



LOCAL ENVIRONMENT ANIMATION

WORK AS A LOCAL

COMMUNITY ANIMATOR

New chance for youth development



Erasmus +, KA2 Cooperation partnerships in youth, Project: Local environment animation- new chance for youth development.
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About the project

The main objective of the project is to increase the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the profession of animator of the local environment, as well as to increase the interest of young people in this profession by developing a series of training and information materials aimed at young people in various EU countries.



A publication

A publication containing the main information about the profession of an animator of the local environment, with its description, a list of skills needed in this job, specific tips on work organization a list of good practices with the use of non-standard training tools.



A collection of training material

A collection of training materials supporting the development of soft skills of people who want to work or work as animators of the local environment. The materials will consist of a series of thematic webinars on individual competencies.



A brochure

A brochure addressed to young people, containing basic information about what a local community animator does, what competences he should have, where to acquire them and why it is worth getting interested in working in this profession.



Who is an animator and what does he/she do

Who is an animator?

An animator is the person who originated in a particular community who holds a community-oriented mindset and is willing to dedicate his/her time in shaping and promoting the overall development of their communities. An animator closely connects with members and communities to encourage them to become more proactive people, with the enhancement in their sense of community, genuine desire to become a better version of themselves, self-confidence in their own capacities and gallantry in following their dreams.

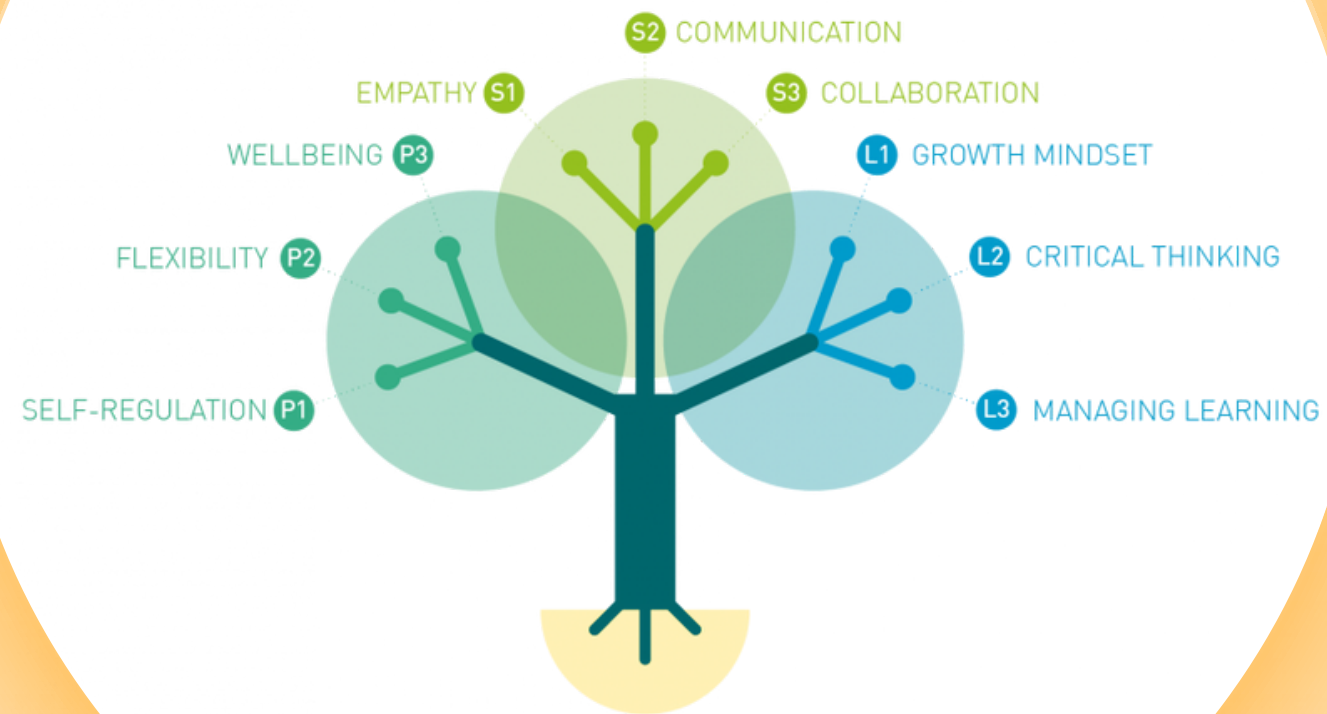
what does he/she do?

