

Story of the project

EDU-facilitation Erasmus+ Training Course

9. - 18. 10. 2023 | Adamov, Czechia

Day 0 - Arrival

We started our second edition of Edu-facilitation Erasmus+ Training Course. Our trainers Lucie Moravčíková, Veronika Kozlová, Martin Rehuš and Lucie Sitarová and Tomáš Doležal welcomed amazing participants from Croatia, Latvia, Spain, Greece, Romania, Czechia and Slovakia, who were all excited to get to know about experiential learning and facilitation in education. We gathered to improve our skills to deliver meaningful workshops and sessions during 8-days training course in a beautiful eco-center Švýčárna.

Preparations were on track, participants were on their way and the weather was clearing up for the meeting between participants and trainers of this second edition of the TC Edu-facilitation... But do we need anything else in this story?

Of course we do! Love for sharing experiences, for learning new things and love for spending 8 days together, sharing feelings, personal experiences and even the toilet paper! The rooms were sweetened to welcome their new tenants and the dinner was ready to energise the participants to play ice breaking games and get to know each other.



Day 1 - Opening

On our exciting inaugural day, we awoke to a delightful breakfast spread that pleasantly surprised us with the inclusion of both plant-based and meat options—a perfect start to our Erasmus adventure! The morning session kicked off at a leisurely 9 o'clock, setting a relaxed tone for the day.

During the morning, we engaged in various activities, one of which involved gathering items that represented us, contributing to the essence of our Erasmus gathering. Furthermore, we were each assigned weekly roles, aptly named "Awesomeness production." These roles included story-telling, purifying, dishwashing, energising, happiness managing, and photography. It was a fantastic way to blend creativity and responsibility within our group.

Our bonding continued with engaging games that encouraged us to introduce ourselves and build camaraderie. Memory-name games and a captivating picture game had us thoroughly entertained and brought us closer together.

Oh, and let's not forget the amusing incident with Hugo, who got a bit wet and turned it into an opportunity for creativity, fashioning a man skirt that certainly sparked a mix of reactions, adding a splash of humour to our day!

Following this, we ventured outside for a short stroll and some sightseeing, exploring the intriguing remnants of an old evaporation mine—an unexpected treat that added an element of historical intrigue to our day.

As the day progressed, we gathered to establish our social agreements called Group Alliance for the upcoming project days, promoting a harmonious and collaborative environment. Later, we held our first LSD (Learning - Support - Development) session, setting the stage for insightful conversations and deeper connections among us.

To cap off this memorable day, an enchanting surprise awaited us during our night session— a campfire with a set of deep life questions and it was indeed an unexpected and delightful end to a day filled with shared laughter, learning, and promising beginnings.



Day 2 - The beginning of learning

We started our morning of this very exciting day with rice cooked in milk for breakfast and some delicious cold cuts. After that, our first activity in the first session was demonstrating our feelings in a circle without words, just with some non-verbal signs and non-verbal communication. Consequently, we attended the workshop about the basics of giving and receiving feedback and the difference between constructive feedback and criticism, which was described as "water pouring" and a non-desirable way of communication in the facilitation of activities.

Next skill that we've acquired today is active listening. We practised it in pairs and had a discussion about its important elements afterwards. Moreover, we've learned about failure management through the activity of a "hot spot" - the spot for a person who wants to hear other's experiences in failure management and there were two spots for other participants who wanted to share their opinion and previous experiences.

Today's lunch was a delightful feast for the senses. We savoured a steaming bowl of rich, aromatic soup, brimming with flavours that danced on our taste buds. The soup was a warm, comforting embrace, with velvety textures and a harmonious blend of savoury and fragrant herbs. Nestled beside the soup were golden, crispy fritters that were nothing short of a culinary masterpiece. These fritters were perfectly crispy on the outside, offering a satisfying crunch with each bite, while their interiors were tender and bursting with a medley of mouthwatering spices. They were a delectable balance of textures and a symphony of flavours.

The most interesting activity of this day to most of the participants was a "Pirates activity", in which we worked and reflected in our LSD (Learning - Support - Development) groups on accomplishing the tasks that we were given in the outdoor space. It was followed by the main moral of the activity, symbolically called "One Piece", hidden in a treasure chest and with the reflection of this activity related to Non-formal education and Experiential learning approach. The last activity for this day was the implementation of Kolb's cycle in the facilitation of activities and discovering the questions appropriate for reflection.

After the dinner, the cultural night was taking place in our kitchen. It was a captivating journey through a tapestry of diverse traditions and customs. It was an evening that celebrated the rich heritage of our global cohort, uniting us in a shared appreciation for the world's cultural mosaic. Each country's presentation or performance was a window into their unique background, filled with colourful anecdotes, traditional attire, and, of course, delectable cuisine. From vibrant dances that told stories of ancient rituals like the dance of the Chito's grandparents, to soul-stirring musical performances that transcended language barriers, the cultural night was a showcase of artistic expression and passion.



