

**Project title:**

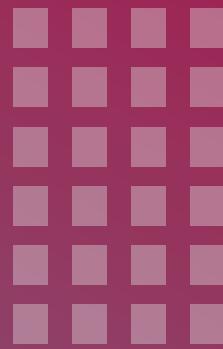
PYLE: Post-YU for Learning Emancipation – Supporting learners on the way to self-realisation

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Intellectual Output 3 (IO3):

# Informal Curriculum for PDCAE Mentor Training

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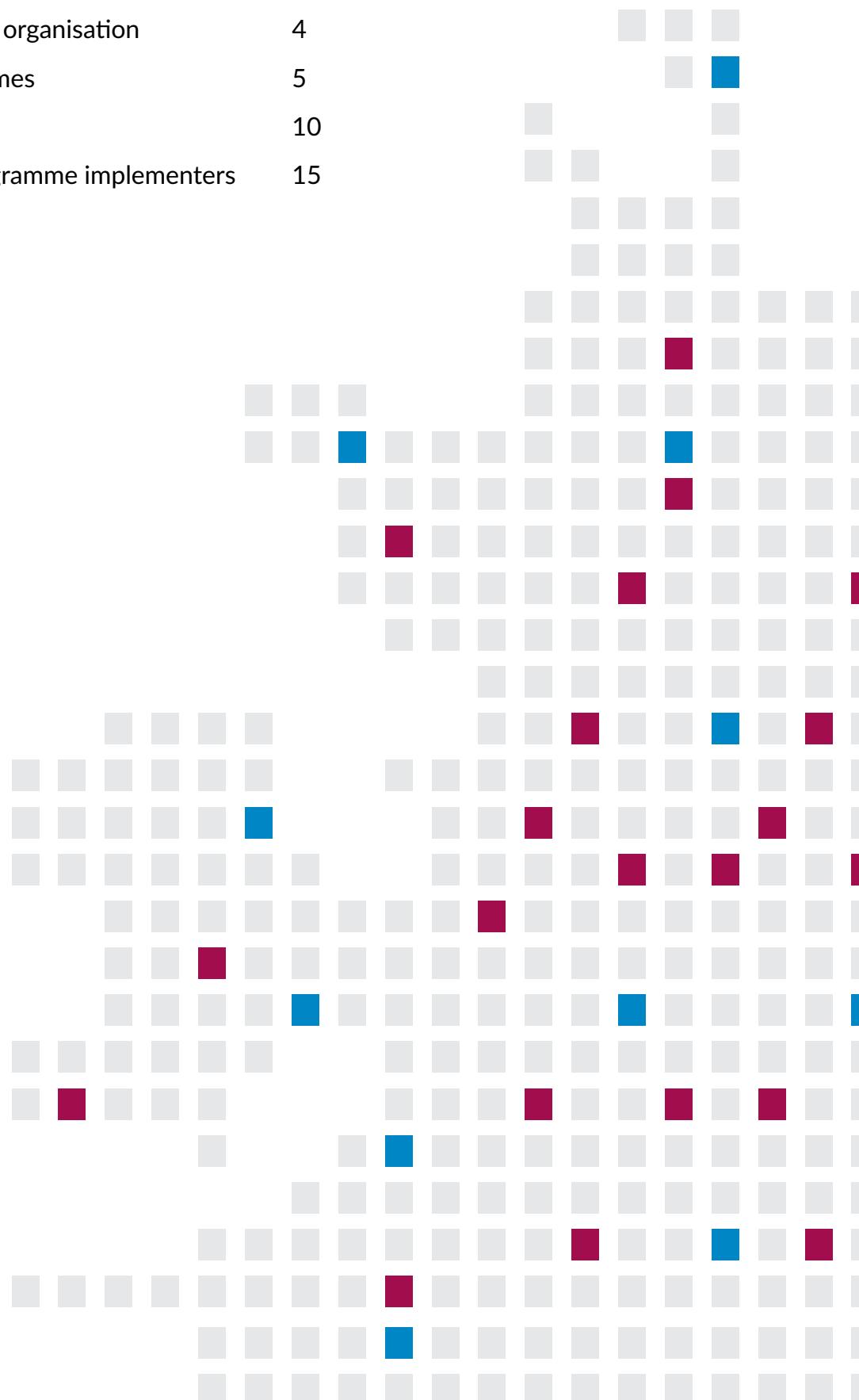


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## Contents

Name of the programme	3
Programme rationale	3
Aim and objectives	4
Target group	4
Programme duration and organisation	4
Expected learning outcomes	5
Programme content	10
The expertise of the programme implementers	15



## Name of the programme

PDCAE Mentor Training is Training for mentors of unemployed youth participating in the Programme for Developing Competences for Autonomous Employment (PDCAE)<sup>1</sup>.

