



EUROPEAN UNION



Learning experience

focused on value-driven education
and compassionate leadership
through embodied learning methods



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Learning experience focused on value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods

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Learning experience

**focused on value-driven education
and compassionate leadership through
embodied learning methods**

We aimed at supporting participants to increase quality of their work and projects in the education and youth sectors by taking a holistic approach that aligns with their vision and mission. For this, we seek to create a learning journey that goes beyond just teaching methods. It's about embracing a whole new mindset that shapes how we guide and facilitate learning.

In each step of the workshop, participants will engage in a series of practices for cultivating emotional intelligence, self-care, resilience, empathy, deep listening, and meaningful communication skills.

the 9th edition of Connector

Connector aims to create a space and context where people involved in learning become familiar with and practice different non-formal learning methods, having in mind the 2024 Erasmus+/ESC priorities *-inclusion& diversity; digital transformation; environment and fight against climate change; participation in democratic life.*

A special focus will be placed on how these learning methods : create a framework for telling stories around project results. a chance to become familiar with non-formal learning methods that you can afterward use in your projects or your daily learning context.

The objective is to cultivate a learning environment grounded in a holistic understanding of human learning and development.

Objective:

- Offering tools, adapted to each participant's skills, inspired from theatre methods and games, in order to make the educational process more interactive, attractive and inclusive.
- Creating together a theatre labyrinth that will explore different means of learning using all the senses.

In summary, participants explore the significance of value-driven learning, delve into the advantages of compassionate leadership, and then put it all into action using embodied learning techniques to improve their learning approach.

Because you can experience learning in an international and multicultural context. Because learning by doing and focusing on participants' hands-on experience are the key elements of this event. We welcome youth workers, adult education practitioners, trainers, learning facilitators, teachers, educators, and support staff, representatives coming from youth sector, schools, higher education, adult education, and vocational training institutions.

Connector is about learning, networking, sharing and practice, but it's mostly about PEOPLE getting connected!



Roxana Turcu

My interest in a holistic approach to learning emerged in 2016 during my facilitation work. Participating in the U-Lab course “Leading from the Emerging Future” provided me with a framework based on Theory U for creating conducive learning environments in diverse contexts. The Dalai Lama Fellowship Program was a pivotal experience in my personal and professional growth, expanding my understanding of compassionate leadership and contemplative practices. I have implemented various international training courses on embodied learning methodologies for youth workers and teachers, infusing this body-mind-heart approach into all aspects of my work.



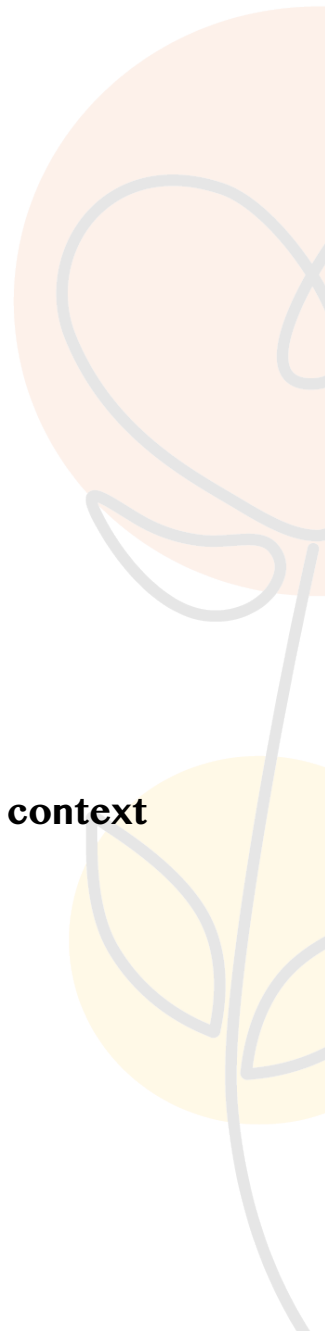
Romina Matei

Program Management Office at SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre. Member in the national network of trainers for the Romanian National Agency of the Program Youth in Action. My journey with value-based education began in 2019 when I discovered the importance of solidarity through my involvement in the European Solidarity Corps. From 2020 to 2021, I led the publication of a Tkit on Value-Based Learning Mobilities, deepening my engagement with the topic. Since then, I have integrated aspects of this content into various learning settings, including international trainer meetings and conferences dedicated to National Agencies staff.

Content



- 6 What is it?**
- 11 Preparation of the method**
- 16 Delivering the method**
- 18 Evaluation**
- 20 Why we use this method? Inclusion & diversity context**
- 22 How it can be used in E+/ESC context?**
- 30 Communities of practice and resources**



What is it?

Learning experience focused on value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods

This particular combination of approaches was specially crafted for the CONNECTOR 9.0 event with the aim at supporting participants to increase quality of their work and projects in the education and youth sectors by taking a holistic approach that aligns with their vision and mission.

