



Developing Attunement through the Experience of Joy

Synthesis report

Result R4-A3

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Co-funded by
the European Union



Result information

Grant Agreement No.	2021-1-HU01-KA220-ADU-000028311
Project acronym	ODE-TO-JOY
Project title	Ode to Joy Developing Attunement through the Experience of Joy
Project time frame and duration	01/11/2021 – 01/05/2024 (30 months)
Task	A3
Result	R4-A3 Synthesis Report
Status	Final version
Version number	1.1
Result responsible	UWEZO GmbH

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Gender declaration

For reasons of better readability, the language forms male, female and diverse (m/f/d) are not used simultaneously. All references to persons apply equally to all genders. The abbreviated form of language has exclusively editorial reasons and does not imply any valuation.

Summary of the Project

Title:	R4.1 Synthesis Report
Description:	<p>The <u>synthesis report</u> gives a review of the findings in outputs 1, 2 and 3, the JOY approach with the applied methods, procedures, and instruments.</p> <p>This report includes the direct impact of this on informal recognition, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, the motivation, and the indirect impact on formal validation of learning outcomes. The synthesis report will also include a plan for valorisation and sustainability.</p>
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Due date:	30 April 2024
Language:	EN



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1. The JOY-research

1.1. Introduction to the JOY project and the JOY research

This result is a guideline for a pedagogical methodology for the JOY training and instruments. It presents the different steps to build the pedagogical method for accompanying young people, the prerequisites in terms of resources and the tutor team, as well as the range of JOY services deemed appropriate and necessary to meet the identified needs.

JOY is only one of the positive emotions¹. Other positive emotions are like – a basic emotion, however somehow it is the emotion, that all of us tend to try to reach. In our approach, joy is not synonymous with happiness. Joy is not a universal emotion, rather it is a more complex virtue. In our approach, joy is not caused by a particular event, but comes from the inside of the individual. Joy means accepting the self, flexibility in unexpected situations, self-care, capacity for positive emotions and coping with negative situations and uncomfortable feelings. Joy means that the individual experiences more comfortable emotions than uncomfortable ones in the present and looking back at the past.

Joy is also one of the main characters of the famous Pixar movie, “Inside Out”. A happy, very proactive figure, whose main goal is to keep the human, it’s working for, happy. However, the character Joy soon learns that emotions are interlinked, and that well-being often comes from overcoming other feelings, like fears, sadness, and anger.

During our research, we found how we can increase the level of personal happiness and contentment of the individual, which is indeed the basis of well-being. As we found out, other research findings are giving the same direction.

Some studies have also shown that positive emotions are correlated with more effective immune system functioning which likely influences our ability to fight off diseases, which can lead to reduced employee absenteeism and sick days. Regardless of exactly why or how positive emotions lead to better health, the association between happiness and health is strong and well-documented.

¹ The project JOY we used the term “Joy”, that includes all positive emotions such as gratitude, contentment, serenity, interest/admiration, compassion, love, hope, pride, amusement/fun.



Some work-related benefits of mental well-being are:

- less burn-out.
- positive emotions also are closely tied to better interpersonal relationships; positive emotions improve social interactions.
- Employees' emotional experiences have an impact on interactions with clients, customers, and co-workers.
- Positive emotions have a positive impact on creativity and on the ability to solve problems.
- Another likely benefit of positive emotions is increased creativity and innovation in job performance.
- positive emotions lead to greater job satisfaction.
- correlation with stress management.

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Sonja Lyubomirsky identified several possible sources of joy. According to her theory, everyone has two or three most important areas that represent a source of joy for them. These are the ones that should be practised the most to have a joyful life. And the others can be an additional source of joy and worth developing. Seligman identified the five most important elements of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments (PERMA):

- **Positive emotions:** Positive emotions are not only simply happiness in somebody's life. It refers to a general attitude toward savouring and integrating positive emotions into daily life such as hope, interest, love, compassion, and gratitude. It does not mean that negative emotions should be forgotten or suppressed. It means that the emphasis is on positive feelings, also containing resilience. Positive emotions are supported by spending time with important people, doing engaging activities or practising gratitude.
- **Engagement:** The concept of engagement is in line with the flow. It occurs when the challenge and skill level are high, and they are balanced. But in Seligman's



work, it means also living in the moment, being aware of our own sensations and feelings.

