

NIK PADDISON

Trainer



Country: Montenegro

Contact information:

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<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/nik-paddison.95/>

Education: Master Degree: Peace and Reconciliation

Fields/topics you work in: Training of trainers and facilitators; Training of youth workers; Non-formal education/learning; Roma rights and issues; Participation; European citizenship; Hate Speech; Human Rights; Women's Rights; Conflict transformation; Peacebuilding; Creativity; Inter-religious dialogue; Intercultural dialogue/learning; Sustainability and the environment; Presentations and public speaking; Recognition and assessment of non-formal learning...

Experience as a trainer:

International Institutions

These include the EU-CoE Youth Partnership, Council of Europe Youth Department, Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme of the European Commission, SALTO Resource Centres (South East Europe, Training and Cooperation, Eastern Europe and Caucasus and EUROMED), and the Eastern Partnership Youth Forum, Lithuania and Latvia.

European Networks

Youth and Environment Europe – Prague, Czech Republic; Youth for Exchange and Understanding – Brussels, Belgium; Youth Express Network – Strasbourg, France; Youth Peace Ambassadors – Budapest, Hungary.

Non-Governmental Organisations / Civil Society Organisations

Loesje Armenia, Nevo Parudimos Romania, DRONI Georgia, JUB Holland, CEMEA Rhone-Alps France, GiovaniSi Italy, SubKult Switzerland, Youth in Progress Austria, CEIPES Turkey, Centre for Intercultural Development Macedonia, Kreaktiv Macedonia...

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TRAINER?

It was an accident. I thought I was going to participate in a meeting, it was in fact a preparation meeting for a training course. From there I continued to work with the European Network, who was one of the organisers of that original meeting, and became part of the Board. This led to many opportunities for being a trainer and developing as a trainer.

Even if I was probably the worst trainer ever in the beginning I liked the idea of it, I enjoyed meeting people from different countries and slowly over time I developed into being a good trainer. Now I do it because it is my passion.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART ABOUT BEING A TRAINER?

-I love being in front of a group – this is the ego part but I think it is important to acknowledge that for some of us like me, the performance is a key part of why we do what we do! Though this is also a point that needs to be strongly controlled, otherwise we get to the point where we do it only for the ego and ourselves!

-The creativity is such a buzz for me, creating new activities, reading up on new theories or learning something new about a theory or model. Working out how to do something that I always do in a different way.

-I love learning new stuff, every training course requires me to learn, reading articles theories, understanding a new activity, going through manuals...



-I love seeing people learn, watching an individual or a group immerse themselves into a subject, get excited about a learning point, being creative themselves.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AN ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY TRAINER?

Unfortunately not very much so. I use rather a lot of paper. I do endeavour to get projects I work on to recycle and reuse.

Unfortunately the training world is being slow in coming up with alternatives to paper. The digital options are there and are potentially very good for the few who know how to use them properly but even a well produced PowerPoint destroys the group dynamic by taking the focus on the group to a screen outside of the group.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A TRAINER?

The most difficult challenge this year for me has been the working conditions. Rooms with columns in the middle. No access to the training room until the day the training starts. Complete misunderstanding of what materials were asked for (even with pictures provided). Rooms with limited or no natural light. Too small, or rectangular so it is impossible to make a circle of chairs. Overwhelming heat or cold.

The list this year has been endless!



One of the biggest challenges a trainer needs to work on is the relationship with the organiser. In most of the above cases either it was an institution messing up or there was just no choice. However in many instances where a trainer gets frustrated with the working conditions it is because of a lack of communication between the trainer and the organiser. Organisers often do not understand trainer's needs and trainers don't understand organisers' needs. Trainers are often assuming the organiser will just understand when in fact they don't because each trainer is different with different needs and even if we talk about the same thing we don't necessarily mean the same thing. Organisers are not trainers, even if they support a lot of training courses. Trainers need to give more credit for the work of the organisers and recognise how difficult their job is. We need to stop assuming they can meet our every half vocalised need.

DO YOU HAVE SOME TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BECOME TRAINERS?

I was a terrible school teacher like trainer when I started. I am quite ashamed of my approach and lack of understanding of what a trainer is or how they should work! OK that was a long time ago, however, the way





I learned the best was to watch more experienced people and those who actually knew what they were doing. I watched the different styles, I took what I liked and rejected what I did not. Every training course, conference, study session, or seminar I would continuously analyse what the people at the front were doing, how they were doing it, why they did it in that way, how I would do it differently, etc. I still do it today, it makes me a bit of a critical participant but it helps me understand better how to do my job. Attending as a participant is important, as much as it is great to be the trainer, it is just as important to be a participant from time to time. Then you discover others doing similar things as a trainer that you do only you see it from the receiving side and sometimes you realise that the thing that you do is really annoying and stupid! So you change it and hopefully find a less annoying way of doing it.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE YOURSELF AS A TRAINER?

I do actually have a brand and a 'gimmick'. It started off as a joke but has now become my trademark. Odd socks, I wear them, my email and web site use the name. It is how people know me and it is a good way for me to promote myself and my brand as a quality trainer – with an edge of fun! Other tools that are used by trainers include the Ukulele, Hawaiian style shirts, use of jewelry (large earrings), etc.

I am also producing materials with my brand logo. Not to sell but to partly get good training materials to a wider audience of fellow trainers and partly as a promotion of myself and my work.

I don't think the youth sector is good at promoting itself, whether it be direct youth work or the training sector. Often it is looked down on to be self promoting because we are the voluntary or the caring sector and our main focus should be the 'client' not ourselves. I totally disagree with this. We do some amazing work in the youth sector and if we can promote it and show it off then go for it. There is little enough recognition of what we do, let's not hide it.



The project **"Meet your Trainer"** was created by Youth and Environment Europe for young people who would like to become trainers in non-formal educational field.



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Funders:

