

## Soft Skills Training Event

***We can repeat the theory many times, but experiencing it at least once is the most valuable thing!***

That was the starting point for us to shape a series of training events for - in total - 7 modules. Each module reflected an area that should be covered while we were working in a Social Solidarity Economy milieu. These 7 modules are appropriate no matter where you are working or with whom, but especially for the communities where the model of organization is more horizontal than vertical, where all members of the community regardless of the task performed should be seen and heard. Such conditions are demanding and competence in how to listen, receive, and give feedback is key to preventing misunderstandings, resolving difficult situations peacefully, and ultimately growing in the community instead of descending into chaos. Such a cherry on the cake was the module on taking care of yourself. We came out of observing how the activist community is fragile and prone to burnout, so taking care of yourself is the first and necessary step to taking care of the whole team. We ended the training series with this module although you might as well take it as the first.

We wish you to set up your combinations in implementing the pieces of training. We have shared our comments at the end of this collection, hope you can find there some inspiration and worthwhile reflections.

Modules are as follows:

1. Nonviolent communication model
2. Active listening & giving and receiving a feedback
3. Organizing a successful meetings: facilitation & moderation
4. Inclusive decision making
5. Distributed leadership
6. Working with conflict
7. Self-care

## HATI-SOS Soft Skills Training – Module 6:

### Working with Conflict

Duration	What	Content	Materials
10	6.01 Introduction of the topic and facilitators (Short welcome speech)	Brief introduction of the topic and the facilitators, the poem of Ralph Roughton called Listen.	Poem printed on a paper
30	6.02 Two truth one lie (warm up)	Getting to know each other, paying attention to each other, active listening.	none
15	6.03 Gate game	To practice understanding non-verbal communication	none
20	6.04 Definition of conflict (rain of ideas)	What conflict means, and when a conflict needs intervention	flipchart, markers
35	6.05 Briefly about mediation (presentation)	Behaviours, resolution styles, reasons behind conflicts , behaviour & tasks of a mediator, phases of a mediation process	flipchart, markers
60	6.06 Practicing mediation based tools (small group exercise)	Trying out roles of a mediation process, to have a taste of a mediation process in non-hierarchical organisations.	Pieces of papers with the instructions/conflict descriptions
70	6.07 Community card game // If needed: Plenary discussion about the experiences of mediation exercise.	Deeper understanding of the mindset that is needed in a community project. Deeper understanding of the attitudes that can help us working with conflicts.	Printed community cards, pins and pinboard or tape
60	6.08 Soft Shoe Shuffle (deep democracy)	Understanding and accepting the ever-changing nature of opinions and views.	none
25	6.09 Briefly about the restorative circles (presentation)	Bringing closer to the participants the tool of restorative circles: Resolution of problems, which are arising on the community, and not on the personal level.	Flipcharts, markers
30	6.10 Restorative exercise (fishbowl)/small groups	Practicing how to run a restorative circle.	Notepads and pens, printed out versions of the description of the process. Can be found below and in ANNEX 4.,
20	6.11 Mimes	To practice questioning and clarification skills. To learn the skills of dialogue.	none
20	6.12 Closing circle	To harvest to lessons of the day.	none

## 6.01 Introduction

**Goal:** Getting to know the facilitators and the topic of the training

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 10 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** printed out poem (it can be also on the trainer's phone)

**Description:**

The facilitators make a small speech in which they introduce themselves, the HATI project and the topic of the training. They read out loud the poem called Listen by Ralph Roughton. (The poem can be found in the annex of this document.)

*Tension is when wisdom is emerging  
Not making the dishes creates hierarchy.*

The facilitator emphasises, that all the participants learn today, are just crumbs from mediation and Restorative technics. **Nobody becomes a mediator after this training.** This training is to help out organisations in using basic tools of mediation methodology, and to show into which expert they can turn if they cant solve their problems on their own. They can use these tools as peer helpers to support their colleagues, but they have to keep in mind their limits in knowledge of this profession.

