

# PeaceMed TRAINING MANUAL



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## Introduction

"Peace be with you." These are the first words of the Risen Christ to his disciples. "Peace be with all of you!" were also the first words of the pontificate of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV. Within them lies a horizon that deeply challenges our time: peace as a gift to be received with gratitude and, at the same time, as a responsibility to be assumed with courage. It is in this spirit that PeaceMed was born, a project promoted by Caritas Italiana for the Mediterranean region, a troubled yet fascinating land, a crossroads of cultures, ancient histories, and wounds that remain open. An area marked by extraordinary possibilities for encounter, but also by unresolved tensions that call for careful and shared attention.

Born under the pontificate of Pope Francis and continued today with Pope Leo XIV, PeaceMed seeks to respond to that "third world war in pieces" so often evoked by Francis. Faced with a world torn apart by fragmented conflicts and widespread violence, the project gathers "pieces of peace" in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. It is a peace that is "unarmed and disarming," as Pope Leo likes to say. A peace that rejects all forms of violence, founded on human dignity and nourished by dialogue between religious traditions and diverse cultures. A true sign of hope, a laboratory for the future in which, through courageous and concrete choices, it is affirmed that peace is certainly not a naive utopia, but rather an achievable goal. PeaceMed is part of the broader framework of Caritas Italiana's international commitment and is therefore part of a long journey that for decades has seen Caritas accompany the world's most vulnerable communities, promoting integral human development, justice, and paths of reconciliation. The experience gained over time is the fertile ground from which the project springs and allows past, present, and future to be held together: good practices consolidated over the years, today's challenges, and the responsibility to build possible tomorrows for new generations, especially in the broader Mediterranean.

In a context marked by growing fragmentation, the atomization of societies, and the re-emergence of new nationalisms, networking represents a deeply political and prophetic choice. PeaceMed values the Mediterranean as a space of relationships, not as a boundary line, bringing into dialogue Caritas organizations and Civil Society Organizations from countries with different histories, cultures, and religions. Building a regional network capable of sharing experiences, good practices, and common challenges becomes a concrete response to the logic of walls and opposition that today dominates many international dynamics. Particular attention is given to young people, essential protagonists of every authentic peace process. Investing in new generations means recognizing their transformative potential and offering them tools and skills for participation, reconciliation, and dialogue.

As Pope Francis recalled on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Caritas Italiana: "Young people are the most fragile victims of this era of change, but also the potential architects of a change of era. They are not the future, they are the present, but protagonists of the future. Time devoted to them is never wasted in weaving relationships that overcome the culture of indifference and appearance."

Young people in PeaceMed are indeed the main protagonists of the activities promoted and carried out. They are involved as peacebuilders, so that their energy and ideas may be the engine of lasting social transformation.

Charity guides this journey, reminding us that the only viable path is that of fraternity, which calls us to recognize the other as part of ourselves. Charity urges us to create inclusive communities where no one is left behind, and calls us to the duty of "becoming neighbours," of caring for one another with the same concern we reserve for our loved ones. For Caritas Italiana, in fact, PeaceMed is only the beginning of a broader journey, a path that does not stop at words but grows in shared actions, in alliances built day by day. Peace, after all, is a collective inheritance, a responsibility that demands courage and the willingness to include even those who seem most distant from us.

**Don Marco Pagnello**

*Director of Caritas Italiana*

## Peace as Common Good

We live in a world where, increasingly, the very idea of armed and violent conflict seems normalised: a somewhat unwanted yet necessary outcome in the social processes that links social actors and diverse, often divergent interests, both locally and globally. But can we contribute to changing this view? Can peace instead be the outcome of the process of confrontation? The times we live in also clearly show us the mechanisms used to justify violence, which are employed to sell us war as the inevitable outcome of any conflict.<sup>1</sup> How, then, should we think about 'peace'?

Peace cannot be treated as a possession to be defended by some against others, but as a common good: a shared condition that benefits everyone, excludes no one, and therefore must be built and safeguarded together. Calling peace a common good<sup>2</sup> immediately shifts our posture. It moves us from thinking of peace as a static outcome ("no violence for now") to understanding it as a living ecology of relationships, institutions, and practices that make nonviolence thinkable, just relations doable, and coexistence durable. Because it is non-excludable in its benefits and interdependent in its dynamics, peace cannot be secured by unilateral action. It emerges when people, organizations, and public authorities choose to take responsibility for the spaces they inhabit together.

This perspective also repositions "context." The context is not a neutral backdrop; it is the framework that shapes what is possible. Our societies are experiencing interlocking transitions (social, economic, technological, ecological) that shift risks and redistribute vulnerabilities. In such conditions, the drivers of violence (fear, humiliation, inequality, disinformation, environmental stress) and the drivers of peace (trust, recognition, fairness, participation, ecological care) are tightly coupled. Reading the context, therefore, is already peace work: it tells us where relationships are frayed, where narratives are polarizing, where institutions are weak, and where constructive energies can be amplified.

Understanding peace as a common good also clarifies the difference between mere "negative peace" (absence of direct violence) and a more robust "positive" or holistic peace (presence of justice, cooperation, inclusion, and restored relationships). The former is brittle: it can be undone by a rumour, a shock, a demagogue. The latter is thicker: it weaves protections against violence into everyday life—how we meet, deliberate, disagree, allocate resources, protect the vulnerable, and take care of our shared home. On this view, peace is not only a goal; it is performative. We "do" peace through practices that widen the circle of concern, reduce the space for force, and increase the legitimacy of dialogue and shared rules.

Three implications follow.

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<sup>1</sup> Morelli, A. (2022). *Principes élémentaires de propagande de guerre: Utilisables en cas de guerre froide, chaude ou tiède* (Nouvelle éd. revue et augmentée). Éditions Aden.

<sup>2</sup> Kaul I. (Ed.), *Global public goods: international cooperation in the 21st century*, Oxford Univ. Press, New York, NY 1999

**First, peace is relational.** People are not “at peace” alone. Peace depends on patterns of recognition—seeing the other not as an abstract category or an enemy image, but as a person with a history and dignity. The craft of peace therefore includes deliberate work on narratives: unlearning simplifications, deconstructing the “enemy,” and making space for ambivalence, vulnerability, and repair. This is not sentimentalism; it is strategic. Dehumanization clears the path to violence; rehumanisation reopens the path to politics.

**Second, peace is institutional.** Relationships require structures that prevent violence and make fair cooperation feasible: transparent governance, due process, accountable security, equitable access to opportunity, and spaces for participation. Institutions do not remove conflict; they transform it into negotiation, law, and policy. When institutions are weak or partial, peace becomes a privilege; when they are credible, peace becomes a common platform on which difference can stand without resorting to domination.

**Third, peace is ecological.** Environmental breakdown is a multiplier of risk: it erodes livelihoods, fuels displacement, and intensifies competition over land, water, and energy. Care for the environment and care for peace are mutually reinforcing. A peace agenda that ignores ecological limits will manufacture new conflicts; an ecological agenda that ignores justice will lack legitimacy.

From these implications we can distil a practical architecture for action, adaptable across contexts and scales:

- **Learning and training.** Peace requires skills: critical thinking, emotional literacy, conflict transformation, nonviolent communication, and civic competence. Training should be experiential and reflective, engaging head, heart, and hands. It should also be coherent: the “how” of learning (participatory, inclusive, dialogic) must mirror the “what” we teach.
- **Relational infrastructures.** Create and maintain spaces where people can meet across lines of difference (youth with institutions, citizens with authorities, communities with experts) under conditions of safety, reciprocity, and accountability. These are the habitats where trust regrows and cooperation becomes imaginable.
- **Fairness in the economy.** Peace with humiliation is unstable. Policies that extend fair opportunity, reduce extreme inequalities, and protect against shocks are not add-ons; they are peace guarantees. Dignity is the strongest form of prevention.
- **Legitimacy in governance.** Transparent, lawful, participatory institutions lower the temperature of conflict by giving it credible channels. Legitimacy is built by consistent practice, not proclamation.
- **Care for our common home.** Align social and ecological aims: resilience, regeneration of local resources, and community stewardship. This connects immediate well-being with long-term security.

Crucially, this view recasts the role of civil society actors and trainers. They are not simple transmitters of content; they are facilitators of collective agency. Their work is to convene, to translate between worlds, to protect dialogic spaces, and to turn learning into practice, so that peace values are embodied in how meetings are run, how disagreements are handled, how decisions are made, and how resources are shared. When education is coherent, it produces credibility; when credibility accumulates, it produces influence.

Peace as a common good is both a norm and a method. It names the horizon, where everyone is included, no one is disposable, and it names the pathway and practices that make inclusion real, institutions that make

fairness durable, and ecological care that makes the horizon liveable. It asks each actor to carry a piece of the responsibility for the whole, confident that, precisely because peace is common, every honest contribution, however small, adds to a shared surplus of security, dignity, and hope.

Peace as a common good is the Catholic Social Teaching way of saying that peace is neither private nor excludable: it is a shared condition, created and safeguarded together, and measured by how the most vulnerable are treated. Pope Francis' *Fratelli tutti* names the social grammar of such peace "social friendship" and a "culture of encounter," and insists that peace-making unfolds through processes (truth, memory, forgiveness, restorative justice) rather than through shortcuts or force. Read with *Laudato si'*, this yields an integral view: ecological breakdown and social fragmentation are one wound, so caring for our common home is constitutive of peace-making, not a parallel agenda.

Since May 2025, Pope Leo XIV has picked up this thread explicitly. In his first World Day of Peace message for 1 January 2026, he calls believers and citizens toward an "unarmed and disarming" peace, language that shifts the focus from balancing threats to disarming hearts, words, institutions, and economies that normalize hostility. Peace, he writes, "exists; it wants to dwell within us... it resists and overcomes violence"; the task is to make it credible in public life. In his address to the Diplomatic Corps (January 2026) he warns against a "zeal for war" and urges a return to law-governed diplomacy and protection of human rights, making clear that the common good of peace cannot be secured by coercive realpolitik.

This magisterial line stands on a well-marked path. *Pacem in terris* (John XXIII) sets out peace's four pillars (truth, justice, love, freedom) linking them to universal rights and duties in the civic order. *Populorum progressio* (Paul VI) adds the decisive intuition that "development is the new name for peace," turning attention to structures that either dignify or humiliate: where peoples are excluded from integral human development, conflict is not accidental but baked in. Together they give your thesis its institutional teeth: peace as common good is not sentiment but architecture: truthful memory, just relations, inclusive development, and ecological responsibility, ordered to the dignity of each and the destiny of all.

What does this add to practice? First, it legitimates your focus on *how* we do politics and civic life, privileging encounter over enemy-making; law over force. Second, it binds peace to distributive justice and integral ecology, so that budget lines, labour and migration policies, and environmental stewardship become peace-making or peace-unmaking choices. Third, it clarifies credibility: the peace we propose must already be visible in our language, our institutional procedures, and our economic decisions. In CST terms, peace as common good is both horizon and method, justice lived socially, with the earth and the poor inside the circle from the start.

## Section 1 – CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

### The PeaceMed Project

“PeaceMed: Enhancing Peace as a Common Good and Strengthening CSOs in the Mediterranean” is a project promoted by Caritas Italiana in collaboration with the Rondine Cittadella della Pace Association, aimed at fostering peace and sustainable development within Mediterranean communities.

Its main goal is to strengthen the skills and capacities of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), enabling them to train and raise awareness among youth workers, educators, and young people by providing practical tools and methodologies to promote peace, cooperation, and regional integration.

The project brought together 31 CSOs from 19 different countries across the wider Mediterranean region: Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Malta, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, the Holy Land, Syria, Türkiye, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Mauritania, Djibouti and Somalia, a region of great historical and strategic significance, yet one facing deep political, economic, and social challenges.

PeaceMed sought to address these challenges through an integrated approach, enhancing the role of Civil Society Organizations and building a transnational network of collaboration. This approach aims to contribute to the creation of a more stable, cohesive Mediterranean region, oriented toward peace and sustainable development, in line with the project’s specific objectives: on the one hand, strengthening the professional capacities of CSOs; on the other, fostering networks and spaces for cooperation to promote dialogue and joint action.

Based on the analysis of the context and related challenges, the most relevant issues addressed by the project concern the following areas:

- **Sociopolitical:** protracted armed conflicts, regional tensions, and fragile governance, further exacerbated by religious and cultural divisions.
- **Economic and social:** economic crisis, growing inequalities, migratory flows, and humanitarian emergencies requiring inclusive and sustainable responses.
- **CSO capacity and governance:** management weaknesses, fragmentation, and isolation of local organizations, often lacking adequate tools and networks to face complex challenges.
- **Youth engagement:** limited involvement of young people in peacebuilding processes and few opportunities for empowerment in their role as agents of change.

Through a participatory and inclusive approach, PeaceMed contributes to strengthening the skills of CSO practitioners and developing practical tools to mobilize young people in promoting peace as a common good and supporting the sustainable development of local communities.

## Project Training Activities

The training program outlined in the project unfolded through several key phases:

1. **Training Needs Analysis:** a systematic assessment of the skills and needs of CSO practitioners aimed at identifying gaps and the resources required to enhance the effectiveness of peacebuilding and sustainable development actions. This analysis served as a baseline for monitoring the project's progress.
2. **Intensive In-Person Workshop (March 2025, Cyprus):** the inaugural event provided an opportunity to share knowledge and initiate a collaborative network among participants. The workshop focused on practical group-building activities designed to foster connection and trust, laying the foundation for subsequent project phases.
3. **Online Training Pathway:** a series of three sessions combining theory, practical exercises, and testimonies. Two sessions introduced key words of the *Rondine Method* (relationship, Conflict, enemy), while the third session focused on the presentation of the PeaceMed Training Manual, aimed at equipping participants with practical tools applicable to their local contexts.
4. **Residential Training (November 2025, Rondine and Rome):** the final and most intensive stage of the program, lasting five days. Participants directly experienced the activities and reflected with the training team on how to replicate them in their own contexts. During the training, they also had the opportunity to design and test new educational activities as trainers themselves, receiving targeted feedback on their performance.

Through this process, the project contributes to strengthening the capacities of CSOs, fostering dialogue and transnational cooperation, and enhancing the role of young people as active protagonists in peacebuilding and sustainable development processes.

The goal is to reinforce the competencies and governance structures of participating organizations by building shared pathways for peace and creating a regional network capable of addressing common challenges in a time marked by increasing tensions.

## Methodology

Meaningful work toward peace requires a rigorous methodological framework. Caritas Italiana therefore conducted a thorough selection process to identify the organization best positioned to develop and deliver PeaceMed's training component.

After careful evaluation of qualified agencies, Rondine Cittadella della Pace was chosen as the project's formative partner. Two factors informed this decision: Rondine's substantial experience in conflict

transformation and its well-established methodology, which has gained international recognition through years of consistent application and refinement.

The Rondine Method is practice-oriented, developed through sustained engagement with young people from conflict affected regions. It focuses on building participants' capacity as active peacebuilders by providing conceptual frameworks, practical tools, and the relational competencies required to interrupt cycles of violence in their communities.

Rondine Cittadella della Pace is the organization responsible for delivering the in-person and online training described in this manual.

## **Rondine Cittadella Della Pace**

The Citadel of Peace was founded in 1998 in Rondine, a picturesque medieval village in Tuscany nestled among the hills just a few kilometres from Arezzo. In this place rich in history and beauty, the organization develops its main educational and training programs. These pathways offer participants a twofold opportunity: to embark on a journey of human regeneration (understood as personal and relational growth) and to develop an authentic form of leadership, one that places at its core the care for one's community and the pursuit of the common good.

Inspired by the vision of a world free from war, Rondine promotes and disseminates its educational approach, known as the Rondine Method, an original methodology for the creative transformation of conflicts.

At the heart of this vision lies the World House – Rondine's International Student Residence, founded in 1997. Each year, it welcomes young people from countries marked by wars or fragile post-conflict situations, young men and women standing at the threshold of adulthood who choose to take on a challenging yet extraordinary experience: building an authentic relationship with the person whom history has declared to be their "enemy."

Through daily coexistence, structured around a well-established educational framework and an intense formative journey, the students of the World House learn to recognize the humanity in the other, who bears wounds different from their own. Dialogue, shared living, and constant confrontation become tools for personal and social transformation.

During their stay, participants develop relational, project design, and civic skills, combining academic study with non-formal education and active engagement in society. Together, they imagine and create new, creative solutions for transforming conflicts, carrying with them, at the end of the journey, a concrete and deeply rooted vision of peace born from lived experience.

## The Rondine Method

The Rondine Method is an educational and training approach recognized and valued both in Italian and international academic contexts. It was developed on the basis of over thirty years of experience by Rondine Cittadella della Pace in the field of conflict transformation. The Method draws inspiration from the immersive experience lived by the young people of the World House, Rondine's international student residence, and can be applied to any context characterized by conflict — in other words, to any situation involving human relationships.

The Rondine Method proposes a path of profound change, inviting individuals to deconstruct the logic of the “enemy” and to view conflict not as a problem to be solved, but as a generative opportunity for personal and collective growth.

At its core lies the creation of positive and generative environments, true relational habitats, capable of guiding individual behaviour. Within these spaces, relationships based on trust, respect, and collaboration are cultivated as essential elements for inhabiting conflict in a transformative way.

The Rondine Method fosters a change in mindset and behaviour, helping participants to develop a new vision of conflict: shifting from seeing it as a threat to avoid, to understanding it as a lever for transformation. Through this process, active peace leaders are formed: people capable of acting with awareness, empathy, and responsibility within the social, public, and professional contexts in which they operate.

The Method's goal goes beyond the individual dimension: it aims to generate a concrete and lasting impact at both systemic and cultural levels. Through specific programs and projects, it promotes practices that strengthen peace, justice, and social cohesion.

A distinctive feature of this approach is its ability to integrate the private and public spheres. The skills acquired are not limited to having an impact on the individual training of each person, but translate into tools to be applied in daily life and within communities, as well as in professional contexts, with the aim of contributing to the building of a peaceful, just, and cohesive society.

