



Curriculum for educating youth workers in
collaboration with schools/teachers on
reducing the school dropout rates through
**developing community service and learning
programmes for young students**



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The Project

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Summary of the project

School dropout is considered to be a serious problem in Europe, and it is caused by poverty, emigration but also different social factors that deprive young people to have experiential learning and positive environment in their schools. Even though there are many updates in the system of education and laws that are enforced to help the situation and reduce the dropout rate, the phenomenon is still quite present especially in some regions and rural areas. School environment is still not considered fully attractive for young people, on the contrary it can be a potential space for bullying, peer-violence, and similarly does not focus on providing continuously activities that foster social inclusion of youngsters.

The idea of having youth involved in social and environmental projects in their community through the engagement and support of their schools, especially in regions where school dropout rate is high, is the main motivation for this project to be implemented and receive adequate funding. School dropout rate as a phenomenon still is quite present in our countries despite the efforts of governments in adopting new laws and regulations for more innovative and practical approaches to education, as well as despite the efforts by the teachers to provide quality learning to their students.

The school dropout rate can be increased due to many factors such as poverty, emigration, bullying in schools, lack of social interactions and inclusion within the school environment, lack of critical thinking development among youngsters in schools, lack of ability to accept the presence of other cultures and embrace diversity, and related causes. Listing all these reasons that cause increase or stagnation of school dropout rates, it can be concluded that there is an urgent need to offer effective long-term solutions that offer attractive, interactive, inclusive and motivational school environment for all youngsters in the partner organisations' countries and throughout Europe in order to support the 2030 EU target in having a below than 9% of school dropout rate.

Non-formal education principles have been embraced by a high number of youngsters throughout Europe and globe, as well as considered highly attractive and practical. On the other hand, the formal education institutions do not necessarily contain interactive spaces and activities for their students. Youth work and NFE methods have resulted in being motivational and bringing interaction, embracing diversity among young people. Although there are different programmes provided through the non-formal education programmes, there is still a big gap on connecting and cooperating between youth workers and school teachers that can lead to fruitful results and prevention of school dropout through the combination of formal and non-formal education methods, as well as through the exchanging of practices, support in processes and stimulating youngsters in becoming active citizens.

This project uses an innovative approach with various activities, involvement of associate partners from different sectors, including schools to address the needs of youngsters, with the main aim to provide a solution which is considered attractive and useful for the community and environment at the same time and promote the inclusion and diversity in education, youth work and local communities.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT ARE:

- Empowering youngsters in organising (eco) community projects and strengthening their competences for life through innovative toolkit and online course on initiating and implementing activities within green community service and learning programmes;
- Empowering youth workers' capacities in collaborating with schools on reducing the school dropout rates through developing community service and learning programmes for young students (mainstream and at risk) – through innovative curriculum;

- Exchange good practices among 4 European countries with different realities regarding school dropout rates and the active citizenship of youth in communities and increase partnership on multiplication of the project results Europe wide

PROJECT ACTIVITIES ARE:

- A1 – Project Management
- Key meeting – kick-off – online
- O1 Toolkit of youth work for organising (eco) community projects as a methodology to prevent school dropout
- O2 Online course for youngsters on step-by-step in organising (eco) community projects
- Key meeting – mid-term – online
- O3 Curriculum for educating youth workers in collaboration with schools/teachers on reducing the school dropout rates through developing community service and learning programmes for young students.
- Local/national training courses
- National conference – PT
- National conference – HR
- National conference – IT
- International conference – RS
- Key meeting – Evaluation meeting



BACKGROUND OF THE CURRICULUM

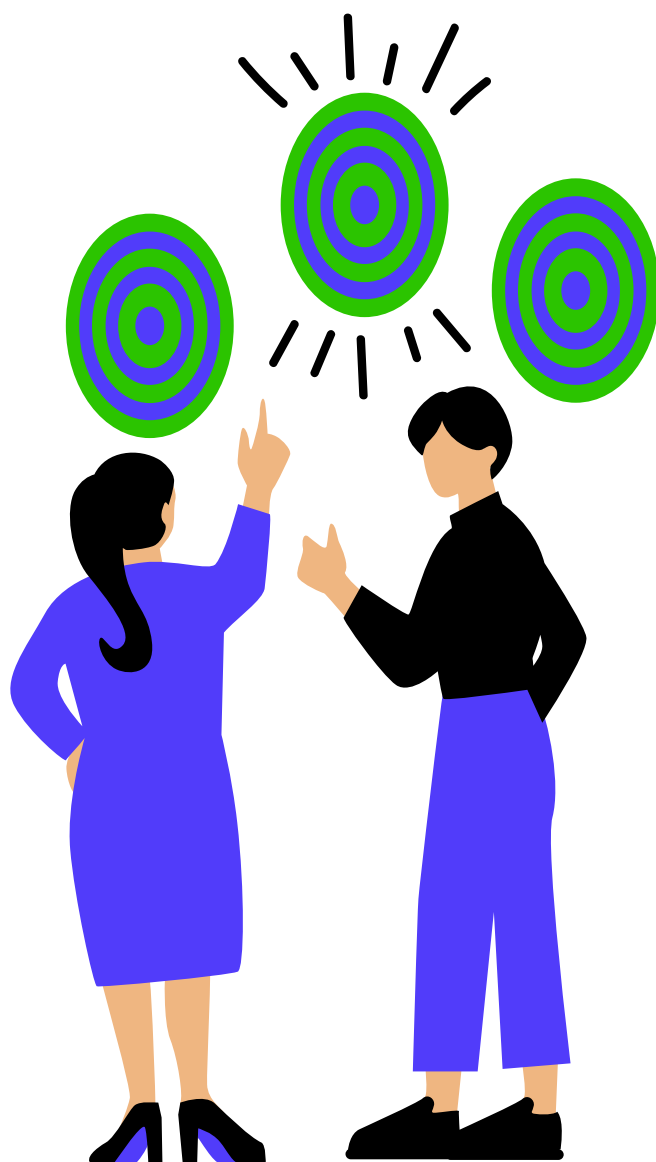
The curriculum for educating youth workers in collaboration with schools/teachers on reducing the school dropout rates through developing community service and learning programmes for young students is a new learning and empowering material for youth workers. It is designed for youth workers that are actively involved in programmes targeting young people who are at risk of school dropout. Acknowledging this concern, the curriculum is designed specifically to empower youth workers in collaborating with teachers/schools in developing learning programmes for these vulnerable youngsters, hence providing practical and innovative, as well as attractive programmes in correspondence to their talents and needs while embracing the community aspect. The curriculum will be an innovative tool for easy multiplication by youth trainers and educators who are educating youth workers. It will deal with youth workers' competences on: establishing positive collaboration with schools and teachers; developing new programmes of community service and learning, together with school and other stakeholders; recruiting and motivating youngsters at risk of school dropout to join the developed community service and learning programmes; mentoring youngsters throughout their involvement in the community projects and afterwards for implementing the learnt into their academic/school learning achievements.