## Programme rationale

PDCAE Mentor Training has been developed within project PYLE, a strategic partnership of organizations from Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia, under the Erasmus+ programme.

Experience shows that different seminars, workshops, programmes, etc. for stimulating entrepreneurship result in good ideas, which, however, to a large extent remain unrealised. This is why the essential elements of PDCAE are mentoring and institutional support for young people, not only during devising, but also during the realisation of their project ideas. PDCAE mentors use a comprehensive approach to support the participants in improving their competences for creating autonomous employment and in developing and testing concrete ideas which may offer a long-term solution for their living situation.

The aim of the project PYLE is to create a social environment in which young people can recognize the importance of proactive action, autonomy and the value of informally gained knowledge. By creating the PDCAE mentors training (curriculum) and by training the first generation of mentors (other than the creators of the programme) we can fulfil one of the basic conditions for ensuring the implementation of the programme - people who are able to conduct its' implementation.

PDCAE Mentor Training and its Informal Curriculum are based on several crucial elements and processes:

- partner organizations' common understanding of basic concepts of the project, i.e. transformative and emancipatory learning, and autonomous employment, as described in Pedagogical Outlines for Emancipated Learning (Intellectual Output 1)
- rationale, principles and methods of the Program for Developing Competences for Autonomous Employment, as expected to be implemented by mentors
- co-creation of the training with the participants of PDCAE Mentor Training, as described in the evaluation and recommendations for the implementation of the PDCAE Mentor Training (Intellectual Output 2)

This Curriculum provides a basic outline for the implementation of the training of PDCAE mentors, proposing learning outcomes and contents, that were co-created, tested and evaluated by three groups of participants/future mentors in three countries.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on PDCAE visit [http://www.zavod-bob.si/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PDCAE\\_IntellectualOutput\\_za-MOVIT\\_EN.pdf](http://www.zavod-bob.si/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PDCAE_IntellectualOutput_za-MOVIT_EN.pdf)

## Aim and objectives

The aim of the PDCAE Mentor Training programme is to prepare mentors for offering encouragement and support to (unemployed) youth in the process of recognition and development of their personal resources, with the purpose of their activation in creating options for autonomous employment and/or other ways of self-realisation with the potential for solving their unemployment and social exclusion problems.

Objectives of the programme are given for each module separately, in the chapter "Programme contents", and they should be considered together with learning outcomes.

## Target group

The training is intended for professionals, adult educators who work with young people in early adulthood: youth workers, social pedagogues, andragogues and pedagogues, psychologists, social workers and others interested in training in methodologies for working with unemployed youth. Besides professionals, training participants/ future mentors can be also students in the last year of studies and unemployed recent graduates, especially of social sciences, who are interested in working with the unemployed, and who are themselves a growing vulnerable group of young people in early adulthood.

## Programme duration and organisation

This is an informal curriculum for the training of youth mentors who participate in PDCAE programme. PDCAE programme, through 400 hours of non-formal learning, enables young people to develop their competencies, social networks and project ideas that can create employment independent of the traditional labour market, while also improving their employability.

The curriculum for mentors contains all the elements of the PDCAE programme itself, enriched by contents that aim to strengthen mentor-specific competencies. The complete content of the educational programme is organised into four parts called modules. After the fourth module future mentors engage in practical work during which they are continuously supported by (their own) mentors.

The estimated duration of the educational programme for mentors is 200 pedagogical hours, which includes 150 hours of training and 50 hours of mentored practical work. Chapter "Programme contents" proposes duration for each module, that can be slightly modified together with the participants, depending on their pre-existing capacities and their priority learning outcomes.

Through various forms of experiential learning and with mentor support, future mentors (participants in the programme) develop and realise their project ideas (products, services, other initiatives) in a way that corresponds with participatory process they will later facilitate with youth. Educational plan of the programme is open, which means that the implementation is customised and regularly adjusted to the circumstances, i.e. the participants' motivation, abilities, prior knowledge and experience, as well as the needs that arise in the process of implementation of the programme. Participants are actively involved in planning i.e. co-creation of the programme content and in evaluation. (Kroflič, 1997)

## Expected learning outcomes

Expected learning outcomes are defined for each module, in the modules where they come into focus for the first time. All learning outcomes are further enhanced through the latter modules and until the end of the training.

