being outlined. Because of these different national realities, the common European approach enforces itself with difficulty, especially since the subsidiarity principle applies: each national state has the right to take its own decisions in this respect.

Nonformal education and young people - recommendations, resolutions, reports

Starting with the Lisbon strategy, a series of meetings have taken place and communication papers have been worked on at European level, that outline certain general guidelines: overcoming obstacles between formal and nonformal education, recognizing nonformal education activities, recognizing the fact that nonformal education increases young people's chances of getting a job and of developing new competencies.

In the “White Paper on Youth” (2001), young people ask for greater recognition of nonformal education activities and for the creation of a coherent connection between formal and nonformal education. Young people want a better promotion of nonformal education that should as well be better understood. Equally, they consider that formal and nonformal education should be seen in connection and all involved stakeholders should cooperate so that nonformal education as a whole and the competencies and abilities it develops are visible and recognized.

The resolution on lifelong learning, from 2002, refers to the priority that should be given to the process of recognizing nonformal education. In 2003, The Council of Europe recommended all Member States to reaffirm that nonformal education is a key element of lifelong learning and develop specific indicators for its recognition; to encourage innovation in the field of nonformal education, by exchanging good practices, training methods, results of nonformal education; to support research in the field of nonformal education, as well as the use of the research results; to allocate the necessary resources.

The new European strategy on youth, launched in April 2009, „Youth Investing and Empowering” emphasis the fact that young people can gain competencies outside the formal education system. As a result, the stated goal is: „Together with formal education, young people's nonformal education must be supported in order to contribute to the lifelong learning process. Therefore, quality must increase, its results must be recognised and there's also a need to integrate it with formal education”.

Recognition of nonformal education is, as previously mentioned, another discussion topic on the European agenda. The UK has implemented a recognition system, Youth Award Scheme, that focuses on recognising abilities and competencies gained. The recognition tool that used to be used in Germany, ProfilPass, even though was not part of the official, formal system, records the competencies gained in other educational contexts.

Still, the debate is rather focused on the necessity of a formal (official) recognition system for nonformal education activities. There are voices that say that the focus should be put on creating personal portfolios. Denmark has already implemented an online system in which each citizen records competencies gained as a result of different activities.

The Youth in Action European programme has a tool for recognizing nonformal education - Youthpass. Anyone who takes part in projects financed under certain Actions of the Programme is entitled to receive a “Youthpass” certificate that describes and validates the nonformal and informal learning experience acquired during the project. It is through “Youthpass” that the European Commission ensures that the experience gained through the Programme is recognized as educational experience and as a period of nonformal and informal learning. This document can prove to be very useful for the future educational or professional path of the young person.

Nonformal education: Romanian context

With small, but significant steps, Romania begins to line up with the general European context regarding nonformal education, especially as far as promotion and recognition are concerned. Nonformal education activities that focus on acquiring skills and professional/personal abilities outside the formal education system gained increasing importance lately.

Similarly to what happens at European level, the concept of “nonformal education” has not yet a generally accepted and recognized definition in Romania. This generates difficulties when it comes to integrating the concept of nonformal education into other forms of education, especially formal education. The nonformal education is not regulated separately, by means of specific legislation. This type of education falls under the stipulations that refer to the education field in general.

One of the strategic priorities mentioned in the national strategy for developing secondary education refers to the necessity of creating a complementary relation between formal, informal and nonformal education. Developing infrastructure and logistics so that nonformal and informal continuous training can take place is, thus, a must.

Another priority direction in Romania, according to the national strategy for sustainable development, is promoting the principle of lifelong learning.

One priority of integrated or separated strategies concerning education in Romania is granting universal and continuous access to learning, in order to build and update competencies necessary for a steady participation in the society development. Building these competencies will be accomplished both by formal education projects, as well as by supporting and validating competencies acquired in nonformal and informal contexts designed for various age and social groups. Another stated priority refers to creating specific validation mechanisms for the competencies acquired in nonformal and informal learning contexts.

Despite these guidelines, nonformal education is still perceived in a parallel, rather than in a complementary relation to formal education. Research in this field is rarely systematic. The accreditation and certification policy through which the educational role of education and training organisms is recognized, irrespective of the systems they belong to, is incoherent. The only way nonformal content gains some space in the compulsory education is through the so-called optional subjects that are generally decided upon by teachers, rather than students.

