



# Az egész életen át tartó tanulás programja

## Summary

### Enhancing System Transformation in Chaos and Crisis

#### Summary

Our project aims at assisting people (learners) to develop an awareness of their situation, opportunities, impacts and interconnectedness in times of crises and chaos as we experience it in our countries. Five nations are involved: Greece, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, all of them are in an economic crisis that has an impact on the everyday life and opportunities of people.

As education providers and consultants, we believe our mission is to help people to see more clearly and consciously their action oriented opportunities in these situations, to assist communities to draw on the resources available for them and to integrate this action based knowledge by assisting people to form communities.

Thus we first plan to develop a shared vision of a better world and a knowledge base to move towards it as well as a thorough inquiry in our present situation, finding our underlying mental models, and analysing the dynamics around us. As a second step we develop a training curriculum with e-resources to help other learners and communities to reach to the same end – to find their shared vision and knowledge, know their own mental models and inner and social dynamics and with this knowledge to reach sustainable change and transformation.

#### Rationale

We, partners in the project have already participated in a few events across Europe. Often we realized how little we know of the delicate interconnectedness in Europe. We still think and operate in fragmentation and divided awareness and practice, thus we create division in spite of the best of our intent. We experience divisions between the West and the East, the South and the North with very little awareness of the central European region and the peripheral disadvantaged regions of the European Union. This holds real danger in a form of unexpected feedback loops—using systems thinking language, with a delayed 'bomb' for all of us.

We live in countries of great differences, some still suffering from the past 22 years of the political transformations (Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia), some experienced a growing gap in their rapid

growth, like Italy and Greece, others also show signs of cleavage in spite of great economic growth, having to learn to accommodate the new migration in Europe.

Thus the Gap is just growing even though it was not meant to be like that. Neither people nor governments had such an outcome in their mind.

Youth is leaving our countries, eg. 1/3rd of the population in a country like Hungary or is living under the breadline. Unemployment rate is a visible indicator people turn their attention to, education fails to serve the needs to mobilise the whole of society and wider and wider is the gap between the “elite” and the growing number of illiterate people, while we all focus on the birth of a digital and network based, innovative and creative society as well as a hope to grow population and wealth.

These differences arise from our histories, the long lasting economic and social division, and from our cultural diversity as well as the hidden hubris or pride and superiority, which we may not always be aware of. We do struggle in ourselves and in our respective social settings how to overcome it where to identify social, organizational and personal leverage points and how to apply them in our global transformation.

We are aware of the need to co-learn new processes and methods that will help us to enhance transformation for a more sustainable Europe that is living up to her values and visions while keeping a balanced and aware development, so that it may avoid fights, aggression and uncontrolled behaviour.

Concepts like transformation, metamorphosis have their deep roots in Greco-Judeo-Christian Europe. We also know that there was a time in Europe – a long and creative, stable, sacred and innovative period in the millennia of 8.000-2.000 BC, which archeologist, Marija Gimbutas calls OLD Europe: a culture of peace, the sacred, creativity, abundance and innovative technologies. It all may sound strange for readers of our times – yet people in Old Europe knew precisely well what contributes to their overall well-being.

We, in the growing network hold the belief and also the knowledge to initiate a large scale co-creative learning process to deepen our understanding, to share our experiential knowledge and to inquire into our deepest values and mental models that may stand in the way of our shared vision: to collaborate for and in a better world.

What is now – is soon to change. We care about what has gone by and what is to come. We do believe that our present crises and chaos, restlessness and general yearning for change is actually a good sign towards a Europe reconnecting its past to a transformational presence and future. In order to enhance and foster this underlying process, we need to host awareness and knowledge, need to activate our local experiences into a shared and growing partnership network that will hold this vision alive and contributes to the new social changes by identifying key variables that generate a living and cooperative social network to host changes with care and understanding, with compassion and skilled knowledge in the years to come.

In countries of Eastern and Southern Europe - with weak democratic tradition compared to Western and Northern Europe – people (individuals, groups) typically cope with their frustrations over the lack of their own influence by either getting passive (which can lead to growing dependence on social

services) or aggressive (organising violent group protests), - lacking any constructive models of engagement and co-operation.

Apparently, new forms of social learning and engagement are needed: how to mobilise the energy of the »99 %« of the population to constructively engage in a) analysing the situation, b) dialoguing about the future they want for their region/nations/communities, and c) in a participatory way, collaboratively craft solutions for the quality of life they aspire to. By involving them into constructive conversations and project development, their frustrations are not only addressed – but channelled into projects that can complement institutional policies, or improve these policy being involved into conceptualising and realising the future they want, they develop the sense of co-creation and co-responsibility for the projects they start in their communities; their commitment to the projects developed is greater, and so is their accountability. Collaboration with others (diverse stakeholders in communities) also enhances social cohesion, de-passivises people, and gives them the sense of success which can have a positive impact on their general social and psychological well-being, as well be transferred to other areas

In order to transform frustration, conflict into constructive dialogue, we need a critical mass of process designers/facilitators/host who host processes that transform frustrations into meaningful dialogue about future, followed by concrete projects.

We're a group of practitioners who each possess their own skills for creating space for meaningful multi-stakeholder conversations on complex issues to happen. Since this is a relatively new field, we are each 'learning-by-doing', and have never had had the space/time to exchange experiences and learn from one another. This is especially needed in times of growing protests all over Europe (and especially in economically the weakest countries, such as the participating ones, when it is urgent to rapidly develop practices that engage people in constructive dialogues with other stakeholders.

