

ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVISM OF YOUNG PEOPLE

How to support & develop collective actions



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Index

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INTRODUCTION

The context of this project	9
Development Education Methodologies	10
Target group	11
A word on collective actions	12
Creating inclusive groups - a checklist to consider	12
The Compassion Compass	13
How to use this manual	14

SECTION 1: Before the action

Building the container

Mindful moment	18
Who's in the room?	19
Sharing through an object	22
Building a community agreement through three questions	23
Compassion Compass activity	24
Broccoli Seed Agreement	25
Words are meaningful	26

The world and our place in it

Exploring different perspectives	30
Tuning in to our environment	32

SECTION 2: Supporting collective actions

What could a collective action look like?	37
Thinking about what to do	39
Dream circle	43
Setting Objectives	44
Creating a timeline of tasks	46
What physical, emotional or financial resources do I have to put into this collective action?	49
Reflection questions	50

SECTION 3: After the action

55

Celebration.....	56
The Compassion Compass revisited.....	57
Five questions to frame ongoing engagement.....	59

RESOURCES

61

Resource 1 - Glossary of terms	61
Resource 2 -Dragon Dreaming	64
Resource 3 - The Compassion Compass.....	65
Resource 4 - The Stories We Tell Ourselves - Rene Susa	66
Resource 5 - Four Ways of	67
Talking and Listening	67



INTRODUCTION

The context of this project

Development Education Methodologies

Target group

A word on collective actions

Creating inclusive groups - a checklist to consider

The Compassion Compass

How to use this manual



INTRODUCTION

This training manual has been developed as part of the ‘International Citizens for Local Perspectives’ project. Funded by Erasmus+, the project aims to promote social inclusion and deepen young people’s engagement as active citizens, by drawing on their experiences of living in other cultures. The manual builds trainers’ and facilitators’ capacity to engage with these young people, who include international volunteers and migrants, to plan and run collective actions on the global justice issues they are passionate about.

At a time when a significant number of people are migrating all around the world, including to Europe, we are deeply concerned about the “welcome crisis” they are encountering. Many of the reasons why people are hoping to start new lives in the EU are directly linked to issues of injustice and inequality.

Our project involves four organisations from across Europe: France Volontaires (France), CESIE (Italy), Comhlámh (Ireland) and Zavod Voluntariat (Slovenia). Collectively, we have supported thousands of young people who have worked, volunteered and lived in the Global South, and who have first-hand experience of the interdependencies and complexities of some of the main challenges humanity is facing. We are excited to be in a position to nourish and support young people to question, learn more, and find direction so that they can begin to do things differently.

As a starting point for this resource, we recognise the enormous potential that young people with lived experience in other cultures have to draw on their skills, using them as a tool to critically reflect on the root causes of global inequality. We hope this resource will support trainers to work with young people to create collaborative responses to the issues we are facing at local, national and global levels. It will do this by identifying and further enhancing the skills, knowledge, and values they developed through their experience in and with other cultures: this will identify ways in which the dominant narrative around migration can and should be different.



The manual focuses on developing inclusive spaces, with an initial emphasis on group process with young people from diverse backgrounds. It provides tools for helping groups to identify the global justice issues they are most passionate about, to develop collective responses, and to become engaged from a place of compassion that incorporates a critical analysis of the root causes of these problems.

By offering the structure of a collective action as a starting point, we hope this resource will assist trainers in supporting young people on their journey as active global citizens, equipping them with skills and experiences of working together that will encourage them to continue their engagement.

The context of this project

Since 2014, there has been an increase in the number of migrants arriving into the EU, often in crisis situations: over 1.8 million people sought refugee status in Europe between 2014 and 2018 (UNHCR, 2019). The lack of a coordinated approach to migration across the EU, coupled with increasingly hostile responses to people arriving, has created a crisis of solidarity.

The reasons why people leave their homes to start new lives in other countries can range from war to climate change, political oppression, study, work, love, hunger... there are as many reasons as there are individuals. However, the response within many EU countries has often been characterised by adverse reactions such as indifference, antipathy, aggression, and hatred. This has been manifested in ways that include attacks on migrant reception centres and camps, the criminalisation of search and rescue efforts in the Mediterranean, and increasingly hard borders. We see a huge need for social justice and solidarity work across Europe, to confront such reactions and challenge the portrayal of migrants as beneficiaries of integration policies, rather than people with the same human rights as EU citizens.

Research (e.g., EU FRA 2018) has consistently shown that migrants encounter social exclusion and isolation within societies across the EU. This resource hopes to help those working with young people to challenge this “welcome crisis” by creating spaces that bring young people from across the world and from differing perspectives together. Doing so aims to break down the single dominant narrative and develop opportunities for new connections and pluralistic understandings. The transformative potential of encouraging young people to develop the skills they acquired through living in and with other cultures - critical thinking, considering multiple perspectives, and questioning the causes of global injustice - is enormous.

Development Education Methodologies

This resource has been compiled using a development education, or global citizenship education, approach. This means it uses participative methodologies to encourage critical debate around the underlying causes of global injustices and to support young people to identify the role they can play in working for a more equitable society.

Our aim for this manual is to invite trainers and facilitators to create space for open inquiry, and to explore the complex, interdependent and unequal world that we live in. We aim to support the exploration of a different way of being with each other in the world, and to encourage young people to engage with issues from a place of compassion that incorporates a critical analysis of the root causes of these problems.

Target group

Who is this manual for? The resource has been developed specifically for trainers and facilitators who are working with young people with lived experience in other cultures. These young people include international volunteers & migrants, who want to explore and develop their skills as active global citizens.

How does it aim to do this? By:

1

Building capacity to encourage young people's continuous engagement & active global citizenship, using participative learning and sharing methodologies that are underpinned by global citizen education approaches;

2

Supporting trainers & facilitators to work with young people through each stage of developing a collective action (before, during and after); and

3

Assisting trainers and facilitators to create safe spaces to gently interrogate issues, unsettle easy solutions, embrace complexity, and ask questions that will support transformative learning for young people.

A word on collective actions

Collective actions are collaborative responses that emerge from nurturing and supportive spaces. Within these, young people can link together to use their experiences, knowledge and insights of living in diverse cultures to raise awareness and mobilise people on global justice issues. Through this resource, we aim to create enabling conditions for the first steps of their common journey as active global citizens. By recognising and celebrating their experiences of developing time-bound "collective action projects", young people can be supported to bring the energy from their experiences into their ongoing engagement as active global citizens.

It is important to note that collective actions are not seen as an end in themselves. Instead, we hope they are a medium to support future engagement on a lifelong journey as an active global citizen.

Creating inclusive groups - a checklist to consider

How can we ensure that the groups we are working in are as welcoming and accessible as possible, for people from a wide diversity of backgrounds? What might be some of the barriers that might exclude people from taking part in our activities? How can we make our space more inclusive? As part of this project, consultation days were held with key stakeholders from migrant support and migrant-led organisations, as well as international volunteer sending agencies. This was done across the four countries involved in this project (France, Ireland, Italy, & Slovenia). Based on their feedback and suggestions, we have compiled a checklist for trainers to consider when beginning this work, or setting up a new group.



How can we support people who are new to our communities to get involved?

Newcomers may not have established networks or maybe living in isolated conditions, where they do not have access to information about activities that are taking place. It is important to consider how and where we advertise events, potentially outside of our usual networks.



Have we thought about how to engage people who do not speak our language?

Some people in the process of learning the language of their host country can feel that their lack of fluency is a barrier to participation. Suggested solutions include encouraging other group members to translate, and factoring time for this process into all activities.



What are the real costs of participation, and can we cover these?