The curriculum is intended for a 6 days long training course. It comprises of 12 interconnected sessions with logical flow in addressing youth workers' competences in the topic. It presents an interactive and participatory training course based on NFE methodology and principles. It also provides opportunities for participants to apply their learning in practical settings and to share their experiences and best practices with each other. The structure of this curriculum is based on the initial introductory pages, followed by the list of developed training course sessions. The first part of the curriculum consists of the introduction on the project, the background of the curriculum, the useful and practical recommendations for future youth workers and educators using this curriculum for their programmes, and the programme table with all developed sessions. Then, the second part of the curriculum presents all the 12 sessions according to the order in the programme table. Each session is in detail presented and described. The session starts with the title, duration in minutes, a background on the session, aim and specific objectives, competences developed through the session's activities, methods and methodologies used. This is followed by a thorough description of each activity flow within the session, materials needed for the implementation, further background documents and sources relevant to the training session, and recommendations for easier multiplication.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT ARE:

- To introduce participants to the training course, create a positive group dynamic and establish a collaborative and open learning environment from the start of the programme;
- To explore and understand the national contexts, causes and existing responses to school dropout, in order to identify where youth work can contribute to sustainable solutions;
- To explore how community service and learning programmes can serve as effective strategies to prevent school dropout and re-engage at-risk youth;
- To practice developing a strategic and structured approach for building effective, sustainable collaboration between youth workers and schools/teachers in support of preventing school dropout;
- To design inclusive, creative and collaborative community service-learning programmes that engage schools, students and community stakeholders in addressing school dropout;
- To equip youth workers with an understanding to apply a needs-based approach when designing and evaluating community service and learning programmes;
- To explore and analyse the risk factors contributing to school dropout and build youth workers' capacity to recognise and respond to these challenges in their communities;

- To strengthen participants' ability to design inclusive and engaging recruitment strategies that effectively reach and motivate young people at risk of school dropout to join community service and learning programmes;
- To equip youth workers with tools and strategies to sustain the motivation and engagement of at-risk youngsters throughout all phases of community service and learning programmes;
- To strengthen youth workers' capacity to provide continuous, structured and empathetic mentoring support to at-risk youngsters during their engagement in community service and learning projects;
- To empower youth workers to design and adapt practical initiatives that transfer learning outcomes from community service projects into school environments, supporting the academic development and inclusion of at-risk youth;
- To provide participants with the space to reflect on their personal and group learning experiences and to evaluate the training programme while identifying ways to sustain and implement their learning beyond the course.



Programme of the training course

| DAY 1 | |
|---------|---|
| PM | Arrival of participants |
| Evening | Welcome evening |
| DAY 2 | |
| AM | Introduction to the training course and the group |
| PM | Understanding the context and challenges of school dropout rates |
| PM | Reflection and Evaluation of the day |
| Evening | Intercultural evening |
| DAY 3 | |
| AM | Connection between school dropout rates and community service and learning programmes |
| AM | Establishing positive collaboration with schools and teachers |
| PM | Developing new and innovative programmes of community service and learning in collaboration with schools, students and other stakeholders |
| PM | Reflection and Evaluation of the day |
| DAY 4 | |
| AM | Applying a needs-based approach to community service and learning programme development and evaluation |
| AM | Identifying and understanding the risk factors that contribute to school dropout rates |

| | |
|---------|---|
| PM | Developing effective recruitment strategies for youngsters at risk of school dropout to join community service and learning programmes |
| PM | Reflection and Evaluation of the day |
| DAY 5 | |
| AM | Developing strategies to keep youngsters at risk of school dropout motivated and engaged throughout their involvement in community projects |
| PM | FREE AFTERNOON |
| DAY 6 | |
| AM | Mentoring youngsters throughout their involvement in the community projects |
| AM | Implementing learning achievements from community projects into the academic/school settings – I |
| PM | Implementing learning achievements from community projects into the academic/school settings – II |
| PM | Reflection and Evaluation of the day |
| DAY 7 | |
| AM | Implementing learning achievements from community projects into the academic/school settings – III |
| PM | Evaluation and sustainability of community service and learning programmes |
| Evening | "See you again" party |
| DAY 8 | |
| AM | Departure of participants |



RECOMMENDATIONS

for using this curriculum and
organising similar training courses

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USING THIS CURRICULUM AND ORGANISING SIMILAR TRAINING COURSES

This curriculum for educating youth workers in collaboration with schools/teachers on reducing the school dropout rates through developing community service and learning programmes for young students, is a structured and innovative tool aimed at equipping youth workers with the necessary competences to effectively address early school leaving. The curriculum supports youth workers in building strong partnerships with schools and communities, designing and implementing inclusive community service-learning initiatives and providing tailored support to students at risk of dropping out. It is particularly designed for a 6-day training course but can also be adapted for different learning contexts. The sessions focus on providing knowledge, skills and attitudes that youth workers need to take active roles in dropout prevention by bridging formal and non-formal education through practical engagement and experiential learning. When using this curriculum, it is recommended that youth workers and trainers involved in organising and delivering the course possess prior knowledge and attitudes in the following areas:

- Understanding of the causes and dynamics of school dropout and the role of community engagement;
- Experience in non-formal education and participatory training methods;
- Skills in collaboration and communication with formal education stakeholders (schools, teachers, institutions);
- Practical know-how in designing youth programmes and mentoring at-risk youth;
- Familiarity with community-based learning and service-learning approaches.

Each session within the curriculum is purposefully interconnected, offering a coherent learning flow and ensuring that the developed competences build upon one another. The curriculum supports easy multiplication by youth workers and educators at local, national, and European levels.

To ensure the quality and effectiveness of the training course, it is important to consider specific recommendations at each stage of the process: before the training course begins, throughout its delivery, and after it is finalised. The following section outlines tailored suggestions for each of these key phases.

STAGE 1: BEFORE THE TRAINING COURSE

- The organising team and trainers should ensure that all selected participants receive a well-structured info pack, which includes training objectives, programme schedule, methodology (non-formal education practices), pre-training tasks that contain local context research on dropout issues, and practical information.
- The sending organisations should be informed on time that they are responsible to organise preparatory meetings to provide context about the topic, clarify the expectations, and support participants in completing any research or pre-training activities.
- It is crucial to foster awareness of diversity, inclusion, and collaboration. Sending organisations should prepare participants to engage in mixed-nationality and interdisciplinary teams and highlight the importance of intercultural understanding, especially as school dropout is shaped by socio-economic and cultural factors.
- Participants should be informed about their active roles during the course, especially if they are expected to co-facilitate discussions, contribute with local examples, or co-develop materials.

STAGE 2: DURING THE TRAINING COURSE

- Trainers should ensure that the course follows a progressive learning flow, adapting timing and methods to the group's needs and ensuring each session builds on the previous one.
- The curriculum includes practical workshops, theory-based discussions and group project work. Trainers should facilitate reflection after each working day to solidify learning and link it to real-life youth work.
- It is important to encourage participants to bring concrete examples from their communities, which enriches discussions and enables real-time peer learning.
- Each session includes practical recommendations for implementation; these should be read and tailored by the trainers to fit participants' professional realities and national contexts.
- Trainers should include daily reflection moments and energy checks to keep motivation high and ensure learning is inclusive and emotionally safe. A flexible, youth-centred approach is vital for high engagement.
- Trainers should allocate space for spontaneous creativity and problem-solving by allowing participants to co-design activities or adapt tasks to their target groups' realities.

STAGE 3: AFTER THE TRAINING COURSE

- Trainers and organisers should maintain communication with participants after the training course and support the implementation of community service-learning programmes developed during the course.
- It is crucial to encourage participants to document their follow-up activities and share them within the network. This helps to ensure peer accountability, showcase good practices and inspire replication.
- Follow-up support is also important. This may include mentorship, online feedback rounds, or networking opportunities (e.g., reunions, online forums, etc.).
- Participants should be invited to evaluate the long-term impact of the training on their work with schools and youth and contribute to the refinement of the curriculum or future training cycles.



DEVELOPED SESSIONS OF THE TRAINING COURSE

“Educating youth workers in collaboration with schools/teachers on reducing the school dropout rates through developing community service and learning programmes for young students”

Introduction to the training course and the group



Session Title:

Introduction to the training course and the group



Duration:

180 minutes



Background:

The first session sets the basis for the entire training course and participants' involvement. It introduces participants to the project, training course's aims, structure and content of the programme, as well as gives space for creating a welcoming and inclusive group atmosphere. As participants come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, it is essential to use the first session to communicate and establish trust. The activities in this session are designed to encourage interaction, spark curiosity and energise participants. Starting the training course with learning about each other and continuing to express their expectations and identifying their contributions, will enable participants to build connections that will support collaboration during the training course. Then, the "Mission impossible" activity serves as both an icebreaker and a team-building activity. This activity helps participants to explore group dynamics in a playful and reflective way. This session also gives participants the chance to have a clear understanding of the training course's purpose and structure.



Aim of the session:

To introduce participants to the training course, create a positive group dynamic and establish a collaborative and open learning environment from the start of the programme.

Objectives:

- To present the background, objectives, and learning outcomes of the training course;
- To create a safe and inclusive space where participants feel welcomed, heard and comfortable to actively participate;
- To support participants in getting to know each other through interactive and creative methods;
- To create space for group bonding and cooperation through a team challenge that encourages creativity, communication and problem-solving skills.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Problem solving;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Speed dating;
- Individual work – Expectations, Fears and Contributions;
- Group work: Mission impossible activity.

Session Flow:

I. Introduction to the training course, team and participants (20 minutes)

Trainers and the organising team welcome participants to the training course and the venue. They officially open the programme by introducing the project. They provide a brief overview of the project "Youth-led ECO community projects for prevention of school dropouts," explaining the relevance of the topic, the importance of youth workers' role in reducing dropout rates, the importance of collaborating with teachers and schools in addressing this issue, and the expected outcomes of the course. They further introduce the aim of the training course, the objectives and the programme for the next 6 days. Then, a brief introduction of organising team, trainers and a round of introduction from participants takes place.

II. Speed dating (30 minutes)

Participants are invited to stand up and form two lines facing each other. They are informed that in the next 30 minutes they will have the chance to form new pairs every 2–3 minutes and discuss about a certain statement/question announced by the trainer. After each round, one person from the line has to move to their left/right in order to have a new person to talk to. For the start, the trainer announces that each pair has 2–3 minutes to introduce themselves, share their name, where they are from, and one fun fact about themselves. Then, the next rounds take place, with new questions/statements to discuss such as:

- My dream job
- A fun experience on my youth work
- Favourite country to live
- Do you have a pet?
- A movie/TV series that I re-watched one/several times
- What is your hobby?

More questions can be added by the trainer, depending on the number of participants and the timing of the activity.

III. Expectations, Fears and Contributions (30 minutes)

The trainer has put out three flipcharts labelled "Expectations", "Fears" and "Contributions". He/she invites participants to reflect individually for a few minutes on this and then approach the flipcharts to write or draw their inputs using colourful markers or post-its. The whole process lasts about 10–15 minutes. After everyone has contributed, the trainer reads out loud some of the points from each flipchart and invites participants to further share or comment. In this way the trainers can gather insights into the group's mindset. This activity also creates a space for participants to feel heard and included from the start.

IV. Mission impossible (100 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. The trainer introduces to them a series of missions/challenges that they have to complete within a given time of 75 minutes. After this time, they need to come back to the working room for the trainer to validate their accomplished mission and a short discussion. The list of tasks/missions can be diverse and can also include activities in the local community to explore the surroundings and the culture as well. A potential list of activities can be the following:

- Create a 1-minute team chant and perform it
- Build a free-standing tower using only paper and tape
- Find an object that represents your team's identity
- Take a creative group selfie
- Learn three new words in the local language.

Each task/mission has points and each group must decide how to manage their time, assign roles and complete as many tasks as possible.

After the mission time ends, all participants gather for a reflection round facilitated by the trainers. They share how they organised themselves, what they learned about teamwork and how they handled the given tasks/challenges.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, tape and list of tasks for the Mission impossible activity.

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should make sure that the Mission Impossible tasks are inclusive and adaptable to all participants' physical, cultural, and emotional capacities. He/she should choose tasks that promote collaboration over competition and reflect the values of teamwork and creativity in youth work.
- "Expectations, Fears and Contributions" activity – the trainer should make sure to revisit the flipcharts at the end of the training to reflect on what has been fulfilled or changed. This helps participants to feel acknowledged and reinforces the value of their input from the very beginning. The trainer should emphasise this element.



Understanding the context and challenges of school dropout rates



Session Title:

Understanding the context and challenges of school dropout rates



Duration:

180 minutes



Background:

Before youth workers start with more in-depth learning and empowerment in collaborating with schools and develop impactful community service and learning programmes, it is essential that they understand the realities surrounding school dropout rates and explore existing programmes tackling this issue. These realities often vary significantly from one country or region to another, shaped by social, economic, educational and cultural factors. This session allows participants to explore and analyse the school dropout situation in their own contexts through collaborative reflection and group work. Participants have the chance to identify the key challenges faced by young people at risk of leaving school early and examine the systemic or community-level factors that contribute to these challenges. Additionally, they have the chance to explore what is already being done to address these issues, both from policy and grassroots perspectives.



Aim of the session:

To explore and understand the national contexts, causes and existing responses to school dropout, in order to identify where youth work can contribute to sustainable solutions.

Objectives:

- To explore and share the current realities and statistics related to school dropout in participants' countries;
- To identify key challenges and root causes that lead to early school leaving among young people;
- To create space for presenting the gathered information and data;
- To encourage sharing of diverse perspectives and experiences among youth workers from different backgrounds;
- To explore existing programmes and responses addressing school dropout on the national level.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Research skills;
- Presentation skills;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Small group work (National teams);
- Presentations;
- Discussion.

Session Flow:

I. Introduction to the session and task (10 minutes)

The trainer briefly introduces the topic and objectives of the session. Participants are informed that during the next 70 minutes they will explore the realities of school dropout rates in their own contexts and critically assess the main challenges contributing to this issue. This task is related to the pre-task research they were asked to conduct before their arrival. The importance of youth workers understanding systemic and social factors is emphasised by the trainers, especially in relation to designing effective community service and learning programmes.

II. Work in national groups – Context and challenges (70 minutes)

Participants are invited to work in their national groups for this task. They are given 70 minutes to do their research, integrate the previously collected data and combine it. Each group is asked to discuss and reflect on the situation of school dropout in their respective countries such as:

- What is the school dropout rate in your country/region?
- What are the main causes (economic, social, educational, personal, systemic)?
- What are the characteristics of youth that are most affected? Which groups are more vulnerable?
- How are schools and communities responding to this issue?

Each group prepare for a presentation of their work during this time.

III. Presentations (60 minutes)

The trainer invites each country group to present their findings using approximately 7–10 minutes per group, depending on the number of groups. After each presentation, the trainer allows a brief 1–2 minute space for questions or comments from the other participants. This is done with the main aim to highlight similarities and differences between contexts.

IV. Continuation of group work – Exploring existing programmes (20 minutes)

Next, participants are asked to go back to their country groups for an additional task. Participants now have to search and brainstorm/share examples of existing programmes, policies or grassroots initiatives in their context that aim to prevent or reduce school dropout rates. They have 20 minutes to do this. The trainer instructs them by giving them the following guiding questions:

- Who implements the programmes (government, NGOs, schools, youth workers)?
- Which challenges do they target specifically?
- Are they effective? Why or why not?

V. Sharing in plenary (20 minutes)

All groups join the plenary to share the outcomes of their discussion. Each group shares 1–2 key insights or interesting examples from their discussion on existing programmes. The trainer wraps up the session by summarising common themes, good practices and emerging gaps that may be addressed later in the training. A short Q&A or reflection is included to close the session.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- This session builds on the pre-task participants were asked to complete before attending the training course. In the beginning of the session, the trainer should check whether the groups have already conducted any research. If they have little or no data collected, the group work time should be extended accordingly.

Connection between school dropout rates and community service and learning programmes



Session Title:

Connection between school dropout rates and community service and learning programmes



Duration:

90 minutes



Background:

The phenomenon of school dropout is a complex issue that can be influenced by various social, economic, educational and personal factors. Youth workers have a significant role in addressing this. However, in order for the youth workers to respond effectively, it's crucial to understand not only the causes of early school leaving but also the potential of alternative, community-based learning approaches to re-engage young people in meaningful ways. This session introduces participants to the idea that community service and learning programmes can play a key role in dropout prevention. These programmes offer young people a sense of purpose, relevance and belonging that are often missing in traditional education settings. By connecting real-world experience with personal growth and community impact, such programmes can serve as motivational bridges back to education. The session is designed to build understanding of how this connection works in practice and explores a simple 3-step framework that participants can adapt and apply in their own contexts. Through reflection, discussion and theoretical input, youth workers begin to identify concrete ways to become part of the solution in addressing early school leaving.



Aim of the session:

To explore how community service and learning programmes can serve as effective strategies to prevent school dropout and re-engage at-risk youth.

Objectives:

- To reflect on the personal and systemic reasons behind school dropout from a youth perspective;
- To introduce a practical 3-step framework that youth workers can use for addressing the school dropout crisis at the community level;
- To explore how community service and learning programmes can contribute to prevention, intervention and reintegration strategies;
- To encourage participants to connect theory with practice by discussing how the proposed steps can be applied in their own local realities.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Individual work;
- Theoretical input;
- Group discussion.

