



SALTO / EUROPEAN TRAINING CALENDAR - E-LEARNING CONCEPT

STORYBUILDERS LAB

From Story to STEAM Challenge in Youth Work

Course proposition

The facilitator designs the learning intention. Young people shape the story. The story creates a need. The need becomes an open challenge. Prototyping makes thinking visible.

E-learning	October 2026	13-15 h
activity type	course period	estimated workload
4 live labs	20-30	English
core synchronous learning	recommended participants	working language

Practice-based | learner-centred | non-formal | participatory | low-threshold | transferable

Organised by Artemis Sapountzoglou / Sapounofouska Events & More

Course proposal for the European youth work community of practice.

POSITIONING

1. Why this belongs in the European youth work context

Storybuilders Lab is designed for youth workers, youth leaders, trainers, facilitators and staff involved in non-formal learning who want to create stronger participant-led STEAM experiences. The course is not a technical training in a particular construction product and it is not an activity for children. It develops the competences of practitioners who work with and for young people.

Core shift

From “deliver a ready-made activity” to “facilitate a learning process in which young people influence the story, the problem and the possible solutions”.

Alignment with European Training Calendar quality expectations

- European: participants from more than one country exchange youth-work realities and adapt the same methodology across contexts.
- Youth-work focused: the primary target group is the youth work community of practice.
- Non-formal: learning is voluntary, experiential, participatory, reflective and based on a carefully designed educational process.
- Non-profit orientation: the concept is designed as competence development rather than commercial product training.
- Open and accessible: low-cost materials and tool-neutral activities reduce barriers to participation.

What makes the course distinctive

The course does not teach a catalogue of cardboard projects. It teaches a facilitation architecture: how to hold a clear learning intention while keeping the storyline and final prototype genuinely open to participants.

PURPOSE

2. Aim, target group & participant profile

Main aim

Aim

To strengthen the capacity of youth workers and trainers to design and facilitate story-driven, participatory and low-threshold STEAM learning experiences in which young people transform ideas into collaborative prototyping and problem-solving challenges.

Target group

- Youth workers and youth leaders working directly with young people.
- Trainers and facilitators in non-formal education.
- Staff and volunteers involved in youth organisations and volunteering projects.
- Youth project managers who design educational activities.
- Educators working in youth-work or non-formal learning environments.

Participant profile

The course is most suitable for practitioners who already have some experience facilitating groups and want to move beyond predefined activities toward participant-led design. No previous robotics, engineering or advanced STEAM knowledge is required.

Recommended level

Intermediate to advanced facilitation level

Technical experience is optional; willingness to experiment, reflect and adapt methods to a real youth-work context is essential.

COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

3. Objectives, learning outcomes & ETS connection

Course objectives

- Transform participant-generated stories and situations into authentic learning challenges.
- Use open questions without prescribing the final solution.
- Facilitate collaborative decision making through Story Democracy.
- Use cardboard and reusable materials for rapid, low-threshold prototyping.
- Support testing, failure, debugging and redesign as learning processes.
- Create inclusive participation roles and adaptable challenge levels.
- Integrate sustainability and circular making into creative learning.
- Design a complete Storybuilder Mission transferable to a local youth-work context.

ETS competence areas particularly supported

ETS competence area	How the course develops it
Facilitating learning	Open questioning, reflection, experiential learning, learner agency.
Designing programmes	Building a learning sequence with clear intention and open outcomes.
Managing resources	Using accessible, reusable and low-cost materials intentionally.
Assessing & evaluating	Making learning visible through testing, iteration, peer feedback and reflection.
Collaborating in teams	Story Democracy, shared decisions and distributed maker roles.
Communicating meaningfully	Narrative framing, explaining choices and giving/receiving feedback.

LEARNING JOURNEY

4. Four-week course architecture

The course follows a repeated rhythm: short online input, hands-on offline experimentation, online sharing and reflection. Participants first experience the method as learners, then analyse it as facilitators, and finally design a transferable activity for their own context.

Delivery rhythm

ONLINE INPUT -> OFFLINE MAKING -> ONLINE SHARING -> PEER FEEDBACK -> LOCAL TRANSFER

Week	Focus	Learning emphasis	Key output
WEEK 1	Story & Question	Curiosity, narrative triggers, authentic needs, open challenges	Live Lab 1 + first Story Wall entry
WEEK 2	Ideas & Make	Story Democracy, participation, cardboard prototyping	Live Lab 2 + first prototype
WEEK 3	Test, Include & Reuse	Iteration, debugging, inclusive roles, circular making	Live Lab 3 + redesigned prototype
WEEK 4	Design & Transfer	Final Storybuilder Mission, peer review, adaptation to youth-work context	Live Lab 4 + transfer plan

Estimated learning time

- 4 synchronous sessions of approximately 90 minutes.
- Short asynchronous inputs and reflection between sessions.
- 2-3 offline hands-on maker challenges.
- Peer-feedback task and final transfer assignment.
- Approximately 13-15 total learning hours.

