Co-funded by the European Union

TOTEM: TRAINING OF TRAINERS WITH ERASMUS MINDSET

16–23 May 2026,
Godinesti, Romania





WHO ARE WE?

ASK Yourself is a non-profit organization with the main purpose in organizing projects and activities aimed at personal and professional development of young people and youth workers, encouraging volunteering and cultural diversity with the help of non-formal and formal education methods.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project started from our need to implement quality activities and from our desire to give courage to our youth workers to be in front of youth.
Our project main objective was to improve our youth workers competencies in preparing, implementing and evaluating a training session, based on the needs of the young people they work with.
Participants in this training learned how to:
-have more courage to speak in front of a group;
-spend less time and be better at preparing a session;
-find what do young people need;
-understand how to choose the right non-formal method;
-be more confident that the group will listen to them;
-learn how to keep the attention of the group;
-learn how to implement a training session.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

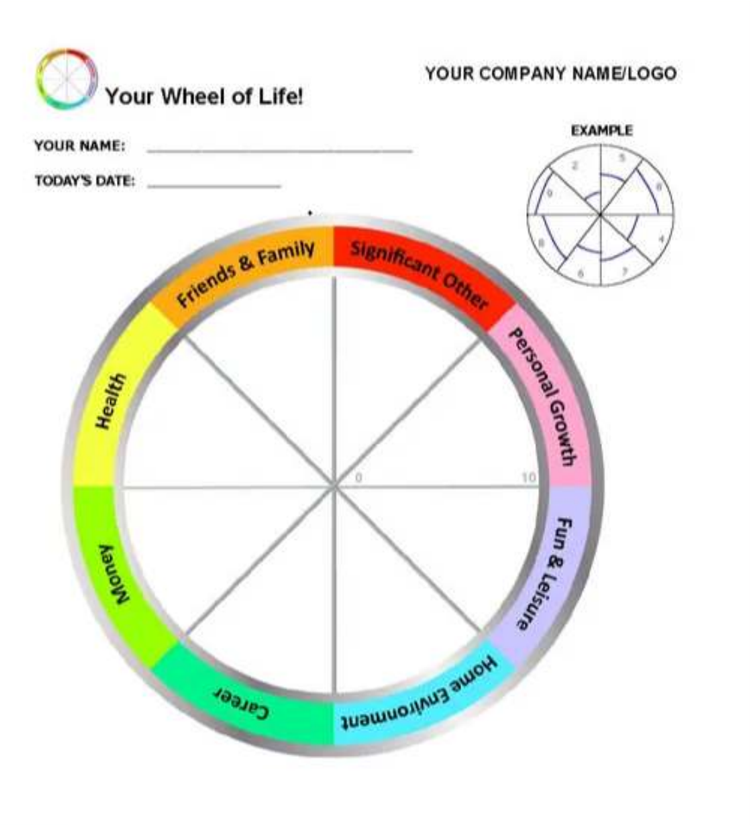
It’s important for youth workers to realize that before taking any action dedicated for young people, one has to make sure that the specific activity is a response to a need, otherwise the young people will perceive it as useless or boring.



NON-FORMAL METHODS ON FINDING NEEDS



First method: Wheel of life



Complete the wheel:

1. Review the 8 Wheel Categories - think briefly what a satisfying life might look like for you in each area.
2. Next, draw a line across each segment that represents your satisfaction score for each area.

- Imagine the centre of the wheel is 0 and the outer edge is 10
- Choose a value between 1 (very dissatisfied) and 10 (fully satisfied)
- Now draw a line and write the score alongside (see example above)

IMPORTANT: Use the FIRST number (score) that pops into your head, not the number you think it should be!

The Wheel of Life Exercise – Instructions for the Trainer

Notes:

• Balance is personal and unique to each individual - what may be satisfying or balanced for some may be stressful or boring for others.

• This exercise raises a person's awareness and allows the them to plan a life that is more satisfying and closer to their definition of balance. It also helps clarify priorities for goal-setting.