Session Flow:

I. Introduction to the session (5 minutes)

The trainer introduces the session and highlights the importance of exploring the connection between school dropout rates and community service and learning programmes, as well as how community service and learning programmes can be used as a strategic response to the issue of school dropout. The trainer also highlights the importance of involving youth in meaningful learning experiences connected to real-life community engagement, and how this connection can prevent early school leaving.

II. Individual Work – A Young Person's Perspective (10 minutes)

Participants are asked to do an individual reflection and work. They are instructed by the trainer to place themselves in the mindset of a young person who has left or is at risk of leaving school. They reflect individually on the following guiding question: "What made you leave school?"

They have 10 minutes to do this and are encouraged to think of factors such as personal struggles, lack of motivation, school environment, or social pressures and write their answers on paper or post-its.

III. Sharing in plenary (15 minutes)

After the individual work, participants are invited to share some of the reasons they identified. The trainer collects key points and visualises them on a flipchart or board to identify patterns and common themes. This segment helps the group empathise with the lived realities of young people and better understand the underlying issues behind school dropout.

IV. Theoretical Input – 3 Steps to Address the Dropout Crisis (20 minutes)

After getting an initial idea on the identified reasons for school dropout, the trainer continues the session with a theoretical input on the topic. The trainer introduces a structured model composed of three key steps that communities can follow to tackle school dropout:

- Step 1: Understand the dropout crisis in your community;
- Step 2: Combine the basics of good schooling with focused prevention, intervention and recovery efforts;
- Step 3: Organise a sustained community-wide campaign to end the dropout crisis.

The trainer briefly explains each step, highlighting how community service and learning programmes can be integrated within this framework as a proactive and engaging intervention method.

V. Group Discussion – Applying the 3 Steps in Our Realities (40 minutes)

Participants are divided into small mixed groups. They are invited to discuss in the first 20 minutes about the following:

- How do these 3 steps apply in your local context?
- Are there existing practices in your community that already reflect parts of this model?
- How can community service and learning be used as a tool for intervention or recovery?
- What are possible challenges or enablers for implementing such steps?

After group discussions, each group shares 1–2 key points in the plenary. The trainer wraps up the session by summarising how these steps can guide youth workers in building community-rooted approaches to school dropout prevention.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Background documents and further reading:

Balfanz, R. (2007). What your community can do to end its drop-out crisis. In Center for Social Organization of Schools. <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-dropouts/the-dropout-crisis-in-the-northwest-confronting-the-graduation-rate-crisis-in-all-communities-with-special-focus-on-american-indian-and-alaska-native-students/letters-what-your-community-can-do.pdf>

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- When facilitating the individual reflection exercise, the trainer should ensure a quiet and non-judgmental atmosphere so participants can genuinely empathise with the experience of school dropout.
- During the discussion on the 3-step model, it is important to encourage participants to bring in real examples or small-scale initiatives from their communities. This helps bridge the gap between theory and practice and inspires action-oriented thinking.



Establishing positive collaboration with schools and teachers



Session Title:

Establishing positive collaboration with schools and teachers



Duration:

90 minutes



Background:

The positive collaboration between youth workers and schools and teachers to support students at risk of school dropout is essential. However, building such partnerships can be challenging due to differences in institutional cultures, communication gaps and unclear role expectations. This session focuses on developing youth workers' capacity to approach schools with confidence, clarity, and a structured mindset. In this session, participants have the chance to use a 3-step process to explore how to initiate, strengthen and sustain effective cooperation with school staff. The session emphasises mutual understanding, shared goals and practical entry points for collaboration that ultimately benefit the young people both sectors serve. The session is designed to create a space for participants to create actionable plans that they can adapt and implement in their local realities, contributing to a more connected and holistic support system for young learners.



Aim of the session:

To practice developing a strategic and structured approach for building an effective and sustainable collaboration between youth workers and schools/teachers in support of preventing school dropout.

Objectives:

- To use a step-by-step approach in reflecting and taking action on addressing the school dropout;
- To reflect on the current barriers and opportunities for collaboration between youth workers and formal education institutions;
- To apply a structured 3-step model for designing a practical strategy for initiating and maintaining school partnerships;
- To identify practical steps and entry points for youth workers to engage meaningfully with schools and educators.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Critical thinking;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Small group work;
- Presentations and Discussion.

Session Flow:

I. Small group work – 3 steps for strategic collaboration (50 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups (3–5 people per group). Each group has the same task. The trainer instructs them that in their groups they will have 50 minutes to develop a strategic approach for establishing positive and sustainable collaboration between youth workers and schools/teachers. They are guided to structure their work using the 3-step model introduced in the previous session:

- Understand the context: What are the common obstacles and needs in school–youth worker collaboration?
- Design focused interventions: What actions can youth workers take to connect with schools and build trust?
- Build a sustainable relationship: How can the partnership be maintained, evaluated, and expanded?

The trainer encourages them to consider several factors while designing their strategies/models such as mutual benefits and shared goals, roles and responsibilities, communication channels, entry points (who to contact first, how to introduce a new initiative), barriers and how to overcome them.

All groups should prepare a flipchart or PPT with their strategy points for the presentation.

II. Presentations and Discussion (40 minutes)

Participants join the plenary for a presentation and discussion session. Each group presents their strategic approach in 5–7 minutes. After each presentation, the trainer leaves a few minutes for open questions or suggestions from the other participants. The session concludes with a short discussion led by the trainer in order to summarise common elements, innovative ideas and practical challenges identified by the groups.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Background documents and further reading:

Burrow, C., & Smith, E. (2011). Effective Dropout Recovery Strategies & The Graduation Alliance Approach. In Graduation Alliance. <https://graduationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GA-White-Paper-Electronic.pdf>

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- It is important to encourage participants to reflect on existing examples from their past experiences in working with schools. This brings authenticity to the group work and helps in designing the strategies on real practice examples.
- If possible, the trainer can involve a school representative in the session to provide the school perspective. This can spark more realistic and empathetic planning of the strategies.



Developing new and innovative programmes of community service and learning in collaboration with schools, students and other stakeholders

Session Title:

Developing new and innovative programmes of community service and learning in collaboration with schools, students and other stakeholders

Duration:

180 minutes

Background:

Community service and learning programmes are powerful tools for engaging young people, especially those at risk of dropping out, by connecting academic learning with real-life community involvement. These programmes can help students find purpose, build skills and develop a sense of belonging, while also addressing real community needs. However, for such programmes to be effective, they must be designed collaboratively. This means that these programmes should be designed as such to bring together the perspectives of schools, students, youth workers, parents and other local stakeholders. This session provides youth workers with a space to co-create innovative and inclusive programme ideas that emphasise learning by doing, social responsibility and shared ownership among all involved parties. Participants are guided through stakeholder mapping and then work in groups to develop detailed programme concepts that reflect their realities and creativity. The process encourages interdisciplinary thinking, strategic planning and consideration of impact both on youth development and community transformation.

Aim of the session:

To design inclusive, creative and collaborative community service-learning programmes that engage schools, students and community stakeholders in addressing school dropout.

Objectives:

- To identify and map key stakeholders essential for successful programme development and implementation;
- To co-create a strategic programme plan that combines learning outcomes with meaningful community engagement;
- To promote innovation and inclusion in designing activities that respond to both educational and community needs;
- To strengthen participants' competences in collaborative planning, ensuring that all actors are involved at every stage of the programme.

Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Research competences;
- Digital competence;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative and critical thinking;
- Teamwork.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Small group work: Mapping the stakeholders and designing programmes;
- Presentations and Gallery walk.

Session Flow:

I. Introduction to the session (5 minutes)

The trainer introduces participants to the session's focus and flow of activities. He/she emphasises that the focus will be to design creative and inclusive community service-learning programmes that actively involve schools, students and key community stakeholders. The importance of co-creation and collaboration in tackling school dropout through hands-on and meaningful learning is also emphasised.