For this, our intention was to create a learning journey that went beyond just teaching methods. The workshop was envisioned as a transformative learning experience designed to cultivate value-driven education and foster compassionate leadership by integrating embodied learning methods. Participants were invited to engage in a holistic approach that combined theoretical knowledge with practical, experiential activities, promoting deep personal growth and professional development.

In each step of the workshop, participants were invited to engage in a series of practices for cultivating emotional intelligence, self-care, resilience, empathy, deep listening, and meaningful communication skills. The objective was to cultivate a learning environment grounded in a holistic understanding of human learning and development.

Our approach is based on the following key components:



1. VALUE-DRIVEN EDUCATION

Value-based learning goes beyond traditional cognitive approaches by incorporating values at its core. It encompasses holistic learning, engaging the head (cognitive/knowledge), hand(s) (skills), and heart (attitudes/values). Recognizing the importance of the body and social dynamics, it empowers learners to understand, embrace, and embody values in their actions and behaviors (T-KIT 14 Value-based learning in mobility projects, Council of Europe and European Commission, December 2023)

Value-driven Education follows main directions as:

Core Values Identification: creates space for participants to explore and identify their core values, understanding how these values influence their decisions and actions in educational settings.

Ethical Decision-Making: through case studies and reflective exercises, participants get the opportunity to practice making ethical decisions aligned with their values.

Curriculum Integration: creates context to discuss and develop strategies for embedding core values into the curriculum and daily educational practices.

2. COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP

Compassionate leadership is a leadership style involving self-awareness, personal sustainability, genuine compassion for others, and the capacity to skillfully navigate complex systems at multiple levels. (*Dalai Lama Fellows, Head, Heart, Hand Curriculum, 2019*)

Compassionate leadership includes main directions as:

Self-Compassion and Mindfulness: Mindfulness and self-compassion techniques to support participants cultivate inner resilience and emotional intelligence.

Empathetic Communication: Focus on levels of listening and empathetic responses to build stronger, more compassionate relationships with self and others.

Leadership Styles: Exploration of various leadership examples highlighting the importance of leading with empathy, humbleness, and service to others.

3. EMBODIED LEARNING METHODS

Embodied learning methodologies integrate physical movement, sensory experiences, and emotions into the learning process. These methodologies emphasize experiential learning, where learners engage not only with their minds but also with their bodies and emotions. It acknowledges the interconnectedness of mind and body, recognizing that physical experiences can significantly impact cognitive and emotional learning outcomes.

Embodied learning methodologies are based on some pillars as follows:

Body-mind-heart Practices: practices focused on body awareness exercises to enhance the connection between mind, body and heart and emphasize their role in the learning process.

Reflective Movement: Guided reflective movement to express and process emotions, fostering a deeper understanding of one's own experiences and those of others.

Experiential Learning Activities: Interactive activities and simulations to provide hands-on experiences that reinforce theoretical concepts, encouraging participants to learn by doing.

Through the methods used, participants had the opportunity to explore the significance of value-driven learning, they delved into the advantages of compassionate leadership, and then put it all into action using embodied learning techniques to explore new dimensions of their learning approach.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this edition of Connector 9.0, we've teamed up to craft a learning experience focused on value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods for our participants.

We aimed at supporting participants to increase the quality of their work and projects in the education and youth sectors by taking a holistic approach that aligns with their vision and mission. For this, we worked to create a learning journey that went beyond just teaching methods. It was about embracing a whole new mindset that shapes how we guide and facilitate learning. The learning journey we envisioned pursued the following steps:

Step 1 - Establishing a Context for Reflection:

We aimed to provide participants with a context to reflect on their vision as learning facilitators, examining how their values are manifested in their work.

Learning objectives for this step:

Self-Awareness and Value Clarification:

- Identify and articulate personal core values that influence professional behavior and decision-making in educational settings.
- Reflect on and assess the alignment between personal values and professional actions through journaling and group discussions.

Ethical Decision-Making:

- Apply ethical frameworks to make informed decisions that reflect personal and institutional values.



Step 2 – Exploring Compassionate Leadership:

We aimed to explore the concept of compassionate leadership, reflecting on the competencies necessary to guide others towards meaningful learning experiences.

Learning objectives for this step:

Compassionate Leadership:

- Demonstrate empathetic communication skills through role-playing exercises and real-world interactions.
- Enhance self-compassion and mindfulness practices to build emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Step 3 – Equipping with Embodied Learning Methods:

We wanted to equip participants with embodied learning techniques emphasizing the integration of body, mind, and heart to enhance the quality of their work.

Learning objectives for this step:

Embodied Learning:

- Participate in body awareness exercises to strengthen the mind-body-heart connection.
- Use reflective movement exercises and mindfulness techniques to explore and express personal and professional experiences.

By tackling these objectives, participants will be well-equipped to create and sustain a value-driven, compassionate, and embodied approach to education, learning and leadership.

