**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SKILLS**

**SECTION OVERVIEW**

The objective of this third section of the 'Protect Project' toolkit is to support participants to develop knowledge and competencies in key concepts of non-formal education. It will present the differences between formal, non-formal and informal education and explain how learning methodologies, concepts and how learning occurs in different settings.

This toolkit section contains four session plans and a variety of resources to help support facilitation on this subject, and in designing sessions more broadly related to the 'Protect Project.'

Some of the session plans in the training toolkit are introduced with a brief summary of important information that will support the delivery of each session.

This section's contents will support the participants to:

* Understand the key concepts of learning theories
* Gain practical skills for engaging in non-formal education and some underlying theory, to help them develop their own approach to non-formal education
* Be able to plan and develop an educational activity on different subjects considering specific target groups' learning needs and styles

**Section Contents**

1. Section overview and 'Formal, Non-formal and Informal Education' (pg. 1-3)
2. Session Plan 1: Education Continuum Puzzle - formal, non-formal and informal education (pg. 4-5)
3. Session Plan 2: What Type of Education Is It? - understanding differences between different approaches to education (pg. 5-7)
4. Basic concepts of Adult Learning Theory (pg. 7-9)
5. Session Plan 3: 'De Bono Hats' - understanding how adults learn (pg. 9-10)
6. Learning Styles Overview (pg. 10-12)
7. Session Plan 4: Learning Styles Test and Questionnaire (pg. 12-16)
8. Learning Methods and Methodology (pg. 17-21)
9. Summary and References (pg.22)

**FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION**

**FORMAL LEARNING/EDUCATION** is typically provided by an education or training institution and is structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal education refers to the education system that runs from primary to higher education institutions. It is systematic and organised as an education model, and is structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms - presenting pre-defined curricula with regard to objectives, content and methodology.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL EDUCATION**

* Usually in a classroom setting, although not just school-based
* Content is usually predetermined by teacher or other person/group in authority (perhaps even a volunteer)
* Pre-established hierarchy between teacher and student
* Often culminates in a formal test or proof of knowledge

**INFORMAL LEARNING/EDUCATION** is gained from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but, in most cases, it is not intentional (i.e., incidental or 'random').

**CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMAL EDUCATION**

* Not organised by any institution or person
* Does not have any set of learning objectives
* Never intentional from learner's standpoint
* Learning is practical and can be applied to real situations

**NON-FORMAL LEARNING/EDUCATION** is typically embedded in planned activities is not explicitly designated as learning, but contains an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically does not lead to certification.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

* Balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning
* Linking individual and social learning, partnership-oriented solidarity and symmetrical teaching/learning relations
* Participatory and learner-centred
* Holistic and process-oriented
* Close to real-life concerns, experiential and oriented to *learning by doing,* using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices
* Voluntary and (ideally) open-access
* Aims to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life

(Council of Europe Symposium on Non-Formal Education, 2001)

The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all. It caters for people of all ages, but does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway-structure; it may be short in duration and/or low intensity, and it is typically provided in the form of short course, workshops or seminars.

Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognised as formal qualifications by national educational authorities or to no qualifications at all. Non-formal education can cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of-school children, as well as programmes on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development.

**SESSION PLAN 1: EDUCATION CONTINUUM PUZZLE - formal, non-formal and informal education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal | Education Continuum Puzzle  formal, nonformal, and informal education |
| Equipment List | Stationery, Flipchart, Print-outs of Empty Continuum framework and inputs in separate papers |
| Duration | 25 minutes |
| Instructions | *Preparation: Make print-outs of an empty continuum only with the framework and cut inputs inside into the small pieces. (Do not forget to cut F-N-I words too)*  Divide participants into the small groups and ask them to place each continuum piece into the right group. E.g. “classroom environment” belongs to formal education.  When all groups finalized, ask them to present it to the plenary. Compare differences and introduce the correct continuum if needed.  Continuum source: Non-Formal Education Manual, Peace Corps,2004 |



