

# Practice Manual Inclusive Methods for Supporting Inclusive Projects in the Wider Communal Social Space

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# INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) describes the right of people with assistance needs to equal participation and self-determination. It refers to all spheres that are relevant to society: education, housing, work, participation in political decision-making processes, to name but a few. States who sign and ratify the Convention commit to implementing the demands specified in the Convention (in Germany since 2009). While the participation of everyone is essential to the development of inclusive living and working in the social space, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focuses on the rights of persons with assistance needs<sup>1</sup>, who have so far been excluded from many relevant societal processes.

To promote the development of organizations and services offering integration support and working towards inclusive decision-making processes, we present below various forms and methods of inclusion that have been developed and tested over four years on selected locations as part of a project called “in guter Gemeinschaft – Inklusion leben.” These locations are organizations that support inclusion and that see themselves as residences, communities or workshops guided by the anthroposophical understanding of the human being. The actors are individuals with assistance needs as well as staff members who fulfil different functions within their organizations. In addition, the project involved co-workers of the German Anthropoi Bundesverband as well as teachers and lecturers from the Mannheim campus of Alanus University. A further goal pursued on the selected locations was to invite people from the social space to actively participate in inclusive activities. The people participating in the inclusive projects from these three target groups are called “initiative group” or “initiators”.

## The three target groups

### **Target group 1:**

people with assistance needs who are supported by organizations and services providing integration support in the areas of living, work, education and/or leisure.

### **Target group 2:**

co-workers who fulfil various functions in these organizations (from temporary helpers to professionals to managers).

### **Target group 3:**

the social space of the people with assistance needs. This is primarily about the geographic social space such as neighbours but also other local residents, particularly members of sports, music or culture clubs.

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<sup>1</sup> We deliberately use the term “persons with assistance needs” since it was chosen as the most appropriate designation by the self-advocacy body Anthropoi Beirat as early as 2016 (Steinel 2026).

Three questions have guided the planning, implementation and evaluation of the projects aiming at an inclusive society:

- How can people with their different resources, abilities and contributions meet and engage at an equal level in the communal social space?
- How can organizations view and develop themselves in new ways so that they can act inclusively in the future and integrate people's diverse assistance needs?
- How can the opportunities offered be used by as many citizens as possible?

The interweaving of the living and working spaces of all citizens can generate a joint sense of living connectedness.

In developing the four methods presented below, the primary goal was to focus on and systematically promote the mutual support of the three target groups so that everyone involved can feel that they belong to the communal social space, including people who were previously prevented from participation due to all kinds of barriers. At the beginning a space needs to be created where the initiative group, whose task it is to plan and organize the project, can experience inclusive and trustful learning and resonance, and where opportunities are created for everyone to get actively involved.

The understanding of inclusion underlying the questions outlined above should allow everyone involved, in particular those with assistance needs, to experience a new and identity-building future impulse: "We belong to and are part of this! We are valued and participate in shaping the future."

In agreement with the leadership, all initiators participate actively as equal partners in the evolving process. This is to ensure that the development of a shared understanding of working together at eye level in the social space can be practised and learned and provide examples for the future.

The participants – initially the initiative group and later also other stakeholders and disseminators – can experience themselves in new roles in the social space. This will hopefully help to resolve the classic inclusion dilemma (who includes whom and where?) in that everyone involved can experience themselves as responsible creators of a participatory learning space and the potential it offers.

The methods developed are based on experiences gained in the project "in guter Gesellschaft – Inklusion leben". This four-year project organized by Anthropoi Bundesverband between 2019 and 2023 was supported by three foundations: Aktion Mensch Stiftung, Mahle Stiftung and Software AG Stiftung. Its methods were largely inspired by the Theory U approach (Scharmer 2029) and the concept of Gross National Happiness (Tho 2019).<sup>2</sup> For more information on the project "in good company – living inclusion" visit <https://www.ingutergesellschaft.org/>

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<sup>2</sup> The project organizers attended a certified professional development course on Gross National Happiness: The Creative Power of Happiness at the University of Applied Sciences in Osnabrück, Germany, carried out in cooperation with Eurasia Learning Institute for Happiness and Wellbeing (ELI). For more information on this course visit <https://www.hs-osnabrueck.de/studium/studienangebot/weiterbildung/seminare-und-lehrgaenge/gross-national-happiness/> . For more information on ELI visit <https://www.elihw.org/>.