More detailed Learning Outcomes are as follows:

- *Enhanced Self-Awareness:* Participants develop a deeper understanding of their own values, beliefs, and emotional responses.
- *Improved Emotional Intelligence:* Through mindfulness and body-mind-heart practices, learners enhance their ability to manage emotions and build empathetic relationships.
- *Practical Leadership Skills:* Participants acquire practical tools and strategies to implement compassionate leadership and value-driven education in their professional contexts.
- *Holistic Integration:* Participants learn to integrate embodied learning methods into their work and leadership practices, creating more engaging and meaningful learning experiences and projects.



Preparation of the method

When speaking about value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods, it is important to have in mind some basic principles for preparation and facilitation. The text below is inspired and adapted from the T-kit 14: Value-based learning in mobility projects.

Facilitation of value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods is a process that should support learners in understanding values and practicing them until they become part of themselves. When preparing such activities it is important to have in mind that values take time and personal effort to be reached, discovered, reflected on, understood, and maybe, just maybe, changed and acted on. Below are some guiding principles in preparing and delivering learning sessions about value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods.



► 1. Providing safe and encouraging learning space(s)

Safe and encouraging spaces are a must for every learning process, even more so when explorations, sharing and discovering might trigger emotional responses and vulnerability. That includes taking care of physical spaces where learning takes place, ensuring strong (enough) relationships in the group, as well as creating an atmosphere of trust, respect and honesty. This kind of space is essential when exploring values and when expecting learners to open up to themselves and to others.

One concept that helps in understanding this kind of environment is “holding space”. Heather Plett, a writer and facilitator herself, and a person who gave us the gift of holding space, said: *“When we’re holding space well, we’re keeping our ego out of it, not controlling the outcome, not giving unsolicited advice, and not taking people’s power away. Facilitators need to make sure that holding space becomes everyone’s task and only then will an encouraging safety net be created. Think about it as one of those infamous group-building activities where a person should just take a leap, with their eyes closed, and land into other people’s arms. It is kind of like that, with all the proper safety measures, and with reflection and sharing”.*

► 2. Ensuring that everyone's voice can be heard

This is one of the main tasks of any facilitator and it really is one of the essentials. Making sure that everyone participates, that no one is dominating the process and that no one is left behind. But it is more than that. Beyond a mere counting of the number of voices and seconds they spend talking, making sure that everyone's voices can be heard also means there is space and time for each point of view to be expressed and heard by the others. This by no means implies that everyone must speak every time they have a chance. It is also possible to participate actively and be silent from time to time.

This is essential if values of inclusion and diversity are to be implemented fully and it is equally essential for exploring values, no matter how a person (as a facilitator and as a learner) feels about them. This aspect also sets the basis for participation of all learners in the learning process.

In order for this to be enabled, a few things need to happen:

Starting with themselves, the facilitator needs to hear and acknowledge all points of view. If the learning environment is safe, trustworthy and encouraging, and the process of discovery and reflection on values has been taking place, there will definitely be some views, opinions and ultimately values that will not be in line with those promoted in the learning environment.

Some of them could even be in genuine conflict with the facilitator's own values and worldviews. However, the facilitator should be ready and able to hear them without judgment and also be ready to challenge them.

The learners need to be empowered to have the courage to speak their mind and from the heart.

Learners need to be prepared to hear, and really hear, all the points of view. Even the most extreme ones.

Dealing with ambiguity and change. When facing diversity, there will be a lot of ambiguity, since neither right or wrong will be as clear anymore, nor will good or bad, or true and not true. Hence, young people should be supported to develop their tolerance to ambiguity and change and find ways of dealing with it.

Empathy is one of the main assets of understanding the other, the different or the unknown. It is empathy which suspends judgment and allows for other views to be heard. Empathy allows for bridges to be formed and true learning and understanding to be developed.

Encouraging the process of self-discovery. It is one of the most important elements of working with values. So, supporting learners is about recognising what values they carry with them, how they manifest and where they are coming from – essentially implementing the principle of **“meeting them where (and who) they are”**.



▶ 3. Promoting values

One of the important roles of a facilitator of value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods, is to promote values – values that are supported by the Erasmus Plus Youth programme and European Solidarity Corps, values that are agreed in the team, and values that ensure human dignity and prosperity. This is about facilitators “walking the talk”, being transparent, taking a stand and being civically engaged and political.

▶ 4. Supporting reflection and critical/dialogic assessment

The key to working with values and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods is to develop a reflective and critical attitude about what happens in yourself, in your body when approaching the values theme. By “critically” we mean not in the sense of judgment, rejection and criticism, but in the sense of reflection, questioning and entering into dialogue about it.

Critical reflection is a competence on its own and is recognised in the of Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe: “The participants should be empowered and encouraged to evaluate and critically reflect about the learning process” (*Council of Europe 2016: 8*).

▶ 5. Creating experiences for incorporating values

Facilitators should create experiences for learners to really feel, sense and embody the values, and take the first steps towards those values becoming part of themselves. In this respect, it is not about discovering values that learners already have, but embracing and embodying ones that are perhaps new or have appeared as part of the learning process. For that to happen, facilitators need to ensure that learners go through the whole experiential cycle (possibly a number of times), which means not just living the experience, but also reflecting on it and generating insights and learning.