**SESSION PLAN 2: WHAT TYPE OF EDUCATION IS IT? - understanding the differences between approaches to education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal | What type of education is it?  Understanding differences between different approaches to education—formal, nonformal, and informal education |
| Equipment List | Stationery, Flipchart |
| Duration | 45 minutes |
| Instructions | Ask participants to think back on the discussion of the different approaches to education—formal, nonformal, and informal education. Divide them into the small groups and ask them where would you place each of the examples on different approaches to education ?   1. A volunteer organize a workshop in their local community center about human rights 2. A student brings a frog into a classroom and the children decide to build a terrarium. 3. A teacher sits with men in the shade and talks about HIV prevention. 4. A Volunteer works with a woman from his or her town to conduct women’s literacy classes in the evening. 5. A student participates in a math class in after-school center. 6. A Volunteer shows women waiting at a health center how to cook healthy meals. 7. In the classroom, children learn about how waste products can pollute their water. They then take a walk to the nearest well, stream, or other water source to get water samples for testing. 8. Students take an entrance exam for secondary school.   *Debriefing*   1. Is it hard to group examples above into one specific approach? 2. How did you decide where to place the examples? 3. Is each example clearly one approach or another, or does it encompass aspects and characteristics from several of these approaches to education? |

**BASIC CONCEPTS of ADULT LEARNING THEORY**

In order to understand how learning occurs, a lot of great thinkers and philosophers of our century worked on the concept of learning. Here is a summary of some important approaches to the adult learning process:

**PAULO FRIERE** used 'problem-posing' methods to raise awareness of social issues and to stimulate action by disadvantaged groups. Using a process of problem analysis, reflection and action, his approach to education was based on the belief that community members need to be encouraged to think critically about the problems in their daily lives in order to make decisions and take action.

As a method of teaching, problem-posing involves "listening, dialogue and action." His book, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' is considered ground-breaking because it is one of the first pieces of literature to challenge the education system.

*"Learning is a process where knowledge is presented to us, then shaped through understanding, discussion and reflection."* Paulo Friere

**MALCOLM KNOWLES** popularised the concept of *andragogy* ("the art and science of helping adults learn") contrasting it with *pedagogy* ("the art and science of teaching children"). He posited a set of assumptions about adult learners - namely, that the adult learner:

* Moves from dependency to increasing self-directedness as they mature and can direct their own learning
* Draws on their accumulated reservoir of life experiences to aid learning
* Is ready to learn when they assume new social or life roles
* Is problem-centred and wants to apply new learning immediately
* Is motivated to learn by internal, rather than external, factors

Inherent in these assumptions are implications for practice. Knowles suggests that adult educators:

* Set a cooperative climate for learning in the classroom
* Assess the learner's specific needs and interests
* Develop learning objectives based on the learner's needs, interests and skill levels
* Design sequential activities to achieve the objectives
* Work collaboratively with the learner to select methods, materials, and resources for instruction
* Evaluate the quality of the learning experience and make adjustments, as needed, while assessing needs for further learning

Adults need to know *why* they are learning something. Effective teachers explain their reasons for teaching specific skills. Because adults learn by doing, effective instruction focuses on tasks that adults can perform, rather than on memorisation of content. Adults are problem-solvers and learn best when the subject is of immediate use, effective instruction involves the learner in solving real-life problems.

*"The learner should be actively involved in the learning process."*

Malcolm Knowles

**DAVID KOLB** raised awareness of learning styles, and created a model that suggest four different categories of learning - concrete experimentation; reflective observation; abstract conceptualisation; and active experimentation. Kolb created a methodology for incorporating these four categories into every learning experience - "the experiential learning cycle."

**KOLB'S CYCLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

1. The first stage is 'concrete learning' - where the learner encounters a new experience or reinterprets an existing experience
2. The second stage, 'reflective observation' - where the learner reflects on the experience on a personal basis
3. The third stage, 'abstract conceptualisation' - where the learner forms new ideas, or modifies existing abstract ideas, based on the reflections arising from the previous stage
4. The final stage, 'active experimentation' - where the learner applies the new ideas to their surroundings to see if there are any modifications in the next appearance of the experience. This second experience becomes the 'concrete experience' for the beginning of the next cycle, beginning again at the first stage.

**SESSION PLAN 3: 'DE BONO HATS' - understanding how adults learn**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal | De Bono Hats  Understanding how adult learn |
| Equipment List | Stationery, Flipchart, |
| Duration | 45 minutes |
| Instructions | Introduce the De Bono Six Thinking Hats discussion model to the participant and explain them that this model helps participants to look at problems from different perspectives.  Divide participants into 6 groups and  ***White Hat*** *represents facts.*  *“What do we know about learning?”*  ***Yellow Hat*** *represents benefits*  *“How does learning helps us?”*  *“What are the benefits of learning in our life?”*  ***Green Hat*** *represents alternative, solutions*  *“How can we innovate learning?”*  ***Red Hat*** *represents emotions*  *“What does learning make us feel?”*  ***Black Hat*** *represents cautions*  *“What are the difficulties that we face while learning?”*  ***Blue Hat*** *represents process*  *“What does we need to learning to happen?”*  Please ensure that all participants visited each station and actively participate into different discussions to ensure to look at the learning from different angles. At the end of discussions, let each group to present the outcomes of their perspective. |

**LEARNING STYLES**

This section has so far covered some of the major learning theories and the ways in which learning can occur. Individuals differ in the specific ways they learn. There are many theoretical approaches dealing with learning styles but in this section, we will outline the 'Honey and Mumford' learning styles.

