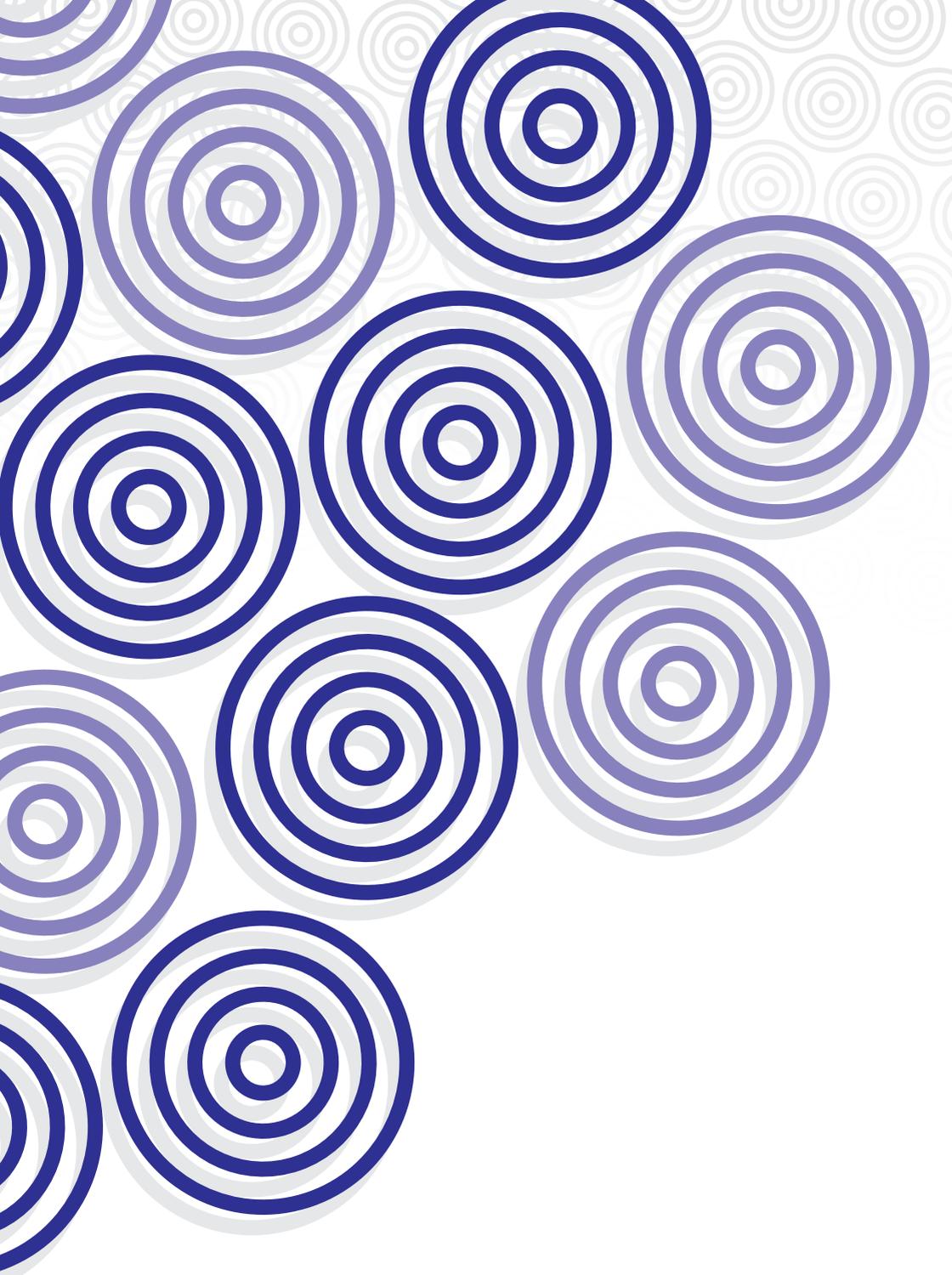


ConnEQt

**Connecting EQ to
Leadership
Development**

Training and learning
Emotional Intelligence

October 2019



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Purpose and target group of the learning experience

This paper is written with the purpose of describing a detailed curriculum in which activities, tools and practices are identified for cultivating emotional intelligence in leadership development. Being addressed to people in a leadership position, team leaders and people who are studying to become such, the curriculum is planned as a blended learning course. This means that online sessions (webinars) alternate with a longer in presence session, in order to allow participants to dive deep into the topic with some freedom to follow the introductory part of the course and to be coached at their own pace or when at work. Blended learning is thought to be an opportunity to learn in different ways, according to multiple intelligences and learning styles, by using different senses (eyes, ears, body, tongue and nose). It offers the possibility to “digest” and transform the inputs into a behaviour and to practise according to personal intention, reflection, and understanding.

In order to make the online training and learning happen, an online platform is designed to enable participants to find (put link to O3):

- articles written by the partners to go thoroughly into the topics object of the course;
- articles on the topic or related to it that can broaden the knowledge of participants;
- links to TED talks and other literature media with a focus on emotional intelligence and leadership;
- link to an emotional intelligence self assessment test;
- recorded webinars in case of impediment to be present during the live sessions or for reviewing it when needed;
- practices to do autonomously for cultivating body awareness, the ability to stay present with intention in a non judgmental way and for regulating one’s emotions

The online platform, also defined as an I-book, allows participants to reflect and discuss with each other about the topics highlighted during the course. It should also enable them to organize online meetings (in an Adobe dedicated virtual learning room), in order to share their reflections, to be coached individually and/or in groups and to practice together.

The curriculum also has the function to create the background material that can be exploited in other residential format with some adaptations, in case of need.

Aims and objectives of the blended learning course

The course has a holistic approach and values the power of experiencing in the present moment. It aims at providing participants with experiences and practices for increasing their knowledge, skills and attitudes on how to nurture their Emotional Intelligence, which is one of the most important leadership competences correlated with traits of being focused, developing resilience, arising self-awareness and being able to perform under pressure. Emotional intelligent people and organizations in fact increase their well-being and productivity either at a personal or professional level, including also the one of other stakeholders such as clients, suppliers and communities.

Furthermore the course aims at providing participants with the emotional strengths to adapt to change and deal with setbacks. It aims at enabling leaders to undertake conscious and intelligent actions regarding their emotional responses, as well as regulating their emotional state when in an emotionally charged situation. In addition, the course should enable leaders to use the same tools and activities when using their own emotional intelligence to carry out their tasks as observant and caring/supporting leaders of followers and other stakeholders with emotions and emotional reactions.