Like critical reflection, this comes with young people venturing out of their comfort zones and stretching their values and belief. The experiential learning approach highlights that it is going through an experience in all its phases (experiencing – reflecting – generalising – transferring) which makes the learning process most effective. This helps to ensure that young people do not just declare they have certain values, but really have a chance to live them. It is important to note, however, that different experiences will have different impacts on learners. Hence, it is important to create diverse experiences that would produce different preferences in learners.

▶ **6. Connected to the promotion of values**
(those of European programmes in our case), the role of facilitators of learning is to challenge absolutely any discriminatory and hateful values – or rather the behaviors and attitudes that reveal them.

This is part of their civil and political role and it is an essential part of value-based education. It does not imply that the facilitator shuts down learners who are spreading those values, but rather encourages them to critically reflect on them. So, for a young person to understand how a value can lead to behaviours that negatively affect other people, they need to go through a complex process of critical reflection. In addition, very often learners, and even the whole group, may not understand the connection between the behaviours or an attitude and value/s behind them. That is why the facilitator needs to facilitate the process that leads to this discovery.

That said, the facilitator also needs to take a strong stand regarding any controversial values. They need to name them and make reference to a set of values that this particular one clashes with. For example, the human rights framework is very strong in pointing out which values are against humanity and equality in dignity. This is important not only for challenging the hateful expression of values, but also for protecting the rest of the group from it.

▶ **7. Encouraging learners to (try to) change their values**

This part of the facilitator's role arises when there are values among learners that do not fit the value code and value frame that is being promoted. To begin with, this "value frame" needs to be clear and known by everyone, and it is another role of the facilitator to ensure this clarity. One example of this is the emphasis on European programmes as a source for the value frame. As previously mentioned, if the space and atmosphere in the learning session is safe and encouraging, things will almost inevitably be said and expressed that go against the core values promoted. Besides challenging them, facilitators should also encourage learners to reflect on them and to see if their values can evolve in the light of the new insights.

▶ **8. Empowering learners to act on values**

In working with values, action based on them is a desired outcome. For example, if focused on solidarity, the impact on value-based education is about young people embracing solidarity and promoting it themselves, but also acting in solidarity. Or practising empathy. Or living sustainable lifestyles. Therefore, an important part of valued-based learning is encouraging learners to make commitments and to act – within the E+ or ESC programme and after it. In fact, a learning mobility can be a first step towards that. For example, by putting on a human rights performance in the community, or preparing workshops for their colleagues about hate speech, or supporting the elderly in the hosting community.



Delivering the method

When delivering the method it is important to follow some of the guiding principles explained below:

1. Participatory/learner-centred

Even if all principles of non-formal learning are essential, this could be understood as the core, the basis for implementing any activity. The main target of a learning sequence are the participants / the learners. In order to do some there are some steps which can be undertaken to reach this goal:

Set a time and space for learners to reflect and plan their learning objectives.

Be ready to adapt the programme according to the learners' learning needs. For example, the facilitator may implement a middle-term evaluation and request daily feedback to know if the content is in line with what is expected from the learners.

Find compromises between what is expected, what is planned and what content can be delivered. The learners are at the centre, but it can be difficult for facilitator to meet all the learners' needs if they do not have enough competences. That is why it is essential to keep clear communication and be transparent. It can be challenging for the learners to change and to reflect on values, so the facilitator must be flexible.

Implement activities that lead to the development of learners' values awareness. Bring to the forefront the individual values and the group values, so that they become the basis of the learning mobility.



2. Holistic

Within this method holistic means that learning takes place within different aspects of each person – emotions, logical and critical thinking, experience, awareness and consciousness. To better understand that concept, the model Head, Hands and Heart (Orr 1992) is a good starting point. It is a model linked to transformative experience with three areas at the center:

- the cognitive domain (head);
- the affective and emotional domain (heart);
- the psychomotor domain (hands).

It is all about full engagement of the learners. So, in practice what can be done is:

Be aware of the holistic approach and support the learners in that. When dealing with value-based education especially, the transformative process can be intense and intensive. The facilitator must be available to provide support in any of these areas.

Offer a diversity of activities that can engage participants in different ways. For example, provide some activities that foster reflection, logic, discussions and awareness raising; some that will empower the connection with feelings and emotions to allow feeling and expression; and some that will work more at a psychomotor level, with dynamic exercises, embodiment, dancing, walking, etc.

Give time for the transformative process. As already mentioned, the raising of awareness and evolution of individual values is a long-term process. As such there's no rush to foster new values and behaviours, but instead allow time for that personal transformation to occur on its own, in line with the learning mobility content and support from the facilitator and group of learners.

