



SoCrATest

# HANDBOOK

Soft Skills & Creativity Assessment and Testing  
for **Volunteers** in Times of Crisis



Edited by **Sonja Bercko Eisenreich** and **Wolfgang Eisenreich**



Co-funded by the  
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## SoCrATest

**Soft Skills & Creativity  
Assessment and Testing for  
Volunteers in Times of Crisis**

### **Foreword**

**Simona Stefani, WIDE**

The Covid-19 epidemic of 2020 posed enormous difficulties for medicine and the economy, as well as for people's mental, behavioural, and physical capacities. The abbreviation VUCA sums up the characteristics of this "new normal": rapidity, unpredictability, complexity, and ambiguity. New modes of thinking and new individual and organisational abilities are required to deal with the problems posed by today's environment of constant, unexpected, and broad change.

The Corona crisis has also prompted innovations in the realm of volunteerism that were previously unimaginable: civil society has developed a newfound respect for volunteerism and the responsibilities it entails. People don't only help out their neighbours for free, or spend time talking to those who can't go out, or do their shopping for them. Because of the financial and economic impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, many people are taking up unrelated side projects to help those in care, agriculture, the mobility economy, and the creative sector.

Volunteering is a great approach to learn new "soft skills" including teamwork, cognitive empathy, communication abilities, intercultural competence, stress management, discipline, and self-confidence, regardless of the volunteers' professional backgrounds. Volunteering is a great way to gain experience and knowledge, especially for individuals who have come to grips with the fact that their professional work is irrelevant to the larger crisis management system. Strictly speaking, volunteering is a fantastic chance, namely the chance to develop and verify soft skills that may be used as an asset in future professional contexts.

But how does a volunteer establish that their acquired abilities are legitimate? How can you convince a potential employer that your ability to think creatively and culturally will help you succeed in high-pressure circumstances? Therefore, validating these "soft skills," or acquired competencies, is of the utmost importance. Despite the misleading title, "soft skills" make a significant difference in the workplace and help young people and adults come up with creative and innovative solutions to face unprecedented risks, societal challenges, and opportunities.

Therefore, the goal of this SOCRATEST Handbook project is to help organisations that rely on volunteers by providing them with resources and guidance to implement internal systems of recognition of soft skills and creativity potentials. This will enable volunteers to improve their skill sets and competences, thereby bolstering their ability to be creative and adaptable in high-stress, high-stakes, high-stakes, and ambiguous work environments.

## Part I

### I.1 Soft skills underpin a learning society

*Susana Moreira Bastos, ISCAP.IPP*

The learning of a soft skill underpins a learning culture during life?

Competence refers to various cognitive capacities and skills that are needed to act, meaning to mobilize resources to match different situations that require results. Competence is the ability to perform in a job being composed of a set of skills.

The concept of competence implies more than just the acquisition of knowledge and skills; it involves the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands. Acquiring these competencies leads to desirable individual development and well-being, and to flourishing cultures and societies.

Soft skills are a set of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude.

As Robles (2012) points out soft skills can be the point of junction of: people skills, social skills and personal careers attributes.

The advantages of soft skills lie in the fact that they are not restricted to a specific field, they can be transferable to different contexts.

Studies by Stanford Research Institute and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation among Fortune 500 CEOs established that 75% of long-term job success resulted from soft skills mastery and only 25% from technical skills. Researchers at Boston University, University of Michigan's Ross School of Business found that workers with soft skills training are 12% more productive than those without them. Harvard University reported that 85% of success at the work place is attributed to soft skills and only 15% to technical skills.

In the context of the OECD Learning Compass 2030, student agency implies a sense of responsibility while students participate in society and aim to influence people, events and circumstances for the better. Agency requires the ability to frame a guiding purpose and identify actions to achieve a goal. It is about acting rather than being acted upon; shaping rather than being shaped; and making responsible decisions and choices rather than accepting those determined by others. Student agency is not a personality trait; it is something malleable and learnable. The term "student agency" is often mistakenly used as a synonym for "student autonomy", "student voice" and "student choice"; but it is much more than these concepts.

Acting autonomously does not mean functioning in social isolation, nor does it mean acting solely in self-interest. Similarly, student agency does not mean that students can voice whatever they want or can choose whatever subjects they wish to learn.

Skills development and lifelong learning are key enablers of decent work, productivity, and sustainability that can increase the value and performance of work, empower workers' lives, and enrich societies.

For individuals, they provide the key to pursue their interests and aspirations, access the labour market, escape from poverty and social exclusion and adapt to the changing world of work. For enterprises, they provide a strategic competitive advantage for productivity and innovation. For societies, they create opportunities for economic transformation, job creation, inclusiveness, democracy, active citizenship and sustainable growth.

The renewed imperative for lifelong learning aims to better prepare people, businesses and society for the future by meeting the learning needs of both young persons and adults in all sectors of the economy and branches of economic activity and at all levels of skill and responsibility. Reskilling and upskilling have become an urgent priority for many workers looking to retain or find a job.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) recognizes that "education, training and lifelong learning contribute significantly to promoting the interests of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society as a whole, especially considering the critical challenge of attaining full employment, poverty eradication, social inclusion and sustained economic growth in the global economy". Soft skills support a culture of lifelong learning.

## 1.2 The lack of Soft Skills & Creativity Education in formal learning

*Alenka Valjašková, QUALED*

Formal learning delivers systematic intentional education, which is structured, goal-oriented and instructor- or teacher-led. It covers education on schools and universities, but also courses, webinars, seminars, or coaching. They are delivering basic and advanced levels of education in diverse range of subjects, which is their main role. In addition to knowledge in different areas, soft skills<sup>1</sup> are also important for people and their development.

Several researches confirm that the importance of the soft skills for work and organisational success is raising. High level of soft skills and competencies is essential for professional, but also for personal life success. The labour market is changing with huge technological and scientific shift, which is deepening the need for skilled workers and the ability to be creative and able to handle any obstacle.

In 2020, the World Economic Forum published a list of the ten most important skills until 2025 for entering the labour market. The skills were following: analytical thinking and innovation; active learning and learning strategies; complex problem-solving; critical thinking and analysis; creativity, originality and initiative; leadership and social influence; technology use, monitoring and control; technology design and programming; resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility; reasoning, problem-solving and ideation; emotional intelligence; troubleshooting and user experience; service orientation; systems analysis and evaluation; persuasion and negotiation.

However, there is soft skills discrepancy between expectations and actual real level of soft skills of the graduates. According to the researches the gap is visible mostly in areas like the leadership, collaboration, teamwork, communication, problem solving, but also creativity or critical thinking. Other areas with missing skills among employees were human connection, empathy, or emotional intelligence.

The missing gaps in soft skills should be covered by several adjustments in the formal learning. The most important is to raise awareness about high demand for at least decent soft skills level among employees.

<sup>1</sup> Soft skills: refer to behavioural competencies, interpersonal skills, people-centred learning skills or personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects and are considered the most sought-after skills in labour market of today's knowledge society.

Schools are often criticized for focusing too much on knowledge and testing. Therefore, are schools advised to cooperate and integrate the Soft Skills and Creativity education into their curriculum. According to the Survey of teachers in Europe conducted by European Commission in 2010, which was followed by Creative Learning and Innovative Teaching Report in 2011, exist a several barriers for addressing the creativity within curriculum. Among the most important identified were, that subjects are addressed separately, or the curriculum is overladed with content which do not allow to be flexible or innovative in the classroom. From that time most of the EU countries undergone reforms of their curriculum, but there is still problem with how often these reforms happen and whether they are flexible enough to adapt to rapid developments in society.

The solution, to have a school that educates the young people holistically, connecting their minds and hearts, in order to develop basic human competencies, is therefore challenging.

However important schools are, soft skills or creativity-enhancing activities are not usually included enough in the educational curricula as would be beneficial for the future employees.

The rapid shift towards a climate neutral Europe and digital transformation is changing the way we are working, learning, taking part in society or is changing the way we are leading our everyday lives. The pandemic and conflict in Ukraine have also had a profound impact on millions of people in the EU. Many needed or will need to acquire new skills and move to new jobs in a different sector of economy. More will need to upskill to keep their job in a new work environment. For young people, entry in the labour market could be very challenging. That is the reason for **targeting this issue on non-formal or informal level** and the significance of lifelong learning.

In the **non-formal** way of acquiring soft skills, two categories are distinguished: the first category is education and training provided through short programmes – courses, such as seminars, workshops, conferences, with the aim of improving the development of skills for employment and everyday life. Other purposeful programmes such as round tables, conferences, book presentations, meetings with experts, art and creative laboratories and social activities, peer tutoring and internal collaboration, international exchanges, assignment of roles and responsibilities, are also a part of non-formal learning category for the development of young adults' soft skills. Training in a specific organisational setting, among employees of a company or within a social group represents a 'deep' experience and an opportunity to improve

or develop soft skills related to different areas and creativity.

In the second non-formal category, soft skills and creativity are developed by attending organised special educations like education supported by labour office or career centres.

In the **informal** mode, acquisition of soft skills and creativity is more general than the formal and non-formal mode because it comes from **everyday life activities of a person**, either as an individual or as a group member.

**As an individual**, you can develop certain personal traits, characteristics, and emotional intelligence through self-learning and discovering your competencies and with continuous efforts you can develop higher level of those skills. Through personal learning you can work on assertiveness, mental agility, or respect to others.

Secondly, soft skills are developed through everyday life **in society**. In this category, the development of soft skills is realised through various socio-cultural activities. Individuals develop social skills by observing friends and family, attending religious, or participating in community activities and social gatherings. The informal mode of soft skills acquisition is characterized by a random and spontaneous, not pre-planned manner.

Future employees should be aware of the importance of soft skills and creativity and if they did not acquire suitable levels of soft skills during school years, they should search for these informal and non-formal opportunities to improve them.

### **I.3 Volunteering as a basis of the non-formal and informal learning**

*Alenka Valjašková, QUALED*

The one environment which was not mentioned in previous chapter was volunteering. Volunteering and social work are closely related, sharing a common historical, cultural, ethical background. There are significant efforts to involve non-professionals in addressing many social or community problems. The European Centre for Volunteering (CEV) distinguishes between formal and informal volunteering, and at the same time we see that virtual volunteering is a new area of volunteering that has been developing in the last years. The Council of Europe recommends, that individual countries define voluntary service at national level, with an emphasis on the educational aspect.

The role of volunteers should be supportive, complementing the work of professionals and enhancing the quality of life of clients and community. Volunteering has long been considered only as an alternative form of spending free time and remained unappreciated.

Today it is irreplaceable in several areas and services and fulfils important functions:

- It strengthens civic participation,
- It contributes to better self-determination of excluded population groups,
- Compensates for missing social services,
- It is an effective public policy tool,
- Contributes to the democratisation of society.

It also brings great educational benefits to a volunteer as a person.

Using your free time to get involved in a community project you care about is a great opportunity to meet new people with shared interests and similar passions. Often you will meet people whom you might not otherwise find yourself in contact with. This can lead to new friendships and a broader **social network** that can become an enriching part of your life, which could have impact on the level of your soft skills and creativity. Volunteering is a reciprocal relationship that expresses not only what each party can offer, but also what both parties can gain. The recipient does not accept help passively; he is able to give something, even if he is often unaware of it, which could be a great benefit to volunteer.

We often tend to connect creativity with artist, we think about it as a gift, which is partially correct, but it is not whole definition. Creativity is opening our minds and it is finding ways to achieve goal or solve problems with an innovative perspective. Most importantly it is a skill which we can learn and improve in it, as we can do it with soft skills.

Creativity and soft skills require some practice; it could be trained during volunteering. For sure, volunteering needs to be done for the sake of others, but it has side effects and could be personally enriching experience.

When you volunteer, you expose yourself to various types of diversity at the same time: human, professional, cultural, organisational. This exposure to diversity strengthens your ability to work with diverse people in the future, so you are enhancing your **teamwork and collaborative skills**.

Also, when you volunteer you need to learn new things, which give you an opportunity to practice your **learning skills**, because the more you learn, the better you get in it.

Usually volunteering brings you experience with different social or community problems, and as you are helping to solve them, you are creating a social bond with other volunteers or clients. This could enhance and built up your **empathy**.

Experience in helping others with financial, family, or social problems is a humbling experience, which can give you the opportunity to appreciate more deeply what you have. But on the other hand, it can give you experience and realization, that there is more than one way to solve problems, which trains your **innovation and creativity skills**.

Volunteering is and will be one of the most profound environments for learning soft skills and acquiring creativity.

## I.4 Crisis Response Volunteering

*Sonja Bercko Eisenreich, INTEGRA*

Volunteers play a crucial role in helping communities recover after calamities such as the Turkey earthquake of spring 2023, the Covid-19 epidemic, and other humanitarian crises. The human toll, physical destruction, and breakdown of social cohesion that result from these crises are devastating to the communities that are hit. Volunteering, the selfless act of people freely giving their time, talents, and resources to help others, has become an integral part of disaster relief and restoration operations.

Volunteers play an important role in crisis situations because they are able to respond quickly and adapt to changing circumstances, frequently filling in the gaps left by established emergency response systems. Volunteers become an invaluable resource when the need for aid surpasses the capabilities of established response mechanisms. They may respond rapidly, adjust to new circumstances, and supplement official initiatives.

Volunteer participation:

Several of the most important reasons why volunteers are so important during times of disaster will be addressed below.

**Quick Deployment:** Volunteers are in a unique position to respond rapidly and effectively to emergencies. They have a strong sense of civic responsibility and a willingness to lend a hand to those in need in their communities. Volunteers may self-deploy and reach disaster zones within hours, whereas conventional emergency response systems may take days or weeks due to bureaucratic processes and other obstacles. This speedy organisation minimises the time it takes to help individuals in need, which can save lives.

Responding successfully to changing conditions in the period following of a catastrophe requires a great degree of flexibility and adaptation, both of which volunteers display in a great deal. They are able to swiftly modify their activities and services to meet new requirements and shifts in emphasis. They can fill important gaps in formal response systems that may have difficulty fast adapting to unanticipated scenarios due to their ability to think on their feet and tailor their talents to the demands of the moment.

**Supporting the Official Response:** Volunteers assist official emergency response

agencies by supplementing and increasing the latter's capabilities. Volunteers supplement official systems by providing labour, skills, and knowledge that would otherwise be lacking. Their help may come in the form of anything from medical treatment and search and rescue to logistics management and emotional support and even community engagement. Volunteers improve the overall emergency response by working in tandem with established mechanisms.

**Reducing Service and Support Gaps:** In times of crisis, established emergency response systems may find themselves stretched insufficient. To bridge these gaps in availability, volunteers are crucial. They can supplement formal systems by contributing extra people, materials, and knowledge. Volunteers with medical or engineering backgrounds, for example, can help out in places where the formal healthcare or infrastructure systems are overburdened. Volunteers are crucial in ensuring that these gaps in resources are filled and that impacted communities receive the help they require.

Volunteers frequently come from the impacted towns or neighbouring regions, so they have personal connections and a thorough awareness of the local background, culture, and language. They are better able to deal with the issues unique to the afflicted area because of their familiarity with the terrain. By helping to pinpoint at-risk communities, cultural norms, and community-specific requirements, volunteers may better direct relief efforts. Because of their extensive social networks, they are in a prime position to foster trust, establish open channels of communication, and offer emotional support to those who need it most.

#### The Competencies of Volunteers

There are several ways in which volunteers may improve the effectiveness of crisis response by supplementing the capacity of established response agencies. Volunteers' specialised knowledge and experience can be invaluable in times of need. These abilities may be learned and include things like medical training, engineering knowledge, language skills, technological understanding, and coordination and logistical experience. Volunteers can best respond to the needs of those affected by a crisis by drawing on the expertise they have developed in their chosen fields. For instance, medical personnel can provide essential medical treatment, engineers can evaluate and repair infrastructure damage, and language specialists can help people of all backgrounds communicate with one another.

**Expertise in the Field:** There are a lot of volunteers with extensive professional backgrounds.

Backgrounds in medicine, teaching, social work, engineering, or project management are all possible. They are able to provide valuable knowledge and expertise from their professions to the crisis response due to their years of professional experience. This knowledge guarantees that reaction efforts are consistent with norms and standards in the field, boosts the efficiency of decision-making, and improves service quality.

Volunteers from the impacted community or those with substantial experience in the region have invaluable local expertise and contextual insight. They are well-versed with the region's topography, cultural norms, social dynamics, and available resources. Because of their familiarity with the area, they are better able to assess the situation, determine the requirements of the community, and implement solutions. Interactions between formal response agencies and the community can be improved with the support of volunteers who have a thorough awareness of the local environment.

**Being Bilingual and Bicultural:** Volunteers who are bilingual or culturally competent are invaluable in situations requiring cross-cultural communication or understanding, such as those involving a multicultural community or an international disaster. They can act as translators or interpreters to help response teams communicate with those who don't speak the common language. In addition, volunteers who are well-versed in a variety of cultural practises and norms would be better equipped to ensure that local customs are respected and included into response activities, protecting against any misconceptions or unintended harm that may arise.

**Ability to Change and Solve Problems:** Volunteers typically have excellent flexibility and the capacity to think creatively under pressure, both of which are essential in crisis situations. They can handle ambiguity, create workable solutions on the go, and meet tight deadlines with ease. Volunteers have the unique ability to rapidly analyse new demands, pinpoint service gaps, and provide creative solutions. The crisis response benefits from their capacity to think quickly and creatively, and to adapt to new situations as they arise.

Volunteers who have already built trust and rapport within the community are able to respond to emergencies more effectively. They can connect with locals, establish trusting relationships, and get useful data on individuals' and communities' unique difficulties. People in impacted areas are more likely to work together and cooperate with response operations when they see friendly faces and people they know and trust involved.

## 1.5 The importance of the Assessment of Soft Skills

*Susana Moreira Bastos, ISCAP.IPP*

Skills may be broadly defined as “action in context” and they can be learned and developed. Indeed, skills are strictly linked to behaviour and to its surrounding context that influences their potential of activation and their power of transference. More specifically, transversal skills are seen as a set of personal and interpersonal skills - generally called “soft skills” - but also as technical skills that can be used and that are important for workplace performance in multiple professions, regardless of the academic subject area.

The approach by competences in learning has as main purpose to develop in individuals the critical reflexive thinking, making them able to analyse, decide, plan and communicate their ideas. In this sense, it is fundamental the development of teaching-learning and assessment strategies that promote the achievement of the desired learning results.

The “great classical thinkers who have studied the problems of education, said and repeated it: it is up to the teacher to pass to the student what Mankind has already learned about herself and nature, all she has created and invented of essential” (...) one of the main papers reserved to education consists, first of all, in endowing Humanity of the capacity to dominate her own development.

The assessment of soft skills is necessary in order to value the process of learning and the personal growth and empowerment.

The perception that individuals and employers have about the acquisition and strengthening of their soft skills is going to generate in them the self-awareness of their level of cognitive development in each soft skill. Thus, the appreciation and the recognition by employers will enhance the promotion of the person and the professional.

Soft skills assessment considers and values the experience of the person, such as learning process and personal growth, especially in the acquisition and strengthening of those soft skills sought by companies, favouring thus their recognition, enhancement and promotion.

The use of the assessment tool for a specific set of skills generates quite an impact directly on people. They are the primary stakeholders to understand the usability of the tool and to have the perception of the need to potentiate and develop such soft skills.

## 1.6 The Growing Importance of Soft Skills and Creativity for Careers Success and Employability

*Wolfgang Eisenreich, ECC*

The significance of a person’s soft skills and creative capacity in determining their employability has substantially expanded as a result of the quickly shifting work market on a worldwide scale. Employers place a larger focus on an individual’s ability to communicate effectively, interact effectively, adapt to new situations, and think creatively. This is despite the fact that technical skills are still necessary. Employers are beginning to see the need for a workforce that possesses not only technical competence but also a broad range of soft skills and creativity as automation and technological breakthroughs continue to transform industries. This need is a direct result of the fact that industries are being reshaped by automation and technological advancements.

Candidates for jobs who have developed their creative and soft skills to a high level have a competitive advantage in the job market. These competencies set individuals apart from their contemporaries and boost their employability across a wide range of sectors and job functions. Individuals who can assume leadership roles, effectively articulate their ideas, and successfully traverse complicated challenges have a greater opportunity for career advancement and professional success. Soft skills and inventiveness are two factors that contribute to career advancement and professional success. The cultivation of soft skills and creative potential not only increases employability but also leads to a sense of personal fulfilment for the individual. These abilities give people the power to express their one-of-a-kind talents, to take part in work that has meaning for them, and to experience fulfilment in their professional activities.

The SOCRATEST Assessment Tool presents four different clusters of soft skills with altogether 18 critical soft skills and creativity skills that are highly valued by employers. Gaining valuable experience through volunteer work increases one’s employability and makes a person more marketable to prospective employers. The following are the most essential skills:

- Capacity for effective communication and interaction with others Capacity for effective communication and interaction with others is crucial in the networked and collaborative work environments of today. Employers in every sector place a high premium on candidates who can effectively communicate their thoughts,

pay attention to what is being said to them, cultivate meaningful relationships, and collaborate with others.

- **Critical thinking and problem-solving abilities:** Individuals who possess the “soft skill” of problem-solving and critical thinking are able to assess difficult circumstances, come to well-informed conclusions, and devise original solutions. These abilities are becoming more in demand as businesses look for individuals who can handle ambiguity, remain flexible in the face of change, and make valuable contributions to attempts to solve problems.
- **Flexibility and resilience:** in a working environment that is always shifting, flexibility and resilience are absolutely necessary. Individuals who can quickly adapt to new situations, accept difficulties, and display perseverance in the face of failures are highly valued by employers.
- **Leadership and teamwork skills** are highly sought in today’s workplace as more and more companies place an emphasis on collaborative work and the ability to effectively collaborate with members of a varied range of backgrounds. People who have the ability to guide, encourage, inspire, and otherwise influence others are regarded as valuable assets in the process of accomplishing organisational goals.

The efforts that are made to solve problems demonstrate the significance of creativity in terms of employability. Employers are looking for staff who are capable of creative thinking, coming up with new ideas, and approaching problems from different angles. Innovative products, services, and procedures are developed in large part due to the contributions of creative minds, who give their companies a competitive advantage. People who are creative tend to be more flexible in the face of shifts in their environment because they are accustomed to investigating novel avenues of action and welcoming unorthodox strategies.

Their capacity to think creatively and adjust their behaviour in response to shifting conditions is highly prized in the fast-paced, ever-changing workplace of today. Individuals are encouraged to mix a variety of viewpoints, areas of expertise, and skill sets when they are encouraged to be creative because this also fosters teamwork and interdisciplinary work. Employees that can produce cross-functional ideas, foster a culture of creativity, and bridge disciplines are highly valued by organisations because of their ability to bridge disciplines.

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has spurred a conversation about the future of employment and the skills that will be in demand. One topic that has been brought up is the growing importance of soft skills, which include creativity and the ability to think creatively. As artificial intelligence technologies continue to disrupt entire industries and redefine the workforce, the importance of possessing these soft skills and being creative is becoming more and more obvious.

Artificial intelligence (AI) systems excel in data analysis, automation, and pattern recognition, which enables them to carry out tasks quickly and accurately. On the other hand, they frequently have difficulty with activities that call for contextual knowledge, emotional intelligence, and creative problem-solving. Artificial intelligence systems are unable to engage in complicated human interactions, grasp non-verbal clues, or demonstrate empathy.

It is still necessary to have strong communication and interpersonal skills in order to successfully form relationships, work together, and satisfy human requirements. Individuals who possess other soft skills, such as emotional intelligence and empathy, are better able to connect with others, comprehend the perspectives of others, and respond accordingly. These abilities are essential for jobs that require engagement with other people, providing service to customers, being a leader, or working together in a group.

Artificial intelligence systems are able to produce answers based on data that already exists, but human beings are the only ones who can truly be creative. Problem-solving, innovation, and the identification of opportunities that AI systems may miss all require creative thinking, imagination, and the capacity to come up with fresh ideas. Concerns of an ethical nature regarding artificial intelligence systems include privacy, bias, and accountability. Individuals that possess the ability to think critically are better equipped to assess the repercussions of AI systems, arrive at moral conclusions, and oversee the responsible deployment of AI.

Developing these “soft skills” gives individuals the ability to survive alongside AI technologies, which ensures their employment and drives human-centred value creation.

## 1.7 The SOCRATEST website as a project web resource

*Gabriele Campanino, WIDE*

The SOCRATEST partners, who created the project website all together, worked to give birth to an engaging and interactive user experience, in order to guarantee numerous benefits and not only the dissemination of information about the project. Different tools have been implemented for the collection of data and user feedback, such as the contact form, to better understand the needs and expectations of the large community. In addition, modules have been integrated to encourage active participation in the project, to involve users and make them an active part of the decision-making process. Website traffic monitoring and analysis tools have also been developed to assess the impact and effectiveness of communication and promotion activities. Thanks to these tools, the website has become a tool for interaction and community involvement, capable of generating added value for the project and its objectives.

### Technological Aspects

The website uses WordPress as main platform since it offers a wide range of possibilities for integration and expansion of functionalities. Thanks to the large community of developers and the tools made available by the platform, it is possible to have custom plugins, graphic themes and widgets that allow you to enrich the user experience. In addition, WordPress offers an intuitive interface that allows site managers to easily update content, create pages and posts, change settings, and monitor statistics. Thanks to the flexibility and scalability of the platform, the website can grow together with the activity it represents, guaranteeing an increasingly professional and attractive online presence for users.

The mobile use of the website represents an important opportunity to ensure the accessibility and usability of content through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Thanks to the design and development of a mobile-friendly interface, the website becomes more accessible and easily navigable on mobile devices, improving the user experience and increasing the possibility of reaching a wider and more diverse audience. In addition, thanks to the mobile presence of the website, users can access content wherever they are, without having to use a desktop computer.

This increases user interaction with the website and allows the project partnership

to provide information in real time, ensuring a complete and increasingly personalized user experience. In addition, the mobile use of the website offers the possibility of using specific features of mobile devices, such as geolocation and the possibility of sharing content on social networks, to enrich the user experience and improve interaction with the public.

### Content-Related Aspects

The website offers direct access to all the information products of the project, allowing anyone to take advantage of the information and results obtained. Thanks to the documentation section, users can access a wide range of information products, such as project products, reports, summary documents, event presentations, manuals and more. These products are available in several languages and are organized by theme, to facilitate research and consultation. In addition, the website also offers the possibility to download the information products, to be able to use them offline or share them with other interested parties. This feature represents an important added value for the project because it allows to disseminate information effectively and to reach an increasingly wide audience. Thanks to the availability of information products, the website becomes a tool for dissemination and awareness, which contributes to the dissemination of knowledge and good practices in the international arena.

The amount of detailed information on project meetings on the website is an important communication and training tool for the community. Thanks to the publication of detailed information on the various stages of project development, participants can have a complete and updated view on the progress of the activities and the results achieved. In addition, the website offers information on the working methods adopted, on the methods of coordination and on communication strategies, which represent a valuable training model for anyone who wants to deepen the methodologies of development of a project in Europe.

Thanks to the transparency and completeness of the information, the website becomes a tool for learning and sharing good practices, which can also be applied in other project contexts. In addition, the presence of a section dedicated to contacts and support, makes the website a reference point for the community, which can find answers to their needs and solutions to their problems with reference to the project topic.

## Methodological Aspects

The essential tool for the work and exchange of information between the project partners is represented by the website, thanks to its function to report all phases of the project in a clear and precise way. Thanks to the section dedicated to the activities and phases of the project, it has been possible to have a precise idea of the progress of the activities and the results achieved, facilitating the sharing of information and collaboration between the different partners.

The website also offered advanced communication features that allowed partners to interact and exchange information. Therefore, the project website played a fundamental role in the management and coordination of the activities, making it an indispensable tool for the work and exchange of information between the partners and contributing to the success of the project.

Moreover, thanks to the availability of a section dedicated to the news and events of the project, the website has represented an important tool for dissemination and awareness, which has helped to involve an increasingly wide audience.

It is important to add that the main process information contained on the website constituted important material through which regular newsletters were developed and subsequently forwarded to a large number of recipients from all the countries involved in the project. In general, the lists of users to whom to send newsletters can be a useful tool to maintain a direct relationship with their target audience, promoting the image of the organisation and encouraging participation, through direct communication with its audience, and the loyalty of its users.

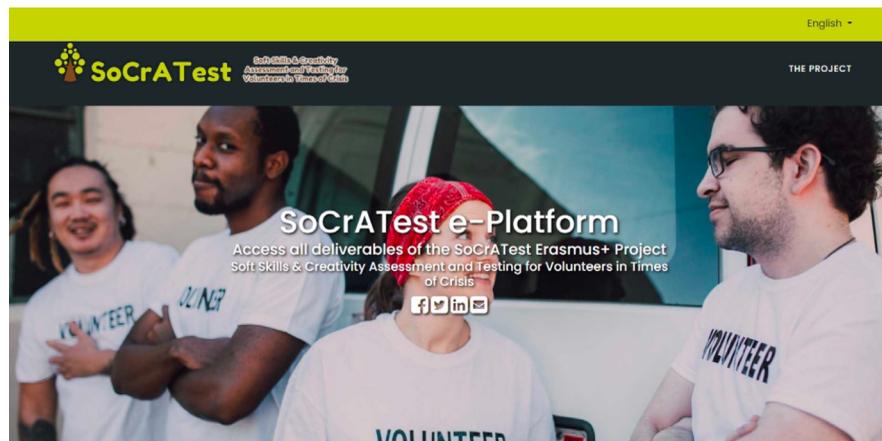
The website is multilingual: this is a fundamental element in ensuring the accessibility and usability of the content by an international audience. Thanks to the availability of several languages, the website becomes an effective and easy-to-use communication tool for audiences from all over Europe. This functionality is particularly important in Europe, where linguistic diversity is an obstacle to communication and information sharing. The EU has 24 official languages, and the multilingualism present on the SOCRATEST website (available in Italian, English, German, Portuguese, Greek, Slovak and Slovenian) allows the project consortium having the possibility of reaching linguistically a potential amount of about 295 million individuals, that guarantees to obtain an important percentage of users.

Thanks to the multilingual website, all project partners and interested users can access project content and information in their native language, facilitating the understanding and dissemination of information. In addition, this makes the website an important tool for promoting the project, as the availability of several languages makes it possible to reach an ever-wider audience and to actively involve all interested countries and communities. In conclusion, the availability of a multilingual website is a determining factor for the dissemination and exploitation of knowledge in Europe.

## 1.8 SOCRATEST E-learning Platform

Konstantinos Tsibanis - GUnet

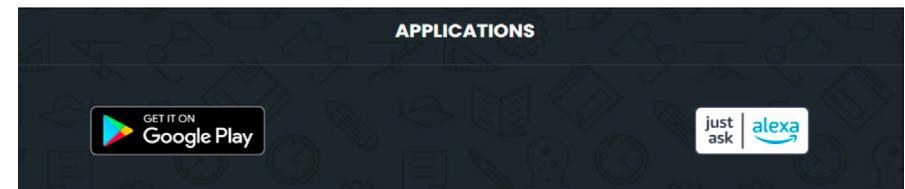
The SOCRATEST E-learning Platform (<https://tools.socratest.eu/>) is a core component of the SOCRATEST Project. It is an accessible and multilingual environment that hosts the content and provides open access to the tools developed in all project outputs. In addition, it includes a link to the project website which provides all background information related to the project, the deliverables, the partners, and the funding agency. As the most prominent core output of the project, the SOCRATEST e-Platform environment carries all innovative aspects of the project and makes them visible to the users. It gives the main contribution to the project's impact.