II. Mapping the stakeholders – Small group work (20 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. The trainer asks them to use the next 20 minutes to brainstorm and visually map out all potential stakeholders that could play a role in a community service-learning programme. This could include the following categories:

- Schools and teachers
- Students (at risk and mainstream)
- Parents/guardians
- NGOs and youth organisations
- Local businesses
- Municipalities or institutions
- Cultural, environmental or social service actors

They are instructed to write down their input on flipchart paper and possibly identifying potential roles and contributions of each actor.

III. Sharing in plenary (15 minutes)

Each group is invited to present their stakeholder map in the plenary in about 2–3 minutes. The trainer facilitates a short discussion to identify overlaps, new ideas and possible challenges in stakeholder engagement.

IV. Small group work: Design a community service-learning programme (90 minutes)

Participants are invited to go back to their groups for another round of group work which lasts for 90 minutes. The trainer has prepared a structured worksheet or flipchart template, to guide participants in their work. They are tasked to design a new and innovative programme of community service and learning in collaboration with schools, students and other stakeholders. The programme must involve at least three stakeholder groups and be tailored to re-engage youth in meaningful learning and community contribution. The template given is the following:

| |
|---|
| Title and goal of the programme |
| |
| Who is involved (stakeholders) |
| |
| Core activities (what students will do and learn) |
| |

| |
|--|
| Community impact |
| |
| What makes it innovative? |
| |
| How collaboration is ensured at each stage |
| |

The trainer visits the groups from time to time to offer support and encourage creative, inclusive ideas. After 90 minutes, they all need to present their programme.

V. Presentations and Gallery Walk (50 minutes)

The trainer invites each group to present their work in 5–7 minutes. When all presentations are done, participants are invited to take part in a Gallery Walk or peer voting activity. This is done in a way that each group's poster is displayed, and participants walk around the room to review the work. They vote using post-its or paper slips for the following categories:

- Most collaborative
- Most creative
- Most realistic
- Best learning outcome design

The Gallery Walk lasts about 5 minutes. The session concludes with a short debrief led by the trainer. The trainer makes sure to highlight strong elements of each programme and how they can inspire real implementation.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, Worksheet or flipchart paper with template for the group work, post-its.

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer can provide templates or visual aids (e.g., stakeholder map examples, programme design canvas) to help guide participants in structuring their ideas clearly and effectively during group work.
- When forming the groups, the trainer should encourage diverse group composition by mixing participants with different backgrounds (formal education, youth work, NGO, etc.) to simulate real-life multi-stakeholder collaboration and enrich the programme design process.

Applying a needs-based approach to community service and learning programme development and evaluation

Session Title:

Applying a needs-based approach to community service and learning programme development and evaluation



Duration:

90 minutes



Background:

When creating community service and learning programmes aimed at preventing school dropout, it is highly important and essential that these initiatives are developed based on actual community needs and not based on assumptions. A needs-based approach is what prioritises the voices, values and lived realities of community members, ensuring that the programmes are relevant, inclusive and impactful. This session helps youth workers understand the difference between perceived and real needs and introduces practical tools for identifying and mapping them. The session consists of creative reflection and collaborative “story mapping” so that participants get the chance to explore how to embed community insights into both the design and evaluation of service-learning activities.



Aim of the session:

To equip youth workers with an understanding to apply a needs-based approach when designing and evaluating community service and learning programmes.

Objectives:

- To introduce the concept and principles of a needs-based approach, including the difference between real and assumed needs;
- To creatively map out community needs, gaps and opportunities through visual storytelling;
- To explore how identified needs can guide both programme development and impact evaluation.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Critical thinking;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Individual reflection;
- Input;
- Small group work: Community story mapping;
- Display of Maps – presentations;
- Group discussion.

Session Flow:

I. Individual reflection – “The Spark” (15 minutes)

Participants are invited to use the next 5–10 minutes for a personal reflection and write down key words afterwards. The trainer asks them to think of a community they care about. He/she adds the question: What’s one visible or invisible need that breaks your heart?

After this, the trainer asks volunteers to briefly share their reflections in plenary.

II. Input: Understanding the needs-based approach (15 minutes)

The trainer uses the next 15 minutes to provide a short input covering key concepts:

- Definition of a needs-based approach in programme development
- The difference between real needs and assumed needs
- Why involving the community’s voice is essential in both designing and evaluating programmes?
- Examples of evaluation criteria that reflect community values and priorities.

The trainer uses a few real or relatable examples to make the concepts tangible and link them to community service-learning work with youth.

III. Small group work: Community story mapping (40 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups. They are tasked to create a “Community Story Map” on flipchart paper or A3 paper. Each group is encouraged to choose a real or fictional community and answers the following questions through visual mapping:

- Who is in this community?
- What are their visible needs?
- What are their invisible needs?
- What’s currently being done?
- What’s missing?
- What would a meaningful programme look like here?
- How would we know it worked?

They have 40 minutes to complete their task and join the training room for a presentation of their work by displaying their maps on the wall. They are encouraged to use symbols, drawings, key words, and storytelling elements to bring their map to life. The trainer supports groups during the work.

IV. Display of maps and Group discussion (20 minutes)

All groups join the room to display their story maps around the room. Each group presents their map briefly in about 3 minutes. Following the presentation and display, the trainer leads a short discussion using the following questions:

- What common needs or gaps did we notice?
- How did the story maps help us shift from assumptions to real needs?
- What evaluation ideas emerged from these maps?

The trainer wraps up the session by reinforcing the importance of establishing programme design according to the community-identified needs and values.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, scissors, tape, other materials that participants might need.

Background documents and further reading:

- Waters, A. (2025). How to Conduct a Community Needs Assessment & Examples. Galaxy Digital. <https://www.galaxydigital.com/blog/community-needs-assessment>
- Cumming, G., & Norwood, C. (2012). The Community Voice Method: Using participatory research and filmmaking to foster dialog about changing landscapes. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 105(4), 434–444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2012.01.018>

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should encourage participants to base their story maps on real communities they work with or are familiar with. This helps make the activity more meaningful and creates ideas that can be developed into real initiatives later.
- It is important to allow enough time for reflection and sharing after the mapping exercise, as this is often where the most valuable insights emerge. The trainer should use open questions to help participants connect their visual work with concrete programme planning steps.



Identifying and understanding the risk factors that contribute to school dropout rates



Session Title:

Identifying and understanding the risk factors that contribute to school dropout rates



Duration:

90 minutes



Background:

Preventing school dropout begins with a deep understanding of the root causes behind it. Young people disengage from education for many complex, overlapping reasons that range from personal and family circumstances to broader systemic and community challenges. This session allows youth workers to explore and analyse the various categories of risk factors that contribute to school dropout such as family-related, school-based, personal, community-based and systemic. In this session they have the space to engage in reflection, discussion and collaborative mapping of risks. In this way participants can build a comprehensive picture of how different challenges interact and affect young people's educational paths. Overall, the session is considered as an important step in equipping youth workers to recognise early warning signs and better tailor interventions to the realities their target groups face.



Aim of the session:

To explore and analyse the risk factors contributing to school dropout and build youth workers' capacity to recognise and respond to these challenges in their communities.

Objectives:

- To identify key risk factors contributing to school dropout across different levels such as personal, family, school, community and systemic;
- To encourage critical reflection on participants' own experiences and community realities;
- To foster awareness of how various risk factors interconnect;
- To build a shared understanding of the challenges faced by at-risk youth, forming the foundation for effective prevention strategies.



Competences addressed:

- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Silent floor brainstorming;
- Presentations and Discussion;
- Wall of risks: Reflection.



Session Flow:

I. Silent floor brainstorming: Exploring risk factors (30 minutes)

The trainer has prepared 5 flipchart papers with different titles. He/she places them on the floor or around the room. Each flipchart paper is labelled with one category of risk factors such as:

- Family issues (e.g. poverty, instability, migration)
- School environment (e.g. bullying, low support, disengagement)
- Personal factors (e.g. mental health, learning difficulties, motivation)
- Community factors (e.g. lack of role models, crime, low expectations)
- Systemic issues (e.g. early tracking, discrimination, policy gaps)

After showing this, the trainer instructs participants that in the next 30 minutes they have to walk silently around the room, visit each paper and give their contribution in identifying risk factors that contribute to school dropout rates. Participants silently walk around the room and use post-its or markers to write and add examples, experiences or challenges they have encountered in each category. The atmosphere is quiet to allow thoughtful contribution. Music can be played quietly in the background to create a calm and reflective atmosphere.