## 6.02 Two truth one lie

**Goal:** To get to know each other a little, to connect to each other, to exercise active listening and paying attention deeply.

**Group size:** 10-18 | **Duration:** 30 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** none

**Description:**

The group is seated in a circle. One of the participants has to state three statements about themselves. One of those statements has to answer the question "Why are you here today?". Two of the statements has to be true and one of them has to be false. After the statements had been said the participant who is seated across the one that has been talking has to decide which of the statement was true and which one was a lie. After the person guesses, the participant that said the three statements has to say which one of those has been true and which one was false. The next person saying the three statements will be the one sitting next to the first one that has been talking.

At the end, the participant that was talking first will be the one guessing for the last person of the group.

## 6.03 Gate game

**Goal:** Practicing the understanding of the non-verbal communication signs.

**Group size:** 10-18 | **Duration:** 15 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** none

### **Description:**

One participant agrees to be the first one to try to break out from the circle. The other participants decide where the gate should be.

They form a circle around the person, holding each other hands and the person inside has to figure out between which participants is the gate where he or she can break out from the circle. The two participants who are the two sides of the gate should send inviting energies, glances to the person (they should not smile) while all the others should be uninviting and repulsive without using actual words, movements or facial expressions.

## 6.04 Definition of conflict (rain of ideas)

**Goal:** To get a common understanding of what conflict is, to collectively describe the characteristics of a conflict that needs intervention.

**Group size:** 10-18 | **Duration:** 20 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** indoor

**Materials:** Flipcharts, markers

### **Description:**

The exercise starts with an open question: What does conflict mean? The facilitators collect the ideas and descriptions on the flipchart then they summarize them into a description.

Then the next open question comes: When does a conflict need intervention?

The facilitators collect the ideas on the flipchart, then they summarize the characteristics of a conflict needing intervention.

## 6.05 Briefly about mediation

**Goal:** To briefly get to know about the most important parts of a mediation process.

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 35 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** indoor

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers

### **Description:**

Presentation based on this document:

<https://www.fenwickelliott.com/research-insight/articles-papers/alternative-dispute-resolution/mediation-guide-basics>

More theory about the background of conflicts:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/537a1f2ce4b05dd13827c4f5/t/62bd576674390505f365e0df/1656575853248/Fellegi\\_BruisingHealing\\_TheDynamicsofResolvingGrievances\\_ENG.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/537a1f2ce4b05dd13827c4f5/t/62bd576674390505f365e0df/1656575853248/Fellegi_BruisingHealing_TheDynamicsofResolvingGrievances_ENG.pdf)

Important parts to emphasise:

- Strategies to solve conflicts: (underlined ones are able to mediate between)
  - Competitive
  - Avoidant
  - Adaptive
  - Compromiser
  - Cooperative
- Reasons of conflicts (there is a need behind every hurting)
  - Value
  - Interest
  - Need
  - Power
  - Relation
  - Information
- Tasks of a mediator
  - Keeps the secrets
  - Makes a safe space
  - Takes the responsibility for the process
  - Controls the emotions arising
  - Ensures the balance of power between the people
  - Impartial and neutral
- The mediator NEVER:
  - DECIDES
  - JUDGE
  - GIVES ADVICE
- Phases of a mediation process
  - Opening
  - Uninterrupted time
  - Setting up agenda
  - Talking about each topic in the agenda (Optional: Private negotiation with the facilitator)
  - Brainstorming on the resolution
  - Writing and signing an agreement
  - Closing

## 6.06 Practicing Mediation based tools

**Goal:** To have a taste of a mediation process in non-hierarchical organisations.

**Group size:** 6-12 | **Duration:** 60 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Role descriptions of Annex 2, printed for each groups

### **Description:**

The group has to be divided in small groups, each made by three people, one of them has to be the mediator in the scene.

The facilitators hand out the papers with the description of the scenario and the roles.