## **Objectives**

Transformation and adaptation to the present situation is an ongoing process, whether we want it or not. What we can do is to be conscious and knowledgeable about them. The way we can help others is to help them to be conscious and aware and skilful as well. That is our mission - to help people to become conscious and aware of the interconnectedness of their situation and to be able to analyse all those roads their actions can lead to. As educators, we are not able to give financial support for people in need – but we believe that financial support is often a way of blocking the necessary learning process, while providing assistance in realizing their own resources, designing their own goals and providing skills for action based development can have an “emergent” impact. and build the necessary resilience.

We intend to apply the core principles of the sustainability paradigm: systems thinking, evolutionary theory, social networking, learning organizations and deep community development processes to enhance large scale transformation.

For this purpose we intend

- to share our already active and effective-affective knowledge
- to inquire into the roots of our respective differences

- to develop training manuals for adults (eg. youth and middle-aged facing unemployment, people facing poverty) that contains tools for learners to analyse, models to act by and develop their own situations either alone or in partnership with people of similar needs mostly in a community base.
- to see how that knowledge is being applied in certain areas of Europe which hold the diversity and challenge for us as well eg. a poverty stricken regions of the Southern part of Italy may be compared with Central East of Europe in Hungary, Slovenia or Croatia, as well as the delicate and fragile situations of collective power emerging in Greece.
- to provide help for adult educators working on these fields by providing training content and materials, as well as bibliography of books and free online resources, one pilot training and an online knowledge community

Based on this knowledge all partners will be more knowledgeable, empowered, supported and skilful in the difficult work they all carry out.

## Results

- **To develop a common understanding of the needs of adult learners in situations of chaos and crises during our First Meeting. This will be a some page common declaration on our common intentions that we are going to translate to our languages**
- **Draft concept on adult learning training curriculum –what it should contain and how it shall be developed**
- **To develop better understanding of our countries, regions and the whole of Europe: a 20-page discussion on the situations and their analysis with the use of dialogic methodologies and system analysis.**
- **A project webpage (English) providing all information about the project and all the materials developed during the project. The webpage will be drafted at the first meeting, prepared with financial support from all partners in Hungary.**
- **A general curriculum of adult learning training course of different modules to reach different target groups. This will be a basic curriculum that can be used also for further development and accreditation at national level.**
- **Part-time report on the project**
- **An English-language e-manual on system thinking and other analysis tools to be used for the training modules, about 80 pages**
- **Training modules upgraded to local / national issue areas, specified for target groups in each country.**
- **E-manual localized (translated) to partners. Partners will add country-specific issues into the manual, at least 20 pages.**
- **Video (10 minutes) (in English) as a summary of the discussion on the situations and their analysis with the use of dialogue based inquiry and system analysis.**
- **Bibliography and free online access material reference list developed for national levels as well as international level**
- **Training modules tested at least at one group per country. Testing reports of countries on the training, including participant feedback on the content and the training.**

## **EU added value**

The awareness of interconnectedness and system dynamics is a leading edge. It already nests in research institutes and universities and academies, yet generally does not have much impact on social and institutional large systems of ours, like governmental offices, educational and health systems, and a general public awareness... We can contribute to the disseminative and applied processes that are so badly needed for a new attitude based on skilled knowledge to develop in the wider public of Europe. There are a great number of social enterprises, local and regional change processes. We can enhance their effectiveness by sharing our results in knowledge development, applied systems thinking and large group-social presencing.

The participating organizations and their members develop a shared knowledge and capacity base that will provide a sound foundation for further cooperation in all major sectors of society and adds to the Learning-Innovation and Change cycle.

This Learning Partnership is strengthening the European dimension through the awareness of interconnectedness and the importance of developing good relationships with its partners responds to both current and future challenges in crisis times and crisis areas. While promoting democratic values, a sense of active citizenship and European commitment, it is contributing to fostering mutual understanding. Learning to see more clearly and consciously in these situations, to assist communities to draw on the resources available for them and to attach these two by assisting people to formulate communities opportunities, are competences that Europeans must possess in order to create actively a future together in a sustainable Europe, where all people feel valued, their difference are respected and their basic needs are met, so that as citizens they are empowered in their participation and contribution. This Learning Partnership helps the European Union achieve its objective of becoming a world-leading knowledge economy, to inquire into our deepest values and mental models that may stand in the way of our shared vision.

There is one additional positive side of our cooperation: we come from both the nonprofit and business side. By this project we can reach both sectors more effectively in our countries and in Europe.

## **Impact**

The participating institutes will have opportunity to share with their international partners at a larger scale, because each partner visits one another thus opening the gates of hosting organizations and their local networks to this major initiative.

As we all have working experiences and partners in all sectors, the developed knowledge will be shared in education, business and governmental institutions, as well as in the civil sector.

The concrete impacts are

- the dissolution of our rigid mental models that we may hold about our national differences,
- we learn to see our part in creating things that we don't like but are likely to continue
- we begin to develop a different relationship with our „problems“
- a free mind to cooperate and design new solutions

- a deep European network of a core group who becomes capable to hold projects of a larger scale, ie. Extended absorption capacity
- an empowering awareness of the unity of the European Union
- inclusion of countries that are to be members of the EU or who are in close cooperation
- Learners trained by the newly developed contents will be much more aware and conscious of their own situation, opportunities and impact at community and society level
- deeper understanding of roots of inequality, the lack of sustainable action and the mental models behind discrimination
- Learners trained in this learning partnership are provided with tools and paths to improve their personal competences that are enabling them to adapt to the rapid pace of change and to create their future together.