Day 3 - Facilitation secrets

Me time in the morning to digest the large amount of information from the previous day as well as recover from intensive intercultural evening experience (and to get some sleep). This light morning start also offered a space to some soft music playing and jamming which created a nice chilled atmosphere.

After the nutritious breakfast, full of energy, we embarked for the brand new day which was kicked-off by the “Blind-folded activity”. In the teams of three we took turns in playing the role of a leader of the blind-folded fellow colleagues. Each leader was given a specific goal to be achieved. The difficulty of the goal increased with each iteration of the activity. Starting by a simple task to get the two blind-folded from point A to point B – by any chosen mean, followed by a task to make them explore the environment (mainly via haptic discovering), finishing with a hardcore task of engaging all their senses (hearing the sounds in the surroundings, smelling the hot tea, tasting the candies,...). Every trio grasped these tasks differently. These diverse approaches were later discussed in the first of many reflections of that day. Interestingly, this activity turned out to be a facilitation in disguise. In this way everyone got the possibility to become a facilitator for at least a short amount of time (as we come from different backgrounds). That is also why the feelings, impressions and learning outcomes of this activity varied a lot among the participants.

After lunch, some members of the group went for a short but educational walk to a nearby cave called Jáchymka. Energised after the walk, the afternoon activity took place inside and was dedicated to the facilitation. Not only we discussed the general definition of it but also we discussed the following topics: How to start and introduce the session, How to actively involve participants, How to close up the session, What are the benefits of facilitation in education, What makes a great facilitator, What makes a session good and effective. We got a lot of inspiration and new knowledge for our future work as facilitators from this fruitful discussion.

As a final organised activity of the day we have split into teams for creating our own workshops according to our common interests and experience. The workshops were carried out the following day and we were not only in the roles of facilitators of those workshops but also as participants of observers in those facilitated by our colleagues and offer them valuable feedback to their activities for future improvement.



Day 4 - Getting in the action

So we got to day four and it was the moment in which we needed to jump to the learning and panic area and exchange our passive roles as participants to the lazy but effective facilitators. Nerves and panic mode got us pretty early in the morning so we started haunting the house before our alarms could go off, and before breakfast was prepared we were all already awaked.

After choosing the workshops that we were interested in, we got to work and we went through 3 workshops as participants and observers, which was challenging. We discovered new perspectives on many interesting topics and felt enlightened on everything that was discussed. We learned about subjects such as intersectionality, public speaking, leadership, languages, trust, and we also solved puzzles related to environmental issues. We all enjoyed the process, as well as we felt grateful for the feedback received.

The evening was ours, having fun and listening to music. Also Lu came back (with a guitar) and we are happy to have her back.

The day itself was blessed with warm and sunny weather - the delayed summer had arrived just in time to facilitate our day of agency. Those of us from colder climates who by mid October already succumbed to the feeling of frost and darkness, rejoiced.



Day 5 - Reflection, reflection, reflection

Day five started slowly and for most of us we wished for the morning to start later. After a long and stressful day, filled with all kinds of emotions, it was time for reflection. Time to reflect on our workshops, on what we learnt and on how we can improve it. We travelled into the past trying to rediscover our values and to get to the beginning of this story, the story of becoming a facilitator. It was a moment of introspection and also a moment of celebration for the small, but successful step taken towards this goal.

After the morning session, lunch came and also the moment for everyone to decide what to do during the Me Time. Some needed rest, some wanted to just watch a movie and others were a bit more adventurous and went in the city while others went to explore the cave nearby; everything that would help to disconnect and take a fresh deep breath for the days to come. Also, Chito proposed to have a campfire in the evening, so we tried to do our best to be back in time.

Everything seemed to go according to plan, the time in the city was relaxing and fun, especially after some beers, the cave seemed interesting and the campfire was almost ready. But the weather did not want to work with us, the group that went in the city was caught in the rain on the way back and the campfire was cancelled. Luckily, dinner and warm ginger tea were waiting for us along with a hot shower.

All in all it was a meaningful day with a very much expected Me Time that connected us even more and offered us the chance to get to know each other in a different way than before. The rain was just a sign of a fresh, better start.



Day 6 - Workshops for workshop givers

Today the amazing team of trainers provided us with the workshops that we suggested the day before. The topics of choice were Public Speaking, Dealing with difficulties, Game-based learning, Visual Facilitation and Group Dynamics. We had two morning sessions where we could choose two of the 4 firstly mentioned workshops, and after lunch we engaged in Group Dynamics and dealing with difficulties with participants - a workshop led by Veronika. In this workshop we defined 4 profiles of participants that might cause unexpected situations in the workshops. Based on short sentences about the personalities of each profile, we designed the entire character —with some beautiful portraits included, of course— and analysed their Strengths, Limits, Needs and what could help to deal with them. These 4 profiles were based on the 4 main personality types of 16 personalities, which could help on further research.