Since the educational plan is open - and should, in each implementation, be customized for and co-developed with each-time-different participants - learning outcomes cannot be fully planned nor predicted. The whole training is based on the premise that the participants are motivated and capable to be responsible for their own learning (outcomes), while trainers facilitate the learning process, offer a framework for the contents (based on PDCAE programme for youth), and "support learners on the way to self-realisation". Therefore, the outcomes here given serve as an orientation for the co-creation of the training, while in practice they can vary in their sequence, intensity, emphasis, etc., or some of them can be left out and some new ones added.

Also, as a participatory tailored programme of adult education, a well implemented PDCAE Mentor Training offers an emancipatory experience that can result in more learning outcomes on an individual level than predicted, both in personal and in professional sphere broader than mentoring youth to autonomous employment.

**MODULE 1 is based on epistemological courses necessary for potential mentors to build their critical consciousness, and supports them to (be/ be able to):**

- articulate their individual wants, needs and motivation
- recognize their personal values
- present themselves
- assess their knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices
- acquainted with tools for self-assessment
- aware of group dynamics
- gain basic information about the implementing organization and understand its guiding principles
- recognize the similarities and differences between non-formal, transformative and emancipatory learning
- critically think about contemporary social and economical context, and its connections with youth unemployment, emancipatory learning, and autonomous employment
- know about PDCAE rationale and objectives
- negotiate and form group agreements about the learning process and collective time planning
- plan next steps of the training
- critically reflect on their learning process, in addition to the pedagogical process and identification of the needs of the participants
- give feedback about the process of the training.

**MODULE 2 engages the potential mentors in creating tangible social networks, among themselves and in a selected local community, and supports them to (be/ be able to):**

- actively connect with other participants and contribute to the development of group cohesion/ forming and strengthening the united team
- upgrade their knowledge about the implementing organization and its activities
- use different methods to explore the community needs and resources (strengths, stakeholders)
- recognize and explain the key specifics of the selected community and most relevant stakeholders
- understand the key specifics of the target group(s)
- understand the role and responsibilities of the (PDCAE) mentor, including the role of the mentor as a part of a larger support network
- understand the basics of project management cycle
- describe their attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviours useful for the role and responsibilities of the mentor that a) are well developed, b) need improvement
- aware of the other individuals' and the group's strengths and needs
- translate their individual and group educational needs into priority outcomes of the training
- plan the rest of the training, according to the priority outcomes and including the use of the resources of the implementing organization and other stakeholders, as well as of their group.

**MODULE 3 includes the potential mentors' extensive learning on cooperatives or other alternative economies and the beginning of project planning towards their autonomous (or other) employment, and supports them to (be/be able to):**

- acquainted with different legal forms to reach autonomous employment
- know of different economic models, focusing on alternative economies
- understand the concepts of solidarity and sustainable development, and their implications for autonomous employment
- generate ideas and use them to conceptually design a pilot project<sup>2</sup>
- use their knowledge of the basic elements of project management cycle in project planning
- use their knowledge about the chosen environment and target group(s) in project planning
- understand the role and contribution of each individual to the project team
- use individual and team strengths in the project planning process
- take responsibility for a variety of tasks, depending on the needs of the project
- participate in the implementing organization's activities according to their interests
- use different methods and acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes for self-directed individual and/or team learning i.e. to realise their educational needs
- recognize, define and express their need for additional knowledge or support from their mentors when needed.

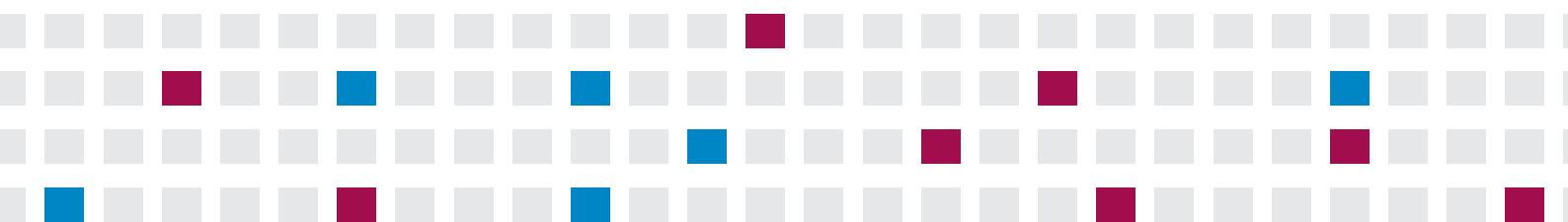
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2 Depending on the group of participants and other factors, the participants can plan:  
a) a pilot project (later submitted for financing or implemented without external financial support), or several small projects that can be implemented within the timeframe of the Mentor Training,  
b) stand-alone, but relatively complex activities, that need team effort to be implemented.