«Finally, the path to peace passes through education, which is the primary investment in the future and in younger generations». These words of Pope Francis clearly point to an essential direction: peace is not only a political or diplomatic goal, but a process that is built over time through daily choices, relationships, and educational practices. It is not an abstract idea, but a concrete possibility for action, accessible to each and every one of us.

Already in *Pacem in terris*, Saint John XXIII was aware of the risk that words might go unheard. For this reason, he invited individuals, families, and communities to become artisanal workshops of peace, capable

of embodying the values of justice, freedom, and responsibility in everyday gestures. Pope Leo XIV likewise takes up and renews this intuition, indicating a viable and non-illusory path: the path of education.

On several occasions, he reminds us: «let us build bridges and embrace peace with concreteness, so that peace may not remain an idea but become daily action». From this perspective, education and training are not merely the transmission of content, but a space of coherence between thought and action. They are the place where words gain credibility because they are sustained by behaviours, relationships, and concrete choices. For this reason, educational responsibility does not concern only those who work professionally in the field of training, but cuts across all social roles: educating is a shared task that challenges ambassadors, policy-makers, citizens, and entire communities. In this way, peace becomes “daily action.” We can indeed say that educating and training means inhabiting everyday life with awareness. It means choosing whether to turn away or to remain present in the face of suffering; whether to ignore or to listen; whether to waste or to take care. Educating is a simple yet radical gesture: it is welcoming the other for who they are, recognizing their dignity, and at the same time accompanying them toward who they can become, by passing through fragility, fears, and conflicts. It is a gift that does not eliminate conflict, but teaches how to go through it without fear—a practice of love that allows values such as justice, freedom, and truth to be internalized without the need to constantly proclaim them.

The memory of a hand that accompanies, that does not leave a person alone in a moment of fear, thus becomes a powerful educational metaphor. It is the image of a trust that is transmitted over time, that remains even when physical presence fades. In adult life, despite the milestones of autonomy, the need to offer and receive that hand remains alive—a sign of our “wonderful insufficiency,” which makes us always educable.

*Franco Vaccari*

*Founder and president of Rondine Cittadella della Pace*

## Objectives of the PeaceMed Training Manual

This manual is designed as a practical guide for Civil Society Organization practitioners, with the goal of supporting them in carrying out training activities aimed at promoting dialogue, peace, and inclusion. The document is based on the experience of Rondine Cittadella della Pace as a training institution, as well as on the practices tested during the sessions held for participants in the PeaceMed project.

In line with the values of inclusiveness and the promotion of the common good, the manual also integrates the results that emerged from the residential training, during which participants designed new educational activities to implement in their own contexts of reference. The result is therefore a collective work that does not seek to be a static text, but rather a dynamic tool—open to gathering, over time, the contributions of all those who continue to design, experiment, and apply educational activities in situations of social and cultural fragility.

### **This work aims to:**

- Provide *PeaceMed* project participants with practical tools and useful information for implementing what was learned during the training experience.
- Offer a flexible and adaptable tool that can be used in diverse and multicultural contexts for group management.
- Support self-awareness and the development of emotional intelligence as the foundation for effective and lasting paths of peace and reconciliation.
- Promote individual and group reflection through activities that stimulate critical thinking and personal awareness.
- Propose games and educational activities divided by type, to be used in various training contexts.
- Facilitate understanding and accessibility of content through translation into multiple languages, with the contribution of students and alumni who share the participants' linguistic background.

## Section 2 – BASICS OF THE RONDINE METHOD

### The Relational Approach to Conflict of the Rondine Method

To understand the Rondine Method, it is first necessary to clarify what is meant by “method.” The meaning used here is the etymological one, derived from the Greek μέθοδος (*mèthodos*), which literally means “to follow a path” or “to travel a way.” In this sense, a method should not be understood as a rigid procedure or a fixed sequence of steps to be applied mechanically, but rather as a journey: a path that accompanies and orients a process over time.

From this perspective, a method can be compared to a journey. It often originates from an intuition, a desire, or even a dream, and develops progressively through experiences, encounters, and learning processes. The destination is not always clearly defined at the beginning, but takes shape along the way, through what emerges and transforms during the experience.

The Rondine Method has developed through an inductive process, grounded in more than twenty years of work and experience with international youth involved in the World House program. Inductive approaches start from lived experience and the observation of reality and gradually lead to the construction of a broader and more structured theoretical framework.

At the heart of the Rondine Method lies the conviction that, through the creation of concrete and meaningful relationships, it is possible to regenerate the human being. This process involves recognizing and going through one’s own pain and that of the other, opening the way to the development of the capacity to transform conflicts and to deconstruct the image of the “enemy.”

From this perspective, conflict is not interpreted as an anomaly to be eliminated, but as a constitutive dimension of human relationships. When it is recognized and consciously engaged with, the conflict-relationship can become an opportunity for learning, transformation, and growth. For this reason, the Rondine Method can be understood as a relational approach to conflict.

At the heart of the Rondine Method lie three key concepts—relationship, conflict, and the enemy—which guide all of Rondine’s educational activities. Central to this approach is the idea that it is through relationship that people can rediscover the humanity of the other, including that of those who were once perceived as “enemies.”

### Relationship

According to the Rondine Method, the relationship precedes the person. Human beings do not exist in isolation; rather, they take shape, grow, and develop within a network of relationships. From the relationship between parents that makes birth possible, to the social bonds that ensure survival and well-being, the relational dimension constitutes an original and indispensable condition of human existence. Even in

contemporary societies, despite the strong emphasis on individual autonomy, people remain deeply interdependent and continue to rely on others to meet fundamental material and emotional needs. Over the course of life, however, this interdependence is often forgotten, giving way to the illusion of self-sufficiency, which can lead to the devaluation or neglect of past and present relationships.

Relationships are therefore an essential condition for human development, but they are not necessarily simple or linear. They can be complex, demanding, and at times painful, especially when divergent values, intense emotional experiences, or behaviours perceived as threatening come into play. While it is natural to care for relationships that are experienced as positive and rewarding, those that generate discomfort or tension are often avoided, interrupted, or removed. The Rondine Method proposes a shift in perspective: investing in the relationship, acknowledging its intrinsically conflictual dimension, and considering it as a potential space for learning, awareness, and transformation.

Within the Rondine Method, every relationship operates simultaneously on three interconnected levels: the concrete level, the unconscious level, and the imaginative level. These levels coexist in every relational experience and require a dynamic balance in order for the relationship to function harmoniously.

The concrete level concerns the present and includes all observable aspects of the relationship: spoken words, behaviours, actions, physical proximity, shared spaces, and modes of interaction. It is through encounters in the concrete relationship that it becomes possible to reduce prejudice, overcome stereotypes, and improve the quality of relationships, both at the individual level and among social groups.

The unconscious level is connected to the past and includes memories, emotions, and previous experiences that continue to influence present interactions, often outside conscious awareness. Events such as trauma, exclusion, or unresolved wounds may be reactivated in current relationships and shape emotional and behavioural responses. If this level is not recognized and acknowledged, it can generate automatic reactions that risk harming both the relationship and the people involved.

The imaginative level is oriented toward the future and encompasses expectations, desires, fears, and the interpretative images that each person constructs about the other and about the relationship itself. Imagination plays a central role in anticipatory and decision-making processes. Unlike fantasy, it is rooted in reality and can either support or hinder the development of the relationship, influencing how the other is perceived and interpreted.

Balance among these three levels is made possible by a process known as psychic accommodation. Similar to the way visual focus is adjusted through the eye's crystalline lens, psychic accommodation allows emotions, imagination, and concrete behaviours within the relationship to be regulated. This process is not automatic; it requires awareness, openness, and a willingness to engage. When this mechanism weakens or breaks down, the relationship may become distorted, sometimes giving rise to what the Rondine Method defines as relational shocks.

Relational shocks are sudden disruptions of relational balance, often triggered by external events that produce intense inner reactions, particularly affecting the unconscious level. In the Rondine context, such shocks may occur, for example, when armed conflicts re-emerge in the countries of origin of participants, abruptly destabilizing relationships that had previously been based on trust and mutual recognition. In these situations, there are no standardized solutions: empathy, deep listening, patience, and creativity are required to rebuild a relational space in which pain can be acknowledged and expressed.

For a relationship to remain alive and stable over time, ongoing care is essential. This responsibility does not concern only the individual or the other person, but the relationship itself as a system—as a “WE” that goes beyond its individual parts. Relationship maintenance can be ordinary or extraordinary. Ordinary maintenance takes place in everyday life through dialogue, presence, sharing, and empathy. Extraordinary maintenance becomes necessary in moments of crisis or following a relational shock and may involve targeted individual or group interventions to restore trust and balance.

Within this framework, active listening plays a central role in sustaining relational balance. It involves the ability to center oneself, maintain an authentic intention to listen, and remain present, aware, and open to interaction with the other. Active listening helps ensure that the relationship remains a space of connection and understanding rather than misunderstanding and withdrawal.

Ultimately, caring for the relationship means investing in the WE. When the relationship is recognized and nurtured, processes of growth and transformation become possible; when it is neglected, stagnation, distance, and rupture may emerge. The Rondine Method invites individuals and communities to consider the relationship as a living system that requires responsibility, attention, and continuous care.

## Conflict

The word conflict (from the Latin *conflictūs*) originally means “collision,” “impact.” From an etymological perspective, the term is neutral and does not carry an inherently negative meaning. Even in the physical world, collision plays a transformative role: friction, which is a form of collision, enables matter to change and transform. Without friction, many processes of transformation would not be possible. This observation introduces a central idea: conflict, in itself, is not destructive, but potentially generative.

In everyday life, conflict emerges whenever differences come into relationship with one another—differences in opinions, needs, expectations, values, or worldviews. In this sense, conflict is not an exception but a constant presence in human experience. Differences are not problematic in themselves; on the contrary, they are a necessary condition for growth, evolution, and creativity. What determines whether a conflict becomes destructive or generative is not its existence, but the way it is recognized, addressed, and accompanied.

Different disciplines offer complementary interpretations of conflict. In psychology, conflict is understood as an internal cognitive or emotional tension between competing needs, desires, or values. It may arise when a person is faced with incompatible choices or when deeply held beliefs are challenged. Although inner conflict can generate stress or disorientation, it also holds strong transformative potential. When approached consciously, it can foster resilience, emotional intelligence, and deeper self-awareness.

At the social level, sociology considers conflict a structural element of collective life, often linked to issues of power, resources, recognition, and rights. From this perspective, conflict acts as a catalyst for change. Many historical transformations—such as civil rights movements, gender equality struggles, labor protections, or environmental justice initiatives—have emerged precisely from social tensions. Conflict brings inequalities and injustices to the surface, stimulating processes of critical awareness, participation, and collective action. Philosophy also recognizes conflict as a driving force of development. In dialectical thought, progress occurs through tension between differing positions: a thesis is challenged by an antithesis, and from their interaction a synthesis emerges, integrating and transcending both. This synthesis then becomes the starting point for further development. From this perspective, conflict is not something to be eliminated, but a necessary condition for personal, social, and cultural evolution. As early as Heraclitus, *pólemos* was described as a generative force underlying change and differentiation in reality.

Returning to the idea of conflict as a collision between differences, it becomes evident that encountering the other often requires adaptation—a change in behaviour, perception, or expectations. Life can therefore be understood as a continuous movement between differences, sometimes small and part of everyday life, sometimes large and systemic, such as those between cultures, political systems, or geopolitical regions. While large-scale differences tend to attract greater attention, it is often everyday differences that most deeply shape lived experience.

Because differences are inevitable, conflict cannot be eliminated. This leads to a fundamental relational insight: there is no conflict without relationship, and no relationship without the potential for conflict.

Conflicts operate at different levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup. At the intrapersonal level, conflict concerns internal tensions within the individual, such as struggles between competing values, needs, or desires. At the interpersonal level, conflict arises in relationships between two or more people and is often rooted in differences in expectations, opinions, values, or priorities. At the intergroup level, conflict involves groups defined by social, cultural, political, ethnic, or religious identities and is frequently connected to power imbalances, access to resources, and opposing collective narratives.

In everyday language, intergroup and international conflict is often confused with war. Within the Rondine Method, this semantic overlap is considered deeply misleading and is seen as one of the main reasons why people tend to fear and avoid conflict in all its forms. It is therefore essential to clarify that conflict and war are not synonymous. War is a violent and degenerated form of conflict that emerges when conflicts are ignored, denied, or mismanaged over time.

## “Enemy”

Peace, too, cannot be separated from conflict. At Rondine, peace is not understood as an abstract ideal, but as a lived practice rooted in relationships. Peace is built by consciously engaging with conflict, not by avoiding it. It becomes possible only in relationship with the “enemy,” not with those who already share our views.

According to the Rondine Method, the “enemy” is an illusion. It is not an objective or natural reality, but a psychological and social construction. No human being is an “enemy” by nature; rather, the “enemy” is created through processes of perception, interpretation, and narration. In times of crisis, uncertainty, or instability, the figure of the “enemy” often emerges as a way to simplify complexity and give meaning to unresolved problems. By identifying an external “enemy,” individuals and societies can channel frustration, fear, and anger outward, temporarily strengthening internal cohesion and a sense of belonging. However, this apparent unity comes at a high cost: the progressive dehumanization of the other.

The construction of the “enemy” is not sudden, but gradual, and often begins at the imaginative and unconscious level of the relationship. In this initial phase, the other is no longer perceived through direct experience, but through assumptions and expectations charged with strong emotions. These mental constructions are shaped by multiple factors, including past experiences, personal fears, collective memories and traumas, political discourse, media representations, and cultural or national identities. Over time, this imaginative distortion becomes increasingly persuasive, like a mirage that slowly takes on the appearance of reality.

As this process deepens, the concrete person begins to disappear from perception. The other is no longer encountered as a complex human being, but as a simplified and distorted figure—almost a ghost—onto whom fears and threats are projected. This deformed image becomes frightening and absolute, leaving little room for nuance or doubt. Eventually, the idea of the “enemy” becomes fully consolidated and extends beyond the individual to encompass an entire group. At this stage, belonging to a particular nationality, ethnicity, religion, or political position is enough to define someone as an “enemy.” Difference, which could be a source of learning and enrichment, is no longer seen as a resource, but as a danger to be avoided.

The Rondine Method emphasizes that the only way to deconstruct the illusion of the “enemy” is through concrete relationships and the sharing of spaces, time, stories, and everyday life. Direct encounter with the real person behind the “enemy” allows the illusion to dissolve. This does not mean denying pain, injustice, or difference, nor does it imply immediate reconciliation. Rather, it means reopening the possibility of seeing the other as a person, with their emotions and existential needs. In this way, deconstructing the image of the “enemy” becomes a fundamental step in the creative transformation of conflict and in the construction of an authentic and lasting peace.

## Section 3 – BEING A TRAINER, DOING TRAINING

### Methodological Approach of the PeaceMed Training Manual

The methodological approach adopted in this manual is experiential learning. This non-formal education approach enables participants to become active protagonists in their own learning process, acquiring knowledge through direct experience, reflection, and application in real-life situations. This process fosters a deeper and more lasting understanding, while promoting the development of personal, relational, and emotional skills—essential for consciously and transformatively addressing complex situations such as interpersonal and group conflicts and intercultural dynamics. In this way, learning becomes not only knowledge but also transformation.

The main features of Experiential Learning are:

- ◆ *Learning is based on experience*

People learn best by doing—through direct, hands-on experiences (learning by doing). Activities, games, role plays, and simulations are used to immerse participants in situations that stimulate reflection and awareness.

- ◆ *Learning is a process, not a product*

It occurs through a cyclical process (as illustrated in Kolb's learning cycle). It is not merely about acquiring information but about processing, reflecting on, and applying what has been experienced.

- ◆ *Reflection is essential*

Experience alone is not enough: participants need structured reflection to make sense of what has happened. For this reason, the proposed activities do not provide ready-made answers but are designed to encourage both personal and collective reflection. The goal is to value participants' existing experiences and skills, guiding them to connect their personal experiences with broader concepts, theories, and values.

- ◆ *Learning is both personal and social*

Experiential learning values each participant's subjectivity as well as the group's characteristics. One learns with and through others: dialogue, group dynamics, and the shared construction of meaning are central elements. Activities therefore develop simultaneously on individual, group, and collective levels, encouraging exploration of each participant's inner dynamics and the relationships formed within the group, in order to build an integrated and shared experience. This approach fosters self-awareness and empathy—key qualities in peacebuilding work.

- ◆ *Learners are active participants*

Participants are not passive recipients of knowledge but co-creators of the learning process. Facilitators guide rather than instruct. For this reason, the training includes moments dedicated to processing and contextualizing lived experiences, within an environment of mutual listening and open dialogue. Content is

always adapted to the participants' socio-cultural context, ensuring an effective response to diverse sensitivities and valuing diversity as a key resource for learning.

◆ *Learning has real-life relevance*

The experiential approach connects with concrete contexts, problems, and challenges. It encourages participants to transfer what they have learned—appropriately adapted—to daily life, civic engagement, or social change.

◆ *Learning engages emotions, body and mind*

Experiential learning is based on integrating three fundamental dimensions: the head (thought), the heart (emotions), and the hands (action). In this approach, emotions and bodily awareness are not seen as marginal or disruptive elements but as essential components of the educational process. For this reason, the training includes activities involving the body and emotional expression within a holistic perspective of the whole human being.

### In-depth Sheet – The Kolb Cycle

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is a four-stage process that describes how people learn from experience. Developed by **David A. Kolb** in 1984, it is widely used in non-formal education, particularly in the fields of **peacebuilding, dialogue, and group facilitation**.

David Kolb is an American educational theorist best known for his work on experiential learning. In the 1980s, he developed a model based on the idea that learning is a process through which knowledge is created by transforming experience. It is called a "cycle" because learning is a continuous process: after experiencing something (*active experimentation*), new experiences are generated, which in turn lead to new reflections and further learning.

