



COURSE DESCRIPTION

From Educational Challenge to European Project

Don't start with the application. Start with the challenge. This five-day experiential course in Rome helps education professionals transform an educational or organisational challenge into a coherent European project concept, combining Design Thinking with CreActionality™. Bring a challenge. Leave with a European project concept.

DURATION 5 days · 25 hours	LANGUAGE English (B1+)	GROUP SIZE Max 20 participants
DAILY SCHEDULE 09:30–14:30 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch	CERTIFICATE Attendance + Europass Mobility	
AUDIENCE Erasmus+ coordinators, school leaders and teachers, VET, higher education and adult education professionals You do not need to be an Erasmus+ expert; some exposure to Erasmus+ or international cooperation is recommended.		
COURSE CENTRES Rome Dates and cities of the scheduled sessions are listed on the course page.		

01 Overview

What if the best place to start an Erasmus+ project is not the application form, but a real challenge? This course combines Design Thinking with CreActionality™, an original methodology developed by Giancarlo La Pietra that brings creativity, rational analysis and action together to turn meaningful challenges into practical, testable and impact-oriented solutions.

Through collaborative workshops, real-life cases, experimentation, peer feedback and project-design labs, you explore needs, stakeholders, European relevance, objectives, activities, partnerships, impact and sustainability. Working on a real challenge from your own organisation, you move through five stages, each with its own question and output:

- **Discover** — What are we really trying to change? → Educational Challenge Statement
- **Define** — Why does it matter, and why Europe? → Needs & European Relevance Map
- **Design** — What could we design to address it? → European Project Architecture
- **Connect** — Who do we need to make it happen? → Preliminary Consortium Map
- **Develop** — Can this become a credible project? → Project Concept and Pitch

By the end of five days you move from “We have an idea” to “We have a European project concept, and we understand why it makes sense, who it serves, how it could work and what change it aims to achieve.” The objective is not a finished Erasmus+ application, but a coherent project concept ready to be developed into one.

02 Course description

This is not primarily a course on how to write an Erasmus+ application. It is a course on how to design a European project before writing the application. Participants spend five days designing, testing and refining a project of their own, not studying templates. The course follows one logic: Challenge → Needs → European Dimension → Objectives → Activities → Partners → Impact.

Many education professionals know Erasmus+, but knowing the programme does not mean knowing how to turn an organisational challenge into a coherent European project. Typical starting points include “We need to improve digital skills”, “Our students are disengaged”, “We want to internationalise our organisation”, “We would like to work with European partners”, “We need new approaches to inclusion” and “We have an interesting idea, but we don’t know whether it can become a project”. Connecting a real need with a meaningful intervention, a relevant European dimension, the right partners and measurable change requires more than knowledge of funding programmes. It requires a way to explore problems, question assumptions, generate alternatives, analyse feasibility and turn promising ideas into practical concepts.

The course responds to the difficulties participants most often bring:

- **“Our ideas are too generic.”** — you explore, reframe and specify the challenge.
- **“We know Erasmus+, but don’t know where to start.”** — a structured design process comes before the application stage.
- **“We need partners, but don’t know what kind.”** — capability-driven consortium design.
- **“We have partners, but their roles are unclear.”** — complementarity, responsibilities and contributions.
- **“We start writing too early.”** — project design is separated from proposal writing.
- **“We don’t know whether our idea needs European cooperation.”** — European added value is built into the design process.
- **“Our needs, activities and expected impact are poorly connected.”** — the project’s intervention logic is developed and tested.
- **“We have ideas but struggle to turn them into action.”** — experimentation, prototyping and feedback improve the concept.

Rome is part of the methodology, not only the location of the course, following the principle Experience → Observe → Reflect → Reframe → Design. Depending on participant profiles and the availability of suitable organisations, the programme may include visits or encounters with educational and other relevant organisations. The purpose is not tourism: the city is used as a living laboratory to observe educational challenges, stakeholder relationships and possible responses, and every external visit has a clear learning question that connects directly to the project-design process.

The course is relevant both to newcomers to project development and to experienced professionals who want to strengthen their design stage. Suitable organisations include schools, VET providers, universities, adult education organisations, training providers, education networks, NGOs working in education and inclusion, and organisations developing internationalisation strategies. It complements existing Erasmus+ proposal-writing training rather than duplicating it: the resulting concept can later be developed against the eligibility criteria, priorities and requirements of a relevant funding opportunity. The aim is not to teach people to write projects, but to help them learn how to design projects worth writing.