The objectives of the course are:

- To increase knowledge on emotional intelligence, on how emotions are generated according to the new neuroscientific researches and discoveries, and how these impact on one's well-being and decision making;
- To increase knowledge on how emotional intelligence supports leadership practices and promotes agile working contexts;
- To increase knowledge, skills and attitude on how to use one's own emotional intelligence to stay focused and flexible in moments of uncertainty and stress and to respond with an open mind in conflicting situations;
- To provide participants with experiences that allow them to become more aware of their emotional state and how this impacts their behavioural patterns
- To explore how to increase awareness of the present moment by experiencing it in a body, mind and heart level, in order to become more mindful and inner ready;
- To be prepared to manage unexpected and frequent changes by developing attitudes, practices and behaviours that enable participants to deal with daily personal and professional issues;
- To acquire simple and effective practices that can be integrated in one own's professional and private environment in order to cultivate resilience;
- To provide participants with tools for their professional observation and handling of followers and other stakeholders with different emotional intelligence and reactions
- To explore the calming and healing effects of using natural essential oils, as a way of reconnecting with nature and restore a sense of well-being;
- To experience and give space for kindness and compassion in one's leadership approach;
- To explore the inner unconscious beliefs that construct one own's mindset.

Methodology of the blended learning course

The experiences provided mostly during and after the onsite course are meant to trigger emotions and to raise awareness on them. They are not designed with a therapy aim in mind, however they might have therapeutic effects. Noticing and naming patterns can already be the starting point of a healing process, this is why it is important that trainers are quite experienced in processing the group's learning process and emotionally intelligent themselves for dealing with meltdowns.

The awareness the course is promoting is facilitated by getting in contact with ones' own self through focusing on body signals, through feedback and individual and group reflection before, during and after action. Awareness is the first important step for listening to the messages one's emotions send and for start practicing ways to regulate them.

The power of Nature

Awareness and regulation of emotions is also fostered by the vicinity to nature, considered to be a reflection of our inner nature. It provides participants with an inexplicable sense of tranquil awareness, contributing in reducing stress and helps them find meaning and connect with their true selves. Many studies in fact reveal the psychological benefits of nature, pointing to the fact that the closer we are to nature, the happier we feel. In

essence, nature is a powerful antidepressant, it lowers concentrations of cortisol, pulse rate and blood pressure, contributing in strengthening our immune system and muscles, with the chemicals (phytoncides) that plants emit. Nature is the element in the course that is meant to inspire intuition and creativity and essential oils are used as an easy to reach distillation of nature, intended to support participants in restoring their emotional balance.

Mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness meditation activities aim at offering participants spaces for paying attention on purpose to the present moment non judgmentally. It's intended to enable

people of becoming aware of pleasant and unpleasant thoughts and emotional/physical states. When thoughts and states are pleasant, awareness of it helps

individuals in appreciating the moment, with a consequent feeling of being happy and more at peace with oneself and the others. While raising awareness on unpleasant thoughts and sensations that might occur in challenging situations, allows people to have more choices in how to handle the generated emotions in that specific moment, since it provides a better chance of responding calmly and empathetically when faced with stress or challenges. Practicing mindfulness in fact does not mean one doesn't get angry, rather it allows to be more thoughtful in how one wants to respond.

Updated studies on neuroplasticity show

that practicing mindfulness meditation not only contributes in changing one's mindset and perspective, it can also contribute in changing the shape of one's brain. It allows individuals to move from high-frequency brain waves to a lower frequency, which activates certain areas of the brain and potentially even more importantly, deactivates them. For example, it can decrease neurological connections to the medial prefrontal cortex, or the "me centre", diminishing traits such as fear, stress, and anxiety. On the other hand, mindfulness meditation can also build new pathways to the parts of the brain responsible for traits like focus and decision-making.

Art and music

As already mentioned, the course has a holistic approach and takes into account the multiple intelligences and the different learning styles. Therefore art and music are also suggested as tools for moving emotions and transforming unconscious mental patterns that block one's self-development and freedom to choose, in more conscious responses. Living in a society where emotions are very controlled, leads to a lack of freely expressing what one really feels. This contributes in accumulating stress and tensions, that with time deteriorates one's health. In fact stress hormones, such as adrenaline and histamine, affect the body and one is left with no space nor time to release and distend the stress. Arts in general are a straight back door to access one's unconscious mind, it is a powerful resource that enables one to overcome limitations. Images in fact are free from any kind of judgmental value and therefore support individuals in paying more attention to the resonance that thoughts, emotions and situations have on them.

Through creativity participants can step out of the rational mind and no longer focus on results, but on the process itself. In the creative process, participants can enter into a vast space of exploration in the present moment, where joy easily emerges, and they can experience a powerful and transformative state of presence. Participants enter into a different state of being, far from a rational understanding of the world. The creative process is meant to allow exploring the unknown with curiosity and to trigger the intuitive mind with no judgment of what's right or wrong. Creativity allows participants to access resources from childhood such as freshness, vitality, curiosity, openness, joy, pleasure, innocence, spontaneity, authenticity, etc. These are powerful sources from within that allow further development.

Body movement and expression

The methodology chosen for the course incorporates and values the body as an organ of sense, that is able to detect and process data that can, if well trained, inform individuals on what is the most suitable response for the situation occurring in the present moment. All that is being experienced of the world, and the ability to act on it, is channelled through the body and the human mind is special not particularly because of its computing power, but because the body provides it with a unique interface to the world. Everyone has a body and is always moving, even if it is just breathing. One's movement and body makes visible all of who one is in terms of mood, personality, history, family, and culture. From the moment one is born the body is essential to one's learning, growth and relationships with others. Throughout one's life, the body movements communicate much more clearly than words. Listening to the impulses of the body helps in acquiring self-awareness in certain situations. Pay-

ing attention to one own's body moving in the space, allows identifying blockages or tentions, rather than noticing the potential within. It increases the sense of how one is moving in the social or natural field (earth) and enhances the sense of interconnectedness. Using the voice can contribute in opening and unfolding one's communication resources. Promoting embodiment in the course means allowing participants to reconnect to who they really are, with the purpose of restoring balance in oneself, the community and the world.

During the course participants are invited to go for a walk in the woods, rather than communicating with each other through body movement and gestures addressed from a Gestalt approach. They are also put into group dynamics for solving problems or being together in given circumstances. In general they are provided with experiences where they can be fully engaged with body, heart and mind.

Reflective practices

Most of the activities suggested during the course are meant to involve participants in meaningful experiences, during which they can explore interaction with others while having to solve a problem or having to deal with a given scenario or having to follow the movement of their body, or draw or even smell the scent of an essential oil. The learner is given a central role in the course and is invited to take responsibility for his/her learning, which in this way becomes rooted in his/her perceptions and emotions. This approach reflects the idea that each learner has a unique set of experienc-

es, mental models and assumptions and that restructuring and reordering what is known requires active, engaged participation in the learning process.

The on site experiences provide the material to be reflected upon, with the idea that reflective practices support participants in making meaning of what happens to them, the others and the context. In the course reflection is used:

- as a four stage process: Re-inhabit (relive the experience), Reflect (notice what was going on during the experience), Review (critically analyse

the situation), Reframe (capture new understanding);

- in action, as the ability to think on one's feet. This involves noticing patterns of thoughts, feelings and physical responses as they happen, and using this information to choose what to do moment by moment;
- for action, which combines insight with intention to apply learning in professional life.