Our consultations highlighted some of the hidden costs of participation, especially if activities are taking place over several weeks or months. These include transport costs, child-care or other caring roles, and food. It is important to think about how these might affect people's ability to get involved and to let them know from the outset if the group or project are in a position to cover these.



How accessible is the venue in which we are holding our meetings?

Here, issues to consider include how linked the venue is to public transport, for those who do not have cars, as well as whether the building is accessible for people with disabilities.



Are young people with dependants welcome to bring them to meetings and events?

If you are in a position to welcome children or other dependants to group meetings and activities, this may make the difference between someone being able to participate, or not.



When is the best time to hold meetings and activities?

It is important to consider different options when arranging meetings, to make them as accessible as possible for people with family, work, study and other commitments.

The Compassion Compass

What type of person does the world need? There is no instruction manual on how to be a “good active global citizen” and no single, linear path towards which young people can be directed to guide their journey. Instead, we ask the questions: “what type of person does the world need now?” and “how can we work to build the related values and dispositions?”. In responding, we have drawn on the **Compassion Compass tool** developed by NGO **Children in Crossfire**.

The Compass aims to help us navigate our way through a complex world while staying grounded in our values. Doing so will help to develop more skilful and compassionate responses to global injustices. The points of the Compass are:

- > Appreciating interdependence;
- > Recognising our common humanity;
- > Recognising and responding to systematic global injustices;
- > Thinking critically and navigating perspectives;
- > Motivation to take action and sustain participation as a global change maker;
- > Building relationships and deepening empathy;
- > Self-awareness and navigating emotions; and
- > Deepening resilience and building personal and social wellbeing.

The different activities contained in this resource all connect with at least one direction on the Compassion Compass. We also invite you to use it as a tool in your ongoing work with your group. Reflecting on how their work links to the different points at different times while they are developing their collective actions can support the group to think about which disposition they are building with each of the activities.

How to use this manual

We hope this resource will support you to bring together groups of young people from diverse backgrounds, with different lived experiences but a common interest in taking action to create a more equitable world. Throughout, we focus on the importance of building friendships and allyships and exploring topics (sometimes difficult or uncomfortable ones) in a constructive and reflective manner that deepens young people's solidarity work. We invite you to tailor the activities to the particular group with whom you work and to grow from whatever existing passion and inspiration is already in the room.

The topics and content that we explore in this manual are exploring complex issues as well as trying to navigate a different way of being together. This includes building trust and moving away from the power structures that we are used to, to a more consensus-focused and compassionate way of being. These are things that take time. In our experience, if they are rushed, the depth of engagement that is needed to build more reflective responses and actions can be missed.

SECTION 1 Before the action

This section of the resource looks at how we can engage with diverse groups, in a spirit of partnership and allyship. It discusses bringing a group together for the first time, exploring how best to create the enabling conditions for working collaboratively on developing collective actions, and beyond. Through a focus on group process and formation, the section explores the foundations that need to be laid to support respectful and reflexive engagement. It covers issues that are critical to “building the container” which will hold the subsequent activities and group work, including creating strong and trustful groups.

SECTION 2 Creating collective action

This section builds on the group foundations created in the first stage, to explore activities that will provide participants with practical tools to identify and develop time-bound collective actions. These tools include brainstorming ideas, setting the aims and objectives of the project and creating a timeline for the action. It also explores how to support a group to work together on carrying out the collective action while staying focused on the bigger issues that they are passionate about.

SECTION 3 After the action

Here, trainers are supported to work with groups to capture and consolidate their learning to inspire participants to stay involved as active citizens once their actions are completed. Questions explored include: what are the group's achievements that they would like to celebrate? In what ways have participants developed their skills, values and dispositions through their work on collective act.



SECTION 1: Before the action

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Mindful moment

Who's in the room

Sharing through an object

Building a community agreement through three questions

Compassion Compass activity

Broccoli Seed Agreement

Words are meaningful

The world and our place in it

Exploring different perspectives

Tuning in to our environment



SECTION 1: Before the action

Building the container

Some of the topics we explore in this resource can be challenging or uncomfortable for people to engage with. With this in mind, a 'strong container' is important to hold this process, so that the group can be more open to this learning. A group or team with members who know and trust each other is likely to be more effective. People tend to offer more of themselves when they are with people whom they trust and respect. It is, therefore, a good idea to spend some time helping people get acquainted with one another.

Process vs action?



How much weight do we give to the process and how much to the actual action? This is a question that is worth keeping in mind from the very beginning. Throughout this resource, we encourage facilitators to help groups explore different perspectives on how they will decide whether they have been successful. This may help to broaden the discussion beyond whether an identified



“goal” is achieved, to considering issues such as the quality of group relations, processes, and internal power structures. With this broader lens, taking the time to ensure that every voice is heard and valued and that the group reaches all their decisions with consensus, should become important aspects of what success will look like for the group.

Working with spoken and unspoken content

It is important when creating containers within spaces of groups to acknowledge that every participant and facilitator comes to the work with a life map and lived experience. Some of that experience will include challenges and difficulties.

This may be especially true when working with the cohorts who are the target of this project. Some of the young people may have made very difficult and sometimes quite profoundly traumatic refuge-seeking journeys. Everybody brings their very distinct, very subjective lived experience into the room and generic group processes that do not acknowledge this can sometimes skim the surface. Within well-facilitated sessions, it is important to acknowledge the broader context.

Big emotions

In groups, sometimes emotions or big issues can come up in the room. How can we as facilitators equip ourselves to better to work with these emotions? It is crucial to engage with both manifest and latent content. The manifest content is the language, the words, and the interactions that we observe between participants in group work in individual processes. The latent content is the unspoken energy in the room.

You as a facilitator may feel that there is a conversation that’s bringing up difficult material or material you know that has a resonance with difficult memories. It is up to you to allow that process to be very much guided by the experience in the room. You may like to begin the group work process by acknowledging: “we have a really diverse group of participants in the

room: we recognize that everybody has their life map; everybody has had both beautiful and challenging experiences in their lives. This is a space in which we want to co-create processing conversation actions and activities in which we can honour all of what everybody brings”. This does not explicitly name things such as trauma but gives the subtle messaging to participants who carry that into the room with them that they are seen, heard, validated and acknowledged.

A facilitator needs to consider, within different processes, when to listen, when to intervene, when to speak, and when to recognise that silence in facilitation is not a bad thing.



Mindful moment

We invite you and the group you work with to regularly take a moment to reflect, especially after difficult conversations, busy periods, or whenever you sense it is needed.

Clearing thoughts, cooling down from conflicts, taking a mental break

AIM

This activity can take place at any time within your group work and can be very useful to open or conclude different stages of the process. Agree on a signal to start the activity, for example, ringing a bell. At the signal, everyone will stop what they are saying or doing, and remain silent for a short while. It is up to the individual how deeply they will relax, but everyone must remain silent for a moment.

TIME 5 minutes

ACTIVITY



Invite participants to close their eyes (if they feel comfortable doing so)

Ring a bell if you have one; if not, speak quietly in a relaxing tone. You can give the group invitations to relax with. Examples might be as follows:

Feel where your body connects with the chair or cushion you are sitting on

How do your clothes feel on your body?

Breathe deeply – in and out: Hear the difference in tone and feel the difference in temperature between the in-breath and the out-breath.

When does the in-breath become the out-breath?

What does the breath feel like?

Where does it first enter the body?

Find the point where there is tension in your body

Breathe into that spot, consciously relax and breathe out the tension.

Invite movement back into your body: Move your fingers, your toes. Now open your eyes and return your attention to the room.

 **Time:** 5 minutes

Who's in the room?