Presently, the development level of nonformal education does not allow a systematic planning of activities, since there is no mechanism to evaluate the needs of the participants.

In addition to that, no one keeps track of the activities of nonformal education or of their beneficiaries. There is no database of the stakeholders that offer nonformal education activities/services on topics of interest for various age groups.

At European level, the activities of nonformal education are realized by trainers, facilitators, volunteers, peer educators that have gained competencies, abilities and certificates in certain fields of study. Therefore, nonformal education is implemented by qualified individuals.

In Romania, nonformal education activities are generally developed by nongovernmental organizations - associations, foundations, federations, unions, alone or in partnership with institutions of primary, secondary and tertiary education and with public local bodies.

Likewise, nonformal education is an objective for other institutions/organizations that develop educational activities on themes such as: personal development, participation, education for a healthy lifestyle.

The ministries, especially the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labor, are organisms that deal - up to a certain level - with nonformal education, by giving regulations, elaborating strategies etc.

Within youth clubs and children's palaces, the nonformal education process is random and unstructured. The offer of nonformal activities is based on the material and human resources available in these institutions. Museums also offer different nonformal education activities, as the community cultural centers used to.

Private companies, even though they do not focus on education as an end in itself, use specialized nonformal education programmes in order to develop their employees' skills and competencies. Besides, they sometimes finance nonformal education activities.

Therefore, in order to develop in an integrated and smooth way, education needs cooperation and partnership between several stakeholders: central and local authorities, the educational sector, the private sector, mass-media, the national and international nongovernmental sector, the local communities etc.

Games

Game has been widely used as one of the most important means of education, long before it became a research topic. All pedagogical systems have given games a certain role and importance.

Since games allow and involve adjusting to the participants, a generic description would not clarify this method enough.

Still, one can say games are fun to play, are based on volunteer participation, have more or less strict rules. Games are activities in which participants feel free and unconstrained. Moreover, it's through these activities that participants explore and use skills they are or are not aware of having and, as a matter of fact, their entire being.

Games are beyond the process of meeting certain needs. They interrupt this process and come forward as a temporary activity, which takes place by itself. This is how games appear to us - as an intermezzo of daily life.

Regardless of the category socio-educational games, society games, experiential games, games aim to:

- develop ambition;
- develop attention, insight and intelligence;
- stimulate senses;
- stimulate logic;
- stimulate the capacity of understanding and accepting others;
- develop solidarity and team work;
- develop behavioral abilities and skills;
- develop creativity and imagination;
- develop physical abilities;
- stimulate memory;
- increase general knowledge;
- increase reaction speed and dexterity.

For further details on games, do not hesitate to get in touch with the associations that gave us the possibility to discover this method during the Nonformal education laboratory.

For society games:

Mirakolis Games Center

Address: Str. N. Titulescu nr. 43, ap. 13, 400407, Cluj-Napoca,
Romania

Phone: +40 740 051 190

Fax: +40 264 553 190

Email: contact@mirakolix.org

Site: www.mirakolis.org

For experiential games:

AVATAR Association

Address: Bd. Theodor Pallady, nr 25, ap. 88, București,
Romania

Phone: +40 21 345 11 41

Email: office@asociatia-avatar.ro

For socio-educational animation games:

CREATIV Association

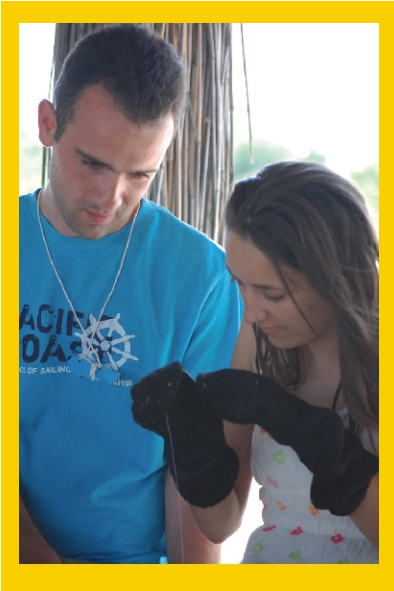
Address: Str. Pache Protopopescu, nr. 104, Sector 2,
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Email: office@creativ.org.ro

Site: www.creativ.org.ro



Life Coaching

Coaching represents a synthesis of various beliefs, methods, theories and successful techniques taken from psychology, management, personal development and sports. Coaching basically aims to help people fulfill their potential as individuals, on several levels (professional, financial, emotional etc.), by defining certain clear goals and figuring out the most appropriate ways of achieving them.