MODULES 0-3

5. From curiosity to shared decisions

0. ENTER Welcome to the Storybuilders Lab

What could this become?

Focus: Group connection, mystery trigger, shared Story Wall.

Practice: Reimagine an ordinary cardboard object and introduce yourself through it.

Learning evidence: A first contribution to the common story environment.

1. STORY Storytelling as a Learning Engine

What is happening?

Focus: Story triggers, characters, environments, ambiguity, “What happens next?”.

Practice: Generate three different stories from the same object or image.

Learning evidence: Ability to use narrative as a learning trigger rather than decoration.

2. QUESTION From Story to Authentic Problem

What needs to happen?

Focus: Situation -> need -> question -> challenge; open versus closed tasks.

Practice: Turn a fictional situation into a STEAM challenge without naming what must be built.

Learning evidence: An open challenge that allows multiple valid solutions.

3. IDEAS Story Democracy & Youth Participation

How do we decide together?

Focus: Idea Storm, Idea Bank, Combine, Decide, Story Parking Lot.

Practice: Co-create the next development of a shared scenario and make the decision process visible.

Learning evidence: A facilitation method that prevents the loudest voice from automatically defining the project.

6. From prototyping to sustainable practice

4. MAKE Cardboard Engineering & Rapid Prototyping

How can we give the idea form?

Focus: 2D-3D, folds, joints, stability, moving parts, scale, rapid prototyping.

Practice: Solve a story-generated problem using cardboard and reusable materials.

Learning evidence: A prototype whose form follows a real need in the story.

5. TEST Failure is Information

What does the prototype tell us?

Focus: Make -> Test -> Notice -> Change -> Test Again; debugging mindset.

Practice: Identify one weakness, change one variable and test again.

Learning evidence: Evidence-based redesign rather than facilitator correction.

6. INCLUDE Different People, Different Ways to Participate

How can everyone contribute?

Focus: Flexible roles, visual supports, scaffolding, extensions, mixed confidence levels.

Practice: Redesign a maker task so meaningful contribution is possible without being the main builder.

Learning evidence: An inclusive participation plan with multiple entry points.

7. REUSE Circular Making & Sustainable STEAM

What happens to materials next?

Focus: Build, use, disassemble, sort, reuse, rebuild.

Practice: Solve the same problem using fewer or reused materials.

Learning evidence: A sustainability decision embedded in the design process.

CAPSTONE

7. Final Storybuilder Mission

The final task is not a traditional lesson plan. It is a facilitation architecture for an open learning experience that can be used with young people after the course.

Every mission includes

1. Learning intention - what do I want young people to explore?
2. Story trigger - what creates curiosity without determining the meaning?
3. Open question - what activates participants' ideas?
4. Story Democracy - how will different ideas be heard and combined?
5. Authentic problem - what need emerges from the story?
6. Maker challenge - what must be solved without prescribing the object?
7. Accessible materials and resources.
8. Inclusive participation roles and scaffolding.
9. Test & Improve phase.
10. Reflection questions that make learning visible.
11. What happens next? - how the process remains open.

Peer review

Three peer questions

1. What creates curiosity?
2. Where do young people have real agency?
3. Where could the challenge become even more open?

Course completion output

Each participant leaves with one revised Storybuilder Mission plus a Local Transfer Plan describing where, with whom and how the method can be piloted or integrated in their youth-work practice.

NON-FORMAL ONLINE LEARNING

8. Methodology & live learning spaces

The online design avoids turning the course into a webinar series. Screen time is reserved for connection, concise input, decision making, peer learning and reflection. Physical experimentation takes place offline whenever possible.

Methods

- Short visual/video inputs rather than long lectures.
- Mystery objects, story prompts and interactive polls.
- Digital Story Wall / shared idea spaces.
- Breakout-room collaboration and peer learning.
- Hands-on offline making and documentation with photos or short clips.
- Peer critique focused on agency, openness and learning process.
- Individual reflection through a lightweight Storybuilder Learning Log.
- Facilitation labs in which participants experience uncertainty and shared decision making.

Four live labs

LIVE LAB 1 - Enter the Story

Group building, story trigger, collaborative storytelling and first micro-challenge.

LIVE LAB 2 - From Problem to Prototype

Hands-on prototyping, testing, debugging and facilitator-question practice.

LIVE LAB 3 - Test, Include & Reuse

Prototype redesign, inclusive maker roles, circular making and facilitation reflection.

LIVE LAB 4 - Storybuilders Showcase

Final mission presentations, cross-country peer feedback and local transfer commitments.

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

9. Cross-cultural learning, inclusion & sustainability

European added value

The same story-driven challenge can produce different interpretations in different youth-work realities. The course deliberately uses this diversity as a learning resource. Participants compare how context, available materials, group culture and local needs influence facilitation choices.