- **Relationships:** Relationships means positive relationships when the individual feels supported, loved, and accepted. Positive relationships are vital to a happy life, strong social networks cause better physical and mental health. Nurturing existing good relationships strengthens life satisfaction and joy. Sharing joy or success fosters a relationship.
- **Meaning:** Those people who have a strong meaning or purpose in life are more satisfied with their lives and have a better health condition. It may be found in a profession, a community or a spiritual belief. It helps to stick to values, and important things and keep the focus when difficulties appear.
- **Accomplishment:** Fulfilling our internal motivation, and achieving our own goals are much more important, than meeting external expectations. Money, fame, or power causes much less well-being than reaching one's own goals. Self-motivation, perseverance and passion for the goals are included in accomplishment, too. This contributes to well-being because individuals can look at their lives with a sense of pride.

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In the JOY project – experiencing all the elements of the PERMA model ourselves – we wanted to understand, how using different approaches in training and counselling can lead to this positive well-being, which is indeed the goal of all coaching and therapy. Researchers and practitioners from four countries – Hungary, Austria, Germany, and Italy – came together again and again to experience their methods, share their ideas, learn from each other, and develop something that can be useful for other practitioners.

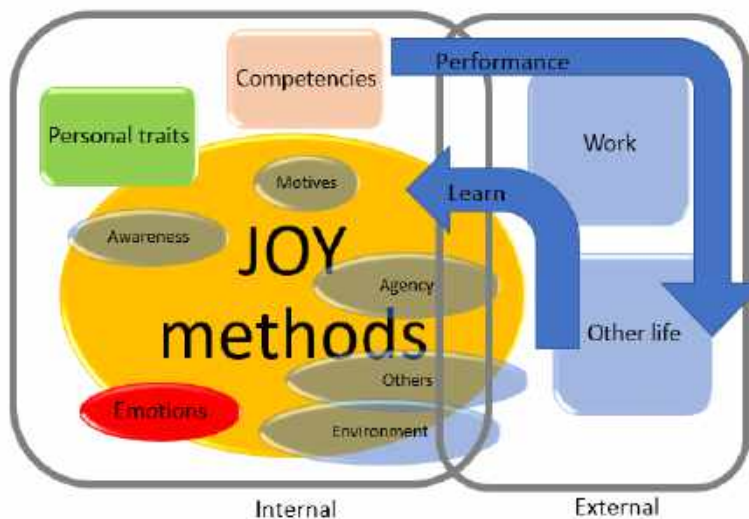
The JOY model is a picture or description of where our methods interact with the levels and field of internal areas of personality and personal development and external areas of life and work of the client.

The main target group of the JOY model is young people not in employment and not in training, however, we believe that our guide is to be used for all practitioners working on personal wellbeing. In the development of our model and criteria, we have implemented a broader desk- and field research, more focused on the needs of NEETs – the results are published in a separate document.



1.2. The JOY model

Finding out how to increase personal well-being, is not a simple issue. Complicated, because there are several factors leading to personal well-being, and also there is a very complex dynamic in-between them. Practitioners working with complex dynamics, have to see the whole picture, although we can only intercept with small elements. The key is to find the factor(s) in the dynamics, where our intervention can reach the most potential impact.



The two main areas interacting are the “inside”/internal, and the “outside”/external: the person and the environment. Coaches, counsellors, and trainers cannot have a direct impact on the “outside” of the person, however through working with the individual factors, they can have an impact on them as well as they have an impact on the internal environment of our client.

The external dimension in our model consists mainly of “work” and “other life areas” or personal life itself. It is rather arbitrary: why mention work and not mention other important areas, like family or hobbies? It is because of the objective of our model: how to increase the level of well-being in work-related circumstances, including preventing burning out. Work is a very important factor of our lives, an area, which in itself is not of choice: as adults, all of us need to work.