The underpinning aim is that of transforming insights into practical strategies for personal growth and organizational impact. It involves integrating activities into daily life on a routine basis which raise awareness, prompt reflection and support self-regulation and decision-making. Reflective practices are intended to support participants in learning to pay attention, to listen to themselves, to notice their assumptions and patterns, with the aim of providing space for seeing the unseen and for looking at things from a different perspective. This is allowed by the fact that reflection is captured and expressed - written, spoken, pictorial, body posture - on a systematic basis. The background idea is that learning comes not only from the 'in the head' reflection but from the process of representing the reflection itself. In

making a representation of reflection, the content is shaped and modelled in different ways depending on a range of factors, including how one is feeling at the time and whether other people will see what one has made. When the process of representation becomes a habitual activity, patterns and connections become visible. Reflective practices are an essential part of developing new skills and at a deeper level as they contribute in raising awareness. They contribute in supporting the capacity of the individual to respond to challenges, make timely decisions, regulate emotions, conduct productive relationships and cope with stress. Reflective practice can help re-visit and strengthen neural connections that contribute to the development of new habits, skills and mindsets. They contribute in increasing self awareness, the capacity for emotional regulation and as a consequence the ability to inspire, influence and motivate others. They increase the ability to make decisions which show awareness of systemic impact and they grow the capacity to generate innovation through learning how to ask open questions and to attend to the answers with an open mind, heart and will. Reflective practices also increase the ability to be compassionate to self and others and inspire trust through demonstrating trustworthiness.

Structure of the course

The curriculum is organised as a three months long-term blended course, which means a combination of on-site and off-site training, with time for additional learning through coaching, personal reflection and practice in the in-between session periods. Three on-line sessions of one and a half hours each, held one every 2 weeks, open the curriculum. A 5 day residential experiential course follows the webinars. After the on-site course, participants are invited to apply in their working context what they have learned so far and in the meantime they benefit of two to three - either individual or group - tailor-made coached sessions to be supported in their upcoming learning needs. In the last month of the course a theoretical webinar is provided for going more in depth in the topic of dealing with paradoxes and dilemmas in the leadership situations and decision making process. To conclude the course cycle, participants are invited to share with colleagues and trainers the stories of the practices in their working context in order:

- to reflect on how nurturing their emotional intelligence has impacted their leadership approach and their working environment;
- To check to what extent the practices provided have helped them increasing their awareness on their bodily and emotional state and have supported them in regulating their emotions.

The curriculum is organized in content areas in order to make easier the merging of theories and practices arising from the partners' experience. The areas

identified are strictly connected to the articles that have been developed on the topic. Learning units are identified for each content area, by suggesting activities/methods/exercises for each learning session. The areas are built to trigger:

- the rational brain throughout the delivery of theoretical inputs on leadership and emotional intelligence
- the intuitive mind throughout an embodied exploration of emotional states.
- Another content area suggests participants ways on how to cultivate their emotional intelligences throughout mindfulness meditation, art and music, body movement, reflective practices and nature, including the use of essential oils. These practices can be chosen autonomously in any order according to the need of the moment. These can be repeated cyclically for installing healthy habits that support participants to connect with themselves for detecting and regulating emotions.

The purpose of this project is also to evaluate a long term blended learning course by testing different learning methods when dealing with emotional issues like leadership challenges, reacting to emotions, sensing emotional impacts, and human relationships – and to take into account different learning preferences amongst the learners.

The pre-course stage and the preparatory webinars

The first online sessions (webinars) are preceded by an individual interview held by each partner with the selected participants with the aim of:

- Better understanding the working context of participants in order to identify their major learning needs for fine tuning learning units accordingly
- Exploring participants' expectations for the course
- Agreeing on the individual commitment to apply the learnings in one's own working environment
- Exploring participants' intention for the course
- Making potential participants confident/familiar with the course – in their own language/native tongue, before the English spoken course starts.

Three introductory webinars are planned in order for attendees to:

- Get familiar with the online platform
- Have an overview of the course structure, its aim, objectives and major contents;
- Get to know each other with the intention to share more about who they are and what's their occupation and interests;
- Get more familiar with the partnership's understanding of emotional intelligence in relation with the latest neuroscientific discoveries;
- Get acquainted with the leadership approach the partnership retains being developed by nurturing emotional intelligence;
- Get an idea of the mutual expectations to the course and to the contributions and assignments of each participant;
- As a preparation to the first webinar, participants are sent some journaling questions for:

- Reflecting on the accomplishments achieved and the competencies developed so far;
- Exploring their sources of energy;
- Identifying their current leadership challenges;
- Identifying what's frustrating them the most at the moment;
- Identifying their specific professional and/or personal learning need;
- Setting an intention for the course and identifying clues that can tell how six months later they can tell to what extent their learnings have been integrated in their professional context;

The idea behind the journaling activity is to explore and sense through writing, rather than thinking about something brilliant to put on paper. The questions aim at leading participants through a self-reflective process, where they follow the intelligence of their hands (the intuitive mind) in order to access deeper levels of self-knowledge. Participants are also invited to get a learning log where to note down personal reflections, learnings and any upcoming insight in the moment when they occur, as well as reflecting on situations after they have occurred.

The first webinar is organized for:

- Allowing participants to learn about the functions and potentialities of the online platforms (webinars, resources, photos etc., online meeting rooms and i-book);
- Getting familiar with each other and creating a favorable informal and trustful learning environment;
- Introducing why in today's world, characterized by social, economical and spiritual divides, emotional intelligence is an essential factor of leaders who are able to generate emotions and situations that reduce the

distances

- Giving an overview of the programme details and of the methodological approach

The second webinar focuses on leadership. A set of journaling questions are submitted to participants in order for them to explore their understanding of the topic and to identify their major leadership qualities. The resource section of the online platform provide participants with books and articles that support the session.

The online session is organized in order for participants:

- to share in subgroups (in the virtual rooms) their personal stories about a moment when they experienced their leadership to be successful.
- to cluster the elements that made their leadership successful. The aim is to find the common features of what makes leaders successful and to make connections with the partnership's concept of emotional intelligent leadership. The idea behind is that emotional intelligent leaders take decisions by listening to the wisdom of their body, heart and mind. They pay deep attention to the messages of their emotions and are attentive to the body signals of the people they are relating with, in order to understand if any of these signals are revealing that something that is going on in them needs to be addressed and taken care of. Noticing and paying attention to data is the one tool leaders have for bringing forward a sustainable action, that is responding to the challenge or situation the present moment is requiring. Emotional intelligent leaders are changemakers who open sustainable and healthy paths that are in tune with humankind and the planet. They take up with courage their journey of self discovery and are aware of the environment (people, context and situation) and appreciate

and take into account its differences.

- To dive into a generative dialogue on the inputs given by the partners. The outputs of the discussion are then available on the online platform in order for participants to reflect further, at their own pace, about the topic.

