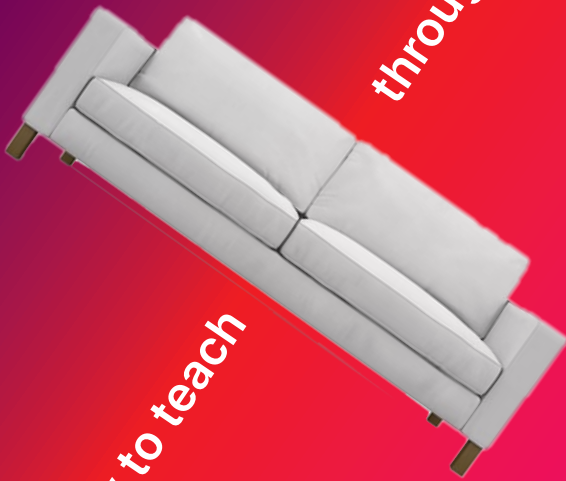


# designing



How to teach

through design?

# VET

## Designing VET

How to teach through design?

# Content

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Needs Assessment and Input Training</b>	<b>8</b>
Really?	9
Is taste a language?	13
Our elements	17
Karlstad – Input Training	21
Experience Prototyping	30
How to collaborate in a world of compexity?	31
How agile is a sofa?	37
<b>Training Lab</b>	<b>45</b>
What should we ask ourselves?	47
How to trigger empathy with cubes, lines and circles?	53
What needs a student to take initiative?	61
How are we?	69
How can we percieve non human spaces?	83
How can we relate to otherness?	91
<b>The Partnership</b>	<b>96</b>

## Introduction

Design methodologies have proven themselves useful in many fields from management to military to achieve more creative solutions to problems or to solve them more efficiently.

We decided as a group of trainers, teachers, tutors, business consultants, entrepreneurs and youth workers from the field of vocational education and training from six organisations and five countries to collect and to develop new approaches to adult education through design.

But also to understand the effect they can have when applied in adult education. This meant for us a process of designing, testing and analysing design methodologies with a clear focus on their inherent logic and ethical implications. While for example the design of a quick solution to a problem might be desirable in some fields of education it could hinder development in others.

We started with a set of meetings, questionnaires and by the use of cultural probes to establish the needs of each organisation and its clients. The result was the decision to put the focus of our work on four design aspects within our practices. Space - Time - Rules and Roles led us through an input training in Karlstad, Sweden and during the design and implementation of our practises in our organisations as well as in an analysis of these during a training lab in Trento, Italy.

Within education uncertainty is in large parts reserved for the students facing educators with a solid shake up of their routines and beliefs when confronted with design processes that rely on uncertainty as a source for the creation of new knowledge.

Therefore the question how far we could go with applying new approaches became soon also a moment of self reflection and awareness.

## Needs Assessment

In the analysis phase, we worked with elements inspired by design research. Among traditional questionnaires and an on-line meeting that we used for a collective storytelling about the process of the project, we worked with cultural probes. These are used in the further development of a product or service when more than just statistical data and facts are to be collected. They are especially helpful when the goal is to get to know the person you are designing for better in order to find out what is actually needed.

In order to make a substantial contribution to the research, it is important that they give as much scope as possible and thus also generate a correspondingly multi-layered picture of those involved.

In addition, we use the cultural probes as a tool in the sense of raising awareness of concrete issues within our own position.

# REALLY?

Silent talk

## 2 Persons in the organisation

**A asks B whatever she always wanted to ask.**

**B does not answer.**

**When A feels that B answered  
A asks the second question.**

## Silent talk

**Idea:** A conversation with clear rules but open topic that does not align with common understandings of a good talk.

---

**TIME:** Time is put in the hands of the participants. While having certain tasks to fulfill, the duration is up to them.

**SPACE:** The use of space is up to the participants.

**ROLES:** Roles are clearly defined within the description. Only the question who would take which role is open and up to be negotiated within the organization. The task includes also a shift in roles.

**RULES:** Rules are strict but leave open spaces in the definition of timing.

---

**Target Group:** Members of the partner organizations.

**Educational Aim:** To raise self awareness on the current state of ones organisation regarding the ability and willingness to face uncertainty.

**Mode of Participation:** Broad range from the feeling of exactly fulfilling a task to questioning the system and neglecting an imagined task. Some element of co-design as the participants have to choose the place where they do it.

**Duration:** between 10 min and x

**Materials:** Variable

**Shortcuts:** Works best with the facilitator as a mediator in presence.

**Facilitator:** Comparative Research Network, Johannes Tolk

# IS TASTE A LANGUAGE?

Tasting Facts

### 3 Persons in the organisation

**A asks B to describe the taste of their last educational encounter.**

**C documents the answer.**

## Tasting Facts

**Idea:** A conversation about work using the language of taste.

---

**TIME:** The moment that should be focused on is defined but the duration of the conversation is open. Equally the amount of time to be spend by C in order to document the answer is open.

**SPACE:** There is a certain space defined and given through the last educational encounter. But again the place for the conversation and documentation is open.

**ROLES:** Roles are clearly defined within the description. Only the question who would take which role is open and up to be negotiated within the organization.

**RULES:** Everyone has a task. But who has to take which role?

---

**Target Group:** Members of the partner organizations.

**Educational Aim:** To raise self awareness on the current state of ones organisation regarding the ability and willingness to



use different channels to negotiate and communicate.

**Mode of Participation:** Broad range from the feeling of exactly fulfilling a task to questioning the system and neglecting an imagined task. Some element of co-design as the participants had to choose the the medium and place for negotiation.

**Duration:** between 10 min and x

**Materials:** Variable

**Shortcuts:** Works best with the facilitator as a mediator in presence.

**Facilitator:** Comparative Research Network, Johannes Tolk

## Our Elements

Design allows us to work on all senses and to influence the impact of every aspect in the making and conducting of a training. We searched through the cultural probes and questionnaires for the specific elements that are most influential in the training methodologies of our partner organisations.

Space	Time	Motion
Sound	Smell	Taste
Rules	Roles	_____

**What was the educational context?**

**Who participated?**

**How long did it take?**

**What was the topic?**

**Which of the above mentioned aspects did you give special attention?**

**What materials did you use?**

**What did you expect to happen?**

**What happened?**

Although faced with a variety of different contexts regarding organisational structures, learning aims and target groups our organisations found four reoccurring elements in the design of our educational work to be of great relevance and potential.

## **SPACE**

### Environment

A space is more than its physical location, it is also a combination of all the imaginaries and attributions connected to it. A good starting point for a training is a collection of these attributions and a collective search for their relevance towards the educational topic at hand. As the space in all its real and imaginative manifestations works on the participants and the trainers even if not on a conscious level using its qualities helps to focus everyone's attention on the topic at hand.

### Setting

The space in which the actual training takes place can not always be completely new imagined, designed and implemented. But reading the space and its material qualities helps to introduce slight changes in the setting itself or in the way it is being used for a training. As a large part of our attention is always focused on our surrounding using it as a tool to communicate and negotiate helps to create an immersive learning environment.