For some, the area of work and other life areas are more overlapping, however for most people, there is a clear distinction in this issue. Several people feel the area of work is only a “must do”, which is a clear factor for unhappiness. If we spend 40 or more hours per week going somewhere we don’t want to be and doing something which we don’t like, that’s an issue to work with. On the other hand, NEETS do not have regular work. It is the consequence of the definition. But they have to deal with how they approach the job. If they feel competent and confident and they have a realistic self-valuation they will give a better impression in an interview and can get an easier and a better job.



The basic interface between work and internal life is the area of competencies. We present our inner selves in work through them. There are very functional (work-related) competencies— however counsellors or trainers do not tend to work with these.

The so-called methodological competencies, the ability to apply knowledge and methods to make sense of, and operate in, any context are also closely related, and our methods can have an impact on them. Still, we are not directly aiming at them either. What is more important from our perspective are the personal competencies and social competencies. Personal competencies are personal traits and abilities that affect your results in the workplace and in life, like self-discipline, stability, stress resistance, integrity, self-reflection, creativity, and self-management. Social competencies are the ability to handle social interactions, having empathy, understanding the actions of others, and communication skills. Our JOY model has a direct impact on developing these through experience.

Other areas of life – family, friends, hobbies, learning, home etc. – can have an even bigger impact and blurred relationship with our internal life and feelings. Based on Maslow’s pyramid we all know that environmental factors – having shelter and food and heating – are the basic needs to be solved, it has a very clear impact on how we actually feel. If we are cold or hungry, our interests and motivation are just crippled to do anything.

However, just on top of the physiological and physical safety, the third need of existence in Maslow’s pyramid is relationships. The need for esteem and self-actualisation is above the relationships, but they are needs of growth. Relationships are partly outside – as the person we are in any kind of relation with -, and partly inside, as the relationship is the dynamics between us and the others, which is deeply rooted in our internal patterns of connecting and bonding. Our model directly addresses these two areas: providing a safe environment, where we can work with our relationship patterns.

The main dynamics between external areas and internal is happening through our “performance”. The important work here is to find the previously learnt and developed maladaptive patterns and behaviours and provide support in changing them.

The main area of our JOY method is the internal world of a person: personality traits, emotions, awareness, (personal) motives, and agency.

Personality traits are natural abilities we are born with. Some of us are personality-wise more introverted, others extroverted. Some of us enjoy working with details, others do not. Personality traits – although they evolve and very slightly change through a lifetime – cannot be externally changed. It might happen for example that due to a hardness a



previously outgoing person becomes introverted, but in reality, a person will suffer in this state, and it will be based on fears, and not on a natural tendency.

The role of **emotions** in the learning and performing process has been a growing topic of research interest over the past 20 years, and a specific focus has been given by the neurosciences to the relationship between emotions, learning and achievement / performance. Emotions are deeply rooted in our somatic being, they are connected to our working body – “embodied” and are evolved for sustaining our lives and reproduction. Importantly, research has revealed that emotion and cognition are sustained between each other and thus interdependent – there is no such action which is not based on emotions, as the neuroscientist.

However, unlike personality traits, emotions can be changed quite easily both from inside and outside. Just imagine such self-care methods when being tired and upset, like drinking a hot, delicious coffee, being hugged, listening, or sitting down and meditating or sleeping. However, even for basic self-care, we can tend ourselves much better, if we increase our awareness of our emotions.

We are not born with this **awareness** as much as we are born with emotions. We learn to differentiate them and recognise them from others, especially from our primary caretakers in the first years of life. This happens through the process, called mirroring, when our parent tells us, to reflect on how we feel: “my little baby is hungry...”. However, there is a level of what we learn at an early age, and for more complex feelings we have to learn to self-reflect and assess our own feelings. This self-reflection can clearly be developed.

Our **motives** – desires and drives which generate an effort toward reaching something we want, are also important factors related to learning and performance. They are in an interaction with our emotions, with our traits and our competencies, and usually, they drive us towards something which in the end makes us happy. Motives are driven by “gratification”, a positive result at the end of our actions – the higher the perceived positive result is, the larger our motive is. Throughout our lives we need to develop long-term motives, however, usually only long-term motives do not make us content in our lives. We always have to balance out short-term motives and long-term ones.