II. Presentations and discussion (40 minutes)

After the silent brainstorming, the trainer and participants go through each flipchart one by one presenting what is written. Volunteers from the group can read out the contribution that was shared. Then, for each category, the trainer facilitates a short discussion using the following questions:

- Which of these risk factors are most visible in your community?
- Are there any surprising or overlooked risks?
- How are these categories interconnected?

This process is done with the main intention to help participants identify patterns, differences between contexts and the complexity of school dropout causes.

III. Wall of risks: Personal experience reflection (20 minutes)

The trainer has written the label "Wall of risks" on the white board. Participants are now invited to use 10 minutes for an individual reflection. The trainer asks them the following question: What are the key risks you've seen or experienced that contribute to school dropout?

They write their thoughts on post-its and place them on the "Wall of risks". After all notes are placed, the trainer does a brief showcase and clustering of responses. Then, he/she closes the session and highlights the importance of the activities and the session itself.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Background documents and further reading:

- Extension, J. O. (n.d.). Risk factors affecting high school dropout rates and 4-H teen program planning. Copyright (C) 2025 Extension Journal, Inc. ISSN 1077-5315.
- Cimene, Francis Thaise & Cimene, A & Albino, Angel-April & Amschel, Rouche & Mijares, J & Flora, Pacilita & Hallazgo, & Austria, Mary & Lpt, & Leah, Marie & Corporal, & Elarcosa, Rorilie & Flora, Mae & Quipanes, & Recto, Stephanie & Rewie, Jane & Villaflo, (2023). Understanding the Complex Factors behind Students Dropping Out of School. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375556929_Understanding_the_Complex_Factors_behind_Students_Dropping_Out_of_School

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should encourage participants to focus on real-life observations or youth work experiences when contributing to the brainstorming activities. This sets the discussion in actual contexts and strengthens relevance.
- Participants should be informed that the "Wall of risks" activity is anonymous. This allows for privacy protection and creates a safe space for participants to share more sensitive or personal reflections, especially if they or someone they worked with has faced similar risk factors.

Developing effective recruitment strategies for youngsters at risk of school dropout to join community service and learning programmes

Session Title:

Developing effective recruitment strategies for youngsters at risk of school dropout to join community service and learning programmes



Duration:

180 minutes



Background:

Reaching out and working with young people at risk of dropping out of school requires more than just good intentions. It requires tailored and empathetic recruitment strategies that speak to their realities, interests and barriers. These youngsters often face various challenges such as lack of motivation, fear of judgment or limited access to opportunities, which makes traditional outreach methods ineffective. This session is designed to empower youth workers to approach recruitment creatively and strategically. This is done through different creative and effective activities such as persona development, barometer exercises and campaign design. Participants have the chance to explore what motivates young people to engage and how to communicate with them in ways that feel relevant, safe and empowering. The session highlights how recruitment is the first and a crucial step in connecting youth to meaningful learning through community service programme.



Aim of the session:

To strengthen participants' ability to design inclusive and engaging recruitment strategies that effectively reach and motivate young people at risk of school dropout to join community service and learning programmes.

Objectives:

- To develop empathy and understanding of the barriers and motivations of at-risk youth through persona creation;
- To explore effective messaging, communication channels and outreach methods that resonate with young people;
- To reflect on how young people perceive recruitment efforts and what makes them feel included and safe to join.
- To create specific and creative recruitment campaigns that addresses the needs, interests and challenges of a specific youth profile.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Individual work – Persona creation;
- Barometer exercise;
- Input;
- Small group work – Campaign creation;
- Presentations and Discussion.

Session Flow:

I. Introduction to the session (5 minutes)

The trainer welcomes participants and introduces the session's focus and activities. He/she highlights the importance of participants' dedication in the session to explore creative and inclusive recruitment strategies for reaching out to young people at risk of dropping out and inviting them into meaningful community service and learning programmes.

II. Individual work: Persona creation (30 minutes)

Participants work individually to create a fictional persona representing a young person at risk of school dropout. They can use flipchart or A3 paper, pencils, and other relevant materials for this task. The trainer instructs them to think deeply and empathetically about their chosen Persona. Furthermore, the trainer emphasises that they have 30 minutes to complete this task, and the following information should be part of their paper/visualisation: Age and background, school situation, family and social context, interests and hobbies, barriers to participation (e.g. fear of being judged, lack of transport, low confidence), communication habits (e.g. social media use, trusted people), elements that could motivate them to join a programme.

When they are done, they keep these papers to themselves, until the trainer announces them to share.

III. Barometer exercise: In the shoes of the Persona (25 minutes)

The trainer now announces that participants take on the role of their created persona. The trainer invites all participants to stand up and form a line to do a barometer exercise. He/she starts to read a series of statements related to joining a community programme. Participants position themselves along a physical "agree, neutral, disagree" line based on how their persona would react. Example statements can be the following:

- I would join a community programme if a teacher/educator recommended it.
- I do not feel like programmes like this are made for people like me.
- I would be embarrassed if my friends knew I joined something like this.
- If it was about something I cared about, like music or animals, I would be interested.
- A cool video on Instagram might convince me to check it out.
- If someone listened to me and my problems, I might want to take part.

After each statement, the trainer invites brief reflections to deepen understanding of how young people perceive outreach efforts. More statements can be added, and the trainer must remind participants that they are in the role of their Persona for this activity.

IV. Input: Importance of recruitment strategies (15 minutes)

The trainer gives a short input on the topic. He/she has a prepared presentation covering the following elements:

- Why recruitment is a key first step in engaging youth at risk;
- The importance of school involvement and collaboration;
- Specific messages and methods to different motivations and barriers.

V. Small group work: Design a recruitment campaign (55 minutes)

Participants are invited to form small groups for a group work. When they do this, the trainer asks them to share their persona with each other in their group for 5 minutes. When they get familiar with each other's persona, the trainer instructs them to create a mini recruitment campaign tailored to these persona's needs and motivations. In their groups, participants are asked to cover the following elements:

- A slogan or message
- A sketch of a poster, Instagram post, flyer front page, etc.
- Communication channel(s): where and how would the message be shared?
- Who delivers the message? Peer, teacher, influencer, youth worker?
- Call to action: what's the first simple step the young person is invited to take?

Groups have 50 minutes to do this task and are encouraged to think creatively and keep the campaign youth-friendly and relatable. They have to present their campaigns afterwards.

VI. Presentations and Discussion (50 minutes)

All groups join the plenary for a presentation of their campaign. Each group has 5 minutes to present their recruitment campaign, explaining how it connects with their personas' needs and barriers. After the presentations, the trainer facilitates a short discussion using the following questions:

- How realistic are these strategies in your context?
- What would be the biggest challenge to making these campaigns happen?
- Could this approach reach other youngsters beyond this persona?

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop.

Background documents and further reading:

- Burrow, C., & Smith, E. (2011). Effective Dropout Recovery Strategies & The Graduation Alliance Approach. In Graduation Alliance. <https://graduationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GA-White-Paper-Electronic.pdf>
- MASHAV Educational Training Center. (n.d.). YOUTH AT RISK: Preventing Student Dropouts and Facilitating Reintegrations. In MASHAV International Educational Training Center Jerusalem. https://metc.mfa.gov.il/sites/default/files/booklet_0.pdf

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should clearly emphasise and encourage participants to base their personas on real experiences or youth they have worked with (anonymously), as this increases authenticity and relevance when designing the recruitment campaigns.



Developing strategies to keep youngsters at risk of school dropout motivated and engaged throughout their involvement in community projects

Session Title:

Developing strategies to keep youngsters at risk of school dropout motivated and engaged throughout their involvement in community projects



Duration:

180 minutes



Background:

While recruiting youngsters at risk of school dropout is a crucial first step, maintaining their motivation and engagement throughout a community service-learning programme is also very important and it is a continuous process. These youngsters may face a range of internal and external challenges such as low self-esteem, lack of support, boredom or unclear expectations that can cause them to disengage even after initially joining a project. This session focuses on understanding these motivation risks across different stages of participation and developing tailored strategies that youth workers can use to maintain continuous involvement. By identifying such challenges and creating responsive engagement tools, youth workers can ensure that community projects remain supportive, empowering and relevant for every participant involved.