AIM

For participants to get a sense of everyone who is in the group

For participants to understand themselves in relation to the others in the group.

TIME 20 minutes

ACTIVITY



This is a movement-based activity.

Ask one person to volunteer to kick-start the activity. Invite them to take a position in the room and say something that describes themselves. This could be in relation to their activism or might be more generally about their life.

For example:

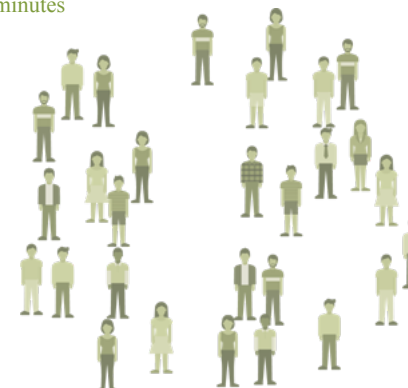
'I am involved in a migrant solidarity group' or 'I am a vegetarian'.

Then ask a second person to contribute; depending on how close or far away they feel from what the first person said, they take a position in the room.

They may be involved in a similar group and stand close to the person, or they may be involved in an environmental group, or no group at all but care about these issues, in which case they can decide where they want to stand.

Invite a third person to take a turn. This continues until all the group have arranged themselves in the room in relationship to one another. They have also shared with others about themselves if they feel comfortable.

 **Time:** 20 minutes



Sharing through an object

AIM	To deepen the sharing among participants To get a sense of people's motivations for taking part in this course
TIME	30 minutes

ACTIVITIES




This activity is a way for the facilitator to deepen sharing among participants at an early stage of the course.

Before the course, the facilitator should ask each participant to bring an object that answers the question, "why do we do what we do?". or by asking another question that explores people's motivation for being in the room, for example, 'Why is social justice important to you?',

Alternatively, the facilitator can bring approximately double the number of objects as there are participants, for example, 40 objects for 20 participants and ask participants the same question as above. Get the group to reflect on the question. If the facilitator has brought the objects then invite each person to pick an object that they connect with and that somehow speaks to them or symbolises their answer to the question.

Ask participants to take their chosen object and form groups of three, where they can share about the object and why they chose it.

 **Time:** 15 minutes

 **Material:** A selection of small objects approximately double the number of objects as there are participants



Ask the group to come back together in a circle, and invite them to place their objects in the centre of the circle so everyone can see what was chosen.

Invite anyone who would like to, to speak about how they found the experience of selecting the object and what they shared with others. Encourage them to ask questions of others if they are curious about an object and why it was chosen.

 **Time:** 15 minutes

Building a community agreement through three questions

AIM	To create a community agreement that meets the different needs of all the group members
TIME	60 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Write each of the following questions on a separate flipchart:

1. What do I need in order to learn?
2. What do I need in order to participate well?
3. What do I need in order to feel respected?

Feel free to adapt these questions to the context of the group you are working with.

Divide the participants into groups of four, and give each group a flipchart with one question. Ask them to discuss it for five minutes, making notes of their main points. Encourage participants to think about both abstract and practical needs.

After five minutes, the flipcharts should be passed clockwise so that each group is adding to the answers of the previous group. This means that no flipchart belongs to any group, so they are developing the agreement collectively in every way.

After each question has been answered, the flip charts should once again be passed clockwise.

 **Time:** 30 minutes

 **Material:** - Flip chart
- Markers



Ask the group to summarise what is important on the flipchart and turn this into action statements. Each group presents these statements in plenary.

If everyone is happy with what has emerged, this is the community agreement for the group.

 **Time:** 30 minutes

Compassion Compass activity

AIM To help the participants connect with the Compassion Compass and areas they would like to develop during their time working together

TIME 30 minutes

ACTIVITIES



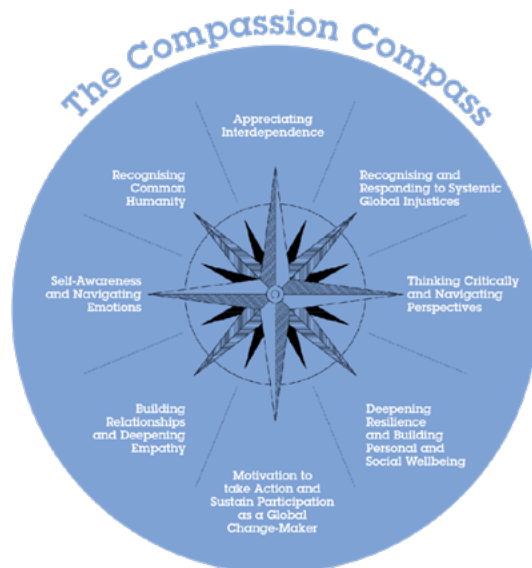
The facilitator introduces participants to the Compassion Compass, which was discussed at the beginning of this resource.

Lay the eight directions of the Compass out on the floor. Beside each of these directions, place the corresponding value/skill from the Compassion Compass. There should be plenty of space for participants to move around the Compass and become familiar with its content.

The facilitator could use a cord or masking tape to mark out the compass points on the floor.

 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Material:** - Print out of skills/values from Compassion Compass
- Masking tape/cord



Invite the group to move to a point on the Compass where they already feel they are strong or where they think they have some skills.

When everyone has landed at a point, invite whoever is at each point to have a five-minute chat with each other about why they are there.

You can then open discussion to the wider group, asking if anyone would like to share their reflections with everyone.

 **Time:** 5 minutes



Next, invite them to move to a point on the Compass where they feel they are not as well-developed or where they would like to grow their skills. Before moving, ask them to take a moment to notice who is standing at the point they wish to go too, who identifies this point as their strength?

Again, when everyone has landed at a point, invite those at each point to have a five-minute chat with each other.

 **Time:** 5 minutes



Bring the group back together. Invite anyone who would like, to share what came up for them during their discussion or through the activity.

It is good to draw attention to the fact that none of us are perfectly evolved, finished or completed in any of these areas.

You can invite the group to use their time working together to develop any of the skills and values they would like to explore further.

 **Time:** 10 minutes

Broccoli Seed Agreement

The broccoli seed agreement was developed by the **Decolonial Futures Collective**, as part of their “Global Citizenship Education – Otherwise” study programme. We include it here, not as a formal activity, but as a set of principles that can be very useful for anyone who is participating in a learning programme. We suggest that facilitators may like to reflect on the four principles and consider how they could explore these with participants, as part of the intention-setting process with a group.

“In our experience, we have found that people often look for approaches with a very strong desire for something that fits their expectations of immediate consumption, convenience and autonomy/choice (we call this “candy”): they want something practical, fulfilling and pleasurable, and very frequently they feel disappointed, frustrated and sometimes angry when they do not have their demands met and desires fulfilled. Thus, we say that, while we understand that people may want “candy”, we can only offer “broccoli seeds” that will require soil, planting, watering and attending to for a possible harvest.

We request that people engaging with our work consider the following “broccoli seed agreement” that confirms that they understand what may happen during this engagement, particularly the experiential sessions.

The broccoli seed agreement invites you to consider the following statement:

I understand that ...

1. The programme may not have any immediate practical application in my context, and that is ok.
2. I do not have to agree with anything presented, but I am happy to see what happens.
3. I may feel uncomfortable, confused and frustrated through this process, and I take responsibility for observing and learning from my conscious and unconscious responses resistances.
4. It is up to me to decide when to push myself further and when to stop and reflect/observe.”