- Knowledge transfer
- Engage community members in the community development work
- Establish connections between communities
- Connect communities with organisation or service providers
- Seed grants projects related roles and activities of a community animator
- Development of community initiatives
- Increasing confidence to claim individual and community rights
- Increased participation in civil society
- Greater sense competence, self-confidence and self-esteem



Competences and skills of the animator

LifeCom





How do you start your adventure as an animator?

1. Education and experience: Any experience that develops communication, leadership and collaboration skills will be valuable. Getting a degree in fields such as sociology, pedagogy, psychology or social work can be helpful, but is not necessary. Passion and commitment to the community are more important.

2. Volunteering: Start your adventure as a volunteer in local community organisations or youth programmes. This is a great opportunity to gain first-hand experience, build networks and discover your interests.

3 Classes and workshops: Look for opportunities to attend workshops on community animation, event organisation or working with groups. This will help you develop the skills you need to run social activities effectively.

4. Own projects: Be creative and involved in developing your own projects for the local community. This could include organising cultural events, charitable or educational activities.

Further steps in the development of a local community animator:

1. Study related to animation: If you decide to study, choose a course related to community animation or youth work to gain deeper knowledge and skills in this field.

2. International conventions, conferences and exchanges: Take part in international gatherings of animators and young people to meet other passionate people and gain new perspectives on social action. This is also a great opportunity to share experiences and inspiration.

3. Mentoring: Look for mentors, experienced community animators who can help you develop your skills and guide your path. They can share their knowledge and experience so that you can become better and better at what you do.

The future of the community animator: A career as a local community animator can lead to different paths. You can work as a community animator, cultural events organiser, social educator, youth worker or run your own community projects. It is important to develop your skills, gain experience and constantly look for new opportunities.

Remember that the role of a local community animator is extremely important for creating positive change in society. Be brave, creative and committed, and embark on your own educational path as a young community animator in Europe!

Good practices

Several cases and successful approaches that help to elevate knowledge and skills of local community animators, and support development of local communities.

Practices on the use of innovative and nonstandard tools and methods in the process of **educating local community animators, of various forms**

Practices on the use of innovative and nonstandard tools and methods that **support the work of local community animators**

Practices mainly focus on:

- **Diverse Educational Tools and Techniques**
- **Showcasing Local Initiatives**
- **Cultivating Innovative Platforms**
- **Presentation of Environmental Education Workshops**
- **Nurturing Innovative Animation Activities**
- **Business Incubators, Sustainable Development and innovation in communities**
- **Showcasing exceptional projects such as exhibitions, competitions, social projects etc.**



I am an animator

Marlena (33) Poland



Being a local animator is more than a job for me. On my way I meet many people—each person is a different, amazing story. They are the ones who inspire me to act. The knowledge I have and the methods I work with give me a great sense of empowerment. Often we people ask ourselves: what can I do? After all, one person will not change the world. – Well, a great deal. On a daily basis I observe how the involvement of one or more people from the local environment improves the quality of life of the community. For me, this is the greatest proof that animators are needed. And when I see how, as a result of working with people, something tangible is created, a positive change – it gives me energy to continue.

Sara Simeone, Italy



With a background expertise in ecosystem services and quality of life, Sara has joined Noi Oratdini community garden and movement as a volunteer. Along three years of activity, she has helped: developing workshops to sensitise about nature; applying nature-based solutions; applying for (and winning) EU grants and prizes such as the New European Bauhaus. Her vision for this 4k-square-meter piece of land is to host a continuous exchange of knowledge about nature, with a citizen science approach and by restoring a food forest year after year, to have it as a green lung and food provider in the city of Matera.