• Balance must be assessed over time. A regular check-in (eg. with this exercise) can highlight useful patterns and help your participants learn even more about themselves. You can do this with them, or recommend they do it for themselves.

• Another option is for the participant to ask someone who knows them well to complete the scores for them (sometimes it's helpful to see an outside perception of your life 'balance'). Important: This must be someone they trust and whose opinion they value - and remember that others may have hidden agendas.

Detailed Instructions:

1. Ask your participants to review the 8 categories on their Wheel of Life. The categories should together create a view of a balanced life for them. If necessary they can split category segments to add in something that is missing, or re-label an area to make it more meaningful for them.

Examples of changes are:

- Family and Friends: Split “Family and Friends” into separate categories.
- Significant Other: Changing the category name to “Dating”, “Relationship” or “Life Partner”.
- Career: Changing the category name to “Motherhood”, “Work”, “Business” or “Volunteering”.
- Finances: Changing the category name to “Money”, “Financial Security” or “Financial Wellbeing”.
- Health: The category name could be split or changed to “Emotional”, “Physical”, “Fitness”, “Spiritual” or “Wellbeing”.
- Home Environment: The category could split or change to “Work Environment” for career or business participants.
- Fun & Leisure: The category name could change to “Recreation”
- Personal Growth: The category name could change to “Learning”, “Self-Development” or “Spiritual”
- Other categories to add could include “Security”, “Service”, “Leadership”, “Achievement” or “Community”.

2. Ask your participants to think about what success or satisfaction would feel like for each area.
3. Now ask them to rank their level of satisfaction with each area of their life by drawing a line across each segment. Ask them to place a value between 1 (very dissatisfied) and 10 (fully satisfied) against each area to shown how satisfied they are currently with each category in their life.
4. The new perimeter of the circle represents their Wheel of Life. Ask your participants, “Is it a bumpy ride?” “Imagine this kind of wheel on your bicycle. How would it work?”
“How can we make our ride smoother?” – we can make all the bigger areas smaller – possible answer from the participants. You can reply “Imagine how small the wheel would be and how long the ride to your objectives.” “The solution is to develop the low areas to come closer to balance and a smooth ride.”
5. Now, looking at the wheel here are some great questions to ask your participants to take the exercise deeper:
Identify 1-3 low areas you would like to work on.

Main questions:
• Why are you here? (with a low mark in this specific area)
• Where would you like to be? (What would be a 10 for you?)
• How can you get from where you are to where you want to be? (try to write specific actions that you can do: today, this week, this month)

6. Taking action - the final step. To wrap-up the exercise you can ask your participants to identify one action for each area, and then pick 1-3 actions to get started. You could also ask them to choose the 3 areas they most want to work on and identify an action for each.
TIP: If your participant is extremely busy or stressed try asking, “What is the smallest step you could take to get started?”




SARCASTIC COMMENT
LOADING...


REMEMBER
WHEN WE HAD...

Second method: 20-5-1

Instructions

Participants have to find and write on a private list 20 characteristics that best describe them.
After they finish, they chose from that list the most important 10. The next step is to choose 5 and then 3.
After that, they have to transform these 3 characteristics in needs (what do I need in order to keep them, improve them or eliminate them in case there are bad characteristics).
From the list of needs, they prioritize them from the most important one to the last one.
The final step is to decide on a calendar with concrete actions in the direction of responding to that need - what can I do starting from today.

Debriefing

The participants will share their impressions with the group.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD TRAINER

1. Training Needs Analysis:

A professional trainer needs to be able to identify training needs successfully for clients and trainees.

2. Strong Organisational Skills:

Trainers must always be organised and well-prepared for training delivery.

3. Versatility:

Be ready to change and adapt to working in different situations and environments.

4. Confident Delivery:

There are many aspects to successful training delivery. Professional trainers will have a confident style of training delivery that ticks all of these boxes.

5. Focus:

When you are training a group in any subject, you must have the ability to remain focused in order to achieve your goals and cover the planned material.

6. Training Design Skills:

Professional trainers should also know how to design effective and engaging training programmes.

7. Think on Your Feet:

Trainers need to be able to handle difficult situations and complex group dynamics to keep things running smoothly.