The third webinar has the aim of introducing the concept of emotional intelligence and to frame it in the context of leadership and it's planned in order to:

- give an overview of how we generate emotions at a chemical level and how these impact our body and our behaviour;
- Highlight what causes stressful conditions;
- Introduce how processing experiences can create rooted beliefs and undermine one's self esteem
- Introduce the concept of the three brains (encephalic, cardiac and enteric) as seats of a complex neural connection;
- Share the partnership's definition of emotional intelligence as a dynamic alignment of the three brains;
- introduce the concept of bringing attention to the breath as a way to train one's mindful attitude;
- Show ways on how to restore well-being, by moving from reaction to response through creating a space for pausing and connecting to oneself;
- Highlight the main qualities of emotional intelligence such as curiosity to move out of our conditioned and judging brain by opening one's mind. Compassion to move out of a cynical heart by opening one's heart and courage to move out of a fearful will to an open will;
- Highlight the key function of the sense of smell as the fastest way to regulate one's emotions.
- Share the latest scientific discoveries of how the aromatic molecules of CPTG essential oils have direct access to the limbic area, the emotional seat of the brain.

The residential course

The Residential Course is planned as a 5-day intensive course that takes place in an area surrounded by a natural environment. The venue is chosen to guarantee an intimate setting for allowing participants to be fully present and have moments of retreat and sharing far from disturbances. The underpinning idea of having an easy access to the outdoors is that nature supports the learning of participants and has an empowering and healing effect on them.

The course involves participants coming from different European countries, with the intention of having a diverse group in terms of background, approaches, mindsets, cultures, gender, age, etc. Diversity, that is intended to introduce different sets of experiences and world views, is thought to be a valuable element, as it reflects the complexity of the world, as well as the multiple opportunities it offers. The participants are chosen among leaders coming from different working contexts, who have an interest in developing their emotional intelligence. The group is intentionally small (20 people) for allowing participants to feel at ease and to fully engage in exploring their emotions and behaviours and to work on their emotional development.

The trainers facilitating the residential course are qualified on emotional intelligence and leadership. Each of them provide a different entrance point to the topics, either from a theoretical or experiential point of view. The residential course is structured as a combination of experiences based on the different approaches of the partners and of theoretical inputs on the topic.

The 5-day programme:

The 5 days programme is structured as a combination of individual and group activities and practices, individual and

group reflections, theoretical inputs, breaks and pauses for resting and processing the learnings. All trying to make the most out of the fact of the participants being physically together – versus the webinars and individual reflections.

Each day is organized for starting and ending with a check in and check out practice. The morning starts with a mindfulness meditation practice and with the question “how am I in this moment”, with the intention to offer participants a space for detecting and noticing any bodily sensations or emotions present in them. The practice is done with the aim of training participants to set a healthy daily habit of becoming more aware of their state and of looking at what comes up in a non judgmental way and with compassion.

The closure of the working day is structured in the same way and with the same purpose of supporting participants in getting out of their anxious mind - often lost in past and future experiences- and in becoming self-centered and more rooted in the present moment. These practices help participants in nurturing the connection with themselves and embodying whatever is happening, by calming and settling the mind. The practices also impact the group dynamic, as relations would be built from a deeper place, more in contact with people’s needs.

Some of the mindfulness meditation practices to close the day are oriented to accompany participants to focus their attention on what they are grateful for, with the intention to train the mind in looking with positive attitude into the learning opportunities of their experiences of the day. This doesn’t mean participants are invited to discard any moments of frustration or pain or rage that might have occurred during the day. Rather they are

asked to observe their experiences with a curious mind, with the purpose of practicing resilience by looking into events with a positive mindset. The aim is to learn to integrate the not knowing and failure in the learning process, as ways to accept the perfect imperfection of us as humans.

At any time after this moments of mindfulness meditation, when there is a need or trainers notice there is a need, participants are invited to write on their learning log what is happening to them. The purpose is to keep track of what they notice about themselves in the diverse contexts and situations, in order to become more aware about patterns or about how different events have an impact on their state of mind and behaviour.

The training day is always accompanied by essential oils diffused in the air or used topically with a gentle massage as ways to:

- enhance the learning
- boost the energy level of the group
- support participants to focus and reinforce their concentration level
- calm any tension or uneasy feeling that might occur.

Flow of the course

Step 1 - A brief explanation of the structure of the five days program is provided, so that everyone can have a full image of the process ahead. Description of the venue and logistic information are given to facilitate participants in finding their place in the group for the well cohabitation of all.

Step 2 - Participants are invited to get to know each other better through body movement and music. This contributes in creating a safe and trustful environment in the group and in releasing any accumulated stress. Name games and activities to sort out differences and commonalities are provided, in order for people to get in touch in a playful and respectful environment that is non judg-

mental and that fosters diversity. These ice-breaking activities allow participants to open up and to be more authentic. The group in fact is considered to be a source for learning and therefore will sustain the coming processes during the course.

Step 3 - Participants are invited to explore their current reality at a personal and professional level for defining what brought them to the course and what is their intention in attending it. The purpose behind it is that the mind of people prepares to focus and to engage in self-directed learning. To say it with the words of Deepak Chopra an intention is “a directed impulse of consciousness that contains the seed of that which one aims to create. Like real seeds, intentions can’t grow if one holds on to them. Only when one releases his/her intentions into the fertile depths of one’s consciousness can they grow and flourish”. First the work is done individually and then shared in plenary to honor the intention declared. A declared intention is equal to taking direct responsibility for the learning process and outcomes.

Step 4 - Participants are put into group dynamics and challenged in some problem solving activities, which are a metaphor that mirrors the complexity and uncertainty of reality. These experiential activities allow participants to explore their leadership in stressful situations and provide them with a safe environment in which they can connect with themselves in a group context and learn how to notice triggering situations and their emotions. Through reflective practices participants are slowly accompanied in this exploration and are supported in finding unusual and new behaviours that train participants to pause in action. This for us means working fully on emotions in leadership situations.

Step 5 - The experience is then supported by a theoretical input on how the brain works and how we create emotions. The

presentation is supported with various exercises that help participants in integrating with experience their intellectual understanding. This phase is more individual and cognitive and prepares the mind with useful information to place the new coming experiences.

Step 6 - In this phase participants are invited to use arts and creativity, body movement and Gestalt techniques to go deeper into the process and to start looking into themselves at a more personal level. The activities are meant to put participants in front of their fears and limitations and on what is holding them behind. The intention is to move and express all the stress that comes from unaware mental patterns and unexpressed emotions. Through the body, participants get in touch with buried memories that are blocking their self development. This awareness and acceptance of emotions is the first step towards a natural process of transformation. Natural, because it's the nature of the body to rebalance. Once what is present is brought into awareness and accepted, participants find the space to choose and change what is not serving them any longer.

Step 7 - As a way to support participants in restoring a body balance (homeostasis) and in finding ways to sustain their personal transformation, they are offered a session, during which they are provided with the experience and the

theoretical input on mindfulness and essential oils. These are offered as powerful facilitators of the emotional processes and support participants in integrating their inner changes. Once participants are open to what is coming next, they are provided with nurturing and balancing practices that support them in their well-being and alignment with the present moment, therefore enhancing their learning process.

Step 8 - participants are provided with some online theoretical inputs on growing and fixed mind-sets, with exercises that would clarify the topic and invite them to explore their own mindsets.

Step 9 - For the closing part, we intend to take participants back to their initial intention and reflect on any changes that have occurred during the process, and then - based on deep listening - continue the closure by setting their intention for the future.

