



Experiences in setting up self-managed volunteer group

Four illustrative case studies

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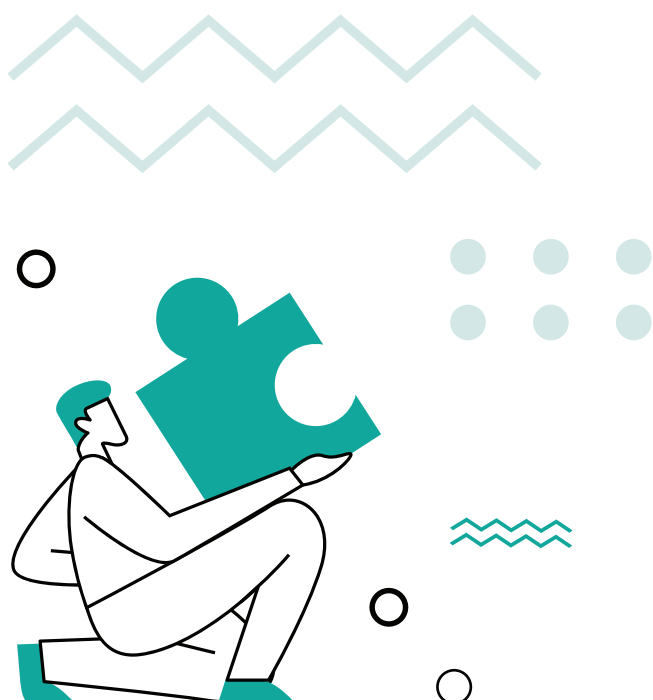
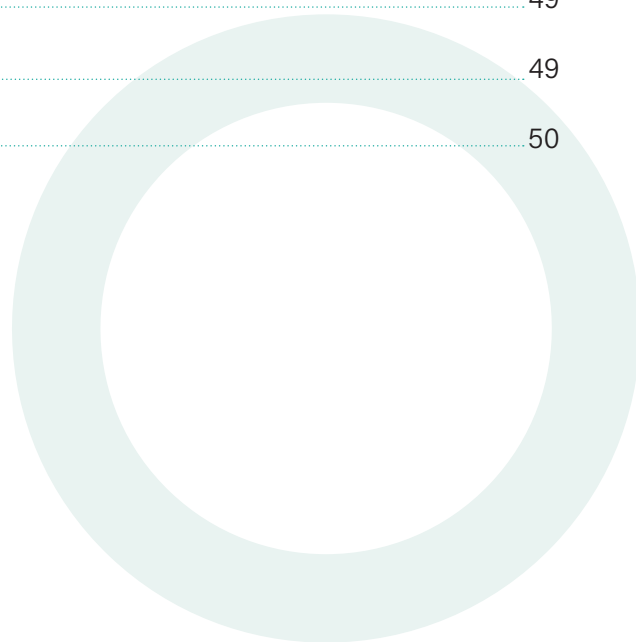
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Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGO-s) play an essential role in society by tackling important social issues (like poverty, prejudices, inequality, mental health problems, social isolation, unemployment, etc). Often, those organisations are challenged by the fact that, regardless of the methods that they have tested and demonstrated to be effective, they fall short of human and financial resources which are necessary to respond to the needs arising in their communities. One option is to expand their reach by involving and managing volunteers. However, this is too often a task which consumes part of their already limited resources. On the other hand, there is potentially a mismatch between what volunteers want to do/are capable of doing and what organizations looking for volunteers offer them to do.

The partners in the COBU project strive to provide a solution to this challenging situation. To this end, they have developed training programs and tools that help establish networks of self-managed volunteer groups, which can act more or less independently of the 'host/initiator' organisation. In the Handbook 'Setting up self-managed volunteer groups' (downloadable from the cobuplatform.eu) the partners describe the main elements of such a training programme, showing the process, step by step, through which volunteers can be prepared to take up such an active role.

This process of preparing volunteers to be able to design and launch their own projects was tested by the four partners; all of which are NGO-s, located in four different European countries (Hungary, France, Spain and the Netherlands). The organisations all used the COBU method described in the aforementioned Handbook, adapting it to their expertise and needs (both of the organizations and the target group/s they worked with). To give you an idea of those needs:

The Hungarian partner (also coordinator of the project), Képes Alapítvány, used the COBU method, among other things, to be able to upscale its intergenerational storytelling workshops with the help of volunteer group leaders. The French partner, Elan Interculturel used the method to create volunteer-led groups with an intercultural perspective around a passion, be it artistic, sporting, intellectual, ecological or other, using art mediation techniques like Forum theatre, collage, storytelling, dance. The Spanish partner,

La Xixa, trained volunteer group leaders to be able to use various methodologies like Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum theatre to foster social transformation and generate "creative communities". And the Dutch partner, Storytelling Centre, used the method to upscale its Living Libraries activities by means of self-managed volunteer groups in order to foster social cohesion in neighbourhoods, housing estates, community centres, etc.. (For an explanation of Forum theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed, see paragraph 1.3; for an explanation of Living Libraries, see paragraph 1.4.)

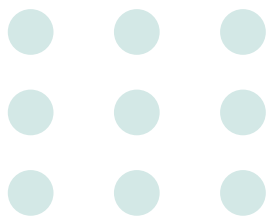
In the following chapter each partner describes its experiences with the COBU method in a so-called case study on the basis of the following topics:

- The intended goal and the reason for choosing that goal
- Recruitment of volunteers
- The training
 - programme
 - experiences
 - result(s) for you as a trainer, for your organisation, for the participants

In the final chapter we 'wrap up' our experiences with the COBU method by sharing our conclusions.

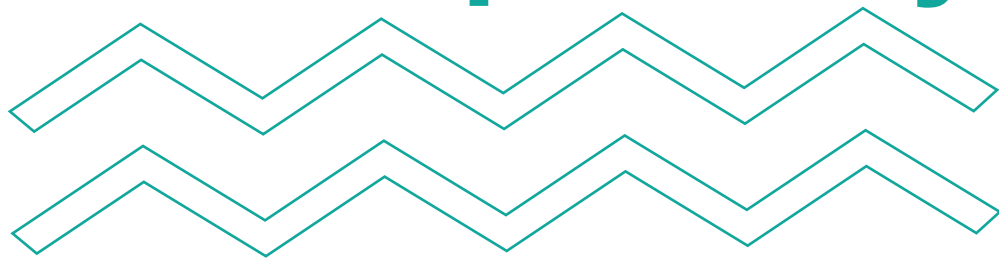
When partners describe their training programme they refer to the "Guidebook" (full title: Setting up self-managed volunteer groups - a handbook) whenever an activity is presented in more details there.

<http://www.cobuplatform.eu/#3>



1. Case Study

Képes Alapítvány



The intended goal and the reason for choosing that goal

Képes Alapítvány's mission is to develop the social emotional skills (SEL skills) like self-awareness, emotion regulation, stress management, perspective taking, relationship skills, problem-solving, critical thinking of a wide range of target groups. We experiment with different methods to achieve this and, so far, have used therapeutic tools, storytelling methods, theatre and art therapy techniques.

In the framework of the COBU project, we wanted to train senior volunteers to run intergenerational storytelling groups. Intergenerational storytelling is a tried and tested method of ours and participants always give great feedback. However, this time we wanted to reach a wider audience, through volunteer trainers.

On the other hand, we were inspired by the example of the University of the Third Age (U3A) movement in the UK, where senior volunteers organise a wide range of courses and activities for other seniors on a self-organised, self-funded basis (see the book 'Staying small – Impacting big', pages 57-61 for details). Inspired by them, we also wanted to involve volunteers (of all ages, not just seniors) and help them to plan and launch their own events. Through this process, volunteers discovered their own skills and needs, developing their entrepreneurial, digital and communication skills, among others. The development of SEL skills (after all our mission) also interested the people who participated in our volunteers' events, as these skills can be honed through almost any group activity that requires people to work together.

Recruitment of volunteers

For workshops that focused on our storytelling method

We had planned to organise two sets of workshops focusing on storytelling for two types of volunteers: seniors who were interested in storytelling methods and could imagine themselves as storytelling group organisers and facilitators and people in the age group 20-40 who were interested in sharing their stories on certain topics.

As the workshops, due to the pandemic, were organised on Zoom, we recruited people who were willing to participate in online events.

We used the following text to attract senior

participants:

We are looking for senior volunteers (55+ years old) who would like to learn how to share their life experiences with younger generations through personal storytelling.

Possible topics include:

- *turning points and crossroads in our adult lives,*
- *difficult life situations and possible solutions,*
- *lessons learned from our successes and failures,*
- *our sources of inspiration.*

About the method:

The sessions are based on listening to each other, sharing stories and experiences in pairs or small groups (3-4 people), followed by group discussions and debates. In addition to the discussions, we also listen to fairy tales related to the topic. We take breaks during the sessions.

Participation in the programme is voluntary and free of charge.



We used this text to create a post on our website, which we also shared on our Facebook page. We sent the links to our professional contacts on our email list, and we also launched a Facebook campaign, which reached over 7300 people:

Thanks to our promotional efforts, 20 seniors registered to the 2-sessions workshop.

After the sessions with senior volunteers, we invited the younger generations to a 2-day session, so that seniors could get the intergenerational storytelling group experience. Again we made a post on our website and a FB post and launched

a FB campaign which reached over 5500 people.

The text of the second call was:

Would you like to talk to people of different generations about

- *what it means to grow up*
- *how to cope with difficult situations*
- *how to find your strengths*
- *how we see our future*
- *what inspires us?*

If so, join our intergenerational storytelling workshop! You can tell stories and listen to those of other people, and to their experiences. We will do exercises in pairs and small groups (3-4 people), followed by collective discussions. We will also listen to fairy tales related to the themes. We are now inviting people in the agegroup 20-40 to register.

The workshop will also be open to people in the agegroup 55-75.

Participation in the programme is voluntary and free of charge.

The programme will be held online via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent before the event.



On Facebook the call looked like this:

21 people from the younger generation registered for this second round of workshops. Together with seniors who had already participated, we had 33 participants in the intergenerational storytelling Zoom sessions.

After organising these first 4 sessions, we invited all participants, who by then had first-hand experience in our storytelling method, to join us in the next stage of the project: the workshops in

which they would learn how to become storytelling group leaders and how to train people in our storytelling method themselves. This second stage consisted of 3 sessions. Our original plan had been to only train the senior participants, but because the younger participants also showed interest in this training, we decided to include them as well. In the end 23 people registered, so we split the group in two and organised the training twice. Also this training took place online via Zoom.

For workshops that focused on organising an event around one's own interest/skills

For these workshops, we addressed people of all ages who were interested in volunteering to organise events around their own interests or skills. In order to make people aware of the COBU project and the opportunities we offered, we organised an event ourselves, which we promoted (together with our workshops) through our webpage, our email list, our Facebook page and through a Facebook campaign.

We used the following promotional text:

In these uncertain times, the need to create and strengthen small communities is perhaps even greater than before, and this is the purpose of our call for volunteers.

** Do you have knowledge you would like to share with others?*

** Is there an activity you would like to get involved in, but that no one is offering?*

** Do you want to meet new people?*

** Would you like to try leading a small group?*

If you have answered any of the above questions with 'yes', we are looking for you to volunteer as a group leader!

What kind of groups and activities can you organise? Some examples:

Chess club, reading club, museum visits, board game club, language learning club, gift making workshop, photography club, making videos/movies on the phone, learning magic tricks, amateur choir, gardening club, embroidery club, dance classes, learning about geography/biology/chemistry, astronomy club and many more...

You can organise a group on any topic (alone or with others), as long as it

is organised on a voluntary basis (not motivated by financial gain)

offers learning, social and development opportunities for the participants

is not for propaganda purposes

It's up to you how often you organise an event

- it's important to only take on as much as your time/energy allows. You also decide the size of your group, you can start with as few as 6 people.

*Not sure what knowledge you have to share?
If you come to our Open Day, we'll help you find out what you're really good at, what you're willing to put your energy into, and what others might find useful and interesting.*

Do you know exactly what you want? Come along anyway, test your idea, see how it's received by others.