3. Voluntary

Learners have the right not to participate if they wish. As the principle of being learner-centred indicates, the focus is the learning process. So, learners will follow their way and pace of learning, and if that means having some breaks and not participating in some sessions, that is their right. Even during the sessions, they may opt to observe instead of engaging in discussions. The principle is in line with the setting of learning objectives by the learners. If it were mandatory to participate, they would not be so motivated and would not engage even in planning the learning objectives. Facilitators of learning have the responsibility to apply the voluntary approach at all times. They can communicate with participants to understand if an absence is related to personal choice or another reason.

So, in practice what can be done is:

- create a safe learning environment and explain this principle to the participants
- if participants do not participate in a session, approach it with a supportive interest, but still ensure that their decision is respected
- implement, as much as possible, a diversity of methods that will attract different learning preferences and motivate participants. Ranging from discussions to simulations and role plays, to reflection (in line with the experiential learning cycle).



4. Experiential learning

There are many books and resources about experiential learning. As mentioned before, working with values demands reflection, since they are not visible and are quite different from person to person. Therefore it is essential in this type of learning to go through the entire experiential learning cycle, following these steps:

- **experience** (an exercise or encounter during the learning mobility)
- **reflection** (done for example through debriefing, by reflection groups or self-assessment moments)
- **conceptualisation** (how that experience can reflect real-life situations and what insights are gathered from it)
- **experimentation** (putting the learning outcomes into practice)

Evaluation

These guiding principles provide a framework for implementing evaluation sessions in an effective way and align with the core objectives of value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods.

1. Provide a safe and supportive environment

This is the same as the first guiding principles in preparation of a learning sequence. The first step in this process involves creating a safe and supportive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their honest feedback. This can be achieved by setting clear intentions at the beginning of the evaluation, emphasizing the goal of collective growth and understanding rather than judgment or critique. It is important to mention that in the evaluation process, there are no “right or wrong” answers.

2. Encourage reflection and connection

The facilitator should encourage participants to reflect on their experiences during the session, focusing on how the embodied learning methods—such as role-playing, mindfulness exercises, or movement activities—helped them connect with the concepts of value-driven education and compassionate leadership. By asking open-ended questions and actively listening, the facilitator can gather valuable insights into how effectively the session met its objectives and identify areas for improvement.



3. Respond to diverse learning styles

In leading the evaluation, the facilitator should use diverse evaluation methods that respond to different learning styles and preferences. For instance, the facilitator might use group discussions, individual reflection exercises, or anonymous surveys to collect feedback. During group discussions, the facilitator can guide participants in exploring how embodied learning techniques impacted their understanding and practice of compassionate leadership. They might ask participants to describe moments when they felt most engaged or challenged, encouraging them to consider how these experiences might influence their future behavior and decision-making. By allowing time for individual reflection, the facilitator can help participants internalize their learning and identify personal takeaways.



4. Ensure anonymity and inclusivity

Using anonymous surveys can help the process, enabling participants to express thoughts they might hesitate to share openly. Through this evaluation approach, the facilitator ensures that all voices are heard and respected, enriching the overall evaluation of the session.

5. Translate feedback into action

Finally, the facilitator should synthesize the feedback and incorporate it in the future sessions. This involves not only summarizing the participants' responses but also analyzing the data to identify patterns and trends that may indicate strengths and weaknesses in the session's design and delivery.

6. Encourage shared ownership and transparency

The facilitator might also consider inviting participants to propose solutions or adjustments, fostering a sense of shared ownership over the learning experience. By sharing the evaluation results with the participants, the facilitator demonstrates a commitment to transparency and continuous improvement, reinforcing the principles of value-driven education and compassionate leadership. This collaborative evaluation process not only enhances the effectiveness of the current session but also models the reflective and inclusive practices that lie at the heart of value-driven education and compassionate leadership, ultimately empowering participants to carry these principles into their personal and professional lives.





Why do we use this method?

Inclusion & diversity context

In the context of inclusion and diversity, traditional educational and leadership methods often fall short of addressing the complexities and nuances of fostering an inclusive environment. By integrating value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods, we are able to address these challenges in a more holistic and effective manner. We develop further some reasons why to use such approach:

Holistic Understanding of Diversity:

- Embodied learning methods encourage participants to engage with diversity not just intellectually, but physically and emotionally. This multi-faceted approach leads to a deeper, more empathetic understanding of different perspectives and experiences.
- Value-driven education emphasizes the importance of core values such as respect, empathy, and equity, which are foundational to promoting inclusion and diversity.

Cultivating Compassionate Leadership:

- Compassionate leadership focuses on leading with empathy, understanding, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background. This type of leadership is essential for creating inclusive environments where everyone feels valued and heard.
- By embodying compassion through practices like mindfulness and empathetic communication, leaders can model inclusive behaviors and set a positive example for others to follow.

Enhanced Emotional Intelligence:

- Embodied learning enhances emotional intelligence by helping individuals become more aware of their own emotions and the emotions of others. This heightened awareness is crucial for recognizing and addressing unconscious biases and fostering an inclusive atmosphere.
- Emotional intelligence also improves conflict resolution skills, which is vital for navigating the diverse perspectives and potential tensions that can arise in inclusive settings.