How many times have you heard that we only use 4% to 10% of our potential? Have you ever wondered what happens with the rest of it? How could we gain access to it? Who would you be, if only you found out how to develop yourself to the maximum? Life coaching - through transactional analysis - is one way to do this.

Transactional analysis is an explanatory personality theory, a psycho-therapeutic system dedicated to personal change and development, a system of inter-relational communication that can be used by individuals and groups to develop their potential to the maximum.

Each and every one of us lives in a certain framework that offers us certainty, comfort, the ease of using the same skills, the capacity to anticipate. This makes our map of the world, of ourselves, of the others and of the connections between all these. What happens when our framework no longer matches the reality we live in or a particular situation we face?

What changes do we need? How can we go through the transition phase? How do we redefine ourselves and build a proper identity for ourselves and in relation to others?

What are the learning objectives of this method?

- raising awareness of ourselves and of the transactions with those around us;
- developing emotional intelligence;
- improving communication;
- access to own resources;
- assertiveness;
- gaining emotional autonomy;
- increasing self esteem.

What are the benefits of this method?

- increasing awareness of ourselves and our potential;
- identifying options for achieving our goals;
- setting up clear development directions;
- improving performances;
- setting up objectives and identifying priorities;
- Increasing efficiency;

- overcoming internal and external obstacles;
- improving the decisions-making capacity;
- developing communication abilities and inter-relations.

Some of the tools used in this method are active listening, asking questions, rephrasing (when necessary), confrontation.

For further details on Life Coaching, do not hesitate to get in touch with Cedes Association that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.



Cedes Association

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Walt Disney Strategy

Walt Disney brought an added value by giving life to unforgettable animation characters and not just in the commercial meaning of the word. In Neuro-linguistic programming, he is himself turned into a character that Robert Dilts identifies and proposes for “modelling” and re-invention.

Walt Disney's ability to connect his innovative creativity with a successful business strategy certainly qualifies himself as an entertainment genius. In a certain way, the field Walt Disney chose, cartoons, describes the fundamental process of all geniuses: take something that belongs exclusively to the imaginary sphere and bring it into the real life, to generate positive influences.

One of the aims of Neuro-linguistic programming is to elaborate and explain successful strategic

Thinking maps of people that have special talents, such as Walt Disney. NLP explores the way in which people use their fundamental mental abilities, such as seeing, hearing, feeling, in order to organize themselves and perform in the surrounding world.

Just as A. Einstein, who stated that imagination is more important than knowledge, W. Disney took all his fantasies seriously, explaining that “animation can explain everything that human mind cannot conceive”.

This Walt Disney micro-strategy demonstrates, in a simple and systematic way, the method through which, during the creative process, realistic and plausible ideas take shape.

Working in the spirit of this strategy in order to obtain efficient results involves clearly distinguishing between and coordinating the three sub-processes - approaches or conceptual positions of an individual: the Dreamer, the Realist and the Critic.

The Dreamer comes with discontinuous, different, sometimes amazing ideas. The Realist is anchored in daily life, in things that have previously been checked and proved. The Critic has a perception filter through which he opposes, is skeptical and brings arguments.

The stages of this strategy are similar to a “download” process to different databases. One begins from a Meta starting point and travels through different folders that store and manage information.

The three faces contrast with each other during this micro-strategy, and in the end set up a congruency that is specific to change management strategies.

So, one will see how a micro-strategy used from the perspective of a creative plan proves to be useful in a management plan, self-management and even team-management.

This strategic trip involves location “anchors”, “storms” between the composing parts of the strategy, going back to harbors and the final congruen silence, full of initiative.

For further details on the Walt Disney strategy, do not hesitate to get in touch with the National Association of NLP that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.

The National Association of NLP

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Mentorship

Mentorship involves developing a relationship between a more experienced person, with knowledge in a certain field, and a less experienced person, who wants to acquire knowledge in that field and develop new abilities. Even though there are different approaches and branches of mentorship, mentorship is based on two principles: communication and developing a relationship between the “mentor” and the “apprentice”.

A mentor has relevant experience in a certain field of activity and he/she can and will share his/her experience with other people who need it or who need help in order to acquire certain abilities or competencies. Basically, a mentor is a person who helps others to discover and develop themselves.