Step 10 - As a last step of the residential course, coaching sessions in national groups follow, for investigating the learning needs to be addressed during the coached practice at home. Time and space is allocated for participants to share their needs and interests, looking into the next steps that would help them incorporate the knowledge in their everyday life and working environment.

The follow up: a 20 day practice programme

After the residential course, in order for participants to sustain their on site experience, they are provided with a daily practice, during which they can still train:

- focusing their attention with intention,
- Suspending judgment
- Practicing gratitude and acceptance

- Sensing their body throughout body movement and expression
- Practice their creativity by drawing and painting
- Pausing and reflecting
- Using essential oils to support and regulate emotions.

For this purpose a 20-day training pro-

gramme of practices are offered in the online platform so for participants to incorporate healthy habits aiming at nurturing their emotional intelligence.

The practices are described in detail with clear instructions and purpose for implementation. They are delivered daily to participants through the online learn-

ing platform and a dedicated whatsapp group.

The purpose of sending them every day is that repetition helps participants in creating healthier neurological connections that can foster their development. The idea is that small changes over time, contribute in making bigger changes in one's life.

The coached practice at home

The coaching sessions are planned to provide participants with individual and/or group on line or on site support for the implementation of their learning objectives in their working context and for diving into further learning (ie: deepening knowledge on the properties of the essential oils and understanding how to make a daily use out of them). Coaching sessions are also planned to facilitate the linking between awareness and knowledge about personal emotional status into leading people with different emotional setting. Trainers facilitate the coaching process and contributions can be

provided also by colleagues (peer coaching), with the additional aim of providing participants with a structured space where to practice their facilitation competences as leaders.

Coaching sessions start already during the evaluation phase of the on site course, during which national teams explore what is still needed for participants to start implementing their learnings. Each partner organization decides with their National group on how to develop the coaching sessions over the following 2 weeks.

The post residential course webinars

The fourth webinar held after the course has the aim to introduce and test simple models for the use of Emotional Intelligence in daily professional leadership

practice. In particular participants are offered a model to process and make sense of tenuous demands for reducing anxiety, escape paralysis, and enable action.

On line wrapping-up and evaluation

The fifth and last webinar has the aim of reconnecting the entire learning group for a final sharing of what happened to each of them in their leadership practice in the two month time frame after the residential course. The aim is to explore how the changes occurred in them have impacted either their state, their relationships or the working environment around them.

Participants are also asked to share what from the course has helped them develop their emotional intelligence and what is their intention for the future.

Evaluation individual learning objectives by the participants

The blended learning course is designed to be very interactive, as participants can navigate on the learning platform driven by their developmental needs. The entire course is based on the principle that the adult learners bring along their past experiences and expertise and that they are the most indicated ones for identifying their own learning needs. Adult learners are more inclined to take responsibility for their lives and decisions and this is why it's important for them to have control over their learning. Therefore, self-assessment, a peer relationship with the trainers, multiple options and initial, yet subtle support are all necessary. Participants are asked to self-evaluate their learnings and to ask for a feedback from colleagues at work. Self-assessment is promoted with the underpinning idea that it fosters responsibility for learning, as participants can take ownership of their work and monitor their progress. It also enhances a sense of direction as participants can see how far they have gone and confirm or change direction. Self-assessment also fosters greater reliance on internal criteria and contributes to increasing people's openness to learning, as they become more aware of their own thinking and are more likely to learn from their mistakes or ask for support.

Participants are asked to self-assess themselves by noticing:

- how their understanding of emotional intelligence has developed further and why it's considered to

be one of the most important competences in leadership

- to what extent they have moved forward with their intention;
- to identify the changes they see happening in their personal and professional life as a result of the process they went through during the course;
- to identify how these changes impact on their professional environment
- to explore whether they see any other aspect they would like to develop further.

Their testimonials are collected either in written or verbal form (through interviews) and/or in videos.

The evaluation of participants' individual learning objectives happens:

- In presence at the end of the residential part of the course, with the aim of exploring new learning needs occurring during this phase;
- Online during the coached practice at home as a way to remodulate actions;
- Online at the end of the blended learning course to check what has changed so far in personal and professional life and how.

The evaluation of individual learning objectives is carried out by participants through self-assessment, feedback from colleagues and trainers via a set of powerful questions.

Evaluation of the course

When the blended course is over, evaluating it is essential to identify its strengths and weaknesses for identifying points of improvement. Elements to be reviewed are:

- Flow of the programme
- Consistency of the activities with the objectives of the course
- The usability of the online platform
- The effectiveness of combining the different expertise of the project partners
- The recorded testimonials of participants investigating what supported them in nurturing their emotional intelligence, what was more meaningful for them about the course,

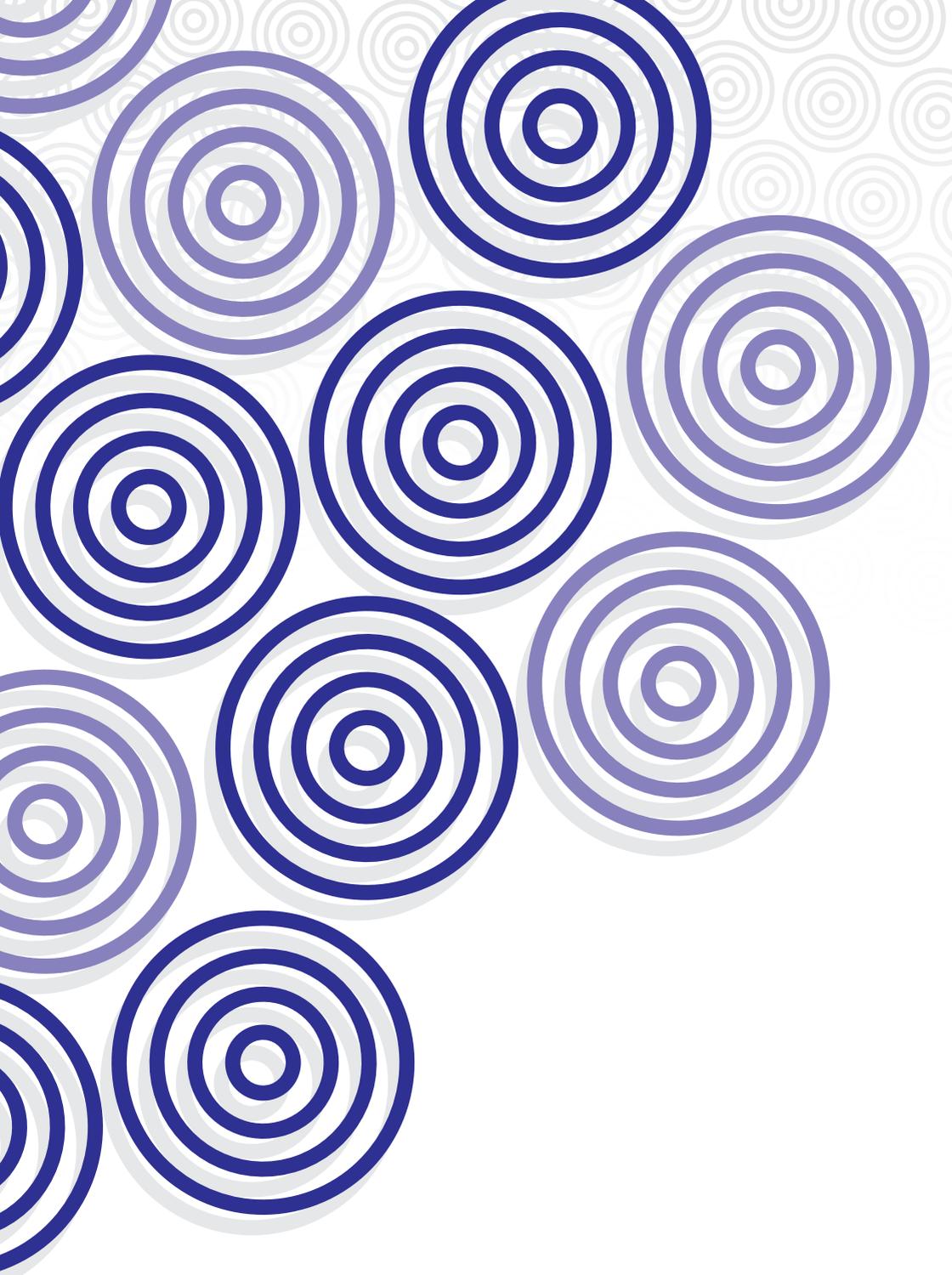
why would they recommend this course to others and if they feel anything was missing