Finally, but not least importantly we reach into the factor of **agency**. Agency means that we feel in control of what happens to us, to feel to have an impact on our environment. To feel in control, we need to have an awareness of our feelings, motives, and personality traits. The level of personal agency is not the same throughout our lives. At the very beginning, babies cannot even have control over their own movement. They learn to



control their body, later be in control of their feelings, and also later be in control of their circumstances.

1.3. Criteria for JOY methods

Based on our model, we consider those methods of working with clients, where the practitioners take into consideration all the different factors described in our previous section.

The methods should meet the following criteria:

- Person-centred approach:
Empathy, Congruence, Unconditional positive regard
- Works in safe space (transient space)
With well-defined boundaries, incremental building of trust and a feeling of safety.
- Experience-based.
Experiencing and processing / assessing/reflecting on the experience from a personal perspective, generalising on the learning
- Group method.
Group size is method-dependent; use of “circles”; small groups for sharing and self-assessment.
- Leads to real-life outcomes.
learning to out-of-workshop environment when assessing; practices to take home, and next experience-based steps.
- Mindful approach to actual state
Being aware of here and now; non-judgmental; non-reactive/observe
- Leads to increasing level of agency.
Including body-focussed exercises: consciousness of body; incremental level of depth.
- Validates of emotions, development of emotional intelligence
Space to meet and express emotions; assess and describe emotions; not valuing;
Mirroring/feedback; sharing; not judging.
- Supports self-valuation, external valuation.
Build in time and space; feedback; written personal self-reflection; certificate.
- Helps to create and maintain healthy relationships.
Sharing/team activities; me/I-language; opt-out opportunity; dealing with complaints; stimulating interpersonal dynamics.
- Helps to be aware of our physical environment, both built and natural.
cosy and warm space; no problems; environmental-related issues.



1.4. JOY methodologies

The methodologies are connected methods with the same approach, which we consider to be leading to experience joy, contentment, and personal growth, based on our research and personal experience.

We identified five approaches/methodologies which support our criteria, although we acknowledge that other methods can also be included in later stages. The five approaches are:

- a. Storytelling and narrative techniques, which allow the narrative identity of a person to develop and strengthen.
- b. Art-related group work, which increases the sense of beauty and creativity.
- c. Nature-based techniques, which connect the self with the surrounding nature and provide feelings of connection and peace.
- d. Somatic and bodywork, which helps the individual to reestablish their bodily agency and sense of self.
- e. Drama techniques, which provide space to understand, recreate and reformulate situations creatively.

How do the methods relate to the JOY criteria?

Criterion	Does the method fulfil the criteria? (Yes / No / Partially)					
	STORY-TELLING	DRAMA TECH-NIQUES	SOMATIC	NATURE	ART	VPL
Person-centred approach	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Works in a safe space (transient space)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Experience-based	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Group method	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Leads to real-life outcomes	P	Y	P	Y	Y	Y



Mindful approach to the actual state	Y	Y	Y	P	P	-
This leads to an increasing level of agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Valuation of emotions, development of emotional intelligence	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Supports self-valuation, external valuation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Helps to create and maintain healthy relationships	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Helps to be aware of our physical environment, both built and natural.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

1.5. Valuation of Prior Learning (VPL)

The VALUATION of Prior Learning forms the bridge between learning outcomes of the socio-creative approaches and other learning outcomes with the formal recognition systems (Validation of Prior Learning). This is an ad hoc process of 1) identifying, 2) documenting, 3) assessing, and 4) certifying the learning outcomes of individuals acquired within previous formal education and training and/or by informal learning. It gives visibility and value to all forms of learning and measure this against a European, national and/or professional standard. It seeks to uncover and unlock latent talent in the workforce and society. The European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop) are leading in the implementation of VPL in Europe.

The pressure from politics, education and the labour market is mainly towards this summative assessment, leading to a certificate or diploma and towards getting a higher degree. Minimal 40% of adult persons aged between 21 and 35 years, should have a completed study at tertiary level. For many of our target groups (NEETs) and other target groups, this pressure is extremely high.