Because the methods can and should be adapted to the users' individual situation, the linked materials/documents are also available as editable word files. They can however also be used without adjustments.

Sequence and extent of the methods used depends on the local situation. It is for instance possible to start a longer-term process with an inclusive opening event that enables potential actors to understand and get to know each other. Alternatively, one can develop specific activities directly in an inclusive future workshop. An invitation to a joint learning journey could also be the starting point for a participatory process in the social space.

For help with implementing the guidelines, the developers of the further training prototype can be consulted, see About Us at the end of this Manual.

**Summary in easy-to-read language:**

Every person should be able to contribute to shaping the social space.

The social space includes all the people we see and meet in the place where we live, as well as this living space itself.

This handbook is about how this working together can succeed.

How can everyone be there and join in?

Four methods for this are presented here.

Methods are ways of doing something.

These methods were developed in the project "in guter Gesellschaft – Inklusion leben".

Everything learned in that project can be read about here.

## 2 INCLUSIVE OPENING EVENT

### 2.1 What for? – Intention

The participation of people with assistance need is essential for developing inclusive work in the social space, so that they can express and call attention to their needs (target group 1). In addition, there are people working in various roles in the organizations, such as assistants, administrators, caregivers and interns (target group 2). Furthermore, it is important to invite people from the social space to join in with effective inclusive activities (target group 3).

At the beginning of a process that serves to strengthen the inclusive community, it is important to involve all the relevant target groups in order to facilitate good communication and organization. The inclusive opening event was developed as a format to serve this purpose.

The goal of the event is to enable the actors to become aware of and get to know each other so that, at the end of the event, they can form an initiative group for a jointly planned project. This group consists of individuals who personally express the wish to actively contribute to developing the work in the social space. They come from all of the target groups described earlier: co-workers without assistance needs and people with support needs from the organization, people from the social space. This group, which is inclusive by definition, assumes responsibility for the entire organization of the project or acts as a representative of the local social space. The planning of activities happens after this, for instance during a future workshop which could also be the starting point for a participatory process in the social space (see Chapter 4).

### 2.1 What for? – Intention

Since the Federal Participation Act has come into force in Germany, every organization that supports inclusion is expected to contribute to an inclusive social space. But activities in the social space can be initiated by impulses of different origins, for instance:

- A person with assistance needs wishes to experience more inclusion. They wish for more opportunities to participate in the social space in the spheres of leisure, work, mobility etc.
- The co-workers of the organization would like to open themselves more to the surrounding community to actively contribute to shaping an inclusive common space as stipulated in the CRPD.
- The board of the organization recognizes the importance of inclusion in the social space and its own need for a new political and social orientation to achieve this.
- People from the social space, such as neighbours, active members of associations, entrepreneurs etc. wish for more inclusive interaction.
- The community resolves to become more inclusive and initiates the relevant activities.

Depending on the impulse and the local situation, there are two ways of initiating activities in the social space:

- “Holding on to the safe space and opening it up gradually.” If the impulse comes from within the organization, if there have not been many previous contacts with the surroundings so far and if the members of the organization are concerned that they may meet with prejudice or rejection, it is better to start with an internal opening event. In this case, the opening of the circle of participants will follow later, for instance in the form of a future workshop.
- “Seizing the opportunity for inclusion.” If the impulse comes from outside and

there are existing inclusive contacts, the opening event should start with an open invitation to everyone interested. In this case the external impulse can be used as a driving force and the future workshop will constitute the next step towards identifying concrete activities.

The event aims to inform all the target groups equally so that everyone has the chance to actively participate.

The reason for the internal format is that people with assistance needs, who may have spent a long time in one institution with its routine processes, may need different information channels, spaces for encounter, time periods and ways of being addressed than the stakeholders of the community. The same can apply to co-workers without assistance needs. This format is therefore a platform for preparation and for discussing questions about the intentions and potential dimensions of the project, whilst offering a safe space for the actors from the institutions.

