

# 'The Topsy-Turvy Learning Experience'

a quest for learning in a chaotic, upside down world



organised by the German National Agency for the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme  
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## Topsy Turvy?

When you would look up 'topsy turvy' in the dictionary you would find 'upside down' and 'in a state of confusion'. That's exactly what this training course is about: turning 'learning' upside down and exploring the confusion, which will be caused by that.

Learning and education are under discussion more than ever. New concepts arriving from the political level like Life Long Learning and Learning to Learn but at the same time new insights from the practical and methodological level about how people learn are turning our ideas about learning upside down. It becomes more and more clear that education needs a revolution.

Although a lot of discussions are about formal education it would be a bit too easy to think that in non-formal education we don't need a critical look at our approaches. We think it's the perfect opportunity to explore new ways, ideas and concepts about learning. If you are into that... join us!

## What to expect?

'The programme will take you...' No!! The programme will not take you... you will take and make your own programme. We are aiming to build a structure where participants can follow their own interest and questions, find different ways to work on that, meet peers to work with and discover inspiring environments to work in. The programme will offer a rich diversity of tools, methods, sessions, environments for you to use if you want to. The main objective is that you will be able to work, together with others, on your questions and will share your findings and new questions with the whole group. An exploring event where we hope to find new ideas and new questions concerning learning and the facilitation of learning that can be brought into practice in the different actions of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme. We believe there is a strong connection between the exploring of your own learning and the facilitation of the learning of others. In order to assist participants in finding their questions and focuses an online platform will already start one month before the actual course and will be available to exchange ideas and wishes.

## But still...

You might find this all a little bit to abstract and vague, so let's share with you what thinking brought this training course into being, what were the topics and issues that came up to see if you can connect to it.

The idea of **Life Long Learning** has put ‘learning’ into new perspectives. Perspectives that are in need of new ways of thinking and innovative approaches both for learners as for those ones who facilitate learning.

One of the most crucial consequences of Life Long Learning is the idea that learners should direct their own learning. They have to be responsible for what, when and how they learn. **Self-directed learning** and the **Learning to Learn competence** are zooming around in education. We more and more understand that self-directed learning is powerful. At the same time we learn from experiences and research that for many learners and facilitators it’s a big step to make. The main problem seems to be that we are all brought up in a system where those competences and attitudes needed for self-directed learning were not recognised and appreciated. It’s hard to get rid of the ‘traditional’ idea we have about learning, **both for learners as for facilitators**. How to take responsibility for your own learning and how, for facilitators, to really give that responsibility to learners?

When choosing the journey of self-directed learning we will find ourselves soon in very different landscapes. Asking ourselves what we really want, questioning ourselves about how we learn best, looking for others who can accompany us, how to make a plan, how to decide we did it etcetera. Learners need to be able to deal with all this **ambiguity** and **chaos** and to have the courage **to think and decide autonomously** about how and what they want to learn. How to support learners to develop the competence to deal with ambiguity and chaos and think autonomously?

There is a big tendency to put learning into steps and plans while we know by now that learning is **not a linear process**. Forcing learners into structured step-by-step roads doesn’t help and denies the organic way in which human beings think and create. But how to get away from this thinking when we plan a training course, a youth exchange or a mentoring process? How to plan an organic learning process?

We live in a complex and rapidly changing world where we need people who don’t fear change but embrace it. **Creativity** is needed more then ever. How to support people to find their own creativity and to take it serious? How to help people to think out of the box? How to motivate people to be stupid and to make mistakes?

These were the main questions that we came up with till now. We are sure there are much more.

#### Objectives of the course

- To support participants to identify their own ‘natural’ way of learning
- To support participants to further develop and broaden their facilitation, mentoring and coaching- capacities.
- To explore how creativity, ‘chaos’ and unconventional environments can provoke new perceptions about (self-directed) learning.
- To create a challenging non-linear learning environment to provoke divergent and creative thinking.
- To share theories and concepts on learning and facilitation of learning.
- To explore the possibilities to apply ‘new learning’ in the different actions of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme

#### For whom

The course is open for youth workers/leaders, trainers, mentors and coaches.

#### The team of Trainers

Gabi Steinprinz (Netherlands), Julia Kastler (Austria) Paul Kloosterman (Italy)