What are the objectives of this method?

As a method, mentorship aims to help, in the broad sense of the word, people who feel they cannot acquire certain abilities or knowledge. Having competencies in certain fields, mentors share their experience so that they can help their “apprentices”.

One says the mentor is that person who doesn't give you fish, but teaches you how to fish.

Anyone can benefit from mentorship, as long as he/she wants to and feels it could be helpful. One can set up mentorship relationships for personal or professional development aims. Mentorship can be very efficient when working with young people, disadvantaged people and children.

There are 10 rules to be observed for an efficient mentorship relationship:

1. Be the friend of the one you want to train/guide! You must establish a connection and create an atmosphere of equality between you and the person you are trying to help.
2. Set up down to earth goals! Your goals must be focused on creating a relationship with the person in front of you. Afterwards, in the mentorship work, try looking at the person as a whole!
3. Try having fun! Especially if you are working with youth or disadvantaged children, this is an essential aspect in order for you to gain their trust.
4. Give the apprentice the possibility to choose! It's important he/she has a word to say in choosing the activities you plan to do together.
5. Approach him/her with a positive attitude! Try becoming a real support for him/her and maintain a positive attitude.
6. Give your partner part of the control! Do not force subjects and pay attention to what he/she wants.
7. Listen! It's better if you are perceived as a friend, rather than a figure of authority.
8. Respect the confidence he/she gives you!
9. Your relationship as a mentor is with the person in front of you. Not with his/her family or friends!
10. You are responsible for creating the relationship.

For further details on Mentorship, do not hesitate to get in touch with CENTRAS Regional Centre for NGOs Resources Constanța that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.

CENTRAS Regional Centre for NGOs Resources Constanța

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Transcend method

A problem does not necessarily have to end up in a violent act or degenerate in a conflict. With the proper approach, through creativity, by explaining aims and through dialogue, any problem can be overcome. In short, this is what TRANSCEND method aims to do.

This method makes a difference between conflict and violence, by identifying ways of turning conflicts into nonviolent actions and by avoiding any type of violence. The principles of this method apply to any conflict.

The guiding principle of TRANSCEND method is transformation: transforming the conflict, changing the attitude, replacing contradictions with creative approaches. This method is oriented towards the effort of overcoming what seems to be a conflict at first sight, towards dislocating the conflict from where it is and replacing it.

How do you apply TRANSCEND method?

Irrespective of its nature, a conflict seems to have a life of its own, a general “life cycle”: before, during and after the burst of violence. Based on this, TRANSCEND method comes forward with a few stages through which the conflict can convert, with the help of the so called “conflict/peace workers” - neutral persons that wish to get involved as neutral, unbiased facilitators.

Dialogue is the basic instrument used in exploring the conflict. The peace workers have separate discussions with both sides, in turn, without trying to convince or win any of them. It's a time for brainstorming, questions and answers, in which the peace workers must prove tactful: even though they are neutral to the conflict, they should keep in mind that the two sides are not and that there is suffering involved.

There are a few guidelines for this method:

The conflict theory: conflict is presented from both perspectives: as a damaging force, but also having a creative and changing potential. In order to analyze the conflict, it's better to use the conflict triangle: attitude-behavior-contradiction.

Practicing the conflict: One must have a creative approach and show a nonviolent attitude and demonstrate empathy: the two sides must be understood from within and one should identify the nonviolent approaches considered to be efficient and the way to overcome the disagreements. One can use here the concepts empathy-nonviolence-creativity.

The violence theory: one talks about direct, structural and cultural violence (the violence triangle) that directly or indirectly causes suffering and the culture that justifies it.

Practicing violence: the roots of violence are identified.

Transformation: contradictions are being replaced with creativity, one tries changing attitudes and violent behavior.

Peace dialogues: the situation and possible solutions are being dealt with in common; it's crucial that the dialogue between the two sides is facilitated.

Transforming the conflict: this can happen at all levels: global, social, inter- and intra-personal.

Transforming peace: the two sides have to reach an attitude showing availability, so that they can create a dialogue and continue cooperating once the violence has stopped.

Using this method also means including other methods of nonformal education: games and simulation, the statues characteristic to Forum Theater, creativity.

For further details on the TRANSCEND method, do not hesitate to get in touch with PATRIR Association that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.