If inclusive formats have been experienced in other areas, a more open format can be chosen as the starting point. In this case a debriefing after the event can be helpful.

### 2.3 What? – Concept and Content

The concept includes several steps:

- Finding and getting to know the interested people together.
- Conveying and practising inclusive attitudes through social art interventions.
- Time to share and develop common visions for the organization.
- Finding an initiative group and clarifying the required process.

### 2.4 How? – Methods

A few people are needed upfront to make the impulse tangible and run the event. This preparation group needs four people for the event (moderator, timekeeper, minute-taker, photographer). Time, place, advertising, catering, materials and funding need to be arranged first.

For this format and with a group of 20 to 30 persons one should schedule around three hours including breaks.

#### Programme and methods

The methods are presented here as part of the chronological order of the event. The process was inspired by Theory U (Scharmer 2019) which stipulates that a process needs to undergo different phases for the participants to be able to unfold their full potential: downloading or observing (steps 1 & 2) – sensing (steps 3 & 4) – presencing / feeling what is there (5, 6, 7) – crystallizing / condensing (8) – prototyping (follows at the next event).

- Welcome and outline of the programme: we want to build an inclusive social space!
- What exactly is an inclusive social space?

Presenting the five attitudes on the posters that are crucial for developing inclusive communities:

- together – inclusive

- explorative – curious
- mindful – respectful
- trying out – exemplary
- changing – developing

LINK: (1) posters

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

- Exercise – always in relation to the posters presented:  
What is a social field and in what way am I effective and dependent within it?

Method: spiderweb network with a ball of wool

LINK: (2) spiderweb (instruction for the exercise in easy-read language)

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

Reflection based on guiding questions:

- Why did we do the exercise?
- What did I experience?
- Was I comfortable with it?
- What didn't I like?
- What have I learned?

- Exercise – always in relation to the posters presented:  
How do I experience relationship and change?

Method: forming a clay ball with eyes closed and sharing with a partner.

LINK: (3) transforming the clay ball (instruction for the exercise in easy-read language)

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

- Transition to the next exercise, using the posters presented in the plenum: what am I grateful for and what new things would I like to learn and develop in the social space.

Method: talk about the two questions written on the cards in groups of five; one person writes down the answers. It can take about 20 Minutes.

LINK: (4) two questions

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

The questions have deliberately been phrased to be open-ended so that they are as easily accessible as possible for everyone. This requires good facilitation. A plenary session then follows about the two questions with sharing of the answers.

Facilitators need to keep in mind that the contributions need to be thought through and discussed when they are transferred to social space activities. This means that the answers/contributions need to be recorded (on flipcharts with photo documentation for instance) and the records handed to the initiative group to take along at the end. The initiative group needs these records for its further work, for example as part of further programs, trainings or for planning the future workshop.

Examples:

- I am grateful for the birthday party I had with my residential group. Transfer: the person likes to celebrate and may like to take part in a community festival.
- I would like to join the firefighters. Transfer: we contact the local fire brigade and broach the topic with them. Someone representing the fire brigade will be invited to the future workshop.
- Transition from the shared experiences of the opening event to the organization's concern -> presentation by someone from the organization who had the impulse (see 2.2) that it was important to develop an inclusive community.
- Finding and self-appointing of people present as initiators who are willing to collaborate as representatives of the organization or interested citizens.
- Agreements:  
Who coordinates the initiative group and organizes the next meeting?  
Where can wishes and requirements for inclusive developments be handed in? Is there a box or a person for collecting everything?
- Reflecting on the day, acknowledgements and goodbye

Concluding round:

How did I like it? What will I tell my neighbours at the dinner table tonight? What will happen next?

## 2.5 Reflection

The preparation group takes the time to discuss the following questions:

Have we been able to offer all the methods in a way that makes sense to the people involved and that they can understand?

Did we address everyone adequately according to their individual potential?

How well did our time schedule work?

What worked out really well? What was the "cherry on the cake"?

What did we not consider enough?

What do we want to do better next time?

For help with implementing the guidelines, the developers of the further training prototype can be consulted, see the section *About Us* at the end of this Manual.

## 2.6 Next steps

In addition to gathering insights at the closing of the event, the newly formed initiative group should agree a date for the next meeting.

