FUNDACJA INNOWACYJNEJ EDUKACJI PRESENTS

Clown path

culture, learning, ownership, work, non formal

MURZASICHLE, 7-15.06.2021

Erasmus+

About the project...

The training course Clown - culture, learning, ownership, work, non-formal Path; took place in Poland/ Murzasichle from 7th until 15th of June 2021.

The main aim of the project was development of youth workers competencies in the field of using clown methodology for social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and for preventing violent radicalization of youth.

The project gave give participants opportunity to learn and experience new methods, understand, develop their competences, give them opportunity to train to perform using clown methodology, to reflect on those methods, to analize them and to use them in practice, to create their own plays, clown activities and games which would enrich their experience and competences in using those methods back in their local communities.

"Family is the theatre of the spiritual drama, the place where things happen, especially the things that matter."

G.K. Chesterton

Improv!

Improvisation, or improv, is a form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment. Often improvisers will take a suggestion from the audience, or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started.

Improv is unique in that if you see a performance, that's it... there will never be another show exactly like it ever done again. Improv is different every time.

Improvised shows can differ between different improv troupes, depending on their training, their goals, and their style. Sometimes improv is purely comedy-based, while other times it can be a mix of both comedy and drama, or just drama. Like scripted theatre – without the script, with the actors acting, directing themselves, writing the plot, and interacting with each other all at the same time without previous planning.

Improv is spontaneous, entertaining, and fun. But like all great things, you'll have to see it first hand to fully experience and appreciate it.*

Why using drama in learning activities?

Using drama and drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages students to speak, it gives them the chance to communicate, even with limited language, using non-verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expression. There are also a number of other factors which makes drama a very powerful tool in the language classroom. Desiatova (2009) outlined some of the areas where drama is very useful to language learners and teachers, and they are listed below;

1-To give learners an experience (dry-run) of using the language for genuine communication and real life purposes; and by generating a need to speak. Drama is an ideal way to encourage learners to guess the meaning of unknown language in a context. Learners will need to use a mixture of language structures and functions ("chunks") if they want to communicate successfully.

2- To help learners gain the confidence and self-esteem needed to use the language spontaneously. By taking a role, students can escape from their everyday identity and "hide behind" another character. When you give students special roles, it encourages them to be that character and abandon their shyness

"I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being"

Oskar Wilde

By taking a role, students can escape from their everyday identity and "hide behind" another character.
When you give students special roles, it encourages them to be that character and abandon their shyness.

3- To bring the real world into the classroom (problem solving, research, consulting dictionaries, real time and space, cross-curricular content)

When using drama the aim can be more than linguistic, teachers can use topics from other subjects: the students can act out scenes from history, they can work on ideas and issues that run through the curriculum.

Drama can also be used to introduce the culture of the new language, through stories and customs, and with a context for working on different kinds of behavior.

4- To emulate the way students naturally acquire language through play, make- believe and meaningful interaction.

5- To make what is learned memorable through direct experience and affect
(emotions) for learners with different learning styles.

6- When students dramatize, they use all the channels (sight, hearing, and physical bodies)and each student will draw to the one that suits them best.

This means they will all be actively involved in the activity and the language will "enter" through the channel most appropriate for them.

7- To stimulate learners' intellect and imagination

8- To develop students' ability to empathize with others and thus become better communicators