*"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." — D. Kolb\**

Kolb's Cycle consists of four stages that make experiential learning effective and efficient:

1. *Concrete Experience (Doing / Living an Experience)*

The participant actively engages in an activity and discusses the experience within the training session, paying particular attention to emotional involvement and intuition.

*Example:* taking part in a role play, a simulation, or a group exercise.

2. *Reflective Observation (Reflecting on the Experience)*

The participant reflects on the experience from different perspectives—observing, analyzing, and interpreting the emotions and behaviours that emerged—with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding.

*Example:* discussing what happened, how one felt, and which aspects were most striking.

3. *Abstract Conceptualization (Learning from the Experience)*

The participant draws conclusions and develops theories or concepts based on their observations. They organize and generalize the skills and concepts acquired, connecting them to external situations—both personal and professional.

*Example:* linking the experience to peacebuilding principles, conflict theory, or group dynamics.

4. *Active Experimentation (Applying What Has Been Learned)*

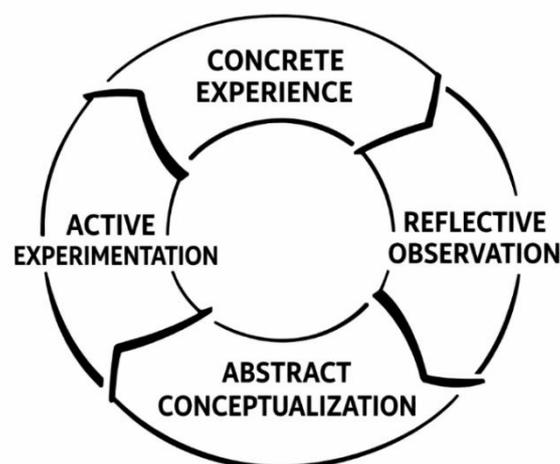
The participant applies what they have learned in real-life situations, testing the acquired knowledge and skills with a focus on change and growth—both personal and professional.

*Example:* applying new skills in everyday life.

This final stage, in turn, becomes a new **Concrete Experience**, initiating another learning cycle. For this reason, Kolb describes experiential learning as a **spiral process**, in which each cycle leads to deeper understanding and increasingly refined competencies.

*Why use Kolb's Cycle in training design?*

- It helps create engaging and effective learning activities.
- It fosters deep learning by connecting action, reflection, theory, and practice.
- It works well with diverse groups and different learning styles.
- It stimulates self-awareness and critical thinking.



*\*In David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, 1984*

## The Role of the Trainer

Trainers represent a strategic resource for the promotion of peace as a common good, fully aligned with the values and mission of Caritas Italiana and Rondine Cittadella della Pace. Their function goes far beyond the mere transmission of content: they act as facilitators of transformative learning processes, capable of creating safe spaces for dialogue, fostering intercultural exchange, and accompanying local communities in building paths of reconciliation, inclusion, and sustainable development.

From this perspective, their role is that of activators of participation: they recognize and value the knowledge and experiences of learning groups, with particular attention to youth engagement, considered an essential driver of social and cultural change. In doing so, they nurture dynamics of shared responsibility, where participants are not passive recipients but active agents of the learning process.

At the same time, trainers act as promoters of dialogue and social cohesion. Through empathetic listening and careful relationship-building, they help prevent and transform conflicts, fostering mutual trust and collaboration among individuals and groups with diverse identities and perspectives.

Finally, trainers support the growth of personal and social skills, encourage critical and creative thinking, and nurture autonomy and responsibility—empowering participants to contribute actively to the common good. In this sense, they are not only guides but true facilitators of change, capable of connecting the individual and collective, local and global dimensions of peacebuilding.

## Ethics of the Trainer

In every educational and training process, especially in contexts marked by fragility or tension, it is essential that the actions of trainers and practitioners be guided by a strong ethical foundation. The following principles represent the basis of their daily work and reflect the values that inspire their commitment. They are not merely abstract guidelines but concrete criteria that guide relationships, educational choices, and the atmosphere one aims to create within training interventions.

### Guiding Ethical Principles

- Neutrality and impartiality, essential in contexts marked by conflict, cultural tensions, or social fragility;
- Deep respect for religious, ethnic, linguistic, and gender diversity, in line with an inclusive approach;
- An ethics of care, with particular attention to the needs, rhythms, and vulnerabilities of each participant;
- Consistency between the content proposed and the trainers' behaviour, ensuring integrity and reliability;
- Educational responsibility, aimed at creating safe, welcoming, and non-judgmental environments where everyone can feel valued and supported in their journey.

## Encouraging Active Participation During Training

Active participation is the heart of every training process: it allows participants to feel engaged, responsible for their own learning, and part of a collective experience. Below are some concrete strategies to encourage it.

### 1. *Create a safe and inclusive space*

- Establish group agreements or a “learning contract” from the start, building it together with participants.
- Use icebreakers and getting-to-know activities to foster positive relationships.
- Acknowledge and value the diverse identities and experiences in the room, showing respect and genuine curiosity.

### 2. *Clarify objectives and expectations*

- Involve participants in co-creating objectives or identifying their own learning needs.
- Be transparent about the structure, schedule, and goals of the sessions to build trust and provide direction.

### 3. *Use interactive and experiential methods*

- Choose techniques that require action and engagement, not just passive listening, such as simulations, role plays, emotional sharing, and movement-based activities.
- Include games, energizers, and short activities to re-activate energy and maintain attention.

### 4. *Encourage dialogue, reflection, and mutual understanding among participants*

- Use open-ended questions and practice active listening.
- Create structured moments for reflection—individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
- Encourage sharing of personal and professional experiences to make learning concrete and relevant.

### 5. *Vary work configurations*

- Alternate different modes of interaction: individual reflection, pair work, small groups, and plenary sessions.
- Consider the need for physical movement through warm-ups or playful activities.

### 6. *Use visual and creative techniques*

- Support learning through visual facilitation (flipcharts, slides, post-its, drawings, mind maps).
- Invite participants to express themselves creatively (metaphors, collages, artistic activities, body movement) when the context allows.

### 7. *Give participants roles and responsibilities*

- Assign rotating roles (timekeeper, note-taker, energizer leader).
- Invite participants to lead short parts of the session or present group work results.

- Treat participants as co-creators of the process, not as passive recipients.

#### 8. *Activate feedback loops*

- Request real-time feedback using simple tools (post-its, bullseye charts, or digital platforms like Mentimeter).
- Show willingness to adapt the process based on the group's feedback, energy, needs, or suggestions, in order to strengthen trust and motivation.

## Trainer Well-being

Taking care of one's well-being is essential to ensure meaningful and sustainable learning experiences. A balanced, rested, and emotionally centered trainer is better able to listen, adapt, and respond effectively to the needs of the group. Well-being includes physical energy, mental clarity, and emotional resilience, all of which directly influence the learning environment.

Keeping in mind personal reflection and respecting one's boundaries is fundamental for establishing a healthy and professional relationship with participants. It is helpful to plan moments in the program where it is possible to pause and recover energy, reflect on one's emotions, or manage potential overload. Additionally, it is important to communicate any challenges to the group clearly and respectfully, for example when agreements or shared rules are not being respected.

Flexibility is another key element. The trainer can adjust the program when needed—reducing activities that are not effective or introducing new ones that seem more useful and relevant to the participants after observing the group's dynamics and interests. This can be done confidently, without feeling guilty, as adaptation is part of creating a meaningful learning experience. The trainer's priority is maintaining focus on the overall quality of the learning experience while indirectly demonstrating to participants the importance of listening, adapting, and self-care in their work.

When it comes to technical or logistical challenges, the trainer should remain flexible and able to adapt to new working conditions. However, it is equally important to set clear boundaries when requests from the organizers compromise or significantly alter the training setting, the flow of activities, or even the core learning objectives. Maintaining the integrity of the educational process is part of the trainer's responsibility toward the group.

At the same time, the trainer must learn to manage the frustration that can arise from not being able to answer every question or handle every situation that may occur during a session. Awareness of one's own limits is essential. For example, if a participant raises a question or topic outside the trainer's area of expertise, it is perfectly appropriate to acknowledge it openly and commit to providing an answer later.

Trainers are not expected to know everything—they are human, after all. In fact, showing this kind of humility and authenticity can strengthen the learning relationship. Admitting uncertainty, when done with sincerity

and confidence, not only embodies intellectual honesty but also creates a more trusting and collaborative environment where both trainers and learners grow together.

## Guidelines for Designing Training Interventions

To design effective training activities, clear planning is essential. In this initial phase, it is essential to clearly define the training objectives and, if working in a team, to establish specific roles: who is responsible for the training activities, who manages logistics, who prepares the materials, and who drafts the final report. It is also important to clarify expectations regarding the expected results and the evaluation methods.

A good training plan is based on a structured program that takes into account several elements:

- **Timing:** determine the total duration of the session and of each activity. Preparation time must also be calculated to ensure readiness, as well as travel time to the training location, any movements between training rooms and breaks between activities. Pauses should not be seen as wasted time but as an essential part of the training, allowing both participants and trainers to rest their minds and engage in informal socialization. For larger groups, timeframes should be expected to expand naturally.
- **Spaces:** it is essential to know whether the training will take place indoors or outdoors. In the former case, it is important to know which rooms or halls are available and whether more than one can be used (which makes group work easier). In the latter, open spaces such as gardens, beaches, or forests may inspire more dynamic and creative activities.
- **Content:** these are the topics to be covered during the training. Each course revolves around a main theme, which motivates the session itself, but it is useful to integrate supporting topics that enrich understanding (for example, if the main theme is conflict transformation, a supporting topic might be active listening).
- **Target group:** knowing the participants is essential. The number of participants, together with the available space, strongly influences the choice of activities. Another key factor is age: conducting training for adults is very different from working with children. In some cases, learning goals can be explored beforehand through questionnaires or at the beginning of the session with open questions.
- **Materials and equipment:** it is crucial to create a list of all tools and materials needed for the training. Consider classroom setup such as chairs and tables (especially whether they can be moved), technical tools such as computers, projectors, screens, microphones, speakers, and flipcharts, as well as participant materials like paper, markers, pens, notebooks, handouts, evocative cards, and any other items required for activities. Preparing a checklist ensures that nothing is forgotten.
- **Feedback and reporting:** it is important to plan how to collect feedback from participants in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. This can be done using paper questionnaires, digital tools,

or embodied activities involving physical movement and spatial positioning. Feedback also serves to value each participant's voice and contribution. Finally, producing a final report is very useful for redesigning and improving the effectiveness of future training (see Kolb's Cycle). The report may include a descriptive summary of what was done and achieved, photos of key moments, and examples of participant contributions. Artistic or creative elements can also be included at this stage.

- **Debriefing:** at the end of the training intervention, it is essential to plan a debriefing session within the working team. This exchange among those involved (not only trainers but also logistical and organizational staff) allows for analysis of what worked, what can be improved, and which dynamics supported or hindered learning. If working alone, this phase can take the form of a written personal reflection, useful for consolidating the experience and planning future improvements. The debriefing, in addition to being a valuable opportunity for continuous professional learning, is also a moment to acknowledge and celebrate the work accomplished, recognizing the commitment of everyone involved in the process.

## Structure of a Training Intervention

Every training intervention represents a process of learning and transformation that must be carefully designed to ensure coherence, rhythm, and active participation. From the very beginning, it is important to clarify with the client what their expectations are, as well as those of the participants, so that the training pathway can be designed accordingly.

A well-structured program allows trainers to guide participants through a gradual process that begins with welcoming and building trust, moves through moments of exploring the training topic, and concludes with shared reflection and evaluation. Designing a training session therefore means thinking not only about the content but also about how participants will interact with it and with one another, so that the experience becomes meaningful and generative.

Depending on its duration (from half a day to several days), the training intervention will include several sessions, each lasting from one to a maximum of four hours. Every training program must follow a clear and coherent sequence, in which each phase prepares and supports the next and the timing is well defined. A basic model for a one-day training includes: welcome, introductory activities, thematic activities, moments of reflection, and closure.

1. **Introduction and Welcome:** the initial phase serves to create an atmosphere of trust and openness to listening. It includes opening remarks, a brief presentation of the program and objectives, and an explanation of the working methods. It is useful for the trainer to clarify from the outset the shared participation rules — such as respect for time, mutual listening, and confidentiality — and, to foster an even safer and more inclusive environment, to encourage participants to express their needs

during the training through a “Group Agreements” activity (see sheet). At this stage, short activities such as name games or icebreakers can also be introduced to break the ice, stimulate curiosity, and build initial group connections.

2. **Thematic and Experiential Activities:** the central part of the session is dedicated to the different activities, where the main topic is explored through active methodologies: group exercises, simulations, pair work, role plays, or guided reflections. This phase may also include theoretical explanations, conducted before or after the activities, which should remain limited and always serve the practical work. It is therefore important to alternate moments of action with moments of reflection, maintaining attention and allowing for content processing. During this phase, trainers may collect materials produced by participants — such as notes, oral reports, visual or written outputs — which can be used to document learning or as a basis for subsequent activities. It is advisable to include energizers, mindfulness activities, or short breaks whenever a drop in concentration is perceived, to regenerate individual and group energy and foster active participation. Even scheduled breaks have a pedagogical function: they allow participants to internally process what they have experienced and stimulate informal conversations, which are often just as valuable for learning and d. Depending on the duration of the training, there may be one or more sessions dedicated to thematic activities.
3. **Sharing and Feedback:** the final phase is devoted to reflection and evaluation of the overall experience, the fulfilment of participants’ expectations, and the achievement of the training objectives. During this stage, the group can be invited to share what they have learned, how they felt, and how the activity can be applied in their own contexts. Feedback can take different forms — plenary discussion, individual writing, creative responses, or physical activities — and serves a dual purpose: to value participants’ voices and to allow the trainer to assess the effectiveness of the session.

## Example of a One-Day Training Program

This is an example of a training day structure divided into phases, with an approximate indication of the time needed for each section. The same framework can be repeated over several days by removing the welcome and group agreement phase and adding a warm-up activity before the first session of the day. To ensure training that is both effective for participants and sustainable for trainers, it is advisable not to exceed six hours of training per day.

Time	Activity
20 min	Welcome, opening remarks, and presentation of the trainer and the program
20 min	Name game or introductory activity (for groups who do not know each other) or a brief activity on expectations
30 min	Group agreements activity
70 min	Thematic activity 1 (with optional theoretical introduction)
20 min	Break
20 min	Reflection and feedback
	Lunch break – at least 1 hour, longer if travel is required
10 min	Resuming the session
20 min	Energizer
70 min	Thematic activity 2 (with optional theoretical introduction)
20 min	Break
40 min	Reflection and feedback
20 min	Conclusion

## Checklist for the Trainer

Preparing and conducting a training session requires attention to many details, both logistical and relational. A checklist is a simple yet highly effective tool to help trainers plan, manage, and monitor each phase of the process, reducing the risk of oversights and allowing them to focus on what matters most: the quality of the learning experience. Having a checklist does not mean rigidity but awareness. It helps free the mind from practical concerns and allows greater focus on listening, relationships, and group dynamics. It is a way to take care of one's work and, at the same time, of the participants: the more organized and calm the trainer is, the more they can create a welcoming and safe environment. The checklist can be used at different stages of the training process. Before the session, it helps ensure that everything is ready: materials, spaces, tools, objectives, timing, and roles. During the session, it can serve as a guide to monitor progress, attention levels, participation, and group energy, allowing for smooth and timely adjustments. After the session, it becomes a reflection tool: it allows you to note what worked well, what could be improved, and which elements should be maintained for future sessions.

Below is an example of a checklist organized by phases. In one column, you note the items to remember or the tasks to be carried out, while in the other column you specify who is responsible for each action, when it should be performed, and how it should be done.

What	Who, When, How...
<i>Before the training</i>	
Kick-off: is a preliminary meeting with the team planned? When will we hold it? How long will it last?	
Program: do we have a clear program with defined times for each session? Do we know the objectives of the training we will deliver?	
Target: who are the participants? How many are there? What are their goals?	
Division of tasks: who does what? (classroom training, logistics, necessary materials, who accompanies any assistants)	
Spaces: have we confirmed the spaces where the training will take place? Have we informed colleagues where the training will be held?	
Materials: do we have a list of materials and equipment?	
Emergencies: how do we handle potential emergencies? Who do I call to cover for me? Who should I contact in case of a serious emergency?	
Breaks: how do we manage breaks? If there is a coffee break, who will bring it? How do we communicate with the person in charge in case of a delay?	
Energy: how do we manage drops in group energy?	
Collecting participant materials: do we want to gather material from participants, such as feedback? How will we do it—paper or digital? How will it be managed afterward?	
<i>During the training</i>	
Reminder: note the things we must not forget during the training (for example: communications to participants, informing collaborators of any delays for meals or coffee breaks...)	
Fill in the attendance register (if required)	
Take photos or record videos	
Write down interesting observations	
Self-care messages (e.g., "Breathe!")	
<i>After the training</i>	
Debriefing: do we have time for a debrief with the team? What worked, what could have been better, and do we dedicate time to celebrate successes?	
Materials: do I need to send materials, photos, or feedback results to the participants?	
Report and evaluation: have I written the training report? Who should I send it to?	
Thank-yous: do I need to send a thank-you email to anyone?	
Expense reporting (if applicable)	

## Example of a Training Activity Sheet

An activity sheet is a practical and versatile tool for designing, describing, and documenting training activities in a clear and consistent way. It helps trainers plan sessions consistently and record them for future use.

A well-structured activity sheet outlines essential elements such as objectives, duration, materials, number of participants, and step-by-step instructions, making it easier to replicate or adapt the activity in different contexts. Beyond supporting one's own work, it also becomes a valuable resource for other trainers who wish to use or draw inspiration from the same exercise, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing within the training community.

In this way, activity sheets contribute to the creation of a shared repertoire of experiential learning tools that can grow and evolve over time.

This is an example of a template for training activities.