Practical Application of Inclusion Principles:

- Embodied learning methods such as role-playing and body awareness exercises allow participants to practice inclusion principles in real-time, gaining practical experience in applying these concepts in various situations.
- Value-driven education provides a framework for making ethical decisions that prioritize inclusivity and equity, ensuring that actions are aligned with the values of diversity and inclusion.

Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces:

- Embodied practices help to create safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable expressing their authentic selves. This is especially important for marginalized groups who may have experienced exclusion or discrimination in the past.
- By fostering a sense of belonging and community through shared values and embodied practices, we can build stronger, more cohesive groups that embrace diversity.

Encouraging Reflective Practice:

- Embodied learning encourages participants to reflect on their own biases, behaviors, and practices, leading to greater self-awareness and personal growth. This reflective practice is key to understanding and overcoming the barriers to inclusion.
- Value-driven education promotes continuous reflection on the alignment between personal values and professional actions, ensuring that inclusion and diversity are consistently prioritized.

Sustainable Change:

- By integrating values and embodiment into the learning experience, we embed inclusion and diversity into the very fabric of educational and leadership practices. This leads to more sustainable and long-lasting change, as these principles become ingrained in the everyday actions and decisions of participants.
- The holistic approach of this paradigm ensures that changes are not just surface-level, but deeply rooted in the values and behaviors of individuals and organizations.

In summary, using value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods provides a comprehensive, empathetic, and practical approach to fostering inclusion and diversity. This method addresses the emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of learning, ensuring that participants are well-equipped to create and sustain inclusive environments.

How can it be used in Erasmus + and ESC context?

Value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods is an educational approach that focuses on developing personal and societal values through engaging activities and reflection. In the context of the Erasmus+ Youth Programme and the European Solidarity Corps, this method can be integrated into the project cycle to increase quality in the actions. Below is a look at how value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods can be applied at each stage of the project cycle: planning, implementation and evaluation.



Implementation in the Project Cycle

1. Project Planning

In the planning phase, value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods help set a strong foundation for meaningful involvement:

Needs assessment and values identification

When planning a project, together with the project team, organise and conduct workshops to identify values such as empathy, sustainability, or inclusivity using activities like “Values Tree” or “Values Mapping”.

Outcome: Aligns project goals with participant values, addressing community needs and personal growth.

Setting the objectives with a values focus

Facilitate discussions to set project objectives based on identified values and articulate their connection to societal values like democracy and human rights.

Outcome: Establishes a sense of purpose and commitment by linking values to project objectives.

Designing activities that reflect values:

Collaboratively design project activities that incorporate values-based elements, such as eco-friendly practices if sustainability is a core value.

Outcome: Creates meaningful activities that resonate with participants and beneficiaries.

2. Project Implementation

During implementation, value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods can be woven into daily activities to reinforce ethical principles. Of course that entire learning sessions can be focused on value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods, but also in project management activities this can be incorporated.

Integrating values into daily activities

Organize reflections or group discussions where participants discuss how project experiences align with their personal and collective values.

Outcome: Reinforces values and encourages real-world application.

Collaborative values-based activities

Design and implement activities in the project team, which require cooperation and problem-solving, emphasizing values like respect and mutual understanding.

Outcome: Develops skills and attitudes that promote collaboration in diverse teams.

Values-driven leadership:

Implement leadership workshops focusing on values-based leadership principles and encourage decision-making based on ethics. Also, make sure that the decision process in the project implementation is respecting the same values.

Outcome: Prepares participants for responsible and ethical leadership roles.



Social responsibility and community engagement:

Organize community service projects that align with identified values, like hosting a clean-up if environmental responsibility is emphasized.

Outcome: Encourages societal contribution and understanding of community impact.

3. Project evaluation and reflection

Value-driven education and compassionate leadership through embodied learning methods continues through evaluation and reflection, offering insights into growth:

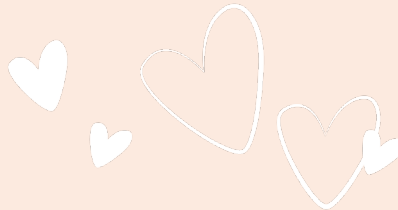
Reflective practices and values assessment:

Conduct sessions using tools like journals or feedback circles to evaluate the project's impact on participants' values.

Outcome: Provides an understanding of personal development and values in action.

Evaluating impact through a values lens by using values-based indicators instead of competence based indicators.

4 examples of activities used in CONNECTOR 9.0



HIERARCHY OF YOUR VALUES

Each person has a set of values that are more dominant, of higher importance, or closer to their core. This exercise helps to identify the main personal values and their hierarchy.