The groups have 45 minutes to go through the phases of a mediation process.

**IMPORTANT:** After the time is up, all the participants put down their roles, and speak out loud: I am xx (Real name).

After this a plenary discussion starts, when people can share their experiences, feelings, questions, and doubts.

### **Situation:**

Flora is the founder of a successful organisation called Future Generation. After many years of focusing only on the organisation, Flora had a serious burn out, and she had to decide to give the control to Emma, who was working for the foundation before as an external trainer and researcher. Flora asked Emma to carry out all the directorial tasks until she gets better. But Flora also stayed in work as a trainer. They did not sign a contract because they trusted each other.

Emma is commonly known as a good expert with great social connections. After half a year, both of them started to feel unsatisfied and both of them want to end this period of joint work. Both of them are engaged in solving the conflict in peace between the two of them without letting other people know about the situation.

### **Role of Flora:**

- Strong personality and charismatic leader. It was a very hard decision for her to give out the power of her hands. The disappointment is even bigger after these efforts.
- Says that Emma did not accomplish her responsibilities.
- Flora is contemplating asking Emma's last month salary back.
- One month earlier she indicated that she was unsatisfied so she thinks that from that date should they count the one month long notice period.
- She doesn't want to pay severance pay.

- All of the financial points are less important than to say goodbye without letting know all the other members of the association about the situation.
- If they can finally have an agreement she is open to work together with Emma in the future.

#### **Role of Emma:**

- Emma was always a freelancer and once she started the role of the director she realised that this contains much more administration and useless struggle than what she expected.
- She is completely lost in this accountant and administrative things and she tried to ask for support from Flora, but Flora always said that she asked her to complete the tasks and not to asks questions for her.
- Emma is engaged to her role and to the organisation and she wants the best for it.
- Under her leadership their training programme developed a lot and they got a national award.
- Emma thinks that her job decription did not include all the administartive work and nontheless she made all the things that needed to be done.
- She secretly took the job because she wanted to be acknowledged by Flora.

## **6.07 Community cards**

**If there are a lot of questions emerging after the mediation exercise and the facilitators feel skilled enough to answer them, then instead of the Community cards game , the mediation exercise can be followed with a plenary discussion about it.**

**Goal:** This method helps to introduce the attitude that is important for creating a community that respects and empower the individuals. It instigates people to reflect their own attitude and to speak about it. This usually starts a deep exchange that is very community building.

To increase awareness of the participants to know what is needed for the thriving of individuals in community.

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 70 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Printed out community cards (the link to them can be found in the annex of this document), pins and pinboard or tape

#### **Description:**

It needs certain attitudes, a certain mindset to make community possible. The cards will serve as a reminder and source of inspiration for the different attitudes.

**Introduction to community cards (20 min):**

The facilitator introduces the 12 community cards, illustrates the message with his / her personal world-view and examples from community life.

***To be on a Learning-Path:*** Everything that I encounter, no matter how painful it is, can contribute to my learning and my spiritual growth.

***Self-Awareness:*** Knowing the own weaknesses and trigger points. Not hiding them, but working with them and speaking about this.

***Self-responsibility:*** I am responsible for almost everything that happens to me. It's only myself who can change my life, I cannot expect anybody else to do it.

***Empathy:*** For myself and for others

***Conscious Emotions:*** Taking responsibility for my emotions, and exploring the background. Why do I react with this emotion? What does the emotion tell me? What can I learn from this?

***Respecting the needs of others:*** ... and the attitude that it is okay, that everyone is looking for a way to meet their needs.

***Honest and transparent communication:*** Communication about intimate issues, about the own weaknesses and doubts, creates trust

***Consciousness about Roles, Power and Privilege:*** Conscious dealing with the implications of roles, power, rank and privilege. The goal is to empower as many people as possible.

***What is reality?*** : Beyond the question of right or wrong, there is a place where we can meet. (Rumi) Accept subjective truths and take them seriously.