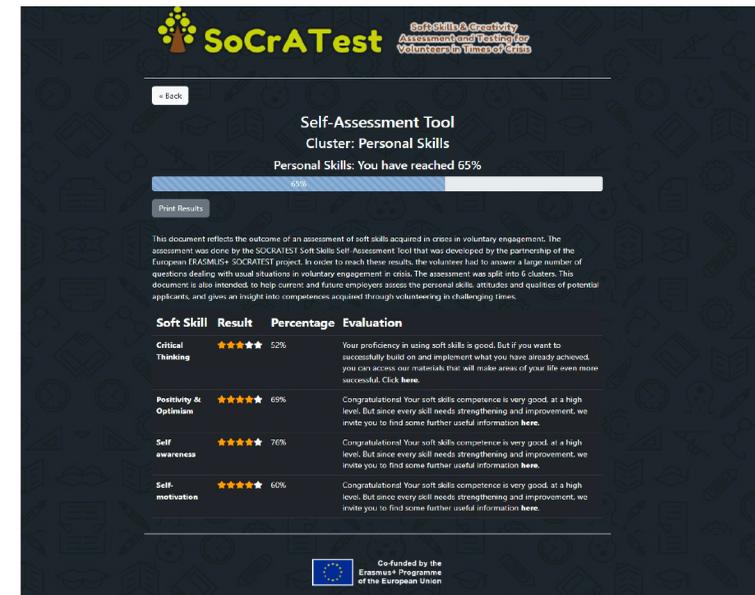
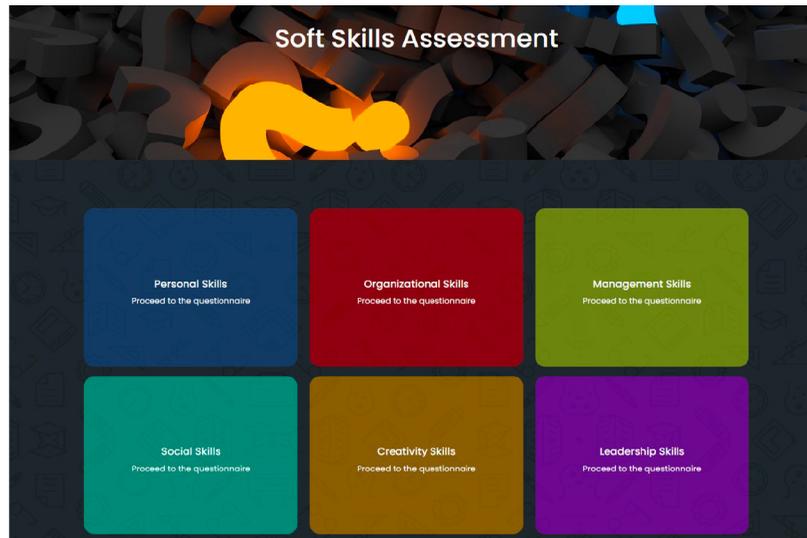
The design and implementation of the SOCRATEST e-platform has exceeded the initial expectations and plans of the project and incorporated suggestions and ideas (media library, podcast files, Alexa app) emerged from analysing project's needs at an early stage of the project.



More specifically the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform provides the main multilingual interface for accessing the project's online interactive tools such as: a) the Soft Skills Assessment Tool for volunteers, b) the Self-Promotion Tool for voluntary engagement, c) the Digital Library with podcast audio files accessed by a browser, d) the project Handbook e) link to the SOCRATEST Mobile App and f) link to the SOCRATEST Alexa app.



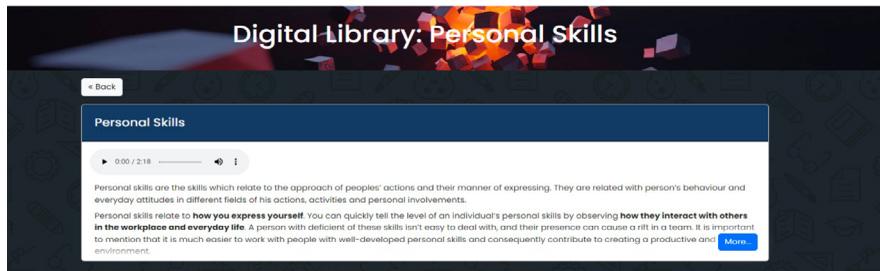
The SOCRATEST Soft Skills Assessment Tool is an interactive custom-made web based tool built from GUnet, the responsible partner, natively on the SOCRATEST E-learning environment. It provides users with open access to an interactive assessment questionnaire regarding 6 clusters of softs skills (Personal skills, Organizational skills, Management skills, Social skills, Creativity skills, Leadership skills).



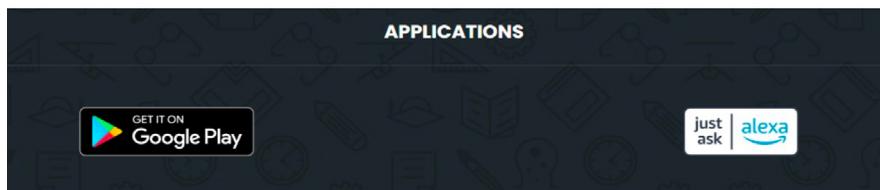
After the completion of a cluster questionnaire and analysing the result (for each user), the tool produces an anonymous online report with scores per soft skill, recommendations for upskilling and includes the functionality for downloading the report in pdf format.

In addition, the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform incorporates both an area for accessing the Self-Promotion Tool for voluntary engagement and a Media Library for storing and providing open access to the educational podcast audio files regarding the 6 clusters of soft skills.

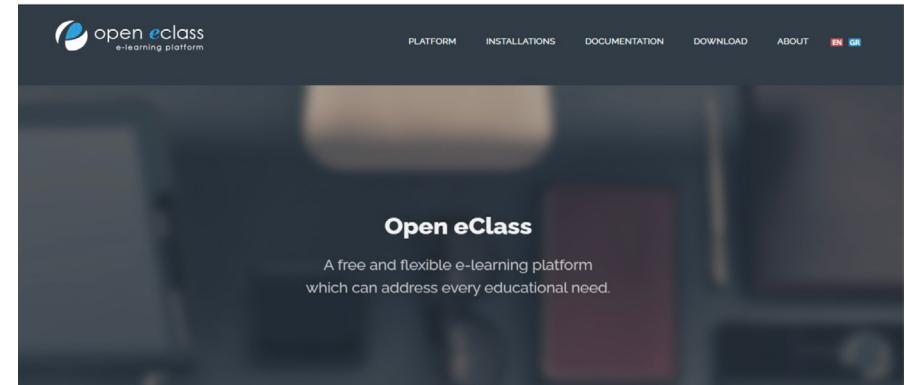




There is also a separate section for accessing the SOCRATEST Applications, Mobile app and Alexa app. The SOCRATEST Mobile App is stored in the official Google Play Store and the SOCRATEST Alexa App is stored in the official Amazon Alexa marketplace.



Technically, the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform environment is based on Open eClass platform (<https://www.openeclass.org/>), an open LMS platform actively supported by GUnet, the responsible partner for the implementation of the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform. Adaptability, multilingual support, flexibility, intuitive use, various user roles, accessibility, responsiveness, use of open models and technologies, modular structure, as well as continuous technical support by GUnet, are the basic design principles for the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform.



Additionally, the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform incorporates functionality for uploading and searching educational materials, learning and communication tools and supports both personalized access or/and open access. These additional tools (announcements, discussion forums, user groups, self-assessment exercises and quizzes, file & messages exchange, wiki, assignments, teleconferences, etc., that can be activated in order to support personalized learning experiences to logged-in users. These scenarios are available only on demand and can be activated by contacting the coordinator, so user accounts in the platform for the trainers and the trainees to be obtained.

Achievements exceeding the initial expectations

Initially, the SOCRATEST tools were intended to enable volunteers to record their soft skills after the crisis and to make them and potential employers aware of the newly acquired skills. However, in the last two to three years our societies experienced several crises in succession: COVID-19 was followed by crises such as environmental disasters in all our countries in 2021, which required the commitment of many volunteers. With the start of the Russian/Ukrainian war in spring 2022, war refugees flooded into our partner countries, who were also cared for mainly by vo-

unteers. In this way, SOCRATEST gained relevance far beyond its original approach, which was also repeatedly addressed as a special quality in our multiplier events by the participants. This clearly exceeded the initial expectations.

In addition, as we mentioned previously, the design and implementation of the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform has exceeded the initial expectations and plans of the project and incorporated suggestions and ideas (digital library, podcast files, Alexa podcast player) emerged from analysing project's needs at an early stage of the project. Especially for the target group of volunteers, we realized that they are always on mobility, provide their services in the field of a crisis and mainly use their mobile phones for communication and information.

For all these reasons the SOCRATEST partnership decided that we should provide them an alternative way of accessing the educational materials based on audio and by using mobile apps. So, extracts from the SOCRATEST materials were transformed into audio podcasts in all seven languages of the partnership. In addition a Digital Library was included into the SOCRATEST E-learning Platform in order to store, organize and make available all educational audio podcasts, organized in six clusters of soft skills. The SOCRATEST Digital Library is accessible from a web browser, from the SOCRATEST Mobile App and through the SOCRATEST Alexa podcast player. Especially the latter allows users who own an Alexa device or have installed the Alexa app in their mobile phone or smart device to have access to the SOCRATEST Podcasts and listen to the educational content while they are on a move.

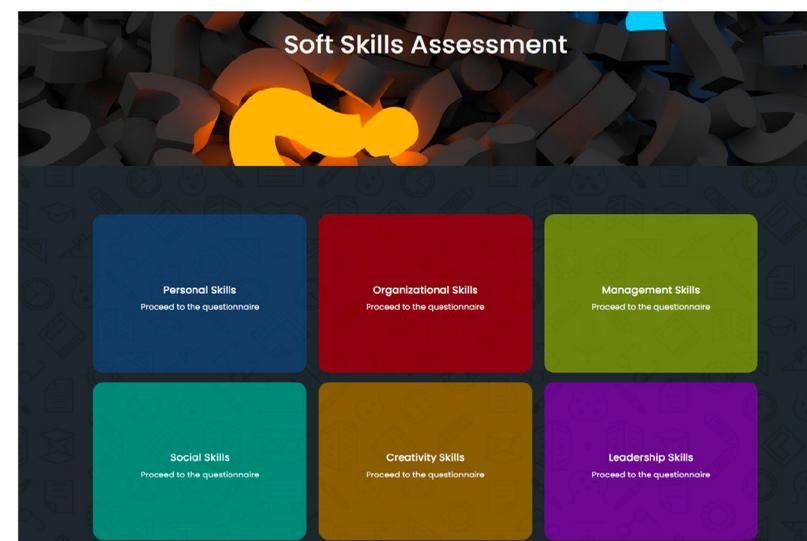
In conclusion, the adoption of this alternative audio approach of the educational materials and the accompanying applications added to the project a technological innovation that significantly improved the user experience on the offered SOCRATEST Tools.

## 1.9 SOCRATEST Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool

*Konstantinos Tsibanis - GUnet*

In this chapter of the handbook, we focus on the SOCRATEST Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) for volunteers. This tool provides users with open access to an interactive assessment questionnaire regarding six clusters of soft skills (personal skills, organisational skills, management skills, social skills, creativity skills, leadership skills). In other words it is a digital instrument that records and assesses Soft Skills that are specifically required in a crisis situation.

The SOCRATEST Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool was developed by the partnership of the SOCRATEST project.



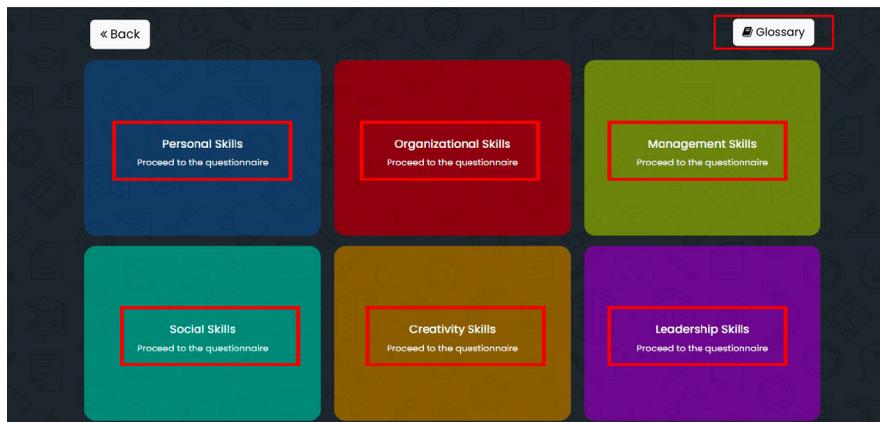
The aim of the Soft Skills Assessment tool is: a) to support volunteers to recognize and validate their soft skills needed in working environments in times of crisis characterised by velocity, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, b) to increase their awareness of the importance of creativity and flexibility in professional life, and c) to recognize these informal and non-formal competences through evidence gathering.

The SOCRATEST Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool is an interactive custom-made web-based tool built natively in the SOCRATEST E-learning environment. It provides users with open access to an interactive assessment questionnaire including a large number of statements, more than 600, for the assessment of Soft Skills in the six clusters, dealing with usual situations in voluntary engagement in crisis.

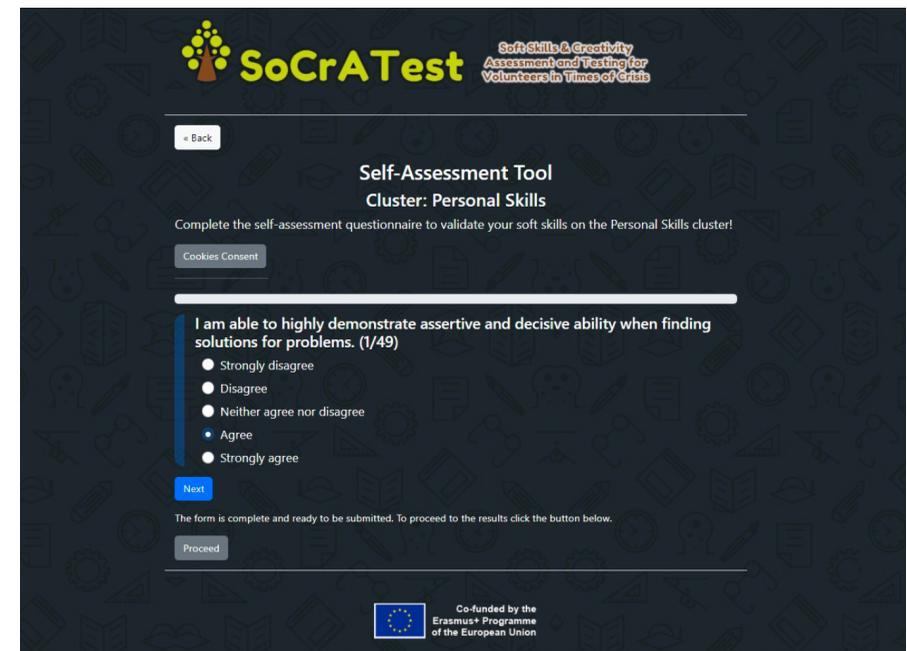
The Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool is anonymously accessible via the SOCRATEST E-Learning Platform homepage.



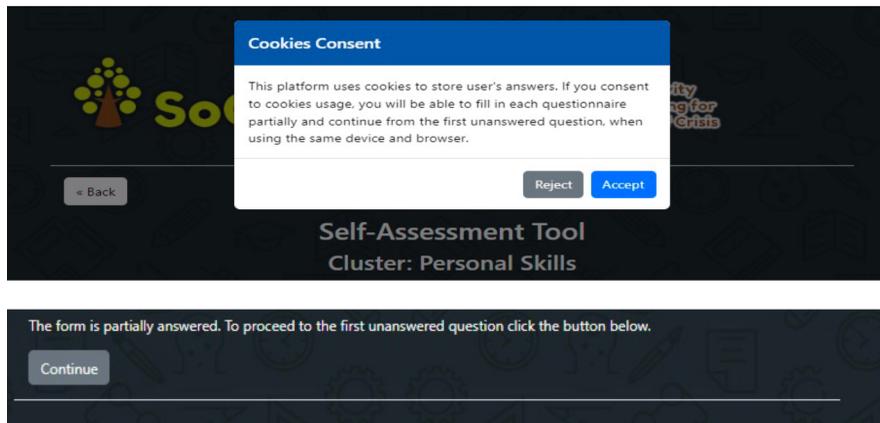
The main page of SAT Tool contains the assessment questionnaires for the 6 clusters of softs skills (Personal skills, organisational skills, management skills, social skills, creativity skills, leadership skills) and also provides access to the SOCRATEST Glossary, an alphabetical list of words and terms related to the soft skills in the six clusters.



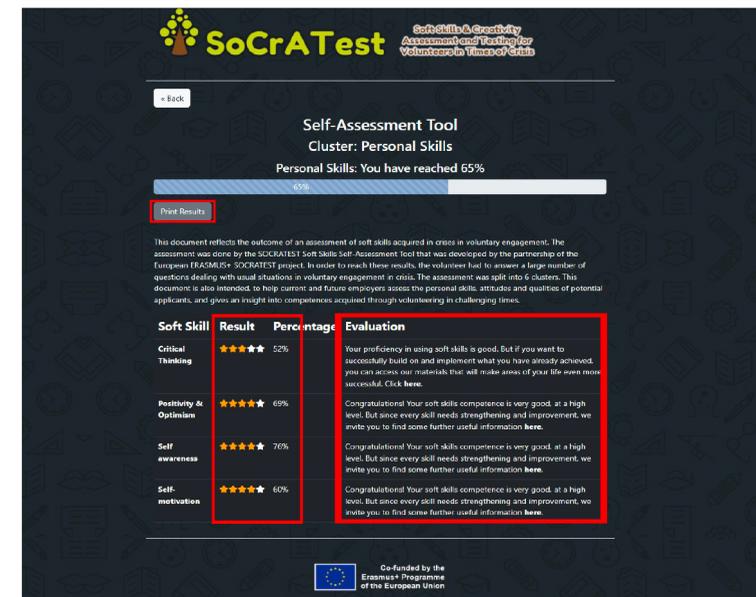
By selecting “Proceed to the questionnaire” in one cluster, the relative assessment questionnaire appears. Each questionnaire contains a number of statements related to the soft skill. The number of statements varies, depending on the cluster skill that assesses. All the answers to the statements follow a scaled approach from strongly agree to strongly disagree.



The SOCRATEST Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool recognises and validates volunteers’ soft skills and creativity potential. Technically the Self-Assessment Tool uses cookies for anonymously storing user’s answers. For this reason, users are asked to consent to cookies usage, so that they will be able to fill in each questionnaire partially and continue from the first unanswered question, when using the same device and browser.



Once users have fully filled in the questionnaires, they are able to either navigate and review the questions or proceed directly to the results page. The tool runs a question/answer analysing mechanism and provides each user with an anonymous online report, as a result, with scores per soft skill, recommendations for upskilling and includes the functionality for downloading the report in pdf format.

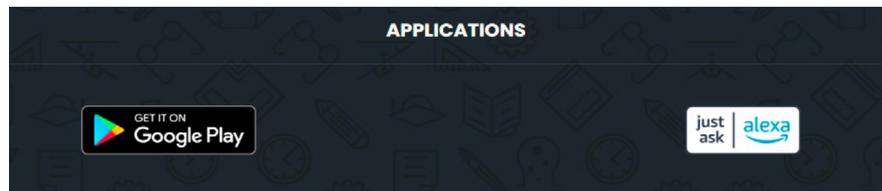


Finally, the SOCRATEST Soft Skills Self-Assessment Tool gives feedback to the volunteers' own strengths and weaknesses and motivates to respective training and introspection. At the same time the Self-Assessment Tool is intended to help current and future employers assess the soft skills, attitudes and qualities of potential applicants, and gives an insight into competences acquired through volunteering in challenging times. Note that the SAT Tool provides volunteers with an overview of the results in a printable / downloadable certificate.

## 1.10 SOCRATEST Alexa and Mobile Apps

Konstantinos Tsibanis - GUnet

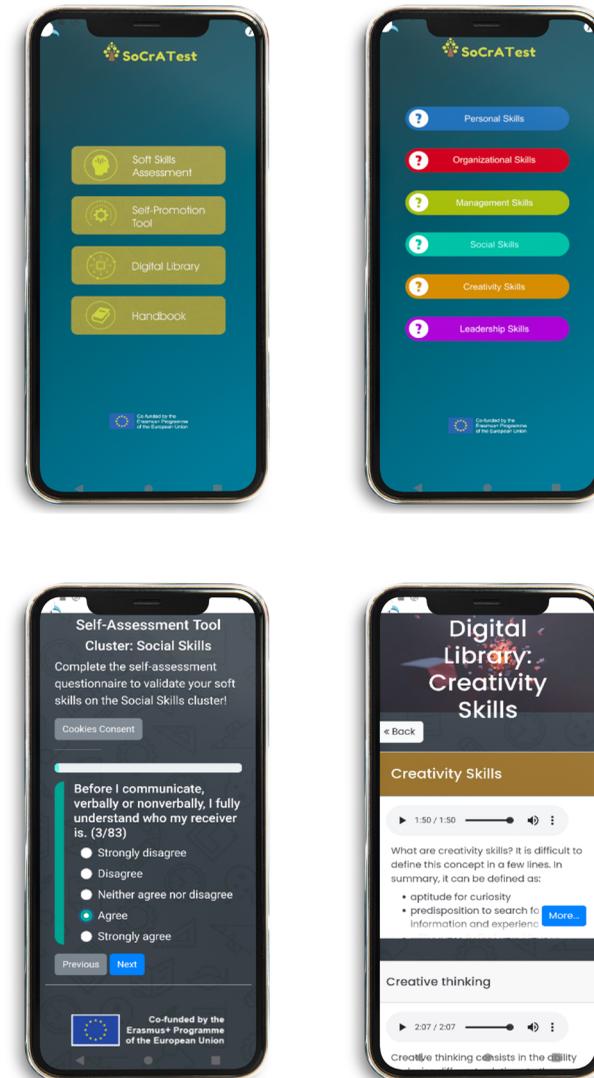
The SOCRATEST Digital Library is accessible not only through a web browser but also from the available **SOCRATEST Applications**. For this reason, there is a dedicated section at the SOCRATEST E-Learning Platform for accessing / downloading the official SOCRATEST Applications, Mobile app and Alexa app. The **SOCRATEST Mobile App** is stored in the official Google Play Store and the **SOCRATEST Alexa App** is stored in the official Amazon Alexa marketplace.



The **SOCRATEST Mobile Application** is a fully functional native mobile environment that provides access to all the project's outputs. SOCRATEST Mobile Application is a multilingual native app that provides an alternative means of accessing / searching the content and tools developed in the context of the SOCRATEST project in an intuitive and flexible way. All the tools and content are responsive. This means that the content is automatically adapted to fit the size of each mobile device screen.

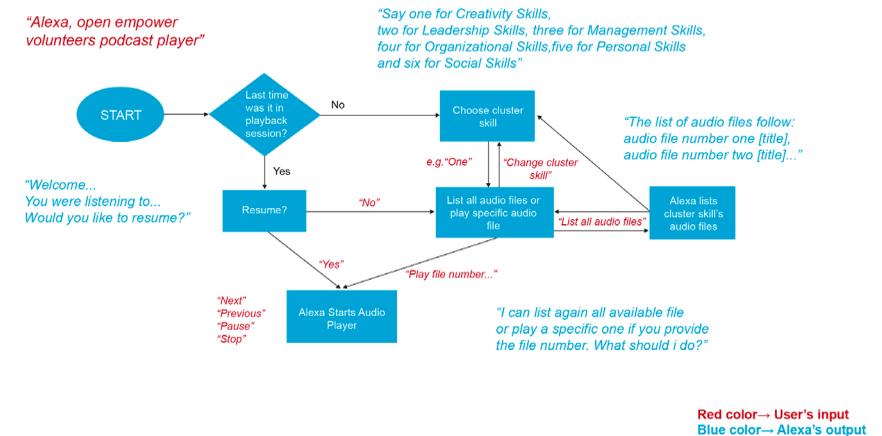
SOCRATEST Mobile Application can be used either as an alternative easy to use virtual learning environment for accessing the project's contents and tools or as a means for disseminating the project results. The SOCRATEST Mobile App was tested thoroughly, through a usability protocol, in order to ensure that it is stable, user friendly and fully functional. SOCRATEST Mobile App can be downloaded for free from the original Google Play Store:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gr.gunet.socratest&hl=en>



The SOCRATEST Mobile App supports seven languages (English, German, Greek, Italian, Slovakian, Slovene, and Portuguese).

The **SOCRATEST Alexa App** introduces one of the most important technological innovations into the SOCRATEST Project. It can be considered as a tool for acquiring knowledge, motivating and encouraging users that are interested in SOCRATEST project products and tools. Technically speaking, the SOCRATEST Project Podcast Player is an application for Amazon's Alexa virtual assistant technology. It provides a voice user interface allowing users to interact with the app via voice commands and perform actions such as: select one of the six cluster skills, listen to the list of available podcasts for each cluster skill, listen to a specific podcast episode, move back and forward while listening etc. A flow chart with all the commands is available here: [https://tools.socratest.eu/applications/SOCRATEST\\_Alexa\\_Skills\\_App.png](https://tools.socratest.eu/applications/SOCRATEST_Alexa_Skills_App.png)



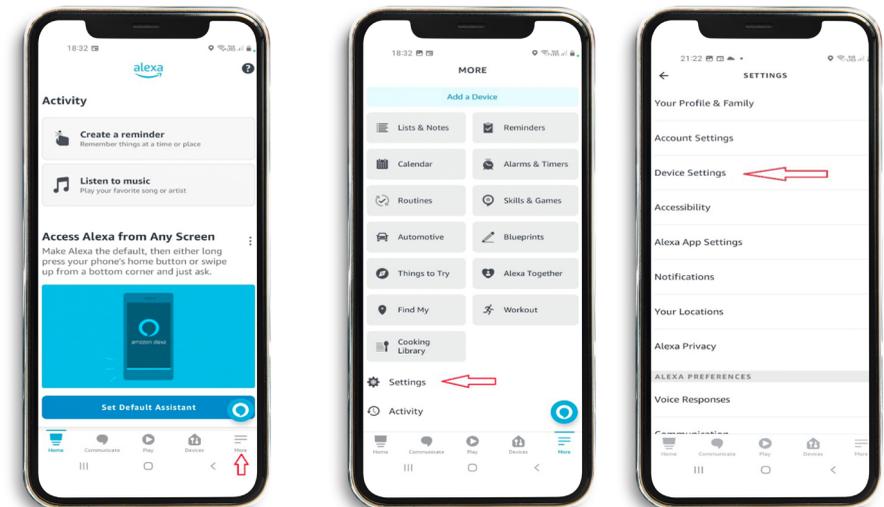
The above flowchart shows the Voice Interaction flow between the user and the podcast player. Phrases with blue colour are spoken by Alexa and those with red colour could be spoken from the user to trigger the respective actions.

Some possible usage scenarios of the interaction flow are presented below:

- When the podcast player opens for the first time, Alexa welcomes the user and asks him/her to choose a cluster skill. The user may say “One” to choose Creativity Skills, “Two” for Leadership Skills etc. Then, Alexa asks if the user wants to listen to the list of audio file titles or wants to listen to a specific mp3 file. In the first case, the user should use a phrase such as “List all audio files” and Alexa will start enumerating the titles and numbers of the available files for the selected cluster. In the second case the user may ask for a specific file using its number, e.g., by saying “Play file number one”. In that case, Alexa will launch its media player and the user will listen to audio file number one of the selected cluster.

- At any time, the user may say “Change cluster skill” and Alexa will ask which cluster to choose.
- When the Alexa media player is launched, the user can use phrases such as “Next”, “Previous”, “Pause”, “Stop” to trigger the respective actions. As the Alexa media player is considered a different app than the SOCRATEST podcast player, the user has to start a new session with the latter to perform actions such as changing cluster or listening to the list of episodes.
- When the user stops the media player, the next time the podcast player is launched, Alexa recognizes that the previous state was within a playback session and asks to resume it or not. If the user says “Yes” the media player resumes playback from the last point. If the user says “No”, Alexa may enumerate the list of audio files or play a specific file or the user may say “Choose cluster skill” to trigger the respective flow.

Users can enable the SOCRATEST Project Podcast Player either on their mobile devices (after downloading the Alexa App for Android or iOS) or in an Alexa smart home device (e.g., Amazon Echo).



This allows users who own an Alexa device or have installed the Alexa app in their mobile phone or smart device to have access to the SOCRATEST Podcasts and listen to the educational content without the need to be in front of a computer screen. Please note that the SOCRATEST Alexa App supports two languages (English and Italian).

## Part 2

### 2.1 Introduction

The second part of this Handbook contains a detailed description of the soft skills clusters which have been identified as important for the assessment of social and creative competences, i.e.

- Creativity skills
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Organisational skills
- Personal skills
- Social skills

For each skills cluster, readers will find a description of the cluster and of the respective competence, together with an explanation of the significance of this particular skill in times of crisis.

The final paragraph deals with the self-assessment indicator statements which users of the SOCRATEST Self Assessment Tool will be confronted with during the interactive assessment process. Altogether, more than 600 statements have been elaborated, for the assessment of Soft Skills in the six clusters, dealing with usual situations in voluntary engagement in crisis.

The algorithm which works behind the assessment of the statements has been elaborated for each statement separately. While statements have a linear gradient for the five answer options (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree), in certain cases the distribution of scores has been altered with respect to the particular statement. To give an example: The analysing mechanism for the statement “I prefer a dictatorship against democracy” (which is not part of this assessment catalogue) would attribute zero points to all three answers (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree). In addition, the developers of the statements could also give three different weight levels in accordance with the relevance of the statement. Therefore, the results yield a realistic picture of a user’s competence in a certain soft skills cluster. For more technical details, please refer to the preceding chapters 1.9 and 1.10.

### 2.2 Social Skills

#### 2.2.1 Cluster description

What are creativity skills? It is difficult to define this concept in a few lines. In summary, it can be defined as:

- aptitude for curiosity
- predisposition to search for new information and experiences
- willingness to find new ideas or solutions
- ability to combine the available elements into something new and “functional”
- ability to solve problems in an original way
- ability to modify actuality improving it
- capability to listen to the ideas of others
- ability to test personal opinions and change mind
- ability to make unconventional decisions

The concept of creativity has changed over time. In fact, while initially it was considered an exclusive characteristic of artists, now it is considered an attitude applicable to every field of human activities.

On the whole, creativity is a way of thinking, and therefore of acting, which is founded on a balance between deduction and intuition, reason and imagination, emotion and reflection, divergent and convergent thinking.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all of us have had to rediscover the concept of resilience. That is a term (originally belonging to the world of science) that defines the ability to resist shocks with elasticity. In the human sphere it is the characteristic that allows each of us to overcome difficulties by adapting our way of being and acting to new situations. A creative mind is naturally predisposed to resilience, because already normally (not in a pandemic period) it is used to putting itself to the test in the tortuous processes of experimentation, which characterize those who try, in various fields, to arrive at new solutions different from the usual standards. For this reason, in most cases, creative personalities have been able to face the challenges of the pandemic in a proactive way (and can help others to do the same).

### 2.2.2 Creative Thinking

Creative thinking consists in the ability to devise different solutions to the same problem, reasoning in a flexible and fluid way and finding unusual and original answers. Creative thinking means being first of all an intellectually curious person, interested in expanding his knowledge without prejudice. But it also means being able to find new connections between facts and known things, look at facts in an objective way, try to have complete visions, from different perspectives or points of view. An essential element for innovating ideas and methods.

At the basis of all this, an optimistic vision of life is needed, seen as an opportunity to express oneself, beyond possible obstacles, interpreted by those who have creative thinking as an engine for learning, change and improvement. A proactive approach to things, especially essential in times of crisis. The fulcrum at the basis of thought consists in never ceasing to analyse, study, question oneself, in order to learn, consequently producing creative elements as a way of self-expression.

This means not being excessively discouraged by difficulties, but on the contrary trying to use them as a motivator. Often those with a creative way of thinking have a clear vision of the objectives they intend to achieve, know how to make decisions and are not intimidated by taking unusual paths to achieve their goals, daring both from the point of view of substance and of method, giving their best and taking full responsibility for their actions. The ability to connect with others is also part of the personality with creative thinking

#### Significance in times of crisis

Creative thinking can prove to be fundamental, in this post-pandemic period, in the search for work, in the organisation and planning of work activities because it allows to find alternative methods and solutions to the usual ones with therefore greater opportunities for success in a difficult context.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am an intellectually curious person
- 2 Often I find new connections between facts and things
- 3 I like to look at facts and things from different perspectives or points of view
- 4 I see life as an opportunity for self-expression
- 5 I use the obstacles of life as an engine for creativity

- 6 I usually produce creative elements to express myself
- 7 I never stop learning and questioning myself
- 8 Difficulties and problems do not demotivate me
- 9 I have a clear vision of the goals I want to achieve
- 10 I am a person who knows how to make decisions
- 11 My goal is to give my best
- 12 I am primarily responsible for achieving my goals

### 2.2.3 Innovation

An innovative person has a methodology of action such as to be able to change, mostly for the better, the existing state of affairs, in search of effective and efficient solutions. At the base of the ability to innovate it is necessary to have a good dose of curiosity, which gives impetus to the search for new and unusual things, through the will to experiment. Curiosity and search for new experiences, to be combined with the ability to ask questions about the state of things and in parallel with the desire to seek new and unprecedented answers, without fear of finding unusual ones, which means not usual, common or already made. An innovative person is basically a curious person. Curious about new technologies, fascinated by new trends, interested in the new and the unprecedented.