- Teamwork among trainers' team

At the end of the course a questionnaire is submitted to participants for monitoring to what extent the units:

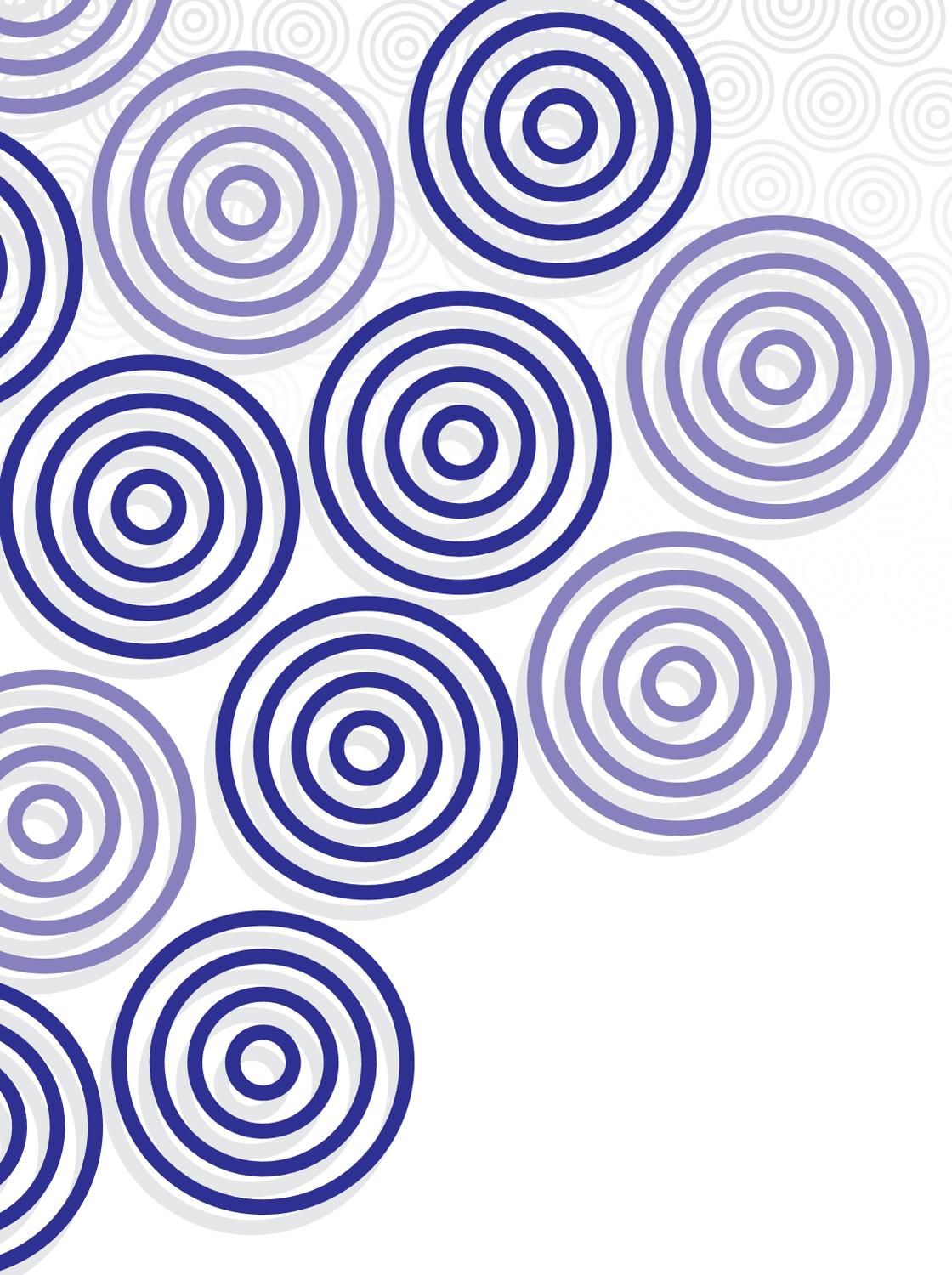
- Have met their learning needs
- Have supported them in pursuing their intention
- Were coherent with the planned aims and objectives

The evaluations mentioned above could also be supplied with interviews with a representative group of participants.



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Contributors

in alphabetical order



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For the past 20 years I have been fascinated with strengthening people and organisations throughout Europe in liminal phases to learn from and for the future with creativity and in harmony with their inner call. At the centre of my methodological approach is above all mindfulness, Otto Scharmer's "Theory U", embodiment practices and the healing power of nature and essential oils. Born in Italy, I have lived and worked in many countries. I am currently living in Austria and serving as the president of alp and

co-founder of LIMINA and emotion-wise network. I have a master degree on Comparative European Social Studies, I am certified as an Emotions Mentor and with AromaTouch, MBSR, Mindful Self-compassion, Insight Dialogue, Mindful Compassionate Parenting and Mindfulness in Education (with school, teachers and parents), Social Presencing Theater of Arawana Hayashi.

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Mario D'Agostino

I am an expert in non-formal education and experiential learning. Since 1989 I have worked as a trainer, consultant and facilitator for several institutions, both for profit and non profit organisations. From 1998 to 2003 I was vice president of the "Advisory Council", the political body of the "Youth and Sport Directorate of the Council of Europe". During those years I developed an expertise in facilitating participation process, community work, intercultural communication and learning, training for trainers in experiential learning, personal and group development. Since 2004 I have worked as the legal representative of Kamaleonte and one of the founder

members of the international academy of experiential education "Via Experientia", where I also facilitate long-term training programmes for trainers and leaders on "How to facilitate groups and lead teams". My main strength as a facilitator and coach is the ability to process individual growth and group dynamics through experience and reflective practices. My learning journey and personal development and my curiosity for developing new concepts in the field of learning and leadership will never come to an end.

