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WORKING WITH STORIES IN PRACTICE

NEWSLETTER November 2018 No.3

Welcome

STORYTELLER PROJECT

A project dedicated to the very core of working with stories. Towards working with vulnerable communities within a professional curriculum.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

StoryTeller's 'Working with Stories' – insight into accomplished learning/teaching/training activity.

THE STORYTELLER PROJECT TEAM



Partnership consortium information available at: <http://learnstorytelling.eu/>



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TOWARDS CONCRETE TRAINING AND USE OF “WORKING WITH STORIES” ...

Dear StoryTeller friends,

STORYTELLER has reached its turning point and transformation of our story, which started about 2 years ago with the Kick-off Meeting of our project. This transformation is our “Working with Stories” training which took place in Limavady, Northern-Ireland in the first week of October. And it is not the end, we still have an interesting and inspiring journey ahead of us and we invite you to write the story’s end together with us in the months to follow.

The story of “STORYTELLER” is not about us (the team, the consortium) but about a new educational programme, which has the ambition to become a well-established programme for a variety of professions, working with and helping people at risk.

The training and the evaluation of this activity made us realise even more what a complex topic the project is addressing. Transferring the experience gained and the knowledge acquired to the national piloting experiences in a variety of different settings of working with people at risk will be taking us on an interesting journey in the next weeks.

But let’s not forget our partner, friend, co-worker and lovely host Betty McNerlin from CERES for the effort done in the past few days for this activity to become a reality. It is clear, the Irish hospitality goes beyond tea, coffee, cookies and good food.

Your StoryTeller team



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Want to join us on the journey of national piloting experiences and experience working with stories in your own (professional) activity? Join us on this inspiring, interesting and challenging journey, learn how to use storytelling in your professional and personal activities and write your own story. AND ALL OF THIS FOR FREE.

Stay tuned as all the training materials will be uploaded on our website soon.

Day 1 - We are all made of stories

We started the day with our portraits. Entertaining exercise to break the ice, in which others draw a portrait of someone they do not know and include a question. Participants then choose their favourite portrait and explain why they choose it. The choice for a particular portrait seems more moved by the question than by the drawing itself.

We moved on to identify the purpose and perspectives of stories, showing stories can be different depending on time, context and person.

A room full of people and not one favourite childhood story is the same, but most stories are known by many. The favourite childhood stories session shows to tell how many stories there are, with a variety of layers, and the different meanings and impact they have had on everyone.

Metaphors are powerful, and the session in which participants were asked to draw how they see their organisation, clients or beneficiaries. Our host, Betty McNerlin from CERES even made a “live performance”.

To close of the day participants described a moment of transformation, describing the circumstance, the moment before and what happened after. Inspiring and touching stories. A beautiful closure of the day.

Day 2 - The best memories are any, depending on the day and context

Group and group dynamics were today's focal point. To reflect (and get our brains and energy running), we started off the day with an exercise in which everyone had a post-it with a colour on their forehead. Participants could not use verbal and limited non-verbal communication to organise themselves in colour-based groups. One participant is the odd-one out and is the only one with a specific colour. Interesting to see how all experienced the process of belonging to a group. Everyone belongs to groups, participants wrote down the groups they feel they belong to, this resulted in an extensive map of different groups.



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Participants then wrote a letter, presenting themselves to a "new" community (whatever one they imagined) to which they did not belong before. The letters were read out loud, and the readers were asked to indicate how they would welcome them.

When thinking about groups, identity also plays a role. An exercise in which we all drew 3 animals and highlighted 3 of their qualities. Apart from laughter it helped us to reflect about our identities and how we perceive ourselves or how we would like to be perceived.

The day finished with a visit to Flax Mill Textiles, recovering a traditional craft (weaving) in a converted old mill, kept as close to the original as possible. The linen produced is used by designers all across Europe.

Day 3 - Stories are maps but the map is not the territory

Today is about listening: the BBRZ team explains all about the "Four Ears Model". An interesting insight about how we communicate and listen.

Dominant narratives shape our lives and language. What are the dominant narratives about women in the cultures/countries where participants are from? The list is long, and the variety of answers interesting, inspiring and a lot of food for thought about the influence of these narratives on people's lives.

Questions are very powerful! We learned that you need to be aware that by asking a question you are already influencing and steering the person. The same is valid for questions: there are stories that can empower and there are ones that can imprison people.

Participants were asked then what they thought what connected: A primrose with a tulip; A fish with a whale; All these 4 with a mad person and a mad person with the trainer, the trainer with them. This generated a lot of different answers, with no wrong answers as there is a structure that connects everything (whatever that structure is).

As one of the final activities of the day participants drew an image of something that is a problem to them, and then reflected on how this artefact influences their lives. A very good way to reflect with a smile or laugh.



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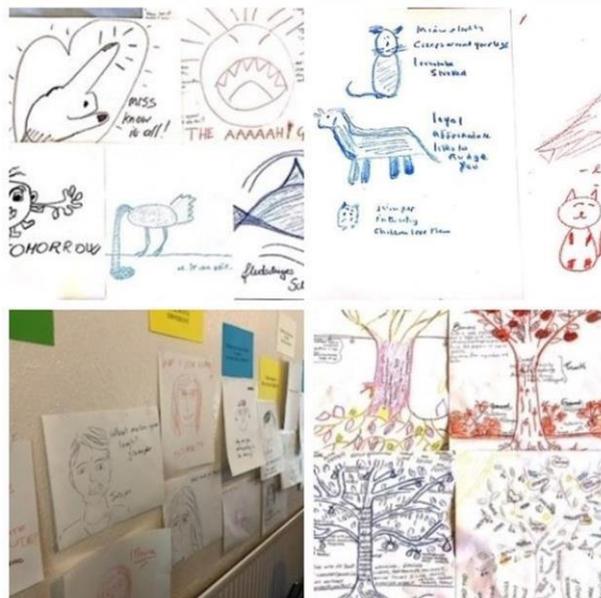
Day 4 – One judges a book by its cover from one’s own experience.

Today we started with the Tree of Life, starting with the roots, then the trunk, the branches, and participants are asked to put leaves on the branches, and adding on the fruits. Despite all our differences, there is a lot in common in our trees.

The next session participants craft stories in small groups. The stories are then shared among all. The stories are entertaining, surprising, touching, funny. It is clear: We are all creators and tellers of stories.

Judging a book by its cover: participants based upon a picture wrote down their impression of these persons. It is clear that your previous experience influences the impressions and thoughts about these persons.

The day ended with crafting a story as a whole group, in which each participant could only continue the story with one phrase. Funny, sometimes hilarious, but also reflective, as it helps to think about perception, impression and stereotypes.





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Day 5 – Evaluation, feedback and future use of "working with stories".

Last day was dedicated to the evaluation of the training. It made us realise even more what a complex topic the project is addressing. Transferring the experience gained and the knowledge acquired to the national piloting experiences in a variety of different settings of working with people at risk will be taking us on an interesting journey in the next weeks.

Do not miss the opportunity to see the developments of national pilot experiences in the following weeks.

Welcome to visit us at: www.learnstorytelling.eu