From page 24:

<https://decolonialfuturesnet.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/decolonial-futures-gce-otherwise-1.pdf>



Words are meaningful

This activity aims to look at terminologies that we are accustomed to using and that we might even use in our everyday lives but to which we have not given a huge amount of thought. It aims to give the group a chance to explore their potentially different understandings of terms including:

AIM *Please be aware that there is potential for this exercise to raise a lot of questions and diverse opinions: we recommend that facilitators prepare by reflecting on the section “Working with spoken and unspoken content”. In cases where groups are composed of people with very diverse backgrounds, it may be more useful to work on this activity at a later date, for example, when the group has completed their collective action and are considering their next steps.*

TIME 30 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Break participants into groups of four. Give each group a list of the words and ask them to explore these systematically. Invite each group to talk about what they think the definition of that word is and then to build a collective definition for each word.

- Citizen
- Global citizen
- Undocumented
- Migrant
- Illegal migrant
- Refugee
- Expats



Time: 20 minutes



Material: - Flip chart
- Markers

(See the **glossary of terms** section in the appendix for added support)



Ask the group to summarise their discussions, how was it, what they noticed during the process.

Invite them to share anything they would like with the wider group.



Time: 10 minutes

The world and our place in it

At this stage, the group's container has been built and is hopefully in a strong condition. We now move on to go deeper into exploring the interconnectedness and interdependence of the world in which we live. When developing collective actions, we encourage participants to explore the structures, practices and policies that have led to problems in the first place. We hope that the actions that come about as a result of this resource will consider the root cause of the issues that the young people are interested in addressing.

However, "learning about what is wrong and what should be done about it is just a part of the whole story, a necessary part, but not the whole thing" (Souza, 2014). With this in mind, we move from exploring personal understandings of concepts relating to global citizenship, to collectively analysing our common surroundings. Throughout these activities, participants are encouraged to identify some of the social and global justice issues that are of most pressing concern to them, with which they will then be encouraged to engage through the collective actions they are supported to develop.

Exploring different perspectives

AIM	To explore and build a collective understanding of global citizenship related concepts
TIME	40 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Place pencils and small sheets of paper in four piles in the middle of the room. Divide the group into two teams, one on either side of the room facing each other.

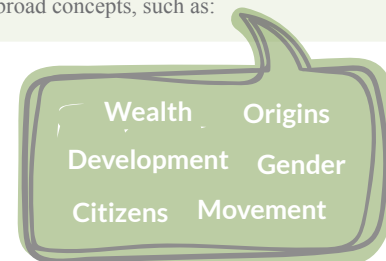
Begin by explaining to participants that they will take turns drawing their representation of a word that will be given to them during the activity.

Invite them to draw what comes to their mind when they hear the word, using free association. Tell them that the drawings are anonymous: there are no good or bad ones, nor any judgement on artistic capacities.

They will only have two minutes to draw each picture, so they should work quickly and instinctively. Use words that evoke broad concepts, such as:

Time: 5 minutes

Material: - Pencils
- Small sheets of paper



Invite the first team to take pieces of paper and draw whatever comes to mind when they hear the first word you call out. Ask the second team to observe them throughout the task.

When two minutes is up, ask participants to place their drawings in a pile in the middle of the room. Give the next team a word and tell them to start drawing. Both teams will draw twice, resulting in four piles of drawings in the centre of the room.

Time: 15 minutes



Divide the participants into four teams. Give each team a pile of drawings that corresponds to one word.

Invite each team to look at the drawings, examining them all together and also as individual pieces. Ask them to share their impressions and interpretations of the drawings, assigning meaning to them as well as trying to understand the message intended by the artist. Encourage them to organise the drawings, grouping those where they see similarities together and highlighting any that surprise them.

Time: 10 minutes



Get each team to present their analysis to the whole group. Ensure that all participants have time to discuss their feedback and respond to each other's comments.

Time: 10 minutes

Tuning in to our environment

AIM To build capacity to see the world through a different lens
To improve awareness of our surroundings through fostering critical thinking

TIME Up to 3 hours, depending on the size of the group

ACTIVITIES



Divide participants into smaller groups of three to six people, depending on the size of the whole group.

Ensure each group has at least one phone with a camera, a notebook, and a pen to take notes.


Ask each group to go for a walk outside, focusing on the prompts below. Ask them to take photos of what they observe in response to each prompt.

Instruct them to keep all photographs together so they can be presented directly as a slideshow.

Ask each group to:

1. Find something that needs to change
2. Find something that frustrates or bothers you
3. How does this environment depend on other parts of the world?
4. What does it give to other parts of the world?
5. Pick a spot and stay still, quiet and observe for a few minutes
6. Look out for things that inspire you


 **Time:** 15 minutes

 **Material:** - Flip chart with the questions written on them
- Pens
- Papers
(1 per group)



Participants now go out and explore while taking pictures related to the prompts above.

 **Time:** 90 minutes

 **Material:** - Camera / phones
- Pens
- Papers
(1 per group)




Then participants return, help them to arrange their photos into a slideshow.

 **Time:** 15 minutes



Invite each group to present their slideshow in plenary, choosing one photo per group to comment on and discuss. Allow ten minutes per group. If there is sufficient time, they can comment on all of their photos.

 **Time:** 40 minutes

 **Material:** - Projector
- Laptop




Debriefing:

Conclude by encouraging participants to make connections between their observations and the possibility of designing collective actions. Ask them to identify any ideas they have for actions that could lead to a positive change in the environment they explored: write these on a flipchart.

If there are clear signs of groups forming around certain ideas, this can then become the starting point for their collective action. If the group is still uncertain, you can use the flipchart of suggestions in the “Thinking about what to do” activity, to discuss and explore the topics further.

 **Time:** 15 minutes

 **Material:** - Flip chart
- Pens
- Papers



At this point in the process, the group has built the conditions for a strong 'container'. The activities have helped participants to explore a deeper level of understanding and appreciation of the complexity. They have looked at the interdependence of all our lives. This will form the basis for the next stage, which is developing and implementing a collective action.





SECTION 2: Supporting collective actions

What could a collective action look like?

Thinking about what to do

Dream circle

Setting Objectives

Creating a timeline of tasks

What physical, emotional or financial resources do I have to put into this collective action?

Reflection questions



SECTION 2: Supporting collective actions

This section presents practical supports for developing collective actions. It sets out tools and frameworks for project planning that are congruent with the processes outlined in Section One. Some are inspired by ‘Dragon Dreaming’ techniques, with several of the activities drawing on this framework. Further information about these techniques are included in the resources section.

During this part of the course, participants are encouraged to reflect and get inspiration from other collective actions that have been developed in partner countries and other places. Drawing on this and on the conversations that have taken place so far, participants are supported to bring forward ideas for actions and to organise into groups with others who have similar interests and passions.

Each group is then invited to come together to share their dreams for the work they want to do. The remaining activities support participants to set the aims and objectives for their collective action, create a timeline of tasks that need to be completed, and reflect on the resources their collective action will require.

The section finishes an activity that supports facilitators to mentor the group, keeping their focus and energy alive while the collective action is being implemented and supporting them to create an environment of personal and collective care.

The activities are designed for groups of four people and can be scaled up if needed.

We strongly believe in the power of collaboration and working together. With this in mind, before the group begins planning out their action, it might be worth thinking about what, if any, organisations/companies/initiatives are involved in similar work?

There is strength in numbers. Is it possible to build on and contribute to their work instead of potentially replicating it? Perhaps it is worth connecting with relevant initiatives to see what they are involved in and how your group can get involved or support this?

Encourage people to check out the Awakened citizen app:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=zavod.voluntariat.sci&hl=en>

to get more info on integration initiatives that are happening around France, Ireland, Italy and Slovenia.

What could a collective action look like?