Two important steps and topics need to be considered at this stage:

What further training does the group consider so that it can take on such a task (see chapter 3)?

Which individuals, companies, associations, organizations etc. in the community would the group like to contact so that it can plan a future workshop (see chapter 4)?

**Summary in easy-to-read language:**

The participating of people with assistance needs is the basis of inclusion.

Everyone should be well informed.

Then everyone can join in.

This is what the inclusive opening event is there for.

During the event people speak and express themselves through art (clay).

As a result an initiative group is formed.

These are people from the organization who want to actively support more inclusion in the social space.

They also talk about how they want to do this.

# 3 INCLUSIVE FURTHER TRAINING – EMPOWERMENT FOR DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE SOCIAL SPACES

## 3.1 What for? – Intention

The further training prepares the empowerment of the initiative group (see chapter 2) and of everyone involved in the field of work. In this context, empowerment – originally a key concept of the American Civil Rights Movement (cf. Doose 2011) – means awareness of one’s own strength and competence and enough confidence to achieve the goals that the group aims for.

Why is inclusive further training important?

1. It enhances awareness of the need for education. People with assistance needs often don’t have sufficient access to professional qualifications and occupations, particularly when they have learning difficulties. In the special schools that most adults with learning difficulties used to attend, formal education is often considered less important than practical training. Further training opportunities can therefore be a chance for adults to learn to work more professionally and competently. While this kind of further training does not necessarily receive state recognition, it leads to appreciation and lifelong learning in a context that is taken seriously by society.
2. It uncovers abilities. People with assistance needs are often underestimated. Inclusive further training opportunities offer them the chance to show and develop their skills. Such settings of shared learning are expected to make mutual education possible. For the kind of further training that aims to develop the social space, “soft skills” such as mindfulness and relationship-building are essential and gain importance over cognitive competence. The resulting positive experiences enhance awareness of the advantages of inclusive formats.
3. It is an example of lived inclusion. When we talk about inclusion, the ways we act and speak have to be inclusive from the start. “Speaking about” is a thing of the past and has given way to the more appropriate “speaking with” that leads to shared decision-making and joint actions. If this participatory way of working – which means working with inclusive groups towards inclusion – is not part of the process from the very beginning, it is difficult to introduce later, because essential aspects of the format have not been inclusively developed and established.
4. The initiators can have learning experiences that they did not expect, as they find themselves in new, perhaps changing roles, for instance as instructors or advisors.

## 3.2 Who?

A preparation team is required to develop the necessary expertise for running the further training. Ideally, the members of the preparation team already have the relevant basic skills. These need to be identified and put to good use. They include above all methods of working in small groups and of creating encounters at eye level as well as knowledge of artistic and interactive methods. At least two persons with the relevant knowledge would be ideal, so they can take turns during the individual modules and at the same time create a relaxed mood among the participants.

Each module builds on the previous one, which means they can be carried out chronologically. The content and time given to each module can of course be adapted to the

particular questions in each case. For every topic, a process with diverse approaches is devised that is appropriate for the participants (see 3.4 Methods).

Group sizes should not exceed 15. People may know each other from the inclusive internal information event, although this is not a condition for participation.

The following conditions for participation apply however:

- appreciation of inclusive teams with intrinsic motivation
- regular participation
- time for preparation and debriefing
- courage and joy in self-experience
- readiness to experiment
- readiness to implement and reflect on the themes in everyday practice.

The aim is to empower everyone involved

- to learn to formulate their own needs and feelings and to address them in the social space.
- to learn to put their will impulses into practice to participate in society.
- to learn to create an inspiring atmosphere in group processes because enthusiasm is contagious.
- to learn to develop interest and trust in communication.
- to learn to openly address basic assumptions, attitudes or even taboos that we tend to unconsciously carry as human beings.
- to learn to work with methods for developing the social space.
- to learn to recognize what is present or lacking in the social space from the citizens' diverse points of view.

### 3.3 What? – Concept and Content

#### Phase A

The members of the initiative group get to know each other and find ways of working together.

Module 1: How will the initiative group work together?

Module 2: We name our own strengths and abilities.

Module 3: Trying out and naming feelings.

Module 4: Learning to ask honest heartfelt questions.