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Open Space Method

The Open Space method was created in the 80s by the organizational consultant Harrison Owen, who discovered that people who joined his conferences were more interested in the coffee breaks rather than in the official presentations they were given.

Taking this into consideration, Owen created a totally new way of holding a conference. The Open Space Conference does not have lecturers previously decided upon or a fixed working programme. In return, the participants discover, during the first hour of discussions, how they will create the conference themselves. Before knowing it, they become teachers and participants for themselves.

The Open Space method, as Owen puts it himself, is in itself more organized than any organizing committee. It's at the same time chaotic, productive and efficient. No one controls anything. The first rule of this method is that anyone who joins such an event must be interested in the subject and willing to create things based on that.

How does it work?

The participants sit in a circle or create several concentric circles. Flipcharts and markers are put in the middle of the circle(s).

At the opening of the event, the organizers present the format, the chosen topic and the facilitator.

The facilitator then invites everyone who feels ready to come in the centre of the circle, take a marker and a flipchart and suggest a discussion topic connected to the general subject. Those who suggest topics will become facilitators of the discussions to be held on those particular topics.

The facilitator reads the topics and, when necessary, can negotiate on them. The proposed topics become discussion topics in small groups. There is time allocated for each topic. The participants that have not suggested a topic are invited to join one of the initiated discussions. One important rule is the rule of mobility: every participant can move to another group once he/she feels there is nothing else he/she wants to bring to the discussion or learn out of it .

There are four important guidelines:

- 1.Any person that joins the discussion is the most suitable person to do so.
- 2.Any topic is a good topic.
- 3.No matter when it starts, it's the perfect time.
- 4.When it's over, it's over.

According to the aim of the event, the discussions can end with recommendations, conclusions, questions, action plans or solutions.

For further details on the Open Space method, do not hesitate to get in touch with The Foundation for Civil Society Development that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.

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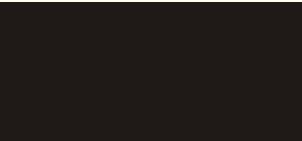
Site: www.fdsc.ro, www.stiriong.ro




Labyrinth theatre

"I am a different person!" This seems to be the reaction of all those who experimented labyrinth theatre. A type of theatre which can hardly be explained and defined, but which one can feel, experiment and discover.

It is a journey back towards your own self. A journey towards the "heart" of the labyrinth where you can mirror yourself. A game which goes from searching to a story and then back to searching your own self. A theatre performance which is less of a performance and more of a game, a fairy tale world built from few words and more images, part of them real, part of them imagined. An experiment through which your being, lost in the labyrinth, creates its own mental labyrinth, which helps it to find the way. Labyrinth theatre consists out of 2 categories of actors: constructors and participants.



The constructors are the ones building the plot of the play, who establish the itinerary and the moments which the participants will experiment.



The participants are following the itinerary, going through an extremely intense sensorial experience. They are facing their own reactions in front of the unknown, their fears and expectations.



The things they learn in this experiment have the power to change them.

Which are the objectives of this method?

A clearly outlined theme or a story with a defined purpose can be used, but at the same time labyrinth theatre can rely only on experiment, trial, the purpose in this case being that participants go through different experiences which can ease/facilitate self discovery. In the labyrinth theatre there are no fixed rules, but only some general principles that have to be followed. Otherwise, imagination and experimentation are a must. One can actually build a real labyrinth, but you can as well experiment this type of theatre without the physical construction, but respecting the idea of an itinerary.

The participants can be blind folded or not, taken through daylight or darkness. The basic idea is for them to experiment all types of sensorial emotions, to get into the game. "It is not just the idea that all your senses are involved in the process, even though this is the truth, but the fact that you lose your secure and normal environment, your points of reference, give a meaning to the world you live in". At the end, the participants note down their impressions and analyze their reactions.

What does labyrinth theatre look like?

"From all around you are being assaulted by information and at one point you are brought to a building where you have to follow the way shown by a string; when this string ends, you hear a strange music which tells you to follow it. When the music stops, a Portuguese girl will talk in her language which you don't understand and she starts to move her hands around you strangely and take you to a room where the general impression is that you are walking on the ceiling, looking at yourself in a mirror. This effect creates a rupture between the brains and the legs and you don't know anymore where you can step.

Next you end up in a room where you are being taken care of by three young girls who are giving you a massage, they feed you, they charm you with several scents, and then you are being taken out of there, you are given a pen in your hand and you are asked to write your impressions on this experience.”