#ZaSavo (part of #SkrbZa)
#ForSava (part of #CareFor)



In Slovenia this collective action was aimed at challenging a planning decision that would allow four hydroelectric power plants being built on the Sava river. This would have damaged and impacted on the natural resources of the area. The initiative encouraged the local community to actively participate in opposing the planning decision and was ultimately successful in preventing the plants from being built on the river

<https://www.facebook.com/ZaSavo-985093701656096>

SOLIDARITY THROUGH FOOD



In Ireland, communities are using food to express solidarity in different ways. Migrant solidarity groups MASI and RAMSI have hosted a monthly series of 'Solidarity Dinners.' Those attending are encouraged to cook some food, donate, organise transport, play music or donate. Any funds raised go towards supporting people within the asylum process, whether in Ireland or other European countries. Another example is the "Cooking for Freedom" project, set up by people living within the Irish direct provision system, to connect with others and gain access to cooking facilities that they are denied throughout the asylum application process.

THE ROOM: COMMUNITY DRAMA IN IRELAND



The project was born as a response to social exclusion of people seeking asylum who are living in Kildare, Ireland. It works to link local young people and people seeking asylum, to create and implement an applied theatre program. This includes a series of drama workshops, which will lead up to a participatory performance at the local theatre.

<https://www.leargas.ie/blog/room-community-drama>
<https://www.kildareyouththeatre.com>

LA CH'TITE MAISON SOLIDAIRE



The association Les Ch'tites Maisons Solidaire renews the concept of hospitality. The members of this group of citizens (born in Lille, France) want to create a solution for homelessness: they do this by opening their guest rooms to tourists to collect funds that are then used to support people who are homeless. In 2018, 91 nights of rentals of the Ch'tite Maison Solidaire financed 1001 nights for homeless people. Today, they want to fund the salaries that will be paid to the residents of an inclusive eco-neighbourhood, a project incorporating tiny houses which breaks with the stigmatizing emergency shelter model.

<http://chtitemaisonsolidaire.mystrikingly.com>
<http://ecoquartier-solidaire.mystrikingly.com/#le-projet>
www.facebook.com/groups/1034342000037707/?source_id=646695025528512

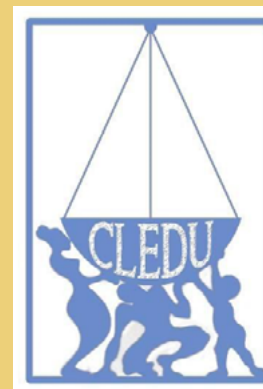
MEDITERRANEO ANTIRAZZISTA



Born in 2008, Mediterraneo Antirazzista is a sporting, artistic and cultural event which aims to promote intercultural relations between people from different backgrounds who are living in Palermo, Italy. It supports initiatives against all forms of prejudice and discrimination, paying particular attention to life in the suburbs and the voice of migrant communities. The anti-racist initiatives it has carried out, the multiplicity of communities and neighborhoods involved, and the number of locations reached, offer an example of how a city can exist in a complex way and how we can experience important opportunities to overcome physical and cultural barriers.

<http://mediterraneoantirazzista.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/mediterraneoantirazzistapalermo>

CLEDU



Legal clinics are a widespread initiative in law universities to enable students to practice as lawyers, while at the same time offering free legal advice & promoting social justice. Present worldwide, legal clinics seek to bridge the gap between academic education and the complexity of reality and law. The CLEDU is a training program that aims to develop skills and competences, both theoretical and practical, of young lawyers, strengthening their ethical and social responsibility. Under the supervision of teachers, tutors and lawyers, students offer a

free legal service for migrants in matters of international protection and status regularization. As part of the street-law projects, students carry out activities of information aimed at people with special need (such as detainees, irregular migrants, etc.) in relation to their rights and legal guarantees.

www.unipa.it/dipartimenti/di.gi./clinica-legale-per-i-diritti-umani
www.facebook.com/CLEDU-1663643247204597

ARTE MIGRANTE



Arte migrante was born in 2012 on the initiative of a young student of anthropology, Tommaso Carturan, and friends he met in Bologna, Italy. The non-partisan and non-denominational group organizes open weekly evenings in order to create inclusion through art for students, migrants, homeless, workers and unemployed, young and old people.

Over the years the group expanded and today there are several active groups in various Italian cities, from north to south. Their work incorporates activities including theatre, dance, music, crafts and painting, English language, Italian language for foreigners, literacy, shared vegetable gardens, computer science and curriculum workshops, etc. The group has also created an annual migrant camp for participants to get to know each other and train on topics such as education for peace, human rights, migration or new poverty.

<https://www.artemigrante.eu/chi-siamo>
<https://www.facebook.com/ArteMigrantePalermo>

Thinking about what to do

AIM To support participants to generate ideas for collective actions and form groups that will build these

TIME 30 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Invite participants to take some time to do some individual reflection on the social or global justice topic/issue/idea about which they would like to develop a collective action. Invite them to think back to the activity on 'tuning in to our environment'. This should be done in silence.

 **Time:** 5 minutes


 **Material:** - Paper
- Pens / markers



Ask each person to write a short overview of their idea on a piece of paper. They should then leave the overviews on the ground around the room. Encourage participants to walk around and see what other people have written. Are there similar topics/ideas?

Ask participants to divide themselves into groups, moving to the ideas they are drawn to.

 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Material:** - Paper
- Pens / markers



Invite participants with similar ideas to come together. Ask them to discuss if there is a way to bring all their ideas together into one collective action.

If someone cannot find anyone to work on the issue in which they are interested, encourage them to link with a different group and explore whether they would like to join their action instead.


 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Material:** - Paper
- Pens / markers



Once all the groups are formed, ask each group to write a short paragraph outlining what their collective action will focus on.

 **Time:** 5 minutes

 **Material:** - Paper
- Pens / markers

Dream circle

A Dream Circle is when a group sits around in a circle and shares their dreams for the collective action. In a dream circle, groups work with a question that invites them to place themselves in a future in which the collective action has been completed. For example: “What will it look like, when our action is successful?”, “What would this project have to be like so that afterwards you could say, this was the best possible way to have spent my time”, or “What would enable you to say, yes, I am so pleased I worked on this project?”.

AIM To focus the group’s attention on their overall vision for their action

TIME 50 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Activity outline:

Prepare a circle in a comfortable space in which participants can see each other. Have at hand several large pieces of paper to write the dream on, as well as coloured markers.

In this activity, the group uses a talking piece, which is an object that only permits the person holding it to speak. One person speaks at a time, while another person transcribes what they say. The person writing should transcribe as close as possible to what is said. If doubts arise, it is possible to ask questions. If more appropriate,

ask one person to transcribe throughout the activity.

In silence, ask the group to begin by reflecting on a question such as:

“What will it look like, if our action is successful”? or

“What would this project have to be like so that afterwards you could say, this was the best possible way to have spent my time?”, or

“What would enable you to say, yes, I am so pleased I worked on this project?”

 **Time:** 5 minutes

 **Material:** - Talking stick
- Marker
- Flip chart



After the silent reflection, whoever would like to start can pick up the talking piece that has been placed in the centre of the circle, and answer the question.


Once they are finished, they pass the talking piece to the next person in a clockwise direction.

The pen follows the piece: one person speaks and then writes what the person next to them says. Proceed around the circle until everyone has had an opportunity to speak and write.

If a person’s turn arrives and they have nothing to say, they pass the talking piece to the next person in the circle.

The circle concludes when nobody has anything else to say. The flipchart will be used in the next activity.

 **Time:** 45 minutes

 **Material:** - Paper
- Pens / markers



Setting Objectives

AIM To help the group set the objectives of their collective action

TIME 75 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Invite each group to take a piece of the flipchart. Give each a selection of post-its, to be shared among team members.