03 Learning outcomes

- 01 Identify and frame a meaningful educational challenge.
- 02 Explore stakeholder perspectives and distinguish symptoms from underlying problems.
- 03 Analyse needs, contexts, assumptions and target groups.
- 04 Identify the potential European dimension and added value of a challenge.
- 05 Translate needs into meaningful project objectives.
- 06 Design a coherent intervention logic linking objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.
- 07 Apply creative exploration, rational analysis and experimentation to project development.
- 08 Develop and test project ideas through prototyping, reflection and feedback.
- 09 Identify the capabilities required within a complementary consortium.
- 10 Define potential partner profiles, roles and contributions.
- 11 Integrate feasibility, impact, dissemination and sustainability into project design.
- 12 Evaluate the coherence and potential of a project concept.
- 13 Present a European project idea clearly and convincingly.

04 Methodology

CreActionality™ and Design Thinking

CreActionality™ combines Creativity, Rationality and Action to help people move from challenges and ideas to structured, testable and impact-oriented solutions. It is the overarching framework of the course, while Design Thinking supplies a practical approach to exploring human needs, reframing problems, generating solutions, prototyping and learning through feedback.

Creativity — explore and reframe

Explore different perspectives, challenge assumptions, investigate stakeholder needs and generate alternative responses. Creativity is not idea generation for its own sake: it helps discover what is worth addressing.

Rationality — analyse and structure

Analyse needs, root causes, stakeholders, context, European relevance, feasibility and expected change, and distinguish an attractive idea from a coherent intervention.

Action — prototype, test and improve

Translate ideas into project concepts, make assumptions explicit, test coherence, gather feedback and refine designs. Action includes experimentation throughout the process, not only implementation.

A thread, not a module

CreActionality™ is the methodological thread of the whole course. Participants repeatedly move between creative exploration, rational analysis and practical action, applying them to relevance, European added value, partnership complementarity, feasibility and impact in a cycle of Explore → Analyse → Design → Test → Refine.

Learning principles

Challenge-based learning on real challenges from participants' organisations; human-centred design around people, needs and contexts; design before writing; experiential learning through doing, reflecting and improving; prototyping and experimentation; collaborative development through peer feedback; and impact orientation from the beginning.

Assessment and feedback

There is no traditional examination. Learning is demonstrated through the progressive development of the project concept and the participant's ability to explain, test and improve their design choices, supported by individual reflection, peer review, trainer feedback, project coherence checks, a consortium complementarity assessment and the final pitch.

05 Daily programme

Day 1

Discover: From Educational Reality to a Meaningful Challenge

- **Main question:** What are we really trying to change?
- **Output:** Educational Challenge Statement — a concise description of the challenge, its context, who is affected, why it matters and what needs to change
- **CreActionality™ focus:** Creativity — explore, observe and reframe.
- **Key topics:** educational innovation and organisational challenges; challenge versus solution; context and stakeholder perspectives; learner and user needs; assumptions and problem exploration; from an interesting idea to a meaningful challenge
- **Activities:** Personal challenge inventory and stakeholder mapping. Exploration of learner and user perspectives. Challenge questioning and reframing. Peer discussion and feedback. Where appropriate, a short observation or field activity in Rome.

Day 2

Define: From Challenge to European Relevance

- **Main question:** Why does this challenge matter, and why could European cooperation add value?
- **Output:** Needs & European Relevance Map — what the need is, who experiences it, why it matters and why European cooperation may be useful
- **CreActionality™ focus:** Rationality — analyse, distinguish and focus.
- **Key topics:** needs analysis and root causes; stakeholder perspectives and target groups; European dimension and transnational relevance; Erasmus+ logic and priorities; European added value; opportunity versus artificial Europeanisation
- **Activities:** Needs mapping and stakeholder perspective exercises. Problem reframing. European relevance test and challenge-to-priority mapping. Peer challenge session to test assumptions and evidence.

Day 3

Design: From Needs to Project Architecture

- **Main question:** What could we actually design to address the challenge?
- **Output:** Initial European Project Architecture — a visual and written model connecting the challenge, needs, objectives, target groups, activities, outputs and expected outcomes
- **CreActionality™ focus:** Creativity and Rationality — generate, structure and connect.
- **Key topics:** project objectives, target groups and expected change; activities, outputs and outcomes; intervention logic and coherence between needs and intervention; innovation and added value

- **Activities:** Generate alternative intervention ideas; select and refine a promising approach. Build the project architecture along the central design sequence: Challenge → Needs → Objectives → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact. Test whether each activity contributes to a clear objective. Identify assumptions and potential weaknesses.