9- Helps learners acquire language by focusing on the message they are conveying, not the form of their utterance
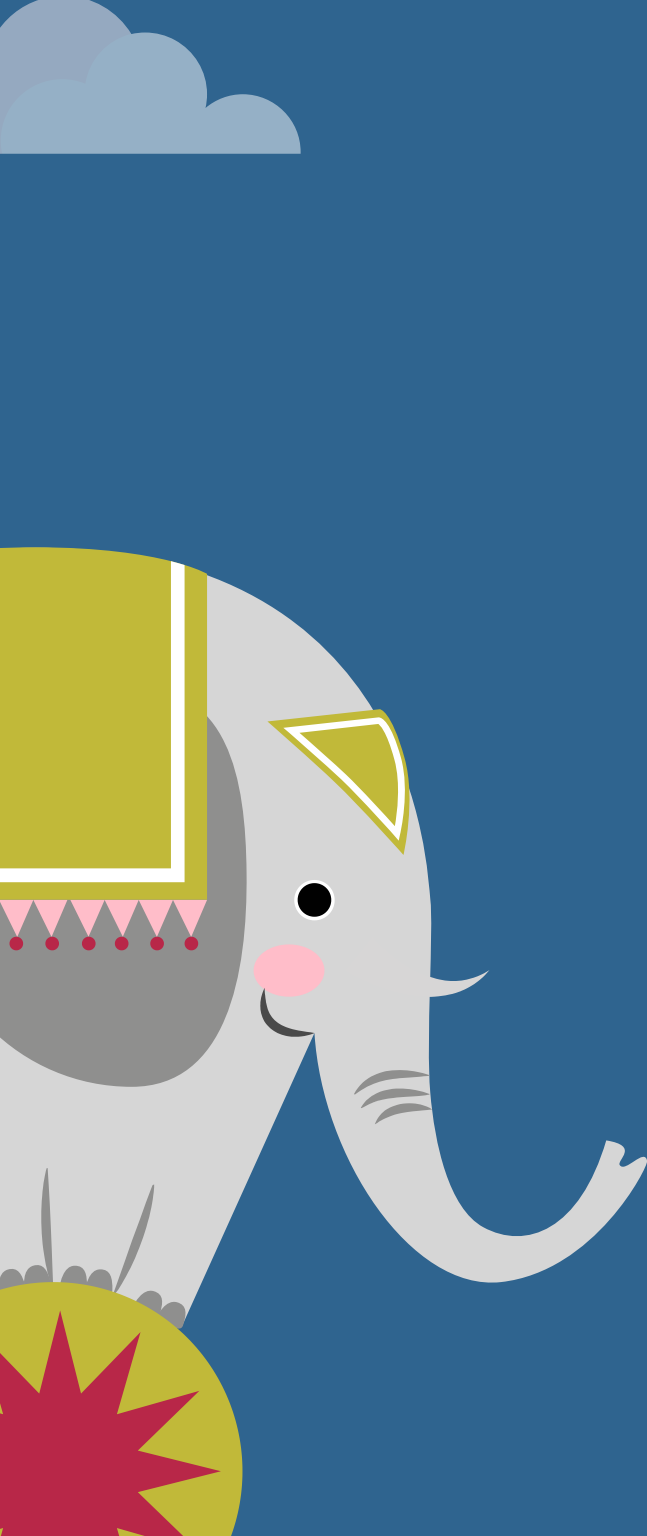
Drama is a powerful language teaching tool that involves all of the students interactively all of the class period.

Drama can also provide the means for connecting students' emotions and cognition as it enables students to take risks with language and experience the connection between thought and action.

Learning process inevitably involves a balance between receptive and productive skills; here drama can effectively deal with this requirement.

Drama also fosters and maintains students' motivation, by providing an atmosphere which is full of fun and entertainment. In so doing, it engages feelings and attention and enriches the learners' experience of the learning process.

Fleming (2006) stated that drama is inevitably learner-centered because it can only operate through active cooperation.

It is therefore a social activity and thus embodies much of the theory that has emphasized the social and communal, as opposed to the purely individual, aspects of learning.

The use of drama techniques and activities in the classroom provides exciting opportunities for foreign language learners to use the NFE in concrete "situations".

There are different ways in which drama can be defined.

And to mention only one of them, Susan Holden (1982) takes drama to mean" any kind of activity where learners are asked either to portray themselves or to portray someone else in an imaginary situation". In other words, drama is concerned with the world of "let's pretend" ; it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person".

As mentioned before drama can foster the oral communication of the students, let's us now find out how drama can do that

"Drama draws upon both cognitive and affective domains, thus restoring the importance of feeling as well as thinking. "

Alan Maley, Alan Duff

Drama in a classroom

There are many reasons in favour of using drama activities and techniques in the learning activities during NFE class. First of all it is entertaining and fun, and can provide motivation to learn.

It can provide varied opportunities for different uses of language and because it engages feelings it can provide rich experience of language for the participants.

Maley (2005) listed many points supporting the use of drama and these are:

1- It integrates language skills in a natural way. Careful listening is a key feature. Spontaneous verbal expression is integral to most of the activities; and many of them require reading and writing, both as part of the input and the output.

2- It integrates verbal and non verbal aspects of communication, thus bringing together both mind and body, and restoring the balance between physical and intellectual aspects of learning.

3- It draws upon both cognitive and affective domains, thus restoring the importance of feeling as well as thinking.

4- By fully contextualizing the language, it brings the classroom interaction to life through an intensive focus on meaning.

5- The emphasis on whole-person learning and multi-sensory inputs helps learners to capitalize on their strength and to extend their range.
In doing so, it offers unequalled opportunities for catering to learner differences.

6- It fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem and confidence; and through this, motivation is developed.

7- Motivation is likewise fostered and sustained through the variety and sense of expectancy generated by the activities.

8- There is a transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners which is where it belongs.

9- It encourages an open, exploratory style of learning where creativity and the imagination are given scope to develop. This, in turn, promotes risk-taking, which is an essential elements in effective language learning

10-It has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere, thus facilitating the formation of a bonded group, which learns together.

11-It is an enjoyable experience.

12-It is low-resource. For most of the time, all you need is a 'roomful of human beings

Drama activities can be used to provide opportunities for the students to be involved actively.

The activities involve the student's whole personality and not only his mental process. Effective learning can be achieved when the student involves himself in the tasks and is motivated to use the target language.

Several scientific investigation have demonstrated that creative, instructional and educational drama activities have positive contribution to the general education process and that these activities improve speaking skills.

According to Makita (1995) dramatic and role –playing activities are valuable classroom techniques that encourage students to participate actively in the learning process. These dramatic activities can take different forms and that the teacher can provide students with a variety of learning experience by developing different methodologies according to the needs of his students.

These role-playing activities enable the teacher to create a supportive, enjoyable classroom environment in which students are encouraged and motivated to effectively learn the target learning skills.

Drama has a significant function especially in specifically improving acquired/improved speaking skills among the leaning skills.

Improvisational theatre

The earliest well-documented use of improvisational theatre in Western history is found in the Atellan Farce of 391 BC. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, commedia dell'arte performers improvised based on a broad outline in the streets of Italy. In the 1890s, theatrical theorists and directors such as the Russian Konstantin Stanislavski and the French Jacques Copeau, founders of two major streams of acting theory, both heavily utilized improvisation in acting training and rehearsal.*

Many of the current "rules" of comedic improv were first formalized in Chicago in the late 1950s and early 1960s, initially among The Compass Players troupe, which was directed by Paul Sills. From most accounts, David Shepherd provided the philosophical vision of the Compass Players, while Elaine May was central to the development of the premises for its improvisations. Mike Nichols, Ted Flicker, and Del Close were her most frequent collaborators in this regard. When The Second City opened its doors on December 16, 1959, directed by Paul Sills, his mother Viola Spolin began training new improvisers through a series of classes and exercises which became the cornerstone of modern improv training. *

*Twentieth Century Acting Training. ed. Alison Hodge. New York: Routledge, 2012.
Viola Spolin (1999). Improvisation for the Theater Third Edition. ISBN 978-0-8101-4008-0.
"TheatreSports History". interactiveimprov.com.

Does clowning and improvisation help in an educational process?

Drama in the classroom has shown an increase in self-confidence and a loss of fear of rejection. Clowning and improvisation are basic skills in acting, which help actors build characters and explore authentic feelings and situations. The main focus of using games in class is to help students learn and have fun. And when teachers manage to incorporate learning and playing at the same time it must lead to a successful lesson.