A curiosity aimed at experimentation, in order to find better and more effective solutions to different needs, through, in the possible fields of application of innovative thinking, in any case of a rigorous and scientific method. The result of innovation, the creation of a prototype, an original model, in an innovative approach is based on rigorous quality criteria: specific elements or functions will be selected, tested and measured in order to confirm the achievement of the quality objectives. The ability to innovate also presupposes asking questions about the surrounding world and gathering information, to then be constantly looking for new ideas in order to improve the existing one through innovative solutions.

The characteristics that distinguish the most innovative people are the ability to ask questions, the spirit of observation, experimentation and the ability to relate. Innovative people are able to generate ideas from old solutions, also taken from other areas, recombining them in a different way, constantly trying to understand how existing processes can be modified to provide better results. It is therefore

necessary to be able to change one's hypotheses, going beyond the boundaries dictated by one's thinking and imagining opposite alternatives, observing common phenomena in detail and without preconceptions.

### Significance in times of crisis

In times of crisis it is essential to have an innovative mentality: the world presents new challenges, which can be better faced by having the ability to imagine and experiment with new methods and new responses.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I like new and unusual things
- 2 I am looking for new experiences
- 3 I am curious about new technologies
- 4 I am intrigued by the new trends in culture and society
- 5 I ask myself questions about what I see
- 6 I am constantly looking for new ideas
- 7 I like to gather information
- 8 I like to build models and prototypes
- 9 I am rigorous in meeting quality criteria
- 10 I have a thousand ideas per minute
- 11 I like to improve organisational processes
- 12 I like innovative solutions

### 2.2.4 Analytical Skills

Analytical skills are soft skills that help you identify and solve complex problems. Some popular analytical skills include critical thinking, data analysis, research and communication. Analytical skills are that set of skills that allow you to organize an activity effectively and find immediate and simple solutions to unexpected events. They are directly related to the way of managing concrete situations, using critical thinking and concreteness. The first phase of analytical thinking consists in collecting information relating to the problem to be solved, and then starting to think about possible solutions or, if necessary, collecting further information, finally there

is the verification which consists in analysing whether solutions implemented have proved effective and, if not, identify the reasons why they have proved not useful, changing the approach accordingly.

It is the habit of the analytic mentality to examine and break down facts, without being overwhelmed by too much information. It is necessary to have the ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of ideas. Elements of analytical skills are the ability to network information, constant learning, the ability to listen to different opinions, careful observation of things.

Analytical skills are very important, because they can be used in different sectors and roles. The importance of this type of approach lies in the ability first to clearly and clearly identify an object of study, then to look at the problem objectively, and finally to try to identify the solution, involving the various actors and addressing the causes that they helped bring about that specific situation.

### Significance in Times of Crisis

In times of crisis, having analytical skills is important because it allows you to observe and interpret the situation in a rational way without letting yourself be influenced by prejudices and feelings, thus having a more effective attitude to face unprecedented challenges

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 It is my habit to examine and break down facts
- 2 I try not to get overwhelmed by too much information
- 3 I look for the strengths and weaknesses of ideas
- 4 I know how to find and organize data
- 5 I am a thoughtful person
- 6 I like to look at the details of things
- 7 I know how to use and network the information I have
- 8 I learn something new every day
- 9 I like to read and be informed
- 10 I like to hear different opinions
- 11 I always try to increase my education
- 12 I am a careful observer

### 2.2.5 Curiosity

Intellectual curiosity is defined as a general interest and motivation in learning.

Intellectual curiosity is a personality trait that gives the ability to open one's field of knowledge, to have an open mind, to continuously acquire information, new knowledge and to learn from previous experiences.

Intellectual curiosity leads to knowledge. Curious people look around, explore the world and ask themselves questions about their surroundings. Intellectual curiosity is one of the fundamental ingredients of creativity. Above all, it is a mental attitude that rejects passivity and puts everything into question. Curiosity is a challenge to oneself and to the world, which allows one to embrace the complexity of the existing thanks to a passionate interest in what one does not know.

The curious person looks for motivations capable of stimulating his creativity, he wants to know the world around him, with a strong desire to explore and learn. He has a mind trained to ask questions, recognizes his gaps and wants to fill them. He has a good tolerance to stress and is willing to accept answers he did not expect.

The ability to open one's own field of knowledge, to have an open mind, to continuously acquire new knowledge and to learn from previous experiences is fundamental in any activity, including work.

Intellectual curiosity is one of the prerequisites for constant personal growth and is the basis of creative thinking.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Intellectual curiosity in times of crisis allows you to analyse the causes of the crisis itself, to understand its elements by deepening your knowledge, thus giving you the opportunity to better extricate yourself from the situation and find positive solutions.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am looking for motivations capable of stimulating my creativity
- 2 I like to know the life of other people
- 3 I like to observe nature and the world around me
- 4 I'm looking for new information on things
- 5 I have a strong desire to explore and learn
- 6 New things grab my attention
- 7 I have a mind trained to ask questions

8 I recognize my gaps and want to fill them

9 I am amazed at the fascinating features of the world

10 I have a good stress tolerance

11 I am willing to accept answers that I did not expect

12 I like to explore the world around me

### 2.2.6 Logical thinking

Logical thinking is a mental process that uses logical-rational tools, justifying the operational mechanisms used at each step. Logical intelligence, of an abstract type, requires the ability to examine an event in a subdivided way, isolating with analysis the factors that intervene to originate it. If problem solution schemes have already proved effective in the past, they will tend to be reused in the present too. Logical thinking is an aptitude for mental concentration that allows us to examine an event in a subdivided way by analysing its parts in an orderly and consequential way. This allows to isolate and analyse the factors that make up the phenomenon itself.

Logical thinking is typical of rational people, who try to observe things objectively to find explanations and solutions without getting carried away by prejudices in the analysis of the facts and not allowing feelings to interfere with rationality. Using logical thinking, if a solution to a problem has already proven effective, it is reused, just as ineffective solutions are discarded. Logical thinking is linear, organized, consequential. Logical thinking favors the analysis of abstract concepts, using rationality.

Logical thinking uses the deductive method, which is a cognitive process that starts from the general to arrive at the particular. It is analytical because it segments and organizes all the information, allowing the organisation of the reasoning that is carried out, so that the reasoning proceeds in a rational and precise way, developing linearly, step by step, until it reaches conclusions.

To advance the logical thinking process, it is crucial to differentiate established facts from personal observations. To come to a logical conclusion, it is necessary to focus on proven information. The ability to analyse facts and use logical thinking allows to overcome wrong patterns of behavior - even in the workplace - and find new solutions to problems. Effective solutions are based on facts and not on prejudices and preconceptions.

### Significance in times of crisis

The coronavirus emergency is triggering an unprecedented economic crisis, logical intelligence can prove to be fundamental for analysing the situation and finding effective solutions, in all fields, including work organisation.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I have an aptitude for mental concentration
- 2 I have the ability to examine an event in a subdivided way
- 3 I like to isolate with analysis the factors that make up a fact or an idea
- 4 I am a rational person
- 5 I try to observe things objectively
- 6 If a solution to a problem has already proved effective, I reuse it
- 7 I think linearly
- 8 I organize my thoughts
- 9 I do not allow myself to be drawn into prejudice in analysing the facts
- 10 I do not allow feelings to interfere with logic
- 11 I like to understand abstract concepts
- 12 I use rationality to evaluate and analyse a real situation

### 2.2.7 Open-mindedness

Having an open mind means being able to consider new ideas and different opinions or points of view, being willing to listen to the proposals of others, even if they go against our principles, evaluating these proposals and deciding whether to accept them with flexibility and ability to change our mind.

People who do not have an open mind are not very flexible or not at all, they are too frightened by the possibility of a change, they fear what they do not know. They are unable to change their minds and accept that of others. Open-minded people have a better chance of reaching their maximum potential in life and in work because they know how to take risks, they know how to dare, they are not satisfied with the easier option. These people are constantly looking for something, are nonconformists in the positive sense of the term and are willing to learn anything from anyone.

Having an open mind allows for positive change and also allows for greater team spirit given the ability to listen to other people's ideas and opinions.

To have an open mind, you need to test yourself, your ideas and your behaviour, stepping out of your "comfort zone." You need to question your ideas by not being afraid of making mistakes, but by accepting the risks. An open mind also allows you to find inspiration in others. Open-mindedness is linked to humility: in fact, those who believe they know everything will never be able to learn something from others and will not be able to reinvent themselves or question their own ideas or principles. However, being open-minded also means approaching one's neighbour without necessarily losing one's principles or one's moral integrity, but being open to dialogue and confrontation.

#### Significance in times of crisis

In times of crisis, which also means great changes, being open-minded is essential in order not to be afraid of new things and to accept to change habitual ideas and behaviors to face the new context.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am always willing to listen to the proposals of others
- 2 I am open to confrontation with those who have different ideas from mine
- 3 I am available to change my mind
- 4 I like experimenting with new ways of thinking
- 5 I don't want to put limits on my knowledge
- 6 I like to challenge the beliefs I currently have
- 7 I accept others without criticizing them, although I may disagree with them
- 8 I listen carefully to what others have to tell me
- 9 I can easily change my behaviour
- 10 I know how to face the new situations that gradually arise
- 11 I try to keep the distinction between what I am, what I believe and what is the truth
- 12 I don't feel threatened when my ideas are challenged

### 2.2.8 Experimenting

Experimenting means subjecting something to tests and checks to evaluate its quality, efficiency and performance. In a broader sense it means not accepting ideas or procedures without actually verifying their reliability, therefore being able to reason and act not by convention but with knowledge of the facts. The experimental method is a process of formation and control of scientific knowledge based on the conduct of experiments.

What defines the experimental method is the observation, often repeated over time, made under particular conditions and opportunities, artificially created and particularly suitable for making the experimenter grasp an unclear aspect of what is being investigated. This method can be applied not only to science, but to life in general and also to the world of work, regardless of the type of production sector and professional category. In fact it is a way of acting, a modality of self-expression applicable to every area. The experimental method makes it possible to verify the validity of the ideas and the effectiveness of the actions and methods in each area. It is typical of concrete people, who evaluate facts and follow passions without considering rewards or recognition, who are not afraid to take risks and are in search of the truth.

Those who implement the experimental method want to obtain concrete results, have divergent, unusual thoughts and want to find effective and ingenious solutions to problems. Applying experimentation means constantly wanting to test the effectiveness of ideas, actions and methods, concretely verifying their reliability.

Using this method means being ready to change if the usual methods do not pass the constant verification tests, therefore it means having an open mind and a creative thinking, oriented towards the search for constant improvement rather than the repetition of what is already there.

#### Significance in times of crisis

In times of crisis, experimenting with ideas or procedures and concretely verifying their reliability is even more important because the difficulty of the context requires more than ever to adopt the most efficient solutions, abandoning the ineffective ones.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I like trying new things
- 2 I am constantly looking for opportunities for self-expression in my daily life

- 3 I like to follow my passions without considering rewards or recognition
- 4 I am a person who is not afraid to take risks
- 5 I like to get concrete results quickly
- 6 I have divergent, unusual and effective thoughts in relation to a certain task or problem
- 7 I generate multiple and ingenious solutions to the same problem
- 8 I like to check if things, ideas and methods work or not
- 9 I like to put my ideas into practice
- 10 I try to find a way to achieve a given goal by trying
- 11 I like to test myself and others
- 12 I submit things to tests and checks

### 2.2.9 Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a decision-making method in which the search for the solution of a given problem is carried out through intensive sessions of debate and comparison of ideas and proposals freely expressed by the participants. It presupposes an open dialogue and the ability to take into consideration the proposals of others. The use of the brainstorming methodology, even in the workplace, is based on the assumption of having the will to dialogue and exchange with other people. Holding meetings to share and discuss ideas and projects, apply teamwork, find a synthesis between different opinions and proposals, these are essential elements of brainstorming.

The concept of brainstorming is based on the idea that it considers useful and positive, also in the world of work and within companies, the circulation of ideas and the teamwork. During a brainstorming session, each participant is stimulated to creatively produce as many ideas as possible: each idea is noted and then discussed among all the participants and only afterwards is a choice of ideas made. This is an interesting technique not only because creativity is stimulated with free discussion, but also because it allows to strengthen group spirit and to maintain good interpersonal relationships. To carry out brainstorming activities it is necessary to have the ability to speak in public, to interact with others in a positive way, to understand and recognize the emotions of others, enhance the skills of others and also delegate tasks to other people.

Brainstorming combines an informal approach to problem solving with creative thinking. Encourage people to come up with thoughts and ideas that may seem a little crazy at first glance. Some of these ideas can be turned into original and creative solutions to a problem, while others can give life to further ideas. This approach helps unblock people, taking them out of their usual ways of thinking.

Brainstorming is a proven way to come up with creative ideas or solve a problem.

#### **Significance in times of crisis**

In times of crisis, the debate and the comparison of ideas, the ability to listen, are particularly important to allow new ideas and better solutions to develop.

#### **Self-assessment indicator statements**

- 1 I like to talk to others
- 2 I like meeting people with different ideas than mine
- 3 I like to hold meetings to share and discuss ideas and projects
- 4 I am a talent for teamwork
- 5 I like to speak in public
- 6 I like to find a synthesis of different ideas or proposals
- 7 I have the ability to understand and recognize the emotions of others
- 8 I know how to recognize and value the skills of others
- 9 I can delegate tasks to other people
- 10 I find it useful to circulate ideas
- 11 I think it's important to rely on teammates
- 12 I consider it important for a team to maintain good interpersonal relationships

#### **2.2.10 Time management**

Time management is the ability to mentally structure a process of organizing and planning activities efficiently. Time management is the ability to do the right thing at the right time, with the minimum effort and optimizing one's resources, therefore effectively and efficiently, in order to achieve objectives and commitments within the deadlines. Time management is one of the fundamental soft skills, both personally and in the workplace. Time management, in essentially, it is the process of planning and controlling time, applied, and used in specific activities, in order to increase effectiveness, efficiency and productivity.

Having the ability to manage time includes a wide range of qualities, such as focusing, planning, allocation, goal setting, delegation, time analysis, monitoring, organisation, scheduling and prioritization. It is fundamental to mind the priorities, the importance and urgency of the tasks. In proper time management it is essential not to be overwhelmed by the to-do list but to keep a calm yet efficient approach. It is also important to make the most of the time itself by having the right balance between time dedicated to planning and time dedicated to action. It is also necessary to have the ability to deal with interruptions and not allow one's interlocutors to waste time on useless activities.

Clearly, punctuality, respect of deadlines and to not allowing to accumulate work to be done are symptoms of good time management. Effective time management makes it possible to tackle unexpected tasks without particular difficulties and to carry out activities without feeling tired and fatigued.

With a good time management each person can achieve a lot of important milestones. Knowing how to use time is one of the fundamental skills of life, as well as for work, also in personal life. A key for well-being, stress reduction and the optimal balance between private and working life.

#### **Significance in times of crisis**

Time management is always important in the world of work, even more so in a context of crisis, when you must always be ready to face unexpected activities and emergencies.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 Sometimes I find myself working at unusual hours
- 2 When I focus, I lose track of time
- 3 I can keep unexpected commitments and interruptions under control
- 4 I don't let my interlocutors waste my time
- 5 I am on time and I rarely arrive late
- 6 I rarely feel tired and fatigued
- 7 I have the right balance between the time dedicated to planning and that dedicated to action
- 8 I always keep in mind the difference between the importance and urgency of what I do
- 9 I almost always respect the commitments and deadlines
- 10 I am aware of how much time I dedicate to each activity of my job
- 11 The meetings I organize with other people finish on schedule
- 12 I don't let the work pile up

### 2.2.11 Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills concern the way to communicate, get in touch and then relate with others. These are all those attitudes that allow for a good relationship between those who own them and the environment, giving way to create synergy and harmony between people.

Therefore, they define the behaviour and methods of interaction towards other people. Having this ability means knowing how to identify with others and understand them. Knowing how to communicate effectively and understand the needs of others are among the most useful skills in professional life, but also in personal life.

Establishing a connection and relationship with others is essential in multidisciplinary environments. Relational skills and competences are all those skills that allow to get in touch in a positive way with others. The goal is to set up positive and effective communication. To achieve this, listening and negotiation skills are required. The setting for positive interpersonal skills is positive, assertive and persuasive at the same time.

People with good interpersonal skills spend time in relationships with other individuals, they like to meet other people, also with different lifestyles and often they like to travel. Curiosity is an essential element, as it is also a positive attitude and a good education. Have good listening and negotiation skills it allows you to reach important goals more easily, strengthens team spirit in the group (including work), offers the opportunity for greater exchanges with the outside world and therefore generates greater personal and collective growth.

Among the most important interpersonal skills, we can mention:

- Verbal and non-verbal communication: the ability to communicate one's thoughts clearly and effectively. From tone of voice to gestures, knowing how to communicate is an art that requires a lot of study and practice;
- Teamwork aptitude: the ability to work constructively with other people;
- Empathy and listening skills, that is, the predisposition to relationships with others and the understanding of people's moods.

### Significance in times of crisis

In times of crisis, interpersonal skills help to communicate even in moments of greatest stress, helping to eliminate misunderstandings and dissolve tensions.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I dedicate time to relationships with other individuals
- 2 I like travelling
- 3 I like to meet people with different lifestyles
- 4 I communicate positively and effectively with others
- 5 I have good listening and negotiation skills
- 6 I like good manners
- 7 I have a positive attitude towards other people
- 8 I have an assertive attitude
- 9 I am a persuasive person
- 10 I congratulate those who express their ideas
- 11 I like to communicate and share with those who work with me
- 12 I like to coordinate multidisciplinary teams

### 2.2.12 Non-cognitive skills

Non-cognitive skills are not the usual skills, such as mathematical, scientific and technological or linguistic ones, but they can be equally decisive in personal and professional success. Non-cognitive skills are those not directly related to information processing. Instead, they refer to individual characteristics related to emotional, psychosocial and personality characteristics. They are, in fact, human and social skills not related to cognition, but just as necessary for development.

Non-cognitive skills are part of a person's cultural background, so the person himself can be defined as competent and declarable only if he possesses these skills as much as if he possesses traditional skills. Although not currently codified, they are in fact indispensable in social life and in the world of work. For a long time, training has been synonymous with the consolidation of hard skills (basic theoretical and procedural knowledge for carrying out a series of specific areas). Now, however, the fundamental importance of socio-emotional or behavioural skills has been understood: in fact, having good cognitive skills is not enough to live in society or to carry out a specific job.

Non-cognitive skills are a series of psychological tools that allow to develop a positive and functional approach in every area of daily life, whether personal or work life. Therefore, these predispositions are fundamental in society. They include a wide range of abilities like emotional maturity and stability, self-control, friendliness, empathy, collaboration, conscientiousness, perseverance, grit, decision-making.

These non-cognitive skills can also be divided into three aspects:

- **Character:** character and personality, friendliness, open-mindedness, awareness and conscientiousness
- **Attitude:** optimistic and functional to the development of positive behaviors, capable of providing the right motivation
- **Motivation:** which consists in the ability to face the challenges of everyday life with a dynamic approach

#### Significance in times of crisis (e.g. pandemic)

Non-cognitive skills in times of crisis help to face safety and safeguarding the compactness of the work group even the most complex situations, proving to be an essential factor.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am an outgoing and friendly person
- 2 I am a conscientious person
- 3 I always try to maintain my emotional stability
- 4 I consider myself a nice person
- 5 I have the ability to know how to motivate myself on the challenges of everyday life
- 6 I have a psychological capital that allows me to face the negative periods
- 7 I am an empathic person
- 8 I am available to learn
- 9 I am a competent person
- 10 I try to focus on positive thoughts
- 11 if there is an obstacle I organize myself to overcome it
- 12 I have a dynamic mindset

### 2.2.13 Networking

The term "Networking" indicates the ability to create and maintain a system of relationships. The goal is to unite more realities and people, bring together their skills and knowledge, to carry out common projects, with mutual benefits. Networking means establishing a relationship of reciprocity, thanks to which an exchange of ideas, advice, information and contacts is generated. It is a virtuous circle in which one gives and one receives, for a mutual exchange. Overall, therefore, we can define "Networking" as a method aimed at creating new relationships and exchanges of various kinds.

To do this, of course, there is a need for consistency in maintaining relationships and, above all, mutual and reciprocal trust is needed. In fact, on both sides there must be a constant mutual exchange, in order to develop mutual trust. The ability to create networks also applies in the world of work: within a company it could be a project in order to make itself known to as many people as possible, to expand its customers, to collaborate with other companies. Above all, this last factor is the key to success for a successful network. Cooperation and team play can undoubtedly give an extra boost to the implementation of projects and the economic growth of a company.

In addition to the purely economic aspect, those who set up a good Networking plan will be able to stay in touch not only with their customers, but will forge partnerships with other professionals who face similar problems. Within the network, professionals will therefore have the opportunity to receive support, cooperation, support and advice by other professionals. This is the reason why trust must be the basis of everything; only in this way will everyone have an interest in helping and being helped. A good network allows to better deal with moments of greatest stress.

This aspect is of fundamental importance and not to be underestimated, especially considering that we live in a period of crisis. Being aware of having a good network of collaborators with whom to share experiences and constructive comparisons will make professionals within a company more united and more self-confident, increasing their productivity and enthusiasm. The result will be an enrichment of everyone's knowledge, encouraging their job growth within the company. To sum up, the guiding concept of Networking is that unity is strength. Finding people with the same goal and who wish to collaborate, involve them and implement good practices of networking allows to achieve excellent results.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Networking in times of crisis allows us to make a common front by having more tools to address critical issues in mutual interest, thus having greater opportunities for success than acting individually, each with limited tools.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I think that there is safety in numbers
- 2 I believe it is right to share common goals
- 3 It is useful to agree on the actions to be carried out
- 4 It is important to involve all partners in the realization of a project
- 5 I like the cooperative spirit
- 6 I like to coordinate project activities
- 7 I have a habit of working together with others
- 8 I like the comparison of ideas
- 9 The presence of different skills and experiences makes it possible to intervene in several sectors
- 10 It is important to exchange information and good practices
- 11 Networking allows to optimize human and economic resources
- 12 In the future, the ability to network will be strategic for development

## 2.3 Leadership skills

### 2.3.1 Cluster description

Many people consider leadership to be an essentially work-based characteristic. However, leadership roles are all around us and not just in work environments. Ideally, leaders become leaders because they have credibility, and because people want to follow them. Using this definition, it becomes clear that leadership skills can be applied to any situation where you are required to take the lead, professionally, socially, and at home in family settings.

Examples of situations where leadership might be called for, but which you might not immediately associate with that, include:

- Planning and organising a big family get-together, for example, to celebrate a wedding anniversary or important birthday;
- Responding to an illness or death in the family, and taking steps to organise care or make other arrangements;
- Making decisions about moving house, or children's schooling; and
- Making decisions during volunteering.

In other words, leaders are not always appointed, and leadership skills may be needed in many circumstances.

Leadership skills are skills you use when organizing other people to reach a shared goal. Whether you're in a management position or leading a project, leadership skills require you to motivate others to complete a series of tasks, often according to a schedule. Leadership is not just one skill but rather a combination of several different skills working together. Some examples of skills that make a strong leader include: Patience, Empathy, Active listening, Reliability, Integrity, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Decisiveness, Creating vision, Perseverance, Creativity, Effective feedback and communication, Team building, Flexibility, Risk-taking, Ability to learn, Ability to teach, coach and mentor.

A leader can be defined simply as 'a person who leads or commands a group, organisation or country'. This definition is broad and could include both formal and informal roles - that is, both appointed leaders and those who emerge spontaneously in response to events or crisis.

### 2.3.2 Honesty

When you are honest, you speak the truth. More broadly, you present yourself in a genuine and sincere way, without pretense, and taking responsibility for your feelings and actions.

Working together with you colleagues in a more honest way will get you much further. The idea that people should work perfectly is a misconception. Being honest doesn't mean being perfect. For people, it simply means truthfully communicating the challenges being faced, and then putting in the legwork to address those challenges. When you presented with honesty, people or co-workers become your loyal enthusiasts. Person that has a heart and stand by his/her values and intentions form relationships with colleagues based on truth. No amount of showiness can replicate this.

At one end of the spectrum, if you are always completely honest with people, telling them exactly what you think, you will probably be considered rude and be deemed to have poor social skills. As with many things in life we all have to manage a balance between politeness and honesty.

“You can please some of the people some of the time, all of the people some of the time, some of the people all of the time - but you can never please all of the people all of the time.” - Abraham Lincoln

Being polite means being aware of and respecting the feelings of other people and being tactful. All social situations are different, and in each situation, you need to use common-sense and good judgement and also take into account cultural differences. Common-sense and good judgement come with experience. Experience, in turn, comes from observing others and from making mistakes, learning what does and doesn't work, what is acceptable and what is not.

Honesty is often linked to self-concordance - the extent to which your goals accurately represent your implicit interests and values. Honesty allows people to take responsibility for their feelings and behaviours, owning them, and reaping benefits by doing so.

#### Significance in times of crisis

In times of crisis, it is enormously important to be honest. It is a building block for creating trust, which is important in times of the challenges. Leaders should be secure enough to say when they are not sure, not as a way out, but to be open and

honest. In doing that, in maintaining honesty and openness, their trustworthiness is demonstrated and modelled in their practice. In crisis, the need for regular and honest communication is important. Researches show that employees trust managers who demonstrate an 'employee-centric' leadership style, supporting the employee both personally and professionally. Right now, during the crisis, it is exceptionally important to show such care and concern.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I like to be open about my motives when I take action.
- 2 I am being sincere with my colleagues, or family.
- 3 If I witness an unpleasant situation I will use my sense of tact and consider whether it is appropriate to intervene.
- 4 I tell people exactly what I think.
- 5 I am aware that my words could hurt people.
- 6 I respect feelings of others.
- 7 I usually make time to have some small talk with my colleagues.
- 8 It is my habit to respect others working time.
- 9 If my boss asked me if I am able to solve a problem alone, I am being truthful if I need help.
- 10 I try to present myself and my reactions accurately to other person.
- 11 Sometimes I use a small deception to make myself look better in the eyes of the others.
- 12 I take responsibility for my actions.

### 2.3.3 Trust

Trust in any organisation including voluntary organisation works on three levels:

- At a company level in terms of culture
- At a team level concerning the relationships among the members
- At an interpersonal level between two people.

Trust is an enormous asset in any meaningful and productive relationship. There are several ways to build trust in a relationship:

- Be honest. People will trust you if they know that they can count on you to tell the truth.
- Share your experiences. Tell them about the time you made a mistake or experienced a failure. You can also talk about your values or beliefs.
- Keep your word. If you make a promise to someone, do whatever it takes (within reason!) to stick to it. If you can't, be upfront and explain why.
- Inspire others. Demonstrate behaviours such as integrity, respect, loyalty, fairness, and authenticity.

Trustworthy people act ethically and are above reproach, build trust through their reliability and authenticity, and admit their own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others.

There are several ways how to develop trust:

**Demonstrate your credibility** - other person in interaction needs to feel that you have the knowledge and skills to help her. That is why credibility is so important. You need to show confidence by avoiding hesitation, making eye contact, and smiling. But, if you don't have all the answers, don't be afraid to admit it. If you're open and honest with your team member, your credibility will increase. What's more important is that you have the resources to find the answers together.

**Show your reliability** - another important aspect of building trust is reliability. To show that you're reliable, make sure that you do what you say you'll do, without fail. Be sure to turn up for your appointment on time, to return messages and calls promptly, and to remain sensitive to your colleague's preferences and expectations.

**Make the other person comfortable** - when your colleague feels secure and comfortable, he/she is more likely to open up and share what he/she is really thinking. This only tends to develop once you know someone well. You can help this process along by sharing some personal information about yourself, too.

This doesn't mean that you have to self-disclose every detail about your life! But telling stories from your past, or talking about your values and beliefs, will show that you trust the other person with your personal information. You need to find the right balance between how much to tell and how much to keep to yourself.

**Show that you care** - your colleague or team member needs to feel that you have his best interests at heart, and that your relationship isn't just about improving the quality of work or increasing productivity. Be clear that you are available at short notice if he needs to talk to you. And, if your plan takes longer than you expect to bear fruit, be patient and demonstrate your commitment to the process.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Being trustworthy is significant skill or competence in crisis times. When trust is lacking, interactions between people or people and organisation suck the enthusiasm and productivity right out of people, no matter how committed and driven they are. Trustworthy leadership is more important than ever for weathering the challenges such as: of COVID-19, war or a recession.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am being truthful in every communication.
- 2 I try to express my point of view in line with facts.
- 3 I respect my colleagues.
- 4 I like to have everything done on time.
- 5 I like to be clear in my intentions.
- 6 If I promise something I try to keep the promise.
- 7 I pay attention what other person tell me and give her/him my full attention.
- 8 I like to constructively discuss the tasks.
- 9 If something goes wrong, I usually blame others.
- 10 I like to work in team, where I could do some good together with others.
- 11 I know my weaknesses quite well.
- 12 People usually ask me to help them, when they need support.

### 2.3.4 Integrity

Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Integrity gives people credibility with those around them. Having integrity means following your moral consciously and being true to yourself with or without anyone around. To have integrity means that a person is self-aware, accountable, responsible, and truthful and that his/her actions are internally consistent.

When a person with integrity says that his word is his bond, you know that you can rely on that. His values are consistent with his actions, and he is acting consistently across the domains of his life rather than being one way in the community and a completely different way in his family. People with integrity are also prepared to confront those who act unethically and take a stand against unethical behaviour, even if that is unpopular.

Here are three acts of integrity that can help during volunteering:

#### 1. Take responsibility for your mistakes

If something goes awry, find help right away. Don't be afraid to speak up and talk about what went wrong. With the help of a leader or colleague, you will likely be able to work through the problem, fix the mistake, and avoid any future accidents or injuries.

#### 2. Respect others

When you are working with a team, respect is vital. Practice strong lines of communication and healthy conflict resolution to make sure that everyone feels safe and informed.

#### 3. Work hard

Committing fully to the job you have been given and working as hard as you can to accomplish it with the best possible outcome is part of your integrity. Focusing on your job and giving it special care will help to eliminate mistakes and accidents, and it will also show the community you are serving, and your team, that you truly care. Integrity is the foundation/skill on which co-workers build relationships and trust, and it is one of the fundamental values that employers seek in the employees that they hire, because it indicates they will perform to the best of their ability and act on their principles.

### Significance in times of crisis

Integrity on the corporate/organisational level is particularly important during a crisis when fear and uncertainty can permeate a workforce and a community. Words of the leaders and their actions can have a big impact on trust and reputation that will linger long after the crisis.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I have a firm and unwavering principles.
- 2 I am being respectful to others.
- 3 I communicate openly.
- 4 I usually evaluate my action, if they are in line with my believes.
- 5 I am easily sidetracked from my moral standards by others.
- 6 Principles of the organisation I volunteer for are at center of my work life.
- 7 I am well aware what is right and what is wrong.
- 8 I am usually influenced by other people.
- 9 I do not evaluate my own views.
- 10 I am pondering what information I need before action.
- 11 I am taking responsibility for my own actions.
- 12 When a colleague propose new approach, I am willing to try it.

### 2.3.5 Decisiveness

Decisiveness is a trait or characteristic that describes people who are biased towards action even though they face uncertainty. The speed and determination of solving a problem is one of decisiveness as personality trait. Decisiveness requires more than relevant knowledge and temperament. Decisiveness is characterized by the ability to conceptualize and act upon the moment using available tools and practices.

In management it makes most sense to think of decisiveness as personality trait, which can be measured and developed to a certain extent. Decisiveness is not necessarily connected to decision-making quality. In other words, decisive action can do more harm than good when the decision was the wrong one. The concept of decision-making competence (DMC) provides guidance how to improve decision-making quality.

