

Utazási Beszámoló - Report

I learned about the Eduk8 Starter within ESN early 2024, and it sparked my interest right away.

The Training for Trainers - Eduk8 Starter program is an intensive and enriching experience aimed at equipping aspiring trainers within the Erasmus Student Network with the necessary skills to design, deliver, and evaluate workshops rooted in non-formal education (NFE) principles. Held over a week, this training not only provides theoretical knowledge but also practical experience through hands-on workshops and reflection sessions. The structured approach allows participants to immerse themselves in the core principles of NFE while developing their unique facilitation styles.

Because of my studies in Special Needs Education, I was eager to apply and complete the training to equip myself with additional knowledge on Non-Formal Education principles and methods. I travelled to the Eduk8 Starter in Romania, expecting I would gain skills necessary for facilitating workshops, but I got so much more.

Understanding Non-Formal Education Principles

The training began with an in-depth introduction to non-formal education (hereinafter: NFE) principles, emphasizing learner-centred approaches, experiential learning, and active participation. Through interactive sessions, we explored how to create an engaging learning environment that fosters self-reflection and peer collaboration. We also learned about Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning, which proved to be a principle we used a lot during the week.

On the 2nd day, we started learning about the role of a trainer, as well as gaining knowledge on the NAOMIE model of workshop design. One of the key takeaways was the distinction between trainers and other educational roles (facilitator, expert, teacher). We also got paired up with another participant, to later co-facilitate a workshop with.

Training Design: Structuring Effective Workshops

A crucial part of the training was understanding how to create structured, engaging workshops. For this, on the 3rd day we finished working with NAOMIE – *Needs, Aims, Objectives, Methods, Implementation, Evaluation* of a workshop. Moreover, for better cooperation with our co-trainer, we received team-building training.

Using the Training Session Outline (TSO) as a guiding framework, we learned to:

- Define clear and measurable learning objectives
- Structure sessions with flow and logical progression
- Select interactive methods suited to different learning styles

By the end of the 3rd day, everyone had a finished TSO and was ready to facilitate their practice workshops on the 4th day.

Group Learning Environment: Dynamics and Adaptation

Creating a safe and inclusive learning space was another major focus of the training. We explored basic group dynamics and social processes, learned how to foster positive interactions and handle challenging participants. On the 4th day, we had the chance to participate in each other's practice workshops and give feedback. In these sessions, trainers had to adapt their facilitation based on the

energy and composition of the group. We discussed training strategies, ensuring that future trainers could navigate unexpected challenges with confidence.

Feedback & Reflection: A Culture of Continuous Learning

For me, one of the most valuable aspects of the training was the emphasis on feedback and reflection. We were encouraged to give and receive constructive feedback, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Debriefing techniques were explored in-depth, allowing us to ensure meaningful reflections after each session.

Additionally, self-evaluation exercises helped me as a participant to identify my personal strengths and areas for growth. This process of continuous self-improvement was reinforced through peer assessments and mentor guidance.

The Trainer's Path: Sustaining Growth and Contribution

Beyond the training itself, we were encouraged to consider our long-term involvement in the ESN training community and reflect on our journey as a trainer.

By the end of the 5th day, we each developed an individual action plan, outlining our goals for future trainer opportunities, and celebrated the learning we did during the training.

Conclusion

The Eduk8 Starter was a transformative experience that provided me with both theoretical knowledge and practical facilitation skills. Furthermore, I also grew a lot as a person and made friends for life. The safe, inclusive learning environment that was created by the trainers ensured that everyone felt welcome and was able to make their voice heard, without fearing the public.

By integrating NFE principles, understanding training design, fostering a positive group learning environment, and embracing feedback, as an aspiring trainer I left the program well-equipped to contribute to the Erasmus Student Network's training & education initiatives, as well as useful knowledge and skills which I can integrate into my work as a teacher.

This program not only strengthened my skills but also gave me a glimpse into a supportive and engaged community within ESN. The impact of this experience will undoubtedly stay with me for a long time, and I am grateful for my Eduk8 Starter family.



My Eduk8 Starter family