For further details on Labyrinth theatre, do not hesitate to get in touch with Epsilon III Association that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.





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Educational theatre

Theatre should not be understood only as an artistic and cultural experience. Theatre also has an educational role, and the fact that through dramatic acts actual/current problems and concrete day to day situations can be envisaged, gives theatre a special force.

Somehow these are the main ideas that educational theatre derives from. Educational theatre is part of the simulation methods category and is supposed to dramatize real events of the daily life. But the whole process of the educational theatre combines also other active and formative methods like role playing, creative techniques, communication techniques. Because the educational theatre is played by regular normal people, and not professional actors, it is also a learning method, a method of team work, experimentation and illustration of an idea, creating a story line.

Stages in educational theatre:

In order to put this method of nonformal learning into practice , you must bear in mind the following steps:

1. Setting up the team which will work on the play
2. Establishing the theme of the play and its title
3. Creating the plot
4. Distributing the roles among the team, considering individual's abilities
5. Rehearsing each act of the play
6. Establishing the location and the days for the rehearsal
7. Promoting the play at community level
8. Performing the play.

The duration of the play differs from play to play, depending on the complexity of the plot. The best duration to set up a play would be 2 months, out of which one month represents the creation of the plot, interpretation of the roles, ensuring necessary resources, and the other month consists of promotion and presentation of the play.

Which are the learning objectives of this method?

Educational theatre firstly aims at involving young people in different actual problems and at stimulating their creativity. The theme which they choose, the way they choose to reflect it, the plot which they create... all these things aim to develop their creativity.

In the realization of the play all the team members are involved since the very beginning. The plot of the play is elaborated together, the way it will be played and the distribution of roles are set up in common.

These things contribute to the development of the team spirit of those who are involved in the play. Additionally, the educational theatre aims at developing new abilities, for example acting, even if the aim is not to train future actors, but to involve young people in projects where they can face their own realities and problems and try to solve them.

Why use this method?

By applying this method one can reach several concrete results, both at participants' level, who will develop their creative, communication, collaboration skills, their state of well-being, self-confidence and confidence in others and at the level of community, through development of cultural

ways to organise the leisure time of young people. One can also organize competitions or small festivals where the plays can be evaluated according to criteria like: the quality of the plot, the theme, the way it was interpreted, the originality of the costumes and the play.

For further details on the educational theatre, do not hesitate to get in touch with the University of Bacău that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.



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Forum Theatre

It's not any type of theatre, but forum theatre - which means that the theatre play is nothing but an opportunity to raise a problem and to create the proper context, for those who attend the performance to exchange ideas, express opinions and get involved. In order for this to happen, members of the audience can after the performance of the play become “actors”, switching places with the characters previously giving life to a situation. Once they become “actors”, the flow of the action and the end are up to them, because they have the freedom to change the attitudes of the characters they have replaced and to take other decisions. And all these give birth to debates.

What are the objectives of forum theatre?

Forum theatre is a social intervention tool, since the themes that the plays tackle are essential. The plays can be focused on discrimination issues, on the problems faced by people with disabilities, involvement, labelling and ignorance. The theme must be chosen so that the audience resonates with it and arouses its emotions.

The situation that is presented in a forum theatre play is one of oppression, a situation out of which the main character does not know how to escape. Therefore, eventually, he/she is defeated. The situation in itself stirs emotions in the members of the audience who, as a result, want to get involved and replace characters, so that they can change the end of the play.

The new situations created are to be seen as pretexts for all those present to discuss. Because the involvement in the play is just one step. In real life, the important thing is initiative. It's through a play like this that one can foster a change in mentalities.

The oppressor and the oppressed in forum theatre

In a forum theatre play, there are two main categories of characters: oppressors and oppressed. As a rule, there is one main character, the oppressed, who has allies and different categories of oppressors. There also is a mediator, the “joker”, who has the initial role of presenting the play and connecting the different acts. The joker is the one that, once the first performance of the play is over, explains to the audience that the play will be put on stage again, and that they can take the place of a character. It's also with the help of the joker that discussions are initiated on the theme of the play and the twists caused by the spectators' interventions.

Steps in forum theatre

Creating the scenario: it's a must that the scenario reflects situations from the community where the performance is going to take place. The plays must be personalized and adjusted to the community, so that the impact is strong enough in order to generate reactions.