To better understand the concept of decisiveness, it is important to know how it works, following three ways:

- Decisiveness as a personality trait/skill
- Decisiveness and cultural differences
- Decisiveness and decision-making competence

Social relationships are an important part of professional and private life. Having strong and healthy social relationships helps to boost self-esteem which is an important driver of decisiveness, according to the recent study. In addition, asking others for their opinion regarding important decisions can help you to think out of the box and improve decision-making quality.

Decisiveness is an enduring and stable characteristic that describes how people behave in similar decision-making situations. Decisiveness, according to the recent Big 5 model, is close to the conscientiousness, which consist of self-discipline and achievement striving. Decisiveness is a characteristic basis of performing well. But decisiveness does not necessarily mean that one makes the right decisions. In some high-risk cases, making the wrong decision could lead to a worse outcome compared to making no decision at all. Therefore, it is important not just to be decisive but to work on your decision-making competence.

There are four elements of decisiveness: speed, importance, rightness, and commitment.

Decision-making using decisiveness is a four-step process built on:

- Describing the problem in a sentence or two,
- Outlining your options,
- Picking a side or making the decision,
- Once you've made your decision, move on.

#### Significance in times of crisis

In crisis, our daily routines are completely shattered and we are all unaware of when the crisis is going to end. Frequent changes and unprecedented challenges in our daily lives are causing us to make all kinds of decisions under pressure and within tight time constraints. In a crisis, decisiveness and decision-making competence have the potential to impact the organisation involved and the broader community, or have an impact on life safety. You cannot control the disaster, the crisis, but you can control the response and the rightness and swiftness of it.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 When I have responsibility for the result of a task, I am able to take action to achieve it.
- 2 I welcome any feedback on my work.
- 3 I am using my intuition when I need to decide.
- 4 I need to have facts in front of me before decision making.
- 5 I like to review advantages and disadvantages before I make decision.
- 6 I am usually determined to find a way in difficult task.
- 7 If an unexpected event occurs, I try to resolve it quickly.
- 8 I let my colleague decide what to do in difficult task.
- 9 I keep my working space littered with notes and papers, so I have everything at hand.
- 10 I have a great respect to someone who knows what he/she want.
- 11 When I need to decide something I am considering my knowledge about topic.
- 12 I am used to making decisions about different subjects several times per day.
- 13 I like doing things in which I need to act quickly.
- 14 I like to confer and take advises from my colleagues, when important events occur.

### 2.3.6 Perseverance

Leaders are required to wear many hats: to be creative, ambitious, kind, understanding, and motivational - all at once. However, the most important trait of a leader (or of a successful person in any profession) is perseverance. This is especially true in the context of a crisis.

Perseverance means being hard working and finishing what is started, despite barriers and obstacles that arise. The pleasure received from completing tasks and projects is very important to those who are high in perseverance.

Perseverance involves organizing oneself to support activities (e.g., scheduling breaks and sticking to them, rewarding in small ways along the way), but when all else fails, this strength helps the person to barrel through until the project is done. This helps build further confidence for future successes and goal accomplishment. Perseverance involves the voluntary continuation of a goal-directed action despite the presence of challenges, difficulties, and discouragement.

Nobody's life is free from difficulties. If it was, then they never stepped outside of their comfort zone, pushed themselves to complete a goal, or challenged themselves in any way. Since challenges are practically inevitable in the professional world, perseverance is extremely valuable. It's more than a professional skill; it's a life skill. A person without perseverance and persistence isn't tied to the need to accomplish their short and long-term goals. They often quickly abandon projects and jobs that become a challenge, and rarely improve their circumstances or skills. Lacking perseverance means also being devoid of a growth mindset. This has negative repercussions on professional and personal life.

#### How to improve perseverance skills?

Perseverance comes from failing and getting back up. So, it is good to change your relationship with failure to seeing it as a lesson, rather than a setback. Having a growing mindset is a way how to increase your perseverance and understand that this is a skill, which is possible to improve. Do not be afraid of difficult situations, be able to take risks. Build a network of support that includes family, friends, co-workers and peers, where you are free to open up and get feedback and encouragement during hard times.

### Significance in times of crisis

Things keep changing on the daily basis during crisis. In a recent article for Forbes, transformational change expert Rob Carucci describes leadership in crisis: "Sometimes we step into new chapters of leadership with the wind at our back, ready to 'take things to the next level.' But commonly, new leadership chapters put us squarely in the face of gale-force headwinds, testing every limit of our abilities, patience and tenacity." The cure is to have perseverance.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I usually lose interest in long term tasks.
- 2 I am ready to help anyone when needed.
- 3 I like to organise my materials.
- 4 I usually use a timetable to achieve my goals.
- 5 I tenaciously try to find solution for an obstacle.
- 6 I am positive, that if there is a problem or crisis, I can overcome the difficulties.
- 7 I am able to take time and complete a goal with enough patience and enthusiasm.
- 8 I usually ask myself, what can I do better next time.
- 9 I feel satisfied with my voluntary work.
- 10 I am afraid that I will fail in assigned task.
- 11 I enjoy the company of my colleagues and rely on them.
- 12 I persist toward my goals despite disappointments.

### 2.3.7 Compelling vision

To lead effectively, it is essential to have followers. A key part of obtaining followers is creating and communicating a compelling vision that means that others want to follow where you lead. If we look at some of the most compelling visions in history, they are very personal. Creating the vision is only half of the work. Leaders also need to communicate their vision, and 'sell' it to others.

A vision is a picture of where the organisation, group or individual needs to be, or where it is going.

Really compelling change visions also set out what the organisation will be able to do, and what opportunities it will be able to take advantage of, after the changes have been achieved. In other words, the vision also includes the reason for the change.

There are two fundamental elements of a powerful and compelling vision:

- It is simple and easy to understand. Ideally, when written down, it should fill no more than half a page of paper and take around 30 to 60 seconds to explain. This means it can be communicated quickly and effectively, and more importantly, it is likely to be remembered and passed on to others. It must, in other words, be clear, precise, and achievable, not a vague statement of broad principle. People within and outside the organisation must be able to understand clearly what the organisation will look like or do once the vision is achieved.
- It is logical, but also has emotional appeal. A powerful vision is logical: it is reasonable and works intellectually. It must also make a conscious appeal to the emotions. In other words, it must 'grab' people, and make them want to follow, but can also clearly be achieved and is a reasonable thing to aim towards.

The precise nature of the vision will vary depending on what needs to change. It might cover people, places, technology, behaviour, or something else entirely. It depends what the organisation or person needs to achieve. Additionally, the other important rule is to communicate the vision constantly. If you are not enthusiastic or interested in vision for a long time, nobody else will be either. Vision must be describing and explaining over and over again, and using lots of different routes: speeches, writings, social media, etc.

Also, individuals could have their own personal vision. Everyone who's ever made a serious impact or achieved personal success has had a vision. Such a vision is a strategy for getting results in your life. People with vision usually asked a question: What do I want to achieve/accomplish in the future? Alongside with desired outcome, they are including their core values into vision and they are making it challenging enough. Important is to have a timeline in mind. Vision can be revised and re-viewed, if necessary, but changes should be minimal, the vision works as a guideline.

#### Significance in times of crisis

For volunteers leader, it is important to note a key distinction between management and leadership: leaders are well-versed in how to guide their colleagues in direction, actions, and opinions. In other words, leaders are influential. The ability to influence is crucial to success, especially in crisis. Leaders and volunteers are charged with mobilizing people to give of their time and talent around a compelling vision for the future, and if you can't inspire them to follow you, you can't meet your goals.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I like to give out advice anytime.
- 2 I am ready to give my advice if anyone asks for it.
- 3 I am supporting my colleagues in difficult tasks.
- 4 I know what is my purpose in work life.
- 5 My commitment to my work task is usually low.
- 6 I focus on the process of how to accomplish a challenging task.
- 7 I am able to explain things with enough patience and enthusiasm.
- 8 I try to be reasonable when discussing something.
- 9 I am usually capable to convince my colleagues about our common goals.
- 10 I never lose hope for achieving my goal.
- 11 I desire deeply to follow my dreams.
- 12 I like to think about what I really want in life.

### 2.3.8 Transparency

While transparency is closely related to honesty, there is a major distinction: A leader's honesty rests in the eyes of those observing. But transparency is a skill you develop on your own, from within.

At many times it can feel easier to obfuscate and twist the truth, usually to hide an issue that you hope will resolve itself, or for fear that honesty might put you at a disadvantage. However, transparency is a valuable character trait in the workplace, coming into its own in all sorts of contexts. Transparent leaders can be described in single word, WYSIWYG - it means What You See Is What You Get.

Transparency is the ability to see (and manage) the relationship between yourself, the organisation you serve, and the people in it. Transparency does not mean disclosing every little detail of every situation. Rather, transparency can be accomplished simply by NOT disguising events and acts as they unfold.

Workplace transparency is proven to breed long-term success. Implemented properly, increased transparency creates trust between employers and employees, helps improve morale, lowers job-related stress (which is especially important during the crisis), while increasing employee happiness and boosting performance. And being transparent costs nothing.

Workplace transparency is a philosophy of sharing information freely in an effort to benefit the organisation and its people. Five things happen when leaders are transparent:

- Problems are solved faster
- Teams are put together more effectively
- Relationships are stronger
- Trust is greater
- High-level performance is common

To be transparent means to share your thoughts and opinions honestly and respectfully. Transparency is an approach to communicating and forming relationships that emphasize being direct with people in your workplace.

Transparent communication is essential to managing and leading others successfully. Clear, honest communication builds trust. Communicating with transparency and integrity is an impetus for creating more trust with co-workers, team, and trust for you as a leader.

### Significance in times of crisis

During times of uncertainty (crisis), it is important to have a transparent conversation with your peers, family, colleagues or staff on how they feel regarding the unknown. This shows your vulnerability as a leader/family member/co-worker, and also exemplifies that you empathize with some of the fears they may also have.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am being open about my motivations.
- 2 I frequently obfuscate the truth, when dealing with issue I hope will resolve itself.
- 3 I am not afraid to show my weakness or mistake.
- 4 My behaviour is in line with the values of the organisation I serve.
- 5 I am sure that I am able to understand my limits.
- 6 I am unable to recognize my strengths.
- 7 I often tend to be secretive.
- 8 I believe that if I have a difficulty to meet a deadline, I will ask for help.
- 9 I am open to constructive criticism of myself.
- 10 When there is a misunderstanding between colleague and me, I clearly communicate my view.
- 11 I am able to acknowledge and compliment a colleague's achievement.
- 12 During uncertain times, I like to have regular meetings.

### 2.3.9 Influencing skills

Influencing skills are the ability to bring people round to your way of thinking about a certain topic, without force or coercion whilst acknowledging their opinions.

Some people seem to be able to do it effortlessly, and almost without anyone noticing, whereas others fall back on the power of their position to enforce what they want. Influencing skills can be learnt just like any others, and they are a key part of being able to influence others to achieve your goals and objectives.

Influencing skills are reliant on good soft skills and the ability to communicate effectively, engage stakeholders which involves the art of storytelling. There are six principles of influence: reciprocity, commitment, social proof, liking, authority, scarcity and unity (see glossary). The best persuasive techniques apply effective soft skills and emotional intelligence.

Although influence is associated with power, you don't need to be a leader to have power or to be able to influence others within an organisation. For instance, persuading others to support an idea, a project, give help or to show approval are just a few examples of influencing skills.

Powerful influencing skill relies on the other social awareness capacities of emotional intelligence. Conversely, the stronger the emotional intelligence is, the more powerful the influencing skill will be. It works on the premise that you cannot force people to do what they are not willing to do, but you can get them to want what you want by mastering effective persuasion tactics.

Other thing that stimulates influence is communication. Without steady communication, people will less likely be influenced by you, especially during times of crisis where people are in in need of security and assurance.

If someone has great influencing skills, it is important to remember that these skills could be only use ethically.

You should never try to persuade people to do anything illegal, or that is actively against their interests.

#### Significance in times of crisis

In times of crisis, it is vital to have a high-level influencing skill, which could be used persuade others to work towards a common goal.

During a crisis, work environments and circumstances may change. There will be times that individuals feel out of control. They may struggle with staying motiva-

ted and engaged due to that sense of fear and uncertainty. Good influencers can accurately assess and combine needs of organisation and workers, people and families. He/she can control and tactically manage and maneuvers others to desired outcome.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I consider myself as a person who can influence others.
- 2 Before I answer someone, I will briefly think about what and how I want to answer.
- 3 I don't usually have a handful of confidence when arguing.
- 4 I can easily recognize the emotional currents in group of co-workers.
- 5 I am easily adapting my actions to appeal those involved.
- 6 I am someone who makes people feel comfortable.
- 7 I am quite confident that I can get along with anyone.
- 8 I try to better understand my motivations behind my actions.
- 9 Often I am shy during meetings.
- 10 I am easy going person.
- 11 It is my habit to ask questions to clarify others statements.
- 12 I like to get to the root of things.

### 2.3.10 Continuous learning

Most people associate learning with formal education at school, college, university. Generally speaking, it is true that a formal education and the resulting qualifications are important. But knowledge can be acquired, and skill sets developed anywhere - learning is unavoidable and happens all the time. However, lifelong learning or continuous learning is about creating and maintaining a positive attitude to learning both for personal and professional development. Although qualifications may get you an interview, actually getting the job can take a lot more.

Continuous learning can enhance our understanding of the world around us, provide us with more and better opportunities and improve our quality of life. For example, learning in whatever context:

- Boosts our confidence and self-esteem
- Makes us less risk averse and more adaptable to change when it happens
- Helps us achieve a more satisfying personal life

- Challenges our ideas and beliefs
- Can be fun

There are several things that are vital in supporting your personal development. Among them it is organising your time or overcoming barriers to learn new skill. Great importance lies in getting out of the comfort zone and learning from the competition.

Voluntary work can also provide an excellent opportunity for learning and developing new skills, as being an active member of a local group or society.

Continuous learning keeps the mind fertile, introduces new ideas and expands your ability to get things done and contribute more.

Most great leaders are naturally curious about the world around them, and how things work, so an inclination toward constant learning is somewhat natural to them. They have a motivation.

For business, continuous learning refers to a planned and on-going development and improvement of job skills and knowledge in order to perform most effectively, and to adapt to changes. Constant learning requires a dedication to staying up to date on the research, information and technology in your field, and identifying and pursuing areas for development and training that will enhance job performance.

Economy is shifting increasingly towards short-term and part-time contracts with more flexible work-patterns whilst old industries are shifting abroad. We need to adapt to changes going on in the work-world and make more of ourselves by stepping out of our comfort zones and ideas of how we believe our life is going. Continuous learning can bring us new set of transferable skills which are sought after by employers.

#### **Significance in times of crisis**

Continuous learning is at heart of the crisis voluntary work. Individuals are usually not used to the crisis circumstances, so their ability and willingness to learn new things is crucial for coping with stressful and critical situations.

#### **Self-assessment indicator statements**

- 1 I like to learn and improve my skills regularly.
- 2 I usually avoid courses offered by my organisation because I don't think it can help me anyway.

- 3 I am evaluating my abilities and identify areas for development of my skills.
- 4 I like to write a diary, so I am able to go back and find information needed.
- 5 I organise my time, so I have enough time for family, work and hobbies.
- 6 I like to spend time with my older colleagues.
- 7 After dealing with critical situation, I am usually questioning myself, what has this experience taught me about myself.
- 8 I have no problem with stepping out of my comfort zone, when the situation requires it.
- 9 I have economic barrier to enroll to a course.
- 10 I like to make a "to do list".
- 11 I am excited when I learn job-specific skill.
- 12 I am open to a changes within my working environment.

#### **2.3.11 Rapport**

Rapport is an easy, quick, and simple process. Have you ever noticed what it's like when two people get along perfectly? When can they find common ground and every word that is said makes sense while you understand each other non-verbally? Every gesture, every smile, the way you pronounced each word was pleasant and you knew that the person you were talking to understood you and it felt like a harmony of two similar people who had a lot in common? Sometimes rapport happens naturally. We have all had experiences where we 'hit it off' or 'get on well' with somebody else without having to try.

Rapport is an emotional connection or relationship with someone else. It can be considered as a state of harmonious understanding with another individual or group. Building rapport is the process of developing that connection with someone else. However, rapport can also be built and developed consciously by finding common ground and being empathic.

Feedback is the basis for the rapport building technique. We adapt our outward expression (verbal – active listening and non-verbal – body language) to the other person and are open to the fact that our inner state will adjust accordingly. In this way, through external expression, we can also gradually get into a similar mental state to that of our partner. Remember: you just need to observe, listen, adapt our outward expression and willingly accept changes in our mental state.

It is only a little more difficult to establish rapport with the group. The principle is the same as with an individual: you adapt your outward expression to the prevailing expression of the group.

Rapport building requires a reliable and versatile set of interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to empathize with others' feelings and adapt. It requires you to listen more to others and try to understand them and focus less on your own agenda or angle point of view. And that's the most challenging thing about rapport.

There are four cornerstones of rapport: honesty, empathy, autonomy, and reflection (the ability to listen actively).

Six key active listening skills include: Paying attention, withholding judgement, reflecting, clarifying, summarizing, sharing.

There are also four main communication styles:

- How to handle confrontation: when you are debating or contradicting someone, be honest and direct. Don't attack, don't punish and don't be sarcastic.
- How to capitulate: when you need to back down or show respect, do it with humility and patience. However, avoid showing weakness and insecurity.
- How to gain control: good leaders are clear, in control, set a plan and support others. They are not demanding, dogmatic and pedantic.
- How to establish cooperation: When you want to make a connection, show affection, interest and a sense of belonging. Give yourself but be careful not to slip into excessive joviality and misplaced intimacy.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Building rapport is even more important in crisis. It is a component that helps you to leave the other persons feeling safe and respected, with developed mutual trust, so the action during the crisis can be successful.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am keeping eye contact when talking to a person.
- 2 I use the name of the person I am talking to during the conversation.
- 3 If I disagree with something during conversation, I keep my mouth shut.
- 4 I try to understand the emotions of other person during conversation.
- 5 When I first meet someone, I am trying to break the ice with a small talk.
- 6 I am paying attention to the tone of my voice.
- 7 I pay attention to my body position during conversation.
- 8 I try to have open and relaxed posture when talking to someone.

9 During first meeting with a person, I am talking about myself a lot.

10 I usually try to summarise or clarify what had been discussed.

11 When discussing something important I am prepared to be patient and to have enough time.

12 During the meeting I am looking at a watch a lot.

13 I am usually mirroring the accent of the person I am talking to.

#### 2.3.12 Coaching skills

Coaching is a key way to motivating and helping individuals and teams to solve issues, improve performance and develop skills and confidence in the workplace. Coaching means asking questions, not simply to gather facts but to elicit solutions, feelings, ideas and new thoughts from the person being coached. Some people argue that it is impossible for a Manager to act as a coach, given her/his position of authority over the team. While authority is an important issue, it need not be an insurmountable obstacle - as long as there is genuine trust and respect in the working relationship.

Coaching differs from the traditional 'command and control' or 'barkin a command' approach in the following ways:

- Collaborating instead of controlling
- Delegating more responsibility
- Talking less, listening more
- Giving fewer orders, asking more questions
- Giving specific feedback instead of making judgements

Effective coaching skills are developed to help others achieve personal or professional goals. In a managerial or leadership role, effective coaching skills may support sustainable change to behaviors or ways of thinking while also facilitating learning and development. In coaching, the responsibility for learning lies with the individual, and not with the coach.

Coaching does not simply correct today's problem; it helps keep the problem from resurfacing. The employee not only understands the goal, but can teach it to others. Coaching may take longer than correcting, which is a "quick fix," but it is longer-lasting. It builds an understanding, and, if done well, helps build a workplace culture.

Managing in a coaching style is ultimately about benefits: more committed team, better team performance, better working relationships, better ideas or information, and investing time to gain time.

Developing your coaching skills will take effort. There are many variants of coaching, which entail different types of skills. Those variants relevant to a consideration of managers and leaders include hierarchical coaching (managers simply coach their subordinates) and team coaching. There are several variants on team coaching:

**Vision coaching** - this approach feels like a partnership and draws on elements of feedback, reflection, and conversation to really motivate and influence employees. Encourages and empowers employees by giving them clear direction and strategies for achieving objectives and encouraging focus.

**Autocratic coaching** – this approach tells individuals what to do rather than asking. The autocratic coach is in control at all times and strives for perfectionism and excellence.

**Holistic coaching** – with the belief that everything is connected, this approach theorises that individuals are a sum of all their parts: in order to encourage growth in the workplace, balance needs to be achieved in all aspects of their life.

**Authoritarian coaching** – coach decides what to do and how to do it. All that is required from the team is their understanding.

All these coaching styles can be effective, depending on the company, project, or the team itself. The key is to know when to use different coaching styles.

### Significance in times of crisis

Increasing empathy and compassion in every job reduces stress and replaces it with human growth potential. Tough situations (crisis) and difficult conversations become easier to maneuver when coaching skills are well learned and regularly practiced. Coaching Leadership skill (CLS) is highly effective in environments where people lack the skills or knowledge to reach a shared vision or have become jaded and tired over time, which is probable during the crisis.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to break broad action to smaller tasks and focus on them.
- 2 When dealing with my or colleagues mistake, I concentrate my attention on recovery of the situation.
- 3 When dealing with difficult situation I need to make sure I fully understood the issues
- 4 I easily facilitate my knowledge to others.
- 5 In a difficult situation, I am trying to focus on asking the right questions which need to be solved as first.
- 6 I am willing to help new colleague to learn how our organisation works.
- 7 I am able to try different approaches to a problem.
- 8 Usually I am putting aside my prejudices to a colleague when we need to work together on a task.
- 9 I usually rush myself and my colleagues to make any decision when facing a problem.
- 10 I am sensitive for the intentions behind my statements.
- 11 If I need help from my colleague, I usually give him the opportunity to say no.
- 12 I like to clarify information before taking action.
- 13 I usually ask myself what are the different ways I could use to approach a problem.

## 2.4 Management skills

### 2.4.1 Cluster description

Management skills are a collection of abilities that include decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, delegating effectively, stress management, motivation, negotiation skills, teamwork, conflict management skills, integrity, troubleshooting, presentation skills and technical skills, required to manage people and resources. Having good management skills is a key aspect for managers to run their business successfully.

Management skills means having the capacity to run a business.

It is being able to make the right choices while managing the overall performance of the organisation.

It means being able to communicate and deliver results by providing employees with a strong business plan to meet the aim for the organisation.

Management skills are required to manage the business and include overseeing workplace issues, employees, teamwork and team development and communication. It also means giving employees their duties and monitoring their performance, while at the same time reaching the business objective.

Management skills are the abilities to lead and deliver projects, encourage initiatives, build a common sense at the organisation, and empower other.

A person with well-developed management skills:

- has the inspiration;
- has the driving change;
- knows how to delivers results;
- and has the ability to direct employees.

The SoCraTest cluster on management skills contains thirteen skills: decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, delegating effectively, stress management, motivation, negotiation skills, teamwork, conflict management skills, integrity, troubleshooting, presentation skills and technical skills. A basis for choosing useful skills based on the need to understand and manage crisis situations in the performance of voluntary work and therefore does not pertain to a specific professional approach to crisis management. It essentially refers to a basic useful basis for acquiring soft skills for the population in general, who is involved in providing services to voluntary and other organisations in crisis management and, on this basis, acquire the necessary and useful soft skills.

The selection of the skills is not based on a specific method or school, but on the relevance of the skills from the perspective of a crisis situation in which volunteers are involved. The project team chose this method for three reasons:

- Lack of a standardised methodological approach: The methodological approaches to validating skills differ in European countries. This may be related to academic schools and conventions that support or hinder the dissemination of a particular method.
- Linkage to crises: With good reason, crises have not been specified, because the CRISIS validation tool does not exclusively focus on a single crisis (even if at the time of the tool's creation the COVID-19 crisis was the highest in awareness). A crisis is understood to be any situation that represents an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life [Merriam-Webster].
- Initial situation of the volunteers: This is not comparable to the initial situation of a professional helper who has been qualified to deal with a crisis situation. As a result, other skills come into play.

### 2.4.2 Conflict management

Conflict is part of life, but understanding how to handle conflict can make all the difference between strained or thriving relationships. Conflict management plays a key role in preventing conflicts between people.

How does a conflict appear? When people strongly oppose each other's opinions and ideas, the likelihood of a conflict arises. A conflict begins when people think in different ways and have great difficulty accepting each other's ideas. Conflict should be avoided because it destroys peace, lowers productivity, and even demotivates people.

A conflict is not very easy to control; a person needs certain skills to control it. The key conflict management skills are such as effective communication, listening, discussion, patience, impartiality, never criticize, and positive attitude, among others. Confident conflict management skills will give empowerment to team building. Being able to handle conflict effectively, whatever the situation, is an ability that will help to build a strong, constructive working relationships and improve the overall performance of your team, group or department.

How to manage conflicts:

1. Understand the conflict in concrete. Analyze everyone's position in the conflict and what are the possible resolutions;
2. Deal with the discomfort. It is difficult to have conversations when conflicts are on, conflicts can be challenging.
3. Listen to all sides. It is very important that all parties can express themselves properly.
4. Express yourself honestly. It's usually good to express your emotions directly, when in a conflict situation and might be angry, fearful or frustrated.
5. React positively. In addition to actively listening to the other person, do not react to the other person getting emotional.
6. Always be kind and calm. Whatever the problem, using foul language or being mean can be harmful to the situation. Be emphatic.
7. Find a good solution with the necessary time to do it. It is common during a conflict resolution that solutions are often made "on" the problem. It is very important to get to "the heart of the conflict" first, then, find a solution.
8. Open discussion. Get an idea how to start dealing with the problem just by starting a conversation, with no solution ready
9. Identify needs. See the causes of the conflicts and identify the needs of the involved parties.

### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change and conflict management is fundamental – address the situations that might generate conflict or even real conflicts – to immediately solve them. Management involves guiding people to the best possible outcome. Conflict management skills in time of crisis is being able to effectively communicate with others in order to avoid conflicts.

It is very important to listen to others, not to criticize or judge without understanding and knowing the other's opinions, to say directly to others what we think of them, to keep an open mind, to be tolerant, to be impartial and take a positive attitude. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of conflict management skills.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I feel that my ideas are discussed with the group.
- 2 I would like to be able to say openly what I think.
- 3 I feel that I have difficulties to manage stress when discussions are "on fire".
- 4 I find myself listen to others and try to have a positive attitude towards a conflict in the team/department.
- 5 I feel like yelling when someone do not take into consideration my opinion.
- 6 I often find myself frustrated because others do not listen my opinion.
- 7 I am able to respect other's opinions.
- 8 I often find myself calm when facing a conflict in my organisation/department.
- 9 I feel that it is difficult to me to accept differing sides without validation of my side.
- 10 I am able to discuss openly, even when I do not agree with someone's point of view.
- 11 I would like to be able to react with a positive attitude when conflicts arise.
- 12 I feel discomfort when I have to take a solution to a problem.

### 2.4.3 Delegation management

Delegation refers to the transfer of responsibility for specific tasks from one person to another. To delegate means to give a particular job, duty, right, to someone else. A manager should delegate responsibilities on employees, teams, among others. Delegating is the ability to effectively assign tasks, responsibility and authority to others. Effective delegation contributes to personal development, people ultimately become more fulfilled and productive. The hallmark of good management is effective delegation.

The meaning of "to delegate" is to let go some of your power in favor of another person who usually reports directly to you. Delegation of authority means using the power of other people to help you deal with the two most common leader challenges: shrinking resources and increasing demands.

Managers need to be able to communicate clearly with their employees when delegating. They have to explain why an employee has been assigned a task, what the task is, and what the expectations are. All of this requires clear, effective oral and written communication skills.

Delegation is a vital management skill. Delegation occurs when a manager assigns specific tasks to his/her employees. By delegating those tasks to team members, managers have free time to focus on higher-value activities.

Delegation involves expertise in:

- what to delegate;
- to know employees strengths and goals;
- to contextualize the task delegated in the organisation goals;
- to provide the right level of authority and the necessary resources;
- to establish a transparent channel of communication;
- to empower people when failure happens;
- to be patient;
- to give and ask for feedback;
- provide the right credit when it happens.

Delegation may be complicated. The two main areas of skills needed for a successful delegating are:

- a) To know what level of control the manager wants and needs, which requires a high level of self-awareness. Good managers/leaders are intrinsically self-aware and understand/know how they like to work.
- b) To know the level of delegation to use and to communicate it clearly to employees. This requires strong interpersonal communication skills, verbal communication skills and barriers to successful communication.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change, and delegating effectively is critical – address the urgent needs is the work of management – to make immediate choices and allocate resources. Leadership, by contrast, involves guiding people to the best possible outcome over that period of time. The focus has to be on what is likely to come next and preparing to face it. What means seeing beyond the immediate to anticipate the next three, four, or five obstacles.

The best leaders skillfully navigate the rough waters, saving lives, energizing organisations, and inspiring communities. If delegation is made properly and for the right reasons, it helps foster a climate of trust and creates growth opportunities for all. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of delegation.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I often find myself working while my employees are idle.
- 2 My organisation/department functions smoothly when I am absent.
- 3 I spend more time than I should doing work my employees (colleagues) could do.
- 4 I make it a habit to follow up on jobs I delegate.
- 5 There is usually a big pile of work requiring my action when I return from an absence.
- 6 I find it difficult to ask others to do things.
- 7 I nearly always give credit for a job well done.
- 8 I trust others to do the tasks.
- 9 I believe that delegating contributes to motivate employees (colleagues).
- 10 I often find myself doing tasks I delegated to others.
- 11 It is difficult for me to manage delegation and sharing responsibility.
- 12 I find it difficult to define the limits of authority.

#### 2.4.4 Decision making

A decision-maker is a person who decides things, especially at a high level in an organisation.

Definition of decision-making is the ability to understand needs, evaluate comparable options, and narrow down to the best option. Is the ability to make decisions autonomously; make timely decisions taking into account the consequences (for instance, effects on others, political and/or ethical implications); take responsibility for the decisions made.

Decision-making is about understanding the objective, analyse all possible options, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses and take the best decision in the interest of the company. Decision-making is the act of choosing between two or more courses of action, and involves individual judgement.

Decision-making skills are about the ability to choose a good option out of two or more alternatives. In the wider process of problem-solving, decision-making involves choosing between possible solutions to a problem. As a type of problem-solving skill, there are three main ways to approach decision-making: using intuition, reasoning, or a combination of the two.

Intuition is the combination of past experiences with personal values.

Reasoning is the use of facts and figures to make decisions. Reasoning can ignore the emotional aspects of the decision.

Depending on the decision context, intuition and reasoning can be misused. It is important to be aware of impulsive reactions to a situation.

Decision needs to be capable of implementation. Commitment to the decision made is fundamental to persuade others of its merits.

An effective decision-making process needs to ensure that the decision-maker is able to do so.

Problems that can prevent effective decision-making:

1. Not enough information: can give the feeling that the decision is taken without any basis. It is necessary to prioritize the information gathered at that specific moment.
2. Too much information: conflicting information that has to be discussed with the involved parties to decide what is the really important information and to set a schedule for the decision-making process.
3. Too many people: when many people are involved it is more difficult to take a decision. It is important to analyse different perspectives and the decision-maker is the responsible to decide.
4. Vested interests: it is hard to identify someone's interests if they are not clearly expressed. Sometimes an outside perspective can help to make a decision.
5. Emotional attachments to the status quo.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change, and keeping a clear mind is essential to make good decisions.

Decision-making in time of crisis is one of the most important skills. Being able to keep in mind what is really important to do and act at the precise moment. A person with a strong decision-making skill is able to face and solve conflicts in any circumstance. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of decision-making.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am aware of the difficulty I have in keeping a clear mind everytime I have to decide.
- 2 I often find myself considering if I took the right decision.

3 I evaluate options to make a decision with help from other managers.

4 I am able to anticipate outcomes and see logical consequences.

5 I can decide based on intuition and reasoning.

6 In my organisation/department decision-making about work changes is not well seen by employees/colleagues.

7 I am able to analyse different information and base my decision on that.

8 I often see myself being impulsive in taking some decision.

9 I am able to seek for new solutions.

10 I often see myself taking responsibility for decision taken by me and by others.

11 I can give problems their proper weight and context.

12 I can decide despite the context or the problem.

#### 2.4.5 Communication management

Successful communication happens when results are achieved. Being able to communicate effectively is perhaps the most important of all life skills. It allows us to pass information to other people, and to understand what is said to us.

