

14

Fotoromanzo

A fun group activity to reflect on, identify and document group learning



Aims

- To turn a dry review exercise into an activity that encourages closer participant attention and active involvement
- To provide an alternative tool for documenting group learning
- To raise awareness of the different challenges and opportunities involved in learning as a team



Group

- 4-5 people/group



Needs

Space:

- One large working room

Material:

- Computer and digital camera for each group, with presentation software (Openoffice, Power Point, Google Docs, etc.)
- Data projector for the final plenary show



Time

- 1 hr



Step by step

Give a short introduction to the concept of fotoromanzo and show some samples of one:

"A fotoromanzo is a typical expression of popular Italian culture, a mixing of romantic novels, photography, comics and cinema. It is a very 60s and 70s thing that influenced and educated generations of women in Italy (in 1976, 8,600,000 copies of fotoromanzi were sold each month). They are based on simple stories, told in pictures with the classic comic speech bubbles. The plot is usually about romance or good over evil, with black vs. white views of life (the rich are evil, the poor are good, those who love are betrayed and so on...).

Besides this sometimes simplistic approach to life, a fotoromanzo is a very useful way to record and document a learning activity. You have to show your learning process as a group and turn it into a presentation: a Fotoromanzo! This is exactly what we are asking you to do during the training course (today)."

Identifying & documenting

Describing outcomes

Introducing Youthpass

Role of facilitator



Break the group up into subgroups of four-six participants. Read out the rules and timing (rules and timing can vary depending on the choice between a basic version or a more complex course-long activity):

“Think of a story that portrays your learning experience during the project. Discuss your idea within your group and, as a group, choose one person to act it out. Make a fotoromanzo out of it. Go out, find the perfect setting and start taking pictures. Using presentation software (Openoffice, Power Point, Google Docs, etc.), create your fotoromanzo.”

If you want to complete the exercise on the same day, give them one whole morning or afternoon for the production process. If you are doing the course-long version, participants can use the time after sessions (or set aside some time at the end of each day). Keep in mind that you will need to allow time during the day for the fotoromanzo, since daylight may be necessary for outdoor pictures, depending on the setting.

When the groups return for their presentations, get them to act out each fotoromanzo while projecting it on a wall. After the presentations, open up the floor for a debriefing session on why a fotoromanzo can be a metaphor for the learning activity.



Debriefing

- Why have you chosen this story?
- How is your learning or the learning process shown in this fotoromanzo?
- How did you, as a group, decide to create this plot?
- How were the roles assigned within your group?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- Was it only knowledge? How are values and skills represented in your work?



Adaption

- This exercise is usually done in small groups, so you could easily integrate participants that may need some extra support. For instance, you could replace the speech bubbles with pre-recorded sound (suggested software: Audacity) and get them to act out the piece, guided by the sound on a headset.
- As for participants with other difficulties that are not physical, the activity is very easy to adjust to everybody's needs. Those who do not like to perform can take on another role, as the photographer or the computer designer.
- As for the learning, acting out a concept is a powerful way of understanding it. However, a 'live' performance can be too stressful for some young people. You can opt to just show the fotoromanzo without acting it out on stage.
- The fotoromanzo can be easily adapted as a way of recording the learning process in different activities, such as training courses, youth exchanges or group EVS projects. As for adapting it to diverse target groups, the only requirement is basic digital skills.



Tips

- The exercise was originally designed to be used as a team-building activity in multicultural environments, like training courses or youth exchanges. It has been tested several times, with success. It has proved to be very effective, both as a simple team-building activity and as a simulation (longer version) of the project learning cycle.
- In a high-pressure situation (scarce time, limited number of pictures, mandatory participation by all members, and internal team communication issues), it can bring out very complex and diverse dynamics. Also, when choosing the topic, some attention should be paid to the abilities of the participants to turn it into a story.
- Best results can be obtained if you give them more than two hours to create the stories. Last but not least, when planning your schedule, do not forget that if there are several groups, there should be enough time to go through all the fotoromanzi. Five groups can take up to 30 minutes just to show them, without any debriefing time.



Handouts Download the handout from the SALTO Toolbox:

www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/1182.htm



Created by Alexandro Jan Lai and Marija Pilipović (adapted by Juan Ratto-Nielsen for the topic of learning)
www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/1182.html & <http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fotoromanzo>