Aim of the session:

To equip youth workers with tools and strategies to sustain the motivation and engagement of at-risk youngsters throughout all phases of community service and learning programmes.

Objectives:

- To explore common reasons why at-risk youngsters disengage during community-based projects;
- To identify key motivational risks linked to each stage of project involvement;
- To develop practical strategies and engagement tools tailored to different project phases;
- To strengthen youth workers' ability to create a positive and supportive environment for long-term participation.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Brainstorming;
- Small group work;
- Presentations.

Session Flow:*I. Introduction to the session (5 minutes)*

The trainer introduces the session by explaining the importance of continuous motivation for young people involved in community service and learning projects. He/she briefly presents the phases of project participation such as recruitment, first week of involvement, mid-project phase, project closure, and the challenges youth might face in staying engaged. Then, he/she mentions that this session comprises of activities to discover ways for motivating youngsters to fully participate in these programmes.

II. Brainstorming: "What pushes them away?" (25 minutes)

The trainer opens a brainstorming session. Participants are invited to reflect on the disengagement of youth in community projects. They brainstorm by answering the following question: What causes young people at risk of dropout to disengage from community projects? The brainstorming goes on for about 10 minutes. The trainer writes the contribution from participants in the flipchart paper.

Then, he/she adds another question: What have we seen go wrong in the past?

The input is collected again on a flipchart, while participants are encouraged to share their opinions and experiences.

III. Small group work: "Design the motivation journey" (90 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups for a task. The trainer tasks them with designing a full motivation strategy across the four project phases: Recruitment, First week, Mid-project phase, Project closure. They have 90 minutes to work on this and prepare for a presentation. Each group uses the following template to have a more structured work:

| Project phase | Motivation risks (e.g. boredom, anxiety, mistrust) | Tools/Actions (e.g. videos, reflection circles, follow-up invites) | Engagement strategies (e.g. buddy systems, flexible tasks) |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Recruitment | | | |
| First week | | | |
| Mid-project phase | | | |
| Project closure | | | |

IV. Presentations (60 minutes)

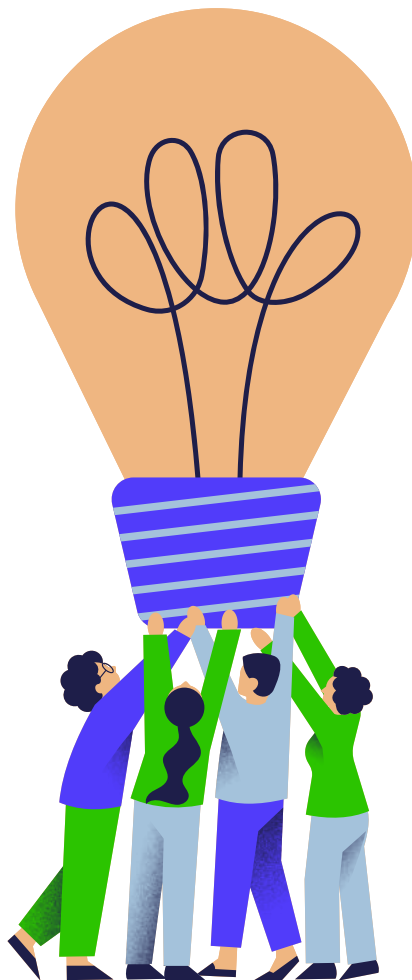
Each group joins the plenary to present their "Motivation Journey" to the rest of the participants. The trainer gives each group 10–12 minutes to present. After each presentation, there is a short round of questions, feedback and discussion. The trainer summarises the main takeaways and highlights any innovative strategies that emerged.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, printed template for group work for each group.

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should encourage participants to use realistic personas or local case studies that reflect actual disengagement experiences. This makes the strategy design more realistic and useful for replication.



Mentoring youngsters throughout their involvement in the community projects



Session Title:

Mentoring youngsters throughout their involvement in the community projects



Duration:

135 minutes



Background:

Mentoring plays a crucial role in ensuring that youngsters, especially those at risk of school dropout remain supported, motivated and empowered throughout their involvement in community service and learning programmes. A structured and responsive mentoring relationship can help young people build trust, feel seen and heard and gain the confidence needed to take ownership of their learning journey. This session provides youth workers with an opportunity to reflect on their own mentoring experiences, understand the phases of mentoring relationships and develop strategies to provide consistent and meaningful support to the young people they engage with.



Aim of the session:

To strengthen youth workers' capacity to provide continuous, structured and empathetic mentoring support to at-risk youngsters during their engagement in community service and learning projects.

Objectives:

- To reflect on the personal value and impact of mentoring in learning processes;
- To understand the stages of mentoring and the evolving needs of young people across a project's life cycle;
- To identify practical mentoring actions and supportive behaviours tailored to each phase of community engagement;
- To explore how mentoring can contribute to motivation, resilience and long-term empowerment of at-risk youth.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Individual reflection;
- Video screening: The power of mentoring;
- Group discussion;
- Theoretical input;
- Small group work;
- Sharing in plenary.

Session Flow:

I. Individual reflection: "Who mentored you?" (10 minutes)

The session starts with a short individual and personal reflection activity. Participants are invited to use the next 5-10 minutes to think back to a time when they had a mentor during a learning or development experience. The trainer instructs them to think about who that person was, what made them a good mentor and how the support influenced their journey. This helps set the stage for understanding the value of mentorship from personal experience.

II. Video screening: The power of mentoring (10 minutes)

Participants watch a short inspirational video titled "Youth Mentoring at Community for Youth" that highlights the impact and importance of mentoring relationships in youth development.

- The source of the video: waOSPI. (2024, January 25). Youth mentoring at Community for Youth [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXemoOP_waY

III. Discussion on the video (20 minutes)

After the video screening, the trainer facilitates a group discussion. Participants are invited to share their opinions on the video, as well as what resonated with them, what they found inspiring or thought-provoking and how it connects to the role of youth workers as mentors in community projects. The discussion highlights the significance of empathy, consistency and trust in mentorship.

IV. Theoretical input: Stages of Mentoring (20 minutes)

The trainer has prepared a short theoretical input on the topic. He/she uses this session to present the six stages of the mentoring process:

- Introductory stage
- Relationship-building stage
- Growth stage
- Maturation stage
- Transition stage
- Termination stage

For each stage, the trainer explains the typical needs of mentees and the mentor's role in providing adequate support during that phase. While this process can be a repetition for some of the youth workers, the trainer ensures that this question is asked at the beginning, so that those who are familiar with the mentoring process can feel free to contribute as well.

V. Small group work: Supporting the journey (45 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups and receive a task to analyse how a mentor can support a youngster during three key phases of a community project: Start phase, Implementation phase, End/final phase. For each phase, groups need to answer the following questions:

- What might this youngster need?
- How can the mentor support them?
- What are some concrete actions the mentor can take?

They have 30 minutes to complete their task and prepare for sharing their input in the plenary.

VI. Sharing in plenary and wrap-up (30 minutes)

Each group is invited to share in the plenary their mentoring strategies and examples. The trainer facilitates a short reflection on similarities, practical approaches and how mentoring contributes to motivation and long-term engagement of at-risk youngsters in community projects.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, speakers.

Background documents and further reading:

- Ervin, A. (2024, July 30). How mentors support young adults as they gain awareness of societal inequality and engage in social action. <https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/how-mentors-support-young-adults-as-they-gain-awareness-of-societal-inequality-and-engage-in-social-action/>
- Mentoring Impact. Connect with a Young Person | Mentor. (2025, January 3). MENTOR. <https://www.mentoring.org/mentoring-impact/>
- Search Institute. (2024, October 18). The Life Cycle of Mentoring Relationships. Search Institute. <https://blog.searchinstitute.org/life-cycle-mentoring-relationships>
- waOSPI. (2024, January 25). Youth mentoring at Community for Youth [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXemoOP_waY

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should emphasise that consistency and trust-building are considered foundational mentoring principles across all phases. He/she should encourage youth workers to reflect not just on “what to do,” but also on how to show up as a reliable and supportive mentor.