The trainers encourage and support the participants to plan projects/ activities that are connected with (the topic of) mentoring unemployed youth for autonomous employment/ PDCAE programme, and that, at the same time, enable the participants to test their own route(s) to autonomous employment (or, alternatively, to already existing forms of employment on labour market).

**MODULE 4 is the realisation of the project planned by the potential mentors in the previous module, and supports them to (be/ be able to):**

- prepare the project documentation (application) or detailed written plan for stand-alone activities
- recognise the additional knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need for the successful implementation of the pilot project
- demonstrate initiative to get support from their mentors when needed
- work as an organised mentor group and establish links with the stakeholders in the chosen environment
- use their strengths and other resources, including knowledge about the chosen environment, in the process of the implementation of the pilot project
- improve their presentation and facilitation skills
- test and continually improve their role and contribution to the project team: carry out a variety of tasks, critically reflect on teamwork and their contribution, negotiate differences
- use the infrastructure and services of the implementing organization
- experience the implementation of the pilot project and test its potential for autonomous employment
- evaluate/ critically reflect on the pilot project implementation and learn from it: recognize strengths and weaknesses of the process, compare the results planned and achieved, anticipate obstacles and changes needed for more successful implementation
- celebrate success with the team and their private social environment.



**MODULE 5 is based on independent planning and coordination of different activities by the potential mentors, and supports them to (be/ be able to):**

- modify the project activities or processes according to lessons learnt from the implementation in previous module
- confident in using the individuals' and team's strengths, and other resources, including the infrastructure and services of the implementing organization, in the process of the implementation of the pilot project
- strengthen the links with stakeholders in the chosen environment
- coordinate and implement the project activities in a way that contributes to the team cohesion and success of the project
- use the process of implementation of the pilot project to realise their educational needs on individual and group/team level: continuously reflect on the process and their performance, meaningfully challenge themselves, and to be conscious of the shifts in their knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices
- develop new educational contents for their team, according to the identified and changing needs of the team
- implement new educational contents for their team and/or engage external experts for specific topics: improve planning, presentation and facilitation skills
- construct and explain their view of the strengths and possible improvements of the PDCAE programme for youth
- establish conditions for the implementation of the PDCAE programme, thus increasing their chances of autonomous employment, or plan for individual application of new knowledge, skills, attitudes and changes in practice
- understand the purpose of evaluation, know about different evaluation tools, critically reflect on the process of participatory evaluation
- actively participate in the evaluation of the PDCAE Mentor Training
- recognize the importance of the individual mentor support for young participants of PDCAE, as well as the importance of the mentor and/or supervision support to mentors during the implementation of PDCAE.

## Programme content

### MODULE 1

Starting points: personal development and theoretical background of the programme

Proposed duration: 25 hours

Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• psychological needs and motivation</li><li>• building trustful relationships and group cohesion; team-forming activities</li><li>• PDCAE key elements</li><li>• PDCAE Mentor Training key features</li><li>• self-assessment</li><li>• individual educational needs and learning goals, and expectations from the Training</li><li>• contemporary social and economic context</li><li>• transformative and emancipatory learning, and their links to social change</li><li>• reflection, including self-reflection, and feedback as learning tools</li><li>• negotiation (co-creation) of next module</li><li>• group agreement about the learning process</li><li>• individual mentor support</li></ul>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• create a safe and challenging learning environment</li><li>• define common values</li><li>• understand the context and premises of PDCAE and Mentor Training</li><li>• establish methods of continuous (self-)reflection</li><li>• accept the responsibility for own learning and co-creation of the educational contents and processes</li><li>• adapt next module to the needs of the group</li></ul>

## MODULE 2

Creating tangible social networks

Proposed duration: 50 hours, intensive training days, preferably in a different community

- exploration of a community not familiar to the participants: as much as possible through observation and conversations with local people

- (PDCAE) mentoring: principles, roles, responsibilities, building relationships

- interpersonal skills: active listening, giving and receiving feedback

- basics of project management

Contents

- group responsibility for co-creating the contents and process

- constant monitoring through group reflection and adaptation to the needs of the participants

- group mentor support

- individual and/or team tasks between the group meetings

- understand the basic principles of mentoring and the role of the mentor, in relations to youth and in cross-sectoral collaboration

- explore the local community needs and resources and the key specifics of target group(s)

- develop group cohesion - the team building

Objectives

- plan the rest of the training based on knowledge about mentoring for autonomous employment and priority outcomes of the Training as defined by the group

- develop sense of freedom and responsibility for own learning processes and results

## MODULE 3

Designing a pilot project: solidarity, sustainability and engaging group resources to respond to community needs

Proposed duration: 25 hours

Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• solidarity economy and autonomous employment: theory and local examples</li><li>• legal forms for social entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on cooperatives and non-governmental organizations (associations): theory and local examples</li><li>• sustainable development</li><li>• further exploration of project management cycle, including project conceptual design, anticipation and prevention of risks, and evaluation</li><li>• designing of pilot project(s) grounded in the cross-sections of community needs (gaps in local services that support autonomous employment) and strengths and interests of the group</li><li>• interpersonal skills: assertiveness, negotiating, posing effective questions</li><li>• group mentor support</li><li>• individual and/or team tasks between the group meetings</li></ul>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand the concepts of solidarity, social entrepreneurship and sustainable development, and their implications for autonomous employment</li><li>• get to know local examples of good practice of social entrepreneurship and solidarity economy</li><li>• explore project management cycle</li><li>• generate project ideas and design a project using acquired knowledge and skills</li><li>• distribute responsibilities in the team for a variety of tasks, depending on the needs of the project</li></ul>

## MODULE 4

pilot projects in the local community

Proposed duration: 50 hours (can be shorter or longer, depending on the pilot projects)

- detailed planning for the pilot project implementation
- co-development and implementation (by the facilitators or by some of the participants) of new educational contents
- realisation of the project plan (PDCAE elements or other “small projects” connected with the key concepts of PYLE project) with participants as coordinators and implementers

Contents

- presentation and facilitation skills
- evaluation tools
- evaluation: individual and group reflection on the results and processes of the pilot project (“collaborative self-assessment”)
- celebration: public presentation of project results and “party” (participants and their guests)

- gain real experience with project implementation
- participate actively in the shaping of social reality
- plan their own life path and/or create opportunities for autonomous employment

Objectives

- learn about the tools for the evaluation of process and project's results, and how to use evaluation results
- recognize the possibilities to transfer pilot project principles and results into other environments
- improve teamwork and relations with stakeholders

## MODULE 5

Independent work with continuous mentor support

Proposed duration: 50 hours during 6 months (twice a month or more)

- participatory evaluation of the Mentor Training programme
- mentors work with (unemployed) youth independently
- individual support sessions between “old” and “new” mentors (clearing dilemmas, stabilising and upgrading personal style of mentoring and workshop facilitation)
- reflection on changes in motivation (before, during, after the Training) and in expectations from the implementation of the PDCAE programme with young people

### Contents

- co-development and implementation of new educational contents by the participants
- booster and team-building sessions
- group interview sessions
- group sessions with a supervisor

\*make the premises and equipment of the implementing organization available also for group operation outside the “official” sessions

- practice participatory evaluation approach and use of evaluation tools/ methods
- implement transformative learning processes

### Objectives

- boost new mentors in their independent work with unemployed youth as a reflective practice
- integrate the principles of solidarity economy in the operation of the team and in the implementation of PDCAE and other programmes
- create a network of national mentors of PDCAE
- ensure the programme results sustainability

The proposed methods for the co-creation of the contents details and the implementation of the Training all come from non-formal education approach and/or allow experiential (Kolb's) learning cycle to take place: brainstorming, group discussions and debates, self-reflection/ learning diaries and forms, role-play and simulations, self-directed internet or other literature research/ critical reading, interviews, focus groups, round tables, etc., planned and conducted by the participants, preparatory activities (tasks between modules and sessions connected with the topics in focus), participant-led activities and workshops (e.g. energizers), study visits, different activities that are done through teamwork... Avoid frontal work whenever possible, with a possible exception when guest experts are involved, but even then help the guests to plan for an interactive approach, e.g. that builds on the knowledge or experience of the participants, has questions & answers section, etc.