Andrea Grieco, Italy



As a biology graduate, Andrea started gardening during Covid times in his home neighbourhood in Matera (Italy). This activity gave him an idea for writing a European Solidarity Corps project called Serra Venerdì Revenge, through which he involved 9 volunteers who started helping him with animating the neighbourhood by gardening, reforestation and cultural events. He didn't expect that this could become a movement called Noi Ortadini – Citizen Gardeners, so he is happy to see the results of his local environment animation.

Bernadeta (20) Slovakia



When I started working as an animator, everything was new to me. The hardest part was working in a team. Each of us had different opinions on how to solve problems. In the evening I was tired of the amount of tasks and the important things escaped me. Later I found out that even small improvements in the organization of work brought big successes. I am already looking forward to my first project that I will manage.

I am an animator

Agata (44), Poland



„Hi, my name’s Agata. I work as a community involvement animator. For the last 3 years, together with the community of European Youth Capital, we’ve been doing our best to find out more about the community of young people in our city, search for opportunities, understand their needs and support actions concentrated on developing a youth-friendly city.

European Youth Capital title, awarded by European Youth Forum, is aimed at young people’s activity in various areas: social, cultural, sports, promoting voluntary service and self-initiative, promoting diversity and inclusion. It is meant to reinforce youth organizations, as well as work possibilities and synergy between young people all over Europe. This is basically what my job is all about. It’s building networks of relations, areas to learn from one another and act together.

It’s never-ending development and an adventure. In recent years, thanks to commitment of a number of people, a network of youth – friendly areas, as well grant, educational and developing programs have been created. Also, psychological support and a wide range of cultural, sports, social, and scientific activities have been developed together with a network for relations aiming at participation of young people in creating the future. We want to turn our experience into youth policy of the city of Lublin, continue our work and constantly develop”.

Taja (27), Slovenia



I adore my job as a local community animator because it allows me to pursue my true passions. Planning creative workshops and animating birthday parties brings so much joy to my life. It is incredibly rewarding to see the smiles on peoples’ faces when they engage in creative activities and experience the magic of animated activities. I am able to indulge my own passion for art and connection while also having a beneficial impact on my community through this job.





Communication

Active listening and questioning – a very important skill that helps an animator formulate understandable questions, listen to their interlocutor and analyse messages. Through active listening, and animator gain crucial information about the needs and preferences of the people they work and share bonds with.

Active listening skill should be used to draw one's attention to what the other person says in order to fully understand the message. Active listening plays a key role in the process of questioning.

Paraphrase – confirming in one's own words what was said, e.g. *Am I correct that..? You were saying that..?*

Clarification – asking for explanation of unclear elements, e.g. *Could you say that again, please ? Could you put it in some other words, please?*

Reflection/emphatic listening – being open to one's point of view and adjusting to the speaker, e.g. *I know how you're feeling and I totally agree, I would feel the same.*

Boost confidence – showing your interlocutor, that what they are saying is worth appreciation, e.g. *This isn't easy. How do you do it?*



Intro



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Creativity

Creativity is the ability to generate original and innovative ideas, solutions, or products. It involves thinking outside of the box, breaking away from traditional or established norms, and coming up with something new and unique.

Creativity plays a crucial role for community animators. It empowers them to discover fresh and inventive methods for involving the community in different activities and projects. Innovative ideas have the potential to spark interest and enthusiasm, as well as connect with individuals who might not have otherwise shown interest or engagement.



Intro



Video



Text



[Six Thinking Hats method of Creative thinking.](#)

[Walt Disney's Method of Creative thinking.](#)

Motivation

Motivation, is a set of factors that activates in a person a behavior focused on achieving a goal. Motivation is the force that makes it possible to achieve goals and make change, including social change, which the animator is working on. One of the key skills of a local animator, which determines his effectiveness, is therefore the ability to motivate others. This is the process of consciously and deliberately influencing the motives of people's behavior through the use of appropriate means, directing them to a certain action in order to achieve a planned goal.