Module 5: What has evolved so far in the initiative group?

Module 6: What are the initiators' needs and questions regarding inclusion in the social space?

#### Phase B

The initiative group learns methods for connecting with the social space.

Module 7: Summary of the needs identified in Module 6 and identifying community members who can and should be contacted.

Module 8: Planning an event/future workshop

Module 9: Organizing an event/future workshop

Module 10: What is a learning journey? How can it be organized? (see chapter 5)

Module 11: What are public relations (PR)?

Module 12: How does the further training affect me?

What strengthens me and us for the social space? What are our next steps?  
Celebrating the successful conclusion of the further training.

### 3.4 How? – Methods

Using easy-to-understand language is a basic requirement of further training.

The modules should have phases and elements that facilitate auditory, visual, kinaesthetic and communicative ways of learning and that occur rhythmically and regularly during the further training.

Alternating between interactive and communicative moments as well as phases of self-questioning and personal reflection are essential aspects to keep in mind when developing the modules.

Each of the exercises presented as examples can be used for activation or self-reflection. The choice of format depends on the expected outcome.

Some exercises (cf. Tho 2019) strengthen group processes, others promote personal knowledge and awareness. Again, the decision in favour of a particular format depends on what the exercise aims to achieve.

All exercises aim to strengthen intuitive, deep and honest sensations and experiences and to practise dialogical perception whilst strengthening sense perception and self-awareness. They can (and must) be devised and implemented flexibly depending on the abilities of the group members.

Examples of moments of listening that can serve as phases of self-questioning and personal reflection include listening to the sound of a gong, silence/stillness, reciting poetry, listening to music.

Examples of small-group work:

Making sculptures, “constellations” using figures and other accessories, drumming together, conversations with questions, painting a poster (What connects us? How are we feeling right now? What divides us? How can we overcome this division?)

Possible movement elements:

Qi Gong, eurythmy, walk/mindful walking, (folk) dancing, balloon games.

Link: (5) Example table of a module

Link: (6) Handouts for each module

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

### 3.5 Reflection

All contributors remind themselves that social changes need a lot of time and interaction. That all the members of the community are “in good company” is not something that can just be attained in a single further training session. All the relevant environments and social spaces must undergo an extended process, reflecting on their attitudes, developing new attitudes through self-knowledge and changing institutional conditions and structures. Relationships which may previously have been asymmetric,

which are experienced in every encounter, consciously or unconsciously, and which often simply establish themselves, can be transformed into warm-hearted awareness and relationship.

For help with implementing the guidelines, the developers of the further training prototype can be consulted, see the section About Us at the end of this Manual.

**Summary in easy-to-read language:**

Inclusion only works if everyone is involved: people with and without support needs.

Knowledge and skills are needed to become active in the social space.

Inclusive further training makes this possible.

It strengthens and encourages (“empowerment”).

Because people with and without assistance needs work together, they practise inclusion.

The participants are called “initiators”.

The further training consists of individual modules. Modules are like individual topics.

Every topic takes place at an agreed time.

During the first six modules the initiators get to know each other.

They find ways of working together.

During the following six modules the initiators learn how they can form a connection with the social space. the surroundings so far and if the members of the organization are concerned that they may meet with prejudice or rejection, it is better to start with an internal opening event. In this case, the opening of the circle of participants will follow later, for instance in the form of a future workshop.

## 4 INCLUSIVE FUTURE WORKSHOPS

### 4.1 What for? – Intention

Networking, taking down barriers and empowering people for participation

Formats of inclusive participation can be realized in very different forms and with different methods because organizations have different ways and reasons for approaching and working with their communal environment. In this presentation we focus on the format of the “inclusive future workshop” to implement the social and legal requirements of inclusion stipulated in the United Nation’s CRPD.

Our source of inspiration is Robert Jungk’s future workshop model (1991) which has been adapted to the given context.

We view such future workshops as important steps towards removing the barriers that people with support needs experience and towards meeting the need for a sense of belonging that everyone has.

The event also offers the chance to establish the opportunities for participation a community offers. It is for instance possible or even probable that not all members of a community know about existing initiatives. Experience has shown that the channels of communication are often not inclusive and only work under certain conditions. Due to the relationships that have established themselves, these conditions can be very direct and exclusive.