Day 4

Connect: Designing the Consortium

- **Main question:** Who do we need to make this project possible?
- **Output:** Preliminary Consortium Map — partner profiles, required capabilities, potential roles, complementarity and contributions
- **CreActionality™ focus:** Collaborative action — build complementarity around the intervention.
- **Key topics:** what makes a meaningful consortium; capabilities before organisations; complementarity and partner contributions; partner profiles, roles and responsibilities; European diversity and stakeholder ecosystems; consortium risks and collaboration requirements
- **Activities:** Consortium Design Lab: identify the capabilities the project requires, such as educational expertise, access to learners, technology, research, policy, dissemination, implementation, impact evaluation and sector-specific knowledge. Define potential partner profiles and match capabilities to roles and responsibilities. Test whether each partner contributes to the intervention. Review consortium gaps and risks — this is a consortium design session, not simply a partner-search session.

Day 5

Develop: From Project Concept to European Project Pitch

- **Main question:** Is this project coherent, relevant and realistic?
- **Output:** 2–3 page European Project Concept and a short Project Pitch
- **CreActionality™ focus:** Action — prototype, test, refine and communicate.
- **Key topics:** impact, sustainability, dissemination and exploitation; feasibility, risks and assumptions; project coherence and Erasmus+ relevance; communicating the project idea and next steps towards further development
- **Activities:** Project Coherence Check: review problem, intervention and expected change; test whether the European dimension is meaningful; review partner roles and contributions. Identify weaknesses, risks and opportunities for improvement. Refine the Project Concept. Present a European Project Pitch and receive peer and trainer feedback.

PLEASE NOTE

Sessions run from 09:30 to 14:30, Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch. Timings can shift a little to suit the venue and the group.

Course activities and content may vary depending on participants' needs and the trainer leading the session; any changes are at the trainer's discretion. If there is a specific topic you would like included, please let us know — content-related requests must reach us at least 3 weeks before the course start date so we can confirm them in time.

06 Materials

- The European Project Design Portfolio, built progressively across the week and yours to keep developing after the course. It provides tangible evidence of learning and shows how CreActionality™ was applied to a real educational challenge.
- Portfolio contents: Educational Challenge Statement; Stakeholder Map; Needs Map; European Relevance Statement; Project Objectives; Intervention Architecture; Activity / Output / Outcome Logic; Preliminary Consortium Map; Impact & Sustainability Framework; 2-3 page European Project Concept; short Project Pitch; reflection on the design process and next steps.

07 How to prepare

- Bring a real organisational or educational challenge to work on — something you would like to change. Nothing needs to be written in advance, and you share only as much of it as you are comfortable with.
- Come ready for practical exercises, experimentation, peer feedback and collaborative problem-solving.
- You do not need to be an Erasmus+ expert. Some exposure to Erasmus+ or international cooperation is recommended, and the course works best for participants in direct contact with learners, teachers, organisations or educational processes.

08 After the course

- Participants will receive their Certificate of Attendance and the co-signed Europass Mobility document.
- You leave with a 2-3 page European Project Concept, a Preliminary Consortium Map and a short Project Pitch, and with your European Project Design Portfolio to keep developing with colleagues and partners.
- You will have experienced a transferable methodology for future educational innovation and European cooperation initiatives.
- Participants will complete a general course evaluation and event survey.

09 What the course fee covers

INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE

- 25 hours of training and course materials
- Certificate of Attendance + Europass Mobility document
- On-site local support throughout the week

ARRANGED SEPARATELY BY THE PARTICIPANT

- Travel to the host city — invitation letter on request
- Accommodation — we share recommended options
- Travel & health insurance

ISSUED BY

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COURSE PAGE

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ABOUT ERASMUS MOBILITY ACADEMY

Erasmus Mobility Academy (OID: E10304561) is an Erasmus+ training provider offering professional development courses for educators, school staff and youth workers across Europe. Our courses are designed for international mobility — open to participants travelling from a country other than the host country — and support schools in building lasting institutional capacity. We provide structured learning, logistical guidance and certification, including the Europass Mobility document.