<b><i>Activity Topic</i></b> Specify the concept the activity is based on, e.g., prejudices, conflict resolution, awareness, human rights...)
<b><i>Activity Title</i></b> Specify the title
<b><i>Objective</i></b> Describe the purpose of the activity, what it serves, and what participants are expected to gain in terms of knowledge and skills.
<b><i>Target</i></b> Age, background
<b><i>Numbers</i></b> Indicate the min-max number of participants
<b><i>Materials and Location</i></b> List all the materials and equipment needed (e.g., sheets, markers, post-it notes, scissors, tape, flip chart paper, slides, images, links, projector, applications, chairs, tables, room type or open space, etc.).
<b><i>Timing</i></b> Specify the total duration of the activity
<b><i>Activity description</i></b> Describe the activity in detail, breaking it down into points and specifying the timing for each step.
<b><i>Notes for the trainer</i></b> Indicate if there are particular aspects to consider, such as notes for the debriefing and explanation of what has been done or observed.
<b><i>Printable or sent resources</i></b> If the activity requires participants to use specific materials, such as questions, role descriptions, images, or forms to fill out, please include them here or indicate where they can be found.

## Online Training

Online training has become an increasingly widespread and, in many contexts, necessary modality. However, designing and facilitating a remote training session requires specific forms of attention that differ from those needed in face-to-face settings. Understanding the limits and potential of this format is essential to ensure an effective, engaging, and sustainable learning experience for participants.

One crucial element in the design of online training is duration. It is strongly recommended not to exceed one and a half hours per online session, as beyond this limit participants' attention and level of engagement tend to decrease significantly.

When planning the session, it is advisable to allow at least 5 minutes for a check-in, giving everyone time to access the virtual room and resolve any possible connection issues. These initial minutes can also be used to greet each other and engage in brief informal conversations.

Respecting the announced timing is a form of care for participants and helps to build trust and motivation. A well-designed session—clear in its objectives and contained in its duration—enhances the overall quality of the learning experience and encourages active participation.

In conclusion, online training requires careful planning, flexibility, and attention to the human dimension of relationships. When thoughtfully designed, it can become a meaningful space for learning, dialogue, and shared growth.

### Limits and strengths of online training

Online training presents several structural limitations that affect the quality of the learning experience. These include a reduced ability to read participants' body language and non-verbal cues, as well as limited opportunities to engage the body and movement within educational activities. Building deep relational connections can also be more challenging, while participants' attention is often more fragile, influenced by external distractions, visual fatigue, and digital overload.

In addition, not all participants have the same level of technological skills or access to adequate learning conditions. Connectivity issues, unsuitable devices, or unfavourable home environments can disrupt the flow of the training and lead to interruptions or frustration.

At the same time, online training offers significant advantages. It makes it possible to overcome geographical distances, reduce travel-related costs, and broaden access to learning opportunities, enabling the participation of people who might otherwise be excluded. Moreover, for some individuals, the online space can feel safer and less exposing than in-person settings, making it easier to voice questions, experiences, and reflections. When intentionally designed, online training can thus become an accessible, inclusive, and meaningful educational space.

## Contents for online training sessions

Compared to in-person training, the digital learning environment requires greater care in the selection, organization, and delivery of content. Due to the limited availability of non-verbal cues, the risk of cognitive overload and declining attention is higher and may not be immediately noticeable to the trainer or facilitator. For this reason, thoughtful instructional design becomes particularly important.

Theoretical inputs should be clear, concise, and well structured. The use of visual aids can enhance accessibility and engagement, provided they are carefully designed: slides should be visually clean, with minimal text and clearly highlighted key words. Diagrams, concept maps, and images can help clarify complex ideas and support memory. Likewise, concrete examples, case studies, or short narratives drawn from experience make theoretical content more relatable and meaningful.

To sustain attention and vary learning modes, it is helpful to integrate different formats within the same session, such as short videos, quotations, guiding questions, individual reflection exercises, or small-group discussions. This variety supports different learning styles and helps reduce fatigue associated with prolonged listening.

Finally, given the high likelihood of distraction in online settings, it is advisable to include a concluding summary that revisits and reinforces the main concepts addressed during the session.

## How to manage an online session and foster participants' interaction

One of the most challenging aspects of online training is encouraging active participation and sustaining attention. Unlike face-to-face settings, each participant joins from a different environment—such as their home, workplace, or a public space—often marked by external stimuli and potential distractions.

This fragmentation of learning contexts can make it harder to maintain consistent attention and can affect participants' level of engagement. As a result, the facilitator may experience a sense of relational distance, with the feeling of “speaking into a void” and fewer opportunities to receive immediate feedback, both verbal and non-verbal.

A trainer facilitating an online training session can implement the following actions:

- ◆ *Creating a safe and comfortable space*

At the beginning of the session, it is essential to dedicate time to building a welcoming and non-judgmental atmosphere. Explicitly stating that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers helps participants feel authorized to speak and contribute. Clearly presenting the objectives, timing, and modes of interaction reduces anxiety and increases participants' sense of orientation.

Sessions should also include breaks, especially when the duration exceeds sixty minutes. Breaks allow participants to stand up and move their bodies. Clarifying from the outset that breaks are planned can help participants manage their attention and energy more effectively.

◆ *Defining participation guidelines*

It is useful to clarify from the start how participants can engage: speaking aloud, using the chat, reacting with icons, or working in breakout groups. It is important to value quieter forms of participation as well, such as writing in the chat or responding to polls, as not everyone feels comfortable speaking in plenary sessions. The use of the chat is particularly helpful in large groups or in intercultural contexts. Moreover, it enables more gradual and inclusive participation, giving space to those who need more time to formulate their thoughts.

It is important for the trainer to explain how the chat will be used (for example, for questions, comments, or reactions) and to take time to read and integrate written contributions into the flow of the session. This helps create a climate of listening and recognition.

◆ *Asking questions*

Questions are a central tool for activating participation. They work best when they are open-ended and connected to participants' experiences; formulated in a simple and clear way; followed by a few seconds of silence, allowing time for reflection.

◆ *Valuing participants' contributions*

Acknowledging and thanking participants who contribute, whether verbally or through the chat, strengthens motivation to engage. Picking up on a comment, linking it to the content, or using it as a bridge to further reflection communicates that every contribution is meaningful and heard.

◆ *Managing voice rhythm and expressiveness*

The pace of speech, clarity of expression, and mindful use of eye contact with the camera all contribute to sustaining attention and engaging participants. A dialogical and authentic style, attentive to group dynamics, fosters a climate of trust. Showing openness, welcoming silence, naming possible difficulties, and adapting facilitation to participants' reactions all help make the session a living and shared space.

◆ *Planning a Plan B*

If the training session includes moments of exchange or a dedicated question-and-answer segment, it is important to prepare an alternative plan in case participants are not responsive or willing to interact with the trainer or with one another.

## Section 4 – TRAINING ACTIVITIES

### Group Agreements

Establishing clear agreements at the beginning of a training session is a fundamental step. Each participant enters the learning experience with their own expectations, shaped by cultural background, educational path, and previous experiences. Some people are used to viewing training as a formal setting, where the trainer holds a position of authority and prestige, which can sometimes lead to attitudes of marked respect or deference. Others, instead, come from contexts where the learning relationship is more horizontal and participatory—especially in adult education settings.

For this reason, it is useful to dedicate time at the beginning of each program to defining Group Agreements, which help create clarity within the context and relationships, aligning mutual expectations. These agreements are not rigid rules, but shared reference points that allow the group to feel safe and free to participate authentically.

It is the trainer who introduces the Group Agreements, suggesting two or three basic principles. These serve both to establish common ground and to foster an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. Common examples include mutual respect—such as not interrupting others, speaking one at a time, and listening attentively—and punctuality, as a form of respect for both the group and the facilitator. In trainings that address sensitive topics, it is also helpful to add a confidentiality agreement, inviting participants to keep what happens within the group inside the learning space. This helps build a protected environment in which everyone can feel welcomed, heard, and free to share their experiences.

Additional agreements may emerge directly from the participants, who—guided and encouraged by the trainer—are invited to reflect on which conditions foster for them a climate of well-being, trust, and participation. This moment of exchange is valuable because it allows everyone to express their needs and feel actively involved in shaping the learning space. Participants often propose concrete elements, such as respectful listening, the option to take short breaks, the freedom not to intervene if they do not feel ready, or the commitment to value everyone's opinions, even when they differ.

Through this co-creation process, the agreements become a true collaborative pact, not imposed but shared, which strengthens group cohesion and collective responsibility. When people take part in defining the rules, their sense of belonging and motivation increase, making the learning environment more authentic, open, and inclusive.

## 1. Our Group Agreement

### Activity topic

Finding common agreements, decision making, safe space, inclusion

### Objective

- To co-create a set of shared values, behaviours, and expectations that guide the group's learning journey and promote trust among participants

### Target

Any target group

### Numbers

5-30

### Materials and location

- Flip chart, markers
- The activity can be conducted indoor or outdoor

### Time

20–30 minutes or more (depending on the group size)

### Activity description

#### *5 min – Introduction*

The trainer explains the importance of establishing shared agreements in order to create a safe and inclusive space where everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and can benefit fully from the training experience. The trainer focuses on what are the participants' needs that help them feel safe, respected, and engaged, and also on personal responsibility in creating a safe space of sharing. The trainer suggests a few (2–3) sample agreements and writes them on the flip chart (see *Notes for trainers/Facilitators*). The first ones are introduced and explained by the trainer, including the reason for the proposal.

#### *15 min – Sharing of additional agreements by participants*

Afterwards, the trainer invites the group to propose additional agreements that would help everyone feel comfortable and engaged. The new ones are written on the flip chart.

At the end, the trainer facilitates a brief discussion with the group to agree on the decision-making process (for example, unanimity or majority) to confirm the agreement. If unanimity is chosen, the trainer also clarifies how dissent will be handled (for example, by creating space for concerns to be expressed and explored before moving forward). The trainer then suggests a short ritual to confirm the agreement (e.g. 'Please raise your right hand if you agree.').

The final group agreement is displayed in a visible place in the room.

### Notes for trainers/facilitators

- Some agreements are generally necessary in any learning environment. Examples of the first ones introduced by the trainer may include:
  - We respect each participant and listen to their opinions so that everyone feels free to express themselves.
  - When someone speaks, others do not interrupt.
  - Take care of others' feelings: be kind and gentle.
  - Keep confidentiality: what happens and what is said in the group stays within the group.

- When inviting participants to propose additional agreements, the trainer may start with an open question such as: "What do you need from others — and what are you willing to give — in order to learn well in a group?"
- During this discussion, participants often mention practical aspects such as punctuality or the need for breaks. If these do not come up naturally, the trainer can prompt the group with guiding questions.
- Another useful question could be: "How can we handle disagreements or moments of discomfort during the training?"
- If there are 2 trainers, they may decide whether one of them will be responsible for addressing such situations, or whether to pause the ongoing activity and deal with them collectively.
- If the training extends over several days, the trainer can invite participants to reflect later on whether they wish to add new agreements or review how well the existing agreement has been respected so far.
- In the case of a large group, the process will take more time. The trainer may divide participants into sub-groups of 3–5 people. After presenting the initial agreements, each group discusses and reflects on:
  - *What helps us feel that our needs for safety, respect, and engagement are met?*
  - *What behaviours or attitudes might harm the learning climate?*
  - *How to handle disagreement or discomfort during the training?*

Each group then writes a short list of "Do's and Don'ts" or "Agreements" on a sheet of paper and selects one representative to share their list during the plenary session.

**Printable or sent resources**

If working in sub-groups, provide guiding questions for the sub-group discussion.

## Name Games and Getting-To-Know-You Activities

Name games and getting-to-know-you activities are designed to help participants get acquainted with one another. In many cases, the members of a training group do not know each other beforehand, and becoming familiar with those with whom they will share the learning experience is essential at the start of any educational journey. These are simple exercises that facilitate introductions and allow participants to discover something about one another in an easy, authentic, and often playful way. Their goal is to create, from the very beginning, an atmosphere of trust, openness, and mutual curiosity—laying the groundwork for friendly, cooperative, and welcoming relationships within the group.

Name games usually revolve around each participant's name. For example, participants might introduce themselves by saying their name and associating it with a gesture, an adjective, or a sound that represents them; or they might repeat the names of others to help memorize them through play and movement. Though seemingly simple, these activities serve an important psychological and relational function: they help break the ice, reduce initial awkwardness, and foster a sense of familiarity within the group.

Beyond name-based exercises, getting-to-know-you activities can include sharing brief personal stories, presenting symbolic objects that represent aspects of oneself, or answering guided questions that encourage light yet meaningful reflection. What truly matters is not the complexity of the activity, but its ability to create authentic connections and make each participant feel that their contribution — and their presence — are recognized and valued.

## 1. A Piece of Me, a Piece of Home

### Activity topic

Getting to know each other

### Objective

- To help participants get to know each other
- To build initial trust, and create a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere

### Target

10+

### Numbers

5-30

### Materials and Location

- Illustrated cards (Dixit, Inuk, or similar)
- Suitable for both indoor and outdoor settings

### Time

30-60 minutes (depending on the group size)

### Activity description

*10 min – Introduction*

Using evocative cards (such as Dixit, Inuk, etc.), participants are invited to select a card that represents them in the present moment—one that reflects their current mood, emotional state, or a meaningful and tangible aspect of who they are.

After choosing a card, participants are invited to think of an object, place, food, moment, smell, or other sensory element from their homeland that they would like to bring into the circle.

*5-10 min – Individual reflection*

Participants are given 5–10 minutes for individual reflection.

*30-40 min – Sharing in plenary*

Afterwards, the group comes together in a circle to share their reflections and listen to one another.

### Notes for the trainer

- During the sharing circle, the trainer's role is primarily to hold the space: encouraging attentive listening, avoiding interruptions, and gently managing time if the group is large.
- There are no right or wrong answers, and participants are free to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with.
- It can be helpful to model the activity by sharing first and offering a brief, authentic example.
- If emotions or memories arise, acknowledge them without analysis, keeping the focus on presence and mutual respect.
- Soft background music can be played during the individual reflection phase to support concentration and a relaxed mood. The music should be instrumental and not overly emotionally charged.
- After the sharing round, a short break or a light non-verbal warm-up (e.g., stretching, walking, or simple movement) is recommended to help participants transition and re-energize.
- If time is limited, the trainer can decide to use only one input: either the mood activity with evocative cards or the activity involving an object that reminds participants of home.

### Printable or sent resources

None.

## 2. First Map

### Activity topic

Diversity, sharing, connection.

### Objective

To introduce participants to each other

To foster initial connections, and visually explore the diversity of places, aspirations, and perspectives represented in the group

### Target

Participants of any background or age (adaptable to youth or adult groups)

### Number

8–30 (can be adjusted according to space)

### Materials and Location

- Printed images or names of continents (optional)
- Large space where participants can move freely

### Time

15–30 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

### Activity description

Participants are invited by the trainer to introduce themselves by choosing a city or country that represents a place they would like to be, a place they feel connected to, or simply a place they like or feel inspired by. The trainer can use images of continents or continent names placed around the room. Alternatively, the trainer may simply indicate the cardinal directions in the space to represent the different continents.

One by one, participants briefly explain their choice and move to stand in the area corresponding to their selected continent.

Once all participants have taken their positions, the trainer facilitates a short discussion to reflect on the diversity of places, aspirations, and perspectives represented in the room.

### Notes for the trainer

- Encourage participants to keep introductions brief (1–2 sentences) to maintain flow.
- Observe the group's movements and interactions, noting connections or interesting patterns that emerge.
- Emphasize the value of diversity and personal meaning in the chosen locations.
- Adapt the activity for virtual sessions by using a shared online map or digital whiteboard where participants can place a marker.

### Printable or sent resources

- World map or continent cards (optional, to place around the room).
- Small cards for participants to write the name of their chosen place (optional).

## Icebreakers and Energizers

Icebreakers and Energizers are short, intentional activities used at the beginning or during a training session to support group dynamics and learning processes. They help participants transition into the training space, connect with one another, and become more present and engaged.

An icebreaking activity is an exercise designed to facilitate the beginning of interaction among participants in a group — especially when they are meeting for the first time or have not yet developed familiarity with one another. Its main purpose is to create an atmosphere of trust, openness, and participation by easing the natural tension or distance that often characterizes the initial stages of a meeting.

These activities, generally short and dynamic, allow participants to relax and connect in a spontaneous and light-hearted way, encouraging informal communication and laying the foundation for a collaborative atmosphere. Icebreaking helps to create a sense of group belonging, makes human contact more accessible, and contributes to building a space where everyone can feel welcomed and free to express themselves.

The methods can vary greatly depending on the context and the type of group: some exercises rely on play and humour to generate energy and a sense of complicity, while others focus on listening or symbolic sharing to develop deeper connections. They may include light physical movement games, creative activities, or simple yet meaningful personal questions (“What is a place where you feel good?” “What is a sound that represents you?”). When well facilitated, icebreakers are not just moments of fun, but pedagogical tools that help build trust, mutual attention, and readiness to learn — transforming a group of individuals into a real community of work and shared experience.

An energizer is a short, dynamic, and often fun activity designed to reactivate the group’s energy and concentration — especially after moments of tiredness, intense cognitive work, or drops in attention. These are small physical exercises, movement games, creative activities, or playful interactions that stimulate both body and mind, offering a refreshing pause and restoring vitality and presence within the group.

It is advisable to include an energizer at strategic moments during a training day — for example, after lunch, when energy levels naturally drop, or between a theoretical and a practical session, to help participants shift from one type of focus to another and to “wake up” attention and create a smooth transition toward new activities.

Beyond planned moments, the facilitator may also decide to introduce an energizer spontaneously — even if it was not included in the original plan — whenever they sense signs of mental fatigue, distraction, or a drop in engagement. In such cases, even a few minutes of physical activity or collective play can make a real difference: they break the routine, renew concentration, and strengthen group cohesion.

When chosen with sensitivity and adapted to the context, energizers are not just about “moving the body” — they become genuine pedagogical tools to sustain attention, improve mood, and promote more participatory, fluid, and enjoyable learning.

## 1. The Walk

### Activity topic

Mindfulness, body awareness, relationship, social theatre, work at both individual and group levels.