Honey and Mumford identified four main learning style preferences. By thinking about your preferred style, you can try to apply this to learning new things. If you are aware of your own natural style, you may be more likely to find learning much easier and quicker. You are also more likely to understand why others may prefer to learn in varying ways. Below are the descriptions of each learning style:

**ACTIVISTS**

Activists like to be involved in new experiences. They are open-minded and enthusiastic about new ideas, but get bored with implementation. They enjoy doing things and tend to act first and consider the implications afterwards. They like working with others but tend to hog the limelight.

Activists learn best when:

* involved in new experiences, problems and opportunities
* working with others in business games, team tasks, roleplaying
* being thrown in the deep end with a difficult task
* chairing meetings, leading discussions and other forms of leadership

Activists learn less when:

* listening to lectures or long explanations
* reading, writing or thinking on their own
* absorbing and understanding data
* following precise instruction to the letter

**THEORISTS**

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex and logically sound theories. They think problems through in a step-by-step way. They tend to be perfectionists who like to fit things into a rational scheme. They tend to be detached and analytical, rather than subjective or emotive in their thinking.

Theorists learn best when:

* they are put in complex situations where they have to use their skills and knowledge
* they are in structured situations with clear purpose
* they are offered interesting ideas or concepts even though they are not immediately relevant
* they have the chance to question and probe ideas behind things

Theorists learn less when:

* they have to participate in situations which emphasise emotion and feelings
* the activity is unstructured or the briefing is poor
* they have to do things without knowing the principles or concepts involved
* they feel they're out of tune with other participants e.g., with people of very different learning styles

**REFLECTORS**

Reflectors like to stand back and look at a situation from different perspectives. They like to collect data and think about it carefully before coming to any conclusions. They enjoy observing others and will listen to their views before offering their own.

Reflectors learn best when:

* observing individuals or groups at work
* they have the opportunity to review what has happened and think about what they have learned
* producing analyses and reports, doing tasks without tight deadlines

Reflectors learn less when:

* acting as leader or role-playing in front of others
* doing things with no time to prepare
* being thrown in at the deep end
* being rushed or worried by deadlines

**PRAGMATISTS**

Pragmatists are keen to try things out. They want concepts that can be applied to their job. They tend to be impatient with lengthy discussions and are practical and down to earth.

Pragmatists learn best when:

* there is an obvious link between the topic and job
* they have the chance to try out techniques with feedback e.g., role-playing
* they are shown techniques with obvious advantages e.g., saving time
* they are shown a model they can copy e.g., a film or a respected boss

Pragmatists learn less when:

* there is no obvious or immediate benefit that they can recognise
* there is no practice or guidelines on how to do something
* there is no apparent pay-back to the learning e.g., shorter meetings
* the event or learning is 'all theory'

Most of us have elements of more than one learning style. Think about your strongest and most prominent style, and your weakest style, to identify how you learn.

**SESSION PLAN 4: LEARNING STYLES TEST - getting to know your learning style**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal | Learning styles test  Getting to know your learning test |
| Equipment List | Print-outs of Learning Styles test |
| Duration | 45 minutes |
| Instructions | Distribute “Honey and Mumford Learning Styles to participants and ask them to reflect their learning and answer questions on the test.  After it, divide them into the small groups to share the results of learning types and if they reall suits to their experience. After the first round of discussion, present the question below  *“How to adjust our training to serve all learning styles?”* |

On the next three pages, you can find the Honey and Mumford Learning Styles Test and Scoring sheet to print out and use in-session.

**../Downloads/ilovepdf_split/Learning%20Styles%20Questionnaire%20by%20Honey%20&amp;%20Mumford-1.pdf**

**../Downloads/ilovepdf_split/Learning%20Styles%20Questionnaire%20by%20Honey%20&amp;%20Mumford-2.pdf**

**../Downloads/ilovepdf_split/Learning%20Styles%20Questionnaire%20by%20Honey%20&amp;%20Mumford-3.pdf**

**LEARNING METHODS and METHODOLOGY**

As discussed previously, academics and great thinkers discuss theories and models concerning how adults learn, and the methodologies to be used in training to facilitate it. In this section, we would also like to include some elements to take into consideration when designing and conducting effective training for you target group.