## **TIME**

Everyone has certain experiences and expectations with trainings. Regarding time this means that changes from the usual schedule mean an irritation that can be used as a disruptive element to trigger attentiveness. Working with methodologies from the field of design will be more intense for the participants and the trainers as uncertainty and emotional involvement are being added to the traditional cognitive ways of learning. Therefore the use of time, periods of intense involvement, reflection, boredom and breaks should be carefully planned.

But also other time lines should be taken into account. The historical time connected to the space and to the topic as well as the time lines of the participants and current events on a local and global level.

A training can start months before the training by the way the participants are being invited and does not necessarily end on the way home from the training.

## **RULES**

There are outspoken and implicit rules in human interaction. Considering learning environments trainers and learners agree on a set of rules on how the process should be structured. But the implicit understanding of each individual functions as a second layer of rules that is activated by each in moments of uncertainty. Open and clear communication about expectations and interpretations of situations can help to achieve a broader common understanding of the learning

path and to use the setting or resetting of rules as a tool to reach a learning goal.

## ROLES

Introducing design methodologies in the educational context also requires a new look at the role of the trainer and the learner. While codesign is a heavily used term in reality it turns out more difficult to overcome the hierarchical structure of the almighty, all-knowing trainer and the recipients of their wisdom. Playing with roles is an easy to achieve task but entering the field of uncertainty through design means an automatic constantly readjusting and real shift in roles that if not acknowledged by all participants leads to conflicts that can inhibit the achievement of the intended learning goals.



## IDEALISM AND REALISM

I'm sick of this new-fangled schism,  
This earth-and-stars dissension:  
Idealism and realism,  
Our brain-devised contention.

'Tis Art when mud is painted right  
(Such is the false conclusion);  
While heavenly visions, fair and bright,  
Forsooth, are cloud-illusion.

But though the box be gold, yet snuff  
Is snuff — so one supposes; —  
And though the vase be cracked and rough,  
Still roses will be roses.

*"The PsyWar Center represents an effort unique to the military history of the United States. For the first time, the techniques of attacking both the minds and the bodies of our enemies have been coordinated in a single training operation."*<sup>[1]</sup>

— Colonel Charles H. Karlstad



## Karlstad – Input Training

A two and a half seater can be considered a problem.  
Karlstadt is a two and a half seater designed by Ikea.  
Karlstadt is the place where our input training happened.

**PARTICIPANTS PROFILE:** The staff of the 6 partner organizations, trainers, VET teachers, tutors, business consultants, entrepreneurs, youth workers and professionals working in the field of education and/or consultancy.

**GOALS:** Improve about some of the most current training/learning practices and methods used in job, VET and entrepreneurship trainings including human-centered design approaches.

**DESCRIPTION:** Introduction to the concepts of human centered design, design thinking, experience design, the design of problems and agile development. By using these concepts prototyping for and realisation of a VET situation with students and staff from Changemaker. Reflection on the practical, ethical and emotional aspects of working with these concepts.

**CONCEPTS:**

**Human-Centered Design (HCD):** is a philosophy that empowers an individual or team to design products, services, systems, and experiences that address the core needs of those



who experience a problem. Human-centered design is best done in a team environment. The process includes three main phases: inspiration, ideation, and implementation.

**Design Thinking:** is the cognitive, strategic and practical process by which design concepts are developed by designers and/or design teams. However, it's more than that. Design thinking is essentially a problem-solving method that follows a systematic approach. It is also referred to as a way to identify challenges, gather relevant information, come up with potential solutions, refine ideas and then test the solutions. The core concepts of design thinking include empathy, brainstorming, prototyping, and storytelling. The design thinking encloses Five Stages:

1. Empathise, which involves engaging and putting yourself in the shoes of the people whose' problems you are trying to solve.
2. Define the Problem by analyzing and synthesizing the needs gleaned from the previous stage to identify and clearly define the core problem statement in a human-centered way.
3. Ideate is where ideas are generated. The goal is to generate alternative and innovative ways of addressing the problem.
4. Prototyping, where you implement the best ideas into a number of prototypes.
5. Test the complete idea that undergoes meticulous tests using the best solutions previously zeroed in during the prototyping phase.

**Experience Design:** is the science and the art of creating experiences that help learners fulfill the learning outcomes they desire, in a user-centered and goal-directed way. It is a holistic, interdisciplinary approach, built around principles and practices that expressly ensure that the learning journey is enjoyable, engaging, relevant, and informative. It focuses on both content and user experience. It is experiential learning at the heart as it takes a human-centered approach. Thus, you have to understand the target audience and their unique needs before designing an experience.



**The Design of Problems:** Designers of problems neither solve problems nor do they provide tools to do so. Similar to musicians who connect the notes of a composition creating a musical experience, designers can interpret the spoken and unspoken, the human and the material elements, the convictions, rules and habits to provide the members of a group with access to a meta level of the status quo.

By shaping material so that the problem takes a form which can then be looked at, which can both be moved around and physically experienced, the problem itself becomes a tangible actor within the context's network.

This allows the group's members to find some distance to the pain points and to enter into a dialogue.

Through this dialogue, the group can find ways to provide a feeling of safety, hence dispersing the need for protection which tends to arise when facing changes or when a context's structure is unbalanced from the beginning.

**The Agile Method:** and methodology is a particular approach to project management that is utilized in software development. This method involves a bunch of tools and techniques that help us achieve agility. Planning is an agile tool, but like all agile methods, the key difference is that the agile planning session would be short, focused and done as a team. Putting people at the center is at the heart of every agile method. Agile frameworks like Scrum and Kanban were used to introduce agility methodology to participants in the direct application through the development of a VET prototype.