### Objective

- To cultivate awareness of one's inner state and presence in the here and now
- Strengthening attention to the body, breath
- Relational contact with others

### Target

14+

### Numbers

6-30

### Materials and Location

- None
- Quiet indoor or outdoor space with sufficient open area to allow free movement

### Time

15-30 minutes

### Activity description

Participants are asked to begin the walk by gently bringing attention to their current state, noticing sensations in the body, thoughts, and emotions without judgment. As they walk, they are invited to stay aware of their breathing, their rhythm of movement, and the experience of being present in the here and now.

The walk concludes when participants naturally encounter another person, stop, and remain in silent eye contact for a brief moment, acknowledging the presence of the other and the shared space before the activity comes to an end.

### Notes for the trainer

- Invite participants to stay silent during the walk.
- Avoid directing the encounter at the end, and let meetings happen naturally.
- Gentle background music can be used if appropriate - in this case, it is important to consider the need for technical preparation in advance.
- Adapt the pace and duration based on the group's energy and comfort level.
- The activity may be adapted or modified with new rules, levels, and integrated tasks depending on the context, as well as the trainer's experience, imagination, and creativity.
- Source - Mindfulness-based practices (Jon Kabat-Zinn's "Mindfulness for Beginners" and "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle).

### Printable or sent resources

None.

## 2. The Mirror

### Activity topic

Mindfulness, body awareness, relationship, social theatre, work at both individual and group levels.

### Objective

- To cultivate awareness of one's inner state and presence in the here and now
- Strengthening attention to the body, breath, and relational contact with others

### Target

14+

### Numbers

6-30

### Materials and Location

- Quiet indoor or outdoor space with sufficient open area to allow free movement

### Time

15-30 minutes

### Activity description

Participants work in pairs. One participant begins to move slowly and consciously, while the other mirrors the movements as accurately as possible, paying attention to rhythm, quality, and small details. The focus is on synchrony, attention, and non-verbal listening rather than performance.

After a few minutes, roles are exchanged so that each participant experiences both leading and following.

### Notes for the trainer

- Invite participants to move slowly and remain attentive to safety and personal boundaries.
- Encourage eye contact when appropriate and remind the group that precision is less important than presence and connection.
- The exercise can be adapted for trios or for the whole group, with one person initiating movement and the others mirroring, reinforcing collective awareness and group cohesion.
- Gentle background music can be used if appropriate - in this case, it is important to consider the need for technical preparation in advance.
- Adapt the pace and duration based on the group's energy and comfort level.
- The activity may be adapted or modified with new rules, levels, and integrated tasks depending on the context, as well as the facilitator's experience, imagination, and creativity.
- Source - Social Theatre techniques (Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed").

### Printable or sent resources

None.

### 3. Sound of the Rain

#### Activity topic

Icebreaker, active listening, non-verbal communication

#### Objective

- To "wake up"
- To turn on listening and attention skills
- To enhance group cohesion, collective listening, and awareness of rhythm

#### Target

10+

#### Numbers

8-50

#### Materials and Location

- Indoor or outdoor space where participants can stand or sit in a circle and clearly see and hear each other

#### Time

10-15 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

#### Activity description

The trainer asks participants to form a circle and gives the following instructions: each participant must copy the action performed by the person on their right and should not stop until that same person performs a new action. The trainer starts with the first gesture, which consists of rubbing their hands together. One by one, the participants repeat the gesture until it reaches the person to the trainer's left. At that point, the trainer begins snapping their fingers. The round continues with this gesture until it comes back to the trainer, who then changes the action to clapping hands. In the fourth round, the gesture becomes patting the thighs, and in the fifth, stomping feet on the floor.

When this final gesture returns to the trainer, the sequence goes in reverse: first patting thighs, then clapping hands, then snapping fingers, and finally rubbing hands together.

#### Notes for the trainer

- Choose whether to mention that this icebreaker is meant to reproduce the sound of rain or not, and then ask participants what sound it reminded them to.
- Maintain a clear pace, allowing each sound to fully travel around the circle before introducing the next one.
- This icebreaker can also be used to calm the group or to refocus their attention.
- To make it a bit more challenging, you can propose the exercise in another session, asking participants to do it with their eyes closed.
- At the end of the icebreaker, take some time to ask for feedback: What did the sound feel like? What did you notice? How did it make you feel?
- Emphasize the importance of listening and of creating a positive, shared atmosphere together.

#### Printable or sent resources

None.

## 4. Zip-Zap-Boing

### Activity topic

Icebreaker, warm up, focus

### Objective

- To turn on or bring back attention
- To make the atmosphere more playful

### Target

10+

### Numbers

8-30 (the more players there are, the harder the game)

### Materials and Location

- Indoor or outdoor, with enough space to create a circle

### Time

15+ minutes

### Activity description

The trainer explains that all participants stand in a circle and introduces three possible movements: Zip, Zap, and Boing.

- Zip can be passed only to a person standing immediately to the left or to the right.
- Zap can be passed to any other person in the circle, except those standing next to the sender.
- Boing means that the pass is refused and sent back to the person who initiated it.

If a participant receives a Boing, they must immediately choose another person and pass a Zip or a Zap. The trainer explains that if a participant makes a mistake (for example, using the wrong movement or hesitating too long), they leave the circle.

The game continues until only one or two participants remain (the winners are two in the case the first says Zip, the second Boing and the first repeat Boing and so on).

The trainer can conclude the exercise with a short debrief, inviting the group to reflect on the importance of concentration and focus. Participants can be encouraged to share what helped them stay attentive, what made the game more challenging, and how distractions or pressure influenced their reactions. This reflection helps participants connect the experience to real-life situations, highlighting how focus, presence, and collective attention are essential when working in a group.

### Notes for the trainer

- Slow the rhythm at first, then speed it up.
- In a more challenging variation, participants who make a mistake do not leave the circle. Instead, they remain standing in place, but they are no longer active players. The trainer explains that the other participants must remember to skip them when passing Zip or Zap.

### Printable and sent resources

None.

## 5. Find the Boss

### Activity topic

Icebreaker, warm up, focus

### Objective

- To wake up the group
- To make the atmosphere more playful

### Target

10+

### Numbers

10-30

### Materials and Location

- Indoor or outdoor, with enough space to create a circle.

### Time

15+ minutes

### Activity description

The trainer asks all participants to stand or sit in a circle. One, two, or three participants (depending on the size of the group) are asked to step out of the circle temporarily so that they cannot hear what the others are saying.

The remaining participants secretly choose a "Boss". The Boss is the person who initiates a simple movement, such as clapping hands, snapping fingers, or another repetitive gesture. Everyone in the circle follows and mirrors the movement, changing it whenever the Boss does.

The participants who were outside are then invited back and stand in the centre of the circle. Their task is to observe the group carefully and identify who the Boss is. During this phase, the Boss should change the movement, without making it too obvious.

The participants in the centre have three attempts to guess the Boss. After the third attempt, the round ends and roles can be rotated.

The trainer can conclude the exercise with a short debrief inviting the group to reflect on questions such as:

- *What strategies helped the group stay coordinated without revealing the Boss?*
- *What made it difficult or easy to identify the leader?*
- *How did attention, observation, and collective synchronisation play a role in the activity?*

### Notes for the trainer

- Choose the number of observers (one, two, or three) according to the size of the group and the level of challenge you want to create. Fewer observers usually make the task easier for the group.
- Emphasize that the goal of the exercise is not to trick or compete, but to practice attention, synchronisation, and non-verbal leadership.

### Printable and sent resources

None.

## 6. Flow Impulse Exchange

### Activity topic

Icebreaker, warm up, focus, group building

### Objective

- To develop group awareness and mutual attention
- To practice coordination and shared timing within the group
- To experience non-verbal communication in a collective setting

### Target

14+

### Numbers

10-30

### Materials and Location

- Indoor or outdoor, with enough space for participants to move freely.

### Time

15+ minutes

### Activity description

The trainer invites participants to spread out in the space, making sure everyone has enough room to move comfortably.

The trainer then explains the activity. One participant begins walking slowly through the space. At a certain moment, this person gently passes the movement impulse to another participant by making light physical contact (for example, a soft touch on the arm or shoulder). As soon as the impulse is passed, the first participant stops moving, and the person who received the impulse starts walking instead.

This process continues for 3 to 5 minutes, with only one person moving at a time and the movement being passed from one participant to another through touch.

In the second phase of the activity, the rule changes slightly: only one person may move at any given time, but participants can choose to start moving whenever they wish, without being touched. When a new person starts moving, the participant who was previously walking must immediately stop.

### Notes for the trainer

- This exercise symbolizes balance, attention, and synchronization within the group. Like a mechanism, the group functions smoothly only when each part is aware of the others.
- Encourage participants to move slowly and attentively, focusing on the group rather than on individual performance.
- Emphasize respectful and consensual physical contact. If needed, clarify or demonstrate what "gentle touch" means.
- The activity can be followed by a short debrief, with questions such as:
  - *How did you decide when to start or stop moving?*
  - *What helped the group stay coordinated?*
  - *What does this exercise suggest about collaboration and shared responsibility?*
- Sources - Group dynamics and movement exercises (inspired by techniques from group therapy and rhythm games such as those used in Contact Improvisation and "Theatre of the Oppressed").

### Printable and sent resources

None.

## Activities with a Specific Focus

The activities presented in this section focus on specific themes designed to support the development of key skills useful both in educational work and in building healthy and inclusive relationships. Among the areas that form fundamental pillars for training programs aimed at peace, social cohesion, and personal growth, we find, for example: trust and collaboration, conflict transformation, effective and nonviolent communication, active listening, identity and diversity, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices, and relational dynamics.

The proposed activities offer concrete tools and experiential approaches to explore these topics in an engaging and reflective way. Through individual and group exercises, as well as moments of collective sharing, participants are invited to observe themselves and others, to experiment with new ways of communicating and cooperating, and to develop greater awareness of their emotions and relational patterns.

The goal is not only to acquire technical skills, but also to promote both inner and collective transformation: learning to recognize one's own biases, turning conflicts into opportunities for growth, and building relationships grounded in respect, attentive listening, and mutual trust.

Focus 1\_

# *Relationship*



## 1. Name Exchange

### Activity topic

Relationship, active listening

### Objective

- To listen to each other carefully
- To begin building relationships
- To learn names

### Target

10+

### Numbers

10-30

### Materials and Location

- Indoor or outdoor, with enough space to move around

### Time

15+ minutes (depending on the number of rounds and participants)

### Activity description

The trainer asks participants to walk around the space. When one participant meets another, they shake hands and say their name, as in a normal introduction. At this point, the participants have exchanged names.

They continue walking and introducing themselves to others, now using the name they received instead of their own. At each new encounter, participants take on a new name—the name of the person they meet.

When a participant meets someone presenting their original name, they may exit the game.

The exercise is successfully completed when every participant has received their original name back.

### Notes for the trainer

- It usually doesn't work on the first round. Sometimes it doesn't work even by the third round. That's okay; the important part is to reflect on the difficulty of listening and maintaining focus.
- Encourage reflection on taking time to process and store the information received.

### Printable or sent resources

None.

## 2. Building Relationships

### Activity topic

Relationships, active listening

### Objective

- To foster deep listening and relational awareness
- To reflect on meaningful relational experiences
- To identify personal values and actions for building transformative relationships

### Target

16+

### Numbers

10-40

### Materials and Location

- Paper or notebook and pens. Optional: evocative images
- An indoor space where chairs can be moved

### Time

60-90 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

### Activity description

#### *10 min - Introduction*

The trainer introduces the concept of active listening, highlighting its main characteristics — such as presence, focus, empathy, and the ability to listen without judgment. These elements can either be presented directly by the trainer or elicited through questions that engage participants in defining what active listening means to them. The trainer then explains the structure of the exercise, outlining its different phases and clarifying that participants will work first individually, then in pairs, and finally in small groups.

#### *10 min - Individual reflection on a meaningful relationship*

Participants are invited to reflect on a personal relationship that has had a significant impact on them and write about it in their notebooks. They receive the following guiding questions:

- *What makes this relationship special to you? (focus on concrete aspects, specific actions and the needs that are met through this relationship)*
- *What emotions does it evoke?*
- *How does it help you grow or change?*

Optional: provide a list of emotions and needs or illustrated images participants can choose to represent their relationship.

#### *20 min - Pair sharing and deep listening*

Participants form pairs and follow these instructions:

- Person A speaks for 5 minutes while Person B listens silently and attentively.
- Switch roles: Person B speaks, Person A listens.
- Spend final 10 minutes to reflect together:
  - *How did it feel when you were speaking? Did you feel truly listened to?*
  - *What did you learn from the other person?*
  - *Are there common elements in what makes your relationships special and meaningful?*

#### *30 min - Group Reflection*

The trainer forms small groups of 2 or 3 couples. Each person shares their reflections on what they discovered about relationships after the pair activity, using the following guiding questions:

- *What qualities do I generally appreciate in relationships? (think also about other positive relationships you have)*
- *What can I do to create such relationships with others?*
- *How can this awareness help me connect and improve difficult relationships?*

*10 min - Closing Circle (plenary)*

The trainer invites participants to share one short reflection, completing the sentence: "*One thing I take away from this exercise is...*".

#### **Notes for the trainer**

- During the introduction clearly explain that participants will later share about the relationship they reflect on, so they should choose one they feel comfortable discussing.
- During the plenary sharing, the trainer may write the participants' takeaways on a flip chart to collect insights. These can be used later in other group activities related to relationships.

#### **Printable or sent resources**

None, or input questions and instructions sub-group reflection if needed.



### 3. Experiential Urban Treasure Hunt

#### Activity topic

Relationship, self-awareness, exploration

#### Objective

- To explore a new urban space/city
- Connect with each other to create a shared group experience
- Connect to oneself

#### Target

16+

#### Numbers

Any number

#### Materials and Location

- List of tasks to do, sheets of paper, pens, markers, phone (depends on the tasks)
- Open space, a city, a village, anywhere

#### Time

1-7 hours, depending on the time available.

#### Activity description

A sensory treasure hunt designed to reconnect participants with curiosity and the joy of discovery. It shows how meaningful learning can be when it is playful and shared with others, evoking a sense of openness and connection - with the place, the group, and oneself.

The activity encourages participants to explore, make mistakes, and find their own "treasures" through experience rather than instruction. During the final sharing, everyone's discoveries reveal how differently each person experiences the same journey.

Like in art therapy, the focus is not on the artistic result but on what the senses awaken within us. The process transforms a simple walk into a creative reflection on presence, emotion, and connection.

*10 min - Introduction to the activity.*

The trainer explains the activity and divides participants into small groups (it can also be done individually). Each group receives a list of tasks. The trainer decides how many tasks need to be completed.

*30 min - 1 hour or more - Exploration*

Each group or individual carries out the tasks while exploring the space.

*10+ min - Final discussion*

Each group or participant presents their "treasures" and reflections, sharing the most meaningful moments and emotions with others to create a space for exchange and connection.

#### Notes for the trainer

- Clearly explain the purpose, structure, and flow of the activity during the introduction.
- Adjust the duration of each phase according to the context and circumstances.
- In the final discussion, create a natural and engaging moment of sharing among participants, emphasizing the key insights or benefits of the activity.
- This activity can be done either in small groups or individually, depending on the context, setting, or available space.
- It can also serve as an alternative or a complement to guided city tours

#### Printable or sent resources

The following list of tasks.

*You can choose the order and the rhythm freely.*

You have **X minutes** - try to complete at least **X** activities.

1. **Explore and collect** - explore what surrounds you and "collect" sensory treasures - a color that evokes a memory, a sound that feels comforting, or a shape that captures your attention. Record these impressions through sketches, words, or photos.
2. **Observation of multiculturalism** - Count how many different national flags you spot or how many different languages you hear.
3. **Silent listening** - Sit by yourself, close your eyes, and for five minutes just listen to the sounds around you. How many can you recognize? How many languages can you hear? Which type of public transport? Are there animals?
4. **Listening walk** - Walk in silence for ten minutes, simply observing what surrounds you - people, architecture, sounds, colours, smells, movements. After the walk, choose one "invisible treasure" that represents your inner state: a sound, a shadow, a face, a light, a tree.
5. **Leaf reflection** - Collect one or two leaves, hold them in the palm of your hand, and observe. Allow them to "speak" to you - what are they revealing?
6. **River observation** - Observe the river - or imagine it if it's not nearby. Watch its flow, its rhythm, the points where it speeds up or slows down. Compare it to your current state in life. Look for bridges: who or what helps others to cross? What does this landscape say about you?
7. **Signs of everyday life** - Walk in the city or village and notice small traces of daily life - writings, forgotten objects, footprints, spontaneous plants. Choose one that catches your attention and imagine the story it tells.
8. **Gaze hunt** - Go hunting for gazes - people, paintings, sculptures. Capture them in your memory. Which one struck you the most, and why?
9. **Small collections** - Collect small things like stones, leaves, or flowers and give them a new function or meaning.
10. **Local voices** - Ask a local passer-by to share a typical proverb or a traditional recipe - note down the ingredients and instructions.
11. **City poem** - Write a short poem about the city and yourself - what connects you to this place today?
12. **Street humour** - Find a funny mural or a sentence written on a wall or poster. What message or feeling does it leave you with?
13. **City life performance** - Create a short video performance representing "This City Life".
14. **Caring connection** - Make a caring phone call or send a kind message to someone you love.

15. **Play together** - Invent a game and play it with the group.