***Inviting Feedback and Dealing with mistakes:*** Being open to giving and receiving feedback. Welcoming mistakes as a chance for learning and not blaming people for mistakes

***Interest for people:*** Real interest in the diversity and similarity of human experiences. The awareness that I can learn a lot about myself in encountering others.

### **Picking the cards and forming groups (5 min)**

The basic intention of this step is to assure that every card is in the hand of one person. The way that is done is not important, the trainers can just hand the cards to group members, but usually try to involve people in asking them to pick one or two cards deliberately, because they mean something for them – either that they express what they think or as well if they have doubts about the importance of this card. In any case the facilitators / trainers should assure that people do not spend a lot of time doing this, because it is actually not important who has what card and why. They can as well be given blindly to the people. If there are more than 12 people, the community cards should be printed out twice, on paper of different colours and there should always be two cards with the same writing in two colours. Then people are asked, to first take all cards of the colour that is on top, and only if they are all taken, take from the second set



of cards. After this short minute of handing the cards to the people and asking them to form groups of 2-4 people.

**Small group discussion about the topics of the cards (20 min)**

The participants dive deeper into thinking about the topics on the cards. They speak about their own experiences, they discuss in the small group and this will deepen their understanding about what is written on the card. Questions that can guide this exploration can be: - Do they agree that this is important for a thriving community? Why (not)? - What are their personal experiences with this attitude? - What can we do to foster this attitude in communities? - And in our community in particular? The facilitator shall encourage the group to make sure that everyone in the small group contributes their experience.

**Harvesting in the plenary (20 min):**

The small groups report the essence of their discussion about the cards in the plenary in popcorn-style. Other group members and the facilitator have the right to add or to ask questions. The card is given back and pinned on a pinboard. Important contributions to the cards shall be written down next to it, or ideally: been recorded through graphic recording for integrating another channel of perception.

**Debriefing (5 min):**

Questions to ask: How was it? Do you think the cards are a good tool to start a conversation about what is important for a community spirit? Would you want to add other cards? Do you think some are not necessary?

The link to the original exercise can be found in ANNEX 3.

## 6.08 Soft Shoe Shuffle

**Goal:** In order to better develop a group's collective intelligence, it can be useful to see and hear how the individuals feel about a particular question or issue that they are working on. We can assume that we know, but we can be more effective in taking action if we do so based on direct input from the group. This process gives the group the opportunity to see and hear how people feel about various issues and why they do so.

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 60 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** indoor or outdoor, an open flat space where people can move around with ease

**Materials:** none

**Description:**

The facilitators asks the participants to come up with a topic that are important to them and is connected to some kind of conflict. When a person tells a topic the others react by making

noises and the topic that generated the loudest group reaction will be the one used for the exercise.

The facilitator explains that we will use the space in the room to make visible the perspectives and understandings of this system.

The person who's topic was chosen divides the space in two and stands in one of the halves, then says an argument supporting their opinion or view on the topic.

Then another person enters the space and depending on their opinion, they stand close to the first one or far away, and they also state their point of view. On by one everybody enters the space. Each time someone speaks, the group will move in relation to that person according to how much they agree with them. For example, if you agree, stand right next to the person, if you disagree, stand across from the person on the other side of the room. The facilitators has to emphasize that this only works if people keep moving. They can demonstrate to the group that they don't have to be stuck in a perspective. If they change their mind and agree more with a new voice, they simply move.

Facilitators can help by amplifying what is being said, or just by helping to illustrate where the roles are in the room. They do not need to force the silent voices into the room directly. I.e. they don't say "James, you haven't said anything – what do you think?" but rather "Does anyone who has been quiet wish to share?" and make eye contact with James and others who have been silent.

The facilitators can ask the people who are farthest away (if there are any) if they care to share why they are standing where they are. Throughout this process, each person can shift his/her position when they hear more of the discussion. For example, when someone who is standing farther away is asked to explain why they are standing where they are, and others find the perspective compelling, they can readjust their location based on this new information. Then, someone else may offer a clarifying statement that deepens the understanding and people may move closer (or farther away) from that person. In this way, the shuffle starts to flow and the perspectives get clearer.