Not sure if this is the right opportunity for you or not? You are also welcome to join and have a look. If you have an idea, let's think about it together. If you are interested in someone else's initiative, you can join them and assist them. And if you decide not to get involved in organising for the time being, you've had a lovely afternoon.

The Open Day is free of charge but registration is required.

If you don't want to miss it, register as soon as possible!

How will we assist you after the Open Day?

You can take part in preparatory training sessions before you start leading a group

We can help you find partners to lead your group with, if you want

Before the programme is announced to the public, we will organise a rehearsal/test session for you, which we will attend, and to which you can invite anyone you like

We will publicise your programme so that it reaches as many people as possible

We will set up a group leaders' forum to give group leaders the opportunity to help each other by sharing their experiences.

Why is this good for you?

You can volunteer for a good cause

You can try leading a group as our volunteer

You can use the experience you gain as a group leader in other areas of your life

You can meet interesting, open minded, new people

You can take part in free training courses and events organised by us

You can learn from your own group members and from other volunteer group leaders.



With this facebook post for the Open Day event we reached over 11.000 people.

In the end over 50 people registered for the workshops. So, again, we split the participants into two groups and organised the workshops twice. 22 people participated in the first group and 25 in the second one.

The training as a storytelling trainer/group leader

Before people could participate in the workshops in which we trained them to set up and run a storytelling group themselves on a voluntary basis, they first had to get acquainted with our storytelling method. So, first they attended a storytelling workshop in which we wanted them to experience that they, as much as everyone, have a story that others value and that - sometimes with some help - they are able to share it in an engaging way. Furthermore, we wanted them to experience that by sharing a personal story around a topic - whatever the topic might be - one connects to the listeners in a meaningful way and vice versa. (Some people might need to participate in more than one of these workshops in order to fully gain this experience and feel competent to organise their own storytelling event.) In the Guidebook for self-managed volunteers you will read more about this first step of our COBU method in Chapter 2, 'Creating a volunteer group', and in Chapter 4, 'First hand experience with new methods.'

The aim of the second phase was to show the participants that not only can they share stories in an engaging way, but that they are also able to



help other people do so and that they can structure and organise their own event. The opportunity to try things out with the other participants in a safe environment was also part of this phase.

The training involved 3 sessions, all of which lasted 4 hours. During the first session, we focused on the development of content for a training in storytelling: which activities to use for what purpose, how to create a learning path, how to deal with breaks. Then the participants were asked to create their own activities and to test them in the group. We ended this first session by asking them to form small groups and to start developing a 4-hours workshop programme. They could continue working on this programme during the 2 weeks between this first session and the following one. All groups developed a detailed 4-hours workshop plan that they sent to us before the second training session. We selected the most interesting activities from each group and

created the programme for the second session. The activities were facilitated by the volunteers who had proposed them. The other participants were asked to give their feedback. We paid special attention to how each facilitator experienced leading the group.

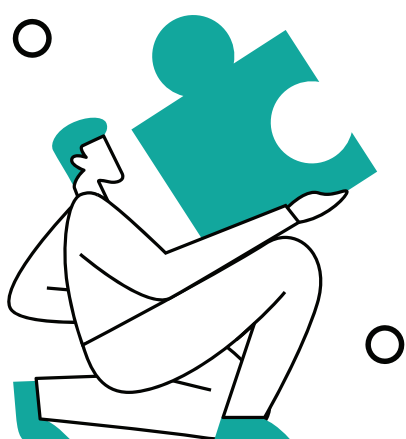
The third session was dedicated to organisational and promotional issues related to storytelling workshops. Participants worked in small groups on those topics and started to create promotional materials for their own workshop.

After the third session we offered supervisory sessions for those who wanted to launch their own groups. In these sessions we worked one-on-one, because not everyone was equally advanced in their preparation. In the long term, however, we would like to offer regular group supervisory sessions, which may then be followed by one-to-one advisory meetings, if wished for. In schematic form, the programmes for the 3 workshop sessions in the second phase were as follows:

1st session, linked to Chapters 3 and 5 of the Guidebook

Duration: 4 hours

Description of the activity	Duration
Introduction and group rules	30 min
How to choose workshop topics, and what type of activities you can use in a storytelling workshop – presentation by the facilitator	25 min
Choose a topic and create a personal storytelling activity [full description of this activity in annex 1:1]	50 min
BREAK	20 min
Energizer	10 min
How can activities be built upon each other? – presentation by the facilitator	25 min
How can we use fairy tales in storytelling workshops? – presentation by the facilitator	20 min
Start to create a 4 hour-long storytelling workshop [full description of this activity in annex 1:2]	55 min
Closing and giving homework (create a 4-hour workshop plan in small groups)	5 min



2nd session (2 weeks after 1st session), linked to Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the Guidebook

Duration: 4 hours

Name of the activity	Duration
1st small group: Energizer	15 min
1st small group: Workshop idea and a selected personal storytelling activity	45 min
Feedback on the activities of the 1st group by the others	10 min
BREAK	10 min
2nd small group: Workshop idea and a selected fairy tale and its discussion	35 min
2nd small group: A personal storytelling activity linked to the fairy tale	30 min
Feedback on the activities of the 2nd group by the others	10 min
BREAK	10 min
3rd small group: A non-verbal energizer	10 min
3rd small group: Workshop idea and a selected personal storytelling activity	45 min
Feedback on the activities of the 3rd group by the others	10 min
Closure	10 min

3rd session (day after the 2nd session), – linked to Chapters 8 and 9 of the Guidebook

Duration: 4 hours

Name of the activity	Duration
Intro	5 min
Promote your workshop! [described in the Guidebook]	80 min
Sharing our experience with promotion – presentation by the facilitator	20 min
BREAK	15 min
Previous experience with groups [described in the Guidebook]	45 min
Free discussion about how to manage a group – the facilitator raises typical topics and discusses these with the participants (e.g. how to manage time, how to be confident in front of the group, what to do with disruptive participants, etc)	45 min
Q&A and closure	30 min

The training as an event organiser around one's own interest/skills/knowledge

The structure of this training is more complex than that of the training which prepared volunteers to become storytelling group leaders. We organised thematic sessions to help volunteers identify their own knowledge, skills and interests and to help them plan their own event/programme, find a venue, promote and run the event. We also set up a closed Facebook group for volunteers, helped them organise test sessions and gave them feedback. This process is still ongoing; we organise one session per month to which all volunteers are invited, and we

also provide them with individual supervision.

The first session was very intensive. We only briefly showed participants how they could identify their topic (if they didn't have an idea yet) and how they could start planning their events. They continued working on their event at home, followed by individual or group supervision sessions. We also offered help with the planning and delivery of rehearsal events and with incorporating the feedback they got in the planning of the real event.

In schematic form, the programme for the thematic sessions was as follows:

1st session, linked to Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 9 of the Guidebook

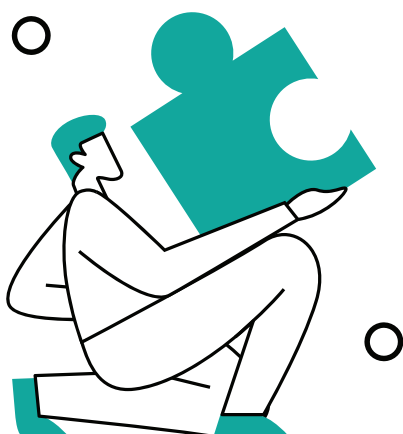
Duration: 3,5 hours

Name of the activity	Duration
Introduction of the project	10 min
Introduction of the book 'Staying small – impacting big'	10 min
Icebreaker, team building activity	25 min
Previous experience with groups – small group activity [described in the Guidebook]	25 min
Discussion with all, based on the previous activity: Identifying factors that make an experience good or bad	30 min
Parallel activities from which people can choose: Planning a group with the help of the 'Group planning' template – individual task [full description in annex 1:3] or Identifying one's own interests, knowledge, skills with the help of the „Idea generating template“ – individual task [full description in annex 1:4]	20 min
BREAK	15 min
Sharing ideas with each other - small group activity	30 min
Creating promotional flyer for the group and discussing the flyers – small group activity followed by a presentation in front of the whole group	60 min
Closure	15 min

2nd session, linked to Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Guidebook

Duration: 4,5 hours

Name of the activity	Duration
Warming up	10 min
From an idea to a promoted event – group discussion about the steps that need to be taken from a first idea to the launch of a tested event	20 min
Q&A session (topics are raised by the volunteers)	20 min
Presentation and discussion of new group ideas	25 min
BREAK	15 min
Test session – a volunteer carries out an event with the participation of the other volunteers and gets feedback	85 min
BREAK	15 min
Test session – another volunteer carries out an event and gets feedback	80 min



Name of the activity	Duration
Warm up	10 min
Q&A session (topics are raised by the volunteers)	25 min
Presentation and discussion of new group ideas	25 min
Test session – a volunteer carries out an event with the participation of the other volunteers and gets feedback	90 min
BREAK	20 min
Test session – another volunteer carries out an event and gets feedback	90 min

The following sessions had and will have the same structure as the 3rd one. There is one fixed session per month, but there are also rehearsal/test sessions at other times, individual supervision when needed, and a closed Facebook group in which members can interact continuously.

Our experiences

from the training as a storytelling trainer/group leader

Because of the pandemic we had to postpone the workshops several times. At one point we decided to organise the training as a storytelling group leader on Zoom. We were pleasantly surprised by the amount of people who registered and realised that the advantage of an online training was that people outside Budapest could also join. The online format worked really well, and thanks to the use of breakout rooms we could keep the small group activities.

Despite the great number of people who participated and enjoyed the workshops and showed interest in becoming group leaders, in the end only three of them organised a storytelling training and event on their own: a senior volunteer, who offers the training every second month now, and two young girls. The girls want to offer the training sessions to their peers, but so far organised only one session, because they got overwhelmed with work and school-related tasks. We hope that they will continue to organise storytelling training sessions in the future. In the autumn of 2022 we will meet them to talk about their plans.

We have concluded that our method requires a lot of practice, thinking, planning, preparation, dedication. From now on, instead of organising a training in our method for future group leaders we, together with the aforementioned senior volunteer, will try to identify people among the participants to our storytelling workshops who may be suitable for the role of co-trainer (and later: trainer) and ask them if they would be interested

in this opportunity. Though the process might be slower than the one we tested until now, it seems interesting to us that future group leaders will gain experience by joining an existing group as “assistants” before they start a group on their own. There was another lesson we learnt from this first workshop series. Some of the volunteers, once they were group leaders, asked for our support in e.g. hiring a room or promoting their programme, while operating under their own name and without mentioning us. We didn't consider this a mutually supportive set-up. We learned from this situation that we need to be more clear about what we offer and need from the volunteers in order for everyone to feel appreciated and valued (them and us).

Our experiences

from the training as an event organiser around one's own interest/skills/knowledge

We wanted to organise this training in-person, so waited for the pandemic to be over. But then two other events delayed the start of the training: the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and the Hungarian parliamentary elections. A lot of volunteers were somehow involved in both. We thus decided to launch the first workshop series at the end of April 2022. Again, way more people registered than we had expected. Because we couldn't organise an interactive workshop with so many people, we decided to split the group in two and do the same workshop twice.

By this time we knew much better how we wanted to involve volunteers, what we had to offer, how best to support them and what we expected from them. We developed a step-by-step training system, the ingredients of which were: participate in a training, join the closed Facebook group, develop the structure of the interest/activity group with the help of the Group planning template (see Annex 1:3), organise a test/rehearsal session that is promoted within the closed group of volunteers

only (and also attended by us), collect feedback on this test session.

Once a group is ready, we sign a volunteer contract with the group leader, we help the group create promotional texts and a text introducing them, and we post these on the project's local website (www.kepeskozosseghu). The group leaders become administrators of the open Facebook page linked to this website and they can start to create Facebook events from that moment onwards. Our foundation, Képes, can then boost their reach by launching Facebook campaigns linked to their events.

So far 33 people joined the closed FB group that we created for volunteer group leaders. They share their ideas and questions in this group and create FB events for the rehearsal/test sessions and we post the date and agenda of the monthly sessions in this group, instead of sending emails.