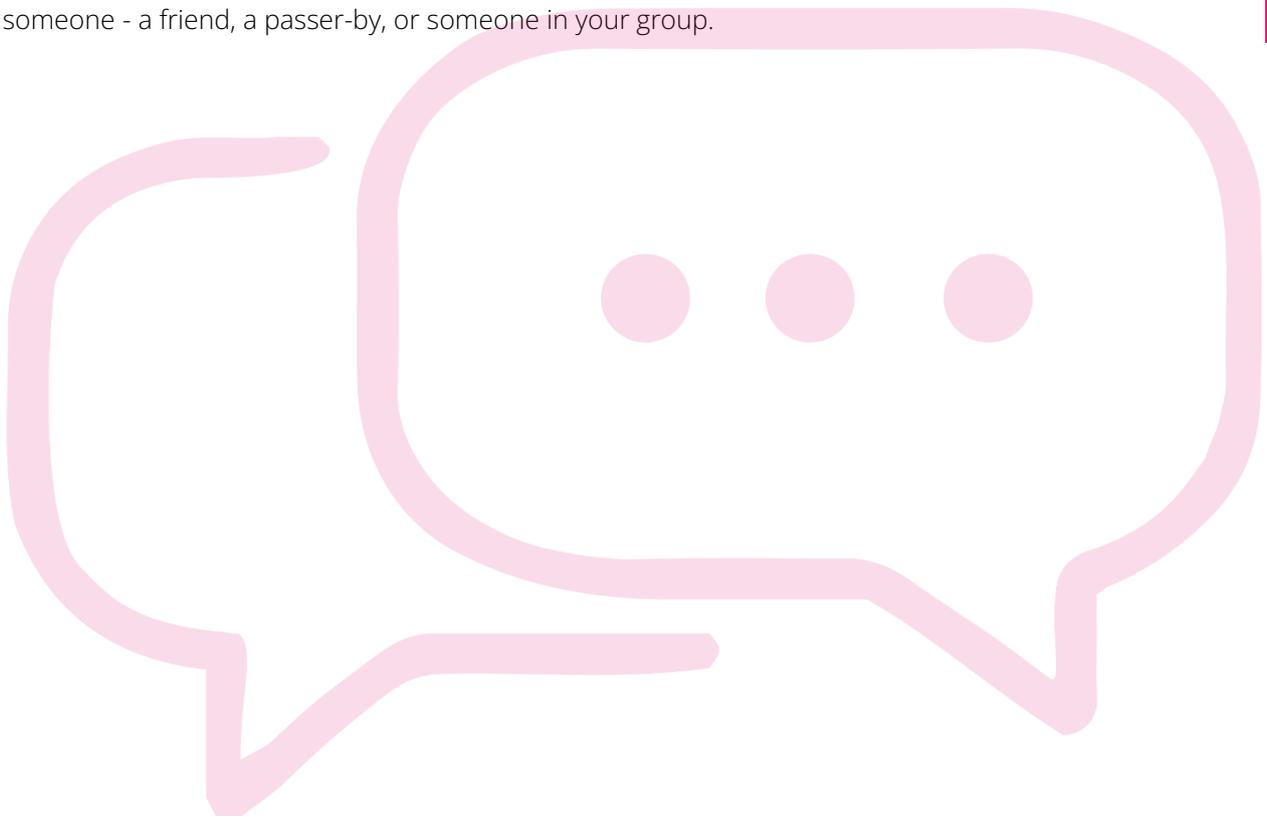
16. **Circle of compliments** - Form a circle and give a compliment to the person on your right.

17. **Sing** - Find a quiet or resonant spot - a square, a hallway, under a tree - and sing. Alone or with others, let your voice become part of the place.

18. **Speak with someone** - Start a spontaneous conversation with someone you don't know. Ask what they love most about this place.

19. **Monument encounter** - Choose a monument or statue and spend a few moments observing it closely. What values or memories does it hold?

20. **Write and share a note** - Write a kind or inspiring message on a small piece of paper and give it to someone - a friend, a passer-by, or someone in your group.



## 4. The Line of Thoughts

### Activity topic

Intergenerational dialogue, active listening, educational relationships, understanding different perspectives

### Objective

- To promote mutual listening between students and teachers
- To encourage reflection on different perspectives
- To foster a climate of respect, trust, and collaboration
- To develop argumentation skills, emotional awareness, and empathy
- To highlight both similarities and differences between generations without judgment

### Target

Mixed groups of high school students and teachers

### Numbers

10-30

### Materials and Location

- Tape or string to draw a line on the floor (alternatively: printed signs reading *"Strongly disagree"*, *"Somewhat disagree"*, *"Somewhat agree"*, *"Strongly agree"*). List of statements
- A large space where people can move around freely

### Time

45-60 minutes

### Activity description

#### *5 min - Preparation*

The trainer draws a straight line on the floor or places four markers corresponding to:

- *Strongly disagree*
- *Somewhat disagree*
- *Somewhat agree*
- *Strongly agree*

#### *2 min - Explanation of the activity*

The trainer explains that a series of statements will be read aloud and each participant will stand in the area that best represents their opinion.

#### *25-35 min - Reading the statements*

Statements are read one at a time. Participants choose their position along the line and on a voluntary basis, 1 or 2 people briefly explain their choice. Then we pass to the following statement.

#### *15-20 min - Final debriefing*

The trainer conducts a guided discussion in circle, using the provided questions (see Printable resources). Participants are invited to reflect on emotions, insights, and group dynamics.

### Notes for the trainer

- Establish psychological safety: remind participants there are no right or wrong answers.
- No one is required to justify their choice.
- Ensures a respectful environment and avoids direct debate when sharing about the position participants choose according to the statement. If strong polarization appears, gently bring attention back to listening rather than debating.

- During debriefing, highlight opportunities for discovery and mutual understanding.

#### Possible adaptations:

- divide into subgroups for very large classes;
- use cones or signs outdoors;
- choose "soft" statements for more sensitive groups.

#### Printable or sent resources

#### Suggested statements

##### *School and learning*

- You only learn at school from lessons, not from relationships.
- Students should have more say in school decisions.
- Teachers should listen more to students.

##### *Relationships and respect*

- To understand someone, you must truly listen first.
- Respect must be mutual, not only towards adults.
- Teachers should show more empathy towards students.
- Age difference makes it hard to truly understand one another.
- School should be a place where you feel free to express your emotions

##### *Technology and generations*

- Young people spend too much time on their phones.
- Social networks make real communication harder.
- Teachers should use more technology in class.

##### *Debriefing questions*

#### Personal reflection

- How did it feel to choose a position?
- Did you ever feel "alone" in your choice?
- Did you change your mind at any point? Why?

#### Group reflection

- What struck you when you saw where others stood?
- Did you discover perspectives you didn't expect?
- Did you notice that students and teachers sometimes think alike?
- Where did differences emerge?

#### Looking ahead

- What can we learn from this activity to improve dialogue at school?
- What concrete actions could help teachers and students understand each other better?
- If you had to describe the experience in one word, what would it be?

## 5. A 5 Persons Job

### Activity topic

Respecting Roles

### Objective

- To highlight how overlapping roles and the desire to decide everything as a group is not always the best approach
- Respecting each other roles, skills, quality will bring more efficiency

### Target

16+

### Numbers

5-25

### Materials and Location

- Paper, markers and possibly a multitude of random objects at disposal for everyone at the beginning of the play so the Directors can use their imagination to enrich the play. Each group can use whatever the space has to offer, chairs, clothes of other people, stage, music.
- Indoor or outdoor space enough space where each sub-group can work on their scene (better if far away from each other). Space for each group to perform in front of others.

### Time

90 minutes

### Activity description

*20 min – Introduction*

The trainer gives a brief introduction on the importance of respecting roles with concrete examples and asks participants about their experiences with the consequences of not respecting roles.

*10 min – Explanation of the activity and creation of sub-groups*

The trainer forms sub-groups of five participants and assigns roles and a scenario. Each group has: 1 Author, 2 Actors, 1 Director, and 1 Assistant.

*10 min – Group preparation*

Each sub-group prepares their performance, organizing roles and planning their scene.

*25 min – Group performances*

Each group performs their scene. Time for standing up and returning to their seats should be included.

*20 min – Plenary debrief*

The trainer facilitates a discussion: participants reflect on which group prepared the best play and why. The winning group shares what worked well in their collaboration, and all groups discuss what did not work and what could have been done differently to achieve better results within the short time.

### Notes for the trainer

- The title is ironic, because it suggests that the work is just about five people doing something together, but the activity shows that simply being five is not enough. What matters is how each person contributes, with a different role, and how the roles work together.
- The trainer does not disclose or hint in advance that the group respecting each person's role will likely achieve better results.
- The group that collaborates most effectively, respecting the decisions of the various characters within the short time available, is likely to prepare the most coordinated, well-structured, and organized skit. Groups that spend too much time discussing every step together may lose time and fail to complete their performance.

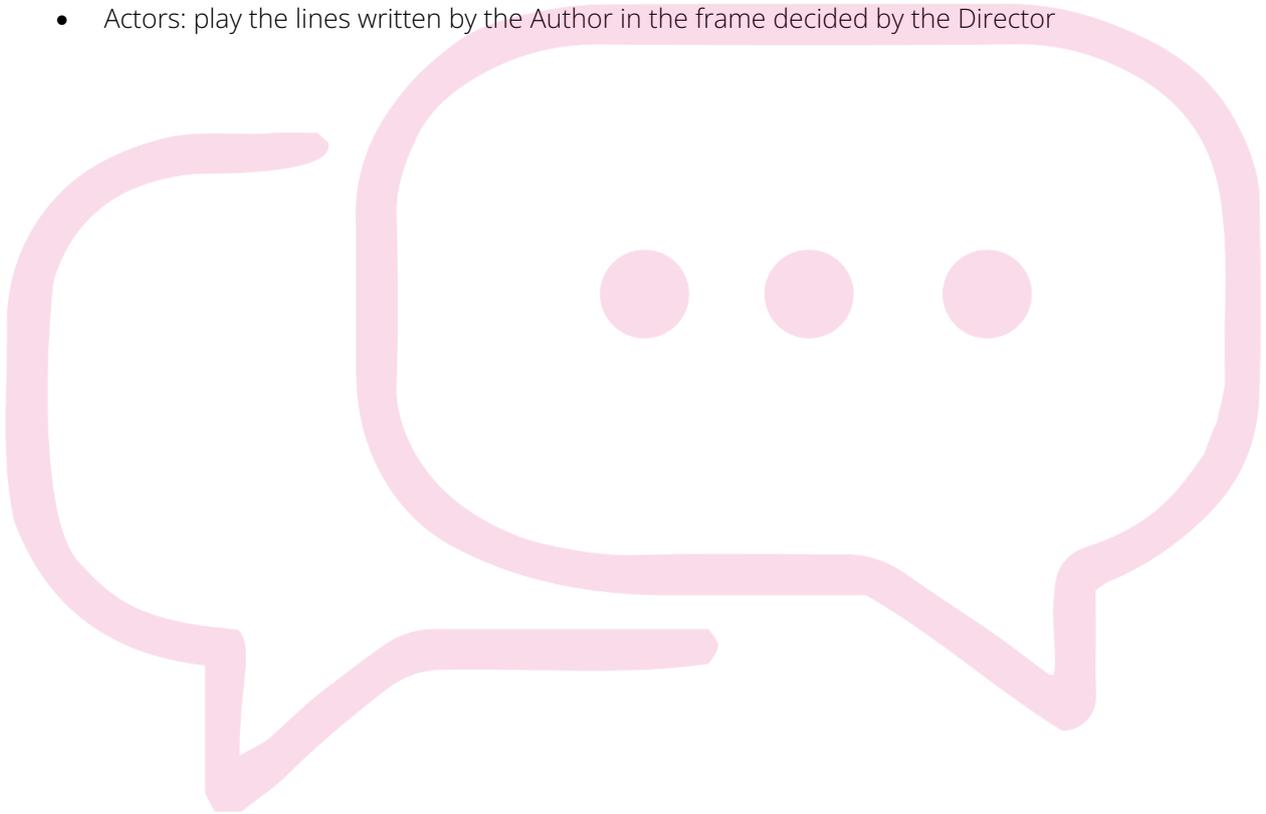
- The most important part is the final reflection after all scenes have been performed. Participants recognize, by comparing the different scenes, what worked well, what did not, and the reasons behind these outcomes.
- The trainer highlights that the consequences of respecting—or not respecting—roles apply to every aspect of life: in a group, at work, among friends, in sports, and within the family.

#### Printable or sent resources

- One scenario for each sub-group.
- One sheet for each sub-group describing the responsibilities of each member (see *Main responsibilities of each character* below).

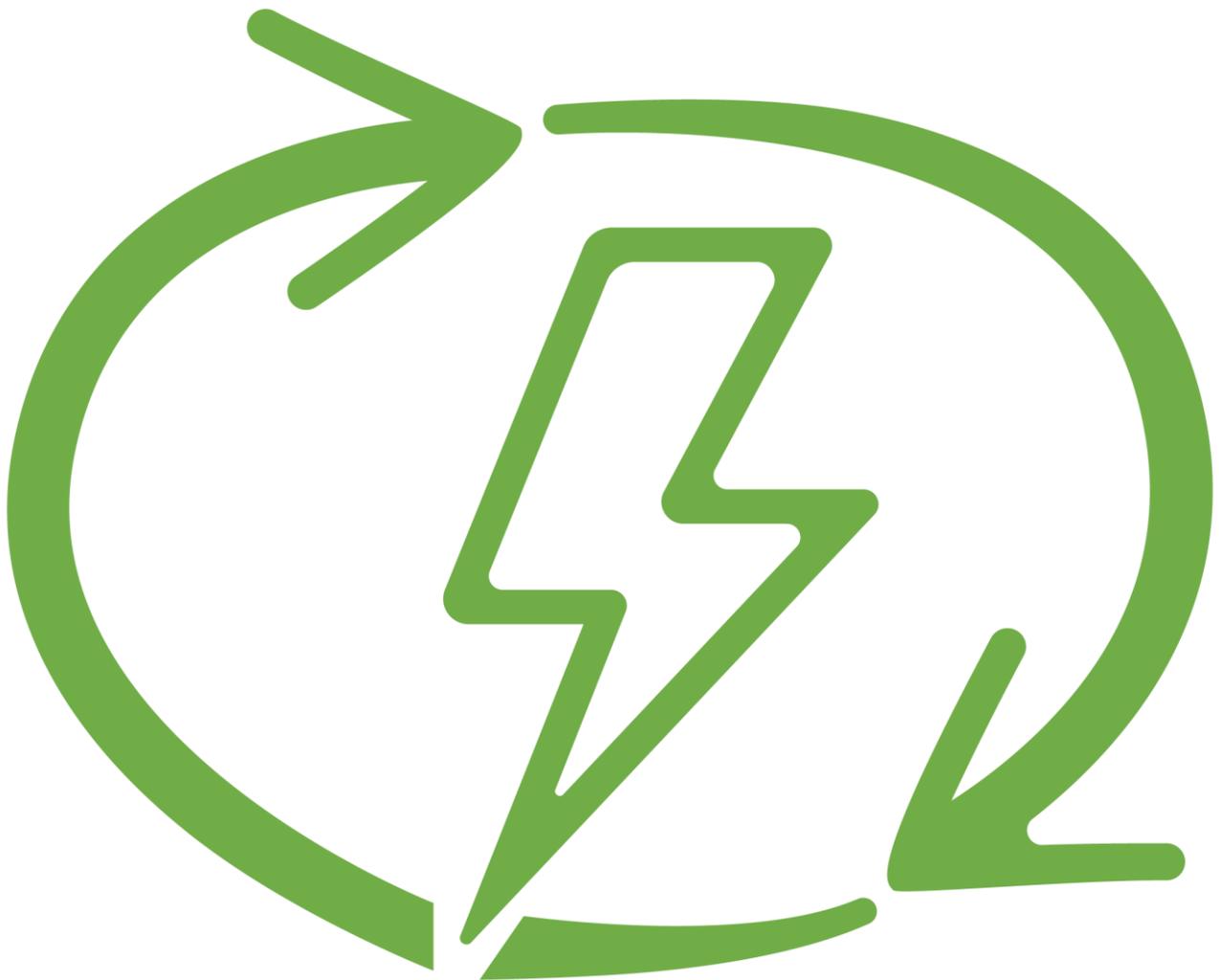
#### *Main responsibilities of each character:*

- Author: writes the dialogues of the actors and decide the plot
- Director: sets up the scene, including scenography, music, necessary tools and materials, and costumes
- Assistant: does not decide anything, just follow director orders
- Actors: play the lines written by the Author in the frame decided by the Director



Focus 2\_

# *Conflict Transformation*



## 1. Gestures and Meanings/1

### Activity topic

Conflict transformation

### Objective

- Enables participants to explore cultural differences in non-verbal communication
- Enhancing their ability to avoid misunderstandings
- Adapt gestures in international contexts.

### Target

15+

### Numbers

6-40

### Materials and Location

Scenario cards and sub-group tasks. Notebook or paper to write notes, pens.

Suitable for indoor spaces with enough space for subgroup work and short role-plays; can also be adapted to outdoor settings if the space allows participants to move and perform comfortably.

### Time

30-60 min (depending on the number of participants)

### Activity description

#### *5 min - Introduction*

The trainer makes an introduction explaining that communication is not only about words. A large part of communication is conveyed through gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. However, gestures are not universal. The same gesture can be positive in one culture and offensive or confusing in another. Non-verbal signals can easily lead to misunderstandings or even conflict, especially in intercultural contexts.

Examples:

- The thumbs-up gesture means "great" in the U.S., but it is considered offensive in Greece or in some Middle Eastern countries.
- The OK sign (a circle made with the thumb and index finger) means "everything is fine" in many European countries, but in France it can mean "zero," and in Brazil it is considered an obscene gesture.

#### *20 min - Subgroup work*

Participants divide into small groups of 4-6 people.

Each group receives a scenario card describing a situation based on non-verbal miscommunication between people from different cultural backgrounds.

The trainer then distributes task sheets to each sub-group (see printable resources).

- **Step 1** – The group reads and discusses the scenario, then prepares a short role-play or performance.
- **Step 2** – The group acts out the situation in front of the others, without revealing the scenario beforehand.
- **Step 3** – The audience observes and tries to identify the cultural or non-verbal issue involved.
- **Step 4** – The group and the audience discuss possible ways to handle, clarify, or prevent the misunderstanding.