Communication is the act of transferring information from one place to another in different ways:

- Verbal: face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media,
- Written: letters, e-mails, social media, books, magazines, the Internet and other media.
- Visual: maps, logos, graphs and other visualizations can communicate messages.
- Non-verbal: body language, gestures, way of dressing, among others.

The effective transmission of a message is a skill developed after continuous practice and experience. An effective communicator understands the audience, chooses appropriate communication channel to send the message and encodes it to reduce misunderstanding by the audience.

The feedback perceived by the communicator is important to know how the message is understood in order to treat eventual confusion as soon as possible.

The predetermined set of skills required for an influential communication process are:

- observance,
- clarity and brevity,
- listening and understanding,
- emotional intelligence,
- self-efficacy,
- self-confidence,
- respectfulness,
- non-verbal communication,
- selection of the right medium, providing feedback.

Effective-communication means that the message is received, understood, and acted upon in the desired way. This means that effective communication may require persuasion, motivation, monitoring, and leadership by managers. Effective communication is about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information (emotional intelligence required by managers).

Communicating effectively means that your ideas and concepts are being heard and that people are acting on them. It also means that you are able to hear, understand, and act on what other people are saying.

Communication in management is an essential soft skill. A manager must be able to communicate effectively because it is essential for the success in three levels: personal, team, organisational.

Communication in management involves:

- to plan;
- to execute;
- to monitor;
- to improve.

The communication channels or process at the organisation: in and out communication. An effective management communication must:

- foster a trusty environment;
- maintain a clear communication in the culture of the organisation;
- give feedback to motivate employees;
- keep the confidence in leaders, managers and employees.

### Significance in times of crisis

Effective-communication in time of crisis is being able to define problems, consider options, make choices and implement a plan. Prioritize is essential when in crises. Being able to clearly identify what is the most important thing to do in a given circumstance or situation, is the first step to start solving-problems. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of effective-communication.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to be attentive and present while listening the other person.
- 2 I am able to communicate with simple language.
- 3 I can communicate with efficacy.
- 4 I have the ability to communicate nonverbally.
- 5 I am able to be clear and concise.
- 6 I can prioritize important information.
- 7 I am able to respect other's opinions.
- 8 I have difficulties to listen the other person without interruptions.
- 9 I can give others positive reinforcement.
- 10 I have difficulties to give feedback to others about their mistakes.
- 11 I am able to use positive language.
- 12 I am able to listen more and talk less.

### 2.4.6 Integrity management

Integrity can be defined as “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles” (Merriam-Webster). Integrity is “the act of behaving honorably, even when no one is watching”.

There are some character traits related to integrity, namely gracious, respectful, honest, trustworthy, hardworking, responsible, helpful, patient. Integrity is more a quality than a skill, but it can still be developed over time. In addition, integrity is doing the right thing, through words, actions and beliefs.

Having a high level of integrity at work means that the person is:

- trustworthy and reliable,
- practices and encourages honest communication,
- is responsible for their actions.

People who are trustworthy and conscientious are reliable.

Daniel Goleman, the author of several books on emotional intelligence, identified certain behaviors related to trustworthiness and conscientiousness that were consistent in those with good emotion intelligence:

- Trustworthy people act with integrity;
- Integrity gives them credibility with those around them;
- When they say their word is their bond, you know you can rely on that;
- Their values are consistent with their actions;
- They are also prepared to confront those who act unethically and take a stand against unethical behavior, even if that is unpopular.

Integrity is crucial for credibility.

In some jobs and areas of life, there is ambiguity about what is right and wrong, and particularly what is expected. Nevertheless, research shows that who act in accordance with their beliefs and inner values are more likely to be respected and to be happy, than those who allow themselves to be pushed into doing something that is not consistent with their personal values

### Significance in times of crisis

A strong leadership culture based on trust, honesty, empathy, and authenticity is essential in times of crisis. Business leaders must ask themselves what they can actively do to create a safe space that allows them to have open, honest, and trusting conversations, as well as recognize when they don't have the answers. Integrity means being honest and have strong moral principles.

Having integrity means express gratitude when other people help us; value honesty and openness; being responsible and accountable for our actions; respect ourselves and others around us no matter where we are; being reliable and trustworthy; helping those in need without sacrificing our own health; being patient and flexible, even when unexpected obstacles show up.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I often express my gratitude to employees/colleagues.
- 2 I value honesty and gratitude.
- 3 I am able to take responsibility and accountability for my actions.
- 4 I struggle to earn respect in my organisation/department.
- 5 I am reliable and trustworthy.
- 6 I often find myself grateful for the life I have.
- 7 I am able to respect other's opinions.
- 8 I am very sensible and patient (I can control my emotions).
- 9 I often find myself with difficulties to deal with untrustworthy people.
- 10 I am always consistent with my values despite the circumstances.
- 11 I have strong values and find it hard when the surrounding do not consider them.
- 12 I am able to understand and share the feelings of another.

### 2.4.7 Motivation

Motivation is what pushes us to achieve our dreams and improve our sense for life.

The definition of motivation involves:

- Being proactive in face of changes and discover new opportunities in distinct situations and environments;
- Conceive innovative ideas/plans;
- Know how to make decisions and act accordingly.

Motivation skills in management are the qualities that managers can use to inspire and empower team members/employees to succeed.

Motivation is about providing people with the means to achieve their goals, and about ensuring that the individual's goals and the organisation's goals are aligned to some degree. For someone working in the field of helping professions, it is primarily important to have an attitude to motivate people around and to be motivated to react and act with positive attitude towards difficulties.

Motivational management skills are the qualities that managers can use to inspire and empower others. Motivation can increase happiness; inspire people and teams to inspire them to feel more connected and engaged and, create a positive workplace culture.

Motivation is one of the three areas of personal skills that are integral to the concept of emotional intelligence.

Daniel Goleman identified four elements that build motivation:

- Personal drive to achieve: desire to improve certain standards;
- Commitment with personal or organisational goals;
- Initiative to reach opportunities;
- Optimism to keep going despite the setbacks, also known as resilience.

“If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things”.

Albert Einstein.

Having the awareness of where we wish to be, and an understanding of how we plan things or actions to get there, is crucial to stay motivated. To have initiative is part of keeping motivation. Initiative combines courage and a good sense of risk management. The sense of risk management is essential to ensure what are the right opportunities and what is the appropriate level of risk to take.

Courage is necessary to overcome the fear under new opportunities, that most of the time means changes in life.

### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change, and keeping motivation is essential – what people feel and how they think (internal cognitive process).

A motivated person is able to pass by crisis situations and to react to them positively. When in crisis, keeping motivated is essential to see things clearly and from different perspectives. A motivated person can interact and relate to others effectively, because he/she has in mind what is really important to do and how to act in that precise moment. A motivated person is able to face and solve conflicts, doubts and even feel others' experience.

Motivation is the state of mind which pushes all human being to perform to their highest potential, with good spirits and a positive attitude. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of motivation.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I can identify the emotion I am feeling at any given moment.
- 2 I often find myself discovering new opportunities in simple situations of daily life

- 3 I can build a relationship based on motivation.
- 4 I am aware that my motivation is often in a low level.
- 5 I am able to maintain a positive attitude despite the situation.
- 6 I have initiative to get others involved in a project.
- 7 I am motivated to achieve the goals proposed.
- 8 I often build clear goals for myself.
- 9 I am on the lookout for new opportunities.
- 10 I believe that everyone can improve motivational skills.
- 11 I find myself trying to commit with organisational goals even when they are not “the right ones” in my perspective.
- 12 I have the courage to overcome the fear of the unknown inherent in new opportunities.

### 2.4.8 Negotiation

Negotiation is the process that can be used to address and solve disagreements between people, and find a common place. Whenever people are together, socially or at work, conflict and disagreement can arise. People have different needs, wishes, aims and beliefs and they can clash. Negotiation is needed in order to reach agreement without causing future resentment and arguments among people.

What is negotiation? It is not always formal but it can help if there is a process with a set of stages.

Negotiation intends to achieve a common place where people make compromises to get the best possible outcome for each ones' position. The key to a successful negotiation is seeking a mutual benefit with principles of fairness. General negotiation skills can be learned and developed. Negotiation skills can be of great benefit in solving differences between people.

Negotiation skills are abilities that allow reaching a compromise. These are often soft skills as communication, persuasion, planning, strategizing and cooperating. Negotiation is a method by which individuals resolve differences. It is a process through which a compromise or agreement is reached, while avoiding arguments and disputes. There are at least six stages of negotiation – preparation, discussion, clarification of goals, negotiate towards a win-win outcome, agreement, and implementation of a course of action.

In any negotiation there are three elements very important to achieve the ultimate goal of the negotiation:

1. Attitudes;
2. Knowledge;
3. Interpersonal skills.

Negotiation is influenced by attitudes related with issues respecting the personalities involved and their personal need for recognition. Knowledge about the situation is the key factor to achieve good results in the process of negotiation, preparation is essential.

Good interpersonal skills are crucial for an effective negotiation, in formal and non-formal negotiations.

Interpersonal skills for an effective negotiation are:

- Effective verbal communication;
- Listening;
- Reducing misunderstandings (reflection, clarification,...);
- Rapport building (strong relationships based on mutual respect);
- Problem solving;
- Decision making;
- Assertiveness;
- Dealing with difficult situations.

There are some key negotiation skills as Communication, Active listening, Emotional intelligence, Patience, Adaptability, Persuasion, Planning, Integrity, Problem-solving, and Decision-making.

### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change, and negotiation skills are crucial – reaching a compromise so that everyone’s goals are attended, or at least, to reach an agreeable solution for all involved. It is necessary to “give and take” in this process and to be prepared to negotiate.

Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of negotiation skills.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I is not easy for me to reach a compromise.
- 2 I often find myself trying to manage relationships that are not based on mutual respect.
- 3 I often find myself reflecting about the problem/situation upon negotiation.
- 4 I am clear and concise in communication.
- 5 I can persuade others to achieve the most suitable outcome.
- 6 I can face tedious or uncomfortable situations without losing control of my emotions or giving up in defeat.
- 7 I am able to adapt to changing environments and work processes.
- 8 I find myself in stress when I have to deal with differences in employees/colleagues in order to negotiate.
- 9 I am able to prepare, plan and think ahead.
- 10 I follow moral and ethical principles in all aspects of my life.
- 11 I am able to see the problem and find a solution.
- 12 I am able to react decisively.

### 2.4.9 Presentation management

The presentation of information with clarity and effectively is a key skill to have our message delivered. Presentation skills are required in almost every area, and most of us have to give presentations on several occasions.

For some people presentation is their stride, for others is a challenge. It is possible to improve presentation skills. Many people feel terrified when asked to talk to small or big groups. This fear can be reduced with good preparation, which is also the key to make an effective presentation.

There are different types of presentation:

- Presenting or make a speech at a conference.
- Objecting to “something” in a meeting.
- Presenting at a job interview.
- ...

All types of presentation require preparation depending on the audience and subject of the presentation. Good speakers know that they need to do a presentation in a way in which the audience can take the words that they say. Good speakers possess certain qualities and personality traits. What are these qualities? How can the generality of people develop them?

Good speakers should:

- be well prepared;
- deliver unique messages and ideas;
- provide actionable content;
- make complex issues seem simple;
- have charisma;
- be open to questions;
- share and give instead of sell and take.

Presentation skills can be defined as a set of skills that enable us to: interact with the audience/recipient; transmit the message with clarity; engage the audience in the presentation; and understand and interpret the mindset of the listeners.

### Significance in times of crisis

Presentation skills in time of crisis are essential as it is necessary to pass the message clearly. Managers need to be able to communicate clearly, concisely, and in a timely manner during times of crisis. They need to be able to remain calm and focus on relaying pertinent information as quickly as possible. The ability to communicate information accurately, clearly and as intended, is a vital skill. In time of crisis it is very important to stay in control of communication. The attention must be focused on the needs and concerns of the audience/recipient.

Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of presentation skills.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I often feel that I am not prepared to do presentations to big audiences.
- 2 I am able to communicate clearly by using simple words.
- 3 I am able to engage people's attention.
- 4 I find myself struggling with time management when I am presenting.
- 5 I feel that I can use verbal and non-verbal language to present my ideas

- 6 Controlling the tone of my voice in presentations is difficult for me.
- 7 I feel pressure when I have to answer the questions posed by the audience.
- 8 I am calm when I do a speech to report a crisis situation.
- 9 I felt that I can be persuasive to convince employees/colleagues.
- 10 I have a consistent speech when in pressure.
- 11 I am self-confident and manage well my emotions when presenting.
- 12 I always prepare myself ahead a presentation.

### 2.4.10 Problem solving

Making decisions and solving problems are two important areas in our life. We face countless decisions and problems every day.

Problem solving skills are highly sought after by employers. Many organisations rely on their employees to identify and solve problems.

In order to be effective at problem solving some key skills are required, such as:

- Creativity;
- Researching skills;
- Team working;
- Emotional intelligence;
- Risk management;
- Decision making.

A definition of problem-solving is the ability to define a problem, determine the cause of it, identify, prioritize and select alternatives for a solution, and implement a solution.

Problem-solving is the process of analysing a problem and solving it in the best possible way for a given situation. Critical thinking and analytical skills are required for problem solving.

Problem-solving starts with identifying the issue, coming up with solutions, implementing those solutions, and evaluating their effectiveness. This ability to solve problems is a basic life skill, and it is essential to our day-to-day lives, at home, at school, and at work.

Problem-solving is connected with troubleshooting management skills. Troubleshooting is “Identifying and prioritizing problems; sort out the many facets of a problem; proactively contribute with ideas/answers regarding the problem while considering respective consequences; ability to solve novel and ill-defined problems in complex and real-world settings.”

“People who can define problems, consider options, make choices, and implement a plan have all the basic skills required for effective problem solving.”

Effective problem solving usually involves working through a number of stages:

1. Identifying the problem: detecting and recognize that there is a problem.
2. Structuring the problem: observation, inspection, fact-finding and “take the picture of the problem”, finding goals and barriers is a part of the structuring.
3. Looking for possible solutions: thinking about possible solutions to the identified problem.
4. Making a decision: analysis of the different courses of action and select the best solution. Decision-making is a skill in itself.
5. Implementation: accept and carry out the chosen course of action.
6. Monitoring: checking that the process was successful.

Management needs employees and managers with problem-solving skills well developed. The way the management faces situations and problems related to the transactional context where organisations operate, is vital for the continuity of business.

In order to solve problems, it is required to have a good proficiency in the skills: good judgement, reasoning, critical thinking and creativity.

### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change, and keeping a clear mind is essential to make good decisions.

Solving-problems in time of crisis is being able to define problems, consider options, make choices and implement a plan. Prioritize is essential when in crisis. Being able to clearly identify what is the most important thing to do in a given circumstance or situation, is the first step to start solving-problems.

Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of problem-solving.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I can decide what to do quickly when faced with different scenarios where I am called to choose one.
- 2 I am able to establish priorities.
- 3 I am able to evaluate options accurately.
- 4 I can anticipate outcomes and see logical consequences.
- 5 I am not comfortable with difficult situations.
- 6 I find it difficult to manage my emotions during a hard situation/problem.
- 7 I am able to analyse problems with employees/colleagues.
- 8 I am able to gather information and select the important one to solve a problem/situation.
- 9 I spend more time than I should seeking for new solutions.
- 10 I feel comfortable with the decisions I take.
- 11 I can give problems their proper weight and context.
- 12 I often feel that I have difficulties in facing problems in the right sequence.

### 2.4.11 Stress management

Stress is a reaction to excess pressure. This pressure may have origin from personal and work situations. The dictionary definition of stress includes hardship, strain, physical, emotional or mental pressure.

Nowadays, a major part of world population deals with stress due to several factors. Stress is normal in life, huge levels of stress are not normal. The ability to manage and to deal with stressful situations is necessary for a happy and healthy life. Different people find different things stressful, and can cope with different levels of pressure before “becoming stressful”.

There are a number of common signs and symptoms of stress such as anxiety and tension. It is very important to learn to recognize stress triggers, and find effective ways to manage stress.

Stress in workplace is very common. It is very important to tackle the causes of stress in the workplace to avoid problems for employees, teams and to the organisation as a whole. Managing stress in the workplace is an essential part of both individual and corporate responsibility.

Stress Management is the ability to control stress level by practicing self-care, relaxation and teaches some techniques to deal with stress when it occurs. It is a “set of techniques and programs intended to help people to deal more effectively with stress in their lives by analysing the specific stressors and taking positive actions to minimize their effect” (Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine).

Stress Management is defined as the tools, strategies or techniques that reduce stress and diminish the negative impacts stress has on our mental or physical well-being. A diversity of techniques can be used to manage stress, including mental, emotional and behavioral strategies.

Relaxation techniques have been developed in order to help people to deal with stress by learning to relax:

- Mindfulness: living in the moment and appreciate it to the full;
- Music therapy: effect of sounds;
- Self-hypnosis: simple technique to feel more relaxed by stepping away stress;
- Laugh-therapy: laugh helps to relax.

Effective stress management helps break through the waiting stress in life, so that people can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun - and the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on.

### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change, and stress management is crucial - the use of specific techniques and strategies to deal with stress-inducing situations. It is necessary to make immediate choices and allocate resources, even when under stressful conditions. Developing coping strategies since early ages in life, allows people to manage stress in difficult situations.

Stress management is the process of acquiring and practicing a variety of cognitive and behavioral techniques that are aimed at managing and coping with stress. Coping with stress effectively is all about finding a balance and keeping it at manageable levels. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of stress management.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to limit unnecessary stress.
- 2 I often find myself struggling in order to say “no”.
- 3 I am able to analyse my schedule and prioritise my tasks by level or urgency.
- 4 I can limit the amount of time I spend with people who stress me out.
- 5 I am able to identify how I can limit stress in a specific situation and take control of it.
- 6 I always keep things in perspective and focus on positive thinking.
- 7 I am able to make my feelings known (instead of bottling them up).
- 8 I am able to communicate my concerns in an open and respectful way.
- 9 I can deal with problems “head on”, and do my best to anticipate and prevent them.
- 10 I am able to manage time to avoid stress.
- 11 Whenever I find myself in situations than can generate stress, I often use stress management tools.
- 12 I often feel that the process of dealing with or controlling things or others makes me anxious.

### 2.4.12 Teamwork management

The definition of teamwork is the “ability of team members to work together, communicate effectively, anticipate and meet each other’s demands, and inspire confidence, resulting in a coordinated collective action.” (International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences).

Teams and groups: The word ‘team’ is used loosely to mean a group of people working together to achieve a common aim. Some academics, however, suggest that this is a better definition for ‘group’, with ‘team’ being reserved for much closer relationships, such as that seen in a small singing choir.

The dynamics in a group can change over time due to the knowledge that people get, the functioning of the group will change.

Several studies show that the most effective groups are diverse, as they contain people with a wide range of skills and role preferences.

Teamwork requires work in team and in cooperation and commitment to the organisation. It is “contributing actively in a group to achieve a common goal; sharing resources and responsibilities; and encourage the participation of all group members.” (Soft Skills Lexicon, ULISSE Consortium Parties, 2020, p. 12).

Teamwork skills such as communication, conflict management, listening, reliability, and respectfulness, among others, must be developed.

Meredith Belbin identified a set of nine roles shown by people working in groups:

1. Shaper – has a clear idea of the goal and direction to take;
2. Implementer – looks ways to act and to take things done;
3. Completer-Finisher – focuses on completing tasks;
4. Coordinator – leader, manages the group dynamics;
5. Team worker – supports personal relationships in the team;
6. Resource investigator – gathers resources to help the team;
7. Plant – gives ideas and creative solutions;
8. Monitor-Evaluator – critical, assesses ideas and solutions, helps decision-making;
9. Specialist – gives expert knowledge to the team.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Teamwork in time of crisis is being able to effectively collaborate for long-term commercial/business success. Especially in a crisis, organisations need to bring together experts with unique, cross-functional perspectives in order to quickly solve complex and rapidly changing problems that have long-term implications. Diversity of experience allows a group to see risks and opportunities from different angles, so that it can give rise to new solutions and adapt dynamically to changing situations. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of teamwork.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to communicate clearly my ideas with the group.
- 2 I am able to communicate with simple language.
- 3 Teamwork at my organisation/department may be stressful.
- 4 I often feel that team members are judging me.
- 5 I can work in-group depending on the group members.
- 6 I find myself making bad judgement of team members’ actions when they do not agree with my opinions.

- 7 I can respect others’ opinions when mine are respected.
- 8 I am able to emotionally understand what other people feel.
- 9 I often find myself giving others positive reinforcement.
- 10 It is not easy for me to give my honest opinion when working in-group.
- 11 I am able to work in teams where ideas are discussed before reaching a decision.
- 12 I struggle with myself when I am in a team where people are always “fighting” for their own goals.

#### 2.4.13 Technical skills

Technical skills can be defined as “sets of abilities or knowledge used to perform practical tasks in the areas of science, the arts, technology, engineering, and math.” (Merriam-Webster). They are learned abilities acquired and enhanced through practice, repetition, and education.

They are specific job-related abilities, like business intelligence/analytics; project management skills; stock analysis; data analysis; technical support, among others. These skills, among others, give managers the ability and the knowledge to use a variety of techniques to achieve their goals. In order to be successful in planning, leading, and controlling, managers must use a wide range of skills: technical, human relations and conceptual.

Specialized areas of knowledge and expertise, and the ability to apply this knowledge, compose the technical skills of a manager.

Human relations skills include the ability to understand human behavior; to communicate effectively with others, and to motivate individuals to accomplish their goals.

Conceptual skills include the ability to see the organisation as a whole, understand how the various parts are interdependent, and evaluate how the organisation relates to its external environment.

What is the role of technical skills in management? For several years education focused on hard or technical skills: math, sciences, languages, geography, among others. To have knowledge is important in order to apply it to practical situations and daily life. Hard skills are necessary as the basis for any profession. Soft skills are required to advance and potentiate the level of hard skills at workplace and at social life.

Take as example, a nurse that has the knowledge to apply a vaccine; but when facing the need to apply the vaccine to a baby she cannot do it. She feels fear and insecurity. The lack of self-confidence is a soft skill that she does not have.

We all had teachers along our life, some good, some bad and a few excellent. The lack of empathy, generosity, reasoning among other soft skills makes the difference between being a good or a bad professional.

A manager that does not have the necessary technical skills is not a good manager. A manager who doesn't have some important soft skills will never be a good manager.

A manager can have the best analytical thinking to solve problems but if patience, active listening, creativity, and other skills are not present, he will not be able to solve the problem by having the best analytical thinking.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Crisis is an extreme form of change. Technical skills in time of crisis are necessary as they refer to practical and job-related skills. They are specific skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to perform a specific task or role. There are three types of skills that are essential for a successful management – technical skills, conceptual skills, and human or interpersonal skills. In time of crisis managers need to embrace their full potential (of management skills) and guide the works, the people, so that short and medium-term solutions are quickly found. It is necessary that they convey confidence and assertiveness in their decisions, because people are looking at them, are relying on them.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to plan ahead.
- 2 I find myself stressed when I have to coordinate the work (of an entire department).
- 3 I am able to communicate effectively with team members.
- 4 I have some difficulties in coordinating teams due to my lack of patience to repeat myself.
- 5 I am able to manage projects.
- 6 I can clearly allocate human resources to several projects.
- 7 I have difficulties to think strategically when I am in a stressful situation.
- 8 I often feel the need to get advises from other managers regarding strategic issues.
- 9 I have no patience to manage conflicts between employees/colleagues.

10 I often find myself revising my strategy and goals to achieve.

11 I often find myself having difficulties in concluding all the tasks on time.

12 I am able to adapt rapidly to situations.

#### 2.4.14 Troubleshooting management

The ability to adopt a systematic approach towards identifying and then solving a problem or issue at hand is referred to as one is troubleshooting skills. In simple words, troubleshooting skills are the problem solving abilities of a person.

Troubleshooting can be defined as the analyses and solving of serious problems for a company or other organisation (Merriam-Webster).

Troubleshooting is the process of solving problems. Ideal problem solving skills mean that one should start by gathering as much information as possible in order to define the actual problem, and provide the best possible solution, generating and evaluating all possible solutions. Then, it is important to follow up and check whether or not the problem is actually solved. Depending on the level of development of troubleshooting skills, the success in preventing problems from occurring is higher. "Problem seekers are usually more creative than problem avoiders".

Troubleshooting skills are important in any organisation due to the need to:

- identify problems;
- build a common solution (if possible build it in teams) and;
- make a better future a possibility.

In summary, troubleshooting is "Identifying and prioritizing problems; sort out the many facets of a problem; proactively contribute with ideas/answers regarding the problem while considering respective consequences; ability to solve novel and ill-defined problems in complex and real-world settings."

#### Significance in times of crisis

Troubleshooting is also being able to identify the impact of a crisis in solving problems. It is a process which starts by identifying the elements of a problem (existing situation, desired outcomes, stakeholders). It is necessary to use specific tools to solve complex problems, and also to use group problem solving techniques. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of troubleshooting.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to identify a problem.
- 2 I can outline the main elements of a problem.
- 3 I often feel that I am not able to explain to employees/colleagues the changes needed to solve the problem.
- 4 I am able to identify the necessary resources to solve a problem/situation.
- 5 I am able to list the priorities, order and sequences in a problem.
- 6 I find it difficult to be creative when faced with difficult problems/situations.
- 7 I often find myself having difficulties in communicate my decisions.
- 8 I make it a habit to solve problems alone.
- 9 I spend more time than I should trying to get a common solution to the problem/situation.
- 10 I am able to conduct an effective research.
- 11 I have problems on finding a consensus due to the lack of trust (on colleagues/employees).
- 12 My organisation/department doesn't function whenever there is a problem to solve.

## 2.5 Organizational skills

### 2.5.1 Cluster description

Organizational skills are skills that allow you to use your resources efficiently and effectively. Being organized means you manage your time, energy and workspace well and can accomplish all your assigned tasks successfully. Organizational skills can take different forms depending on your particular workplace and job title, but they typically involve maintaining an orderly workspace, meeting deadlines and communicating well with your team.

Organizational skills are a set of techniques used by an individual to facilitate the efficiency of future-oriented learning, problem-solving, and task completion.

Organization requires the integration of several elements to reach a planned goal.

**Organizational values** represent the direction of joint action - what is important to us, invaluable and what we all stand for in the work or planned implementation activities. They determine the desired, important behaviors in a particular organisation, common beliefs and principles that contribute to better cooperation and more effective achievement of goals. Those who live the values of the organisation in their work or activities and are aware of why this is good for them, see more meaning in the work they do.

**Competences** are the ability to effectively use knowledge and other abilities: personal characteristics, talents, personal motives, patterns of thinking, knowledge, skills, experience and thus values. Competences result in the individual ability of the employee to perform a certain job efficiently and with quality. It is extremely important for the implementation of more complex tasks that we have the appropriate competencies. A competent person knows what needs to be done, knows how to do it and does it effectively.

The presence or the level of development of competence is manifested only through effective behavior. When defining competencies for a certain field of work, it is therefore important to define behaviors - that is, how these competencies are concretely manifested at work, how "competent employees" behave. Namely: without defining key behaviors, competencies are practically useless, as we do not know how they are reflected in the concrete behavior of employees. Conversely, employees do not know what behaviors to train in order to develop a particular competency.

### 2.5.2 Adaptability and flexibility

Change comes to our lives as a result of a crisis, as a result of choice or by a chance. In all three situations, we are facing the choice – do we make a change or not? In crisis situations, we actually have no influence over planned and conscious decision-making. The situation surprises us and adjustments are needed. These are often the cause of many emotional and even health problems. We cannot avoid the unexpected events (crisis) in our lives, as it is these events that challenge us and force us to step out of our comfort zone. If we ignore the challenge of change, on personal level we deny also the opportunity to learn and grow.

Our resilience in life can become only stronger when we accept change and manage the challenges in a positive way. Coping skills are the methods a person uses to deal with difficult and stressful situations. They may help a person to face a situation, take action and be flexible and persistent in solving problems

Adaptability and flexibility are two of the very important qualities, highly seeking in various working sectors and under diverse conditions. Both terms simply mean adaptation to certain circumstances or triggers (external and internal).

Adaptability is a willingness to change or confront your own perceptions or ideas. Flexibility is more an ability to “walk toward others” and meet them halfway. Both are becoming more important in our everyday rapid changing societies and or workplaces and according to Forbes are among the eight skills people will need in the future workplace.

The others are: empathy, humility, transparency, competent communication, emotional intelligence and commitment to a vision.

In the field of social sciences and in all spheres of helping professions and activities, including volunteering, the skills are very highly required and represented.

#### Types of Adaptability Skills

Adaptability can be defined as the ability to be creative and flexible in new situations. It is an important survival skill and it is often seen as a personality trait. Some people are more adaptable, and the others are more struggling. Accepting the uncertainty of the future means planning one step at the time. Taking small steps out of big problems, which undoubtedly pandemic is, means differentiating between the things we can control and can't control and in this way somehow cultivating adaptability in ourselves by learning it as a skill.

As a soft skill, adaptability requires a number of others soft skills in order to be applied successfully.

- Ability to learn (for those with developed adaptability skills, failure is just part of learning);
- Persistence (build more positive, encouraged and focused attitude, e.g. motivation, resilience);
- Resourcefulness (search and find new resources and techniques) by demonstrating creativity, problem solving, initiative;
- Curiosity (one is not afraid of ideas, suggestions) is demonstrated in investigation, open-mindedness)
- Analytical skills
- Strategic thinking
- Negotiation
- Communication (oral, written)

#### Types of Flexibility Skills

Adapting to change requires flexibility. In the pandemic crisis, with all challenges, difficult circumstances, overall uncertainties people are facing complexity in change (physical, psychological, mental, medical, etc.). Flexibility and adaptability are the requirements. Many social researches are pointing out the necessity of social and emotional skills that will enable this process. Rigid personality traits and emotionally illiterate inability to develop certain level of resilience can lead to more serious mental distress and even disorder.

To prevent that we point out three types of flexibility that help to adapt to change:

1. Cognitive Flexibility – the ability to use different thinking strategies and mental frameworks;
2. Emotional flexibility – the ability to dealing with one's own emotions and emotions of others;
3. Dispositional Flexibility – the ability to remain optimistic and at the same time realistic.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Adaptation and flexibility are extremely important skills in working with people and in helping professions in general. When recruiting volunteers, both skills are an important recognized category for working in exceptional circumstances and under special conditions.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to shift gears with minimal complaints.
- 2 My view of myself and my world is characterized by optimism and confidence.
- 3 My failures present opportunities for innovation.
- 4 I can readily imagine new uses for old ideas.
- 5 I recognize myself as someone who is able to change his/her position and modify him/herself accordingly
- 6 I am able to make concessions in my decisions if this allows an agreement to be reached.
- 7 I seek other peoples' opinion.

### 2.5.3 Cooperation

Cooperation is essential for almost all aspects of life and work, and almost every imaginary job in a company means at least some joint efforts of team members to work together. Thus, cooperation in most sectors of the working world is essential. The definition of the word “cooperation” refers to working by working with someone else to create something or create something.

Collaborative skills enable employees to connect productively with other co-workers. Successful cooperation requires a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Employers typically look for employees who work effectively as part of a team and are willing to balance personal accomplishments with group goals.

#### Types of Cooperation

1. Direct Cooperation – represents all those activities in which people do the same things together. For example, plying together, working together, carrying a load together or pulling the car out of mud together. The essential character of this kind of cooperation is that people do such identical function which they can also do separately. This type of cooperation is voluntary e.g., cooperation between husband and wife, teacher and student, master and servant etc.
2. Indirect Cooperation – in this type of cooperation are included those activities in which people do different tasks together towards a common end. This cooperation is based on the principle of the division of labour. People perform different functions but for the attainment of the common objective.

Cooperation is the most elementary form of social process without which society cannot exist. According to Kropotkin, it is so important in the life of an individual is that it is difficult to survive without it. Cooperation is the foundation of our social life. Cooperation for human beings is both a psychological and social necessity. The physical mental and even the spiritual needs of the individual remain unsatisfied if he does not agree to cooperate with others. Cooperation helps society to progress. The idea of cooperating in the field of work, projects, tasks or providing services in the field of volunteering seems simple. But it is undoubtedly much more than that.

If you want to collaborate with others, be sure to include all the elements of successful collaboration:

1. Clear definitions and agreements on the role of partners in the cooperation process.
2. Open communication in groups to exchange information needed to carry out tasks.
3. Agree on objectives and methods for completing projects or tasks. Do not continue until the agreements of all team members have been confirmed.
4. Recognition and respect for the contribution of all participants.
5. Identification of obstacles and problem solving in the cooperation process.
6. The goals of the group are above personal satisfaction and / or recognition. It is crucial that the desired results of the project or task are brought to the forefront - not individual goals.
7. Willingness to apologize for any wrong steps, directions, or decisions.