## Experience Prototyping

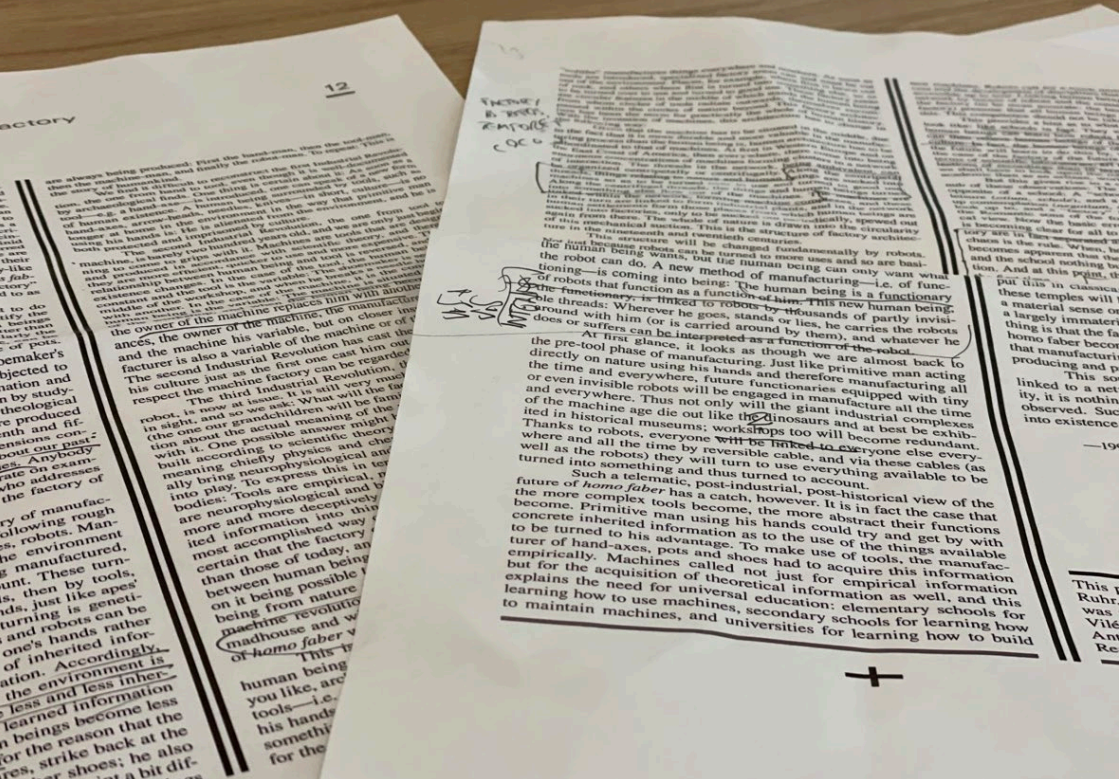
The training started with an experience prototype. These can best be described as real-life metaphors of emotional states. We also used Cultural Probes to analyze the situations in which change was desired, with particular attention to the inherent emotional processes. Based on this, we developed an experiential space through the conscious use of all the senses. Visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, the sense of duration and movement are all elements that can be used in the design and form the framework of a free choreography. An Experience Prototype can be a small element added to a familiar context or a new arrangement of the given elements, for example a place could be arranged differently or participants could be asked to perform unfamiliar actions. An Experience Prototype can also be a completely foreign place that is arranged in such a way that the participants can playfully experience for themselves emotions that they provoke in each other through their actions.

By continuously observing the tension between the emotional constitution of the participants and the structural and conceptual requirements during the process, we could support new solution potentials to emerge.

# HOW TO COLLABORATE IN A WORLD OF COMPLEXITY?

Read & Run





**SPACE:** The space that can be used by the participants is limited only through the element of time. Every place that can be reached by a participant within one hour becomes part of the setting.

**ROLES:** There is a collective role as a team, that has to fulfill two tasks. And there are individual roles allowing each participant to help to contribute to the collective goals.

**RULES:** Each group has one hour to fulfill two tasks. As it is impossible to fulfill them both to a satisfying level individually each group needs to negotiate its own rules for how to achieve them.

**Idea:** The group is split into small groups with at least one member of each organisation. They get the task to read and reflect on an essay relevant to the training, to get away as far as possible from the venue and to come back within one hour. As all at once can hardly be achieved they will need to find a way as a team.

**TIME:** The general time frame is exactly defined. Within one hour the goals need to be accomplished. But how the groups should distribute the time between the two goals is undefined.



**Target Group:** Members of the partner organizations.

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Materials:** The neighborhood, printed essays

**Educational Aim:** To get to know the other partners and understand their concepts for collaboration. To develop modes of collaboration, use intuition, gather knowledge with all senses, understand individual limitations. To collect valuable knowledge about the surrounding area needed for the following tasks.

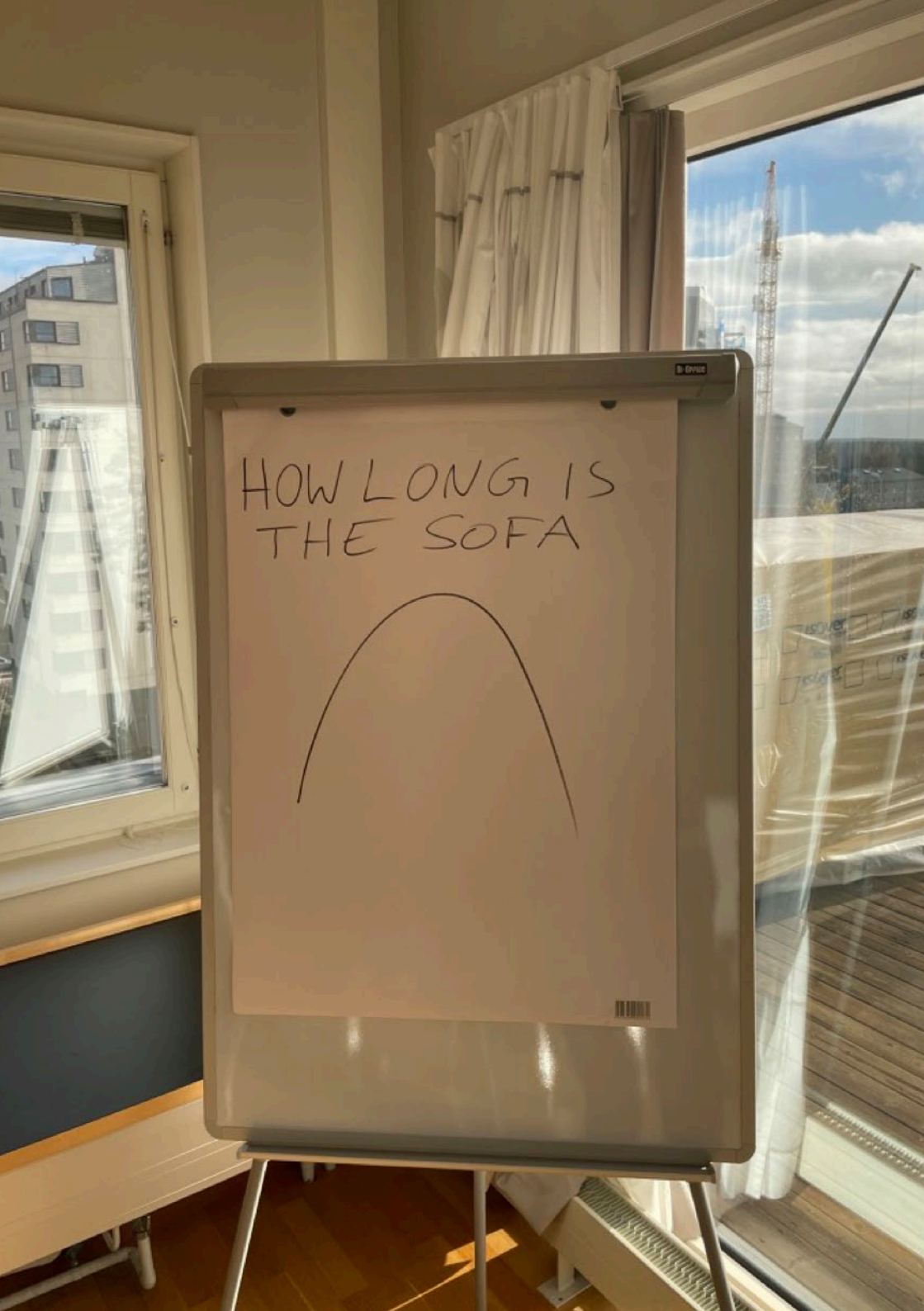
**Facilitator:** Johannes Tolk



A two and a half seater can be considered a problem.  
Karlstadt is a two and a half seater designed by Ikea.  
Karlstadt is the place where our input training happened.