Methodology, briefly, is a system of methods used in a particular activity. In the 'Adult Learning Theory' section, we outlined Malcolm Knowles' concept of *andragogy.* You may recall that adult learners' motivation is very important in their learning process. Participants will want to know how they will immediately benefit from what they acquire via the course or session. It's vital to begin any workshop by reviewing learners' expectations and demonstrate how they are reflected in the session learning objectives, and to continually refer to them throughout the course of the session.

It is also very important that learners participate actively. When facilitators design their educational activity, it's important to choose participatory training methods so that learners will be engaged and it is accessible to different individual learning styles.

We have compiled a short list of 'participatory training methods,' so that you can choose different methods when designing your sessions.

**ACTION PLANNING**

Any exercise which invites participants to reflect on their learning during the training event so far and plan how they will use the material in their own workplace. Action planning can take the form of: a learning log, sharing in pairs and groups etc.

**BRAINSTORM**

In response to a question or issues generated by a facilitator, all participants contribute ideas and suggestions which are noted on a large flipchart or whiteboard as fast as they come. The idea is to take and record all ideas, no matter how apparently irrelevant, and not to stop for any discussion. Ideas generated in this fast-paced and random way often spark other ideas. At the natural end of the brainstorming session, the merits of different ideas can be reflected upon and discussed.

**DEMONSTRATION**

An exercise in which the facilitator shows participants how to do something by doing it themself. Demonstrations are useful ways of introducing skills and techniques and giving participants confidence to try it themselves. However, similarly to lectures, demonstration does not necessarily help participants do something for themselves and may need to be combined with other participatory methods.

**DIALOGUE BOOKS**

There is a variation of sentence completion exercises that can be particularly effective at the start and finish of training events.

One example includes: participants are arranged in pairs, either in two lines facing towards one another. Each participant is given a prepared booklet. On each page of the booklet, a single sentence completion prompt is given (e.g., "My feelings on arrival at this course were..." and "Something I have learnt during this session is...) Participants take turns to share their sentence endings, working through the book prompts.

As a good icebreaker, each participant pairs with a different person for each page.

**DRAWING AND CARTOONING**

A non-verbal technique which allows participants to creatively explore or explain a situation without using words. Working individually or as a group, participants are invited to draw - themselves, their team, a particular situation - as they perceive it. The resulting artwork forms the basis for subsequent discussion and sharing. Cartooning is a variation in which the history of an event is drawn in a cartoon sequence.

This identifies key moments and concepts and is a useful way of preparing for other participation methods such as role-play. Useful training tip: encourage participants to regard *all* of their efforts as acceptable artwork.

**FEEDBACK ROUNDS**

Exercises which stop the process of learning during a session and encourage participants to state how they are feeling or what they think they are learning. This can look like group or paired discussions, for example. This allows both participants and the facilitator to gather a sense of progress of the session and adapt the session or approach depending on feedback.

**GAMES**

Games comprise a wide range of techniques, from pre-packaged training aids (used in team-building for instance) to less competitive devices in which one group's task is contrasted with another's. For some training groups, techniques such as role-play may best be introduced as a 'game.'

**GOLDFISH BOWL**

A particular technique for demonstrations. Several volunteers from the group volunteer to take part in an exercise (such as discussion, role-play or game) in front of the rest of the group members who act as observers. The action of the exercise then takes place within this central 'goldfish bowl.' At its conclusion, feedback can be taken from both the actual participants and the observers. A useful technique, if the facilitator wishes to retain more control of the exercise, or if some participants lack the confidence to engage.

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

Any open or structured discussion involving the whole group with the facilitator. The topic may be limited by the facilitator to left to evolve via contributions offered by participants.

**HANDOUTS**

Written notes/diagrams/photographs or pamphlets containing a summary of the session, instructions for a practical exercise. These are issued by the facilitator to participants either as a useful reminder, or as additional material for use in the participant's own time.

**ICEBREAKERS**

Any exercise designed to introduce participants to one another, or to begin a training session. Typical icebreakers involved remembering the names of other participants, interviewing them to discover who they are, or simply physical games to encourage strangers to work together.

**LECTURE**

A prepared verbal presentation from the trainer to participants as a group. May be supported by slides, videos, demonstrations, handouts, etc. Is useful for conveying factual knowledge, theory and instructions to participants but may have limited retention in their memories if it does not suit their learning style.