Be sure to plan for reflection time after each "major" activity or half-day session, since without reflection there is no learning from experience.

Also, our experience from the implementation of the pilot Training, shows that the implementing/facilitation team's semi- or non-formal contact with the participants, especially between group meetings, goes a long way in maintaining motivation and group cohesion (e.g. reminders or motivational e-mails, social media messages and groups, sending resources, being available for questions, informal feedback).

## The expertise of the programme implementers

The programme implementers i.e. trainers of the programme (or, better to say, facilitators and supporters of new mentors' learning process), should ensure mentor support for the participants, future PDCAE mentors, in the same way they want them to work with and support unemployed youth in the PDCAE programme. That's why the implementers' support and safe space are here again a fundamental feature of the programme. As in the PDCAE, the used methodology challenges participants towards active participation and cooperation, so the created content is a product made by the participants, depends on their contribution and arises from their needs, abilities and interests. Participants co-create the learning process and seek the most appropriate learning styles together with the programme implementers, who should monitor the learning process and give feedback.

Taking all of that into consideration, according to the PYLE project organisations, who have already implemented the pilot training, the expertise of the programme implementers should include:

1. holistic understanding of young people's needs, that also includes knowledge from recent research in the country where the programme is implemented
2. appreciation of and the ability to apply the core principles of youth work<sup>3</sup> in practice
3. understanding, valuing and use of emancipatory learning principles<sup>4</sup>, including willingness and ability to:
  - a. create horizontal relationships - instead of teaching, trust and recognize the learners capabilities, facilitate and support learning, and learn from the learners

<sup>3</sup> For more information see e.g. [Youth Work Competence, Quality Youth Work: A common framework for the further development of youth work, A Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#).

<sup>4</sup> A very useful starting point for implementers is the text "Pedagogical Outlines for Emancipated Learning" (one of the intellectual outputs of project PYLE)

- b. stimulate and nurture true dialogue with the learners to reach a negotiated curriculum (co-create)
- c. express the notion that emancipatory learning is political as it involves analyzing and challenging dominant models of thinking and power relations

4. critical thinking, and the ability (knowledge, attitudes, skills and practices) to support others' critical analysis of political and social issues
5. experience of the methods of non-formal education and knowledge of different resources of experiential learning methods
6. knowledge of group dynamics and skills to create and maintain a safe and engaging group environment
7. experience in mentoring, coaching and/or other ways of empowering and supporting youth to their autonomous life and/or employment
8. basic knowledge of labour market, relevant policies and resources
9. basic knowledge of solidarity economy and non-governmental organizations

It is of utmost importance that the implementers both value and practice what they are aspiring to spark and nurture in new mentors: being authentic in enabling emancipatory learning and discussing other PDCAE key concepts is the only way to truly inspire new mentors to make shifts in their knowledge, attitudes, skills and practices that contribute to their self-realisation and later mentor unemployed youth in the same manner. Important characteristics and soft skills of implementers that can help in this endeavour are adaptability, integrity and reliability, broad-mindedness, openness to sharing knowledge and learning, genuine respect for differences, faith in humanity, enthusiasm, personal warmth, being present, good communication/ interpersonal skills, especially the ability to foster open communication that stimulates debate, perspective taking, creative thinking, an appropriate sense of humour, providing continuous feedback.

The implementing team can consist of "trainers"/ facilitators directly involved in group processes within first four modules, and of mentors who are supporting individuals or smaller teams of participants in their work between the group meetings and/or during the last part of the programme (continuous mentor support). PYLE project team recommends that facilitators possess all, and (other) mentors all or a majority of the characteristics and expertise described here. It is also desirable to involve guest experts for more specialized topics<sup>5</sup>, and before that to introduce them to basic principles and concepts of the PDCAE and Mentor Training. And, because of emancipatory learning and participatory approach to the Training, participants/ new mentors, too, become a part of the implementing team, which should be recognized by the rest of the implementing team and can be further used for mentors' empowerment.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, guest experts can be: a) people with real-life experience of working in a cooperative or a horizontally managed non-governmental organisation, b) practitioners or researchers dealing with key concepts or topics of the programme, c) practitioners of particular approaches or methods interesting for the participants (e.g. Theatre of the Oppressed, structured debate, participatory research or evaluation, coaching), d) practitioners in other fields that the participants consider useful for the development and implementation of their pilot projects (e.g. social marketing, project management).