# HOW AGILE IS A SOFA?

Two and a Half



**Idea:** To use the metaphor of a sofa for two and a half as sold by the Ikea brand with the title Karlstad to understand the specific needs for the design of an educational setting in Karlstad based on the four elements time, space, rules and roles.

---

**TIME:** Three sessions focused on the elements time, space, rules and roles. After general introductions to the elements from a perspective of design theory the three groups had limited time to reflect, design and discuss their proposals for a real setting that they had to implement.

**SPACE:** The space that was used in this training was the metaphorical space of a sofa as well as the real space given through the venue and its surrounding. As the given sofa was a two and a half seater the central question was who or what that half could be.

The final setting designed by the participants were two separate rooms and the hall representing the two and a half places of the sofa. One room was dark and a projector showed images and played loud music. The other room was bright and silent. In both the rooms there were chairs placed in a circle and a flipchart stand in the middle.

In the hall there were coffee and cakes and sofas and armchairs.

The students and teachers from the UX school were supposed to be the final user of the experience that the participants in the training were preparing for them. The users were told to choose to sit in one of the two rooms. After half an hour, the two groups switched the rooms, after having a break in the hall in between.

**ROLES:** The group that was in charge of defining the roles decided to focus on the specific roles covered by the users in the school: students and teachers.

The aim of the experience designed was to break down the barrier that usually separates students from teachers, levelling their status.

**RULES:** The group that decided the rules was as well in charge of keeping the time. The rules were a fundamental part of the experience 'because they steered the entire experience.

---

**Target Group:** The target group was the staff of the organisations partners in the DesigningVET project.

**Educational Aim:** To introduce the participants to the theory and practise of applying design methodologies in their workflow as VET professionals.





**Mode of Participation:** The participants were on the one hand recipients of knowledge through input sessions but on the other hand actively applying the theories into action for the setting the designed and implemented.

**Duration Preparation:** Two days. One day to research a subject to propose as a starting point and that will be used as the object of the exploration. One day to elaborate on the questions that will be used to stimulate the group discussion and the creation of the experience.

**Duration Situation:** Two days.

**Materials:** Whatever was available in the conference room and in the surrounding area reachable within 30 min: flipcharts, chairs, desks, projector, Internet connection, lights, markers, sofa, food and coffee...

**Effects:** A cognitive and emotional learning experience resulting in improved knowledge about the main human-centered design approaches and the context for their implementation. Through the practical work designing and implementing experience prototypes fundamental ethical questions were raised, experienced, analyzed and discussed. This will guide the participants in the further development of their practices.

**Facilitator:** Johannes Tolk, Francesca Olivier – Changemaker



# THE EDU LAB

During the EDU Lab all the organizations presented and tested their processes and tools oriented towards training, co-learning, team and community building and the deepening of their specific work interests. The purpose of all these sessions was to introduce each other to the design methods that each organisation had refined over time. Several sessions were aimed at testing the state of the art of their practices in order to collect feedback and put them in immediate comparison with other's practices, favoring contamination and expanding the possibilities of development of the different formats.

# WHAT SHOULD WE ASK OUR- SELVES?

Strategic planning for communication



**Idea:** To understand what the most important question is one is facing regarding communication and how to strategically plan for it to get the best result.

---

**TIME:** We used two concepts of time for this practice: actual time and lifetime.

During the practice, we applied time as a limiting tool to increase spontaneous responses and creativity. The fast past of questions and answers made their mark into participants mind with the hope of providing a wider perspective for them. For this part, actual time was applied.

For the practice itself, when designing a strategic plan for the hypothetical subject, the lifetime in which the subject could be applicable was determined and all the questions and answers were placed in relation with the past and future of a specific event.

**SPACE:** We used the concept of the space instead of the actual space in this practice. An organization as a space, tools and means of communication as spaces. In this practice these two spaces were examined in details to find an overlap between them where the communication plan would be the most successful.

**ROLES:** All the elements which could affect the lifetime of the organization were discussed in this practice. Two main roles has been detected for them: organizational and target group.

Organizational roles has been described by the help of participants for the selected subject. The difficult part was to define the role of target group. To do that we used target analysis and target mapping methodologies for a better understanding of their influence on each other and the impacts on the plan.

**RULES:** With the help of time, space, and roles, we defined the rules. Each of these elements could directly or indirectly affect the other.

For example, considering the lifetime of an organization, communication and target groups could play a specific role which differ itself when we point a specific time, like an event or a project in the organization.

Shown in the attached pictures, with the help of a circular diagram or a graph diagram, the relationships between different elements could be described.

---

**Target Group:** For this practice: Partner organizations

**Educational Aim:** For planning a successful strategy, several

questions should be answered, some about the organization itself, and some about target groups. In this practice, possible questions and answers has been placed in three categories to make it more tangible for participants. The aim of this practice was to understand what questions could stand for their own organization and how to find the answers which would be aligned with their needs.

**Mode of Participation:** A prepared chart of the designed practice was showing to the participants. Participants chose a subject which was interesting for them. The facilitator explained each step and participants fill it with questions and answers.

**Duration Preparation:** Ten minutes to explain the idea and prepare participants for what comes next. Some minutes to draw the chart on the board.

**Duration:** Around 30 minutes.

**Materials:** Powerpoint presentation as a visual aid to show the actual chart we are hoping to create. Board and pen for collaboration part.

**Feedback:** At the end of the practice, we received positive feedback which most importantly reflects the effectiveness of the practice to answer a correctly pointed out need.

**Effects:** Strategic planning for communication is a complicated

activity. Yet it is an essential need for any organisation to reach out to their target group and adapt their potentials with the needs and changes in the market. This practice, considering its scale, could become a starting point for participants to re-design their own plans.

**Tips:** This practice could be applied to any project or organisation regarding the scale of them. The four elements, time, space, roles, and rules could be described individually for each project and be determined by the staff and regarding to the needs of the project or organisation.

By trying to describe the elements as simple as possible one can avoid the trap of complicity and create a simple draft. Later, extra effort and more practices on the draft could result to a more successful strategy.

**Facilitator:** Diba Mokhtabad, Change Maker, EU Projects Coordinator Diba is a cultural project leader who currently consults other companies as business analyst.

# HOW TO TRIGGER EMPATHY WITH CUBES, LINES AND CIRCLES?

Universal Language



**Idea:** To achieve more clarity and connections between subjects through the language of art. To raise a debate and empathize with the other.

---

**TIME:**

- 5 minutes introduction video
- 5 minutes personal reflection
- 15 minutes flipchart discussion and lecture
- 5 min. task description and preparation
- 10 min. break
- 30 min. execution of stage 1
- 30 min. execution of stage 2
- 20 min. reflection and feedback

**SPACE:** Both teams had the same time for each task, the same rules, but they were divided in different spaces. For example: team with the scientific text was working in the conference room, while the poetry team were working outside in the garden.