Much more volunteers who participated in this training remained active and started to organise events themselves than those that were trained to become storyteller trainers and group leaders.

The result(s) of the training courses

For us as organisation

As described above, the two different training courses partly met our expectations: we had hoped for more volunteers to become active as storytelling group leaders, especially considering the number of registrations for the workshopsed, which we had not expected.

The project so far has resulted in three self-managed volunteer groups: a storytelling, an art therapy and a rowing group. Five other groups will be ready to be launched in September-October 2022 after their successful rehearsal sessions. These will be a book club, a story drama group in which people listen to a tale, choose a role and then re-enact the tale, a 'club of enthusiastic amateurs', a bibliotherapy group and a 'philos club' in which people discuss philosophical issues using their own life experiences.

Of a different order, but not unimportant: thanks to the training courses that we organized within the framework of the COBU project about 100 (new) people registered for our newsletter, we made new professional contacts (with a web developer, a video maker and with a communication strategy developer) and we have started building up an active, lively community of volunteers, which we would like to see grow.

We consider our volunteer programme so important that we decided its continuation will be

one of the focal points of our organisation in the coming years. This implies that we will continue organising workshops for future group leaders and that we will keep the project's website (on which we offer relevant information), the closed Facebook group (on which group leaders can exchange information, ideas, questions, etc) and an open Facebook page (on which group leaders can promote their events etc.). Because all volunteer group leaders will have attended our workshops before they can join our volunteer network, we will know them personally. This allows us to ensure the quality of their activities as group leaders and also to keep control over our volunteer network.

For the participants

We asked both groups of volunteers if the workshops had met their expectations.

Participants in the storytelling group leaders workshops stated:

- *"I expected to understand how to put together such a workshop, and that was absolutely fulfilled, plus I know where to look/ask if I get stuck. Thanks a lot!"*
- *"My prior expectation was to learn more about how to organise and run workshops and this was fulfilled."*
- *"I didn't really have expectations, but I got more than I expected. :)"*
- *"What I had expected was fulfilled to the maximum."*
- *"I knew it would be good and useful, but it exceeded all my expectations."*
- *"In terms of content, I think you've put it together super well. It was good to go through the whole process in practice. I particularly enjoyed the experience sharing part of the last session. And I love that we were so intergenerational :) Always enjoyable!!!"*
- *"I liked that we could try each other's ideas and activities in real life."*
- *"I like it best when participants talk about their own experiences. It was nice that you guys showed exercises and that we could try our own ideas."*
- *"I particularly liked the interactivity of the workshop and the way it dealt with the issue of failure. It gave me confidence to know that more experienced group leaders than myself also made mistakes and I learned a lot from how they handled them."*

Participants in workshops on organising an event around their own interests/skills/knowledge mentioned:

- *"It was meaningful, and it was great to meet people with whom we share the common goal of offering people meaningful time as*

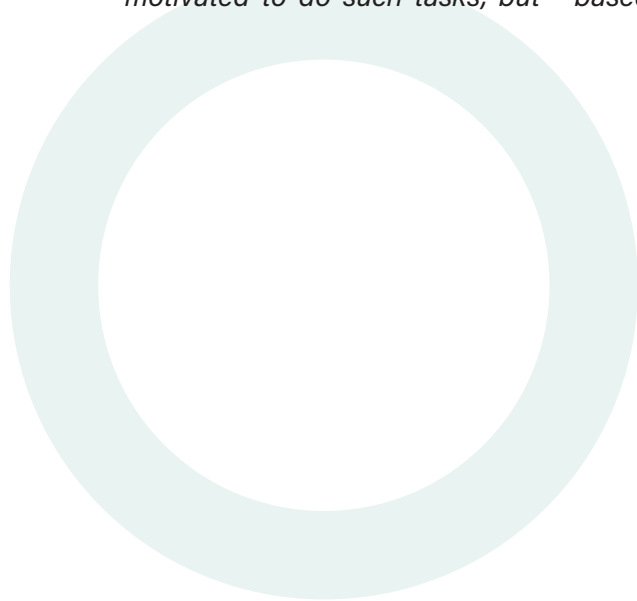
volunteers."

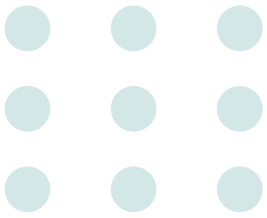
- "It was a very good atmosphere, very well organised and a positive event."
- "It was inspiring and useful."
- "Interesting initiative, I liked it, I had a good time, I met creative, active, open-minded people."
- "It was nice to meet new people."
- "The atmosphere was very good, and I liked the small group we worked in together."
- "I liked the atmosphere and the group planning template."
- "I liked the small group aspect. And the large group. And the atmosphere."
- "I liked the good atmosphere, it was a well organised, guided event. I liked the co-creation with my group, we were very effective."
- "I liked the session, it was a great first step, it was good to be with you."
- "Inspiring, inviting, informative :) I had a great time and was glad to have participated."
- "The location was great and the atmosphere was great, for me it started a bit early and it was quite long, but at the same time, we were not bored for a minute."
- "My poster was only done because someone volunteered to do it for me. I don't feel overly motivated to do such tasks, but - based on

my sketches - I'm always happy to present it orally. :)"

- "I had a great time. I think the small group solution worked, I personally definitely find it much harder to let go in a big group, and I'm probably not alone in that. Thank you for the group planning sheet, we got quite a useful set of guiding questions."
- "It was a very useful session for me, I got confirmation to implement my ideas. It was inspiring and stimulating to think and brainstorm together."
- "It was good to talk to people in small groups, the atmosphere was friendly. The planning sheet was a great idea, it really helped to get ideas clear."
- "The atmosphere was great, and the exercises sparked really interesting conversations (at least in our group)."
- "The community of like-minded people gave me a safe and supportive environment, and very quickly I developed an atmosphere of trust in which I could express myself freely."
- "The female/male ratio could be changed, but I guess it's not up to you :)"

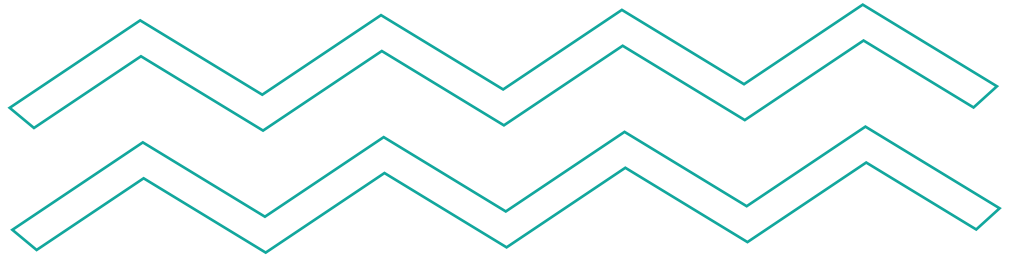
All in all, the feedback we got from the participants was mostly very positive.

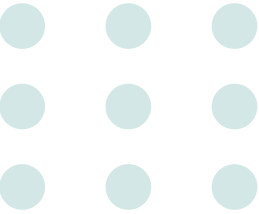




2. Case Study

Elan Intercultural





The intended goal and the reason for choosing that goal

At the beginning our objective of the COBU project, and more specifically of the workshops in Paris, was to give tools to people who have an artistic passion and wish to jointly propagate that passion. Our training modules would be based on artistic mediation techniques such as dance, visual arts (collage, photography), and theatre. Furthermore, all training modules would have an approach based on the valuation of diversity and intercultural collaboration.

Just as we were beginning to promote the workshops and recruit participants, the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus broke out. We decided to pause our search for participants and to continue to work on the content of the training. After months of isolation, when people started coming together again, the negative effects of that isolation on the mental health of people of all generations came to light.

So we decided to change the target group of our workshops. They were no longer intended only for people who had an artistic passion, but for EVERY person who had a passion, be it ecological, sporty, intellectual, artistic or anything else, and who was motivated to share this passion with a group and to make this group self-managed. We did stick to the basis of our methodology, artistic mediation, and to the intercultural perspective.

Thus, the decision to broaden the audience of the workshops was closely linked to the negative consequences of the pandemic on people's mental health. Everybody seemed desperate to connect with others. The COBU project provided an opportunity for people to come together to share their passions and in turn to develop a network. We saw how this project helped people to activate their resilience and how it encouraged exchanges and interpersonal cooperation after so many months of suffering. What COBU did for the mental health of the participants, they could then do for other people.

Recruitment of volunteers

As mentioned above, we wanted to recruit participants who already had a passion - be it artistic, ecological, sporty, intellectual, etc. - and wanted to share it, but did not know how. With respect to the participants' profiles, we also aimed

at a diversity of ages, genders and origins, in order to value the richness of heterogeneous groups.

To recruit participants, we created flyers that we posted on our social networks (Instagram, Facebook, our website) and on French online media that promote activities, such as the Municipality of Paris' online medium 'quoi faire à Paris.' We also sent the same flyers to all the participants of previous training courses and to the social and artistic associations we work with locally.

Our motivation and what we wanted to explore through the COBU project was clear to us: how to move from individual desire to collective action, thanks to techniques such as dance, photomontage and theatre. That is what we expressed in our flyers:

"Do you have a passion that you would like to share with other people? Do you want to create a group around this passion? Are you motivated to lead this group? Do you like to learn through artistic mediation techniques and non-formal education? If you answered "yes" to all these questions, we have good news for you! The COBU workshop-residency is for you!"

Those who were interested in registering and receiving more info were asked to register through a form that was linked to the flyer. This form contained specific questions about people's motivation to participate in the workshop and the passion they wanted to share and develop collectively. This information allowed us to better select the participants in order to create a very heterogeneous group.

The main challenge in recruiting participants was the length of the workshop. We asked people to be present for 35 hours the first week, Monday to Friday, 7 hours a day, plus bi-weekly meetings for 3 months thereafter.

The results of the recruitment far exceeded our expectations: more than 40 people filled in the registration questionnaire. Never in the history of the Élan Interculturel association have we been so successful in recruiting participants for a workshop. However, not all of them could participate, as we had set the maximum number of participants at 18, in order to guarantee the quality of the workshop. Our selection criteria were: diversity of profiles (gender, age, profession, cultural background), diversity of passions, realistic motivations concerning the workshop, availability.

The training

Programme of the first week

Day 1 – Morning

Topic: Creating a volunteer group

Duration: 3.5 hours

In order for the participants to feel confident, safe and at ease, we did a series of activities to get to know each other and each others' names, to know our similarities and value them, to know our differences and value them too, to know our motivations and passions, to laugh and to build a shared space in which to create and learn together. Some of the activities we did were:

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Different walks, stop and go	to warm up, energize bodies	Guidebook – page 18
Name and Gesture	to get to know each other through the use of the body	Guidebook – page 14
Tell me about your name	to help participants to memorize each other's names and stimulate active listening and storytelling resources	Guidebook - page 16
Go to the centre if...	to help participants to get to know each other	Guidebook– page 15

Day 1 - Afternoon

Topic : Creating a volunteer group

Duration: 3.5 hours

We addressed the following concepts: "Stereotypes, prejudices and identity dynamics". The importance of these subjects comes above all from the fact that when we facilitate intercultural groups, the stereotypes and prejudices of facilitators can have an impact on participants to the level of «formatting» their behaviours. In fact, even if we want to create a horizontal group, the relationship between the facilitator and the participants will never be 100% horizontal. This asymmetry, however slight, can create the dynamics of a "self-fulfilling prophecy". That is the reason why during the whole first afternoon we were engaged in playful activities aimed at identifying, making visible and breaking the stereotypes and prejudices that the participants had about the facilitator role, the participants and the different cultural groups that they would like to work with.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Cultionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work on our stereotypes and prejudices about others, in order to analyse them;• Understand how stereotypes work;• Generate creativity and spontaneous ideas from the group.	Annex 2:1

Day 2 – Morning

Topic: Creating a volunteer group

Duration: 3.5 hours

In the morning of the second day we continued working on creating a volunteer group by introducing another concept: stress. We connected the topics we discussed on the first day (Stereotypes, prejudices and identity dynamics) with the importance of managing stress in a group: one of the dangers of letting ourselves be carried away by our stereotypes and prejudices without questioning them is to increase stress and lock ourselves in and harm the collaborative relationship. Feeling threatened (in relation to the behaviour of both the facilitator and the participant) can cause irritability, aggressiveness, or flight. At the rational level, we have experienced a process of cognitive closure that does not allow the creation of a dialogue. The importance of clarifying stress reactions promotes the understanding of ourselves and others. When we try to understand ourselves, we gain clarity and resources. When we try to understand the other, we give value to that person and vice versa. If we feel valued, the threat decreases and room is created for cooperation.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
My brain in my glove	<p>Based on "Hand model of the brain" of Daniel Siegel, this activity aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn about the functions of the major regions of the brain understand how our brain reacts under stressful situations gain awareness of self-calming and re-regulating in stressful situations. 	<p>Annex 2:2</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gmuplg5fo5Y</p>

Day 2 – Afternoon

Topic: First hand experience with new methods - image theatre techniques

Duration: 3.5 hours

Given that all participants already knew what kind of workshop they wanted to organise, we didn't spend time on choosing a topic. In the afternoon of the second day we could therefore start straight away with familiarising the volunteers with art mediation methodologies. The goal of this session was to show them how to use art to convey and work on different concepts.