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I am a psychologist with extensive experience as a trainer in humanistic approaches, body movement and corporal expression (Río Abierto), vital readjustment facilitator, and MBSR in mindfulness and Gestalt therapy. I work mainly in the ar-

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I am currently an assistant professor at University College South Denmark, working in the fields of action research, organisational psychology and cognitive science. I have provided consulting for many ma-

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Angelica Paci

For over 10 years I have been training and facilitating groups and individuals in their personal and professional growth and well-being through experiential learning programmes, where reflective practices have been a core element in learning and development. In recent years I have been working for Kamaleonte in the field of leadership, multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence. I am also a founding member of the international nonformal network of "Via Experientia" and of ALP. I believe that the group is a resource for learning

and that diversity is a value that enriches people and the context in which they live, learn and work. This is why Otto Scharmer's "Theory U" and Arawana Hayashi's social presencing theatre are inspiring me and currently integrated in my work.

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Anne Rise

Experiences throughout my life have contributed to my current passion for the development of individuals, whether in a professional, organisational, or personal setting.

I have 45 years of experience as a leader in volunteer NGOs, 30 years of experience with training volunteer leaders, 15 years of experience training corporate teams and leaders, working with teams in the areas of creativity, networking, coaching, communication, competence building and personal development issues in many aspects.

I have a bachelor's degree in librarianship, coupled with a study in psychology and a master's degree in organisation-

al learning and working environments. I am also certified for a number of international personality assessments and coaching methods.

I am a freelance leadership and communications consultant, a coach and lecturer in leadership, personal development and communication. I am currently also working as a leadership consultant for NGOs and teaching in business schools and at the University College South Denmark. I am also the volunteer vice president of alp.

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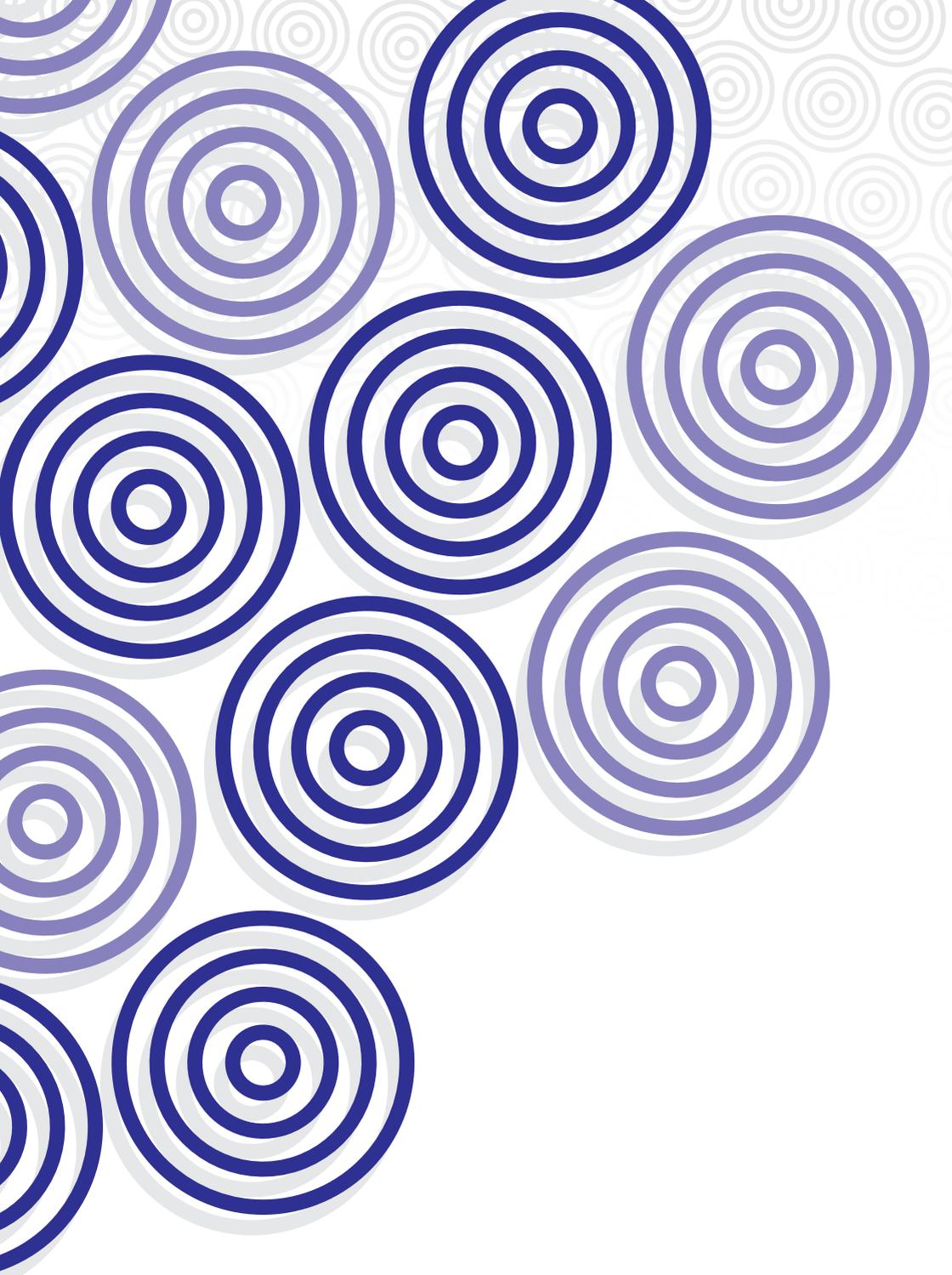
Irene Rojnik

Communication is my strength, key to which is active listening and asking the right questions at the right time. I have 20 years of professional experience at an international level in several non-profit organisations from Africa to Eastern Europe, as well as several years' experience abroad, all of which has sharpened my intercultural senses.

As a coach, trainer, facilitator and consultant I support individuals, teams and organisations in their development. My current focus is on inclusive

leadership and emotional intelligence, specifically on allowing our bodies to help us find the right path. I hold a master's degree in communication, a degree in mediation and a master's degree in systemic coaching and organisational development.

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Partners

University College Syd (Denmark)



University College South Denmark offers a wide range of higher education study programmes at all levels, with an emphasis of 13 first-cycle bachelor degrees in Educational Sciences, Health Sciences, Social Sciences, and Communication Sciences as well as a large range of post-educational courses and further education. Along with this, there are 8 centres of science and research, a centre of educational material, and a centre for educational choice supervision. There are more than 6,000 students (among these are more than

500 international students) on the main programmes, and more than 5,000 students at post-educational programmes at the 5 main campuses in 5 cities spread across the south western region of Denmark. The Leadership School is one of the Centres of Science and Research. The Erasmus Student Network is integrated at UCSYD.

www.ucsyd.dk

alp - activating leadership potential (Austria)



alp is a European network of professionals who are passionate about leadership development, emotional intelligence and learning. alp's members combine academics and practitioners with backgrounds in and experiences of the field of education, personal and organisational development from all over the world. alp's members share a common passion for new approaches to leadership and non-formal learning supporting the "opening up" of people's potential.

alp was formally set up in 2011 in Austria as a non-profit organisation and

has a wide European network with organisations and individuals active in the field of emotional intelligence and leadership.

alp's method is based on experience, embodiment activities, deep reflection, promoting authenticity and self-discovery. alp's members have a proven record in supporting adults in exploring their inner potential and leadership.