Clowning helps students find a different character within themselves, which we could call their English speaking self. This can help students by allowing them to make mistakes they would usually not allow themselves to make. When playing improvisation games in a different language, students can easily get wrapped up in the game. In such games the words come from a subconscious level, which they might usually censor.*

* Clowning and improvisation in the ESL classroom: Observations and suggestions Sigríður Eyrún Friðriksdóttir

The goal is not to get students/participants to any performance level with the exercises.

Rather, the goal is to help them explore what is special and fun about them and discover new things that build their social 'toolbox'.

A person may feel very witty and smart in a social situation in their own language and then they may feel like they have lost this ability when having to express themselves with new words and social rules.

The exercises when playing with the clown can help students find this witty character—or a new character that has other great attributes and which a person can use to build confidence in new social situations.

We may also have a student who is extremely shy and doesn't like fooling around in a 'normal' situation.

This person may discover something absolutely different about themselves when introduced to their inner clown.

Students/ participants could opened up and were willing to play with the topic of the activity much more when in their clown or in an improvisation game, than when we were sitting and chatting as 'themselves'.

Clown

The first step on the way to create our individual clown character is a journey to our "inner child", our "inner animal", and our "inner village idiot".

We discover our essential power of expression, our unbroken joy, our love but also our fears and inhibitions which will show us the way to understand human failure.

We learn to overstep borders playfully and to develop the clown within ourselves.

This very individual process of self-investigation is accompanied by a systematic teaching of clown acting techniques.*

*https://www.clownschule.de/index.php/clown-actor-training-178.html

The basic rules of clowning (by Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir)

1. One should always wait three seconds before reacting to anything when in clown character.

2. When anything unexpected occurs you look at what happened, count to three and then react.

3. You must keep your eyes wide open at all times and pay attention to what is going on around you, by doing so it is easier to react to situations.
Every action can then be met with a reaction, which intensifies the first.

4. Do not move unless you are looking into the eyes of an audience member, unless you are helping another clown get what they want.

The basic rules of clowning (by Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir)

5. If you make a mistake you must repeat it three times and then continue. Something great can come out of the repetition.

6. Always look at the one who is speaking, whether it is an audience member or another actor. Even turn your body toward the person.