*10-30 min - Group discussion and closing*

After all the performances, the trainer facilitates a group discussion using the following questions:

- *Which non-verbal signals were the most surprising or unexpected?*
- *How can misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication be reduced or prevented?*
- *What strategies can help us become more aware of gestures and body language in international contexts?*

After listening to participants' reflections, the trainer can close with some final takeaways:

- If you are unsure about the meaning of a gesture, observe how others use it or ask directly.
- When in doubt, choose neutral gestures to avoid misinterpretation.
- Tone of voice, pauses, and distance also communicate meaning—be mindful of how you express yourself, not only of what you say.

**Notes for the trainer**

- The goal is not to label cultures as “right” or “wrong,” but to understand differences and develop awareness.
- It is recommended to open a short discussion after each role-play, focusing both on the content of the scenario and on how it felt for each subgroup to collaborate and perform together.
- Other scenarios can be created or adapted based on the cultural backgrounds present in the group.

**Printable or sent resources**

- Instruction (1 for each sub-group)
- Scenario cards for subgroup work

**Instructions**

- **Step 1** – The group reads and discusses the scenario, then prepares a short role-play or performance.
- **Step 2** – The group acts out the situation in front of the others, without revealing the scenario beforehand.
- **Step 3** – The audience observes and tries to identify the cultural or non-verbal issue involved.
- **Step 4** – The group and the audience discuss possible ways to handle, clarify, or prevent the misunderstanding.

## 1. Personal space difference

*A diplomat from Italy is having an informal meeting in Morocco. He maintains a distance of about one meter, respecting personal space. However, his Moroccan counterpart keeps moving closer, reducing the distance to just a few centimetres and occasionally touching his arm or shoulder. The Italian finds this intrusive, while the Moroccan sees it as a warm and friendly gesture.*

✂-----

## 2. Eye contact interpretations

*During a business meeting in Armenia, a French representative maintains direct eye contact with his Armenian counterpart to show sincerity. However, the Armenian occasionally looks away and avoids prolonged eye contact. The Frenchman perceives this as a lack of interest or dishonesty.*

✂-----

## 3. Approval or insult?

*At a conference in Turkey, an Egyptian participant gives the "OK" gesture (a circle made with his thumb and index finger) to express agreement. His Turkish colleague, however, perceives it as an offensive sign.*

✂-----

## 4. Emotional expression and intonation

*A Greek entrepreneur passionately explains his position to an Italian partner, using broad gestures and occasionally raising his voice. The Italian, accustomed to such expressiveness, views this as a lively discussion. However, a Lebanese colleague nearby interprets the conversation as aggressive and distances himself.*

✂-----

## 5. Greeting and physical contact

*A French businesswoman in Azerbaijan extends her hand for a handshake with an Azerbaijani colleague. Seeing that she is a woman, he hesitates, unsure whether shaking hands is appropriate, as his culture does not always encourage physical contact with women. In the end, he simply nods slightly, which the Frenchwoman interprets as distant or dismissive behaviour.*

✂-----

## 6. The Left-Hand taboo

*During a business lunch in Algeria, a German colleague casually hands bread to his host using his left hand, unaware that in this culture, the left hand is associated with impurity. The Algerian feels subtly disrespected.*

## 2. Gestures and Meaning/2

### Activity topic

Conflict transformation

### Objective

- To recognize how conflicts arise
- To identify the "inner enemy"
- To transform tensions into understanding

### Target

15+

### Numbers

6-40

### Materials and Location

- Scenario cards and sub-group tasks. Notebook or paper to write notes, pens
- Suitable for indoor spaces with enough space for subgroup work and short role-plays; can also be adapted to outdoor settings if the space allows participants to move and perform comfortably

### Time

30-60 minutes, depending on the number of participants

### Activity description

*10 min - Introduction to the exercise*

The trainer explains that conflicts do not arise only from disagreements, but often from the ways we interpret gestures, words, and even silence.

Within every conflict, there can also emerge an inner enemy — something we reject or fear to see in ourselves. By becoming aware of this dynamic, we can begin to transform tension into understanding, uncovering the meanings hidden behind our reactions. In this way, conflict becomes not a battleground, but a meeting place where two truths can encounter and learn from each other.

After the introduction participants are divided into small groups of 3-5 people and each group receives one conflict scenario and instructions (see printable resources).

*30-35 min - Work in subgroups*

Each group works on their case following the given instructions.

*15 min - Conclusion / Group reflection*

In plenary the trainer facilitates the discussion and gathers insights.

### Notes for the trainer

- Suggested questions for the group reflection:
  - *What differences did you notice between the two versions of the same situation?*
  - *Which moments, gestures, or details caught your attention — something that stood out, felt meaningful, or that you'd like to discuss further?*
  - *Were you able to recognize when or how the tension or misunderstanding began to emerge?*
  - *What might become clearer or more visible if awareness or reflection were brought into the situation?*
  - *How did gestures, silences, or tone of voice influence the meaning of what happened?*
  - *What did this experience reveal to you about the nature of conflict — what tends to make it escalate, and what helps it shift or transform?*
  - *What insights from this exercise could you apply to real-life situations involving tension, communication, or teamwork?*

- The trainer can also use suggested inputs related to the conflicts scenarios (*see printable resources*)

### Printable or sent resources

Conflict scenarios for the trainer and for the participants.

### Conflict scenarios for role-play (FOR THE TRAINER)

#### 1 Scenario

Two colleagues had an argument the day before. The next day, one remains silent - not out of anger, but because they don't know how to start a conversation. The other perceives this silence as coldness and resentment.

The air is filled with tension - silence becomes a weapon.

#### Facilitator's notes

##### Depth

Silence is not the absence of communication - it is a form of fear. Both are afraid to say, *"I am hurt."*

##### Transformation

One takes a step: *"I'm silent because I don't know how to begin."*

Silence becomes a gesture of vulnerability, not of war.

**Key words:** silence, fear, interpretation, acknowledgement, vulnerability.

#### 2 Scenario

During a project discussion, one participant speaks loudly and passionately. Others perceive it as aggression and distance themselves. The speaker feels unheard and raises their voice even more. The cycle repeats.

#### Facilitator's notes

##### Depth

Behind the loud voice - excitement and emotional intensity. Behind withdrawal - fear of another's emotions.

##### Transformation

Someone stays present and says: *"I see this matters to you. Help me understand what you're trying to say."*

The voice stops being a weapon and becomes a search for meaning.

**Key words:** emotion, attention, recognition, energy, connection.

#### 3 Scenario

During a difficult task, one participant offers help. The other reacts irritably: *"I can handle it myself!"* The first feels rejected and angry: *"I was just trying to help!"*

#### Facilitator's notes

##### Depth

For one, *help* means control. For the other, it means care.

Both act from good intentions but read different meanings.

## Transformation

One says: *"When I offer help, I just want to be close, not to control."*

The other replies: *"I take help as doubt in me... but maybe it's not."*

A third space appears - a space of understanding.

**Key words:** care, control, interpretation, boundaries, trust.

## 4 Scenario

Two friends are in conflict. One cries and says they're tired of fighting. The other stays cold and replies:

*"Don't dramatize."*

One feels devalued, the other feels cornered.

## Facilitator's notes

### Depth

One expresses pain through emotion, the other through control.

They speak different languages of fear.

### Transformation

The facilitator invites them to exchange reflections:

*"What do you hear when they cry?"*

*"What do you feel when they withdraw?"*

Through their answers, a shared fear appears - the fear of not being understood.

**Key words:** emotion, control, fear, recognition, language of pain.

## 5 Scenario

Two participants argue about values. One accuses the other of cynicism, the other of naivety. Each believes they are defending the truth.

## Facilitator's notes

### Depth

They mirror each other: one fears their own naivety, the other their exhaustion and shadow.

The enemy becomes a mirror.

### Transformation

One says: *"When you get angry, I see a strength I'm afraid to show in myself."*

Silence.

The conflict becomes an encounter.

**Key words:** enemy, mirror, strength, recognition, encounter.

## 6 Scenario

During a group discussion, one participant irritably accuses another of "overcomplicating everything." The second explains that they just want everyone to understand clearly. The rest fall silent, feeling the tension and unsure how to react.

## Facilitator's notes

### Depth

Behind the accusation lies fatigue and fear of losing direction.

Behind the need for clarity lies the desire to be understood and heard.

Each moves from a different fear - one to speed up, the other to slow down.

## Transformation

When someone admits: *"It's hard for me when I don't know where we're going"* or *"It's difficult when things feel confusing,"* the conflict turns into a shared search for rhythm. The pace becomes a common field, not a battlefield.

**Key words:** clarity, control, rhythm, recognition, tension as signal.

## 7 Scenario

Two partners working on a joint project feel growing tension: one feels they are doing more, the other feels unheard. Both interpret the other's behaviour as disrespect. The conflict turns into hidden competition - who works harder, who matters more, who is right.

## Facilitator's notes

### Depth

Both experience a lack of recognition.

One seeks confirmation of their effort, the other of their voice.

The phrase *"You don't respect me"* becomes a defence against the fear of being insignificant.

### Transformation

When tension stops being a reason to argue and becomes the topic itself, trust emerges. The focus shifts from *"Who's right?"* to *"What does each of us need to be seen?"* Mutual respect is born not from equal effort, but from the willingness to notice the other.

**Key words:** respect, recognition, equality, vulnerability, shared space.



## Conflict scenarios for role-play (FOR PARTICIPANTS) to be cut out and handed to participants

### 1° Scenario

Two colleagues had an argument the day before. The next day, one remains silent - not out of anger, but because they don't know how to start a conversation. The other perceives this silence as coldness and resentment. The air is filled with tension - silence becomes a weapon.

#### Instructions

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*
- *Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*

✂-----

### 2° Scenario

During a project discussion, one participant speaks loudly and passionately. Others perceive it as aggression and distance themselves. The speaker feels unheard and raises their voice even more. The cycle repeats.

#### Instructions

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*
- *Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*

✂-----

### 3° Scenario

During a difficult task, one participant offers help. The other reacts irritably: "I can handle it myself!" The first feels rejected and angry: "I was just trying to help!"

#### Instructions

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*
- *Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*

#### 4° Scenario

Two friends are in conflict. One cries and says they're tired of fighting. The other stays cold and replies: "Don't dramatize." One feels devalued, the other feels cornered.

##### Instructions

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*
- *Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*



#### 5° Scenario

Two participants argue about values. One accuses the other of cynicism, the other of naivety. Each believes they are defending the truth.

##### Instructions

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*
- *Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*



#### 6° Scenario

During a group discussion, one participant irritably accuses another of "overcomplicating everything." The second explains that they just want everyone to understand clearly. The rest fall silent, feeling the tension and unsure how to react.

##### Instructions

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*
- *Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*



## 7° Scenario

Two partners working on a joint project feel growing tension: one feels they are doing more, the other feels unheard. Both interpret the other's behaviour as disrespect. The conflict turns into hidden competition - who works harder, who matters more, who is right.

### *Instructions*

- *Read the story.*
- *Identify where the "enemy" appears in the story.*
- *Act out the scene as it would normally unfold - without awareness (choose naturally within your group who will play each role).*
- *Replay the same scene, but this time add one conscious gesture or action that could change the course of the conflict (again, choose naturally who will play).*

*Find moments for discussion within your group (for example - before acting, after the first play, and at the end).*



### 3. Meeting the "Enemy"

#### Activity topic

Conflict transformation

#### Objective

- Explore conflicts from the other side's perspective
- observe how emotions and subjective perception shape a conflict

#### Target

16+

#### Numbers

6 - 30

#### Materials and Location

- None. Optional: printed instructions or guiding questions for pairs.
- Indoor or outdoor space that allows participants to work in pairs without being overheard.

#### Time

70 - 90 minutes, depending on the number of participants

#### Activity description

*10 min - Introduction of the idea and the steps of the activity*

The trainer introduces that conflict is not only a clash of positions or ideas, but an emotional experience. We rarely argue about facts alone; we react, protect ourselves, and interpret the other through our own fears and assumptions. By consciously stepping into the other person's perspective, we can shift the dynamics of the conflict itself. The task is not to justify anyone, but to understand how the situation might look and feel from the other side.

*5 min - Choosing a conflict*

Each participant is invited to recall a real conflict from their life that involved another person. This could be an argument with a colleague, a family dispute, or tension within a team.

It is important to clarify that each participant will share their story with the person they are paired with, and vice versa. This sharing will remain between the two participants, with no need to share the story with the whole group.

*50 min - Telling the story in pairs*

Participants pair up.

The first participant has 10 minutes to describe the conflict from their perspective (what happened, what feelings they had, what seemed unfair to them).

The second participant listens attentively, without interrupting or judging.

Now, the second participant has other 10 minutes to take on the role of the "enemy" (the person with whom there was a conflict). Their task is to retell the same story, but from the opponent's perspective.

They are asked to speak from the first person: "*I did this because...*".

#### **Important\***

- the goal is not to defend oneself but to immerse in the other person's perspective.

- the facilitator reminds: "*Imagine trying to be in the shoes of the other person - what were their reasons, emotions, fears?*"

Then, participants exchange roles. The first participant listens to the story of the second participant and then attempts to retell the story from the "opponent's" perspective. The goal is for the participant to step into the shoes of the other person, playing the role of the "enemy" and expressing the story from their point of view (20 minutes).

*10 minutes - Sharing in pairs*

After the activity, the trainer asks the participants to share their experiences in pairs, discussing how it felt to switch roles and what new insights they gained from viewing the situation from the other person's perspective.

*10-20 min - Group discussion*

After the individual sharing, the group will come back in a circle for a collective reflection. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss how their perception of the conflict changed, if it changed at all, during the activity. They can also share how they experienced the exercise in general and what insights they gained from stepping into the other person's perspective.

This group discussion allows for a deeper understanding of the different ways conflicts can be viewed and handled, fostering empathy and encouraging participants to reflect on their personal growth throughout the activity.

### Questions that the trainer can use to lead the discussion

- *What was the most difficult part? Was it easy to "become" your enemy?*
- *How did this affect your perception of the conflict? What changed in your perception?*
- *Why might the other person have perceived the situation this way?*

### Final takeaways

- Conflict is a relationship, not a battle of positions.
- When we understand the motives of the other side, we stop seeing them as an "enemy."
- The more mutual understanding there is, the greater the chance of changing the situation.

### Notes for the trainer

- Create a safe and contained atmosphere, clearly setting boundaries around confidentiality.
- Encourage participants to stay grounded and realistic, avoiding exaggeration or role-play performance.
- Be attentive to emotional intensity and remind participants that they can pause or step back if needed.
- Keep the group reflection focused on insights and learning, rather than solving individual conflicts.
- The "Meeting the Enemy" activity, which focuses on empathy-building and shifting perspectives in conflict, draws from well-known conflict resolution techniques such as those found in "Nonviolent Communication" by Marshall B. Rosenberg, "The Anatomy of Peace" by The Arbinger Institute, and "Getting to Yes" by Fisher, Ury, and Patton.

### Printable or sent resources

Optional: written instructions and reflection questions for pair work.

Focus 3\_

# *Collaboration and Trust*



## 1. Building the Tower

### Activity topic

Collaboration, team-work, participatory decision-making, problem solving

### Objective

- To foster team-work
- To be aware of different approaches to team-work

### Target

16+

### Numbers

8-30

### Materials and Location

- Simple, low-cost materials (e.g. paper, cardboard, disposable glasses, straws, tape, threads and ribbons, scissors) to "build the tower"
- Indoor or outdoor space that allows participants to work in small groups

### Time

30 minutes or more, depending on the number of participants

### Activity description

*5 min – Instructions*

The trainer divides participants into small groups of 4–5 people.

The trainer explains that each group is asked to build a symbolic tower using only the materials provided.

The trainer reminds participants that:

- Time is limited.
- They are free to organize themselves as they wish.

*10 min – Tower construction*

Each group works until the time is over.

*15 min – Debriefing*

The trainer invites participants to share in plenary using guiding questions such as:

- *How did your group organize itself?*
- *How were decisions made?*
- *Who pushed more for speed? Who emphasized planning or coordination?*
- *What strategies worked well?*
- *What difficulties emerged during the process?*
- *How did the constraints (time, materials, rules) influence your collaboration?*

### Notes for the trainer

- To make the exercise a little bit more challenging, each group can have slightly different rules or resources.
- In a different version of the exercise the tower can be built with marshmallows and spaghetti.

### Printable or sent resources

None.

## 2. Guided Journey

### Activity topic

Trust, mindfulness, body awareness, relationship, work at both individual and group levels.

### Objective

- To cultivate awareness of one's inner state and presence in the here and now
- To strengthen attention to the body, breath, and relational contact with others
- To enhance trust and attentive listening, embodied perception

### Target

14+

### Numbers

6 - 30

### Materials and Location

- Quiet indoor or outdoor space with sufficient open area to allow free movement

### Time

15-30 minutes

### Activity description

Participants are asked to work in pairs. One participant closes their eyes, while the other gently guides them through the space by holding their hand. The guiding participant leads slowly and attentively, inviting their partner to notice bodily sensations, movement, balance, and contact with different elements of the environment (such as textures, temperature, or surfaces). The focus is on safety, care, and heightened sensory awareness rather than direction or control. After a set time, participants switch roles.

At the end of both "journeys" participants are invited to share how they felt in each role. The discussion can address themes such as trust, sensory awareness beyond sight, inner thoughts, sounds, smells, touch, mental imagery, and the process of building mutual trust.

### Notes for the trainer

- Clearly establish safety guidelines and consent before beginning, reminding participants that they can open their eyes or stop at any moment.
- Encourage clear attention to the partner, and respectful physical contact.
- Monitor the space to prevent collisions and ensure a calm atmosphere.
- Adapt the pace and duration based on the group's energy and comfort level.
- Gentle background music can be used if appropriate - in this case, it is important to consider the need for technical preparation in advance.
- The trainer may introduce scents, sounds, or objects to enhance sensory awareness.
- The activity may be adapted or modified with new rules, levels, and integrated tasks depending on the context, as well as the facilitator's experience, imagination, and creativity (for example, participants who have their eyes open may be asked to switch the people they are guiding).
- Source - Partnered movement and guidance exercises (adapted from various psychotherapeutic techniques like Gestalt and sensory interaction practices)

### Printable or sent resources

None.