In the processes of cooperation, we include a number of important communication and organisational elements, such as:

- active listening to group members
- negotiating roles that take advantage of individual benefits
- analysis of problems without blaming
- finding consensus on goals and processes for successful execution of tasks
- delegation of tasks through open discussion
- willingness to find solutions to problems
- facilitating group discussion
- identifying barriers to success
- investing the time and energy needed to complete tasks
- maintaining a sense of humor whenever possible

- heard perspective of quieter co-workers
- meeting deadlines for individual contributions
- recognition of contributions from other contributors
- recognition of strengths and weaknesses of employees
- selection of compatible partners in the implementation of the task
- sharing feelings of frustration or dissatisfaction when they arise
- respect among team members
- taking responsibility for mistakes
- keep employees informed about project / task development
- striving to fulfill group commitments.

Although cooperation in today's workplace is often described as necessity of "soft skills" application, it is just as important as hard skills such as educational background and / or technical knowledge. And while productive collaborative skills may not be innate to some individuals, they can be easily learned and practiced to perfection.

#### Significance in times of crisis

A major determinant of how societies and individuals handle crisis like pandemic is cooperation. Particularly in crisis voluntary organisations and volunteers need to pull together cross-functional perspectives to alleviate rapid changes, complex problems that have long-term implications.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to actively listen to others
- 2 I am able to analyse problems without blaming.
- 3 I am always meeting deadlines for individual contribution.
- 4 I am respected among team members.
- 5 I am striving to fulfil group commitments.
- 6 I take full responsibility for my mistakes.
- 7 I am willing to find solutions to the problems.
- 8 I am able to negotiate roles that take advantage of individual benefits.

#### 2.5.4 Planning and situational assessment

Planning is setting planning goals and tasks for the planning period based on forecasting and defining the necessary resources for their realization. The result of planning is a plan, which most often takes the form of a written document. The planning goal is the result that the association wants to achieve during the planning period.

Planning can be defined as a future-oriented human activity. It covers the process of thinking about the future possibilities and dangers that the society may face. We can say that this is an organized way to reduce the uncertainty and business risk of the association in the future. Planning or thinking about the future in parallel with thinking about the past and the present is a complex activity that aims to actively influence future events in order to lead them to the future desired state of the company. How to achieve the greatest possible business performance and how to reduce the risk of future business decisions - these are the two main reasons for serious planning in the company. Planning, as the first function of management, is a continuous process that ensures the necessary changes to plans and the preparation of new ones based on feedback, including control.

In order to make the preparation for planning as concrete, efficient and, above all, successful as possible, it is good to follow a few recommendations:

1. Goals setting – students who set goals and are tasks oriented invest their time in ways that need to achieve their goals;
2. Reduce distraction – put away unnecessary distraction from environment and / or social media;
3. Set time limits – allocate specific times to tasks and then stick to those times. When time runs out move on to the next task; monitor your time and set deadlines;
4. Reward achievement - when students achieve goals it is important they are rewarded for their efforts in managing their time effectively;
5. Master the schedule

Strategic planning includes assessing the company's essential problems (threats) and opportunities, checking and establishing the basic concepts of the company's development, providing opportunities for the company's long-term business success and predicting likely business results. Based on strategic planning, the company decides on its growth, makes short-term - tactical and operational - decisions, responds to changes and demands of the environment and, if necessary, reorganizes operations.

Tactical planning is linked to strategic plans, while taking into account the company's operations in the past year and taking into account all important changes in the internal (within the company) and external environment (in the environment that has an impact on the company's operations). Since the plan is designed for the short term (business or calendar year), we can assess the impact on the company's operations with considerable certainty (more than with long-term planning) and predict the development of events based on the decisions made.

Operational planning is limited to shorter periods of time, and its basic tasks are to ensure the continuity of the planning process and the greatest possible short-term (monthly, quarterly, half-yearly) performance of the association. The subject of operational planning of business functions are individual business functions in the company (sales, procurement, production, finance, etc.), and the planning criterion is the optimal utilization of given capacities.

All strategies are just a piece of paper if not implemented properly. We often hear people complaining about procrastination. This is one of the most common reasons for task failure. Timely execution of priority tasks becomes our main step in planning.

The daily work plan allows us to determine the course of the day and thus gradually progress towards our goals. Every day counts both urgent and important tasks that need to be balanced, starting with the most important tasks before everyone else. Breaking your goals into pieces makes it easier to progress and achieve them. We also suggest that you divide the time into "focus" days and preparation days. Preparing for task planning is extremely important from this point of view.

One of the very useful planning tools is the so-called Eisenhower matrix, which is presented below:

### The Eisenhower Decision Matrix

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>	<b>DO</b> Do it now	<b>DECIDE</b> Schedule a time to do it
<b>Not important</b>	<b>DELEGATE</b> Who can do it for you?	<b>DELETE</b> Eliminate it

Planning decisions are often made quickly; sometimes in the absence of a thoughtful analysis of available data. A Situational Assessment is a systematic process to gather, analyse, synthesize and communicate data to inform planning decisions. Information from a situational assessment can be used to inform the goals, objectives, target audiences and activities of a different sectors' strategies.

#### Six strategic steps for conducting a situational assessment:

##### Step 1: Identify key questions to be answered

The first step in a situational assessment is to determine what you need to inform planning decisions. Use the three broad questions (and sub-questions) to shape the direction of the situational assessment and develop your research questions:

1. What is the situation?
2. What influences are making the situation better and worse?
3. What possible actions can you take to address the situation?

### Step 2: Develop a data gathering plan

Questions you develop in the first step will determine data needed. Too much data can become overwhelming. Ensure your data gathering plan includes diverse types of data (e.g. community social or health status indicators, environmental scans, or best practices); different methods of data collection (e.g. surveys, document review, and literature review); and varied sources of data (e.g. partner organisations, community, umbrella of voluntary organisations and/or government).

### Step 3: Gather the data

Now that you have identified the research questions and developed a data gathering plan, the next step is to collect data. It is important to note that there are two types of data collection - primary and secondary data collection. Primary data is data that you and your situational assessment team collect yourselves; secondary data is collected by someone else; for example, by the provincial or federal government, a researcher, or a partner organisation.

### Step 4: Organize, synthesize and summarize the data

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis or a Force Field Analysis can help to determine to detect or/and improve the situation.

### Step 5: Communicate the information

Colleagues, partner organisations and decision makers are all interested in your findings. Therefore, it is important to communicate key findings to each of your stakeholders in a manner that is understandable to each distinct audience.

### Step 6: Consider how to proceed with planning

It is now time to utilize your findings and decide on your next steps. Consider what are your next steps in the planning process. Could you proceed, or must revisit research questions, project scope or resources.

A situational assessment, although time consuming, is an important part of planning an evidence informed program. The steps, highlighted above, simplify the process into easily manageable, strategic tasks.

### Significance in times of crisis

A volunteer, especially in times of crisis, needs a range of knowledge, skills, and competencies developed at a high enough level to master the field of volunteering works successfully. As volunteering becomes more specific and increasingly deman-

ding (new target user groups, the impact of different cultures, health status, social status, material status, Etc.), key skills, including planning as an important organisational skill, is crucial. Last but not least, the acquired skill from volunteering are also transferable to other sectors.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I do the most important tasks at my best time during the day.
- 2 I avoid meetings that are time wasters.
- 3 I don't procrastinate.
- 4 I use organized weekly/monthly time plan.
- 5 I make a list of my strengths and weaknesses before I start planning
- 6 I have alternative plans up my sleeve in case of setbacks or pitfalls
- 7 I make plans as per my understanding and do not look for opportunities or resources
- 8 I take the suggestions of my team in formulating a plan
- 9 I keep my team informed about all my plans, strategies and available opportunities
- 10 I am not afraid to take risks
- 11 Before sketching out a plan, I look for gaps and issues that might cause possible setbacks to my plan
- 12 I generate solutions through brainstorming and discussing with team members

## 2.5.5 Prioritization and effectiveness

Prioritization is a key skill that you need to make the best use of your own efforts and those of your team. It helps you allocate your time where it's most needed, freeing you and your team members from tasks that can be addressed later.

Prioritizing helps you allocate your time where it's most needed, freeing you and your team members from tasks that can be addressed later. By knowing how to prioritize you can stay on track with commitments.

Prioritization can also be a challenge when you're working in a group, because each team member wants to have a say in what's most important. Knowing how to prioritize your tasks is an essential skill, because all of us have demands on our time and attention. With good prioritization (and careful management of reprioritized tasks) you can bring order to chaos, massively reduce stress, and move towards a successful conclusion.

At a simple level, you can prioritize based on time constraints, on the potential profitability or benefit of the task you're facing, or on the pressure you're under to complete a job.

Most people prioritize what they need to do based on each task's urgency and importance – they focus on the most pressing, important jobs first, and do the others once these are complete. Although this is a good start, the reality is that there are sometimes other factors to consider. So using specific prioritization tools can make more sense.

When we talk about setting priorities (prioritizing), we are also talking about efficiency. Efficiency generally defines the extent to which time, effort, and cost are well spent on a planned task or purpose. Working effectively is important. In a more general sense, it is the ability to do things well, successfully, and without waste.

Below are eight tips to effectively prioritize your tasks:

### 1. To-Do List

At the beginning of each day or week, create a to-do list that reflects what you want to get done. Try and set realistic expectations/goals too so you avoid disappointment if you haven't completed your tasks by the time you set.

### 2. Regular review

By regularly reviewing your workload, you'll likely tick off several completed list

items, giving you that feeling of accomplishment. Checking things off your list feels good and motivates you to do more.

### 3. Concentrate on the most crucial

Follow the 80:20 rule of workloads; 80 per cent of our work contributes less than 20 per cent of its value, so focus on the most important 20 per cent in order to complete the most crucial tasks. This should increase your performance at work as the most important jobs are complete.

### 4. Set realistic deadlines

It is important to accurately estimate the time each task will take you to do in order to achieve and gain that sense of satisfaction. If you are too optimistic, this will only lead to disappointment.

### 5. Allow time for interruptions

This may be difficult to allow for as you don't know how many interruptions you will have but if you are likely to have some during a particular time of day then do the more urgent work during the times you are less likely to get interrupted. That way you can focus better and complete the tasks quicker.

### 6. Structure your task loading

It is best to deal with each item on your list one at a time so you don't chop and change between different tasks

### 7. Don't let your inbox drive your workload

Allocate a time to check your inbox to avoid interruptions each time you receive an email.

### 8. Keep a log of your work (tasks)

By keeping a log of your work, you will learn how long each task you do takes which will help when you plan your week ahead, especially when setting realistic time scales for your all-important to-do list.

### Significance in times of crisis

During a crisis, cognitive overload looms; information is incomplete, interests and priorities may clash, and emotions and anxieties run high. In the field of working with people in crisis situations, efficiency and prioritization are therefore even more important, as many factors in the aid process are especially dependent on these two skills.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.
- 2 In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
- 3 I am able to successfully overcome many challenges.
- 4 I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
- 5 Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
- 6 Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well
- 7 I easily meet deadlines.
- 8 I manage my workload effectively.
- 9 I am able to use time wisely and avoid distractions.
- 10 I have no problem adapting to change and re-evaluate my priorities.
- 11 I am able to control stress when dealing with multiple tasks.
- 12 I use to deal with the important tasks first and put secondary tasks aside.

### 2.5.6 Time management

When we talk about time management, we can say that it is about skills which allow you to prioritize tasks, avoid distractions and maintain focus. In the work area, including voluntary work, it helps with setting and meeting deadlines, working on one task at the time and delegating responsibilities. The essential part how to manage ourselves is by managing our time. There are many reasons why time management is important. One of them is so called “positive cycle” that can dramatically improve many aspects in our life.

Time management is a technique for using time more effectively. It is about organizing professional and private tasks based on their urgency and importance. The first is to take care of the most urgent and important tasks, followed by activities that are not necessary, but still important. By setting priorities in your schedule, you can focus your time and energy where they are most needed.

Successful time management involves conscious planning and thoughtful decision making. It also involves keeping focused and prioritizing important tasks instead of derailing unimportant distractions.

Self-management is one of the strategies with which we set work goals and priorities and achieve them effectively in a certain period of time. In fact, it is a process made up of seven basic elements:

- Time analysis and evaluation (time awareness)
- Planning (lists of tasks to be done)
- Setting goals and priorities
- Scheduling
- Organization
- Establishing new and improved time habits and
- Monitoring (time, activities, etc.).

#### Frequent time management traps

When you're trying to manage time, it often happens that you get out of the way. To improve time management, you should try to avoid the following common pitfalls:

- Trap no. 1: Don't make a to-do list. If you don't know what needs to be done, you can't.
- Trap no. 2: Multitasking. Contrary to popular belief, multitasking is actually less productive than focusing on each task at a time. This is because our brains are not equipped to perform two tasks at the same time that require high-level brain functions. Some studies suggest that multitasking can lower our IQ because our attention span is split, and can even damage our brains.
- Trap no. 3: You don't know how long a certain task takes. Can you write a report in one hour or will you need three hours? If you don't know how much time a task takes, you can't effectively manage the Seven Skills for Successful Time Management.

#### Significance in times of crisis

Learning how to balance assignments and number of deadlines while you are working as volunteer will make it easier to adjust to possible future collaborative work environment. Having the skill of time-management means for the clients with whom the volunteers work, establishing cooperation and a level of trust that the mutual agreements will be realized. This is especially true in times of ongoing crisis.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I put off tasks that are not important.
- 2 I prioritize my 'to-do' list.
- 3 I find my plans are hindered by interruptions.
- 4 I enjoy quality time with my family and friends.
- 5 I delegate tasks that can be done by others.
- 6 I find myself asking for extensions to deadlines in order to complete a task.
- 7 I break complex tasks into small steps.
- 8 I allow buffer time in my schedule to deal with the unexpected.
- 9 I am stressed about deadlines and commitments.
- 10 Distractions keep me from working on critical tasks.
- 11 I have to take work home in order to get it done.
- 12 The tasks I work on are the ones with the highest priority.

## 2.6 Personal skills

### 2.6.1 Cluster description

Personal skills are the skills which relate to the approach of peoples' actions and their manner of expressing. They are related with person's behaviour and everyday attitudes in different fields of his actions, activities and personal involvements.

Personal skills relate to how you express yourself. You can quickly tell the level of an individual's personal skills by observing how they interact with others in the workplace and everyday life. A person with deficient of these skills is not easy to deal with, and their presence can cause a rift in a team. It is important to mention that it is much easier to work with people with well-developed personal skills and consequently contribute to creating a productive and effective environment.

In short, we can say that personal skills are things we are good at – our strengths, abilities and attributes.

The latter is especially important when the person is involved working in the field of social activities with volunteering. And undoubtedly, in crisis situations, well developed personal skills are the basis for volunteering activities. This is also the basis for acquiring, developing, and consolidating other social skills that are important for crisis situations.

A person with well-developed personal skills:

- says directly what she thinks or feels
- is able to listen carefully what you have to say without interruptions
- treats you honestly, respectfully
- behaves consistently
- you can rely on her courtesy and professionalism
- is open to your comments, makes sure to understands
- works with you to solve the problem
- is responsible for her actions
- is flexible and willing to adapt or make changes for the benefits of the team
- recognizes and confirms your strengths and contribution
- supports you in your ideas and is willing to contributes to build them

The SoCrATest cluster on personal skills contains four skills: self-awareness, critical thinking, self-motivation, positivity & optimism. Basis for the choice of useful skills Based on the need to understand crisis situations in the performance of voluntary work and as such does not belong to a specific professional approach in crisis management. It basically refers to a useful basis for acquiring soft skills for the general population, which is involved in providing services to voluntary and other organisations in crisis management and on this basis acquires the necessary and useful soft skills.

### 2.6.2 Critical thinking

Critical thinking allows you to make better decisions. It consists of mental processes of the ability to judge well, analysis and evaluation. It includes possible processes of reflecting in order to form a solid judgment that reconciles evidence with common sense. Critical thinking clearly involves synthesis, evaluation, and reconstruction of thinking, in addition to analysis. Critical thinkers gather information from all senses, verbal and/or written expressions, reflection, observation, experience and reasoning. Critical thinking has its basis in intellectual criteria that go beyond subject-matter divisions and which include: clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance and fairness.

Thinking critically does not mean being blind we accept all the knowledge gained, but that we know how to evaluate them properly. Is something true or good just because most believe it to be true or good? Critical thinking is the search for a deeper truth. The critical thinker asks, "Is that true?" Critical thinking is the search for deeper reasons for certain actions. It refers to one of the basic lifelong competencies - learning to think.

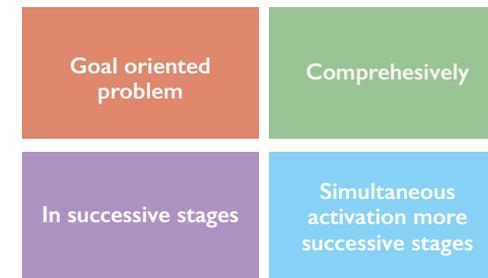
Critical thinking and learning is one of the most important activities in adulthood.

During this period, critical thinking is connected with our whole life, with the whole the spectrum of different areas in which we demonstrate critical thinking with originality, intransigence and the ability to find new alternatives.

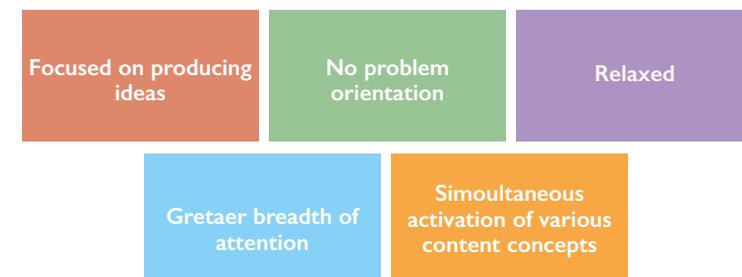
We often associate or confuse critical thinking with logical, creative, or lateral thinking. However, the process of critical thinking is different from those listed shape. It contains many components, including mental and emotional, which, for example, significantly separates it from logical thinking.

Above all, the purpose of critical thinking is important in this: we are trying to see that our thinking, acting or behaving so far (or thinking and behaving others) is not necessarily the only correct or even the most appropriate. Through critical judgment, we discover new alternatives, from which we then choose the most appropriate option for us, depending on the goals we want to achieve.

In general, we can talk about two types of thinking: convergent and divergent thinking. Convergent thinking is characterized by the verticality of thinking, the item of which is integrity and goal-orientation, usually from several options to the only correct solution.



**Divergent thinking**, on the other hand, is equated with creative thinking, which is characterized by flexibility and a multitude of ideas in a short period of time. Such thinking is lateral or horizontal, which could be said to be a conscious, deliberate trigger of intuitive thinking.

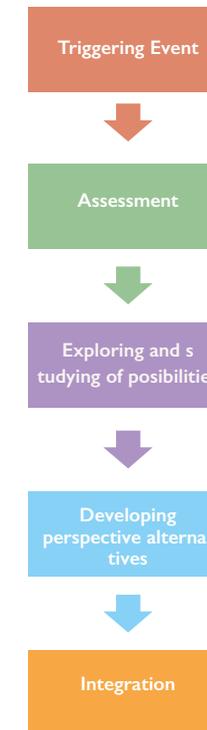


How do we find out that this is critical thinking? What processes are taking place then?

1. Critical thinking is a productive and positive activity: When we think critically, we perceive different behaviours, values, social structures, and other forms of occurrence, while being aware that other people are also convinced of the correctness of their actions and thinking.
2. Critical thinking is a process, not a result. Critical thinking is a constant questioning of predictions; we always doubt, even about whether we have reached the highest level of critical thinking.
3. The occurrence of critical thinking depends on the circumstances in which it takes place. Critical thinking emerges primarily as thinking (expressed in writing or speaking) or as concrete action that has different outcomes in the environment.
4. Critical thinking can be triggered by positive and negative events. The prevailing view is often that critical thinking is the result of traumatic or tragic events we experience; and in doing so we question the correctness of our previous thinking. It is true that such events are more often a cause for reflection, but it is precisely the development of critical thinking that allows us to reduce the number of such cases. However, critical thinking is also triggered by pleasant events, during which we also wonder about the appropriateness of our previous performances.
5. Critical thinking is emotional and rational. Although critical thinking can be understood as a strictly rational process, emotions are actually essential in it. Namely, we often start solving problems differently when something happens that makes us sad, angry, and we feel resentment, joy, resentment and the like.

The process of critical thinking always takes place through stages, stages that lead the individual to the end result - a change in behaviour, thinking or some other decision.

The stages of critical thinking can be called differently, but they are mostly the same activities. Stephan Brookfield named them as follows:



Characteristics of critical thinkers:

- They are independent.
- They trust in themselves and in their thinking.
- They are future-oriented.
- They often use alternative approaches to experimentation.
- They look at the problem from different angles.
- They are interested in different areas.
- They reject established ways of solving problems.
- They have developed lateral thinking.

Critical thinking is important in all areas of our lives. It gives us new perspectives on already known phenomena, raises doubts about generally accepted truths and opens new paths for us. Based on this, we can say that in today's age of rapid change, it is especially important on issues of socio-political aspect.

### Significance in times of crisis

By thinking critically – examining all sides of an issue, event or circumstances, reflecting on past experiences, and listening to what client (user) or other group members have to say – you could arrive at a breakthrough that moves your personal development forward in new and exciting ways. Critical thinking is a necessary important personality skill in volunteering in the times of crisis.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to highly demonstrate assertive and decisive ability when finding solutions for problems.
- 2 I know how to clarify problems and solutions easily so that other people can understand.
- 3 I usually take in into consideration different and varied perspectives when solving problems.
- 4 I am able to examine the implications and possible consequences to any particular action carefully.
- 5 I gather all the required facts and figures before starting to solve a particular problem.
- 6 I always seek to ask questions as a form of finding a sound basis to solving a problem.
- 7 I show less flexibility when it comes to changing strategies while dealing with certain problem.
- 8 I don't feel comfortable and confident when seeking help or advice whenever stuck on solving any issue.
- 9 I find it challenging to arrive at a concrete conclusion after undertaking any evaluation.
- 10 I am able to present ideas and points in a logical order or outline.

### 2.6.3 Positivity and optimism

We understand positivity in several personality traits, like thinking in an optimistic way, looking for solutions, expecting success and results, focusing and making life happier. It is positive state of mind where you:

- don't take things too personally;
- enjoy the present moment;
- do not worry much about the future;
- focus instead of thinking about the past and difficulties rather to doing and achieving (relocation and reframing);
- are tolerant, happy and good-natured.

Emotions are associated with positivity: inspiration, joy, love.

Thoughts are associated with positivity: thoughts of courage, success, certainty, self-esteem.

Positive psychology deals with the study and strengthening of the positive aspects of human life and mentality: issues of happiness, contentment, meaning, optimism, hope, perseverance, resilience, mental well-being, and other important positive aspects of human life and experience. It creates new insights into the importance of positive aspects of life for quality of life and mental and physical health; on the other hand, it develops methods and strategies to strengthen life skills and improve the quality of life. However, it should be emphasized that positive psychology is not a "happy psychology" that would strive to create constantly happy people who will always smile and always smile. Sickness, distress, pain, loss and trauma are a necessary companion of human life, as well as fear, anger, anxiety and other less pleasant emotions, as well as various mental distresses, problems and disorders.

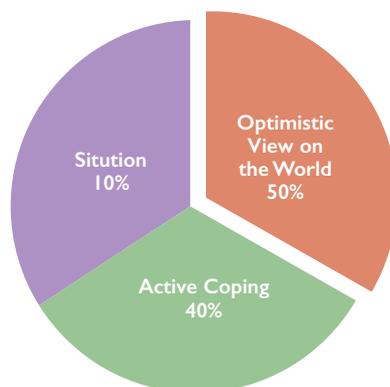
Positive psychology does not have the illusion that it can eliminate the less pleasant aspects of human life and experience: but it can do much to make us happier, more optimistic and better equipped to deal with less pleasant events and feelings when they happen - and it's easier to beat them.

The dictionary definition of optimism is 'hopefulness and confidence about the future or the success of something' while positivity is 'the practice of being, or tendency to be positive or optimistic in attitude.

An optimistic view of the world is the basis for satisfaction with your life. If I judge for myself that I have enough strength, resources and support in my current life situation, then I successfully use emotional energy to achieve goals and live in accordance with my values. Optimists have a characteristic pattern of thinking where they highlight what they have an impact on, focus on the here and now, and describe their future with positive expectations.

Active coping is the basis of behaviour to experience pleasant emotions. It is not enough to just be sure that we will succeed. The next step is very important, so that we can actively deal with the situation. In active coping, we control the situation to a greater extent and influence each subsequent outcome. Active coping is the basis for positive emotions. Positive emotions, on the other hand, are a new fuel for active coping.

The situation is represented by objective circumstances. We never evaluate only these, we add subjective perception to them. Therefore, the situation usually brings only 10 percent of the feeling of personal satisfaction. It would be different only if a very “catastrophic” thing happens to us, which is important for us subjective exchange (e.g., your loved one dies). In such a case, the impact is much greater, but it is true that such situations are very rare.



Learned optimism is a concept that says we can change our attitude and behaviors by recognizing and challenging our negative self-talk, among other things. It is the opposite of learned helplessness: a phenomenon whereby individuals believe they are incapable of changing their circumstances after repeatedly experiencing a stressful event.

Despite facing more difficult trials, optimists believe that such a trial or defeat is only a temporary obstacle. The ordeal is actually a challenge for them, and in order to overcome it, they work even harder. The concept of learned optimism advocates the fact that we can learn optimism. In doing so, we recognize our basic thoughts that influence behavior, and in the process of learning optimism, we actively challenge transitional beliefs.

Can we learn optimism?

Optimism can be learned by an individual, even if he does not have such a positive view of the world. Learning optimism can be a real stimulus for us, because with the right amount of effort we can look at the world and circumstances from a much more positive side.

Cognitive-behavioral techniques and rational emotional-behavioral therapies are approaches that are optimal for learning the optimism illustrated by the ABCDE model.

**A - Adversity** - a circumstance that requires a response. For some people, distress due to a problem is the end point. They wonder what the benefit of effort is and tell themselves that they can't keep going and try, and then they give up. For others, the hardships are fair, as they are just a series of interesting challenges that then often lead to success.

**B - Belief** - how I explain the event. Beliefs are the ones that affect how we interpret distress, and it is necessary to separate thoughts from feelings.

**C - Consequence** - ways of behaving, reacting and feeling. In the aftermath, we try to think about what consequences and behaviors more precisely arose because of the beliefs we had.

**D - Disputing your Beliefs** - When challenging our beliefs, think about your beliefs and look for examples that prove that those beliefs are wrong. Much of the skill of coping with failure involves learning how we can challenge our first thoughts in response to setbacks. Interpretive habits are so ingrained that learning to effectively challenge these beliefs requires quite a bit of practice.

**E - Energization** - the result of challenging our beliefs. Let's consider how we feel now that we have challenged certain of our beliefs. At the same time, we can feel much more motivated and energetic for the next difficult trials, which we experience step by step as challenges and inspired to continue on the path to our goals.

### The ten principles of well-being

1. Try to look at events as an optimist.
2. Try to plan your time well so that you have time for things that are important to you.
3. Focus on yourself personally important life goals.
4. Think of life as long and pleasant, not as short and tiring.
5. Spend your money on experiences, not material things.
6. Learn to be alert and use and practice a mindset pattern associated with gratitude.
7. Try to be politically open and tolerant of difference.
8. Focus your focus on holistic health, including psychological health.
9. Try to be open in interpersonal relationships and friendly to (new) people.
10. Don't try to be happy, be active in thinking and behaving. Satisfaction and happiness will follow you alone.

**Positive Psychology Interventions:** A great deal of research has been done in supporting a client in applying interventions in positive psychology into their life. The rapists with a deeper understanding of the benefits of these types of interventions can not only help clients return to health or psychosocial homeostasis. They can also help clients lead lives that are more fulfilled.

Positive psychology interventions, or PPIs, are a set of scientific tools and strategies that focus on increasing happiness, wellbeing, and positive cognitions and emotions.

### Significance in times of crisis

Humans are not adapted to the long-term and invisible danger posed by the coronavirus disease epidemic. Virus spread, measures, or restrictions, cause anxiety, stress, loneliness

One of the core elements of positivity in client-oriented approach of help is unconditional positive regards. It (UPR) is a practice by accepting, respecting, and caring about the clients; the volunteer (therapist) should operate from the perspective that clients are doing the best they can in their circumstances and with the skills and knowledge available to them. He/she cultivates the ability to attend sessions with their clients in a non-judgmental and caring capacity.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I take positive attitude toward myself and others.
- 2 I don't give up easily.
- 3 Others feel encouraged after talking to me.
- 4 I have a good sense of humor.
- 5 There's nothing to worry about.
- 6 I enjoy a challenge.
- 7 I am so relaxed.
- 8 My life keeps getting better.
- 9 I state my opinion with confidence.
- 10 My future looks bright.
- 11 I am fun to be with.
- 12 I am comfortable with life.
- 13 I have friends who support me.
- 14 Bad days are rare.
- 15 There is no problem that is hopeless.

### 2.6.4 Self-awareness

The Definition of self-awareness involves being aware of different aspects of Self, like personality traits, feelings and behaviours. It is one of the first components of self-concept.

#### Personality Traits:

Psychological classification of different types of individuals we denote as Personality Types. Sometimes they are distinguished from personality traits – smaller grouping of behavioural tendencies.

People have unique personalities that make them who they are. There are many different types of personality traits, including some that are positive and some that are negative. A personality trait is defined as something about a person that impacts how they tend to think, feel and behave on an ongoing basis. Personality traits are characteristic of enduring behavioral and emotional patterns.

Positive personality traits manifest themselves in many ways. When a person's regular behavior exhibits the same positive attributes time and time again, the associated behaviors become definitive of their character.

The most common positive personality traits are being honest and taking responsibility for one's own actions and decisions. To get along with others adaptability and kindness are great traits, as well compassion, empathy, patience, loyalty, trustworthiness, optimistic, reliable, fair, discreet, respectful, if we mention just few of them.

Consider some of negative attributes we have to emphasize that you and everyone you meet have at least a few negative personality traits as well. For example, propensity for lying, a tendency to be dishonest, rigid, unable to empathize with others, being quick to anger, being disloyal, bossy, self-centered, rude, picky, or disrespectful. For someone working in the field of helping professions, it is first and foremost important to have good mental health conditions across the spectrum. Such person can be described as fully functioning person who tends in his/her personal development to self-actualization.

The fully functioning person is an individual who has "ideal emotional health." Generally, such person will be open to experience, lives with the sense of meaning and purpose, and trust in self and others.

Her self-concept is constantly taking new information and experiences. Such individuals are in touch with their emotions and make a conscious effort to grow as a person.

New scientific outcomes in neuroscience indicate that an area of the brain as the interior cingulate cortex located in the frontal lobe region plays an important role in developing self-awareness. Studies used the brain imaging to show that the region become activated in adults who are self-aware.

Self-awareness is an important component of personal development, which is without a doubt a life-long process. It represents a way for people to assess their skills and qualities, consider their aims in life and set goals in order to maximize and realise their potentials. Surrounding personal development there are many ideas, one of them is the Maslow's process of self-actualisation. He suggests that all individuals have in-built need for personal development. The extent to which individuals are able to develop depends on certain needs being met in the form of hierarchy.

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



The basic human needs have always been the need for food, beverages and body protection, both in clothing and the suitable place. However, in today's complex environment, we need to add to the basic needs the needs for health and social care and education. Satisfying all of these basic human needs is now one of the fundamental human rights (UN Human rights and Freedom declaration).

People today are not just trying to satisfy their basic needs, but also to live in prosperity. It does also mean that people live in a safe, healthy and free environment. Prosperity is a prerequisite for human happiness and its real development. Life in prosperity does not make us happy by itself, but it helps us that we can be happy, satisfied and creative. The prosperity of social community and humanity as a whole should be the ultimate goals of the entire social structure.