This method also points out that rarely is someone completely alone in his or her perspective. Everyone owns a piece of it to varying degrees. It's finding those areas of convergence and divergence that will create a fuller picture of the situation we're addressing. The facilitators close the exercise when the energy starts to lag and when someone makes a statement that is good for closing (not when someone has just made an attack on someone else). They ask the participants to journal about what they saw and what role they played in the conversation. This exercise requires the ability to be flexible with time, as you want to be able to take advantage of the rich conversations that it evokes.

The link to the original exercise can be found in ANNEX 4.

## 6.09 Briefly about the restorative circle (presentation)

**Goal:** To bring closer to the participants the tool of restorative circles. Resolution of problems, which are arising on the community, and not on the personal level.

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 25 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** indoor

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers

**Description:**

Presentation based on this document:

[https://www.foresee.hu/uploads/tx\\_abdownloads/files/peacemaking\\_circle\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.foresee.hu/uploads/tx_abdownloads/files/peacemaking_circle_handbook.pdf)

## C9 : Restorative exercise

**Goal:** To try in practice how to run restorative circles

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 30 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** indoor

**Materials:** Printed out versions of the description of the process. Can be found below in ANNEX 5., notepads and pens

**Description:**

Before the fishbowl game, the facilitators has to find 6 people who are willing to play the roles of the scenario. The characters of the scene are the facilitator, the „perpetrator”, the „victim”, two person, who are on the side/supporters of the perpetrator and two on the side/supporters of the victim.

The facilitator of the exercise will be one of the trainers/facilitators of the training.

The scene :

An association has to pay 2 million to the National Tax and Customs Office, because the member who was responsible for it, forgot to submit their yearly tax declaration and they ran out of the deadline.

In the scene, the „perpetrator” is the member of the association who did not submit the tax declaration and the „victim” is the president of the association.

The “perpetrator” acts in a grumpy way, says that he or she was overwhelmed at the time.

## 6.11 Mimes (presentation)

**Goal:** Many conflicts arise because our assumptions or perceptions are inaccurate. Even though our assumptions may be wrong, we then make judgments based on these inaccurate assumptions. This activity teaches teams the skills of questioning and clarification

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 20 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** none

### **Description:**

Have everyone find a partner and spread out in the room. Partners can be standing or sitting for this activity. Each team member will get a chance to ask his or her partner a question. Rather than give a verbal answer, the person to whom the question is asked can only mime his or her answer. The asker is invited to ask as many clarification questions as he or she would like to gain an understanding of the other person's answer.

### **Sample Topic Questions**

- When you were a child, how did you like to spend your time?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How do questioning skills help us understand?
2. In addition to questioning skills, what other skills are necessary to overcome assumptions?
3. What is the value of questioning skills to resolve conflict?
4. What gets in the way of our willingness to ask questions when we are involved in conflict situations?

## 6.12 Closing circle

**Goal:** To summarize the lessons of the day.

**Group size:** 5-20 | **Duration:** 20 min. | **Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** none

### **Description:**

The participants sit in a circle and the facilitator invites them to one by one share with the group how are they feeling and what are they taking away with them from this training.

## Annex 1

### **Listen: by Ralph Roughton, MD**

Listen!

When I ask you to listen to me

And you start giving advice,

You have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and

you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way,

you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me

and you feel you have To do something to solve my problems

you have Failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen, All I asked was that you listen \* Not talk or do, Just hear me.

When you do something for me

That I can and need to do for myself,

you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel,

no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you

and can get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense, when we understand what's behind them. Perhaps that's

why prayer works, sometimes, for some people\* because God is mute and He/She doesn't

give advice or try to fix things. So please listen and just hear me. And if you want to talk,

Wait a minute for your turn, and I'll listen to you.