**LOGS AND DIARIES**

Participants are asked to maintain a written log or diary of their experiences, learning or insight during (and sometimes for a specified period after) a training event. Logs assist in reflection. They can be private or shared with the facilitator or wider group. Occasionally they may be used for purposes of assessment.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

A technique for collecting information. It can also be used to help self-assessment before or during a session or training event. A variation is to ask participants to use a questionnaire or interview others. Used this way, it can be a helpful icebreaker.

**RANKING ON CARDS**

Many training situations require participants to prioritise issues. Issues can be identified through brainstorming, or pre-prepared and written onto cards. Participants working on their own or in small groups must then rank-order the cards.

Individual results can then be compared.

**ROLE-PLAY**

A technique for recreating or practicing real-life situations. Having identified a real-world situation and the way in which it developed; the facilitator converts this into a role-play by asking individual participants to take on particular roles as seen in the situation. This can represent real-life individuals or situation, or be an approximate imagined version.

**SCULPTING**

A non-verbal technique which is particularly useful for understanding group dynamics. One participant is asked to 'place' other participants in the room as they mentally perceive them: actual distances between them reflect the degree (or lack of) closeness between them. Their positions (standing, arms outstretched, subservient, turned away etc.) reflects their attitude. Their expressions (eyes averted, head down, smiling etc.) reflects their mood.

Participants can be asked to reflect and comment on where and how they and others have been placed. Other participants may re-arrange people according to their own personal perspectives. This can be used throughout a session or longer-term training course to understand changes in perspective and dynamics over time, which can be helpful and powerful for feedback and de-briefing amongst the group.

**SHARING IN PAIRS**

Participants are divided into pairs to discuss an issue set by the facilitator. This technique can be used in various ways: discussing personal experiences and reactions to situations; co-counselling each other's difficulties; clarifying personal expectations; supporting a partner's reflections and planning.

**SIMULATION**

A large-scale reconstruction of a complex series of interlinked processes. Sometimes seen as a large role-play, because participants take on various prepared roles acting together as a team. Depending on the simulation, some teams and individuals may co-operate, other may conflict. The simulation can proceed through various phases with the director (usually the trainer) moving it on through differing time spans, or introducing random external events into the process. Requires extensive pre-planning and de-briefing.

**SITUATION CARDS**

A prepared set of cards each describing a typical awkward or difficult situation which participants may expect to encounter in their work. Each card is introduced by a participant who continues by suggesting their likely response. Other participants can contribute their ideas as well.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Any opportunity given to sub-groups of the whole training group to work through topics and issues via discussion together. Usually, the theme of the discussion is carefully set by the facilitator to give direction. Small group discussions can also be used to encourage sharing of experiences and action planning in a more informal and supportive manner than is often possible within the larger group. Small group discussion can be self-contained, or could require feedback to the whole group later. This would be dependent on whether the content of each group's discussions needs to be shared.

**TICK-LISTS AND ASSESSMENT SHEETS**

A form of pencil and paper exercise or questionnaire, in which a list of pre-prepared statements of prompts have to be considered and responded to by the participant. The headings against which statements might be ticked could include: 'is true of me/sometimes true of me/never true of me; 'is a problem/sometimes a problem/never a problem" etc.

**TRIADS**

A specific form of small group work in which three people (A, B and C) work together in a particular way. The group is given a topic to explore, or each participant is asked to identify a personal issue with regard to that topic. In the triad, person A is actively exploring the issues by conversing with person B who acts solely as a responder or counsellor. Person C does not participate directly in this conversation, but contributes at the end in one of several ways, depending on the nature of the exercise.

**TRUST GAMES**

Various games and exercises which encourage group members to participate less as individuals and more as collaborative partners. Simple trust games include:

* the blind-folded person in a paired team being helped around the room by their partner
* one person lying prone on the floor, and being lifted up horizontally by six other participants
* one person standing in the middle of a close circle of others and allowing themselves to repeatedly fall to one side, be supported by the circle and pushed in another direction across the circle etc.

**SUMMARY**

This third section of the 'Protect Project' toolkit covers non-formal education and training skills that can support the delivery of any training events, workshops or sessions with a wide-range of participants. It presents key concepts of various learning theories and methodologies, and provides resources for facilitating and engaging with training sessions.

**REFERENCES**

# Council of Europe Symposium on Non-Formal Education, 2001. *Non-Formal Education,* s.l.: Council of Europe.