One person from each group reads their group's dream circle transcript, in the past tense. This will have a motivational effect on the team members.

 **Time:** 5 minutes

 **Material:** - Post-its
- Flip chart from the dream circle



Ask the following question:

"Which particular things need to be done first in order to make these dreams come true?"

Everyone then writes one objective on each of the post-it notes.

Encourage participants to make their objectives specific, something they can realistically do, and relevant to the overall aims of the project.

 **Time:** 10 minutes



The first person can post their notes to the flip-chart. A second person joins them and does the same; then the third, and so on.

As each person adds their post-its, they should organise the objectives by relationship to each other

Any member of the team can begin to move the post-it -notes, as new relationships are seen between them.

By the end of this stage, there should be groups of objectives, preferably not more than 8 groupings.

 **Time:** 20 minutes

 **Material:** - Papers
- Flip chart




The group then considers each grouping, one at a time.

They should highlight the keywords in each of these post-its.

A keyword is a word that has been repeated various times or that stands out for its relevance.

 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Material:** - Paper
- Markers
- Flip chart




On a new post-it -note, the group should write a "main" objective that includes all the highlighted keywords, plus some linking words to make sense of it.

It is important not to summarise, create more new words, or discard information from any of the post-it -notes.

All-new "main" objectives will be placed at the top of each flipchart; to finally end up with three main objectives for the collective action.

 **Time:** 20 minutes

 **Material:** - Post-its
- Pens / markers



The next step is to select one main objective, on which to concentrate all the group's energy initially.

This is done by giving each of the participants three dots. Ask the following generative question:

'Which objective would have the biggest impact on achieving the over vision set out in the dream circle'?

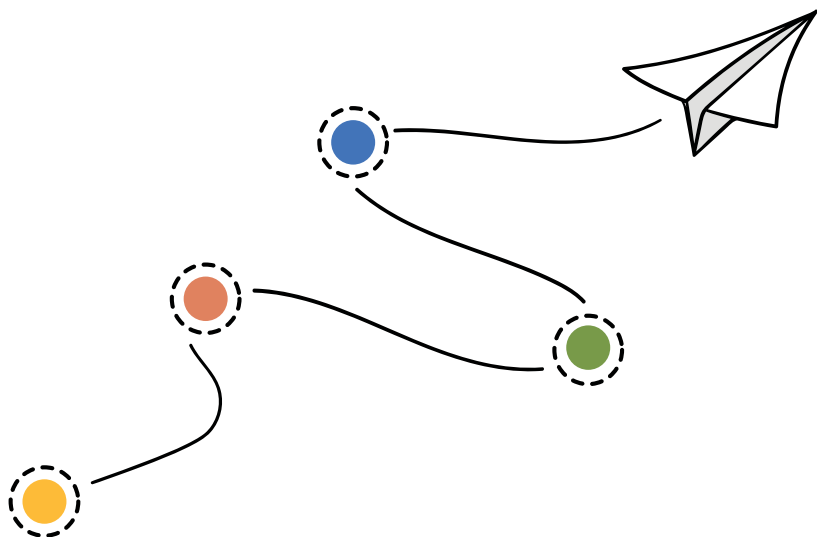
Participants split the dots across the objectives they feel are the most important for the project.

They can put 2 dots on one objective and one on another, or they can put three dots on three different objectives. They should not put all three dots on one objective.

When everyone is finished, the post-its with the most dots become the collective action's objectives!

 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Material:** - Sticky dots / stickers
- Markers



Creating a timeline of tasks

This will help to focus on the tasks. It will lead to the greatest impact on the overall vision of the project

AIM To support the group to create a detailed plan for their collective action

TIME 60 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Ask the team to draw a line with a start and end date for the project on a blank piece of the flipchart. If needed, they can connect 2/3 blank flipchart pages to complete it.

Distribute post-it notes among the members of the team. Give as many as the participants need.

Invite each group to reflect in silence on the objectives they identified in the previous activity, and to ask themselves: *what tasks do we need to do to achieve these objectives?*

Get everyone to write the tasks they think of on the post-it notes.



Time: 15 minutes



Material: - Post-it notes
- Flip chart



When they are finished, invite participants to place these on the timeline, on when they think it should happen in the project. Encourage them to remember that some of the activities can happen simultaneously.



Time: 10 minutes



When everyone has finished, ask if the group agrees with the timeline. There should be broad agreement: the group can make any final adjustments needed.

This should result in a timeline of tasks that needs to be done in order to achieve the overall objectives of the project from start to finish. Give each task a number in preparation for the next activity.



Time: 10 minutes

What physical, emotional or financial resources do I have to put into this collective action?

AIM To estimate what is involved in the collective action and what resources each individual has to give to the action.

TIME 60 minutes

ACTIVITIES




Ask the group to reflect on the question:

“What physical & emotional resources do I have that I can/want to give to this action?”

After a couple of minutes, invite members of the group to put their name next to different tasks that they would like to be involved in.

 **Time:** 15 minutes

 **Material:** - Worksheets
- Paper
- Pens



When everyone has finished, see if all the tasks have at least one name beside them.

If some tasks do not have a name beside them, the facilitator should point this out to the group. If no one is willing to complete this task, is it necessary for the project to be completed?

If it is and people are not willing/able to complete all the task, then perhaps the group needs to revisit the project and what they want to do. Perhaps they can make it smaller.

 **Time:** 15 minutes



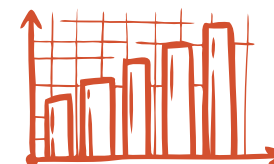
Financial resources

The group will need to calculate how much financial resources the project needs. If they are applying for funding, they will need to develop a budget for the cost of what is involved.

An important consideration is hidden costs that can arise, for example, travelling to group meetings and childcare. Consider the checklist on **“creating inclusive groups”** and think about how best to cover all the costs of participation.

The facilitator should guide this process in a way that is sensitive to people’s circumstances and avoids putting pressure on any participants to overspend their personal budgets or over-commit on what is realistic for them to contribute.

 **Time:** 30 minutes



At this stage, people are generally very energised and enthused about the next steps of developing their collective action. Our experience of working with groups shows that it is important to continue to support and mentor them until they have achieved their goals. We suggest that the collective actions aim to last for approximately five to six months. In order to support the group throughout the process, we recommend they meet monthly with a mentor, to provide some external support and encouragement. This is in addition to the group’s internal communications, which might take place online, in-person, or both.

The following **reflection questions** are a useful activity to include at the start of each mentoring meeting. However, answering the questions is not enough, on their own, to ensure that a collective action will remain in existence for the expected period, or when other important events affect it. They will, however, help to keep people focused on the inspiration for their work. It will keep in their mind how what they are doing is contributing to the achievement of their objectives.

Reflection questions

AIM To offer the group a process for checking in with themselves throughout the collective action.

TIME 15 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Preparation

1. Invite the participants to sit in a circle quietly to support self-reflection. They can sit in any way, as long as they are comfortable.
2. Ask them to think about the collective action and their role in it.



Time: 5 minutes



Material: preferably a comfy space



Invite them to take a piece of paper and a pen each. Explain that you will be asking questions, and they can write anything that comes up for them. This will not be shared with anyone. The exercise is done in silence.

Ask the following questions, focusing on the ones that are most relevant to the group at this time. Give enough time for everyone to think and write an answer. If it is possible, do not ask them if they are done to avoid breaking the silence.