Learning objectives

To explore personal values and their level of importance for each person at the present time

To raise awareness that values change over time

Duration: 30-90 minutes

Group size: 1-30 participants

Material and preparation:

50 cards with different values on it

Something to mark the cards (poker chips, beans, etc.), at least seven for each participant.

Method

1. Scatter the cards on the floor, ensuring that there is enough space for participants to move freely and be able to see all the cards.

2. Ask participants to move around the space and mark seven values that connect to them (each person marks seven values).

3. Explain that each participant prioritises their seven values by selecting the ones that are “stronger” for them or more dominant in their life at the moment.

This can be done by having different colours of the same elements (e.g. green = top priority; blue = second priority) or different elements to mark them (e.g. beans = top priority; rock = second priority).

4. Invite participants to have one final look around the different values and then move on to the debriefing.

Debriefing

How was the process of choosing the seven values for you? Did you follow your brain/heart/body or a combination of them all?

How come your chosen values are the “strongest”, the more dominant at the moment?

Could you live without those values? What would be different?

Which value is the main one (or the most dominant at this moment)? Why?

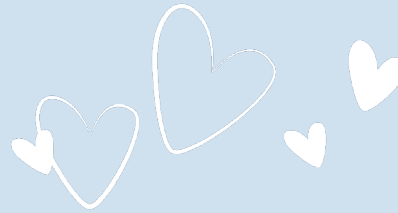
Were you surprised by values chosen by other participants? What was surprising?

What is the difference between changing the priority of values and changing the values completely?

Variation questions (when repeating the exercise on different days or periods of learning mobility):

Which values changed throughout time?

Did your values change? How and why?



FEELINGS AND VALUES DANCE

Values provoke a strong emotional connection for each person. To connect with feelings and values is a key element for developing self-awareness.

Learning objectives

To connect feelings with values

To identify and raise awareness of personal values

To develop emotional awareness

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Group size: 1-30 participants

Preparation: Print your chosen values on A4 paper –one value per sheet

Method

Part 1: Demonstrate the exercise with one volunteer participant

1. Put all cards (or papers) on the floor.
2. Inform all participants that it is important to be silent and present (in the moment) to support the individual participant who will be doing the exercise.
3. Ask one participant to move around and step on one value. Embody the value (feel it, connect with it, check how your body reacts).
4. Ask the participant: *How does that make you feel? How does your body react to that value?*

5. Repeat the process with another value. It is recommended to repeat the process with three to five values.

Part 2: Open the process to the whole group

6. Divide the participants into small groups. In each group one participant will do the “dance” while another will support, acting as the facilitator.
7. Repeat all the steps above in small groups, having a different participant do the “dance” each time.
8. Invite all the small groups to come back and start the debriefing.

Debriefing

To the participants that took part in the exercise:

Which feelings did the values elicit?

Which values made you feel comfortable (describe the feeling) and why?

Which values made you feel uncomfortable (describe the feeling) and why?

How are your feelings connected to the values you follow?

To the participants that were out of the exercise:

What did you observe about the people doing the exercise?

How did their body react?

Do you think you would have a different feeling for the same value?

To all participants

Why do different values make you experience different emotions?

Why is it important to understand the connection between values and feelings?

Exploring Self - Compassion as Leadership key aspect

Learning objectives

To define the concept of Compassion

To explore self-compassion

To develop emotional awareness

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Group size: 1-15 participants

Preparation

Prepare a flipchart paper for brainstorming about Compassion

Choose soft music as a background

Prepare paper, pencils, markers, colors, modeling clay (alternative) for participants

Step 1 - What does COMPASSION means to you?

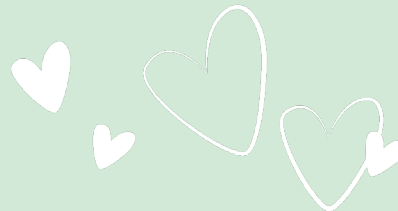
Facilitated discussion about Compassion. Participants are invited to reflect on the following questions around Compassion and share their thoughts in the group. The Facilitator writes down on the flipchart their answers:

What does compassion mean to you?

To whom could you express compassion? (Self / Others / Nature, etc.)

How does compassion feel? Where in the body do you feel compassion?

What are the blockages around feeling and expressing compassion?



Step 2 - Exploring Compassion towards self

Part 1 - Participants are invited to reflect on a moment in their life when they felt excluded, sad or burdened. Through a guided visualization, invite participants to remember what and how did they feel, where in their body they felt any emotions, what did they tell to themselves in that particular situation.

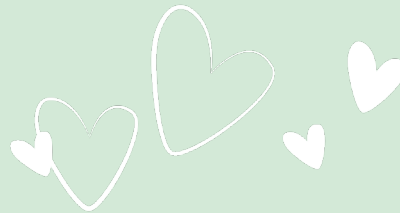
Notes for facilitator:

Make sure to create a safe space for participants to go through the guided visualization. Mention the steps of the exercise and what is going to happen in each step.

Invite participants to choose a situation that is safe for them to use in the context of the exercise. Remind them that they can take breaks or stop at any time.