### 3. Supportive Navigation

**Activity topic**

Trust, body awareness, relationship, work at both individual and group levels

**Objective**

- To cultivate awareness of one's inner state and presence in the here and now
- Strengthening attention to the body, breath, and relational contact with others
- Enhancing trust and attentive listening
- Strengthening the ability to lead, follow, and navigate uncertainty through attentive physical presence

**Target**

14+

**Numbers**

6-30

**Materials and Location**

- Quiet indoor or outdoor space with sufficient open area to allow free movement

**Time**

15-30 minutes

**Activity description**

Participants are asked to work in pairs. One participant closes their eyes, while the other stands behind them, placing one hand gently between the shoulder blades. The participant with closed eyes begins to move backward, freely choosing direction, pace, and pathway. The supporting partner follows closely, offering subtle guidance and protection through touch, ensuring safety without controlling the movement. The exercise emphasizes trust, listening through the body, and awareness of mutual responsibility. After a set time, participants switch roles.

**Notes for the trainer**

- Clearly establish safety guidelines and remind participants that they can open their eyes or stop at any moment.
- Encourage slow pacing and respectful physical contact.
- Monitor the space closely to prevent collisions and ensure a calm, supportive atmosphere.
- Adapt the pace and duration based on the group's energy and comfort level.
- Gentle background music can be used if appropriate - in this case, it is important to consider the need for technical preparation in advance.
- The activity may be adapted or modified with new rules, levels, and integrated tasks depending on the context, as well as the facilitator's experience, imagination, and creativity.
- Source - Partnered movement and guidance exercises (adapted from various psychotherapeutic techniques like Gestalt and sensory interaction practices).

**Printable or sent resources**

None.

## 4. The Web of Appreciation

### Activity topic

Appreciation, rebuilding trust, active listening, cooperation, collective leadership, group cohesion.

### Objective

- To recognize the value, experience, and competencies of other members
- To strengthen interpersonal trust and group cohesion
- To improve listening and communication skills
- To reconnect with a shared sense of purpose and collective leadership

### Target

8+

### Numbers

8-20

### Materials and Location

- One ball of yarn or string
- Quiet indoor or outdoor space with sufficient space to make a circle

### Time

30-45 minutes

### Activity description

#### *5 min – Instructions*

The trainer asks participants to stand in a circle and explains the purpose of the activity: rebuilding trust, listening to each other, and recognizing the value of each member.

The trainer holds a ball of yarn and explains that the string represents the cooperative and the connections between its members.

#### *15-20 min – Building the Web*

The trainer demonstrates how the exercise works and starts by holding the end of the string, naming one participant, and saying something positive about what that person brings to the group (skills, experience, attitude, commitment). The trainer then throws the ball of yarn to that person while keeping hold of the string.

Each participant, upon receiving the yarn, repeats the process: they keep hold of the string, choose another participant, and express appreciation for their contribution before throwing the yarn.

The process continues until everyone is connected, forming a web.

#### *5-15 min – Reflection and Debriefing*

The facilitator invites participants to look at the web and reflect on its meaning.

### Notes for the trainer

- Before starting the exercise, ground rules are set (respect, confidentiality, active listening).
- Pay attention to group dynamics and emotional reactions; some participants may feel uncomfortable expressing appreciation at first.
- Encourage authenticity but avoid forcing participation.
- During debriefing, highlight how trust, cooperation, and leadership are interconnected, just like the strings in the web.
- If conflicts emerge, acknowledge them without judgment and refocus on shared goals.

### Printable or sent resources

None.

Focus 4\_

# *Training for Trainers*



## 1. Designing Effective Training Activities

### Activity topic

Training design, creativity, collaboration, team-work

### Objective

- To learn how to design and conduct training activities
- To challenge oneself as a trainer

### Target

18+

### Numbers

6-30

### Materials and Location

- Flipchart and papers, markers (different colours), tape, post-it
- Indoor space with a room large enough for a plenary session and several separate rooms for small-group work, allowing groups to work without disturbing one another.

### Time

3,5 ore+

### Activity description

*20-30 min – Introduction to training design*

The trainer provides a short theoretical input on training design and on the key elements that shape an active learning space. This is followed by a brief discussion with participants on what makes a learning experience engaging and potentially transformative, drawing on their own experiences and insights.

*10 min – Instructions*

Participants are divided into subgroups of 3-6 people and are given a case. The trainer explains that participants are invited to create a learning experience from start to finish. They should begin by defining clear learning goals, reflecting on what the participants in their mini-lab should realize, understand, or practice. Next, they are encouraged to choose methods and dynamics that suit the context of the group, considering factors such as age, motivation, and setting. The trainer then suggests assigning roles within the team, to ensure the session is prepared efficiently. Finally, the participants are asked to be ready to present and facilitate their mini-lab involving participants from other groups and/or the trainers.

*180 min – Group work*

Each group:

- Discusses their case and identifies the main learning goal of the lab.
- Designs the structure of the session (introduction – warm up/lab - main activity – reflection/closing).
- Prepares materials or a simple presentation format (no special resources needed).

*45 min+ depending on the number of sub groups*

Each group facilitates its training lab for the others, who will act as participants. Each presentation lasts around 30 minutes.

Even if the original case suggests a different time frame, the group should prepare an interactive 30-minute presentation, including at least one exercise conducted in full.

After each presentation, the group receives brief feedback from peers and facilitators.

*20 min – Final reflection*

The trainer conducts a shared reflection to explore:

- What was learned about designing and facilitating learning experiences;
- What made the process work or not;
- How these tools can be applied in the participants' own contexts.

#### Notes for the trainer

- Support the groups by helping them clarify their case and responding to their questions.
- Invite participants to agree on roles within the working team (e.g. who presents, who prepares materials, etc.).
- To make the activity more challenging, introduce unexpected situations during the group work phase.
- Different cases can be designed according to the context and the learning participants' objectives.

#### Printable and sent resources

- Instruction for the group work (one for each group)
- Case studies (1 case for each group)

#### Instruction for the group work

You will work in small groups to design and prepare a training workshop based on the case you received. Each case describes a different context, target group, and challenge.

Your task is to:

- Create a learning experience
- Define clear learning goals - what should participants realize, understand, or practice through your lab?
- Choose methods and dynamics that fit the group's context (age, motivation, setting).
- Assign roles within your team (facilitator, observer, timekeeper, etc.) to prepare the session efficiently.
- Be ready to present and facilitate your mini-lab for the others, as if they were your real group.

#### *Remember:*

Keep it simple, meaningful, and active.

Focus on why each step matters, not just what you do.

Encourage participation, curiosity, and reflection - these are the core of Rondine's approach to learning.

#### Case 1

Context: In a local high school, tension is growing between students and teachers. Teenagers feel unheard, while teachers feel they are losing authority.

Target group: 15 high school students (aged 16–17) and 5 teachers (aged 35–55).

Training setting: In-person session in the school auditorium, 2 hours.

Task: Design a short workshop aimed at restoring dialogue and mutual respect.

Focus: trust, active listening, intergenerational communication.

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#### Case 2

Context: A team of young activists is split into two camps: some want to act quickly and publicly, while others prefer a slower, more strategic approach.

Target group: 12 young activists (aged 18–25).

Training setting: Session in the organization's space, 3 hours.

Task: Create a workshop that helps participants recognize the value of different approaches and find a shared direction.

Focus: collaboration, strategic thinking, conflict management.

### Case 3

Context: Students from Mediterranean countries are organizing a cultural festival together but face challenges due to different communication and leadership styles.

Target group: 10 students (aged 20–24) from 5 different countries.

Training setting: One-day university workshop or a 3-hour training session.

Task: Design a workshop that helps participants view differences as a resource and strengthen shared leadership.

Focus: cultural sensitivity, communication, group dynamics.



### Case 4

Context: A group of women started a cooperative for local development. After initial challenges, they lost trust and began arguing about the direction of their work.

Target group: 15 women of different generations (aged 30–60).

Training setting: In-person meeting at the local community center, 2.5 hours.

Task: Develop a workshop that helps participants listen to one another again and rebuild shared motivation.

Focus: collaboration, leadership, rebuilding trust.



### Case 5

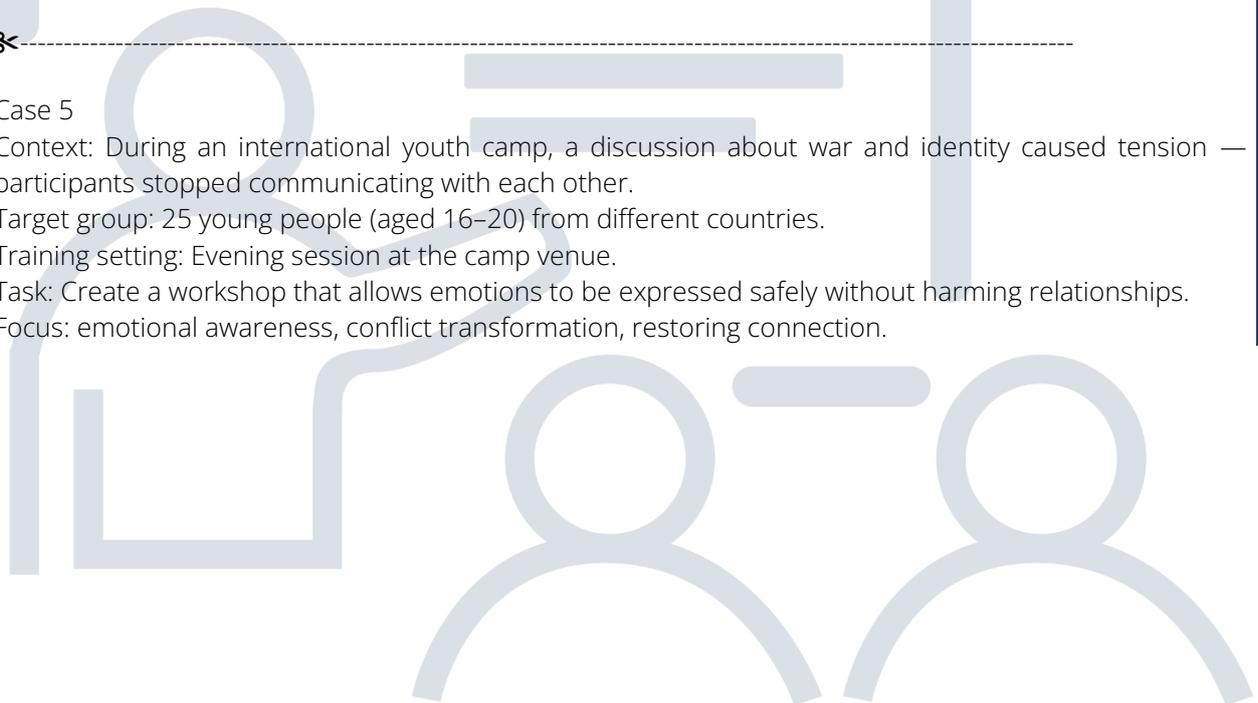
Context: During an international youth camp, a discussion about war and identity caused tension — participants stopped communicating with each other.

Target group: 25 young people (aged 16–20) from different countries.

Training setting: Evening session at the camp venue.

Task: Create a workshop that allows emotions to be expressed safely without harming relationships.

Focus: emotional awareness, conflict transformation, restoring connection.



## Feedback

Feedback activities are structured moments designed to help participants reflect on their learning experience and provide constructive input to trainers and peers. They are particularly valuable at the end of a training program, as they allow the group to consolidate what has been learned, identify key points, and recognize personal or collective growth. Through guided reflection, creative exercises, or open discussions, feedback activities encourage participants to connect the training content with their own experiences and with its future application in their context. For trainers, they also serve as a vital source of information to assess the effectiveness of the program, understand participants' needs, and improve future sessions. Ultimately, feedback activities close the learning journey in a participatory and meaningful way, reinforcing responsibility, mutual appreciation, and continuous learning.

## 1. One Word Each

### Activity topic

Feedback, awareness

### Objective

- To make a quick emotional and intuitive check-in
- To encourage presence and closure

### Target

10+

### Numbers

6-50

### Materials and Location

- Post it and flip-chart, pens (optional)
- Indoor or outdoor space large enough to make a circle

### Time

5-10 minutes, depending on the number of participants

### Activity description

Participants stand or sit in circle and the trainer asks them to share one word that expresses how they feel after the activity. It can reflect:

- a feeling (e.g., inspired, confused, energetic)
- a learning (e.g., awareness, listening, respect)

### Notes for the trainer

- The activity can be made using port-it, on which participants write their word and stick it on the flip-chart.
- To have a visual representation of the feedback, words can be connected with a red thread or line, creating a symbolic representation of the shared experience.
- To make it more creative, the connecting line can also take the form of a drawing.

### Printable and sent resources

None.

## 2. Reflective Session with Digital Tools

### Activity topic

Feedback, sharing emotions and insights at both individual and group levels

### Objective

- To support collective reflection
- To give voice to individual experiences, and visualize group insights through interactive and anonymous participation

### Target

12+

### Numbers

5-40+

### Materials and Location

- Smartphone, tablet, or computer for each participant; internet connection; presentation prepared in advance (during PeaceMed training Mentimeter was used)
- Indoor or outdoor space with stable internet access and a screen or projector (optional but recommended)

### Time

15-40 minutes, depending on the number and depth of the questions

### Activity description

#### *5 min – Introduction*

The trainer introduces the reflection session and explains how to access the digital tool. Participants are invited to join using their personal devices.

#### *5-20 min – Sharing feedback individually*

Through a series of prepared interactive slides (such as live polls, open questions, quizzes, or word clouds), participants share thoughts, emotions, or feedback related to the experience or activity just completed. Responses appear in real time, allowing the group to see emerging patterns, common themes, and differences.

#### *5-15 min – Plenary sharing and closing*

The trainer guides the process, pauses to observe the results together with the group, and invites brief verbal reflections when appropriate. The session ends with a short collective closing, highlighting key insights or recurring words that emerged.

### Notes for the trainer

- Prepare the input questions in advance and test the technical setup before the session.
- Keep questions clear, short, and focused on experience rather than evaluation.
- Allow moments of silence for reading and reflection before moving to the next question.
- Adapt the number of questions and the pace based on group energy and time available.

### Printable and sent resources

None.

### 3. Question Without Answer

#### Activity topic

Feedback, sharing emotions and insights at group level

#### Objective

- To encourage personal and collective reflection on the learning experience
- To give space to emotions, insights, and unresolved questions
- To practice listening without the need to respond or fix

#### Target

14+

#### Numbers

6-30

#### Materials and Location

- No material needed
- Indoor or outdoor with enough space to create a circle

#### Time

15-30 min

#### Activity description

The trainer invites participants to stand in a circle and briefly recaps the training session, highlighting its main themes or moments. Participants are then invited to reflect silently for a short moment on how the training affected them, what stayed with them, or what questions emerged. One by one, participants are invited to share one question. The question can be addressed to the whole group, to a specific person, or to themselves. Participants are clearly informed that these questions will not receive any answers and that no discussion will follow.

After a participant shares their question, the group remains silent for a few seconds, allowing the question to resonate. The process continues until everyone who wishes to share has had the opportunity to do so. The activity ends with a brief moment of collective silence or a short closing remark by the trainer.

#### Notes for the trainer

- Explain clearly that the purpose of the activity is not to find solutions, but to honour questions as part of the learning process.
- Emphasize that open questions can deepen awareness and reflection, even when they remain unanswered.
- Invite participants to listen attentively and respectfully, without commenting, reacting, or offering advice.
- This activity works particularly well at the end of a training, as a way to close the group process while leaving space for ongoing reflection.
- If the group is large, you may invite only those who feel comfortable to share, or limit each contribution to one sentence

#### Printable and sent resources

None.

## Reading Suggestions

**Dewey, John** – Philosopher and educator who emphasizes the educational value of learning through experience and the role of participatory processes in education.

*Experience and Education* (1938)

**Freire, Paulo** – A key figure in critical pedagogy, he focuses on the development of critical consciousness through dialogue and experiential learning as tools for social transformation.

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)

**Galtung, Johan** – Founder of peace and conflict studies. His work provides a foundational framework for understanding the root causes of conflict and the processes of nonviolent conflict transformation.

*Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (1996)

**Goleman, Daniel** – Explored the importance of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, all of which are central to reflective processes and interpersonal learning experiences.

*Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995)

**Kolb, David A.** – Developed the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and the Kolb Learning Cycle, highlighting learning as a process grounded in experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.

*Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (1984; 2nd ed. 2014)

**Lederach, John Paul** – A seminal voice in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, who offers a comprehensive framework for sustainable reconciliation that moves beyond traditional conflict resolution to include long-term, relational and participatory processes.

*Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997)

**Lewin, Kurt** – One of the main inspirations for experiential learning theories, he laid the

foundations of action research, group dynamics, and learning through experience.

*Field Theory in Social Science* (1951)

**Rosenberg, Marshall B.** – Developed Nonviolent Communication as an experiential practice based on active listening and conscious language use, emphasizing change through observation, awareness, and self-reflection on feelings and needs.

*Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (3rd ed. 2015)

**Vaccari, Franco; Díaz, Miguel H.; Hauss, Charles** –

This book offers an in-depth exploration of the Rondine Method and brings together essays by Italian and American experts, including the editors. It provides the religious, psychological, and political context for this innovative psychosocial approach to conflict resolution.

*The Rondine Method: A Relational Approach to Conflict* (2023)

### Training manuals

*Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* (2002) -

The Caritas Training Manual is a resource that contains both conceptual and practical tools to help fill the peacebuilder's toolbox.

*Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook* - Published by the United Nations, this handbook focuses on the role of young people in peace processes and provides practical tools to support their inclusion and training in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

*Young Peacebuilders Handbook (UNAOC / UN)* - A manual aimed at young peace practitioners, developed within the framework of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. It includes core competencies for participation in global and local peacebuilding, with exercises, tools, and intervention models.

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