8. Subject Matter Expert:

Whatever you train, you must understand well. In addition to being familiar with the delivery materials (slides, videos, exercises etc.), you must also have a strong enough comprehension to answer questions on the subject.

9. Excellent Communication:

Communication is at the core of all training delivery. This incorporates spoken, written, active listening, and comprehension communication skills.

10. Patience:

People learn in different ways and at different speeds. When training others, it is essential that you are patient and inclusive.

11. Time Management:

Good time management habits are the secret weapon of effective, efficient trainers.

12. Evaluation Techniques:

For your benefit and that of your trainees, you will need to understand how to evaluate the outcome of your training sessions.





STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

When we use words GROUP and TEAM in particular we understand it as a collection of people who interact with one another, accept rights and obligations as members and who share a common identity. Criteria for a group include: formal social structure; face-to-face interaction; perception about common fate; common goals; interdependence; self-definition as group members and recognition by others. To understand the group forming and developing processes perhaps the most often used approach is Bruce Tuckman's classic description of the stages of group development – his forming, storming, norming and performing model of group development.



Stage 1: Forming

Individual behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by others, and avoid controversy or conflict. Serious issues and feelings are avoided, and people focus on being busy with routines, such as team organization, who does what, when to meet, etc. But individuals are also gathering information and impressions - about each other, and about the scope of the task and how to approach it. This is a comfortable stage to be in, but the avoidance of conflict and threat means that not much actually gets done. Forming includes: excitement, anticipation and optimism; suspicion and anxiety about the work to be done; defining the tasks and how they will be accomplished; determining acceptable group behavior; deciding what information needs to be gathered; long discussions about ideas and issues, and for some members, impatience with these discussions; also difficulties to identify some of the relevant problems.



Stage 2: Storming

Individuals in the group can only remain nice to each other for so long, as important issues start to be addressed. In the storming period members have their own ideas as to how the process should look, and the personal agendas prevails. Storming is probably the most difficult stage for the team. They begin to understand that tasks are different as seemed at first glance. They become impatient about the lack of progress and argue about what actions the team should take. They try to impose their personal ideas and resist working in partnership with other members of the group. Some people's patience will break early, and minor confrontations will arise that are quickly dealt with or glossed over. These may relate to the work of the group itself, or to roles and responsibilities within the group. Some will observe that it's good to be getting into the real issues, whilst others will wish to remain in the comfort and security of stage 1. Depending on the culture of the organization and individuals, the conflict will be more or less suppressed, but it'll be there, under the surface. To deal with the conflict, individuals may feel they are winning or losing battles, and will look for structural clarity and rules to prevent the conflict persisting. To summarize: storming includes resisting the tasks; resisting quality improvement approaches suggested by other members; arguing, defensiveness, competition and choosing sides; establishing unrealistic aims and objectives; divisions, increased tensions and jealousy. This means that members have little energy to spend on progressing towards the project aims and objectives, but they are beginning to understand each other.

Stage 3: Norming

As Stage 2 evolves, the "rules of engagement" for the group become established, and the scope of the group's tasks or responsibilities are clear and agreed. Norming phase is when the team reaches agreement on what the process will be. Everyone wants to be a part of the new agreement. Members are enthusiastic and may wish to go even more far than initially defined objectives. During this stage, members resolve their differences, they accept the team, team ground rules, and the individuality of fellow members. Emotional conflict is resolved and relations become more cooperative. Having had their arguments, they now understand each other better, and can appreciate each other's skills and experience. Individuals listen to each other, appreciate and support each other, and are prepared to change preconceived views: they feel they're part of a cohesive, effective group. However, individuals have had to work hard to attain this stage, and may resist any pressure to change - especially from the outside - for fear that the group will break up, or revert to a storm.

Norming includes an ability to express criticism constructively; acceptance of membership in the team; an attempt to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict; more friendliness and confidence in each other; sharing of personal problems; a sense of team cohesion, spirit and goals; establishing and maintaining team ground rules and boundaries. Team members do not put so much energy on differences, so they have more time for starting to work.