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Kamaleonte (Italy)

Kamaleonte is an organisation that promotes the growth and psycho-physical health of groups and individuals through outdoor experiential learning programs, held at a local, national and international level. Some of the topics addressed by the programs are personal and professional development, problem solving, team building, effective communication and leadership, intercultural learning, diversity, conflict management, inclusion, and group dynamics.

Kamaleonte is also a member of the informal network "International Academy of Experiential Education" (www.viaexperientia.net), that has been re-

searching on experiential learning as an innovative and holistic methodology for developing the transversal competences of adult trainers and educators.

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Euroaccion Murcia (Spain)

Euroaccion is a non-governmental, independent organisation for the support of youth and adult learning, professional and personal development of people with fewer opportunities. We promote experiential learning, volunteering service and social inclusion projects.

Our mission is to foster social change by inspiring and stimulating human

potential through a humanistic approach, combining Gestalt in theatre, body expression and music.

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The project

“ConnEQt - Connecting Emotional Intelligence to Leadership Development” has developed an up-to-date and sustainable concept for educational opportunities for adult leaders, culminating in a 12-week-long blended learning course that is unique in delivering personal leadership development opportunities for individuals. Its purpose is to raise awareness about combining leadership activities with emotional intelligence. This is a relevant skill for both leaders themselves and team members.

This personal development journey also provides skills for leading and managing team members with different amounts and awareness of their emotional intelligences. It is necessary that the course be this length in order to give participants time to discover, practice, digest, reflect and evaluate personal learning in order to optimise professional and/or volunteer leadership activities. While the period of learning is 12 weeks, only one of these weeks is set aside for the participants to be physically present on site. All other learning activities, including supervision, coaching, and networking, are intended to be remote, either online or offline, although they will still be in close connection with a personal coach or supervisor.

The project has carried out a thorough literature study about the combination of leadership activity and emotional intelligence when it comes to inventing, describing and piloting learning activities that can assist a holistic personal development of emotional intelli-

gence. The additional aspect of human senses to support the full body learning was made possible through physical, visual, olfactory, and auditive activity development.

Before piloting the concept, all the staff, facilitators, coaches and lecturers involved went through intense staff training themselves in order both to create the concept and to practice potential activities with the aim of refining and prioritising the learning activities.

The concept was piloted by 17 individuals in leadership positions through a 12-week-long blended learning experience with a residential seminar in Spain. Alongside these activities there were also 5 national multiplier events in Spain, Italy, Austria, and Denmark. The online contents and learning materials of the blended learning are contained in an interactive i-Book.

The products of the project are all available and released under a Creative Common Attribution - nonCommercial - ShareAlike 4.0 International licence on the partners' websites and here www.eqtollead.eu.

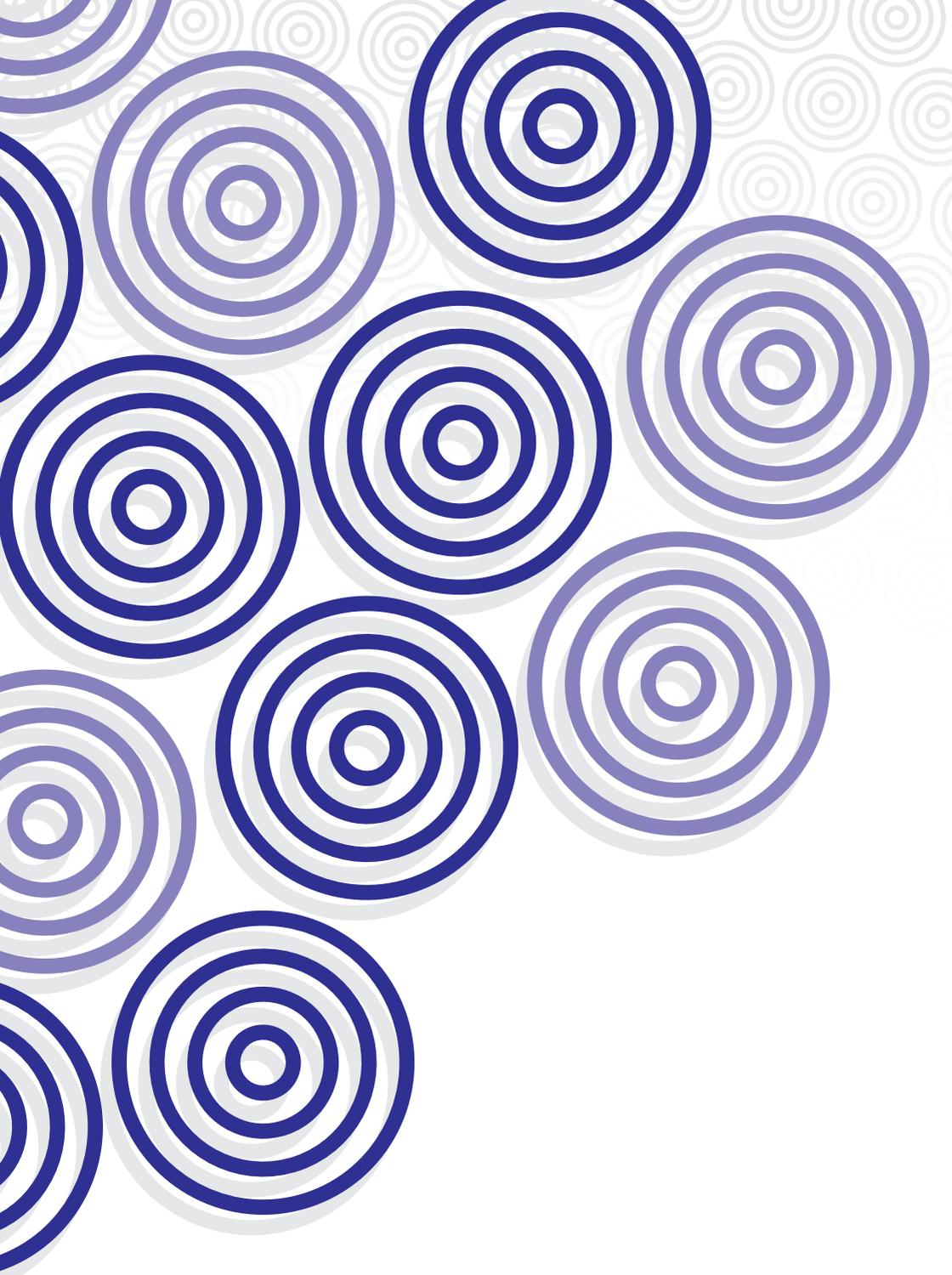


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