Other barriers arise when participants have physical disabilities or restrictions, such as impaired hearing, vision and mobility, impaired speech or language or cognitive disabilities, to name but a few.

The future workshop format strengthens systems that did or could not develop natural relationships among all their members. As with other marginalized groups of society, people with assistance needs do not always have the chance to participate in the community.

An initiative group or individual initiator will run future workshops to facilitate long-term, meaningful project ideas and create inclusive life realities that meet the needs of and are wanted by all the community members involved.

Depending on the chosen procedure, actors from the social space may have joined the initiative group in addition to the co-workers and people with assistance needs once the first future workshop takes place. If the process of developing activities in the social space starts with an internal and inclusive opening event, a further future workshop will aim to expand the initiators’ group by actors from the social space.

The following questions could form the basis for further future workshops:

What do we as citizens wish for our inclusive future-viable community?

Where and how can community-building activities be developed?

Success factors for generating a communal network:

- At least two initiative members, ideally from different target groups
- One or more persons who open and hold the space; it needs a vessel or space that is opened and made available
- Diverse concepts and approaches that can then be joined so that something new can emerge
- A motivating rhythm of activities: regular events of the initiative group interspersed with activities in the social space that enable stress-free personal encounters

- For the group:
  - shared intention and vision
  - attitude of mutual appreciation
- For the individual:
  - clarity about what one needs from the network and what one can and will contribute to it
  - assuming responsibility as a participant
  - interest in others, in their lifeworld and views, particularly if these differ from my own.

#### 4.2 Who?

If an initiative group exists, it should take on the planning and preparation as a whole. If the process starts with a future workshop, the organizers should belong to different target groups. It is recommended to choose one or two individuals as facilitators who have experience with group processes. One can also appoint someone from outside for this task.

The invitation extends to anyone who, in the view of the initiative group or the original initiators, are important in realizing the intention described above. Due to the responsibilities within a community, there are presumably established relationships among individuals who should be invited. Additionally, the members of the initiative group should invite organizations and individuals that/who can be expected to add new potential to the development of an inclusive society. The needs of all the participants will be increasingly considered over time.

All opportunities available to the organizations and the actors from the social space can be used to establish new contacts. Personal and institutional contacts, public offices, associations, tradespeople, family members etc. can be addressed through various channels such as flyers, emails, phone calls, ads in regional papers, notices pinned up in the church or town hall etc. The preparation team considers how they would like to open the event. A proven approach is a process of initially three future workshops, in the course of which the number of people invited gradually grows, starting with the nearest contacts (“immediate social space”), then adding professional contacts (“intermediate social space”) and finally the “widest social space” that includes people one does not know yet who receive a public invitation.

#### 4.3 What? – Concept and Content

An example of concept and content can be found in the link with two programmes which show the structures of a first and a second future workshop.

And the link leads to instructions for all the suggested exercises.

LINK (7)

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

#### 4.4 How? – Methods

The preparation and organizing teams of a future workshop need to know that the workshops will bring different expectations and work cultures together. They must also assume that some participants will find social art activities challenging (see link to exercises above). It is therefore important to offer exercises without making participation compulsory and to address such challenges openly.

When planning the programme, the organizers ensure that plenary conversations alternate with group work or with tandem or individual work phases. Some degree of choreography (from perceiving to sensing to condensing and trying out, see Scharmer 2019) also increases the chance of achieving results that really make a difference.

Rules or the self-image of the future workshop (based on R. Jungk 1991)

- everyone present is heard at the beginning (check-in)
- all contributions are treated as equal and equitable
- disturbances, which are always possible due to individual support needs, have priority
- everyone makes an effort to speak loudly and clearly and in easy-to-understand language
- everyone supports everyone
- Facilitators can change depending on skills. They provide the framework, organize, inspire, mediate and summarize when necessary
- As many contents as possible are visualized and illustrated artistically through movement, painting, writing etc.
- Practical exercises which are either visual, auditory or kinaesthetic serve to support and reflect on spoken content.
- Playful moments contribute to informal encounters and generate a cheerful mood.
- One person acts as timekeeper.
- All participants are equally responsible for the event's success.
- At the end of the event, everyone is heard again (check out, highlights, etc.)