The animator does this by, for example, properly formulating a common goal for the animation group, discovering the competencies of group members in order to use them in the process of motivation, giving people a sense of influence through joint decision-making, and recognizing and rewarding them.



Intro



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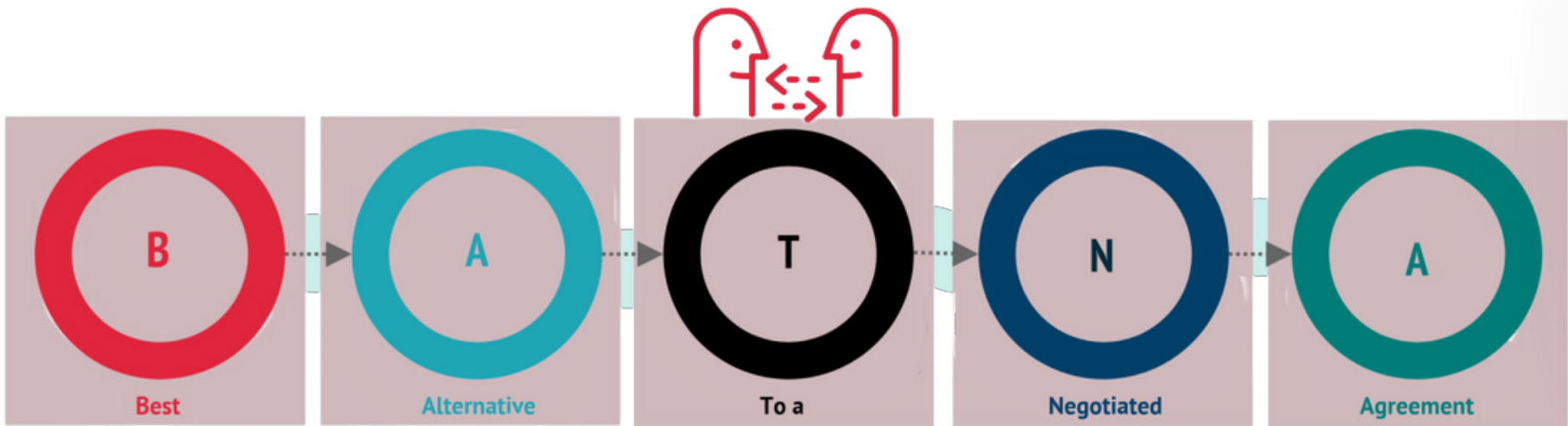


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Negotiation

Negotiation is a strategy for resolving disagreements between parties. Who all can a local community animator negotiate with? Apart from clients, these include representatives of state and local government, suppliers of goods and services, cooperating professionals, donor organisations, sponsors, and volunteers.



Intro



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Patience

Patience, the ability to endure difficulties calmly, brings a multitude of benefits, including improved health, emotional regulation, and social skills.

As community animators, people dedicate themselves to shaping and promoting community development. Patience is essential as they transfer knowledge, engage community members, and connect various groups. It empowers them to navigate challenges and build strong, meaningful relationships with communities, fostering growth and unity.

There are a few ways to development patience. For example, in the moment, use the STOP practice to calm physical symptoms and shift perspectives for emotional ones. For long-term patience, exercise regularly, meditate, and play patience-building games like puzzles and legos.



Intro



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Self-esteem and resistance to criticism

Self-esteem is believing in oneself, ranging from low to high levels. High self-esteem brings benefits like better mental health and relationships. Resistance to criticism involves handling feedback constructively, including constructive, destructive, and self-criticism. Possessing high self-esteem and resistance to criticism is vital for community animators to foster positivity and growth in their communities.

Developing self-esteem and handling criticism are vital for personal growth. To manage self-esteem, recognize negative thoughts and reframe self-judgments positively. Embrace thought diaries, charitable work, and a positive lifestyle for long-term goals. In handling criticism, listen honestly, differentiate constructive and destructive feedback, and respond proactively. Apply the same steps for self-criticism. Building self-esteem and resistance to criticism empower individuals for a healthier and fulfilling life.