**ROLES:** Two facilitators and one mediator who organize the experience. The mediator is the connection between two teams, while the facilitators guide the participants. Participants, divided in two teams, who are aware of the final goal, but not of the process. Their role is to create two projects by



discussing and generate creative products. Each team chooses a speaker.

**RULES:** Start with brief instructions on the visual code of the exercise and hand on the materials. Divide the participants in to two teams in two separate spaces. Provide two different genre of texts on the same subject. Create an abstract artwork based on the texts. Exchange artworks between teams and start decoding with narrative. Get together and review the final outcome.

---

**Target Group:** Participants from all organizations. Educators and students.

**Educational Aim:** To provoke critical thinking and explore connections between subjects.

**Mode of Participation:** The origin of this practice was inspired from our common experience in Karlstad, but our target group did not take part in the preparation itself. They were participants in the execution of the practice and we, the organizers, were only mediators in the happening.

**Duration:** Two hours.



**Materials:** Video, flipcharts, markers, two printed texts, glue and colorful paper shapes.

**Facilitator:** The national school of Arts and Design “Dechko Uzunov”, Mariya Stefanova – graphic design teacher, Silvia Koeva-Popova – fine arts teacher, Nikola Valchev – fine arts teacher

# WHAT NEEDS A STUDENT TO TAKE INITIATIVE?

The Half Space



**Idea:** To use the students room as a conjunction between the subjects, between obligations and free time, work and rest, students and teachers and also to make space for informal connections and manifestations.

---

**TIME:** The “Two and a Half seat Sofa” is the base of our approach, as we looked on the “Two seats” as the main course of education in school (subjects, both practical and theoretical) and “the Half seat” to be the break time. We regard the time as the binder, and yet we always need to consider the time schedule of our institution. As our prototype is not exactly fit for the formal educational process itself, but to be an extension of it, we use the time after and between classes.

**SPACE:** We initially came with the idea of creating a specific

space/room in our school, established from the students, for the students, to use in their break time as library, conference room, exhibition space and overall as an interdisciplinary space.

We regard the student room (SR) as a process. The aim is not a finished hall with furniture but instead we chose to leave it to the inhabitants to interact with the space and arrange it according to their current interests and needs. Thus the main goal of the project is to make the space as adaptable as possible and to assist the students in hosting their initiatives.

Our vision for that this small room to be an accelerator for ideas, that will grow around the whole school and beyond.

We regard the student room (SR) as a process. The aim is not a finished hall with furniture but instead we chose to leave it



to the inhabitants to interact with the space and arrange it according to their current interests and needs. Thus the main goal of the project is to make the space as adaptable as possible and to assist the students in hosting their initiatives.

Our vision for that this small room to be an accelerator for ideas, that will grow around the whole school and beyond.

**ROLES:** This was perhaps one of the most valuable discussions, as the students themselves reached the answers of how they imagined the government of such a common space. They were unanimous that they would need the supervision of the teachers.

A list of concerns listed by the students:

- Who is supposed to clean?
- Are all students willing to keep it clean and fix if broken
- Will there be a key and who keeps the key
- How to organise the events, since some would like to read and others to rehearse or party

**RULES:** The students insisted on having rules and order, not unlikely in contrast to the dysfunctional and orderless society they were born and raised in. Our in house psychologist confirmed that the guidance of an adult is required for this age.



A list of suggestions for using the Students Room:

- Soft furniture for leisure
- Place to eat
- Space to exhibit sketches or other drawings
- Place for board games
- Place to exchange favourite objects
- A stage for performances
- Parties after school
- A small library
- Colourful and stimulating interior

**Ethical Considerations:** Since we work with youngsters, a supervision from an adult is required. Some of the risks we considered include: - feeling of ownership - lack of maintenance and responsibility - students dividing in to fractions instead of connecting

**Facilitator:**

Mariya Stefanova - graphic design teacher

Silvia Koeva-Popova - fine arts teacher

Nikola Valchev - fine arts teacher and other colleagues

**Target Group:** Students and educators

**Educational Aim:** The aim is not a finished hall with furniture but instead we chose to leave it to the inhabitants to interact with the space and arrange it according to their current interests and needs. Thus the main goal of the project is to make the space as adaptable as possible and to assist the students in hosting their initiatives. Since the downfalls in education are diverse, we decided to focus on multidisciplinary.

**Mode of Participation:** We started as a team of three teachers in a classroom one day after school. We tried to gather as much research material as possible by creating a questionnaire for our fellow colleagues, by talking to the students and by listing existing advantages in other schools in Bulgaria. We made a chart, containing the obstacles and troubles in the school, searching for the causes and then elaborated ways

to handle them. At the first stage we proposed everything we could think of, even unlikely solutions. At the end we sieved the practices we found possible to carry into effect. Almost all suggestions had one condition in common-Space. Therefore our best candidate for implementing turned out to be the creation of a multi functional zone for students.

**Duration:** It's an ongoing, in development practice through generations.

**Materials:** The material implementation of this practice is the room and enhancement of the internal logistics, in order for the students to have access to interdisciplinary environment. In order to achieve that we used the following materials: -wi-fi -heating -new lighting -projection screen for movies and presentations -shelf with new art books and catalogs -clip chart -vending machine for tea and beverages -wall mural -window shaders -adaptable furniture

**Feedback:** The students are slowly starting to recognize the room as their own space and find different applications. We've got positive feedback from the partner organizations, some of whom took inspiration for their own inspiration.

**Effects:** We have opened an important discussion about the future of our organization, multidisciplinary and relationships with one another.

## Shortcuts:

- Speed work meetings during class breaks
- Delegating responsibility through teams and mentors

**Facilitator:** The national school of Arts and Design “Dechko Uzunov”, Mariya Stefanova – graphic design teacher, Silvia Koeva-Popova – fine arts teacher, Nikola Valchev – fine arts teacher

# HOW ARE WE?

Starting a conversation  
about Mental Health



**Idea:** The purpose of the workshop is to, resulting in agreement on a strategy and commitment from all participants. This agreed strategy and commitment will be reinforced through a contracting ceremony, with the contract outlining the commitment of everybody and the strategy to be used. It will be signed by all employees, and it will be displayed in the workplace. The learning experience 'workshop' was designed using the Time/Space/Rules & Roles pillars, to be delivered in 3 parts reflecting the 3 phases shown below describing teaching using principles of experiential learning. Workshop Phase • Phase 1 – Observation of the participants, to gauge the mood of individuals and of the room as a whole.

---

#### **TIME:**

The workshop was allocated a 2 hour slot when delivered and so the following schedule was created to guide facilitation.