## 5 INCLUSIVE LEARNING JOURNEYS

### 5.1 Why? – Intention

Learning journeys are opportunities for learning more about unknown places, organizations and people. By entering deeply into the experiences and stories of these host places, visitors can experience a sense of wonder about the world.

Learning journeys are opportunities for exploring or discovering familiar or new organizations and places in the social space. They are suited to support interaction in the social space or to call people's attention or invite them to a forthcoming future workshop.

Inclusive learning journeys have proved to be effective tools in that they contribute to the diversity of methods within the process. Based on their own ideas for a project, the initiators choose places, organizations or initiatives that pursue similar goals or, in the ideal case, have already made some progress in this respect. The interested initiators visit a suitable place, usually in the form of a day outing.

### 5.2 Who?

Learning journeys are suitable for anyone who wishes to learn something new. They start with inner curiosity, interest and joy in widening one's horizon and gaining personal insights. The group embarking on a learning journey should not exceed fifteen people. An inclusive group of 2 to 4 persons is sufficient for the preparation if each of them takes on an individual task. It is also important to include the intention of the learning journey in the planning stage: what concrete insights are we interested in? What are our questions? Who is asking them? Who is documenting?

### 5.3 What? – Concept and Content

Those wishing to embark on a learning journey choose together a place, organization and/or person that or whom they wish to get to know. They talk about the objective of the learning journey: for instance, the initiative group wishes to visit an inclusive hotel to find out how such a project can be done. This is followed by a planning phase.

### 5.4 How? – Methods

It is the attitude that distinguishes a learning journey from an ordinary outing. The opposite would be the attitude of a tourist who looks at a place rather superficially, takes a photo and moves on to the next attraction.

On a learning journey we do not look for what we know but open our minds and hearts and show interest in the unknown. This can also work in familiar places. The visitors "walk in the shoes" of the hosts, aiming to enter into people's feelings and thoughts and even the smell of a place. In the ideal case the hosts do not only speak about their success but also about challenges and difficulties. It is part of this encounter that the visitors open up and share their own experiences; it means that the learning journey can also be a learning experience for the hosts.

On the whole, the learning journey represents the sensing and perceiving phase in the

Theory U process. The other phases can be added or inserted earlier in combination with other activities. A learning journey can for instance follow on from the opening event and inspire specific activities in the following future workshop (prototyping/trying out) (Presencing Institute, accessed online on 17 November 2024).

Various learning questions can be part of the learning journey:

An unknown place: what does it look like? What is immediately noticeable? What sounds do I hear? What does it smell like? How do the hosts meet me? Do I feel warmly received? Do they ask me how I am? Do I have opportunity to experience the hosts' everyday life to a certain extent?

Is the visit well-structured? Is there an alternation between exploration and relaxation? Is there enough time to ask questions?

Are the hosts interested in their guests? Are they interested in their guests' aims and ideas?

Is it possible to build a relationship as a basis for a productive exchange? Can one talk about staying in contact?

Several people should document their impressions regarding the learning questions during the trip to create a basis for deepened reflection. For this documentation they can use recordings, photos or short notes.

LINK: Chapter 3, Module 10

<https://inclusivesocial.goetheanum.ch/en/handouts-practice-manual>

## 5.5 Reflection

A first exchange takes place directly after the learning journey, ideally in the place itself.

Around two weeks later one can then meet again to reflect on the experiences, starting with a recall. The question "What do I remember" can then lead to a conversation on the insights that have been gained for working together and for future plans. The learning questions should then be used to collect and evaluate the results. What can be improved on the next learning journey? Is there another place we would like to get to know on a next learning journey, because there are things we still need to learn?

For help with implementing the guidelines, the developers of the further training prototype can be consulted, see the section About Us.

### Summary in easy-to-read language:

A learning journey is a day outing with a special attitude.

The aim is not only to observe a place from the outside.

There should be an exchange with people who know the place well.

What are their questions and stories?

How do they feel in this place?

What is good? What could be better?

We open our hearts.

We listen.

We ask honest questions in conversation.

We learn from the hosts' experiences.

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