### Significance in times of crisis

The level of self-awareness is at a high enough level where a person is aware of their own limitations and strengths. Because he encounters vulnerable individuals in his work, she is able to clearly demarcate herself in relation to the client. In this sense, potential emotional and other abuses that can often result from unplanned and non-intentional manipulations, too tight self-identification with the client's experience, unresolved traumatic events of one's own past, and the like. Therefore, one of the most important skills of client-centered help and support on social level is a sufficiently high level of self-awareness.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I watch how others react to me to understand which of my own behaviours are effective and which are not.
- 2 I can deal calmly, sensitively, and proactively with the emotional displays of others.
- 3 It's easy to understand why other people feel the way they do.
- 4 When I meet some people I am aware of the physical reactions that signal sudden changes in my body.
- 5 I understand why other people feel the way they do.
- 6 When I feel a strong impulse to do something, I usually pause to reflect and decide whether I really want to act on it.
- 7 When I feel angry I can still stay composed.
- 8 I consider my "emotional temperature" before I make important decisions.
- 9 I can identify the emotion I am feeling at any given moment.
- 10 I can show empathy and match my feelings with those of another person in an interaction.
- 11 I think about the emotions behind my actions.

### 2.6.5 Self-motivation

Will, power, driving force, desire, interest, encouragement... All these words can be summed up in one: MOTIVATION. Motivation is the key to our actions. It directs our behaviors and reactions and determines our performance, including perseverance and responsibility. By doing so, it marks our personality and with its power influences us to become what we are. In psychology, motivation is divided into external (extrinsic) and internal (intrinsic). It is important that the motives or desire for a certain activity come from us ourselves. That's when we talk about intrinsic or self-motivation.

It is a term used to describe the characteristics of an individual's behavior in various areas operation. It is the individual's inner excitement that motivates him into a particular activity. It determines perseverance and enables focus in activities on the way to the desired goal or to meet a particular need. Self-motivation is an individual's voluntary, internal striving for the best job (task, action, goal achievement, etc.) possible.

There are quite a few obstacles and problems, we have already mentioned lack of motivation, but what is our motivation related to? Motivation is related to the following elements:

- Needs
- Goals
- Wishes

According to Maslow, people have a hierarchy of needs, which extends from lower needs for survival and security, to higher needs for self-realization or self-actualization. Satisfaction of lower needs is a condition for them to appear higher, for a person to realize his personal potential, activate his natural gifts and use them. It thus satisfies the need for self-realization, which is the culmination of motivation, desire.



**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

There are several means of motivation:

**1. Abilities and talents:** We have greater motivation in areas where we are good or where we have some ability or talent. When does our motivation decline? When there are no expected results.

**2. Achievements, recognitions and feedback:** Definitely the best motivation is to be praised, encouraged and supported. That is when we get even more will and momentum to move forward. If we work hard, learn, work, etc., but there is no achievement, motivation declines. Then it is necessary to find obstacles and find out where the problems come from. It is necessary to gather a lot of strength for inner motivation to walk forward and not give up despite failures and disappointments.

Positive criticism is well-intentioned criticism, with good arguments and is justified. He refuses to harm a man, even if he tells him real facts that can be painful.

Criticism can also be negative. This is when criticism has only one purpose - to harm a person, whether real or not, justified or not. Unfounded criticism is criticism that has no real basis and no real arguments (because I thought so, I said so, etc.).

When is criticism justified?

1. When it is well-intentioned, realistic and positive
2. When it is well-argued (it has enough evidence that it is true)
3. When it follows the general good
4. When it is action-oriented and not personality-particularly

The latter plays an important role. When, for example, a person criticizes another one, he should not direct the criticism at him as a person, but only at his action.

**3. Example of motivators (authority):** Strong motivational means also include motivators themselves. These are people who in any way in different areas want to encourage others, and infuse them with the will and strength to act in life. For a motivator to be good, there has to be authority. Being an authority, however, means that this person has quite a few strong qualities (consistency, kindness, professionalism, empathy, value system, etc.).

Self-motivation ensures forward progress with the projects and activities. It is the ability to take initiative and finish tasks should be completed. Self-motivation as positive motivation, helps you to focus on outcomes that results from accomplishing a task or achieving a certain goal. Self-motivation has a strong link with setting goals. Motivation is useful for many situations in life and can vary as we face challenges, dealing with unexpected situations and care for our emotional and physical health or well-being. It is normal to experience shifts in motivation levels while moving through life.

**Significance in times of crisis**

During a turbulent time like a pandemic, it's easy to feel like we are at the bottom of a pit, lost, and helpless. The daily barrage of news regarding the pandemic can lead to mental fatigue and emotional exhaustion.

Often, people facing crisis situations need more empowerment, either from their internal resources and will, or from an external source from which they can draw internal strength to cope with the crisis and make the necessary adjustments or changes. Strengthening self-motivation is of great importance for maintaining good mental health.

In difficult crisis situations can happen that a person begins to develop a certain distorted image of reality, which, if they last too long or emotionally too strong, can develop into disorders.

Such personality disorders have four defining features which include distorted thinking patterns, problematic emotional responses, over- or under-regulated impulse control, and interpersonal difficulties. Therefore, it is important that both volunteers and helpers know the power of motivation and self-motivation to strengthen personal mental health.

#### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I'm confident in my ability to achieve goals I set for myself.
- 2 I think positively about setting goals and working towards achieving them.
- 3 I work better when there is a deadline.
- 4 I believe that if I work hard and apply my abilities and talents, I will be successful.
- 5 I reward myself when accomplishing significant goals.
- 6 I tend to put forth my best effort so that I feel proud of my work.
- 7 I worry about deadlines and getting things done, which causes stress and anxiety.
- 8 I set challenging goals for myself.
- 9 When an unexpected event threatens or jeopardizes my goal, I tend to walk away, set a different goal, and move in a new direction.
- 10 When doing a job I need a feedback.
- 11 I include others in what I am doing.
- 12 I accept responsibility eagerly.
- 13 I work best when there is some challenge involved.

## 2.7 Social skills

### 2.7.1 Cluster description

The skills of an individual, reflected in interpersonal relations are called social skills. They involve different capabilities of an individual about how he/she approaches, integrates and works in specific circumstances, whether he/she can cooperate and follow rules in the environment, or solve problems that occur in an effective way, and if he/she can communicate with others in an assertive way. The most important topic in so-called social literacy (person trained and/or skilled in social skills) discussions is a list of behaviours which enable and empower people to function well on a personal and professional level.

Traditional education has not focused on teaching individuals to improve their 'social skills', 'communication skills', or 'organisation skills'. But in today's fast changing society we must move from a rigid definition of social skills as conversation skills to a broader understanding of Social Literacy: an individual's ability to successfully and deliberately mediate their world as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners. Social skills are important on a number of different levels.

In general we can say that Social literacy means the presence of social skills, knowledge and positive human values. These support the ability in people to act positively and responsibly in social settings, and also their ability to successfully and deliberately mediate in their world. It is a part of an emotional behaviour awareness in which a person recognizes their emotions before they talk or act.

By definition, these include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competences and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.

The Social Learning Theory (SLT) is one of the most influential learning theories. It states that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. The theory is based on observational learning (or modelling) where a social element is added to the concept of learning, so people (individuals) learn new information and behaviours by watching other people. In modelling, we adopt someone's behaviour as our own. Thoughts, beliefs, morals and feedback all help to motivate humans. By understanding the main concepts of Social Learning Theory, there is a greater understanding of how people can learn new things and develop new behaviours by observing other people.

The learning process appears as a series of cognitive and behavioural processes, like attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

Based on this, it is important to know that social skills can be learned and enhanced at any age. They allow us to modulate emotions, control behaviour, solve social problems and to be responsible, assertive individuals.

Therefore, social skills could also be called “life skills”. Namely, these are skills that we understand in the context of everyday interaction between the individual and the environment. With them, the individual realizes or meets its needs in the social environment. According to modern definitions, these are skills that are essential for quality coexistence and are much more than just communication skills, as they include experiencing the world and other people and systems of beliefs, values and attitudes.

In the process of applying social skills, three dimensions in particular need to be considered. First, the behavioral dimension, which refers to a type of social skill. Second, the personal dimension associated with a person’s cognitive variables. Finally, there is the situational dimension, which relates to the environmental context.

### Types of social skills

#### 1. Basic social skills

Basic social skills are the first skills that people acquire and are essential for interpersonal contact. These skills include the skill to start, maintain and end a conversation, know how to ask questions, and so on.

#### 2. Advanced social skills

These are skills that people learn after acquiring basic social skills. Among the more advanced social skills we find assertiveness, the skill of giving personal opinion, asking for help, giving you and following instructions, etc.

#### 3. Social- emotional skills

They are characterized by being closely associated with the control and recognition of emotions and feelings. These include empathy, respect, etc.

#### 4. Social negotiation skills

They are those social skills that promote conflict management in the right way. These skills include negotiation, conflict resolution, altruism, sharing with others, and so on.

Interpersonal relationships touch each of us. We are constantly surrounded by people with whom we are in various social, work, emotional contacts and relationships. What kind of relationships we have and how we cultivate them greatly affects our well-being and quality of life. Social skills, especially communication, are the basis for regulating relationships in different social situations, and assertiveness helps us to be aware of, express and assert personal interests / desires in a way that is beneficial to us and harmless to others.

For our needs and the basis for the evaluation of social skills in Socratest project, we have placed the following social skills in the field of providing assistance (volunteers, helpers) and acquiring these skills in crisis situations (e.g. pandemic): communication skills, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, resilience, and assertiveness.

### 2.7.2 Communication

Communication with other people is an integral and indispensable part of human life. It is an important activity of every individual since we establish relationships through communication. Communication helps us establish contacts, interpersonal relations and relationships, either social, familial or business. In interpersonal relationships, people, through communication, take turns in passing on experiences and learning from one other.

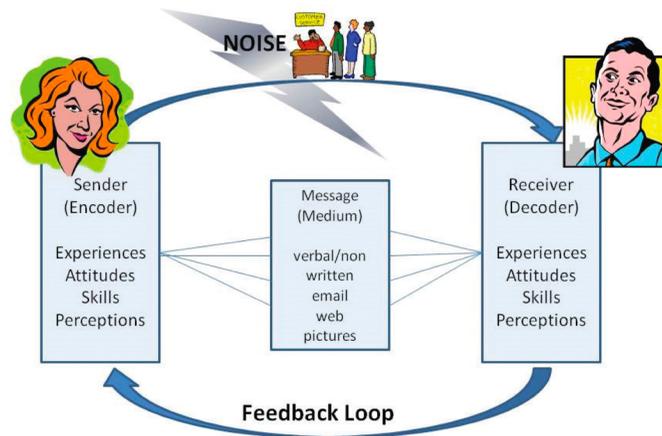
The term communication means a process whereby information and thoughts are transmitted and exchanged. Communication allows people to convey their feelings, thoughts, opinions and expectations.

There is verbal communication, which is communication through words, and non-verbal, which is communication that applies to facial expressions, movement, thoughts and feelings.

There is also a learning process which happens in communication; it means that in conversing with others we acquire new knowledge and skills and are exposed to new viewpoints. Communication, therefore, is not just a means with which to convey information but the main objective is for the information to be heard, understood, accepted and practically applied.

## Communication process

Communication is a two-way process that results in a shared meaning or common understanding between the sender and the receiver.



Communication is a two-way process that results in a shared meaning or common understanding between the sender and the receiver.

The efficient exchanging of information is a skill that requires systematic preparation. Using only speech is not enough, so we need to supplement the message with pictures, drawings and also a number of senses. This type of communication will then be more convincing, the co-speaker will remember it more easily, and it will be better accepted.

This is necessary because people are different and we perceive information differently (e.g. information from the environment is accepted through our five senses – visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory).

Efficient communication is achieved when we accept co-speakers as equals and especially when we respect ourselves and can objectively value ourselves in our environment. With active listening, the listener wishes to understand the co-speakers' feelings and expectations; s/ he wants to understand the co-speakers point of view and doesn't judge the information.

The manner of delivery and speaking is very important because it encompasses 45% of the message perceived by the participants. Communication skills also include the ability to manage time - the speaker is the one who controls the time, not the listeners.

For effective communication it is important to know the following:

**WHO** you are communicating with (it is of great importance to know your audience: who they are, what their age range is, what they already know, how many people will receive your message, etc.)

**WHAT** you are communicating – the communication should be relevant to the subject;

**WHY** - what the goal of your communication is, what you want to achieve;

**WHEN** you will communicate the issue;

**HOW** will you communicate the issue – think about the method you will choose.

For successful communication it is important to follow these guidelines:

- Clear your thoughts before communicating
- Think about the reason for communicating.
- Consider the environment of the communication.
- Plan the communication (consult!).
- Think about the non-verbal messages you send.
- Take the opportunity to communicate something beneficial to the receiver.
- Track and check the communication.
- Make sure your actions support your message.

Difficult Conversations:

A difficult conversation is anything you find hard to talk about. These are conversations that touch on subjects of TRAUMA, HEALTH, RACE, SEXUALITY, POLITICS, RELIGION, GENDER, etc. These are sensitive subjects that can make a person vulnerable - the conversations can be difficult and they require many skills and abilities to deal with them successfully. People should not be afraid of difficult conversations although they present a dilemma: to avoid THEM or to confront with them?

Within difficult conversations there are three different stages we should be aware of and go through:

**First stage** - WHAT HAPPENED? At this stage we need to be mindful of three elements: TRUTH, INTENTION AND BLAME. People get stuck on these points during the conversation and jump to conclusions which lead to conflict.

### 1. The truth assumption

During a conversation we can get trapped in contrasting claims: I am right, you are wrong. 'I am right' sentences are endless BUT everything that concerns the debate 'Am I right' concerns our beliefs, understanding and values. 'I am right' sentences tell us only how we ourselves create the meaning of something and that it does not have any connection with reality. Another person will have their own, completely different reality about the same problem because they interpreted the problem in their own way.

### 2. The intention invention

For this point we deal with the question of intent. Did the person shout at me because they wanted to hurt me or because they wished to more clearly express their opinion? How we understand the intentions of the other person influences the conversation itself. The problem that occurs at this stage is that we believe we know what intentions the other person has. We jump to conclusions, again.

### 3. The blame frame

People often react in this way when they try to absolve themselves of guilt and pass the blame on to another person, situation or another reason. By not judging we gain more time to focus on the real cause of the problem.

**Second stage:** the feelings conversation - what should we do with our emotions? How do we face and control emotions that appear during difficult conversations? People often decide not to talk about their feelings. They are afraid of the reaction, they do not know how to express themselves, and they are afraid that they will be rejected. But the essence of difficult conversations are feelings. Understanding emotions, talking about them, controlling and valuing them are the basic elements of important and difficult conversations.

**Third stage:** the identity conversation - what does this say about me?

At this stage, the questions are: how does the existing problem influence me as a person and what does that say about me? Inside a difficult conversation a separate monologue occurs that revolves around identity – what do I say to myself during a difficult conversation? Internal dialogue will always occur. It is important that we are aware of it and that we try to balance it. If it goes out of control it can trap us and we become the prisoners of our own thoughts.

It is important to have positively oriented and empowering thoughts and beliefs but still not in terms of avoidance yet not in terms of avoidance or self-repression. Therefore, a broader insight is needed.

In the field of providing psychosocial support and assistance, there are some important elements that make sense to consider in this process.

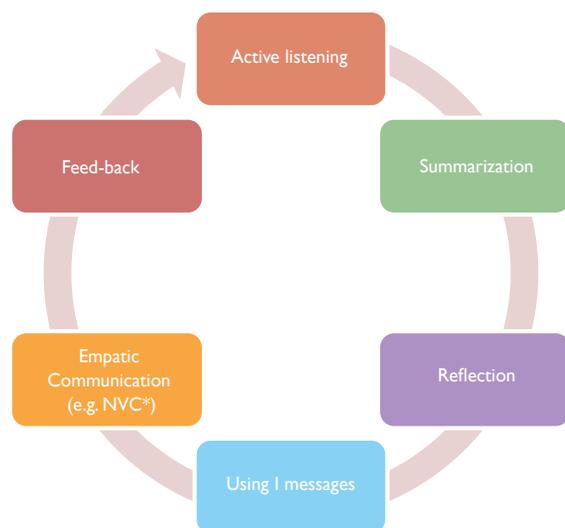
1. Task-oriented: Making sure that the client is the focus of communication without a great deal of self-disclosure is important. Staying in a task-oriented communication focus will help the client move forward;
2. Non-directiveness refers to the method of allowing the client to drive the (therapy) session; therapists (helper, volunteer) should refrain from giving advice or planning activities for their sessions.
3. Interpretation is a skill that takes some practice to cultivate well. It is utilized to give clients perspective but should be used sparingly;
4. Reflection, which is a purposeful thoughtful activity which
  - contains reflections on concrete experiences;
  - means looking back on the whole process;
  - allows the person to gain new insights, new ideas, and acquire new understanding;
  - is the process where basic insights and understanding of past events are formed;
  - is an activity where the person search for new solutions;
  - allows a person to test the selected solution in a new situation.

The stages of reflection are: description of the event; Feeling; Evaluation; Analysis; Conclusion.

5. Solution collaboration - considering self-determination theory solutions coming from a client are more effectively created and later also more likely to put into practice (allow a person to test the selected solution in a new situation). However, once a client has exhausted personal resources for finding a solution, a collaborative approach is helpful when forging solutions for behavior change.

## The communication circle

In order to make communication as successful as possible (including the bases described above) in the field of helping professions or sectors (such as volunteering), it makes sense to use the so-called communication circle with the described successive stages.



\*NVC – Non-violent Communication by author Marshal B. Rosenberg.

## Significance in times of crisis

The impact of pandemic crisis on vulnerable groups would rely in part on the quality of communication regarding health risk, mental health stability and danger. Concrete communication is proactive, imaginative, compassionate, innovative, creative, constructive, progressive, enabling, transparent and technology friendly.

However, there are multiple factors playing a key role in accepting information, like social and cultural characteristics, gender, generational contrasts, language inclinations, strict convictions, religious beliefs, and varying literacy influence the action and behaviour of individuals.

## Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I think before I speak because I am aware of how words may not mean the same thing to other people that they do to me.
- 2 I understand that sometimes the message the other person is sending may not be the same one I am receiving.
- 3 Before I communicate, verbally or nonverbally, I fully understand who my receiver is.
- 4 I make my messages as precise and to the point as possible.
- 5 I deliberately avoid the use of slang words and idioms with those who may be offended by them.
- 6 I try not to use words that might cause an emotional response that may distress or confuse the receiver of my message.
- 7 I recognize that how I say something is just as important as what I say.
- 8 I examine my verbal communication to determine what nonverbal messages I send and how well they imitate the meaning I wish to get across.
- 9 I carefully consider the method of delivery for my message: a face-to-face meeting, over the telephone or in writing.
- 10 I form opinions about what others say to me based on what I hear them saying rather than what I think of them as a person.
- 11 I make an honest effort to listen to ideas with which I don't agree.
- 12 I listen carefully of the ideas of others before making decisions.

## 2.7.3 Emotional intelligence

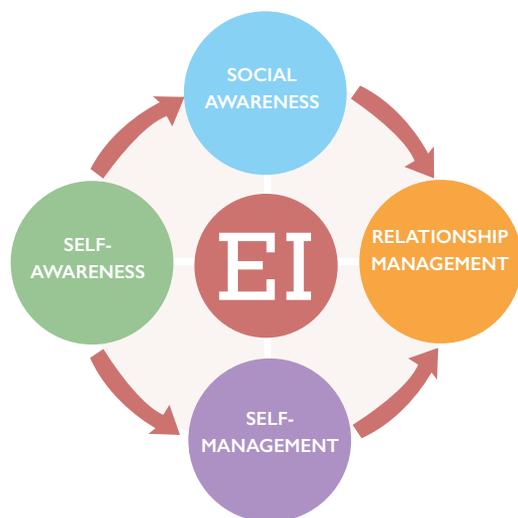
Emotional intelligence means recognising one's own feelings and understanding the feelings of others. It also means that we can distinguish and name various emotional states. A person who is aware of their feelings will be able to describe how they feel, what is causing these feelings and, finally, they will be able to regulate and evaluate their emotional states. People with well-developed emotional intelligence use the information about their feelings to help them in their thinking and behaviour.

Therefore, a person who can identify and regulate their feelings will be able to constructively focus their thoughts and actions. These skills are critical for emotional well-being and success in life.

Characteristics of a person with well-developed emotional intelligence  
People with well-developed emotional intelligence are sociable and they want to meet new people; they are good leaders because they can listen and can also take constructive criticism; they are respectful, and principled in their relations to co-workers. They quickly detect the mood of others and better judge the character of other people. They also know their strengths and weaknesses. They know when they are hurt in a relationship and why. They know how to say no. They are clear in their communication and get along with most people. To them, morality and ethics are always important.

Dimensions in the learning process of emotional intelligence

There are four main dimensions of the »emotional mind« that are essential for learning emotional intelligence. There are two personal skills: Self-awareness and Self-management and two social skills: Social awareness and Relationship management.



Source: (<http://www.teleosleaders.com/ho>)

Each of these dimensions comprises many abilities, skills, qualities and virtues that a person can develop in professional or family life.

**Self-awareness.** In the context of understanding emotional intelligence, this means the ability to be in tune with one's own feelings. A person who is in touch with their emotions understands and knows how to interpret their own feelings and how to use them in relationships. Connected with emotional awareness is also situational awareness which will be more broadly described later on.

**Self-management.** This means the ability to regulate one's own emotions, impulses and behaviour. A person is capable of controlling and acting in a professional and calm manner, even in stressful situations. An individual who can manage his/her own behaviour is more focused on the task at hand rather than with trivialities. Capabilities within this category are achievement orientation, adaptability, a positive outlook and emotional self-control.

**Social awareness.** The ability to sense, read, understand and evaluate other people's emotions and how they impact on a certain situation. A person with a developed social awareness has capabilities such as empathy, understanding the dynamic of interpersonal relations, and organisational awareness.

**Relationship management.** This last dimension includes various skills and capabilities that a person has to master if they want to be an efficient relationship manager. The person has to know how to manage, influence and accept the feelings of other people. They have to be an excellent conflict solver. With these abilities a person can work as an inspiring leader, coach, mentor and a successful manager of a group or organisation.

**Strategies for building emotional and social effectiveness:**

- Skill 1:** Valuing yourself  
Healthy self-talk
- Skill 2:** Valuing others  
Acknowledge others  
Enhance awareness of diversity in other people
- Skill 3:** Responsive awareness  
Observe and practice empathy
- Skill 4:** Courage
- Skill 5:** Authentic success  
Connecting values and expectations

### Significance in times of crisis

Without this awareness, our emotions will dictate our actions and in the middle of a crisis we (or volunteers, helpers,..) need to use the part of the brain that allows rational thinking, not the part of the brain where emotions are experienced. Practice being calm and in control, and be aware of our reactions to challenging situations is crucial in any difficult situation, especially in the times of crisis when it is important how successfully we can face other life trials. In order for individuals to empower themselves and others they encounter in their activities, the skill of emotional intelligence is of paramount importance.

The reason emotional intelligence is so important when dealing with difficult situations is that an emotionally intelligent person will respond to adversity in a calm, considered way. The emotionally intelligent person is better at managing emotions- both their own and those of others- during times of stress or pressure.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I can identify the emotion I am feeling at any given moment.
- 2 I understand why other people feel the way they do.
- 3 I openly share my feelings with others.
- 4 When I feel angry I can still stay self-controlled.
- 5 I know how to calm myself down when I feel anxious or upset.
- 6 I avoid conflict and negotiations.
- 7 I find it difficult to read other people's emotions.
- 8 I lose my temper when I feel frustrated.
- 9 Others feel encouraged after talking to me.
- 10 I can deal calmly, sensitively, and proactively with the emotional displays of others.
- 11 I am able to honestly say how I feel without getting others upset.
- 12 I can show empathy and match my feelings with those of another person in an interaction.
- 13 I am respected and liked by others, even when they don't agree with me.
- 14 I watch how others react to me to understand which of my own behaviours are effective and which are not.
- 15 It's easy to understand why other people feel the way they do.

### 2.7.4 Resilience

Positive psychology deals with the study and strengthening of the positive aspects of human life and mentality: issues of happiness, contentment, meaning, optimism, hope, perseverance, resilience, mental well-being, and other important positive aspects of human life and experience. Its founder is dr. Martin Seligman, although well-known psychologists and Rogers - Theories of human well-being have talked about this, but without empirical research. Seligman has thus expanded the field to explore positive emotions and processes, focusing on exploring happiness and aspects that promote an individual's personal growth and development based on his or her individual strengths and abilities. In this way, positive psychology promotes the well-being and quality of life of the individual.

Thus, positive psychology creates new insights into the importance of positive aspects of life for quality of life and mental and physical health; on the other hand, it develops methods and strategies to strengthen life skills and improve the quality of life. However, it should be emphasized that positive psychology is not a "happy psychology" that would strive to create constantly happy people who will always smile. Sickness, distress, pain, loss and trauma are a necessary companion of human life, as well as fear, anger, anxiety and other less pleasant emotions, as well as various mental distresses, problems and disorders.

Positive psychology is based on important findings:

- that there are people who feel happier, satisfied, persistent, optimistic, better firm and better psychologically equipped to cope with and cope with unpleasant events, circumstances, feelings and emotions; therefore, even more difficult life trials will pass with less severe consequences and injuries,
- that qualities such as perseverance, optimism, resilience, the ability to develop lasting and deep relationships, and feelings of satisfaction, happiness, meaning in people can be systematically strengthened and developed (thereby strengthening and developing their psychological strength and resilience),
- that it is most expedient (as is the case with most important skills) to develop and strengthen these psychologically and vitally important skills and qualities as early as childhood; because then the learned and internalized life skills will be most permanently anchored and will contribute the most to the quality of life in the long run.

## What is resilience?

All individuals who show a greater degree of personal resilience face with life changes more easily. Resilient people respond to those change with healthy and positive adjustment while remaining physically and mentally healthy. In doing so, they activate the ability to learn from these experiences, accept new information, adjust their thoughts and behaviors, and incorporate all of these new lessons into later life. This is also confirmed by Darwin's idea of evolution that not the greatest and strongest survive, but those with the greatest ability to adapt.

Therefore we can say that resilience is the ability to adapt positively and restore personal balance during life's trials and various negative experiences. It activates us to equip ourselves with our own internal and / or external sources of power and to tackle problems in the right way by self-regulating, adapting, learning, changing and / or going beyond existing patterns.

### Elements of Emotional Resilience

Emotional Resilience has three building blocks – these are the pillars on which we can build resilience or work on improving it. Also referred to as the three dimensions of emotional resilience, the three elements include:

1. The Physical Elements: involving physical strength, energy, good health, and vitality.
2. The Mental or Psychological Elements: including aspects like adjustability, attention and focus, self-esteem, self-confidence, emotional awareness and regulation, self-expression, thinking, and reasoning abilities.
3. The Social Elements: including interpersonal relationships (work, partner, kids, parents, friends, community, etc.), group conformity, likeability, communication, and co-operation.



Source: <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-resilience/>

### Nine Pillars of Resilience

The nine-pillars resilience model connects nine factors from three areas of our lives. The first three pillars relate to the area of relationships we have with ourselves, with other people, and with “something bigger than me”. The second area concerns our physical, emotional and cognitive balance. The third area is the way we operate in the world.

The relationship with oneself is an important foundation. It represents proper self-care, connection with oneself, a positive view of oneself. It is important that we are supportive, compassionate, self-respecting, accepting and loving ourselves. When we are accepting of ourselves, we do not judge ourselves, this promotes the ability to self-calm. If we are overly self-critical, we condemn ourselves, our ability to reassure ourselves diminishes.

The ability to establish and nurture connected, intimate relationships with others and gain support. Supportive relationships help us develop and build confidence in ourselves, in others. This pillar has a significant impact on the sense of a “safe world”. It also includes setting healthy, clear, consistent boundaries.

Attitude to something “bigger than me” can represent our involvement, association with community activities, volunteering, charity, or our spiritual practice. This pillar gives us meaning, hope, direction, affects the reduction of feelings of loneliness, alienation.

Physiological balance represents the ability to relax, calm down, not react too quickly and excessively.

Cognitive balance, on the other hand, includes a positive attitude and beliefs, the ability to control our thoughts, to focus.

Presence represents the ability to be “here and now”, in touch with ourselves and the environment, not occupied with the past or with worries, fears about the future.

Flexibility represents the ability to adapt appropriately to change, learning from past experience. Part of this pillar is also the creativity associated with the flexibility of our outlook on life.

Strength refers to the ability to engage in an activity, do things, persevere. It involves courage and assertiveness to present and represent our arguments, boundaries, put our ideas into action, achieve goals. It also includes the ability to plan, think strategically, make decisions. This pillar promotes a sense of control and self-confidence.

The model of the nine pillars of Resilience represents an integrated approach for strengthening the protective factors that, in complementary action, provide us with optimal actions in nowadays societal challenges.

### Significance in times of crisis

As such, resilience can be defined as multilayered and is most successfully used in crisis management processes. Resilience is thus defined in a systemic and interactional way, as it is about adapting successfully in the face of difficulties (crises, traumatic events, losses, setbacks, illnesses, etc.), about being able to overcome difficulties and stress in order to function effectively, and finally about overcoming and transcending obstacles in order to achieve success in life.

Strengthening in the area of personal and emotional resilience is therefore an important personality component for an individual who, in today’s challenging times, is increasingly confronted with crises of various kinds.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I have a hard time making it through stressful events.
- 2 I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.
- 3 I believe that my life is meaningful and worth living.
- 4 I believe that am not a victim of the circumstances and I can influence my life situations.
- 5 I have at least one person in my life with whom I can share everything – the good and the bad.
- 6 I take time for the people that are important to me.
- 7 I can rely on the support of others when I need it.
- 8 It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.
- 9 I look forward to a bright future and know I can handle difficulties
- 10 I adapt flexibly to change and easily accept the unchangeable.
- 11 I prefer finding solutions instead searching for mistakes and someone to blame.
- 12 I am important to myself and I take good care of myself.
- 13 I trust myself, my intuition, and my abilities.
- 14 I set clear priorities for my life.
- 15 I notice new and positive things more often than negative and well-known things.
- 16 I contribute to the well-being of others.

### 2.7.5 Social intelligence

Social intelligence is a matter of primary needs and human nature: being in a relationship. Neuroscience has discovered that our brain’s very design makes it sociable, and it is inexorably drawn into an intimate brain-to-brain linkup whenever we engage with another person. People are drawn towards relationships and social intelligence reflects whether we are capable of creating, nurturing, maintaining and growing interpersonal relationships, either in a family or work environment.

Social intelligence is a combination of skills that are needed for interacting successfully with people, and a combination of abilities to understand people. It comes from social awareness. Simply put, social intelligence is the ability to get along with other people.

Social intelligence is a measure of self-awareness and social awareness that involves social attitudes and beliefs. People with well-developed social intelligence can manage complex social changes in their lives and they can adapt to different stressful events.

Social intelligence can be thought of as encompassing four dimensions:

**1 Awareness** - Social awareness means that a person has knowledge of what is going on in society. It is the ability to understand social contexts (which consist of social situations). When a person is aware of a situation, they can choose the appropriate behavior.

**2 Presence** - This characteristic relates to how an individual's sense of self reflects outwards and how it is experienced by other people. People who are confident, who respect and value themselves, also reflect these qualities outwardly and that is how other people experience them when they come into contact with them.

**3 Authenticity** - A person with this quality reflects sincerity and loyalty, and acts in such a way as to give the impression of credibility and trustworthiness. It is the quality of being authentic or genuine.

**4 Empathy** - This is the ability to put oneself in somebody else's shoes, to understand them and their feelings. Empathy is very important in a relationship because people use it to connect, to help and encourage one another, and to be effective and authentic.

### Significance in times of crisis

As human beings, we connect through shared values, experiences and beliefs. From political preferences, education choices and down to our favorite shops, we gravitate towards those with whom we have something in common. In times of crisis, like COVID 19 pandemic, we share concerns around trust, communication, engagement, and support.

Such "people skills" named also life skills are essential in overcoming these concerns, by exploring the relationships between the construct of social intelligence composites of self-perception, self-expression, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and stress management during a time of crisis.

### Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am becoming nervous when connecting with others.
- 2 I easily adapt to others.
- 3 I help other people feel better when they are down.
- 4 Feelings of others baffle me.
- 5 I am able to recognize the wishes of others.
- 6 I know how to act in accordance with the feelings of others.
- 7 I feel relaxed and in various social situations.
- 8 People who are willing to do anything for me make me nervous.
- 9 By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.
- 10 Other people find it easy to confide in me.
- 11 I do not become defensive when criticized.
- 12 It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.
- 13 I maintain a sense of humour.
- 14 I try to see things from another's position.
- 15 I recognize how my behaviour affects others.
- 16 I seek out activities that make me happy
- 17 When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.