We started with image theatre techniques: What is image theatre and how can we use it to improve group dynamics and creativity?

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Infernal machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop group cohesion Stimulate collaboration 	Annex 2:3
Mimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop group cohesion Stimulate collaboration 	Annex 2:4
Sculpture and clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the concept of oppression Establishing a healthy atmosphere Creating physical confidence 	Annex 2:5
Shaping the image of oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing participants' stories related to a sense of oppression To be able to create a metaphorical vision of a real situation To introduce theatrical language into the group Find stories that the group can take up and develop in the forum theatre workshop 	Annex 2:6
Sculpture Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring and extending your non-verbal communication repertoire Introducing topics you want to work on Have fun, laugh, ... Preparing the group for theatre activities 	Annex 2:7

Day 3 - Morning

Topic: First hand experience with new methods - communication and dance

Duration: 3.5 hours max.

The goal of this morning was to explore different communication styles through dance techniques. The use of body and space helps to explore and expand the understanding of non-verbal and paraverbal communication. Through dance and movement, a healthy atmosphere is created, physical confidence is built and participants' expression is developed differently. Through short and rhythmic activities proposed by the facilitator, the group was able to work on the concepts of intercultural communication, comfort zone and discovery zone, and above all, to continue to develop a good group dynamic and a space of trust.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Communication and dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a healthy atmosphere To build up physical confidence To work on the concepts of intercultural communication, comfort zone and discovery zone To develop good group dynamics and a space of trust 	http://elancreatif.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Danse-method-sheet-COBU-final.pdf

Day 3 - Morning

Topic: First hand experience with new methods - communication and dance

Duration: 3.5 hours max.

In order to go deeper with communication, we dedicated a moment to work on active listening.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Active listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strengthen active listening skills, empathy To connect participants 	Annex 2:8

We ended the day by exploring the difficulties related to the volunteers' projects and identifying useful resources to address them. In order to achieve these aims we carried out an activity based on theatre. We focused on any kind of obstacles related to the participants' projects (instead of focusing on difficulties linked to managing a group, as described in Chapter 7 of the Guidebook)

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Difficulties and resources on stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify difficulties linked to your project Identify and share resources to address obstacles Develop communication and problem solving skills 	Guidebook - page 55

Day 4: Morning

Topic: First hand experience with new methods - preparing for difficulties

Duration: 2.5 hours

The morning of the fourth day we continued working on the fears that generate their own projects and the identification of resources (internal and external) through the technique of collage. The objective was for participants to discover a new artistic mediation technique to use with their groups, the collage, and to improve their self-esteem to carry out their projects with more security and peace of mind.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Exploring possible fears, challenges, resources through a collage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare participants to deal with fears and setbacks To provide a calming and introspective moment To stimulate creativity and develop problem solving skills 	Guidebook - page 60

Day 4: Afternoon

Topic: Creating content

Duration: 2.5 hours

In the afternoon, after having reinforced participants' self-esteem thanks to the collage technique, we started to work on the content of their projects. Our hypothesis is that the more confident the participants feel, the more relaxed they will be. And the more relaxed they are, the more effective and creative they will be in working on the content of their projects.

In order to achieve this goal, we proposed an interactive activity for creating projects in a collaborative way.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Create a short programme linked to a theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a short programme with a focus on a certain topic Stimulate creativity and mutual aid 	Guidebook - page 44

Day 5: Whole day

Topic: Managing a group

Duration: 7 hours max

After having spent 4 days working on techniques to energize a group, to manage stress, to diminish the impact of stereotypes and techniques to improve intercultural communication and listening, we dedicated the last day of the residency week to put everything into practice through a forum theatre activity, focusing on group management: me as a group leader, my fears, my strengths.

Theatre helps put together a metaphorical vision of a real situation. This exercise allows the group to live or put themselves in a given situation, which can facilitate awareness of the issues involved. It is a playful way of putting oneself in the place of the other, of solving a difficult situation and/or of introducing themes that one wants to work on. The participants re-enacted situations they feared in relation to their role as facilitator/leader. Thanks to the intervention of the audience, who replaced the character in a difficult situation and suggested possible solutions, the group was fed with new tools and strategies to better face possible difficulties.

Name activity	Aim(s)	Full description activity
Difficulties and resources on stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify difficulties linked to managing a group Identify and share resources to address obstacles Develop communication and problem solving skills 	Guidebook - page 55

We ended the week and this first part of the training with an interactive evaluation of the whole week.



Training part 2 - Thematic apéros

After this week of intensive workshops, we organised 'thematic apéros' once a month. Each apéro lasted 3.5 hours and focused on a specific topic that participants needed to develop or reinforce for their future projects. The format of each apéro was more or less the same: Welcome, energisers and then, sitting in a circle, each participant shared how his/her project was going, what the next steps were and, most importantly, whether he/she needed help from the rest of the group. After all participants had shared their situations, we started to deal with the specific topic. We closed each apéro with an evaluation.

First thematic apéro: 15 October 2021

Topic: Preparing for difficulties - how can neurosciences help me better understand communication and the learning process, in order to better transmit my passion to the group.



Image of the first thematic apéro on 15 October 2021

Second thematic apéro: 12 November 2021

Topic: Preparing for difficulties - How to deal with a participant's traumatic speech

Third thematic apéro: 3 December 2021

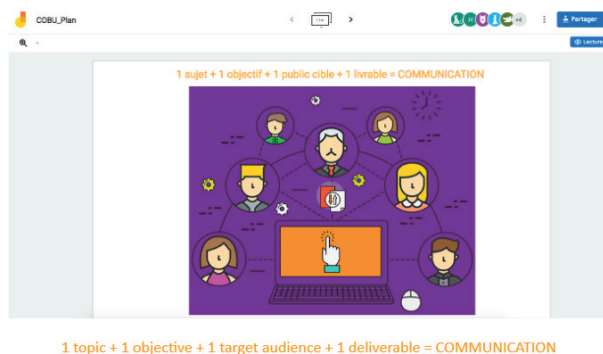
Topic: Preparing for difficulties - How to obtain local and international grants for my project

Fourth thematic apéro: 21 January 2022

Topic: Promoting the group - How to disseminate my project

Fifth thematic apéro: February 2022

During this last event, we asked participants to share how their projects were going, we exchanged useful information and above all we had a good time together.



Our experiences

The whole training took place in very good conditions. The group was very dynamic and energetic from the beginning to the end. The only unforeseen event was that due to the health crisis 3 thematic apéros had to be done online. As the topics arose from the specific needs of the participants, everyone was able to adapt to the virtual surroundings without any problem. Of course, as soon as it was possible, we organized the apéros again in person.

With regard to the question of what worked best and not: everything worked very well, especially the artistic mediation activities such as theatre and icebreakers. The participants enjoyed playing, moving and laughing.

Testimonials of the participants can be found in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8e6o-IVbTvw>

The result(s) of the training courses

The reactions were all very positive. The training exceeded the expectations of the facilitator. It turned out to be very useful and took place at an important moment, namely at the end of the lockdown. Both the participants and the facilitator really enjoyed each meeting. There was a lot of generosity and solidarity among everyone. Everyone enjoyed the progress of each other's project. At no time was there a competitive attitude. All the participants emphasised the human quality, the good energy, the dynamism and the concrete tools they received during the workshops for their projects.

Numerous groups have developed thanks to the COBU project and are still functioning. Here are some examples:

- a Latin dance group
- a group for ecotourism
- a group for the prevention of prostitution of minors
- a group to improve children's nutrition
- a massage group
- a discussion group for immigrant women.

The participants continue to see each other for

social and recreational activities. A fortnight ago, for instance, they came together to see a “Queer” performance.

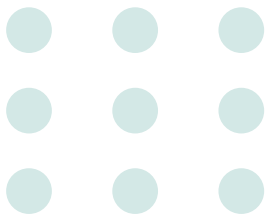
The facilitator remains available for support and consultation. Since the end of the intensive training week, one on one virtual meetings have been taking place weekly to guide the participants

in the development of their project. During these meetings we look at the state of affairs, the difficulties, the next steps, the identification and development of resources.

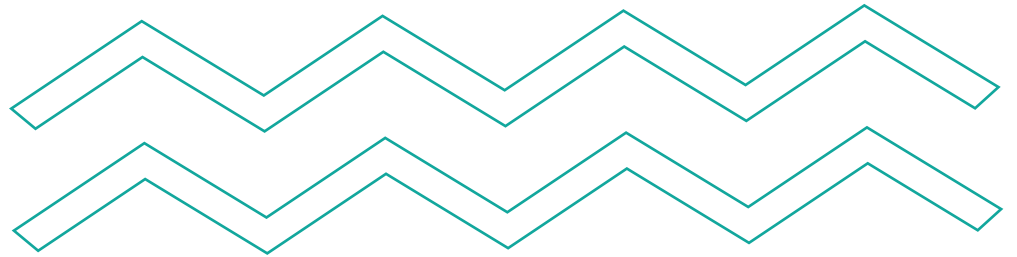
Testimonials of the trainer can be found in this video:


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCvyte5qCWE>





3. Case Study La Xixa





The intended goal and the reason for choosing that goal

For more than 10 years, La Xixa Teatre has carried out an annual training for people interested in getting to know and multiplying their methodologies, while learning about interculturality and intersectionality. In this framework, the COBU project has provided a special opportunity to offer an upgraded version of the training, while systematizing the knowledge and experience gained by the organization through the previous years.

The COBU workshop was specifically designed for volunteers aiming to be trained in group facilitation, forum theatre and intersectionality, motivated to create, manage and train their own groups.

The specific objectives of the workshop were for volunteers:

- To experience a process of Intersectional Forum Theatre and be able to replicate it.
- To develop a meta-look as facilitators and become aware and responsive to the needs, motivations, expectations and potentials of the group.
- To become aware of and recognise the diversities (gender, origin, etc.) existing in the group and the importance of taking them into account in facilitation and group dynamic.
- To be able to apply the Theatre¹ of the Oppressed² methodology in the identification, expression and management of conflicts.

The COBU workshop was a fantastic way to multiply the methodologies, activities and tools that La Xixa Teatre normally uses in its projects and interventions with different groups, both locally and internationally, with the aim of fostering social transformation. The main methodologies used were:

- Theatre of the Oppressed;
- Process Work;
- Theoretical and conceptual foundations on Interculturality and Intersectionality.

The workshop took place between April and November 2021, for a total of 19 blended sessions (65 hours) and the volunteers/participants of the workshops participated actively in two multiplier events organized by La Xixa: as Forum Theatre actors and actresses during the Forum Theatre Marathon carried out in June 2021 and as Jokers/Curingas³ during the Forum Theatre Masterclass in November 2021). After a few months of training (from April to September) on the proposed methodologies and contents, the participants were encouraged to test what they had learned through the creation, management and facilitation of their own groups. They had to create, plan and promote their own workshop, recruit participants, look for and find venues to carry out their activities, create, facilitate and evaluate them (both face to face and online in some cases) with the aim to create a Forum Theatre play that they would present in November.