You can use calm music on the background if everyone agrees to this.

Part 2 - After the guided visualization, participants are invited to note down what came up for them. Provide them papers, markers, pencils or any other instrument you have at hand (colors, modeling clay, etc). Participants can write down, draw, model something, anything that works better with them.



Part 3 - After this step, invite participants to brainstorm individually ways they could have shown compassion to themselves in that particular moment. You can guide the brainstorm with some questions as:

What would you have needed at that moment?

How could you have shown compassion for your mind / body / heart?

What could you have said to yourself at that moment?

Part 4 - Continue with a Self-love guided meditation. Invite participants to find a comfortable space, to bring their attention to the sensations in their body, to observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment or with the intention to change anything, to take few deep breaths and repeat some affirmations:

May I be healthy / May I be safe / May I be happy / May I live in peace and harmony / May I be liberated from suffering / May I be loved, seen and appreciated for who I am

Part 5 - As a next step, invite participants to take this feeling from the Self-love guided meditation and to put into a dance with themselves. Choose a soft music and invite participants, with closed eyes, to accompany themselves, those parts of themselves that came up during the activity and show them compassion through movement, touch and affirmations that they feel they need.

Notes for facilitator:

Make sure that all participants are comfortable with closing their eyes, the alternative is to lower their gaze. Make sure that participants are safe at any moment, they have space to move and they do not bump into the others.

Step 3 - Debriefing

What happened?

How was the activity for you?

What did you feel?

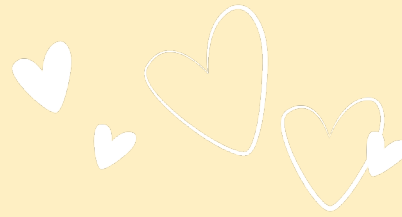
What did you observe about yourself: your body / mind / heart?

Was any step of the activity difficult for you? What were the reasons?

What did you learn through this activity: about yourself, about your needs, etc.?

What did you enjoy throughout the activity?

What learning do you want to take with you from this activity?



Empathy Walk

This is an adaption of the original method from The u-school for Transformation and the Presencing Institute **the original method**

Learning objectives

- To define the concept of empathy
- To gain deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences
- To enhance the ability to listen actively and communicate effectively
- To develop empathy and emotional awareness

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Group size: 2-30 participants

Preparation

Print one paper with the question per participant

Participants are invited to form pairs. Each pair will receive one paper with the questions and are invited to go for a walk and discuss the questions focusing on their level of listening and the connection with the other person.

Empathy Walk Handout
on the next page (to be printed)

Debriefing

How was the activity for you?

What did you feel?

What did you observe about yourself: your body / mind / heart?

What did you observe about the other person?

What did you observe about your listening throughout the conversation?

What factors influenced your levels of listening?

Did you feel empathy at any moment toward the other person? What were the reasons?

Was anything difficult for you? Why?

What did you learn through this activity?

What did you enjoy throughout the activity?

What learning do you want to take with you from this activity?



Handout

Empathy Walk

Here are some questions that will help you when you are talking about yourself. You do not need to answer them all, they are a guideline.

*How hard/easy is for you to express your feelings?
What would constitute a perfect day for you?*

*For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
What is your Super Power?*

*What is your favourite part of your body and why?
What is your self-care routine?*

*How would you describe your alarm clock?
Is there somebody/something draining your energy these days?*

How would you describe your ability to manage stress?

When was the last time you surprised yourself? How?

*What's on your mind right now?
If you could wake up tomorrow having gained one quality or ability, what would it be? Why?*

*Is there something that you've dreamt of doing for a long time?
Why haven't you done it?*

*What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
What do you value most in a friendship?*

*What is your most treasured memory?
What is your greatest sorrow?*

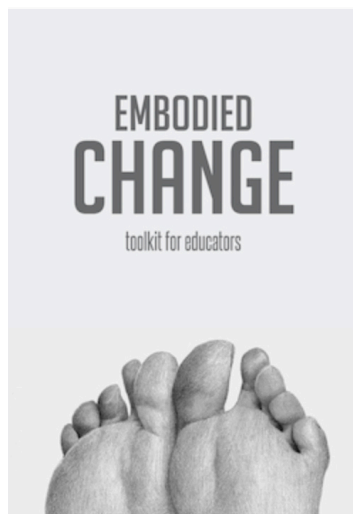
*What does friendship mean to you?
Share an embarrassing moment in your life.*

*When did you last cry? Why?
Describe your first meal of the day.*

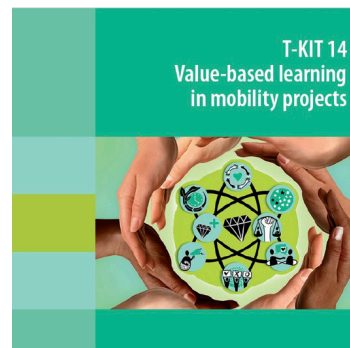
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1.



2.



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