Stage 4: Performing

Not all groups reach this stage, characterized by a state of interdependence and flexibility. At last team members have discovered and accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses, and learned what their roles are. Everyone knows each other well enough to be able to work together, and trusts each other enough to allow independent activity. Roles and responsibilities change according to need in an almost seamless way. Group identity, loyalty and morale are all high, and everyone is equally task-orientated and people-oriented. This high degree of comfort means that all the energy of the group can be directed towards the task(s) in hand. Performing includes constructive self-change, close attachment to the team; ability to prevent or solve group problems.

Stage 5: Adjourning

This is about completion and disengagement, both from the tasks and the group members. Individuals will be proud of having achieved much and glad to have been part of such an enjoyable group. They need to recognise what they've done, and consciously move on, feeling good about what was achieved. Recognition of, and sensitivity to people's feelings in the adjourning stage is extremely important, particularly if members of the group have been closely bonded, as they may feel insecurity or threats from this change. Tuckman's original work simply described the way he had observed groups evolve, whether they were conscious of it or not. But for us the real value is in recognizing where a group is in the process, and helping it to move to the Performing stage. In the real world, groups are often forming and changing, and each time that happens, they can move to a different Tuckman Stage. A group might be happily Norming or Performing, but a new member might force them back into Storming. Seasoned leaders will be ready for this, and will help the group get back to Performing as quickly as possible. Leadership of teams requires an ability to diagnose the stage of development of teams, and make appropriate interventions that move the team forward.

DEALING WITH ‘DIFFICULT’ PARTICIPANTS



The Talker

There are a few variations of this first type. It could be someone who always has an answer and an opinion to share. Or the participant who talks at length and wanders off the subject. In either case, if you don't deal with this there is a risk that the talker will dominate the session. Here are some tips for managing 'the talker':

- Use summarising as a strategy to interrupt, e.g. 'Thanks, this sounds like an interesting point, so can I just summarise what you're saying so we are all clear?"
- Avoid open questions to the group; nominate people by name to answer questions or share thoughts and experiences
- Break eye contact and turn your body slightly away to signal to the participant that it's time to stop talking now
- Give this person a role which encourages him or her to listen, e.g. taking notes on a flipchart of the main points in a discussion.



The Challenger

This type wants to disagree or argue with everything you say. It may seem like she or he has something they need to prove to the group and maybe you. While we definitely want participants to critically argue and debate, we want them to do it in a constructive way. If you don't manage the challenger early on you may find yourself becoming drawn into arguments that take you off what you want to focus on. Here are some tips to manage this type:

- Acknowledge the participant's right to have a point of view and remind them of why they are here, e.g. "I don't need you to agree with everything I say. My intent is to share certain models and theories with you all and ask you to decide how they could be useful in your jobs".
- Throw the argument to the group by asking what others think; often a bit of peer pressure will calm the challenger down
- Ask questions to encourage the challenger to self-reflect on what they are saying, e.g. "That's an interesting perspective, tell me more" or "Can you tell me why you think that?"
- As with 'the talker', give this participant roles which will encourage them to listen to others, e.g. note-taker, observer, summariser.



The Know-It-All

Similar to ‘the challenger’, this type claims to know much more than you do about the topic and gives the impression that he or she should be leading the training! Their constant attention seeking can take up time and energy. Some tips:

- You can flatter their ego to an extent but be careful not to give them the floor for too long; once they have it you will find it difficult to take it back off them
- Ask them to tell the group what they know about a topic and then follow up with some probing questions to reveal what they don’t know; this takes a bit of thought but if you can do it well you can succeed in humbling their ego a little
- Get them to ‘teach’ the others in the group and encourage the group to ask difficult questions, which could show up gaps in their knowledge
- Take them aside and directly ask why they are here; as with ‘the quiet one’ you may discover information that can help you manage them.