1 - The Forum Theatre is the main tool of the methodology. In the Forum Theatre, actors and actresses develop a short play based on the collectivization of the actors 'and actresses' own experiences, or act-activists. This piece is mainly composed of several characterizations: the oppressed, the oppressor, the allies and the Joker/Curinga.

2 - The Theatre of the Oppressed, developed in the 1970s by Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal, has been one of the main tools for participatory communication and for Latin American popular education movements. Unlike many aspects of social theatre, the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is a political theatre. It is a collective essay of emancipation. Based on the epistemology of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, the TO allows us to analyse through theatre the abuses of power perpetrated and perpetuated in a systematic way in our daily micro-structures. This methodology consists of several tools: Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, Legislative Theatre, The Rainbow of Desire, Invisible Theatre and Journalistic Theatre. The TO uses theatrical games to de-mechanize our perceptions, making us aware of our cultural filters by making explicit and collectivizing our own conflicts and experiences. The collectivization of individual problems, and subsequent extrapolation to a group history, allows us to look for collective alternatives to situations that are often difficult to solve from an individual position.

Recruitment of volunteers

The COBU workshop carried out by la Xixa in Barcelona was addressed to any person (of any age, origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, etc.) interested in acquiring group management and facilitation skills and eager to learn about the Theatre of the Oppressed and intersectionality, in order to multiply the methodology and work of the organization.



In order to recruit volunteers/participants, La Xixa created a visual identity of the workshop, and a flyer/program which was promoted through their website, their social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and through emails to organizations and professionals working in the social field and/or with groups in situation of vulnerability. The flyer/program and info disseminated contained a link to a Google form through which interested people could sign up. In this form, the candidates were asked for personal information (such as name, last name, contact), if they already had some experience in Theatre of the Oppressed, if they had ever participated in a volunteering program/project, if they had already ideas about the group/activity that they wanted to create, and

finally we asked for a short motivational letter. The call was very successful, receiving 62 pre-inscriptions, which made it necessary to make a pre-selection, based on the answers to the questions in the Google form and on an online interview with La Xixa staff to check on their motivation and commitment.

- The questions we asked during the 20-minutes online interviews were:
- Tell us something about yourself and what is your motivation for participating in this workshop.
- Are you familiar with the Theatre of the Oppressed (either as an actor/actress or as a member of the audience)? If yes, tell us something about your experience.
- Do you know La Xixa Teatre? Have you already participated in one of our workshops? If yes, how was your experience?
- How would you define interculturality?
- Do you have experience volunteering and/or facilitating groups?
- Do you know that as part of the program you will be expected to create your own group multiplying the methodologies and tools that you will acquire during the workshop? Do you already have something in mind?
- Is there anything else that you would like to share?

After the interviews, 32 participants were selected (23 women, 8 men and 1 non-binary person). 21 of them ended up creating self-managed groups, engaging a total of 167 people participating in their groups. The groups that were created include Catalan and migrant people; women, men and trans people; people with university degrees and people with lower levels of education. The main topics dealt with by the groups which have been represented during the Marathon and the Masterclass are: racial and gender-based oppressions, discriminations experienced by older women, discriminations due to physical characteristics, types of masculinity.

3 - The Joker/Curinga is the character who interacts with the audience, that is, with the spectators. The postulate of the piece is that an oppressed always has the capacity to act to confront the oppressor. In the moment of greatest conflict, the Joker/Curinga stops the piece. Through open dialogue by the public, alternatives are proposed to try to resolve the conflict on stage. The Joker/Curinga then invites the spectator to replace one of the characters on stage. As many alternatives are tried as proposals emerge.

The training

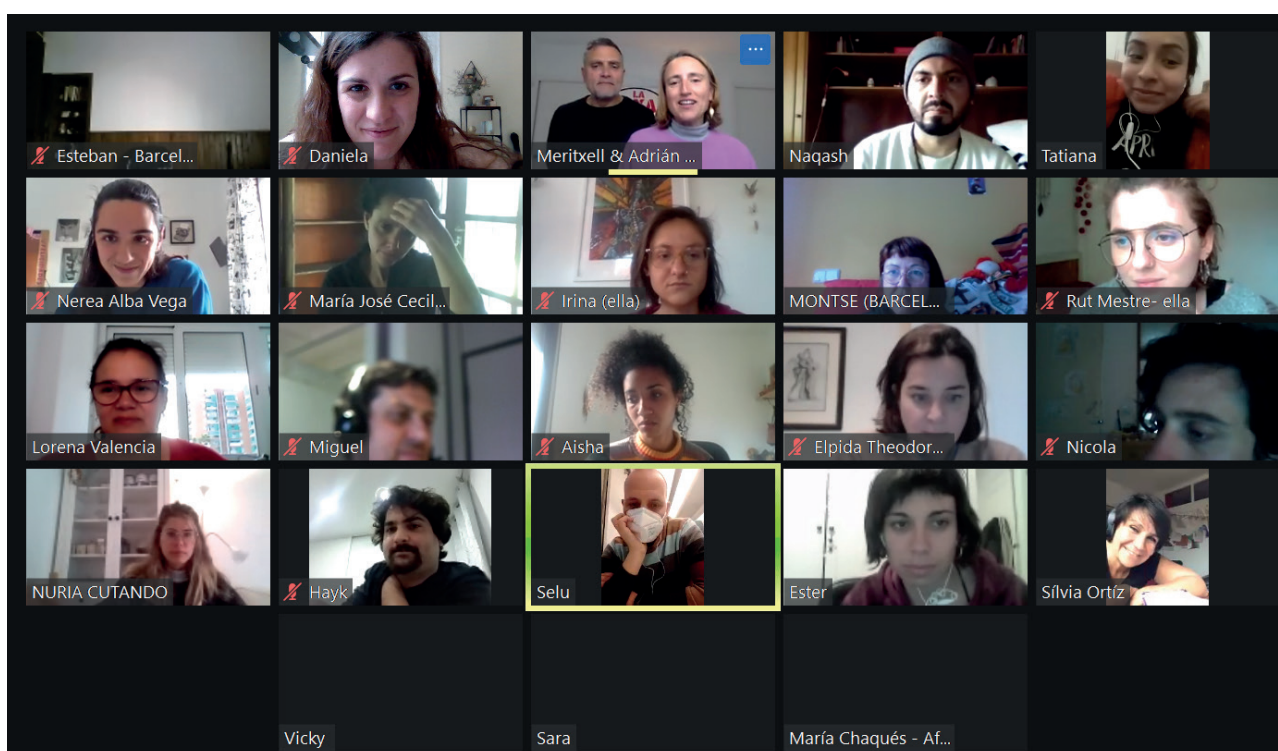
La Xixa divided the training programme into 5 Modules, through which different topics and objectives were addressed.

- Recruiting volunteers, described in the Guidebook in Chapter 1, was addressed in Module 4 and 5, with exercises and discussions on how to mobilize people to participate, how to communicate and disseminate information. In the practical phase, the theoretical information shared during the workshop was then put into practice and online communication strategies and production of digital dissemination materials were tested. The dissemination material can be found in La Xixa's IO2 platform: <https://laxixafemcomunitat.eu/>
- Creating a group of volunteers was

addressed in all modules, by experimenting with exercises and games that helped build trust and confidence and by focusing on the importance of an agreement between facilitators and participants, so that everyone feels free to express themselves.

- The participants tested exercises inspired by the Theatre of the Oppressed, being the main methodology, during the entire duration of the training, experiencing their effectiveness, usefulness, difficulties, strengths and weaknesses and, above all, assimilating an overall view on how to conduct collective creation processes.

Module 1 was dedicated to discovering the motivation of the participants, team building, group cohesion, approximation to Theatre of the Oppressed and Process Work.



MODULE 1 – SESSION 1 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Introduction of the facilitation team, of the training and the methodologies that will be used	20 minutes
Get to know each other – exercise in pairs who share their name, three things that identify them and expectations towards the training. Sharing in plenary	25 minutes
Defining theatre – participants, divided in groups, are asked to give a definition of what theatre is. Sharing in plenary	35 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Video on the Theatre of the Oppressed: In the footsteps of Augusto (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVslx8OmE3k) + discussion	70 minutes
Evaluation of the session, closing and assignment for the following session	15 minutes

MODULE 1 – SESSION 2 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in	15 minutes
Energiser / get to know each other: Name and gesture (See Guidebook Chapter 2- page 14)	20 minutes
Energiser: Energy circle	10 minutes
Energiser and demechanization: Different walks, stop and go (See Guidebook Chapter 2 - page 18)	30 minutes
Get to know each other: Talking in pairs	15 minutes
Teambuilding: The forest of sounds	30 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Energiser: Free dance	10 minutes
Introduction to image theatre: The word's image	30 minutes
Creation of stories: individual and combined (in 4 groups)	50 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 1 – SESSION 3 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Introduction to interseccionality and creativity Theory and exercises https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8MyDeDpGAs&t=4240s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NncQOYtrig http://angelsbarcelona.com/en/artists/daniela-ortiz/projects/pinturas-de-castas/1039 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj_WaBGyVSo https://lecturia.org/cuentos-y-relatos/jose-maria-arguedas-sueno-del-pongo/1062/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHBbIMLSxTA	65 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Introduction to interseccionality and creativity Theory and exercises	65 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 1 – SESSION 4 – ONLINE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Internal work: focusing on the characteristics of an object, its qualities and how the participants relate to them	35 minutes
Dream vs. Agreed reality	35 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Introduction to prejudices and stereotypes Exercise commenting on a photo in small groups and discussion in plenary	60 minutes
First journey of otherness: us vs. them as children (work in pairs) + vocal performance	60 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

Module 2 was dedicated to start working on theatrical expression, creation of stories, and intersectionality. By doing this, the participants started getting inspiration, ideas and experience to be able to choose the topic that they wanted to work on with their self-managed group (Chapter 3 of the Guidebook). This work was continued also in the following modules through exercises

and games on diversity in groups. The volunteers also participated in many sessions related to the content of interculturality and intersectionality, increasing their awareness of the different social issues that can be found in a group depending on its composition. In module 4, the volunteers started imagining the groups they would work with and focusing on topics that might be suitable for them.



MODULE 2 – SESSION 1 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Exploring otherness: Exercise in pairs - choose a person you like and admire very much and talk about their favourite food; choose a person who annoys you and talk about their plans for the summer; join a quality of the first and the second character.	30 minutes
Introduction to role and ranks	10 minutes
Conceptual vs. Social rank	20 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Raise participants' motivation: The high dream and the low dream (See Guidebook chapter 7 - 57)	40 minutes
Structural rank and role of the facilitator	30 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 2 – SESSION 2 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Energiser: How are you with a statue	20 minutes
Energiser: Walk and name exchange	20 minutes
Star of intersectionality	70 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Star of intersectionality	80 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 2 – SESSION 3 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Ranks: Social, Contextual, Structural, Psychological, Spiritual	60 minutes
Break	15 minutes
What is my impact on the groups I may work with? How do they see me (gender, age, social class)? Group of 12 year olds Group of Senegalese people Group of veiled Moroccan women (Group exercise)	70 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 2 – SESSION 4 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Image Theatre (the group is divided into pairs and each person proposes 4 statues. Then 2 pairs are combined and select 4 statues as a group which will create a choreography, and then they perform it in front of the entire group)	70 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Creating stories: In pairs, each participant shares a personal story of oppression and then they combine it in one story	120 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

Module 3 was dedicated to deepening, through theory and practice, into the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed, offering to the participants the possibility to have first hand experience with this new method (Chapter 4 of the Guidebook). The participants created Forum

Theatre performances based on their own experiences. To do this, through exercises and games, they were encouraged to share personal experiences and ideas and to build the story of the group.