- Cross-country peer groups exchange examples from youth centres, NGOs, volunteering projects and community settings.
- Participants adapt a challenge created by someone from another context before designing their own.
- Peer feedback asks what would need to change for the same method to work with another community of young people.
- Final missions are designed for reuse in Erasmus+ Youth, European Solidarity Corps and local youth-work activities where relevant.

Inclusion principles

- Multiple valid solutions rather than one correct model.
- Roles such as storyteller, question maker, designer, builder, tester, observer, documenter and presenter.
- Visual and verbal instructions where useful.
- Individual and collaborative contribution options.
- Scaffolding for beginners and extensions for participants with more technical confidence.
- Assessment of thinking and process, not aesthetic quality.

Sustainability

Circular making cycle

BUILD -> USE -> DISASSEMBLE -> SORT -> REUSE -> REBUILD

10. Assessment, recognition & follow-up

Formative assessment

Learning evidence comes from decisions, iterations, dialogue and transfer rather than from the visual quality of prototypes. Participants document selected moments in a lightweight Storybuilder Learning Log.

- A story/problem reframed into an open challenge.
- A prototype and one evidence-based redesign.
- Peer feedback given to another participant.
- A final Storybuilder Mission.
- A Local Transfer Plan for a real youth-work context.

Reflection prompts

End-of-course reflection

I used to think...
 I discovered...
 I tried...
 I changed...
 I will use...

Follow-up & multiplier effect

The course is designed for transfer beyond the online learning period. Participants are encouraged to pilot, adapt or integrate their final mission in their own practice and to document one learning insight for later peer exchange. The methodology is intentionally tool-neutral so it can be reproduced with low-cost materials in different local realities.

Potential impact

- Stronger participant agency in STEAM and creative youth-work activities.
- More open-ended and inclusive programme design.
- Increased confidence in facilitating uncertainty, testing and failure.
- Reusable methods that can travel across countries, organisations and project formats.

11. Public course description & publication data

Short description for SALTO / course catalogue

Public description

Storybuilders Lab is a practice-based e-learning course for youth workers, youth leaders, trainers and facilitators who want to turn storytelling and low-cost prototyping into participatory STEAM learning. Participants explore how young people's ideas can generate authentic problems, open challenges and multiple possible solutions. Through online collaboration, offline making, peer learning and reflection, participants practise Story Democracy, cardboard prototyping, testing and redesign, inclusive maker roles and circular making. Rather than following predefined construction tutorials, they learn to design learning environments where young people have real agency over the story and the solution. Each participant finishes the course with a complete Storybuilder Mission and a Local Transfer Plan ready to adapt in their own youth-work context.

Suggested keywords

youth work • STEAM • storytelling • participation • maker education • prototyping • non-formal learning • creativity • inclusion • sustainability

Publication data

Proposed live dates - Option A	6, 13, 20 & 27 October 2026
Proposed live dates - Option B	8, 15, 22 & 29 October 2026
Application / registration deadline	30 September 2026
Selection date	30 September 2026
Organiser	Artemis Sapountzoglou / Sapounofouska Events & More
Eligible participant countries	TO BE CONFIRMED
Participation fee / financial conditions	EUR 50 participation fee
Online platform	Zoom
Contact person	Artemis Sapountzoglou +30 694 453 3091 artemis.sapountzoglou@gmail.com

Two possible live-date schedules are shown above. Select one final schedule before publishing the SALTO call. The eligible participant countries should also be confirmed before publication.

TRAINER & ORGANISER

12. Trainer profile - Artemis Sapountzoglou



**ROBOTICS & STEAM EDUCATOR · KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER · FACILITATOR · TRAINER**

Artemis Sapountzoglou is a Robotics & STEAM educator, kindergarten teacher, facilitator and trainer based in Athens, Greece. She is co-founder of Sapounofouska Events & More, where she designs and delivers interactive educational programmes, experiential workshops and events for children, educators, young people and youth workers. Her practice combines educational robotics, STEAM, new technologies, storytelling, theatre, creative facilitation and non-formal education.

Professional experience

- Co-founder, Sapounofouska Events & More (since 2021): educational programmes, experiential workshops, interactive events and creative learning projects.
- Kindergarten teacher and STEAM/Robotics educator, designing discovery-based and interactive learning experiences for early childhood and primary education.
- European and youth-work practice through Erasmus+ activities, team building, design thinking, facilitation and collaborative programme development.

Education & training

- MSc in STEM: Contemporary Topics of Digital Technologies.
- Studies in Preschool Education with a specialisation in New Technologies.
- Theatre Studies / Artistic Expression, with continuous training in robotics, STEAM and facilitation.

Core competences

Educational Robotics & STEAM programme design; interactive and interdisciplinary learning; storytelling and improvisation; team building and participatory facilitation; creative use of new technologies; project coordination and network development.

Trainer approach

Learner agency, creativity and practical experimentation through open questions, collaborative problem solving, hands-on making and reflection.

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