The performance: it's better if there are not too many “actors” involved; the ideal number of spectators is between 60 and 100.

Once the performance has taken place, the joker discusses with the public on what happened, on the reflected situation, the types of characters in the play, the relations between them. The play is put on stage once again, with the same “actors”, with the difference that now the mediator invites those in the audience to stop the action whenever they want to interfere and replace a character, in order to change the action. After each intervention, the joker initiates a debate with the public in order to analyze the new approach and the chances it fosters for a new ending to the play. The realism of the solution is also analyzed and the audience comes with pro and against arguments on whether to keep the proposed change. Once the public decides what is to be kept and what not, the action is continued.

As the final version of the play is reached, the debate with the audience continues. The focus is on how the solutions That the spectators came up with can foster change in real life, too.

For further details on the Forum Theater, do not hesitate to get in touch with Save the Children Association Mangalia that offered us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.

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PhotoVoice

Photography and social inequity. These are the two key concepts that PhotoVoice deals with, as a nonformal education method. In other words, it is through photos that one can give voice to his/her opinions, can point out different situations, can report problems and send others a message.

What are the objectives of this method?

PhotoVoice has three main objectives:

- to allow participants to photograph (literally and figuratively) the problems and strengths of their community
- to identify important aspects through group discussions and photography
- To draw the attention of decision makers and the community as a whole

For those who take part in a project that uses PhotoVoice, the aim is to present their opinions by means of pictures they take themselves. These opinions can, afterwards, lead to a change for the better. PhotoVoice encourages personal development, participation, expressing opinions. During the PhotoVoice process, participants gain new abilities: photographic skills, working with digital images, creating artistic products.

Stages in PhotoVoice

PhotoVoice involves organizing several sessions and developing things in a pre-settled order.

Session 1 - Introducing the participants

Session 2 - Training (working with the camera)

Sessions 3-7 - Taking pictures and exchanging pictures

Sessions 8-10 - Writing the comments to the pictures and planning social actions in order to spread the message

Even though there are some steps that need to be followed, so that the whole process is efficient, one must not forget that PhotoVoice is what the participants want it to be.

They are the ones who think of the themes to be tackled, the objectives to be achieved, they are the ones taking the pictures and choosing the ones to be exhibited and they are the ones that write the comments attached to the images.

In addition, one must not forget - when applying this method - that social action is essential for PhotoVoice. A project isn't meant to end after the pictures have been taken. They must have an educational role and inspire the community, therefore they must be taken out to the community.

In this respect, mass-media, political decision makers, the different events where the pictures can be exhibited and the presentations of the project are essential.

For further details on the PhotoVoice method, do not hesitate to get in touch with CeRe-Resource Centre for Public Participation that offered us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.

CeRe - the Resource Centre for Public Participation

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Support group for public speaking

Fluent and convincing speech, proper vocabulary, humor, gestures, creating a relationship with the listeners. Does it seem impossible?

For many people, public speaking is a real impediment and a real reason for fear. But since sometimes we have to convey a message to a smaller or larger group of people, public speaking can become an art we could master.

Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured way, with the aim of informing, influencing or entertaining the listeners.

As any other communication mean, public speaking has some basic elements that can be phrased as: “Who says what?”, “To whom does he/she talk to?”, “What means does he/she uses?”, “What is the impact?”

What are the objectives of this method?

Why should one be able to speak in front of a public? The reasons can be plenty: to send information, to motivate people, to entertain them by story-telling. Good speakers are those who know to alter the mood of the listeners, not just to inform them. Public speaking can influence, convince and entertain.

What does public speaking consist of?

For some people, public speaking seems to be a gift. Many times, though, their entertaining speeches hide a real training. In order to be a good speaker, one needs to get training on how to use gesture, oratory, voice control, nonverbal language, vocabulary, even humor. Exercises on how to establish a connection with the public are also important. Training in order to become a good speaker differs a lot and depends on who does it. The basic things one follows are those already mentioned, as well as preparation to give a speech without prior notice and ways of overcoming nerves.

Principles for a successful speech

Knowing very well what you have to say, before giving the speech, is the most important thing. One must be prepared and know more things on the chosen theme than those that are actually included in the speech. Don't rely on the fact that, if you know what you have to say, you will say it in the proper manner. Rehearse the speech beforehand, loudly.

If you want to use electronic devices, it's advisable to rehearse their use.
Keep the time!