### 2.7.6 Social skills assertiveness

Providing appropriate parameters within which a helper, volunteer or therapist works with a client is foundational to success. Ability to set boundaries enables and demarcates the relationship between the person providing social assistance and the person receiving it. One of the most important skills in this process and transfer is assertiveness.

Assertiveness is the ability to stand up for yourself without violence, with the respectful attitude to differences of others and their freedom. It is the ability to stand up for yourself, to defend your opinion, to strive for something and to fight for your rights, without violence, with a respectful attitude to differences of opinion and freedom of expression. It is intended to protect yourself, your values, your personality and your dignity.

Assertiveness is a broader term for decisiveness and confidence of a person while at the same time it includes the qualities of compassion and openness to the needs, interests and limitations of others. She/he can compromise when a conflict arises and knows how to put him/her self in somebody else's shoes.

People that act assertive are aware of their virtues and flaws but accept themselves nonetheless. They try to go beyond their limits while at the same time they are kind and patient with themselves; they know their needs, interests, emotions, feelings, and limits and don't hide them from others. They are aware of their responsibility to others and that is why they treat them with respect; they understand their flaws and limits but don't surrender to manipulation and aggression.

Whoever wants to learn assertiveness must follow the rules of creative communication. Whenever a person uses creative communication he/she is aware that the manner of communication is very important and the choice of words is the key. Creative communication creates authentic relationships and brings clear and calm messages.

Two types of messages are generally used in creative communication:

**You–messages** do not address the co-speaker or the group but they are statements of conviction given in advance, without the co-speaker's approval of the opinions. These unsuitable messages are, for example: You have no manners You don't know how to be patient!

I-messages mean speaking to a known or unknown receiver in the first person singular by communicating your own relationship to the message or to the situation you are talking about. With these, we clearly and without judgement communicate to the co-speaker how his/her manner of communication affects you. For example: I can't concentrate while you're talking! I can't trust you when you conceal things from me!

In creative communication, I–messages are used and are a part of assertive communication.

#### Rules and examples of assertive communication

First rule: Authenticity. "I am who I am and not who others want me to be. I show you my feelings and I want you to show me yours. I want us to 'hold a mirror up to each other' and learn. You can tell me what you think but also how you feel so that we can communicate."

Second rule: Openness. "I accept how you are and not how I want you to be. I offer you good intentions, respect and affection and I expect the same from you."

Third rule: Setting limits. "I wish to stay in a creative relationship with you, with a clear line between you and me."

Fourth rule: The inevitability of disagreements.

It is also important to recognise and differentiate between assertive and non-assertive behaviour.

**Table: Distinguish between assertive and non-assertive behavior**

Non - assertive	Assertive	Aggressive
speaking quietly and shy	outspoken and calm speech	speaking loudly and fast
speaking unclearly	speaking clearly	commanding
gestures are modest	gestures are relaxed	gestures are fast and irritating
nervousness and restlessness	calmness	agitation
reservedness	emotional openness	rigid emotions
shyness	confidence	arrogance

## Significance in times of crisis

Whenever a person uses assertiveness he/she is aware that the manner of creative communication is very important and the choice of words is a key. It creates authentic relationships and brings clear and calm messages. People that use assertiveness as a model of creative communication among themselves are honest, respectful and equal co-speakers. In the time of pandemic crisis people may prioritizing safety over connection, which may result in feeling of isolation, hopelessness, fear, depression, anger, or low motivation.

In order to find a solid ground between these two basic human needs, healthy assertiveness is helpful by balancing these needs. By behaving assertively, a person inspires trust in others, because they know they can count on him/her. Also, we illustrate behaviour that they themselves may come to follow.

## Self-assessment indicator statements

- 1 I am able to honestly say how I feel without getting others upset.
- 2 I often say »yes«, when I really want to say »no«.
- 3 I find it difficult to stand my ground in an argument with someone else.
- 4 When I don't agree, I try to make my opinion hard.
- 5 I adapt to accept the behaviour even if it is not what I choose.
- 6 I often raise my voice to achieve results.
- 7 I am not afraid to tell people what I think, even if I am facing hostile response.
- 8 I believe that how people behave is up to them.
- 9 I would feel vulnerable if i was suddenly put in charge of handling a crisis
- 10 I find it easy to put forward my viewpoint even when other people are trying to put forward theirs.
- 11 I am often critical of my own behaviour.
- 12 I believe that by being open about how I feel assists in achieving clear communication.
- 13 I feel uncomfortable when people criticize me.
- 14 When people try and force me to do something, I usually manage to achieve a compromise with which we are both happy.
- 15 I tend to approach problems in a consultative and democratic manner.
- 16 I find it easy to let people put forward their views in preference to my own.
- 17 I believe that being open about one's emotions is a sign of vulnerability, so I rarely do it.
- 18 I find it easy to relate to, and feel responsible for, other people's problems.

## Part 3

### 3.1 Glossary

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

The SOCRATEST glossary is a document that lists and defines the key terms and acronyms used in a SoCraTest project. It serves as a reference for final beneficiaries and stakeholders to ensure a common understanding of the terminology used throughout the project's part of Soft Skills and Creativity Identification and Assessment Tool content. The project glossary includes definitions of terms and any unique or specialized vocabulary that was used in clusters and skills description.

In our glossary, we have divided the terms as transparently as possible in alphabetical order, in a reader- and user-friendly way. It helps users who may not have specialized knowledge or understanding of the subject matter to quickly and easily understand important terms. Its purpose is to improve communication and understanding between those who have different levels of expertise and knowledge.

By providing clear and concise definitions, a glossary helps prevent confusion and misunderstandings, and also facilitate more efficient and effective communication. It can also be useful in educational settings to help users understand new concepts and terminology.

### 3.1.2 Glossary Terms

#### A

Term	Description
Active listening	A two way communication process. to actively listen is not just to hear but to understand, interpret and evaluate what one hear
Adaptability	The capacity to make appropriate responses to changed or changing situations; the ability to modify or adjust one's behaviour in meeting different circumstances or different people
Analytical skills	Analytical skills are the traits and abilities that allow you to observe, research and interpret a subject to develop complex ideas and solutions.
Analytical thinking	Analytical thinking is the term used to describe the thinking process of abstract separation of a whole entity into its constituent parts in order to study the parts and their relations. It is a trait most desired in job candidates since it helps them to identify and define problems, extract key information from data and develop workable solutions for the problems in order to test and verify the cause of the problem and then develop solutions to resolve them.
Assertiveness	An adaptive style of communication in which individuals express their feelings and needs directly, while maintaining respect for others. A lack of assertiveness may contribute to depression and anxiety, whereas maladaptive approaches to assertiveness may manifest as aggression.
Attention	A state in which cognitive resources are focused on certain aspects of the environment rather than on others and the central nervous system is in a state of readiness to respond to stimuli.
Authenticity	The quality of being real or true. The daily practice of letting go of who we think we are supposed to be and embracing who we are. A common definition is that being authentic is living your life according to your own values and goals.
Authority	The capacity to influence others. <b>The power to give orders or make decisions</b> , The right to direct or control someone or something.

#### B

Term	Description
Behaviour	The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.
Behaviour modification	To be able to adjust method or working style to meet the needs of the situation It is generally thought of as the process of changing patterns of human behavior using various motivational techniques, such as negative and positive reinforcement, extinction, fading, shaping, and chaining. It can be a useful tool to encourage desirable behaviors.
Belief(s)	A belief is an attitude that something is the case, or that some proposition about the world is true. In epistemology, philosophers use the term "belief" to refer to attitudes about the world which can be either true or false.
Brainstorming	is a group problem-solving method that involves the spontaneous contribution of creative ideas and solutions. This technique requires intensive, freewheeling discussion in which every member of the group is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible based on their diverse knowledge.
Business	is the practice of making one's living or making money by producing or buying and selling products. It is also "any activity or enterprise entered into for profit.

C

Term	Description
Clarity	The quality of being coherent and intelligible; the quality of being clear and easy to understand, see, or hear; the quality of transparency.
Coaching	Is a form of development in which an experienced person, called a coach, supports a learner or client in achieving a specific personal or professional goal by providing training and guidance. The learner is sometimes called a coachee.
Cognitive skills	Cognitive skills, also called cognitive functions, cognitive abilities or cognitive capacities, are brain-based skills which are needed in acquisition of knowledge, manipulation of information and reasoning. The core skills your brain uses to think, read, learn, remember, reason, and pay attention.
Collaboration	Work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavour.
Commitment	The state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, etc.; an engagement or obligation that restricts freedom of action.
Communication	The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.
Competency	The ability to do something successfully or efficiently. Competency is a series of knowledge, abilities, skills, experiences and behaviours, which leads to effective performance in an individual's activities.
Concentration	The action or power of focusing all one's attention.
Confidence	The feeling or belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something. Confidence comes from a Latin word 'fidere' which means "to trust"; therefore, having self-confidence is having trust in one's self.
Conflict	An extended struggle; fight, battle; a clashing or sharp disagreement (as between ideas, interests, or purposes); mental struggle resulting from needs, drives, wishes, or demands that are in opposition or are not compatible.
Conflict solving	Conflict solving is a process by which two or more parties reach a peaceful resolution to a dispute.

Confrontation	Confrontation is an element of conflict wherein parties confront one another, directly engaging one another in the course of a dispute between them.
Convergent thinking	Focuses on reaching one well-defined solution to a problem. It generally means the ability to give the "correct" answer to standard questions that do not require significant creativity, for instance in most tasks in school and on standardized multiple-choice tests for intelligence.
Cooperation	A process whereby two or more individuals work together toward the attainment of a mutual goal or complementary goals.
Coordination	The capacity of various parts to function together, organization of the different elements of activities to enable them to work together effectively, e.g. groups of people work together in an efficient and organized way.
Coping strategies	Refers to conscious strategies used to reduce unpleasant emotions. Coping strategies can be cognitions or behaviours and can be individual or social.
Creativity	The ability to produce or develop original work, theories, techniques, or thoughts. A creative individual typically displays originality, imagination, and expressiveness.
Credibility	The quality of being trusted and believed in. The quality of being accepted as true, real, or honest.
Crisis	A situation (e.g., a traumatic change) that produces significant cognitive or emotional stress in those involved in it. Crises are negative changes in the human or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no warning.

## D

Term	Description
Data processing	The carrying out of operations on data, especially by a computer, to retrieve, transform, or classify information.
Deadline	A time limit is a narrow field of time, or a particular point in time, by which an objective or task must be accomplished.
Decision-making	In psychology, decision-making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several possible alternative options. It could be either rational or irrational.
Deduction	A process of reasoning that moves from the general to the specific, in which a conclusion necessarily follows from a set of premises, such that the conclusion cannot be false if the premises are true. The process of inferential reasoning itself.
Delegation	Delegation is the assignment of authority to another person to carry out specific activities. It is the process of distributing and entrusting work to another person.
Distraction	A stimulus or task that draws attention away from the task of primary interest.
Divergent thinking	Is a thought process or method that leads in various directions. Some of these are conventional, and some original. It typically occurs in a spontaneous, free-flowing, "non-linear" manner. Because some of the resulting ideas are original, divergent thinking represents the potential for creative thinking and problem solving.

## E

Term	Description
Effectiveness	is the capability of producing a desired result or the ability to produce desired output.. It is the ability to do things well, successfully, and without waste.
Emotion(s)	Emotions are mental states brought on by neurophysiological changes, variously associated with thoughts, feelings, behavioural responses, and a degree of pleasure or displeasure (joy, sorrow, anger, fear, disgust...) Emotion typically involves feeling but differs from feeling in having an overt or implicit engagement with the world.

Emotional intelligence	Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, control, and use emotions to communicate with and relate to others effectively and constructively. This ability to express and control emotions is essential, but so is the ability to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others.
Emotional reasoning	Emotional reasoning is a cognitive process by which an individual concludes that their emotional reaction proves something is true, despite contrary empirical evidence. Emotional reasoning creates an 'emotional truth', which may be in direct conflict with the inverse 'perceptual truth'.
Emotion regulation	Is the ability to exert control over one's own emotional state. It may involve behaviors such as rethinking a challenging situation to reduce anger or anxiety, hiding visible signs of sadness or fear, or focusing on reasons to feel happy or calm.
Empathy	Understanding a person from his or her frame of reference rather than one's own, or vicariously experiencing that person's feelings, perceptions, and thoughts. Empathy does not, of itself, entail motivation to be of assistance, although it may turn into sympathy or personal distress, which may result in action. Empathy for the person (client, user, patient) can be a path to comprehension of the client's cognitions, affects, motivations, or behaviors.
Empowerment	The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. The promotion of the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to take greater control of one's life.
Enthusiasm	A feeling of excitement or passion for an activity, cause, or object.
Ethics	Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity. The branch of philosophy that investigates both the content of moral judgments (i.e., what is right and what is wrong) and their nature (i.e., whether such judgments should be considered objective or subjective).
Evaluation	A systematic, intentional and structured interpretation process of gathering and analyzing data (quantitative and qualitative), It looks at original objectives, and at what is either predicted or what was accomplished and how it was accomplished.
Experimentation	The action or process of trying out new ideas, methods, or activities.
Extrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation involves completing a task or exhibiting a behavior because of outside causes such as avoiding punishment or receiving a reward. <i>A motivation that is driven by external rewards.</i>

## F

Term	Description
Feedback	Responses that inform an individual about the correctness, physical effect, or social or emotional impact of his or her behavior or thinking. In interpersonal relations and therapy, information feedback gives an individual insight into other people's experience of him or her. In behavior therapy, information feedback is intended to help change and shape behavior directly.
Feeling(s)	Feelings are subjective, evaluative, and independent of the sensations, thoughts, or images evoking them. They are inevitably evaluated as pleasant or unpleasant, but they can have more specific intrapsychic qualities (e.g. affective tone of fear is experienced as different from that of anger). Feeling is thus merely a mental portrait of what is going on in our body while we are experiencing emotion.
Flexibility	Flexibility is a personality trait that describes the extent to which a person can cope with changes in circumstances and think about problems and tasks in novel, creative ways.

## G

Term	Description
Gratitude	The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. Gratitude is both a state and a trait

## H

Term	Description
Hard skills	are specific abilities, capabilities and skill sets that an individual can possess and demonstrate in a measured way. They typically focus on specific tasks needed to complete a job, like the use of specific software, tools or other equipment. Many hard skills are technical and highly sought after.
Happiness	is a state of emotional well-being (emotion of joy, gladness, satisfaction,...) that a person experiences either in a narrow sense, when good things happen in a specific moment, or more broadly, as a positive evaluation of one's life and accomplishments overall—that is, subjective well-being.
Helplessness	Helplessness is the belief that there is nothing that anyone can do to improve a bad situation (such as being diagnosed with an illness). In many ways, then, helplessness is a belief that control over the situation or its outcomes is impossible. Like all beliefs, helplessness is learned.
Honesty	In general, truthfulness, uprightness, and integrity. Honesty, speaking and acting truthfully, is more than not lying, deceiving, stealing, or cheating. It entails showing respect towards others and having integrity and self-awareness.
Human needs	A condition of tension in an organism resulting from deprivation of something required for survival, well-being, or personal fulfillment. Needs are distinguished from wants. In the case of a need, a deficiency causes a clear adverse outcome: a dysfunction. Human needs are commonly used to refer to the drivers of peoples' actions, the motives behind human behavior.
Human relations	refers to the ability to interact in a healthy manner with others and build strong relationships. From the perspective of managers in a company, it involves the process of creating systems and communication channels to enable group employee relationships as well as strong one-on-one relationships.
Hypothesis	A supposition or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation. In a scientific context, is a testable statement about the relationship between two or more variables or a proposed explanation for some observed phenomenon. In Philosophy a proposition made as a basis for reasoning, without any assumption of its truth.

I

Term	Description
Implementation	The process of putting a decision or plan into effect; execution. As such, implementation is the action that must follow any preliminary thinking for something to actually happen.
Impulse(s)	A sudden strong and unreflective urge or desire to act. In psychology, the expression of psychic energy from instinctual drives.
Innovative thinking	The ability to create something new, moving away from traditional thought patterns. With the help of innovative thinking, one can generate new ideas, act differently, and come up with novel solutions to problems.
Integrity	The practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions.
Intellectual flexibility	the moral capacity to adjust for one's lens-to admit one's perceptual limitations, embrace feedback, and learn from personal experience, including one's mistakes, as well as the insights and experiences of others. Keeping an open mind, ability to integrate information and shift.
Intelligence	The ability to derive information, learn from experience, adapt to the environment, understand, and correctly utilize thought and reason.
Interaction	Relationship between two or more systems, people, or groups that results in mutual or reciprocal influence.
Interpersonal relationship	Interpersonal relationships are created by people's interactions with one another in social situations. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, support, regular business interactions, or some other type of social connection or commitment.
Interpersonal skills	The behaviours and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively. People use interpersonal skills all the time when dealing with others, whether in the workplace, in social situations, or within a family.
Interpretation	The action of explaining the meaning of something. In the field of social assistance (e.g. voluntary work) interpretation can provide the individual with an alternative way of viewing the problem. Helps to get to underlying trends, patterns, and issues related to the problem.

Intrinsic motivation	Intrinsic motivation involves performing a task because it's personally rewarding to you. It is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external products, pressures, or rewards.
Intuition	Immediate insight or perception, as contrasted with conscious reasoning or reflection. An ability to understand or know something immediately based on your feelings rather than facts.

J

There are no terms.

K

There are no terms.

## L

Term	Description
Lateral thinking	The solving of problems by an indirect and creative approach, typically through viewing the problem in a new and unusual light.
Leadership	The processes involved in leading others, including organizing, directing, coordinating, and motivating their efforts toward achieving certain group or organizational goals. Leadership tends to be reciprocal (leaders influence followers, and followers influence leaders), transactional (leaders and followers exchange their time, energies, and skills to increase their joint rewards), transformational (leaders inspire and motivate followers), and cooperative rather than coercive (followers voluntarily accept the leader's suggestions).
Listening skills	Are skills that contribute to one's ability to accurately receive information when communicating with others. Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. If there is one communication skill you should aim to master, then listening is it.
Logical thinking	Analyzing a situation or problem using reason and coming up with potential solutions. Logical thinkers gather all the information they can, assess the facts, and then methodically decide the best way to move forward.

## M

Term	Description
Management	The process of dealing with or controlling things or people. A single or group of individuals who challenges and oversees a person or collective group of people in efforts to accomplish desired goals and objectives. Furthermore, the definition of management includes the ability to plan, organize, monitor and direct individuals
Mental Balance	The psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioural adjustment.
Mindfulness	A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.
Misconception	A view or opinion that is incorrect because based on faulty thinking or understanding.
Morality	A system of beliefs or set of values relating to right conduct, against which behaviour is judged to be acceptable or unacceptable.
Motivation	The impetus that gives purpose or direction to behaviour and operates in humans at a conscious or unconscious level. Motives are frequently divided into (a) physiological, primary, or organic motives, such as hunger, thirst, and need for sleep; and (b) personal, social, or secondary motives, such as affiliation, competition, and individual interests and goals.
Multidisciplinary Approach	A manner of dealing with professional questions in which individuals from different disciplines or professions collaborate to obtain a more thorough, detailed understanding of the nature of the questions and consequently develop more comprehensive answers.

## N

Term	Description
Negotiation	A reciprocal communication process in which two or more parties to a dispute examine specific issues, explain their positions, and exchange offers and counteroffers in an attempt to identify a solution or outcome that is acceptable to all parties.
Nonconformist	A person who does not conform to prevailing ideas or practices in their behaviour or views
Non-verbal communication	Nonverbal communication is the transmission of messages or signals through a non-verbal platform such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and body language. It includes the use of social cues, kinesics, distance and physical environments or appearance, of tone and pitch of the voice, and of touch.
Non-violent communication	Nonviolent communication is an approach to communication based on principles of nonviolence. It is not a technique to end disagreements, but rather a method designed to increase empathy and improve the quality of life of those who utilize the method and the people around them.

## O

Term	Description
Observation	The careful, close examination of an object, process, or other phenomenon for the purpose of collecting data about it or drawing conclusions.
Open-mindedness	Open-mindedness involves being receptive to a wide variety of ideas, arguments, and information. Being open-minded is generally considered a positive quality. It is necessary in order to think critically and rationally. Open-mindedness involves asking questions and actively searching for information that challenges own beliefs. It also encompasses the belief that other people should be free to express their beliefs and arguments, even if you do not necessarily agree with those views.
Optimism	Optimism is a mental attitude characterized by hope and confidence in success and a positive future. Optimists tend to view hardships as learning experiences or temporary setbacks. It is a set of beliefs and traits that help individuals reflect on the positive aspects of life rather than the negative ones.

**P**

Term	Description
Patience	The capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.
Perception	The process or result of becoming aware of objects, relationships, and events by means of the senses, which includes such activities as recognizing, observing, and discriminating. These activities enable organisms to organize and interpret the stimuli received into meaningful knowledge and to act in a coordinated manner.
Personal Growth	Is a process of developing new skills, attitudes, actions, or reactions that can have a positive impact on your life and increase your overall well-being. Successful personal growth requires motivation, the desire to improve, and the willingness to strive to make changes.
Personal Strength	Personal strengths are positive personality traits, knowledge and abilities. They are defined as our built-in capacities for particular ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving.
Personal Values	Are "broad desirable goals that motivate people's actions and serve as guiding principles in their lives. Everyone has values, but each person has a different value set. These differences are affected by an individual's culture, personal upbringing, life experiences, and a range of other influences. They are one's own ethics and personality goals.
Personality Traits	A relatively stable, consistent, and enduring internal characteristic that is inferred from a pattern of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and habits in the individual.
Positivity	The practice of being or tendency to be positive or optimistic in attitude.
Positive Psychology	Positive psychology is a branch of psychology focused on the character strengths and behaviors that allow individuals to build a life of meaning and purpose to move beyond surviving to flourishing.
Preconception	A belief or expectation related to some attitude object that is held before substantial information about the object is gained.
Predisposition	A predisposition is any set of factors which while not be a direct cause make it more likely that a subject will display a personality trait or characteristic, or develop a particular disorder or behavior. For example, drug or alcohol addictions or even personality types, might be genetic predispositions. The actual personality development may be initiated by the interaction of certain biological, psychological, or environmental factors.

Prejudice	A negative attitude toward another person or group formed in advance of any experience with that person or group. Prejudices include an affective component (emotions that range from mild nervousness to hatred), a cognitive component (assumptions and beliefs about groups, including stereotypes), and a behaviour component (negative behaviors including discrimination and violence). They tend to be resistant to change because they distort the prejudiced individual's perception of information pertaining to the group. Prejudice based on racial grouping is racism; prejudice based on sex is sexism; prejudice based on chronological age is ageism; and prejudice based on disability is ableism.
Prioritization	Prioritization is the activity that arranges items or activities in order of importance relative to each other.
Proactivity	Proactivity or proactive behaviour refers to self-initiated behaviour that endeavours to solve a problem before it has occurred. Proactive behaviour involves acting in advance of a future situation, rather than reacting.
Problem solving	Problem solving is the act of defining a problem; determining the cause of the problem; identifying, prioritizing, and selecting alternatives for a solution; and implementing a solution.

## Q

There are no terms.

## R

Term	Description
Rational thinking	Rational thinking is defined as the use of reason, the capacity to make sense of things, and the use of logic to establish and verify facts.
Rapport	In Psychology the ability to connect with others in a way that creates a climate of trust and understanding. A warm, relaxed relationship of mutual understanding, acceptance, and sympathetic compatibility between or among individuals.
Reasoning	Reasoning is a process of thinking during which the individual is aware of a problem identifies, evaluates, and decides upon a solution.
Receptiveness	The quality of being willing to listen to or to accept new ideas, impressions, or suggestions. Learning that is facilitated through social interactions with other individuals.
Reciprocity	The quality of an act, process, or relationship in which one person receives benefits from another and, in return, provides an equivalent benefit.
Reflection	Examination, contemplation, and analysis of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions. The condition of or capacity for this is called <b>self-reflexivity</b> .
Relaxation	Abatement of intensity, vigor, energy, or tension, resulting in calmness of mind, body, or both.
Resilience	The process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them (a) the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, (b) the availability and quality of social resources, and (c) specific coping strategies. Psychological research demonstrates that the resources and skills associated with more positive adaptation (i.e., greater resilience) can be cultivated and practiced.

Respect	An attitude of, or behavior demonstrating, esteem, honor, regard, concern, and other such positive qualities toward an individual or entity. Respect can serve an important purpose in interpersonal and intergroup relations by aiding in communication, for example.
Responsibility	<i>Taking</i> responsibility is acknowledging and accepting the choices you have made, the actions you have taken, and the results they have led to. True autonomy leads to both <i>having</i> responsibility and <i>taking</i> responsibility. Responsibility is an essential element of integrity; it is the congruence of what you think, what you say, and what you do. Responsibility is essential for reciprocity, trust, and for maintaining symmetric relationships.
Risk management	Is a structured approach to managing uncertainty related to a threat, a sequence of human activities including: risk assessment, strategies development to manage it, and mitigation of risk using managerial resources.

S

Term	Description
Self-actualization	The complete realization of that of which one is capable, involving maximum development of abilities and full involvement in and appreciation for life, particularly as manifest in peak experiences. The term is associated especially with Abraham Maslow, who viewed the process of striving toward full potential as fundamental yet obtainable only after the basic needs of physical survival, safety, love and belongingness, and esteem are fulfilled. Also called <b>self-realization</b> .
Self-awareness	The ability to focus on yourself and how your actions, thoughts, or feelings match or don't match your internal standards. If someone is very self-aware, they can evaluate themselves objectively, control their emotions, align their behaviour with their values, and correctly understand how others perceive them.
Self-care	It is defined as providing adequate attention to one's own physical and psychological wellness. It is ability to care for oneself through awareness, self-control, and self-reliance in order to achieve, maintain, or promote optimal health and well-being.
Self-discipline	1. The control of one's impulses and desires, forgoing immediate satisfaction in favour of long-term goals. 2. Resolute adherence to a regimen or course of action in order to achieve one's goals.
Self-concordance	The extent to which people pursue personal goals with feelings of intrinsic interest and identity congruence. Self-concordant goals are goals that are aligned with who we are, our authentic self, and with what we really want to do in our lives.
Self-concept	One's description and evaluation of oneself, including psychological and physical characteristics, qualities, skills, roles and so forth. Self-concepts contribute to the individual's sense of identity over time. The conscious representation of self-concept is dependent in part on nonconscious schematization of the self. Although self-concepts are usually available to some degree to the consciousness, they may be inhibited from representation yet still influence judgment, mood, and behavioural patterns.
Self-confidence	Is described as self-assurance: trust in one's abilities, capacities, and judgment. It is <b>an attitude about your skills and abilities</b> . It means you accept and trust yourself and have a sense of control in your life. You know your strengths and weakness well, and have a positive view of yourself.
Self-efficacy	Refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments. It reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour, and social environment.

Self-expression	Free expression of one's feelings, thoughts, talents, attitudes, or impulses through such means as verbal communication; the visual, decorative, literary, and performing arts; and other commonplace activities (e.g., gardening, sports). Self-expression is, at its core, the action of expressing yourself, and it can take a wide variety of forms.
Self-regulation	The control of one's behaviour through the use of self-monitoring (keeping a record of behaviour), self-evaluation (assessing the information obtained during self-monitoring), and self-reinforcement (rewarding oneself for appropriate behaviour or for attaining a goal).
Situational awareness	Conscious knowledge of the immediate environment and the events that are occurring in it. Situational awareness involves perception of the elements in the environment, comprehension of what they mean and how they relate to one another, and projection of their future states.
Social interaction	Any process that involves reciprocal stimulation or response between two or more individuals. Social interaction includes the development of cooperation and competition, the influence of status and social roles, and the dynamics of group behaviour, leadership, and conformity. Persistent social interaction between specific individuals leads to the formation of social relationships.
Social proof	Is a psychological phenomenon where people assume the actions of others in an attempt to reflect correct behaviour for a given situation. In essence, it's the notion that, since others are doing it, I should be doing it, too. It is partially a reflection of 'herd mentality'.
Soft skills	Personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. They are non-technical skills that describe how you work and interact with others. Unlike hard skills, they're not necessarily something you'll learn in a course, like data analytics or programming. Instead, they reflect your communication style, work ethic, and work style.
Strategic thinking	Is simply an intentional and rational thought process that focuses on the analysis of critical factors and variables that will influence. In its simplest form, strategic thinking is an ability to plan for the future. It's the capacity to prepare strategies and conjure ideas that will both cope with changing environments and consider the various challenges that lie ahead.
Stress	The physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. It may be manifested by palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, shortness of breath, fidgeting, accelerated speech, augmentation of negative emotions (if already being experienced), and longer duration of stress fatigue. Severe stress is manifested by the general adaptation syndrome. By causing these mind-body changes, stress contributes directly to psychological and physiological disorder and disease and affects mental and physical health, reducing quality of life.

## T

Term	Description
Transferable skills	Skills beyond qualification. Skills and abilities you've developed throughout your life, at school or university, at home, in your social life, as well as through any experience in the work-place. They are often called "portable skills" because you can apply these general skills to various fields, working environments, and industries (e.g. collaboration, problem solving, time management, creative thinking, adaptability, and so on).
Transparency	Is a skill that requires you to be an honest and straightforward employee. As an ethic, transparency is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed. Transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability. It is perhaps most commonly used in a figurative way to refer to a state in which things are free from any attempt to hide something. Is a skill that requires you to be an honest and straightforward employee.
Trust	Reliance on or confidence in the dependability of someone or something. In interpersonal relationships, trust refers to the confidence that a person or group of people has in the reliability of another person or group; specifically, it is the degree to which each party feels that they can depend on the other party to do what they say they will do. The key factor is not the intrinsic honesty of the other people but their predictability. Trust is considered by most psychologists to be a primary component in mature relationships with others, whether intimate, social, or therapeutic.
Trustworthiness	Is the ability to be honest, dependable and reliable. It relates directly to ethics on two specific dimensions: integrity and benevolence. In professional settings, it's the assurance that someone will get things done. It's a vital component of an effective and efficient workplace environment.

## U

There are no terms.

## V

Term	Description
Values	In psychosocial terms, values are principles or standards of behaviour; own judgment about what is important in life. They are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another. Basic human values refer to those values which are at the core of being human. The values which are considered basic inherent values in humans include truth, honesty, loyalty, love, peace, etc. because they bring out the fundamental goodness of human beings and society at large.
Verbal communication	Verbal communication is the use of words to share information with other people. It can therefore include both spoken and written communication. However, many people use the term to describe only spoken communication. The verbal element of communication is all about the words that you choose, and how they are heard and interpreted.
Vertical thinking	The solving of problems using conventional logical processes. It is a type of approach to problems that usually involves one being selective, analytical, and sequential.
Vision	A mental image of something or someone produced by the imagination. Whether personal or in business, a clear vision will enable us to define the path to success. Yet achieving that vision is down to our own mind-set, and being prepared to test ourselves on a daily basis in a way which will be uncomfortable and difficult at times, but totally necessary to make change happen.
Visualization	The process of creating a visual image in one's mind or mentally rehearsing a planned movement in order to learn skills or enhance performance. In the field of creativity, we encourage and initiate the generation of new ideas. Therefore, visualization is an effective creative tool.

## W - X - Y - Z

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The SOCRATEST Partnership





This book presents the results reached by the **SoCrATest project** (Soft Skills & Creativity Assessment and Testing for Volunteers in Times of Crisis), carried out in the years 2021–2023 by a consortium of seven organisations established in various European countries: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Austria, Slovenia, and Slovakia.

The work is structured in three main parts.

In the first part, conceptual and methodological principles at the base of the research on soft skills related to volunteering are illustrated, underlining the importance of assessment of soft skills and creativity in a modern world characterized by rapidity, unpredictability, complexity, and ambiguity.

In the second part, the authors offer a detailed description of the soft skills clusters which have been identified as important for the assessment of social and creative competences, i.e., creativity skills, leadership skills, management skills, organisational skills, personal skills, and social skills. The third and final part contains a wide glossary of key terms used in the book and a useful list of bibliographic references.

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