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Games in education

Traditional platforms, educational institutions and employment avenues have not been accessible or available for NEET youth due to multiple reasons. Many young people are not able to engage more mainstream methods and routes to employment and education. Our project is based around the concept of engaging NEET youth through informal learning methodologies and approaches.



Informal learning as a tool has often been used by several fields such as youth work, community development, community organising and community engagement (Batsleer, 2008). Informal learning is a means of teaching or sharing knowledge in non traditional environments such as youth centres for example. Informal learning has its own merits and advantages which are separate from formal learning and should be viewed as an imperative learning method in its own right (Coffield, 2000). Knowledge in itself should not only be limited or restricted to a formal process which encapsulates schools, colleges and universities. Rather there needs to be a connection with the wider community and a bridge which allows the emergence and connection of knowledge to and from between traditional educational establishments and direct access to the community & this can be seen as an extension of knowledge in one aspect (Leadbeater, 2000).

Non formal learning can take place in a range of diverse environments and is related to what is significantly important to young people in their immediate surrounding rather than pre

written and pre directed curriculums. Both the educator in the non formal learning arena and the learner have a role to play (Smith, 1988).

The term non-formal methods of education could be summed up as ‘those educational activities organised outside the formal system and designed to serve identifiable clientele and educational objectives’ (Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed, 1973), whilst being divided in four sub-categories:

The communication-based methods, based on interaction, dialogue and mediation;

The activity-based methods, based on experience, practice and experimentation;

The socially-focused methods, based on partnership, teamwork and networking and;

The self-directed methods, based on creativity, discovery and responsibility (Source: Council of Europe Symposium on Non-Formal Education: Report (2001)).

Gaming is a normal part of culture for young people and games appear to be a natural channel for reaching disengaged teens: their possible usage covers motivating and engaging those who are in danger of dropping out of formal compulsory education, reengaging and reaching those who are disengaged and smoothing transitions from compulsory to post-16 engagement (Ulcsak, 2010).

NESTA (2013) recognises that the use of games in education, if appropriately planned, can help to involve NEET in training and education, including the development of their knowledge and skills. Games can be seen as an effective method of non-formal education in working with the youngest representatives of the NEET group, neglecting compulsory education or learning, who are at risk of social exclusion. Realisation of social inclusion may be approached by using game-based dialogues, non formal education and games to address a number of challenges currently facing the European Union and its individual member states (Proyer et al, 2017).

Games are becoming more readily used by educators and facilitators in youth work and are gaining focus and acceptability in the educator’s community (Crookal, 2010). The use of games in education is still seen as a relatively innovative concept for many educators and requires the development of methodology and tools.

Games (Fullerton, 2014) can vary in their format and can come in the shape of board games, street games, card games, dice games, role play games & pen/paper games amongst other types. Games are very popular amongst young people and by incorporating them into informal surroundings these tools can be used to assist in positive outcomes.

Source: Guide on the use of of games as an effective non-formal education method in the socio-economic activation of NEET youth (joint study - "Game Laboratory" workers)