MODULE 3 – SESSION 1 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Theory on the Theatre of the Oppressed – characteristics, structure and elements	30 minutes
Practical work on the question at the base of a Forum Theatre presentation	30 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Theory and practical work on the characters/roles/masks of a Forum Theatre	40 minutes
Theory and practical work on the space and time of the scenario presented through a Forum Theatre	30 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 3 – SESSION 2 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Creation of stories in groups (combining the stories previously created in couples)	60 minutes
Creation of characters, definition on time and space	40 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Creation of dialogues	50 minutes
First trial of the scenes	40 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 3 – SESSION 3 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Deepening on the theory behind characters' construction	40 minutes
Exercise on characters' construction (posture, sounds, emotions, story, rhythm)	40 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Creation of dialogues with images as a base (http://www.pazerrazuriz.com/) and presentation of the dialogues	50 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 3 – SESSION 3 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Creation and trial of the choreography (combining images created by the groups on a previous session)	60 minutes
Second trial of the scenes created by the participants	30 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Second trial of the scenes created by the participants	100 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

Module 4 was dedicated to the creation of content, design and planning activities and workshops (Chapter 5 of the Guidebook), to defining one's role and to deciding if they wanted to work individually, in pairs or in groups to create a self-managed group (Chapter 6 of the Guidebook), to group facilitation (Chapter 7 of the Guidebook) and

problem management techniques (Chapter 8 of the Guidebook). The trainers proposed exercises and shared advice on how to deal with groups and possible difficulties. At the end of module 4, the volunteers facilitated a self-managed session of the workshop, experimenting with facilitating activities they had created.



MODULE 4 – SESSION 1 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in	15 minutes
Energiser: how are you as if you were a weather forecast presenter	15 minutes
Developing leadership – Make it big	20 minutes
Promote a group – Elevator pitch (See Guidebook chapter 9 - page 96)	60 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Presentation of, and discussion about the elevator pitch activity (See Guidebook chapter 9 - page 96)	40 minutes
Plans for the future (target group of the volunteers' activities, spaces, organization, type of activities, etc.)	60 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 4 – SESSION 2 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

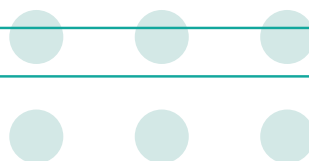
Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Theory and discussion about interculturality	70 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Theory and discussion about interculturality	60 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 4 – SESSION 3 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS: SELF-MANAGED SESSION

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in	15 minutes
Group 1 shares energisers	40 minutes
Group 2 shares activities to work with the body	45 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Group 3 shares activities on creation of the stories	50 minutes
Group 4 shares activities to trial the stories created and perform it	60 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 4 – SESSION 4 – FACE-TO-FACE – 4 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Theory and exercise: Primary and secondary processes in facilitation (based on Process Work methodology)	40 minutes
Theory and exercise: Feedback and limits in facilitation (based on Process Work methodology)	40 minutes
Theory and exercise: System theory	30 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Theory and exercise: Roles in facilitation	40 minutes
Theory and exercise: Hotspots in facilitation	40 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes



Module 5 was dedicated to the promotion of groups (working on communication, digital and promotional skills) and to their supervision (Chapter 9 of the Guidebook).

During the online sessions, the trainers supported the volunteers in the problems they were facing by helping them to identify strategies to find new solutions.



MODULE 5 – SESSION 1 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Participants share with the group their experience as facilitators	70 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Participants share with the group their experience as facilitators	60 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

MODULE 5 – SESSION 2 – ONLINE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Participants share with the group their experience as facilitators	70 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Participants share with the group their experience as facilitators	60 minutes
Evaluation of the session and closing	15 minutes

FINAL ASSESSMENT – FACE-TO-FACE – 3 HOURS

Description of the activity	Duration
Welcome and check in + energiser	20 minutes
Participants share with the group their experience as facilitators	70 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Participants share with the group their experience as facilitators	60 minutes
Closing	15 minutes

For a designed version of the training programme in Catalan, follow this link.
https://www.laxixateatre.org/_files/ugd/632f44_560bb927dc4849af8d1e8fb87dc2ae16.pdf



Our experiences

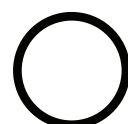
The project focused on training volunteers who will serve as multiplier agents, by replicating the process they lived with their self-managed groups and by making the Theatre of the Oppressed more widely known.

32 participants had the possibility to learn to apply creative and innovative methodologies. As for the content, special emphasis was placed on intersectionality.

The workshop was a great success and although

at the beginning it was meant to be offered to 20 participants, given the high number of people interested in attending it, La Xixa decided to work with a bigger group. However, given the restrictions determined by the Covid-19 pandemic, the workshop was carried out in a blended format, with a mix of face-to-face and online sessions. However, some participants lived outside of Barcelona and for a long period of time they could not travel to Barcelona given to local and regional restrictions, so they mainly participated online. This situation represented a challenge for the facilitation team and the group dynamic, but also an opportunity to learn something new (blended group facilitation), and the result was brilliant. The team adapted some activities so that online participants could follow and the group dynamic was a real positive one. A space for open debate and sharing was created, and a lot of learning came directly from the interaction among participants who collaborated really well among each other and with the facilitation team.

*More photos and video can be found here:
<https://laxixafemcomunitat.eu/>



The result(s) of the training

Both the participants' and La Xixa Teatre's reviews are very positive. According to the evaluation and impact criteria, the objectives have been achieved and the team is very satisfied with the work done, the results and the evaluations received.

The workshop was conducted with 32 participants instead of the planned 20. This was a positive effect of the blended format (on- and offline), which allowed more people to participate depending on their availability and location. We registered 117 participants for the Marathon and 133 for the Masterclass. 15 self-managed volunteer groups (led by 21 participants - some worked in pairs and groups of three) and Forum Theatre performances were created in Barcelona, Sabadell, Sant Celoni, Masnou, Alicante and Valencia. Thanks to these self-managed groups, new networks and partnerships with municipal spaces and community and social entities have been established (BarcelonActua, Creu Roja, RAI, Centre Cívic Drassanes, Casal Jove Espai la Fontana, Casal Jove Casa Sagnier, Palau Alòs, among others). 167 people took part in the self-managed groups.

In order to carry out their activities with their self-managed groups, the volunteers contacted organisations that could provide rooms, set objectives for their sessions, worked on the promotion of their activities and on the recruitment of participants, learned how to deal with time and conflicts, etc. One of the visible results are the posters prepared by the volunteers, which are shown on the Spanish COBU platform: <https://laxixafemcomunitat.eu/>.

The level of engagement of volunteers during the workshop was high. The workshop generated moments in which the transformative potential was high and the participants felt comfortable sharing personal experiences, were able to live in diversity, create empathy, forge new bonds and open up to new perspectives. Two self-managed groups also participated in another event after the workshop had ended, and most participants continued to use the methods they had learned in their professions and in their free time.

The training was evaluated both in a non-formal and a formal way with the participants. Below we collected some of their testimonials:

"Everything experienced so far has been motivating and has led me to reflect".

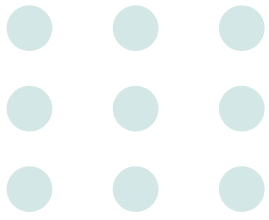
"The activities proposed, the skills acquired, all the experience in general has been very useful".

"I think it has been one of the most transformative experiences in my life. And I will recommend it to everyone I can."

"Creating the self-managed group was the most natural and necessary outcome of the workshop and at the same time the starting point to learn more, reflect more, delve more into the contents of interest. Our role as participants took a turn as we became facilitators".

"I believe that the role of the leader is mainly to facilitate processes, encourage people to try and reveal what they have inside (in terms of feelings, preconceived ideas, desire to act, creativity). I have learned to trust the group and its processes, its times and its capabilities and not to let myself be blindly guided by what I "would like to do" or what we "should do".





4. Case Study Storytelling Centre



The intended goal and the reason for choosing that goal

It took us a while to decide what we wanted to be our goal. Storytelling being our 'core business,' it was clear from the beginning that our goal would have something to do with storytelling. But there are so many purposes for which storytelling can be used. Think of the development of social skills, of speaking skills, of self-knowledge and so on. (We call this use of storytelling for purposes other than just telling a story, applied storytelling). Finally it dawned on us: Storytelling Centre (STC) has been organising Living Libraries since 2014, but has been struggling for a few years with time and manpower, resulting in fewer Living Libraries being organised than desired. STC's approach to the COBU project therefore, after much consideration, was to find volunteers who would be interested in learning how to run a Living Library on their own, including the training of 'new' storytellers in order to prepare them for participation in such an event. A Living Library, as we organise it, is a small-scale storytelling event in which storytellers share a short (about 8 minutes max.) personal story with a maximum of three people. The aim of Living Libraries⁴ is to 'share to connect,' i.e. to combat loneliness and/or make problems discussible by sharing experiences in the area of a certain subject (varying from an illness to sexual orientation to unemployment, etc.) and/or to improve poor relations between neighbourhood residents due to a lack of contact.

Recruitment of volunteers

Once we had set our goal, we could start thinking about recruiting participants. Earlier in the project we had interviewed somebody who works for the Amsterdam Volunteer Centre (official name: Vrijwilligers Centrale Amsterdam). One of the things she told us was that many expatriates are looking for volunteer work and not only expatriates from Western countries, but from everywhere. With this in mind, we decided to start recruiting participants via the website of the Amsterdam Volunteer Centre by posting a call for volunteers in Dutch and in English. Below you will find a screenshot of the English version. Unfortunately the form we had to fill in didn't allow a translation of the headings, but this turned out not to be a problem.

Eighteen people reacted and registered; 6 opted

The screenshot shows the website for the Storytelling Centre Amsterdam, specifically the page for 'Organisers and storytellers for Living Libraries'. The page is in Dutch and includes a map of Amsterdam, a list of tasks, and a registration form. The header features the logo of the Storytelling Centre Amsterdam and the text 'Organisers and storytellers for Living Libraries'. Below the header, there is a section titled 'Locatie' (Location) with a map of Amsterdam and a list of tasks. The tasks are: 'IN HET KORT' (In short), 'TAAKOMSCHRIJVING' (Task description), 'WAT VOOR KENNIS OF VAARDIGHEDEN ZIJN NODIG?' (What knowledge or skills are needed?), 'WAT VOOR SCHOLING KRIJG JE AANGEBODEN?' (What education do you get?), 'WAT KRIJG JE ER VOOR TERUG?' (What do you get out of it?), 'WAT IS DE MEERWAARDE VAN DIT VRIJWILLIGERSWERK?' (What is the value of this volunteer work?), 'WERKTIDEN' (Working hours), and 'HOE KOM JE IN AANMERKING?' (How do you get in?). The page also includes a section for 'Vragen over vrijwilligerswerk vinden?' (Questions about finding volunteer work?) and a logo for 'VCA helpt' (VCA helps).

for the training in Dutch, 12 for the training in English. In the end 11 people showed up, 4 of which opted for the Dutch training. Of the seven people who didn't show up, only two replied to the email that was sent to them to ask for a reason. One had found a job and the other one had to go abroad for family matters. (She has contacted us later to ask if she could participate in another training.) The age of the participants, 2 men and 9 women, ranged from late twenties to mid-seventies. Their backgrounds were also diverse: Malay, South American (2), North American (2) English, Iraqi, Turkish, Dutch (3). Most of the non-Dutch participants understood and spoke reasonably good to good Dutch and everyone spoke English.

For part 4 of the training we needed 'new' participants. This online training was facilitated by 2 of the trainees, supported by us. Part of the trainees' training was to think about ways to recruit 'new' participants and they did. They recruited via their personal LinkedIn and Facebook pages, via WhatsApp and by phone. We posted an announcement on our organisation's Facebook page and sent emails to people in our network that might be interested. In the end we had 5 'new' participants (from the 9 who had registered). Six people attended the first training, but for one, working online wasn't ideal, so he decided to quit and to join a session in person when offered.

⁴ - Living Libraries are small scale events in which people, trained in telling a short personal story, share this story with one up to three people at a time with the aim of creating a connection between the narrator and the listener(s).

