



UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

Leisure time and Non-formal Learning

Adult Education promoting sustainable development – Module 4



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Content

1. Concept of leisure time
2. Leisure time and wellbeing
3. The work-leisure dichotomy
4. Formal, non-formal and informal learning
5. Non-formal learning
6. Non-formal learning in free time
7. Non-formal learning and sustainability
8. Key points
9. Questions to think about
10. References





Concept of leisure time



- Leisure time is time that is not spent at work.
- It's devoted to activities for their own sake (consumption activities) rather than financial matters.
 - e.g. housework, do-it-yourself projects, commuting, personal care are excluded from leisure
- Leisure is free time that is devoted to recreation and nonproductive contemplation.
 - e.g. eating and sleeping



Leisure time and wellbeing

- The meaning of leisure time in one's life has been viewed differently in different ages.
 - e.g. It's been viewed as a gift, as an opportunity to self-development, something that must be earned, and even as something dangerous.
- Traditionally, adult education has provided individuals knowledge, skills and opportunities to use their leisure time in a way that supports their wellbeing and agency.

(Anderson 2013.)



The work-leisure dichotomy

- Soule (1955)
 - *“People sell time primarily so that they may acquire enough money income to buy products sold by others.”*
- Leisure time is the leftover time from work time = one’s own time.
- Leisure time contacts benefits work life and gaining economic advantage.
 - Meeting the right people, networking...
 - Leisure activities gives more advantage more upper level than lower-level occupations.





Formal learning, non-formal learning and informal learning

Formal learning: organized by education system, it is structured and organized, usually follows a curriculum or program, has clear learning objectives, planned to gain knowledge, skills and competencies, always intentional

Non-formal learning: organized or structured outside the formal educational curriculum or education system, still usually structured some way, can include many kind of activities

Informal learning: not structured, no set learning objectives, is incidental, seen as learning by experience, happens in work, free time etc.



Non-formal learning 1/2

Non-formal learning

- May or may not be intentional or arranged by an institution, but does not lead to a degree or formal credits
- Activities that are not explicitly designated as learning
- A wide variety of approaches (non-credit language courses in adult education center, continuing education, book club, sports club etc...)
- May occur during other activities

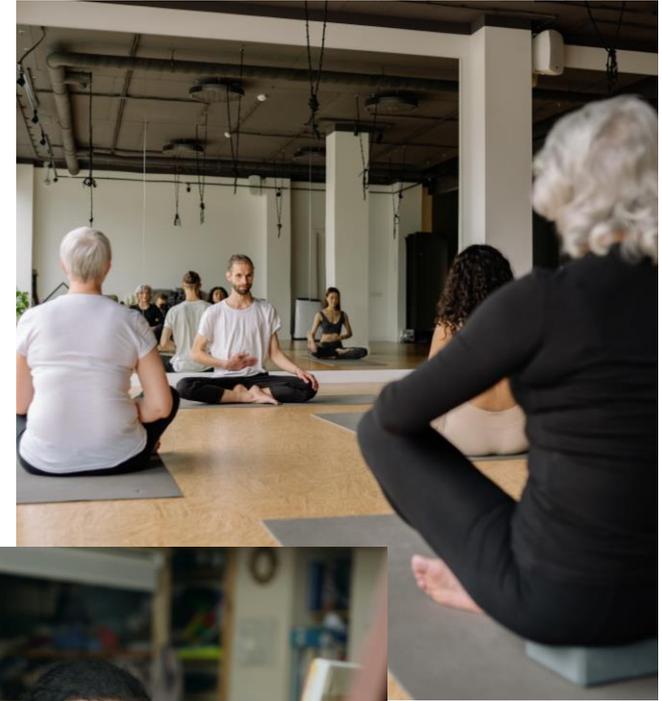
Benefits for

- Individual: economically, educationally, socially and personally
- Career development, maintaining lifelong learning, individual growth, social benefits (improving equity)



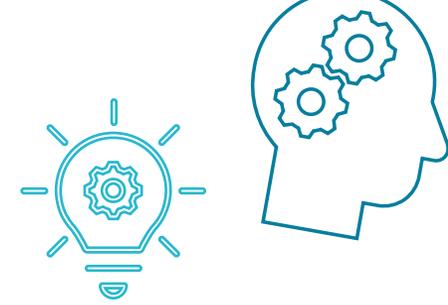
Non-Formal learning 2/2

- Non-formal learning is organized and structured in some way but not necessarily arranged by an educational institution.
- Non-formal learning can also be organized and can have learning objectives.
 - Learning still happens whether there is or is not.
- Individuals' active role in non-formal learning
 - Learning may occur at the initiative of the individual





Non-formal learning in free time



- Non-formal education activities can be perceived similarly as other leisure time activities.
 - People that perceive having enough free time spend more time on non-formal education than people that have limited free time.
 - People with higher education are more likely to actively engage in non-formal education.
- In addition to, pleasure and satisfaction, individual development is, also, an important function of leisure time.
- The importance of individual development is emphasized among young people, due to, life's insecurities that require continuous improvement of skills and competences.
 - On the other hand, people who are at the end of their career are more likely to choose activities based on pleasure and satisfaction.
 - Younger generation might also view free time differently than older generation.

(Thoidis & Pnevmatikos 2014.)



Non-formal learning and sustainability

Due to wide range of challenges citizens require a lot of knowledge to promote new more environmentally friendly lifestyles (European Commission 2021).

The diversity of non-formal education practices enables experiences that provide knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that support fruitful lives (UNESCO 2016).

This learning also promotes making informed decisions, and taking a more active role both locally and globally in solving issues related to sustainable development (UNESCO 2016).

Non-formal education is seen as a very effective way to raise awareness about society, promote active citizenship and evolve citizens' abilities that encourage to live in a more environmentally friendly way (European Commission 2021).





Key points

- **Leisure time:**
 - Is one's own time spent apart from work
 - Supports wellbeing
- **Non-formal learning:**
 - Occurs usually outside the formal education system
 - Doesn't lead to a degree or formal credits
 - Can happen in many different learning environments
 - Emphasizes the learner's active role in the learning process
 - Emphasizes learning that is not only memorization of knowledge
- **Sustainability:**
 - Non-formal learning ties itself to sustainability by raising awareness about the society, promoting active citizenship and environmentally friendly ways of living.





Questions to think about...



- What leisure time means for you? How do you use it?
- Should leisure time only be considered "time away from work"?
- What do you think about the balance of work life and leisure time?
- Where have you experienced non-formal learning?
- How would you define the difference between formal and non-formal learning?
- What about the difference between non-formal and informal learning?



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