1. What did you hope to achieve since we last meeting (last week, last month...)? Did you finish it? If not, what has stopped you? Is it still important that you do those things?
2. What extra work do you hope to have completed by the next meeting? Do these activities still contribute to furthering the overall dream (review and consider alternatives if needed)?
3. Who should be involved? Who are the stakeholders in these activities?
4. How will you involve those who need to be involved?
5. What spiritual, mental, physical, emotional or financial resources are required for you to complete the task?

6. How can you best get these resources? How should the work be done? What are the best processes for this part of the project?
7. By when is the work required to be completed? When should it start?
8. How might you try to distract or stop yourself from achieving the tasks you have set?

It is good to end each meeting with a checkout, asking for example:

- When and where can we meet next?
- How do you feel now?
- Is there anything else you need to add?



Time: 10 minutes



Material: - Paper
- Pens





SECTION 3: After the action

Celebration

The Compassion compass revisited

Five questions to frame ongoing engagement



SECTION 3: After the action

This section aims to support participants' ongoing curiosity, engagement and activism. It is important to dedicate time to helping them reflect on their participation and achievements, once the collective action has been completed. This offers an opportunity to encourage participants to embrace questions that are arising for them following the action and to support them to identify ways to stay engaged.

We recommend bringing groups together again for a dedicated reflection and “next steps” session. This can offer an opportunity for participants to share their achievements with the wider group, learn from what their peers have completed, and consider the individual and collective learning arising from their work.

Finally, if participants are interested in continuing to work on their collective action, or see the potential for other ways to continue their active citizenship, encourage them to check out the European Solidarity Corps. This includes a funding strand for youth-led solidarity projects, which could provide useful financial resources for activities they are interested in developing.

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/solidarity_projects_en

Celebration

AIM	To celebrate the gifts and skills that each person has gained throughout the collective action process
	To reflect on the personal effects of the process
TIME	30 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Ask each participant to take a piece of paper and a pen.

Read out the below questions and ask participants to write their answer on their page.

There is no expectation for participants to share this unless they feel comfortable doing so.

- What do you think the greatest achievements of your group were?
- What part of the process did you enjoy most?
- How have you developed personally during your work on the collective action?
- Can you list five things you are grateful for, arising from your participation in the process?



 **Time:** 15 minutes

 **Material:** - Paper
- Pens



Invite those in the group who wish to, to share their responses to the question they found to be most thought-provoking.

 **Time:** 15 minutes

The Compassion Compass revisited

AIM	To help the participants connect back in with the Compassion Compass and areas they have developed during their time working together
TIME	30 minutes

ACTIVITIES



The facilitator re-introduces participants to the Compassion Compass, reminding them that they look at this at the very beginning of their time together.

As with the activity on **page 26** lay the eight directions of the Compass out on the floor. Beside each of these directions, place the corresponding value/skill from the Compassion Compass.

Encourage the group to think back to when they first completed this activity and to remember their thoughts with their position on the Compass.

 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Material:** print out of skills/values from Compassion Compass



Invite participants to move to a point on the Compass where they feel that they have developed some skills during the time working on the collective action.

When everyone has landed at a point, ask whoever is at each point to have a five-minute chat with each other about why they are there.

You can then open discussion to the wider group, asking if anyone would like to share their reflections with everyone.

 **Time:** 5 minutes



Next, invite everyone to move to a point on the Compass where they feel would still like to grow their skills.

Again, when everyone has landed at a point, invite those at each point to have a five-minute chat with each other.

 **Time:** 5 minutes



Bring the group back together. Ask anyone who would like, to share anything that came up for them during their discussion. Encourage them to reflect on changes they have noted since participating in this activity for the first time.

Invite them to reflect on how they can continue to develop these skills into the future, both individually and as part of wider groups that are involved in action for social change.

 **Time:** 10 minutes



Five questions to frame ongoing engagement

AIM

To encourage participants to think about how they will continue to apply their learning in their everyday lives

TIME 20 minutes

ACTIVITIES



Write the following five questions on a flip chart, or print them out and give each participant a copy.

1 How can I continue to deepen my knowledge about global citizenship education and social justice?

2 How can I stay involved in communities of change?

3 In what ways can I be kinder to myself and those around me?

4 How can I be a friend or ally of a group/campaign that works on something I care deeply about?

5 How can I bring my new skills into conversations about inequalities that I have with my family, friends and peers?

Ask them to reflect on the questions in silence, making notes if they wish.

 **Time:** 10 minutes



Invite them to chat with the person beside them for five minutes, discussing anything they want to share from their reflection.

When this is finished, invite them to take a copy of the questions. They can return to these at regular intervals in the future.

 **Time:** 10 minutes



RESOURCES

Resource 1 - Glossary of terms

Resource 2 - Dragon Dreaming

Resource 3 - The Compassion Compass

Resource 4 - The Stories We Tell Ourselves- Rene Susa

Resource 5 - Four Ways of Talking and Listening

RESOURCES

Resource 1 - Glossary of terms

Due to the fact that there are many different reasons why people migrate, we try to avoid categories and putting people in boxes. The organisations in this partnership prefer to use the term **people with migrant backgrounds**, as we think it is more inclusive. In addition, we have developed the following short and non-exhaustive glossary of terms relevant within the context of this manual. We encourage trainers to explore the definitions further with their groups.

Migration is the act of moving from one place to another. Many living beings – plants, animals, humans - migrate. Human migration is the movement of a human being from one place to another: it can be within a country – from one region to another, from the countryside to the city - and outside the country to another one, or another continent.

Who are migrants, asylum seekers and refugees?

A **migrant** is a person who has moved from one place to another (within a country or geographical area or to another country or continent) for a sustained duration.

People can migrate for economic, family, political, and climate-related reasons; it can be for their studies, for love, for work, for adventure, or in the hope of better living conditions. Sometimes, people have to leave their countries to survive or to escape persecution, and they live in **exile**.

Among those people, some try to obtain international protection because of war or persecution, or fear of potential persecution on the basis of their political opinions, religion, ethnic origins, gender or other personal characteristics: they are **asylum seekers**.

When asylum seekers are granted international protection by a state, they obtain **refugee status**. This status is defined by the **1951 Geneva Refugee Convention** and its 1967 additional Protocol.

Sometimes, words like **illegal migrant** or **clandestine** are used to refer to foreigners in an irregular administrative situation: **undocumented migrant** is used in relation to a person who does not have the legal right to be or remain in a specific territory. These words carry prejudices towards people, are pejorative, and reduce people to their administrative status: a person cannot be illegal!

Discrimination: This involves treating a certain person or groups of persons unfavourably in a comparable situation, without justification.

Prejudice: These are judgments, preconceived ideas that we form from the outset about a person or group we don't know. They are inculcated in us by our social environment, and getting rid of them requires awareness and work on oneself. Prejudices are encouraged by stereotypes.

Stereotype: A stereotype simplifies a reality and generalizes it to a whole group of people, regardless of individual differences/characteristics.

Xenophobia: Rejection of a person or group because of their skin colour, religion, origins, etc. because they are different.

Citizen: A citizen is a person who falls under the protection and authority of a State, of whom they are a national and within which they wish to take an active part. As a citizen, a person benefits from civil and political rights, including the right to voting, and must fulfil duties to the State that include paying taxes, respecting laws, and so on.

Citizenship: In the context of this manual, the word "citizenship" is not limited to its most commonly accepted usage, which refers to a legal status granting a number of rights and duties to individuals. Neither is it attached to a national affiliation (for example the right to vote or stand for election in a country).

Instead, the term citizenship is understood as participation in the life of the place in which a person lives, independent of their nationality. It goes beyond the issue of borders and promotes participation and the opportunity to act and be heard for all, irrespective of nationality and administrative status.