## Annex 3

<https://clips.gen-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CommunityCards.pdf>

<https://clips.gen-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Community-Cards-Description.pdf>

## Annex 4

<https://reospartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Reos-Partners-Toolkit-Module-12-The-Soft-Shoe-Shuffle.pdf>

## Annex 5

Description of the process:

### 1. Introduction:

(everything that the person in the role of the facilitator says will be with bold letters):

facilitator: **Good morning everyone, my name is ... and I will be the facilitator of this discussion.**

Then he or she introduces everyone, and states everyone's relation to the „perpetrator“ and to the „victim“.

**Thank you all for coming. I know that this situation is hard for everyone, but our presence here will help us solve the problem that brought us here today. This is an opportunity for all of us, to be active parts of the redemption or reparation of the damage that has been done.**

**This meeting concentrates on an event that** ( here they shortly describe the event, where and when it happened, what happened)

**It is very important that our task is to pay attention on understanding of what ... (the „perpetrator“) committed and what was the effect of this doing on others. We are not here to decide whether ... („the perpetrator“ ) is a good person or not. We want to analyze how this event affected others and hopefully make reparation for the damage caused. Is this understandable?**

....(The „perpetrators name) **acknowledged that they committed the event.**

(Turns to the perpetrator): **It is my responsibility to tell you that you are not obligated to be part of this meeting, you and everybody else is free to leave if they want to. If somebody leaves we will need to continue this matter by taking legal action. (i. e. police, court, etc)**

**However, with this meeting we could close this matter in case this meeting ends with everyone in agreement. Is this understandable for everyone?**

### 2. „Perpetrator(s)“

**We will start the discussion with** ....(name of „perpetrator“).

If there is more than one perpetrator, then all of them needs to answer these questions.

- **What happend?**
- **What were you thinking about it (about the action) at the time?**
- **What do you think about it since then?**
- **Who was affected by your actions?**
- **How where they affacted by your actions?**

3. „Victim(s)“ If there is more than one victim, then all of them needs to answer these questions.

- **What was your reaction when the incident occured?**
- **What feelings, emotions do you have about what happened?**
- **What was the hardest in this whole situation?**
- **How did your family, friends, colleagues react when they heard about what happened?**

4. The supporters of the „victim“

- All of them needs to answer the following questions.
- **What were you thinking when you heard about the incident?**
- **How do you feel now about it?**
- **What was the hardest for you in this situation?**
- **What dou you think, what is the most important aspect of this situation?**

5. The supporters of the „perpetrator“

If they are closely related , for example the parents of the perpetrator, the facilitator can tell them the following:

**This must have been very hard for you, right? Could you please tell us about it?**

All of them needs to answer the following questions.

- **What were you thinking when you heard about the incident?**
- **How do you feel now about it?**
- **What was the hardest for you in this situation?**
- **What dou you think, what is the most important aspect of this situation?**

6. „perpetrator(s)“

Question to the „perpetrator“: **Do you have something to say, something to share at this point?**

7. Reaching the agreement

Question to the „victim“: **What do you expect from today’s meeting?**

The same question to the „perpetrator“.

**What is your opinion about the this?**

Then they need to determine if the „perpetrator“ agrees to the proposal. The facilitator has to give time for them to consult.

When the agreement starts to take form, the facilitator says:

**before I put the agreement into its final form, I would like to be sure that I wrote down percisely everything about the issue that we resolved.**

8. Closing of the meeting

**Before we formally end this meeting I would like to give a last chance to everyone to speak if there is something that needs to be said. Does anyone has anything to say or share?**

After everyone spoke who wanted to, the facilitator says:

**Thank you for being part of the processing of this difficult case. Congartulations for the work that has been done.**

Then the facilitator has to prepare the written agreement.



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This module is part of the Soft Skills Training for the social solidarity economy initiatives and organisations developed within the project Hard Times – Soft Skills. All other related materials can be found at the address: <https://www.socioeco.org/hati-SOS>

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