Solving the problem

Concentrating on problem solving is a very useful skill in an animator's job. A constructively solved problem might be an opportunity to boost changes, teaches mutual respect and directs one to seek solutions to problems for all the people involved.

Searching for solutions

Define the problem – find out where the differences in points of view come from, openly declare your expectations and doubts, clearly define the problem and its sources.

Generate solutions – come up with ideas, avoid imposing a solution by either side.

Evaluate solutions – define possible solutions and rejecting those unacceptable for either side.

Pick a solution – decision, making, mutual acceptance for the chosen solution.

Make a plan – define ways to implement the solutions.



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Stress management

The work of a local community animator is a fascinating and demanding task that often brings many challenges. In the course of performing their duties, animators often face various stressful situations, including conflicts. Therefore, the ability to manage stress is essential for performing this role effectively and efficiently.

The use of stress management competencies in the work of a local community animator is extremely important for the efficiency and effectiveness of the duties performed. Awareness of one's own reactions to stress, the ability to deal with difficult situations, conflict management and taking care of one's own mental and physical health are key elements of effective stress management. Thanks to them, an animator is able to act effectively, contribute to community development and maintain harmony in the work environment.



Intro



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Team building

The ability to collaborate within teams, groups and community effectively is vital skill every animator should possess.

This skill proves essential in various scenarios, such as:

- **Group Formation and Recruitment:** When assembling groups and selecting team members with the appropriate skills and experiences.
- **Facilitating Group Discussions:** Managing group dynamics and ensuring active participation towards shared objectives.
- **Fostering a Positive Team Environment:** Cultivating an encouraging and supportive atmosphere within the team.
- **Engaging Social Activities:** Organizing activities that involve team members or the community, like team-building exercises, icebreakers, energizers, role-playing, communication drills, trust-building activities, conflict resolution exercises, etc.
- **Handling Diversity:** Being adept at collaborating with diverse communities and team members from various social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.



Intro



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Time management

Do you ever feel that you have too much to do and not enough time to do it? Or are you so overwhelmed with work that you have lost your sense of direction and enthusiasm? Each one of us has 24 hours a day and how we spend it completely depends on us. Time management is organizing your time and making the most of your daily routine. The benefits of managing time are simple.

Good time management allows you to accomplish bigger results in a shorter period of time which leads to more time freedom, helps you focus better, allows you to be more productive, lowers your stress and gives you more time to spend with the people that matter most. So as not to get lost in all the techniques, we have selected the best time management techniques you definitely have to know.

Pomodoro



Keep a to-do list



Eat that frog



The Pickle Jar



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Where can you find information about animators

<https://www.localenvironmentanimation.eu/>

European Youth Portal: <https://europa.eu/youth>

Youthpass: <https://www.youthpass.eu/>

European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA): <https://www.alda-europe.eu/>

4.European Solidarity Corps: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

SALTO-YOUTH: <https://www.salto-youth.net/>

<https://www.youthforum.org>

<https://lublin.eu/lublin/esm2023/>

<https://lublin.eu/lublin/esm2023/mlodziej-inspiruje-dzielnice/>

<https://lublin.eu/lublin/esm2023/miejski-aktywator-mlodziejowy/>

<https://lublin.eu/lublin/esm2023/przestrzenie-mlodych/hej/>

<https://przedsiębiorczy.lublin.eu/uczen-przyszlosci/>

<https://przedsiębiorczy.lublin.eu/match/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FundacjaTeatrikon> <https://www.facebook.com/piwnica.labiryntu>

<https://www.facebook.com/punktkulturylublin> <https://www.facebook.com/InstytutAiRS> <https://www.facebook.com/fundacjatrach>

<https://www.facebook.com/5medium> <https://www.facebook.com/StowarzyszenieBonaFides> <https://www.facebook.com/rewirfelin>

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<https://www.facebook.com/ackim.umcs.chatkazaka> <https://sempre.org.pl/centrum-pomocy-dzieciom>

<https://www.facebook.com/FundacjaTuiTam>

<https://www.facebook.com/InstytutKreatorowPrzyszlosci>

Consortium



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