Implementing learning achievements from community projects into the academic/school settings



Session Title:

Implementing learning achievements from community projects into the academic/school settings



Duration:

110+190+130 minutes



Background:

One of the key goals of community service and learning programmes is to bridge informal and formal learning, particularly for young people at risk of school dropout. While community projects offer rich experiential learning, it is equally important to ensure that these achievements are recognised, valued and integrated within academic environments. This session is designed as a collection point of the training course's learning as it gives youth workers the opportunity to apply everything they have learned throughout the days. In this session participants are given the chance to develop real workshops or initiatives that connect community learning to school settings. This enables participants to gain the tools to initiate systemic collaboration between non-formal and formal education actors. This final session allows them to create impactful approaches that reinforce school retention, personal development and educational inclusion, while ensuring community engagement remains a meaningful part of young people's academic journey.



Aim of the session:

To empower youth workers to design and adapt practical initiatives that transfer learning outcomes from community service projects into school environments, supporting the academic development and inclusion of at-risk youth.

Objectives:

- To reflect on how community-based learning experiences can complement formal education;
- To develop practical and innovative workshops or initiatives that integrate non-formal learning into academic/school settings;
- To promote collaboration between youth workers and schools through applied, transferable approaches;
- To further foster creativity, collaboration and innovation in youth work.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Digital competence;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Citizenship competence;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Small group work;
- Presentations;
- Feedback and recommendations.

Session Flow:

I. Introduction to the task and initial group work and planning (70 minutes)

The trainer opens the session by emphasising the key learning points during the training course, and highlighting the importance of the activities planned in this session. Participants are informed that this step is the part when they put their learning into practice. They are working in their national groups and introduced to the main task: designing concrete workshops or initiatives that transfer learning outcomes from community service projects into school or academic settings. Each group selects a target school environment and develops a plan that aligns the key community project learning (e.g., responsibility, teamwork, environmental care, initiative) with school needs and formal education objectives. All groups are instructed and encouraged to consider the following guiding questions:

- What learning from the community projects should be transferred?
- How can schools benefit from this learning?
- What methods and approaches are appropriate in school settings?
- What actors (teachers, school leaders, peers) should be involve

They work for 60–70 minutes to have an outline of their work for the check-in session. They can work in the training room, or somewhere else, but they should be back for the check-in session. The trainer stays in the training room for additional consultations.

II. Check-in session (40 minutes)

All groups join the training room for a short round of update on their work. Participants share in 1–2 sentences how they feel about the task, if they are on the right track, and what they might need to improve or complete the work. This also gives trainers the chance to provide clarification or support.

III. Continuation and finalisation of group work (190 minutes)

Groups continue refining their initiatives/workshops. By this stage, they move into developing structured content with clear:

- Objectives and target group
- Flow of activities
- Tools and materials
- Role of youth workers and school staff
- Expected outcomes and indicators of success

Trainers move among the groups offering coaching and guidance as needed. In the meantime, groups wrap up their plans, prepare visual materials (e.g. flipcharts, handouts, slides) and prepare for a presentation.

IV. Presentations (80 minutes)

Each group presents their developed workshop or initiative to the rest of the participants in about 10–15 minutes. Presentations focus on clarity, transferability and how the community-based learning is being adapted to school environments. A round of questions and feedback from other participants follows each presentation.

V. Feedback and recommendations from trainers (50 minutes)

After all presentations are done, trainers offer constructive feedback and suggestions on each group's proposal. They highlight how the ideas can be adapted further, improved or replicated in different school contexts. Trainers also invite participants to reflect on their learning process and share how they plan to implement their ideas once back in their own communities.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, speakers.

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- The trainer should emphasise that youth workers should have a focus in creating partnerships with schools/teachers at an early stage. When developing workshops or initiatives, future youth workers should involve teachers or school staff to ensure alignment with school curricula and gain institutional support for implementation.



Evaluation and sustainability of community service and learning programmes



Session Title:

Evaluation and sustainability of community service and learning programmes



Duration:

90 minutes



Background:

The evaluation session is the final session of the training course. As the final session, it offers participants the opportunity to reflect on their learning experience, provide meaningful feedback and consider the long-term sustainability of the practices and tools they've explored and developed. Evaluation is not only about assessing what worked well and what could be improved, but it also strengthens participants' sense of ownership and encourages them to envision how the knowledge gained will be applied in their local communities. The session consists of a combination of creative, verbal and written evaluation methods, where youth workers are guided to reflect on their journey throughout the course. At the same time, trainers gain valuable insights that can improve future trainings. This session also symbolically closes the training by acknowledging each participant's contribution and fostering a sense of collective achievement.



Aim of the session:

To provide participants with the space to reflect on their personal and group learning experiences and to evaluate the training programme while identifying ways to sustain and implement their learning beyond the course.

Objectives:

- To facilitate personal and group reflection on the learning journey and outcomes;
- To evaluate the content, methodology and organisation of the training through visual, written and verbal methods;
- To acknowledge the importance of sustainability by encouraging participants to plan for follow-up and implementation of their learning in local contexts.



Competences addressed:

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Analytical competences;
- Cooperation and communication;
- Digital competence;
- Critical thinking;
- Literacy competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Teamwork.



Methodology and methods:

- Verbal evaluation and reflection;
- Visual evaluation: The river of learning;
- Written evaluation.

Session Flow:

I. Verbal evaluation: Reflecting on the journey (25 minutes)

The trainer opens the session with a verbal evaluation round where participants are invited to share their reflections about the entire training course and their learning experience. They are instructed to share their reflections by answering the following questions:

- What is one key takeaway you're bringing home?
- What moment stood out to you the most?
- How do you plan to use what you've learned in your work?

Participants take 5 minutes to reflect first and then are encouraged to speak in a circle, one by one, creating a shared moment of closure and appreciation.

II. Visual Evaluation: "The river of learning" (25 minutes)

After the verbal evaluation, the next activity takes place. Participants are divided into small groups for this activity. Each group is provided with a flipchart paper with a river drawn across it, cut-out paper shapes such as boats, leaves, stones and fishes. Their task is to use the next 10–15 minutes to place their shape along the river to represent their experience. The illustrations are as follows:

- Boat: What carried me through the training (support, group, motivation)?
- Leaf: What was a fresh or new learning for me?
- Stone: What were the obstacles or difficult moments?
- Fish: What did I take with me moving forward?

In their groups participants place their shapes on the river and, if comfortable, briefly explain their choice. The river becomes a collective visual reflection of the group's learning journey. Each group shares briefly their "River of learning". The trainer keeps the flipchart papers.

III. Written evaluation (25 minutes)

The last round of evaluation consists of a written evaluation form. Participants receive a printed or online form with open and closed-ended questions for in-depth feedback on the following aspects of the training course: Learning outcomes, Methodologies used, Logistics and support, Overall satisfaction, Suggestions for improvement. They have 20 minutes to do this. In the meantime, music is played quietly in the background to create a calm and reflective atmosphere. Trainers are available for support and printed copies are provided for those who prefer writing by hand.

IV. Closing round (15 minutes)

To close the session, the group gathers in a circle for a final reflective moment and check the flipchart paper from the first day on the "Expectations, Fears and Contributions" activity. They reflect whether their expectations were met, fears were overcome, and contributions were assured. Anyone who has to share something related to this, can do it in the plenary. Then, trainers thank everyone for their contributions and highlight the importance of transferring this knowledge back to local communities. The session ends with a group photo to mark the completion of the training.

Materials needed:

A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, post-its, flipchart and flipchart papers, projector, laptop, prepared written evaluation forms (digitally and printed), prepared small/cut-out paper shapes such as boats, leaves, stones and fishes and flipchart for the "River of Learning" activity.

Recommendations for future adult educators multiplying this session:

- It is essential to use a creative visual evaluation method like the "River of Learning" to encourage honest and engaging reflection. It is especially useful for groups who may not express themselves comfortably through formal forms.
- The trainer should design the evaluation session as a learning tool, and not just a formality. It is important to highlight that participants' feedback directly contributes to improving future programmes and helps sustain meaningful change in youth work practices.

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