120	countdown
120	Questionnaires (5 minutes)
115	Introduction and scene setting (5 minutes)
110	Show the video (5 minutes)
105	Discussion on mental health in a working context (15 minutes)
90	BREAK (10 minutes)
80	Experiential Activity (10 minutes)

60	Discussion on reflections on the activity (15 minutes)
55	Mindful breathing exercise (5 minutes)
45	BREAK (10 minutes)
35	Final discussion and design of the contract and the signing ceremony. (30 minutes)
5	Questionnaires revisited (5 minutes)

#### **SPACE:**

Initially we felt it is best, if possible, to deliver this workshop in the actual workplace of the group in question.

However, for the Lab in Italy, we did not have sight of the venue until we arrived. In the end we agreed the following space specification.

The Room was set up with chairs and tables in a square arrangement, there is no hierarchy, everyone is at the same level.

The facilitator was equipped with audio/visual capability to show a video and play music.

The facilitator also had a flip chart.

As the participants settled in the room Mozart's 'Piano Concerto no. 21' was playing softly. This was to provide some texture to the environment and remove the stale 'training room' feel. It was felt that music would help the participants relax and pique their interest about what was about to happen. (The music is the choice of the facilitator)

## ROLES:

### Phase 1

Introduce the topic, perhaps including some facts and figures to stimulate discussion about Occupational Mental Health and the opinions of the group on how (or if) it can be safeguarded in a work setting.

Explain the purpose of the workshop, and introduce the contract with the high level goals already stated. The detail of how they will be achieved will be developed by the participants during the next hours.

### Phase 2

Deliver the 'experience' designed to provoke thought and group discussion. (options such as, presentation, video, telling of real life experience, reading an article, role play, practical exercise).

Facilitate a short Breathing exercise before taking a short break, to help participants take pause for thought.

### Phase 3

Focus on designing specific actions for safeguarding employee mental health. Concept maps may be used. Once an approach is agreed, document it in the contract and have a signing ceremony.

## RULES:

Group is minimum 2 people + facilitator(s). The facilitators should be familiarized with the concept of workplace Mental Health Management and First Aid for Mental Health. Resources available at [www.bewell-eunoia.eu](http://www.bewell-eunoia.eu).

Question to be asked before, and after, (for comparison/evaluation) the workshop can include,

How do you feel right now?

What is your role in your workplace?

What is your role in workplace health and safety?

What is done to safeguard mental health in your workplace?

The following 'probabilistic Questions' are also posed...

Q If you observed a colleague and suspect they are struggling with a mental health issue, what is the likelihood that you would intervene? 1% 5% 20% 50% 80% 95% 99%

Q If you are struggling with a mental health issue, what do you think is the likelihood that a colleague would intervene? 1% 5% 20% 50% 80% 95% 99%

The reason the questions are posed in this way is to identify very strong help responses at both ends of the spectrum. I.e.

in the 1-5% and the 95-99% range. Individuals who chose in these ranges are more likely to have strong opinions in the workshop discussions.

**Ethical Considerations:** It is important to remember that when broaching a the subject of mental health there is a Risk/Danger that somebody gets uncomfortable or upset, as this is a topic that touches many lives. For that reason, it is imperative that at least one facilitator be trained in First Aid for Mental Health or equivalent.

**Feedback:** The following feedback was gathered after the workshop.

Participant 1– I thought the workshop went exceptionally well, everyone played their part in open, free ranging conversation. It was hosted and facilitated extremely well. The experience confirmed my belief on the importance of the topic, and that recognition of the reality should take place in the workplace. I am self-employed, and I know I need to be vigilant for myself... but also customers.

Participant 2– I did not predict that the workshop would be on this topic. When I realized, I was struck by the amazing, interesting, inspiring, and important training. This is a topic that is very important to me. The session was really inspiring. Since we left the training session, I am looking at everything, and everyone in a different way. I took very positive experience

from the session. Right now I am thinking about how I can bring this to my company.

Participant 3– I really enjoyed the workshop. It was thoroughly thought through. It is an important topic that is often overlooked. I really like the idea of Mental Health first Aid. I think about how we can structure this in the work place... have a safety net to capture issues before they become issues, and know how to deal with them.

Participant 4– it is a good idea to have a plan for mental health safeguarding in the workplace. At work there is so much stress... it comes from home and from work. We are not so good at helping in the right way so the training is helpful, and the structure is helpful to know that if you act, you acting in the right way.

Participant 5- The workshop helped to remove reluctance or fear of involvement with a mental health situation. It acted as a reminder to be mindful of own emotional condition.

**Mode of Participation:** The learning experience ‘workshop’ was designed using the Time/Space/Rules & Roles pillars, to be delivered in 3 parts reflecting the 3 phases shown below describing teaching using principles of experiential learning. Workshop Phase • Phase 1 – Observation of the participants, to gauge the mood of individuals and of the room as a whole. This is achieved through questionnaire and discussion

- Phase 2 – Participation in the experience,
- Phase 3 – Plan and develop the solution, and commit to action (the contracting ceremony)

**Duration Preparation:** The workshop can be delivered in any place. What is important is that it is a comfortable, relaxing space. For this reason, there is not an onerous preparation needed to set up the space. What is important is that the facilitator's are familiar with Occupational Health & Safety roles and responsibilities, and Mental Health First Aid or related subject. Preparation of the contract, and of the activities/experiences to be delivered in Phase 2

**Duration Situation:** The workshop was developed for 2 hour duration due to time restraints. However, the workshop could benefit from more time and a 3 to 4 hour (1/2 day) duration is recommended.

**Materials:** The facilitators should be familiarized with the concept of workplace Mental Health Management and First Aid for Mental Health. The Bewell video is available on the Bewell project website, and can be accessed from the following link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2dRyrU2HdY&t=2s> These, and other resources, including mental health awareness handbooks, guidebooks for managing mental health in the workplace, fact sheets and training videos are available at [www.bewell-eunioia.eu](http://www.bewell-eunioia.eu).

**Facilitator:** The workshop is best delivered by an independent trained facilitator supported by a qualified Mental Health First Aider (or equivalent). However, it is also effective if lead by with a senior manager, (the more senior the better), but again, supported by a qualified Mental Health First Aider (or equivalent).

**Target Group:** The objective is addressing Mental Health at the workplace by including Mental Health as a fundamental component of workplace health and safety. The Employee Mental Health Workshop is aimed at the general employee population within your company, specifically targeted to SME with small workforce. It should include All employees if possible, from the top down, In this context, the target group for this workshop is everyone in the workplace, from the very top to the very bottom of the employment hierarchy, and specifically for any who are interested in expanding their knowledge of mental health and creating awareness across their colleagues.

**Educational Aim:** This workshop is designed to be delivered in workplaces as a means of raising the subject of mental health and starting a discussion between all workers about how mental health is dealt with in the specific workplace. The outcome sought is a commitment from all employees, at every level, to look after one another. This is achieved by everyone contributing to the design of the solution (a system for safe-



guarding employee mental health, and dealing with any issues that may arise) Educational aims summarised; • Help employees understand the mental health continuum, and become more aware of what can affect (positively or negatively) the mental wellbeing of themselves and others • Break down stigma through discussions and exercises within our workshops, and reinforce confidence that no employee will receive negative repercussions for coming forward and opening up about mental ill-health. • Provide tools to know how to have helpful, kind conversations around mental wellbeing at home and in the workplace • Show employers and employees what their responsibilities are towards safeguarding mental health in the workplace • Help employees picture ways in which they could become advocates for mental health change in the workplace

**Effects:** The purpose of the workshop is to start a conversation about mental health, and achieve collective consensus to implementing a workplace mental health strategy... this is realised in phase 3.