After the session (and a well deserved coffee break) we jumped to the preparation for the second round of Creative Labs, which was finished astoundingly quickly because the teams were arranged almost immediately and the topics were chosen in less than 2 minutes. It's been a pretty intense week and some of us need to slow down the pace for a bit. Others go through with the burnout until the moment of getting back into the plane.

As in the previous Creative labs, we only had this night to devise and prepare the workshop, but most of us quickly got into the creative flow and could finish most of the important points to cover in the template. Then we enjoyed a magical night of music making together. Tomorrow will surely be magical too...



Day 7 - Creative Labs 2.0 and Celebration

The day was a whirlwind of excitement and ingenuity as we delved into the depths of our genius Creative labs, pushing the boundaries of our knowledge and enhancing our performance. Each member of our team contributed their expertise, and together we brought our visions to life.

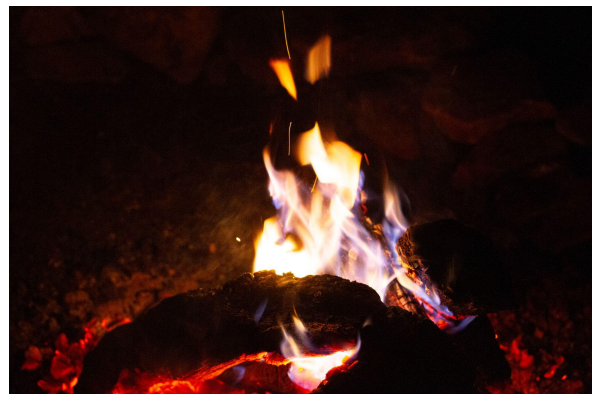
As the sun set, casting a warm glow across the horizon, we gathered for the much-anticipated closing ceremony. The crackling bonfire in the backyard provided the perfect backdrop as we began our festivities. We were serenaded by a captivating medley of international songs, each note resonating with the collective spirit of our diverse team. The flickering flames danced to the rhythm, enhancing the magical ambiance.

In the midst of the music, we shared spine-chilling, yet thrilling, scary stories that sent shivers down our spines, further strengthening our bond. The crackling bonfire seemed to come alive with our animated tales, creating an intimate setting that encouraged camaraderie and laughter.

Our beloved facilitators orchestrated the evening with grace and warmth. They had not only guided us through the labs but also became an integral part of our journey. Moreover we dazzled our taste buds with a delectable dinner that was a feast for both the senses and the soul.

Chito, with his profound wisdom and heartfelt sincerity, took the stage and delivered a speech that touched the depths of our hearts. His words were a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the incredible potential we held within ourselves. It was a speech that would forever be etched in our memories, serving as a guiding light as we embarked on the next chapters of our lives.

This day was not just a closing ceremony; it was a celebration of our shared journey, our growth, and the extraordinary bonds we had formed.



Day 8 - Gathering learning, unclosing and next steps

We have started this day with the very fun and dynamic gazelle energiser and reminiscing on our Hero's journey from the first day of the project and with filling in our map of the project. Next, we've updated our flipcharts with some new tips and tricks after the second block of the creative labs. The last thing we did in the morning session was to make reminders for further facilitation when we get back home. We also exchanged our Instagram profiles so we can stay in touch after the project and took a few group photos.

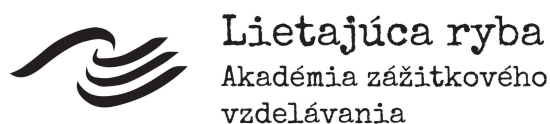
After that, we had some delicious meatballs, potatoes, pork soup and baked potatoes with vegetables for lunch. We filled our bellies with tasty food and were given some time to "get our ducks in a row", or in other words, do all of the chores and technicalities that needed to be done before the project is finished, such as reimbursement spreadsheets, "sugar cubes", feedback reports etc. At 5 p.m., we met again and had a meeting about our obligations after the project, such as social media posts and application of the workshops from this project in our countries. We finished the afternoon session with the Kahoot quiz about the possibilities for young people in the organisation of the European Union.

After some delicious chicken and fried tofu for dinner, we had a closing ceremony in which every participant was given the YouthPass certificate to confirm his or her participation in this project. The last day of the project finished with some dancing, chatting and partying until the early morning hours and that is how we finished this very dynamic and emotional day for all of us.



Thanks for cooperation

We want to thank our partner organisations: [Piedzīvojuma Gars](#), [CPNT Brasov](#), [Roes Cooperativa](#), [Lietajúca ryba](#), [Brújula Intercultural](#), [Ocean Znanja](#) who helped us to create this project and found our amazing participants.



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