In case you have time before the speech, talk to those in the public. It will be easier afterwards. Equally, it's good to be familiar with the room you are going to talk in.

Be relaxed and start your speech by addressing the public. You gain time. Take a break, smile and in case you want to, count to 3 before you begin. Try turning your nerves into enthusiasm.

It can be useful to imagine yourself while you speak to the public and watch the public while it applauds. Do not apologize if you are nervous or have small flaws. Focus on what you have to say and on the public, not on what you feel.

Personalize your speech. It has to represent you. Under no circumstances should you read word by word from a piece of paper or try to imitate other speakers.

For further details on Public Speaking, do not hesitate to get in touch with the Junior Chamber International that offered us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education Laboratory.

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The living library

Have you ever thought about the prejudices and stereotypes you have about other people? Have you ever thought that other people might have prejudices about you?

If you have prejudices regarding Muslims or Jews, politicians or ticket inspectors, priests or therapists, feminists or LGBT people (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), ex-convicts, ecologists or blondes, but you never had the chance to talk to them and find out what their story really is, that means you are ready to face your own prejudices and stereotypes.

What is a living library?

A living library works as an ordinary library where readers come and borrow books for a limited period of time. Once they read these books, they return them and, in case they want to, they can borrow another book.

There are two major differences:

1. Books are living people
2. Books build a personal dialogue with the reader.

What is the role of the Living library?

The living library acts to promote respect for human rights and human dignity, to draw attention on diversity in all its forms, to foster dialogue between people. Why is this dialogue necessary?

Because, often, differences between people are not viewed as being resources, but most of the times these differences lead to discrimination, suspicion and rejection.

Who are the books?

The books from the living library are people who represent groups which face or could face prejudices and stereotypes (gender, age, education, job, ethnic, race, religion related stereotypes etc.) and which could be victims of discrimination or social exclusion. They can be people with stories that could offer the reader an unique learning experience in the field of diversity.

The participation of a book will offer the visitors of the library a new perspective on what prejudice, stereotype and discrimination mean.

How does the living library work?

When you arrive at the library for the first time, a librarian will welcome you with a catalogue and a library pass; once you become a reader in the living library, you will have to accept the policy of the living library and its operating rules. You can choose a book you want to read from the catalogue. Many books are available in different languages.

If the book you want to read is in a language you don't know, you can be offered a living dictionary.

In case the book you want to read is already borrowed by another reader, you can choose another book or come back in 50 minutes.

You can spend 50 minutes with your book; afterwards you have to give it back to the librarian. The library services are free of charge.



Street animation

Street animation reaches those places that any other form of art cannot reach: it creates action on asphalt, sand or grass, magic in a parking lot, performance in the middle of the town. It follows you and those like you and surprises you in places you wouldn't expect to find it. It usually is something provocative, weird, interesting, energetic, overwhelming or a combination of all these.

Main characteristics of street animation

Street animation includes different artistic expression forms, among which theater, music, circus, clownery, dance, carnival, pyrotechnics and many others. Street animation takes place in an open space, in public and is accessible to everyone and to any number of people.

One can witness street animation for as long as he/she wants to, from the moment he/she wants to.

The most important aspect, even fundamental, is the contact with the public. The by-walker, watcher, spectator plays the most important role. The whole show is based on him/her and unfolds around him/her. Often, he/she does not stay a mere watcher.

Why does this field exist, why do so many people invest time, energy and creativity to create something that surprises you and impresses you in an unforgettable and special way? There cannot be a single answer, since street animation is something so complex and diverse that the reasons for its existence are just as complex and diverse.

What are the objectives of this method?

Some of the objectives of street animation are to:

- create social cohesion, switch the focus from the individual to the community
- send a message in a nonformal way
- offer the possibility for people to access certain art forms
- bring culture to people and especially to those who don't have access to it
- Educate people regarding a certain theme
- raise public awareness on certain subjects.

The objectives of street animation are diverse, vast and obviously meet the needs of society, of people in general, of artists, of culture and even of political strategies.

Street animation has been and is used in order to send a social message. It is used in projects or campaigns addressed to groups that are in need or in activities that aim at changing attitudes and decisions. This is what makes street animation a tool that is worth exploring and properly valorizing.

For further details on the Living Library and Street Animation, do not hesitate to get in touch with A.R.T. Fusion Association that gave us the possibility to discover this method at the Nonformal education laboratory.

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