Phase 3 – The desired result is engagement by the employee group, managers and/or owners. This engagement must be backed up with commitments for each person, depending on their role in the organisation or workplace to play their part.

For this reason, the contract ceremony plays an important role to ensure that real thought is given to what is being signed, because the contract is to be shared and displayed in the

workplace to create visibility about the commitments made.

Specific commitments may include volunteering for training, to work to eliminate the stigma of mental health, to be open and honest, to be observant of the needs of oneself and ones colleagues, for specific roles such as Mental Health First Aider, and/or in the case of management to properly resource the initiative.

The contract does not need to be a legally binding document... it is a symbol, and constant reminder, of the commitments made during the workshop.

**Tips:** It is important to create an environment where all participants feel safe and empowered to speak openly and honestly without fear of judgement or reprisal. In this phase of the workshop participants will become more in tune with the challenges that people can face, and that perhaps they themselves could face. They will come to understand the negative impacts of stigma and judgmental reactions etc.... and they will learn how much difference a supportive environment can make to an individual suffering from a mental health issue.

The Mindfulness Breathing Exercise (phase 2) is designed to bring a sense of relaxation to the group following the potentially upsetting discussion, with a view to provide closure to that part of the workshop and clear the minds for the break and the final discussion.

**Facilitator:** MEAG, the workshop is best delivered by an independent trained facilitator supported by a qualified Mental Health First Aider (or equivalent). However, it is also effective if lead by with a senior manager, (the more senior the better), but again, supported by a qualified Mental Health First Aider (or equivalent).

# HOW TO PERCIEVE NON-HUMAN SPACES?

The White and the Black Tents



**Idea:** Mali Weil tested a relational tool based on fictional narratives designed to establish a practice both to pay attention and to develop new imaginations through a collective worlding action. Mali Weil's experience focused on the theme of interspecies relations, understood as a set of practices and knowledge that aim at renegotiating the relations between human beings and Other than human.

---

**TIME:** Time as Narration: The first action consisted in a reading session of some narrations taken both from fictional and scientific sources. All these narratives have been shared with a performative cut, in order to inspire a collective imagination and understanding of the concepts of otherness and interspecific relationship (between animals, plants, bacteria). This session took place in an afforested area on the edge of a disused hydroelectric reservoir: a place that evokes the abandonment of a purely human productive function, today available to be inhabited by other forms of life.

Multiple time + Crossing Other than human & Human times

**SPACE:** A disturbed Forests : the second session was dedicated to the individual recording of sounds in the woods via smartphone. This action encouraged participants to personally tune with the theme: catching the sounds of "others" in an open and wild space means amplifying the senses, changing

one's bodily attitude, to listen and to give room to the images evoked during the reading. The audio recording was necessary for the collective construction of the third session.

### White Tent + Black Tent + Narrative Space

**ROLES:** A black room for The Evocation: this session was dedicated to the collective construction of a sound environment inside a pre-settled, completely dark room in Centrale Fies. From the outside to the inside the sounds have been recomposed and created a new space: no longer the individual experience of the woods, and not only the physical space where it took place. A new, fragile soundscape where everyone was called to be creator and listener, in which a key figure broke through (in the form of sound) from the long term Mali Weil's research on interspecific diplomacy: the wolf, that returns from the reading of the first session.

After this session a collective discussion arose.

To mix different roles + To foster a perception of Other-Than-Human

**RULES:** The Spaces with their specific lights, sounds and inhabitants, as well as the time while we were experiencing the spaces were as much relevant as the selection of texts and the active involvement of the participants. Rules have been set in order to live those spaces, for instance the act of walking with the group of participants in the woods to reach an unknown



place, has been designed as a way to stimulate the imagination through the environment and to enable the symbolic potential of the landscape, amplifying the perception. Or the request of recording sounds of others while we were in the Forest was designed in order to pay attention to the surroundings.

To listen + To record + To share + To re-create a new space (artificial)

**Ethical Considerations:** «In the end, what interests me in the design of an object or experience is the dreamability coeffi-



cient I can inject into it.» \* \* from Mali Weil's book The shining revery of unruly objects, Bruno, Venice, 2020

**Target Group:** The staff of the participating organizations in Designing VET project

**Educational Aim:** In Mali Weil's experience designed specifically for the Trento Lab we worked on a path based on a fictional narrative in order to enhance human perception beyond human spaces The experience was based on, and can be read through, the four Keywords of the whole Lab activities of the Design VET trainings.

**Mode of Participation:** During the experience different spaces, different approaches on listening and even different frequencies have been activated, and the whole experience shifted from a passive listening session to an active role for all the participants. The experience was designed in three moments: collective sharing of narratives, individual immersion, collective imagination. Each moment had specific Times, Spaces, Rules and even light.

**Duration:** The whole experience lasted 2 hours

**Materials:** Environment Mobiles as recorders Text and Narratives Light and Darkness Collaboration of other beings, Sounds (real time recordings) Participants' Bodies

**Effects:** From some purely imaginative sessions emerged the idea of a new way of understanding and paying attention to the Others-who-live-with-us.

The low level of intervention and the unguided session were aimed at creating “gaps” that the participants can cultivate independently according to their own experience and imagination.

**Tips:** Understanding design as a relational practice means, for me, to design the turning points that connect different subjects, thinking of them as encounters. Not always singular and not necessarily exclusively human. For example: an encounter takes place in a time and in a space that must be thought out (and designed) and taken into careful consideration, especially if one wants to leave open a plurality of possibilities.

Landscape is often thought of as one of the subjects to be related. Sometimes I approach the whole process as an act of design for “assemblages”, which requires paying attention not only to the different beings whose survival is inextricably intertwined with ours, but also to the different temporalities involved, to the polyphony that ensues.

**Facilitator:** Mali Weil’s team acted as art director and project manager

# HOW CAN WE RELATE TO OTHERNESS?

Like Life Lab

**Idea:**

To invite a biodesigner to guide a group of interested people into a new perspective on relationships with other living beings at microbial scale. What did you imagine?

---

**TIME:** A wet lab is but one of an infinite number of places where we can encounter otherness such as viruses and bacteria. However, it is certainly an interesting space because it is designed to focus our attention on interacting with them.

Which metaphor effectively represents you making these gestures?

**SPACE:** A wetlab (within a prominent Science Museum), which is a type of laboratory where various types of potentially hazardous chemicals and biological entities are handled. Therefore, the space must be designed, constructed and controlled to prevent spillage or contamination.

For Mali Weil a wetlab is more than an experimental space: it is a meeting place. Here we individuals of the species homo sapiens can consciously meet, see and interact with a variety of microorganisms.

Can you imagine a polis that also includes otherness?