The training

The participants were split in two groups, a Dutch speaking and an English speaking group, and offered exactly the same training twice a day: in the morning for the Dutch speaking group and in the afternoon for the English speaking group. One Turkish/Dutch participant had to quit the training after 2 in person sessions because he had found a paid-for job. Of the English speaking participants, one had to quit after 3 in person training sessions because she had to go back to the United States. Another one had to quit after the in person sessions because her partner was appointed minister in the Dutch Cabinet and she felt she had to be there for him. The whole training consisted of: 5 in person sessions of 4.5 hours each; one Living Library (1.5 hours) in which they could practice the stories (in English and Dutch) they had found and constructed during those live sessions; 3 online sessions (due to

the pandemic) that were dedicated to setting up a training programme and all the aspects you have to keep in mind when organising a living library (participants, venue, audience, finances, etc.), which lasted 2 hours each and were offered in Dutch in the morning and in English in the afternoon. We then had a 4 hours live meeting (in combination with a lunch) with all participants but two, who were ill with Covid. And for those who had expressed their wish to become trainers of future storytellers, we organised two online 3 -hours workshops (partly due the pandemic, but also to give people outside Amsterdam and even the Netherlands the opportunity to attend) in which they could practice their skills as trainers of people who wanted to learn how to find, construct and tell a short story. This training was preceded by an online gathering with the two co-trainers to help them prepare for the training (programme, tasks division, timing, etc.)

PART I

During the first 5 live sessions the participants were trained in telling a short (8 minutes max.) personal story. During this training, much attention was also paid to personal safety and team building. Not only because, as explained in chapter 2 of the Guidebook, these are requirements for effective training, but also with a view to the goal: that they will set up living libraries together independently. At the end of these 5 sessions, Storytelling Centre organised a Living Library in a community centre to offer the participants the opportunity to practice their skills as storytellers and to become familiar with the concept of a Living Library. [See the full programme below.]

DAY 1 / 9 Dec 2021, 10am-2.30pm

What	Duration	Description activity
Introduction project COBU and Living Libraries	20 min	
Check in	30 min	Everybody introduces themselves and tells about their expectations of the training. Trainer begins.
Name game (See for full description Guidebook, Chapter 2, page 16)	30 min	In pairs, participants answer 4 questions: what is your name, by whom was your name given to you, are you happy with your name, does your name have a meaning. When done, the group comes together again and the pairs repeat each other's answers. Afterwards, the facilitator pays attention to the importance of listening.
Break	10 min	
Most dull moment made exciting (See for full description Guidebook, Chapter 9, page 64)	40 min	Each participant tells a story (3 min max) about one's most dull experience. After all have done so, they have to tell about the same event as if it was the most exciting one in their life.
Letter A (See for full description Annex 3:1)	15 min	Facilitator says letter A and asks everyone what their letter A looks like. Activity to show that one piece of information can have various interpretations.
Break	30 min	
Clap Boom	15 min	Energiser
Retell your favourite story	60 min	Participants tell their favourite story from memory in their own words. Afterwards the facilitator makes them aware of the structure of each story.
Check-out	20 min	Trainer last to check-out.
TOTAL	4.5 h	

DAY 2 / 10 Dec, 10am-2pm

What	Duration	Description activity
Check-in	20 min	Trainer last to check-in.
Game of many things	25 min	Energiser
Journey of the hero (See for full description Annex 3:2)	25 min	Facilitator explains the basic structure of each story, using Red Riding Hood as an example.
Short break	15 min	
Journey of the hero continued	60 min	Participants are asked to think of stories that do not follow the structure of the 'journey of the hero' or to give examples of stories that do follow this structure and explain that structure within that story.
Break	30 min	
Throw imaginary ball	15 min	Energiser
Throw in words (See for full description Guidebook, Chapter 2, page 21)	30 min	In pairs - one participant tells a story, the other one throws in words that have nothing to do with the story but have to be used in the story. After 10 min. They change roles.
Check-out	15 min	Trainer last to check-out.
TOTAL	4 hours	

Day 3 / 13 Dec 10am-2.15pm

What	Duration	Description activity
Check-in	20 min	Trainer last to check-in.
Tree of life explanation (See for full description Annex 3:5)	20 min	Facilitator explains the tree of life.
Tree of life explanation continued	30 min	Participants ask questions about the tree of life.
Short break	15 min	Participants make their own tree of life.
Start making own tree of life	60 min	Energiser; participants stand in a circle with their back to the centre. They have to count from 1 up to 10 and back without knowing who is going to be the next to count nor when. If two say a number at the same time, they have to start all over again.
Break	30 min	
Counting 1-10 and back	15 min	
Sharing tree of life	60 min	Participants share their tree of life in pairs and question each other.
Sharing tree of life	60 min	Participants share their tree of life in pairs and question each other.
Check out	15 min	Trainer last to check-out.
TOTAL	4.25h	

DAY 4 / 15 Dec 10am-2pm

What	Duration	Description activity
Check in	20 min	Trainer last to check-in.
Sharing trees of life	60 min	Those who want, share the 'ingredients' of their tree of life.
Short break	15 min	
Explanation of mind map	10 min	Mind mapping will help the participants to come to a personal story.
Making a mind map (See for full description Annex 3:3)	50 min	Participants have to first choose their own centre word/theme, based upon their tree of life.
Break	30 min	Energiser
Clap Boom	10 min	Use about 10 minutes to evaluate the making of the mind map in the group.
Making a mind map continued	30 min	Trainer last to check-out + Homework: think about a personal story, based upon their tree of life and mind map.
Check out	15 min	
TOTAL	4 hours	

DAY 5 / 17 Dec 10am-2pm

What	Duration	Description activity
Check in	20 min	Trainer last to check-in.
Making your story	40 min	Participants tell each other in pairs the story they've come up with so far and question each other in order to help each other to make the story better.
Short break	15 min	
Sharing the stories	60 min	Each participant shares his/her story (8 min. pp max.) with the group.
Break	30 min	
Game of many things	10 min	Energiser
Sharing stories continued	50 min	
Check out	20 min	Trainer last to check-out.
TOTAL	4 h	

DAY 6 / 18 Dec 13-14.30pm

What	Duration	Description activity
Living Library	90 min	Participants share their stories with 1 or 2 listeners at the time in a living library setting in a public place.

Five trainees participated in the Living Library as storytellers and one helped organise the event. The

others could not make it on the date or did not feel ready to tell their story yet.



PART 2

In 3 online sessions, on 14, 18 and 19 January 2022, the participants got to know more about how they could help others (future storytellers in Living Libraries) to find and construct their story: how to set up a training programme, what to take in consideration when choosing activities, how to deal with challenges in the group, tips and tricks, etc. They also got to learn more about the practical sides of organizing a training and a living library: this included the recruitment of participants, various ways of finding venues for the training and the living libraries, where to apply for (small scale) funding if needed. Each session lasted 2 hours and was offered in both languages: Dutch in the morning and English in the afternoon. We asked the participants to each lead an activity, either for team building or in the field of storytelling, and evaluated these afterwards with the group. During the final session they all presented a training programme, set up by each of them individually. One of these training programmes was for five 3-hour workshops, the others for a 4-hour workshop each. We discussed the set-up of these programmes in the group: the activities, their order, the time for breaks, potential obstacles and how to deal with those if they would occur, etc..

PART 3

The 4-hours live meeting on 6 February 2022 that followed these online workshops resulted in each participant defining the role(s) they wanted to have in the living libraries. Most of them had decided beforehand which role(s) they preferred, based on their experiences in the workshops. Each participant shared his/her wishes and explained why he or she thought that role suited him or her best. The other participants could react to that (and did). Eventually this meeting turned into an evaluation of what participants had learned from the training about the different subjects and about themselves and how that had influenced them in choosing their future role within the Living Libraries.



PART 4

The 4 participants who had expressed their wish to train future storytellers were fully involved in the preparations of the Introductory storytelling training and the training itself on 25 and 28 February 2022: together they recruited the participants, set up the training programme and led the activities. STC took the roles of advisor (when asked for advice) and supervisor. [See the full programme below.]

Programme Friday 25 February 2 - 5 CET
1-INTRODUCTORY TRAINING STORYTELLING by COBU-TRAINEES

What	Time	Remarks
Introduction	5 min	a.o. Permission to record the training sessions; (input for) house rules, ask everybody to add their name to their image.
Check-in	10 min	What's your name, where are you located right now, what made you join this training, how do you feel. [the trainers start with the check-in]
Memory	10 min	(Energiser/icebreaker) Participants go to break-out rooms in pairs (2 min): 1 trainer stays in the main room. In break-out rooms, the pairs decide upon a movement. When they've returned to the main room, the one who has stayed behind asks 2 people to make their move. If there is a match (same movement), they have to close their video. If there is no match, s-he has to ask other people to make their move.
Name game (See for full description Guidebook, Chapter 2, page 16)	30 min	Participants go to break-out rooms in pairs (5 min.). Questions: what is your name, how did you get your name; are you happy with your name; does your name have a special meaning. (Do not mention beforehand that the listener is going to repeat the information about the name of the teller! Link this exercise, once all have told about the other's name, to the importance of listening in storytelling.)
5 min break		Play music from participants' playlist.
Identity Triangle (See for full description Annex 3:4)	20 min	Participants go to break-out rooms, 3/room. Needed: pen and paper Draw a triangle on a piece of paper. Find something all 3 persons have in common; find something you have in common with one and not with the other; find something unique for each person. Add this info to the triangle.
Introduction journey of the hero (See for full description Annex 3:2)	10 min	Participants go to break-out rooms in pairs. Practice with story building blocks to get attention Four parts: 1. Intro "Once upon a time" 2. But one day..... 3. And then suddenly..... 4. Finally..... You have 5 minutes each or you can build up the story together for 10 minutes.
Journey of the hero	10 min	Preparation: drawing of the journey, helpers and adversaries via shared screen.
10 min break		Play music from participants' playlist.
Make a story yours	45 min	Participants go to break-out rooms in pairs (first 3 rounds in different pairs). 1st round 8 minutes: Tell each other about an adventure of max. 3 minutes each. True story or a fantasy but tell it credible as if it actually really happened. 2nd round 8 minutes: The story you've received is a gift: It's yours now. You can change, delete or add anything you like to make it your own. Tell each other the received story but make it yours and as if it actually really happened to you. You have 3 minutes each to tell the other about your adventure. 3rd round 8 minutes: same as round 2. 4th round in group 25 minutes: Who wants to tell the latest story you received as if it is yours and actually happened to you.
Check-out	25 min	Questions: how do you feel, what have you learned, anything you'd like to say? [trainers are the last to check out] Homework: think about a subject for a personal story.

Programme Monday 28 February 2 - 5 CET
2-INTRODUCTORY TRAINING STORYTELLING by COBU-TRAINEES

What	Time	Remarks
Check-in	10 min	Trainers last to check-in.
Energiser (show ... of your body)	5 min	Participants have to show body parts like a foot, an arm, an ear etc. in front of the camera.
Association web	30 min	Needed: pen, paper or jamboard (participants can choose) First individually (20 min), then in pairs in break-out rooms. Question to all: think of a situation that is or has been important in your personal life and start associating with that situation (people, surroundings, climat, etc.)
10 min break		Participants are asked to think about a circa 3 minutes personal story based on their association web.
Continue the story	10 min	The trainer starts a story with two sentences. All participants, one after the other, add 2 sentences to the story.
Make your personal story	20 min 30 min	The trainer will explain what is expected of the participants and remind the participants of the role of the listener. They then work individually on their personal story for 20 min, after which they will go to break-out rooms. 4 break-out rooms in total, in each one 1 trainer plus participants. In the break-out rooms the participants tell each other their story as it is then. All listen in silence. After each story, the teller gets feedback that will help him/her to improve the story. (trainers lead this feedback process by asking questions like: did the story evoke an image in your head, or more images? Which image(s)? Are those the images the teller wishes to evoke? Did the story evoke an emotion? If so, is this the emotion the teller wishes to evoke? Etc.
Some advice with regard to presenting a story	5 min	Voice, body language, synchrony between content and body language.
Presentation of personal stories	30 min	For those who want to share their story.
Verbal evaluation + 1 word mentimeter	25 min	If we compare the training with a journey: what challenges did you overcome, if any? What did you learn? Did the training meet the goal you had in mind? Did the training tickle your wish to learn more about storytelling? [If one person answers, the others can indicate whether they agree or not by using the thumbs up, thumbs down, heart application available in Zoom.] Do you have any questions? For Mentimeter one question: if you had to stick one word to the training, which word would you choose?
Check-out	5 min	Trainers check-out last.