7. When the audience laughs at you, you must count to three and then say "thank you".

8. Clowns like mistakes and being laughed at, it is a gift. *
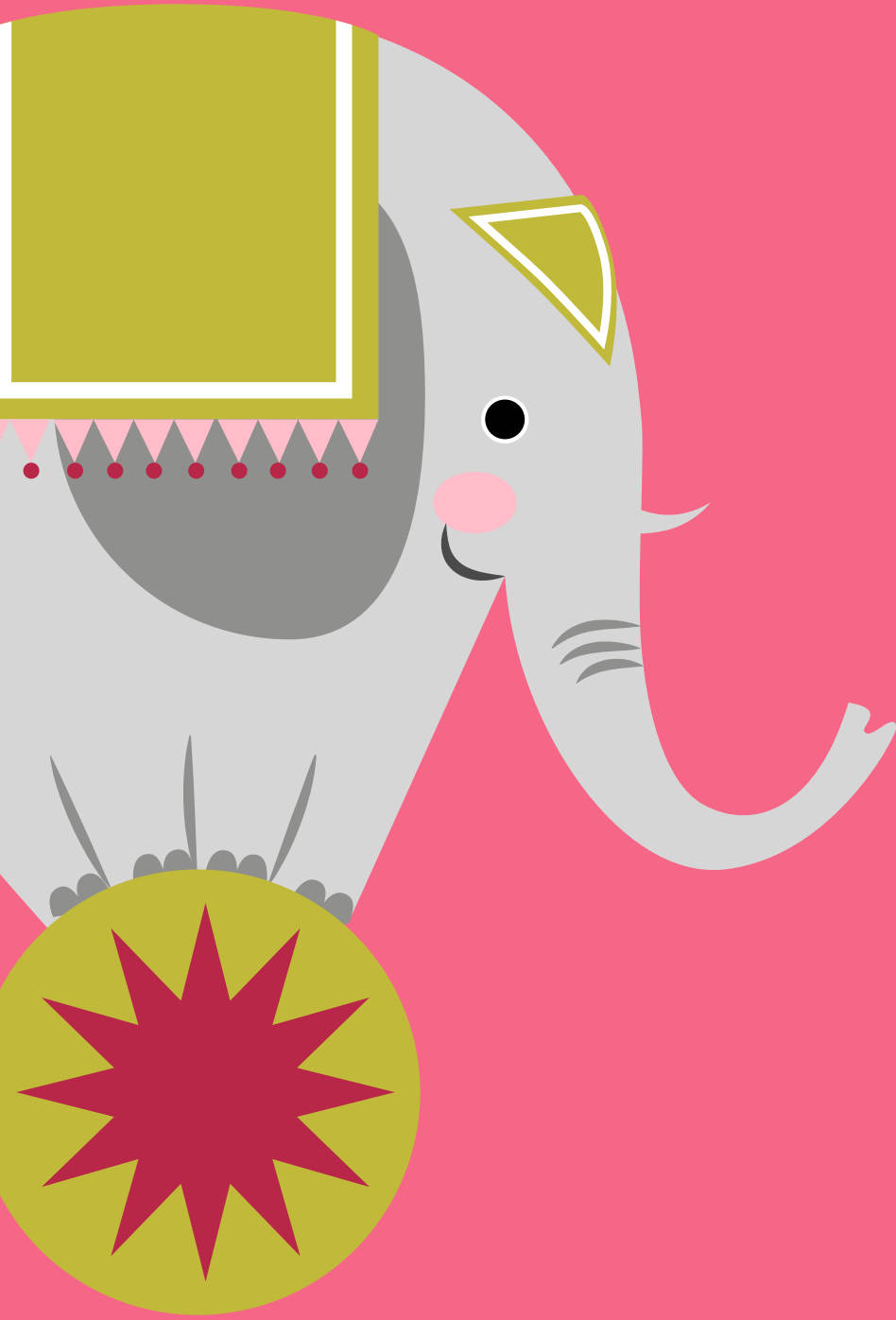
When a clown is born the actor sits down, looks for his/her voice, takes three deep breaths and fills their lungs, then the clown is born with a big scream and the clown says their name.

When you put that red nose on you have opened up a new world in which you have abandoned rules and restrictions which sometimes hold you back in "reality" – everything is fair game now.

When clowns are released from the confines of 'acting', like a normal grown-up they become omnipotent beings that express and evoke deep emotions (Simon, 2009).

We each inhabit our own personality and so when we explore our inner clown we find a character, which is our own special clown, and nobody has a clown like that.
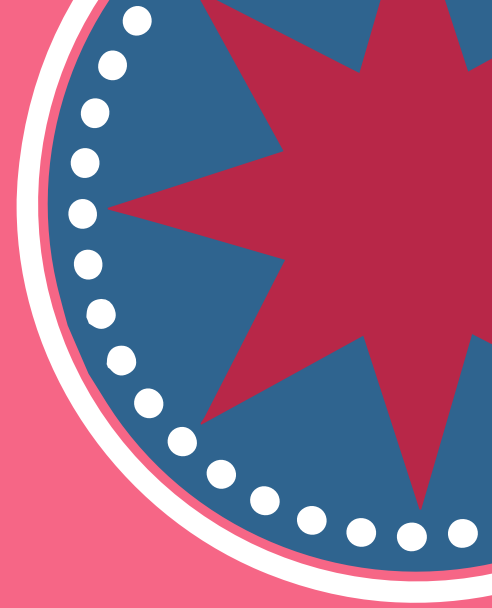
Debriefing

Debriefing is the process of strategically examining and analyzing what happened after the completion of an event or activity, within the context of learning. (Stephanie Lancaster).