The Quiet One

This could be someone who is innately shy or perhaps uncomfortable in a group setting. Here are some of the things I do:

- Be gentle and encouraging, being aware that you are putting them on the spot, e.g. “I know you have some great experience in this area, we would really like to hear what you think.”
- Dividing the class into small groups really helps any quiet participants to come out of their shells and contribute something
- Use the break time to take the participant to one side and have a private chat to find out why they have joined the training and if there are any specific reasons that you can address to help them participate more

The Clown

This type loves to tell jokes, make light of serious issues and distract other participants. ‘Clowns’ usually have some insecurity which they want to mask. While this type can supply some needed humor and lighten the atmosphere at useful times, you need to contain their behavior in order to maintain the focus of your training session. Here are some tips for doing this:

- Use your body language and eye contact to signal to this person that enough is enough
- You can also leverage the energy this person supplies at good moments, e.g. to energize people after a hard task or returning from a break
- As with some of the other types, take them aside for a private chat just to check that they are taking things seriously deep down
- Get them involved in roles that keep them busy and focused and away from disruptive behavior

The Complainer

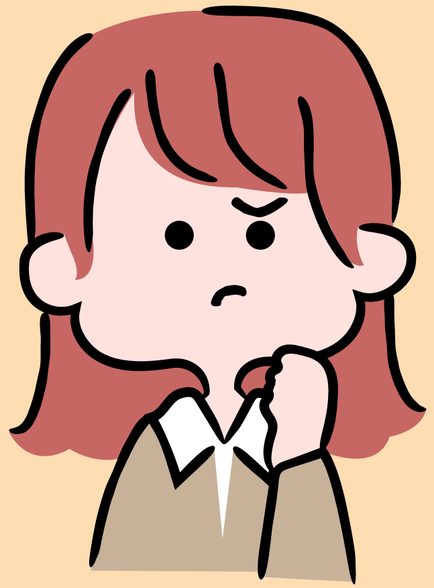
This type seems to have a negative opinion about everyone and everything. You will hear frequent comments like “I can’t do that” or “Person X should be here not me”. The problem with constant negativity is that it can be contagious and quickly spread to the whole group, eventually undermining any productive work. Here are my tips to deal with negative types:

- Counter negative statements by focusing on reasons behind them and options, e.g. “Tell me why you think it can’t be done” or “So if this won’t work, what else could we try?”
- You can be a little bit playful and make light of the negativity, which could lift the atmosphere, e.g. “Now I’m sure Participant X will have something to say about this!”
- Take the person aside for a private chat; sometimes participants don’t realise they are being so negative and raising their awareness of this could help put a stop to it
- Get group agreement on a limit to the number of negative phrases allowed in the training room and an appropriate punishment for infringement (e.g. the infringer buys cake for everyone at the break!)

The Sceptic

“This is fine in theory, but it will never work here”. As with ‘the challenger’ we want participants to use critical thinking in training, after all the whole point is that they use the training to make changes at work. However, like ‘the complainer’ some participants are overly negative and skeptical and this can impact the rest of the group. Try these tips to manage this type:

- Acknowledge that skepticism in a necessary thing but only if it leads to new ideas and ways of thinking (a similar tactic to deal with ‘the challenger’)
- Counter skepticism with positive statements, e.g. “So, you don’t think this would work here. What can we think of that would work?”
- Use case studies from your own experience to demonstrate how other teams and organizations overcame obstacles using some of the methods you are showing during the training.





Special thanks for all those who made this project possible:

• Erasmus Plus: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en
• Romania National Agency: https://www.anpcdefp.ro/
The course was coordinated and hosted by ASK Yourself — Romania, in partnership with:

- 21 Nap – Fiatalok a Tudatosabb Életért Egyesület — Hungary
- AFS Interkultur — Denmark
- BLOOM Associacao Socio Cultural — Portugal
- Bildungswerk “anderes lernen, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Schleswig-Holstein” e.V. —
- Germany
- Global Circle — Italy
- Orenda Foundation — Bulgaria
- POSITIVE YOUTH — Sweden
- Training, Education, Reflection & Resources Association (TERRA) — France
- Youthsrule Company Limited By Guarantee — Ireland

Disclaimer: This brochure was made during a project financed by European Commission through the program Erasmus+. The points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of European Commission.