**ROLES:** A Biodesigner interested in bio-feminists and political topics, a group of interested people (see Target group), a biologist as wetlab technician (always present)

What does it feel like to be made of microbes?

**RULES:** To ensure safety, the wet lab space is organised according to precise rules and rituals. From the way gloves are worn and instruments are handled to the protocols for cleaning and decontaminating surfaces, every gesture takes on great importance.

Even if we don't deal with hazardous substances, it is interesting to consider the potential and risks for which this space is designed, as well as to imagine the precise choreography of movements and attentions that are required of researchers and biologists.

Did you find it possible to use the term 'interspecies communication'?

---

**Ethical Considerations:** Terrestrial biodiversity is mostly provided by microbes despite the increased visibility of animals and plants. Microbes are found in clouds and up to 50 km above the earth's crust. Several kilometres below the earth's surface and in the darkest oceans. They can survive at very

high temperatures but also in ice. In the most extreme environments they live for millions of years in a dormant state.» What questions did you ask yourself?

**Mode of Participation:** Participation in the activities was a mandatory request. The program was both theoretical and practical. What did you think that you didn't think before?

**Duration:** Two days, full time, in presence

**Materials:** A wet lab with: cookers, beakers, pots, Pans Measuring cup and scales Craft knives, spoons, spatulas, scissors Brushes Hand blender Syringe Hotplate or stove Filtration fabric or/and a bag made from it Protective gloves and clothing Tape Papermaking frame Thermometer Pliers and cutters Magnetic stirrer and magnet Ready-made or self-made moulds Colander Hot press Oven Resistors, electric cables, activators, leds, electric circuits, etc. Microfibrillar cellulose Dry pulp Starch Water

Mali Weil's team acted as art director and project manager in collaboration with MUSE Science Museum team as project manager

**Target Group:** STUDENTS (UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUNG PROFESSIONALS DESIGNERS SCIENTISTS ART STUDENTS CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS In what position did you place yourself?

**Educational Aim:** To open a museum space usually closed to the public to create an experience of relating to forms of otherness usually ignored and to re-narrate the experience from a cultural and political point of view. How did it change, if at all, your idea of the bacteria, of yourself?

**Effects:** Some of the effects of the experience according to our questionnaires:

- Retrace and rethink gestures and actions by imagining them as moments in a relationship
- Retrace and rethink roles and rules in science, culture and design
- Letting the questions emerge
- Act small shifts in Roles and Rules in every situation

Did you feel comfortable? If not, what made you uncomfortable?

**Tips:** Open dialogues are not always the best way to discuss and share an experience.

How did you experience the rules and procedures?

**Facilitator:** Mali Weil's team acted as art director and project manager





## Comparative Research Network:

The Comparative Research Network was founded in 2007 and worked since then in the field of adult education and research. The CRN Network is specialised in training activities within the fields of intercultural competences, intergenerational learning, mobilities and migration. Additionally, the CRN is specialised in creating and performing evaluation and dissemination processes. The Comparative Research Network is based in Berlin and since 2007 active in Horizon2020, Erasmus+, REC, national and local programs.

НАЦИОНАЛНО УЧИЛИЩЕ  
ПО ПЛАСТИЧНИ ИЗКУСТВО И ДИЗАЙН  
"АКАД. ДЕЧКО УЗУНОВ" - Казанлък

The national school of Arts and Design „Dechko Uzunov“ is an art school that offers high-quality vocational education in the fields of fine arts, design and lute-making. We strive to build national human virtues, development of individuality and of artistic talents. We enhance the activity of creative and artistic youngsters.



Mullingar Employment Action Group (MEAG) is a community supported not for profit organisation which was established in 1986 and incorporated in 1990. The group work towards supporting the development of enterprise and jobs in the region, as well as helping prepare those outside mainstream employment to enter the workforce.



Change Maker is a consulting company providing guidelines and strategies for change. Digitalization, circular economy, sustainability, and green energy are the areas Change Maker shares its expertise with others.

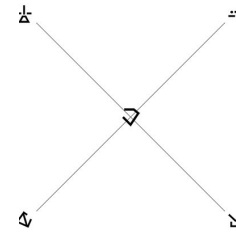


IREFORR is a limited liability cooperative company founded in 1984 with considerable experience in the field of training and research and has also been active for many years mobility within European programs. Furthermore, it has been accredited by the Basilicata Region since 2004 and has the UNI EN ISO 9001: 2008 – EA27 Quality Certificate since 2006. The institute has carried out several projects in the field of vocational training and the labor market. The experience within the community programs is remarkable. IREFORR has managed various programs such as Equal, Now, Daphne, Youth, Leader and actually Erasmus. Our institution has carried out activities on numerous training and research projects in the area of vocational training, the labor market and the economy. In the field of training, it specializes in the development of:

- Vocational needs analysis - Job analysis – Professional nature analysis - Planning and Didactic programming - Accompanying step and post formative tutoring - Arrangement of didactic equipment

It has developed products in the following fields: - Vocational training - Business training - Community training

The activities and experience of I.Re.Forr. they are in the field of training for social professions, the environment and tourism.



Mali Weil is an art platform established in 2008 based in the Italian alps. She works as an artist and cultural designer, creating expanded and stratified performances which also include the implementation and dissemination of design collections, audio-visual formats and editorial products. Mali Weil in her practice explores the potentials of the performance intended as a space for the creation and dissemination of political imagination. In 2020 she published *The shining reverie of unruly objects*, a book (editions Bruno, Venice for the series Loc. Fies 1), organized as a collection of remarks regarding the theoretical and practical research carried out by Mali Weil on the design of performative objects.

Published 2022 by the Comparative  
Research Network e.V. Berlin

The eBook was edited in the frame of the Erasmus+ Partnership Designing  
VET- 2020-1-DE02-KA202-007499

Editor: Johannes Tolk

Authors: Johannes Tolk, Martin Barthel, Massimo D'Andrea, Mali Weil,  
Michael Ward, Mariya Stefanova, Silvia Koeva-Popova, Nikola Valchev,  
Diba Mokhtabad, Francesca Olivier

Contact Address:  
Comparative Research Network e.V.  
www.crnonline.de  
central@comparative-research.net  
Belziger Str. 60  
10823 Berlin, Germany

The eBook was edited and published in the frame of the Erasmus+ Strategic  
Partnership Designing VET. Erasmus Plus is financed by the European  
Union. The European Commission support to produce this publication does  
not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views  
only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any  
use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The external links in the ebook are being provided as a convenience and for  
informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an  
approval by the project partners of any of the products, services or opin-  
ions of the corporation or organization or individual. The project team bears  
no responsibility for the accuracy, legality, or content of the external site or  
for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to ques-  
tions regarding its content.

Images displayed in this booklet are the property of their respective pho-  
tographers or creators. IMAGES MAY NOT BE REDISPLAYED ON WITHOUT  
PERMISSION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER OR CREATOR. Contact the creator  
if you wish to obtain a reproduction of an image or if you wish to obtain  
permission to redisplay an image on another web site. For information on



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**ISBN 978-3-946832-48-5**