The aim of the debriefing is not just to provide information, but to help the participant leave the experimental situation in a similar frame of mind as when he/she entered it (Aronson, 1988).

Below is a list of questions to use when doing a debrief and review at the end of your team building session or challenge. These questions are great for making sense of the experience and building connections or transfer of learning.

After your group have completed a challenge, pick a couple of questions that will lead them to the learning outcome you are targeting or anything that you noticed during the activity.

-Open questions in the debriefing

-Grab the message from the group

-Listen to the inputs from the participants

-Where do You want to go in the debreifing, focusing?

-Conclude the debriefing (summarize the outcomes)

-Visualize the outcomes

-Plan the debriefing, structure it and stick to the structure

-Talk about the facts (what happened)

-Try to step over Your barriers (ex. language barriers)

-If You had an observer, then use him/her/they properly in the debriefing

The three questions of the efficient debriefing

WHAT?

SO WHAT?

NOW WHAT?

WHAT?

What? The first stage is to look back over the events. This involves the recall of facts in an objectives way.

It is usually more effective to concentrate on the positive to begin with so that the group will become more comfortable talking about their feelings.

"recount the main events leading to the end of the project"

"what was the best/worst/more interesting/most involving moment?"

"what were the stages you went through in managing this event?"

SO WHAT?

So what? Once the facts are discussed the next stage is to find out what people think or feel about them. This stage is in the NOW. It involves ideas and opinions. People are able to build on the events described to grasp some meaning to them.

"what kind of communication helped/hindered?"

"how did your risk taking change throughout the session?"

"what could have increased this level of support you received?"
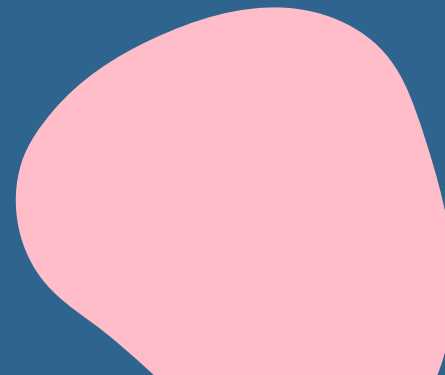
NOW WHAT?

Now what? This stage looks into the future. It is about change and development and is focused on action.

"what will you do differently next time?"

"what will you do the same?"

"how will you tackle this next time?"

Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle

David Kolb published his learning styles model in 1984 from which he developed his learning style inventory.

Kolb's experiential learning theory works on two levels: a four-stage cycle of learning and four separate learning styles. Much of Kolb's theory is concerned with the learner's internal cognitive processes.

Kolb states that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations.

In Kolb's theory, the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences.*

"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience"

David Kolb

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflective Observation

Abstract Conceptualization

Kolb's experiential learning style theory is typically represented by a four-stage learning cycle in which the learner 'touches all the bases'

1. CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

- a new experience or situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience.

2. REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

-of the New Experience - of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding.

3. ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION

-reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience).

4. ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

- the learner applies their idea(s) to the world around them to see what happens.*

*https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html

Effective learning

Effective learning is seen when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages: of (1) having a concrete experience followed by (2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then (4) used to test a hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

Kolb (1974) views learning as an integrated process with each stage being mutually supportive of and feeding into the next.

It is possible to enter the cycle at any stage and follow it through its logical sequence.However, effective learning only occurs when a learner can execute all four stages of the model.

Therefore, no one stage of the cycle is effective as a learning procedure on its own.*

*https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html

Erasmus+

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising Education, Training, and Youth work. The seven year programme will have a budget of €14.7 billion: a 40% increase compared to spending levels between 2007 and 2013, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas. Erasmus+ will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Erasmus+ will support transnational partnerships among Education, Training, and Youth institutions and organisations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of Education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe. It will also support national efforts to modernise Education, Training, and Youth systems.

In the field of Sport, there will be support for grassroots projects and crossborder challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism. Erasmus+ brings together seven previous EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training, and Youth; it will for the first time provide support for Sport.

Contact us...

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