Global citizen: A global citizen is someone who is aware of the interdependence of the wider world and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make our planet more equal, fair and sustainable. **Global citizenship** is about encouraging people to become engaged from a place of compassion that incorporates a critical analysis of the root causes of global justice issues.



Resource 2 - Dragon Dreaming

The Dragon Dreaming Ebook

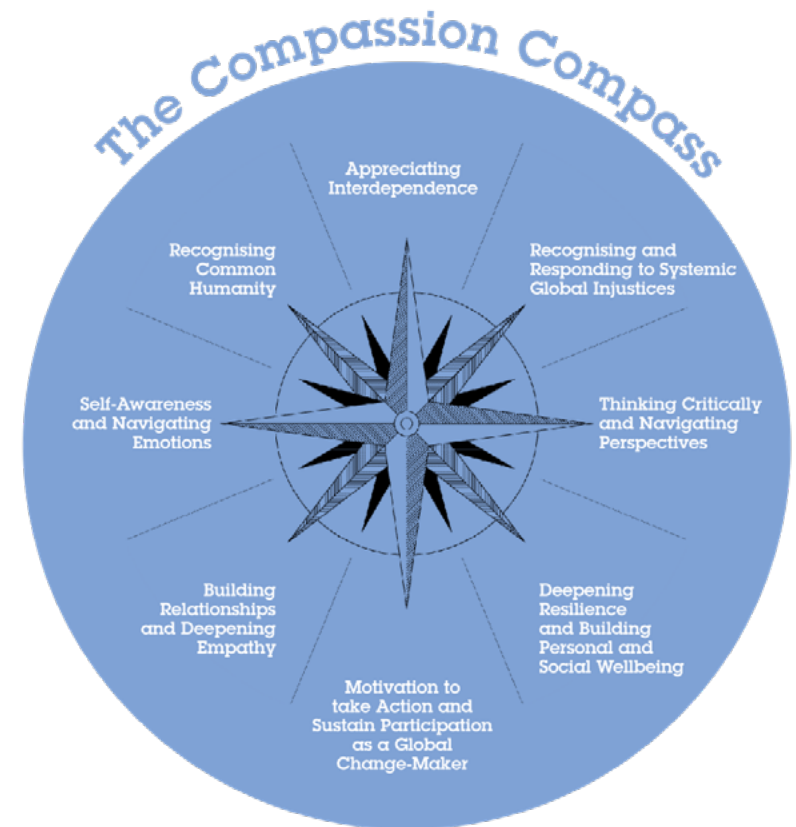
<https://dragondreaming.org/#ebook>



Resource 3 - The Compassion Compass

Towards compassionate global citizenship: educating the heart through development education and cognitively-based compassion training- Caroline Murphy, Brendan Ozawa-de Silva and Michael Winskell

<https://www.childrenincrossfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Murphy-Focus-19.pdf>



Resource 4 - The Stories We Tell Ourselves - Rene Susa

<http://codeofgoodpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Rene-Susa-The-Stories-We-Tell-O>



(pic: Dave Lowenstein, www.justseeds.org)

Resource 5 - Four Ways of Talking and Listening

Adapted from *Changing the World by Changing How We Talk and Listen* - by Adam Kahane

Most processes involve conversations of some kind. There are four distinct conversational modes to work with: Downloading, Debating, Reflective Dialogue, and Generative Dialogue. To meet the variety of conversational needs out there, we have to develop our capacity to recognize and navigate through all four of these modes.

A Downloading

In Downloading, we repeat what we already know, focused on one-way information flows or sharing, without generating new insights or challenging whether it is true or not. We download (like from a computer file) or project (like a slide projector) our thoughts and feelings onto the world. By definition, Downloading upholds existing rules, conventions and behavioural norms.

The strength of Downloading is that, when the rules fit the context, it is predictable and efficient and supplies the right answer without hesitation or uncertainty. It is more about people having their say than listening to each other, and thus it tends to reinforce the status quo, often leading to stuckness or crisis. When this happens, when people are frustrated by it, it can often pave the way for Debating.

B Debating

We move from Downloading to Debating when we stop saying what we think we have to say and start to say what we are really thinking, often in reaction to what others have said. In Debating, we say what we think. We speak our minds openly, even at the risk of fragmenting the system (“How are you?” “I am terrible.”), of causing discomfort or even conflict. We debate and make judgments, like in a courtroom. We test our ideas against each other, as in an argument.

Moving from Downloading to Debating is a momentous step outwards towards an active search for alternative facts, perspectives, and options, for more honesty and towards the embrace of free speech, robust challenge, and open argument. Debating can stimulate change, but it can also create another kind of stuckness or crisis of being trapped in conflicts between differing viewpoints, of “either/or” thinking, of winning or losing the argument. When people tire of this mode and realise that it is not always helpful, they become more open to change, realising they need to listen and appreciate what others are saying and start to practice more Reflective Dialogue.

C Reflective Dialogue

In Reflective Dialogue, we move outside of ourselves, towards each other. We become curious to see what we can learn from others, to add to what we know, even to replace it. We start seeing through their eyes. We also listen self-reflectively to ourselves and hear ourselves through the ears of others. We inquire into how things came to be as they are and envision how they might be. We listen empathetically to one another. We seek to build new knowledge together. But it requires a determination to move beyond Debating and to find trust and courage within and between ourselves.

The more we engage in Reflective Dialogue, as trust, empathy and even affection develop, the more we lay the conditions for Generative Dialogue.

D Generative Dialogue

In Generative Dialogue, we are fully present to what is emerging in the whole system. We may speak one after another, but it is as if we are completing each other's thoughts. The normal sense of separation between people seems lessened, from appreciating each other's different perspectives (as in Reflective Dialogue) to being, for a while, a whole collective “I.”

In a Generative Dialogue, it is as if meaning emerges not from any one person but from the centre of the circle. We are not only of one mind, but we begin to speak from the same deep intentions, from what really

matters to us as human beings. The sacred book of the Mayan Q'iche people is called the Popol Vuh. It contains the following text: “We did not put our ideas together. We put our purposes together. And we agreed, and then we decided.”

Leading Through Talking and Listening

As leaders, we have ultimately only one instrument: how we talk and listen to each other. Each of the four modes of conversation is legitimate and useful, but if we want to create new social realities, our ability to lead conversations must include Reflective Dialogue and Generative Dialogue.

Why do we find it so difficult to change the world? Because most of us spend most of our time in Downloading: being polite, not listening, saying what we already know, following the rules. We spend some of our time in Debating: paying attention to what is different and arguing about it. But most of us—and certainly most institutions—have limited capacity for Reflective Dialogue and Generative Dialogue, and therefore have limited capacity for effecting deep change.

Downloading, by far the most common, maintains the status quo. It maintains the (artificial) wholeness of the system and re-enacts the patterns of the past. Debating mode, common in organizations with an analytical or intellectual bent, involves vigorous debate and reasoned decision-making. In Debating, we see more of what is there to choose from, but do not create new choices. Reflective Dialogue calls on us to be empathetic—to see the world through the eyes of others—and to be self-reflective—to understand how we influence the world around us. This mode is rare in organizational life, but it is essential for deep change. Unlike Downloading and Debating, Reflective Dialogue allows us to participate in the future that is emerging. As we deepen our relationships, Generative Dialogue becomes possible, allowing a group to discover its larger and deeper shared purpose, generatively unlocking creativity in each participant as a collective process.

Generative Dialogue is especially memorable when the participants are from very different backgrounds and have scant hope that they can work together successfully. Generative Dialogue is vital for the success of deep change initiatives. In Generative Dialogue, we are tuned into the potential of the system and what is being born amidst and through us.



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