Our experiences

Although more participants in the training would have been welcome, the advantage of working with two small groups is that you can give everyone and all aspects of the training a lot of attention, with the result that the training usually has a deeper impact on the experience and the acquisition of skills of the participants. This was certainly the case in the COBU training. Although, for various reasons, not all participants shared their stories in the Living Library in December 2021, they all created a personal story and mostly a very well constructed and substantive one.

Despite working with two groups, a close-knit group of participants emerged. This was partly due

to the fact that participants sometimes switched groups because it was more convenient for them in terms of time, but also because of the Living Library in which they worked together and because of the communal lunch. The fact that two languages were spoken, Dutch and English, proved not to be a barrier to a group feeling.

Training in finding, creating and telling a personal story can trigger strong emotions in participants, which may cause challenging situations. Although the proper guidance of such a situation - without taking the place of the therapist - is a challenge for a trainer, it offered the other participants the opportunity to experience in practice how intense reactions can be and how you can deal with them

in such a way that someone does not fall out of the group, but feels safe enough to continue (partly after discussions with the trainer alone, in which he or she explores whether continuing the training would not be too taxing for the participant and the group). Such an experience in practice was especially valuable to the participants who were considering training people in personal storytelling themselves, which came out in part 2 of the training. One remark: the tree of life exercise (see annex 3:5) is a very tricky one. Unless you are an experienced trainer or one that is capable of keeping the activity 'light', we advise trainers to just use the mind map activity (see annex 3:3).

It was fascinating to notice that, as a trainer, you actually suspect at a fairly early stage who is going to take on the role of trainer and organiser, who will want to continue telling stories (the one does not exclude the other, by the way) and who will drop out after the training, but will remain involved with the group as an interested party. In the case of the COBU training, our suspicions proved to be correct.

The result(s) of the training

When it comes to the results of the training, we distinguish two aspects: what the participants think they have learned and whether the goal, the continuation of the Living Libraries by self-managed volunteers, has been achieved. To start with the first:

At the end of our lunch meeting in February 2022 the participants interviewed each other on the basis of two questions:

- What have you learned?
- How do you see your future role?

To give you an idea of their answers we include some of them here:

"I learned a lot about the share to connect storytelling method and experienced how safe, connecting and effective it is to reorder stories/ events in your life and give them value and meaning. I also learned how to set up a training course myself. Furthermore: Through the training / the COBU project I have met beautiful people with whom I feel connected, because we all believe in the power of sharing stories."

"I want to set up Living Libraries for vulnerable target groups, whom I train to share their stories. I also want to teach fellow social workers to work with life stories in a positive way and to share my own stories as a storyteller. (I am an experienced expert in the area of child abuse and mistreatment, experiences I use in my social work.)"

–

"I started this training during a very difficult period in my life. The training has brought me back among people and it has brought me a lot. I recognise the

power of sharing stories and I felt heard, seen and supported during the training, but I am still too far from the world to be able to share my stories outside the setting of this safe group."

"I have participated in the Living Library, and liked sharing my stories with total strangers. But, again, I felt safe with our trainer and the group being there, knowing about my issues. As much as I would like to continue telling my stories, I do not dare to do it again for the time being. For me the first step is to bring peace and continuity in my life."

–

"I have found this to be a well-researched method, very accessible to everyone, that teaches you to get to the heart of your story. The tree of life, which we used in the training, is a special, efficient and good tool to 'find' your personal story. I knew, through my work as a theatre maker, how healing it is to get to know and share your own story. Thanks to my experience as a participant in this storytelling training and in the train-the-trainer training, I can now help others to learn and experience this."

"I would like to use this storytelling method with old people and preferably also with young people. I don't know how yet; perhaps in a Living Library, but perhaps also in another way. I see a role for myself as a trainer and as an organiser and also as a storyteller, in a Living Library or on stage."

–

"I have learned far more than I expected, like: what do I have to tell, what can I draw from my own life and how to turn that into a story that might be interesting for others. So more than just how to tell a story."

"I am happy to tell stories and be involved in organising Living Libraries. I cannot see myself as a trainer yet, because I feel I would need more experience for that. Maybe the first step would be to assist a trainer in a workshop."

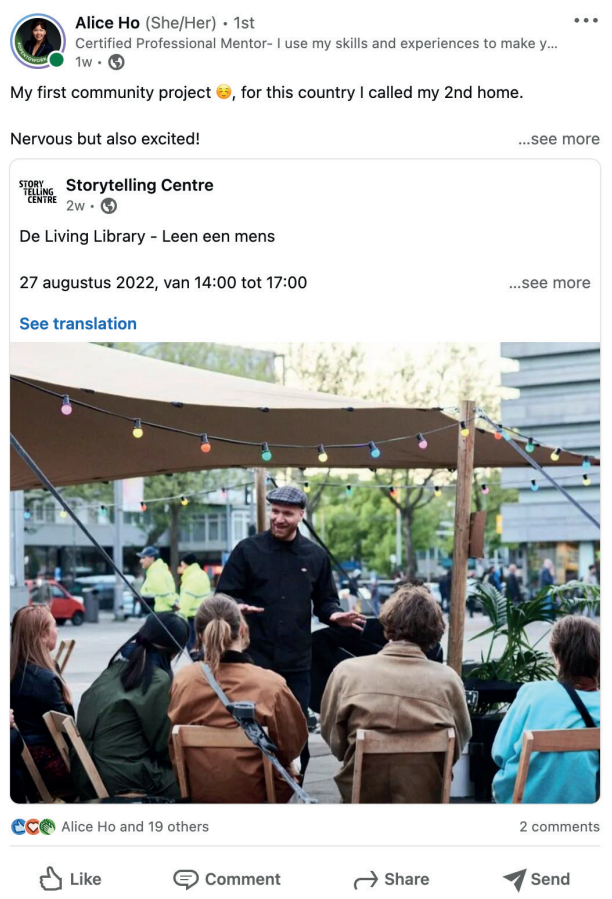
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"I have learned to translate a personal experience into a story and to use this to help others by sharing my stories. I am telling stories to children in my work as a physics teacher (on a voluntary basis), but those stories are not personal. I will surely use my new knowledge in doing that work. By participating in a Living Library and by the training that focused on organising one, I learned about that as well. Though I must say that organising a Living Library is fundamentally not so different from organising a conference, which I have done several times."

"I would prefer just to share my stories in Living Libraries, but might also organise these myself if I feel a need for that."

About the second aspect, the continuation of the Living Libraries by self-managed volunteers, we can at least say the following:

The COBU training, so far, has resulted in one Living Library in the Library of Hilversum on 27 August 2022, organised by one of the participants, in which other participants to the COBU training shared their stories. The library of Hilversum, very happy with how 'things' went, has booked the group for next year again. Before that, the participant would like to organise a few more Living Libraries.



Another participant has decided to merely focus on training people in telling personal stories. Not just to share them in a Living Library, but this option she will also offer. She has just finished writing a brochure with which she intends to raise attention for her training and she hopes to be able to start one soon. The training she will offer will be under her own flag, but when a participant would like to share his or her story in a Living Library, that will be under the flag of Storytelling Centre. The Living Library will be organised by one of the self-managed volunteers.

A third participant would like to train people in telling stories about a certain theme and then organise a Living Library around that theme, but preparations are still at a very early stage.

As the above quotes from some of the participants clearly show, the organisers of Living Libraries can

count on their cooperation as storytellers.

Storytelling Centre continues to be involved in the activities of the COBU training participants, as a point of contact, to provide support where needed, and to promote those activities, e.g. via the events calendar of the digital platform developed as part of the COBU project (see: livinglibraries.eu). This platform, which is partly interactive, offers volunteers the possibility of expanding their network and provides interested parties with all kinds of information on Living Libraries and the setting up of volunteer groups, among other things.

Conclusions

One of the first conclusions we can draw from this COBU project is that we have learned a lot about possible ways to involve volunteers in our organisations' activities and to help them become self-managed. And we sincerely hope that we have managed to put our research and experiences into words that will help others, NGO's and volunteers alike.

To be more precise about what we have learned: whatever the methodology you use, be it forum theatre, storytelling, dance, theatre, collages, etc. or a combination of methodologies, the method that we have developed to create self-managed volunteer groups works. Whether the volunteers take over activities from your organisation to help expand their reach and impact or organise activities that are in line with the mission of your organisation; if you follow the method described

in our Guidebook and put an effort in training the initial volunteers and supervising them and their activities, your organisation will benefit. And not just your organisation, also the volunteers. They will have acquired new skills or improved 'old' ones, have a more clear idea about what they want to do, have made new contacts, and have found a purpose in their lives as volunteers. And such a purpose, in almost all cases, comes together with positive feelings like satisfaction, being useful, being seen, etc. And in the end it's the society, whether on a community level or on a bigger scale, that will benefit from it all as well. And that is what organisations like ours are working for: a society where inclusiveness, respect for the other and being 'different', charity and feelings of equality prevail.

Annex

We developed further activity descriptions so that readers can have a clearer understanding of our training programmes. We collected these activity sheets in a separate document, that could be found here: <http://www.cobuplatform.eu/#3>

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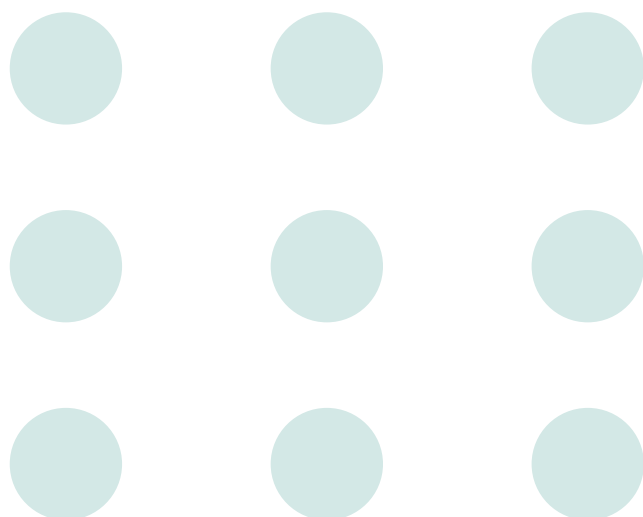
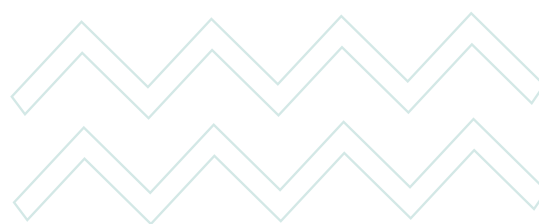
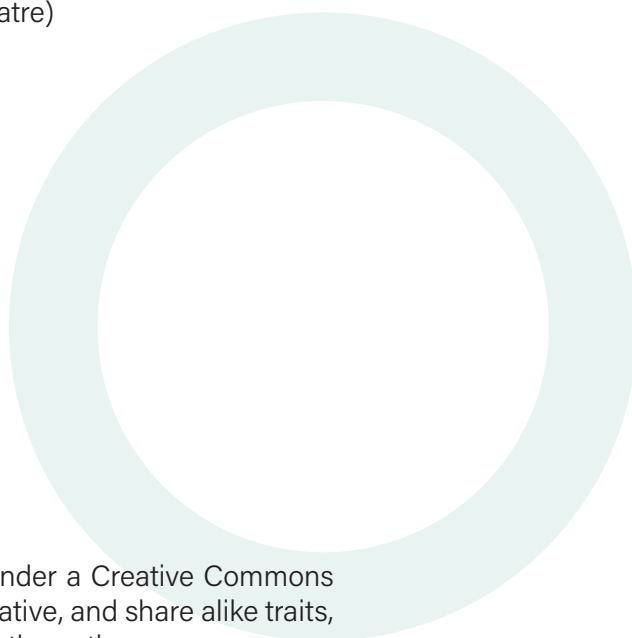
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