The bottom-up to all **valuation** uses standards/systems closer to the person like:

- The personal standard, driven by personality traits, emotions, and motivation.
- Social standards, such as family, friends, colleagues
- Organisational standards, like volunteers, hobby-clubs.

Day-to-day life and personal learning and development are based on a mix of personal and social standards. If these standards are not addressed and not met, the unbalance in life increases and also (the chance of) illness, low performance and mistakes increases.

The valuing process can take place at different types/stages:

- As an entry-check for training if the competencies required to start a training are met.
- During the training, to follow the development process and to give feedback, feedforward of a feed-up.
- After the training, measure a trainee's/student's understanding, typically against standardized criteria (learning outcomes, competencies, qualification).
- During life: a continuous self-evaluation against a person's own or social standards.
- Can have different goals such as diagnostic, formative, and summative.

JOY offers more space for the uniqueness of a person, the personality traits, the emotions, motivation, the informal self- and social recognition and the power of diversity in learning and valuing the outcomes of learning. This is the need/demand of an individual (e.g. closer to his/her own needs, reducing stress, increasing resilience), what employers are asking for (rather a high-motivated, practical, and learning employee, than a high-certificated, more theoretic, employee).

The findings in the monitoring show the low effectivity of the formal VPL and the enormous grey labour market: People are more interested in self-evaluation, self-esteem, support for and improvement of their informal learning and other ways of recognition (networking). A second aspect is which jobs to expect in the near future. The outcome of research done by the Institute for The Future for DELL Technologies it was expected that 85% of the jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet. What is for the NEETs the value of the present formal recognitions? A third aspect is the process of finding and getting a job: A survey on LinkedIn showed that 85% of the jobs are obtained by networking. Important skills for this are networking, maintaining connections, presenting, contacting, informing, and socialising.

The JOY approach connects the informal valuing processes with the VPL system, whereas the valuing process of the individual is leading and where s/he has the power of control over their own development.



1.6. Conclusions of the Research

During our research – both based on previous research and through the feedback of youth workers, we have found that many young people lack a clear personality profile and place in life. They suffer from sadness, tiredness, lack of drive and motivation, lack of interest in hobbies and friends, fear, and feelings of inner emptiness. And external circumstances increase the pressure on these youngsters, like the accelerated speed of change in this world, the high pressure to perform, the decreasing role of family structures, and social contacts mainly via the Internet.

At the same time, we learned that the role of emotions in the learning process has been a growing topic of research interest over the past 20 years, and neuroscience has a specific focus on the relationship between emotions, learning, and achievement. Importantly, research revealed that emotion and cognition are sustained together and thus interdependent, indicating that rather than interfering with learning, emotions are critical for learning.

During our research, we identified the following other factors related to outputs in well-being and work performance:

External: work and other life areas, physical environment, personal relationships.

Internal: personality traits, emotions, awareness of emotions, agency, motives, competencies.

The JOY model is described in more detail in our GUIDE for Developing Attunement through the Experience of Joy. We cannot change the full social environment for young people. Therefore, we have to act at the personal level. We have been collecting practices, which involve, and motivate people, where people experience growth and learning.

Based on all these findings, we have concluded the following:

- It is important to base our pedagogy on Rogers' view of a person, who is always capable of growth in a supportive environment.
- JOY methods are used in a "transient space" - a safe environment.
- JOY methods are experience-based and used in groups.
- JOY methods lead to learning outcomes that are tested/used in real life.
- JOY methods very much focus on the actual state and awareness of people (mindful approach).
- JOY methods increase the level of agency – the personal feeling of control over one's own life, and empowerment.



- JOY methods recognise emotions, validate them, and increase emotional intelligence.
- JOY methods support self-valuation, external valuation feedback and self-reflection (containing relevant parts and exercises).
- JOY methods help to create and maintain healthy relationships.
- JOY methods help us to be aware of our physical environment, both built and natural.

Based on these findings the JOY Criteria and guidelines for JOY practice have been developed and is described in our GUIDE for Developing Attunement through the Experience of Joy.

2. Toolbox

The Toolbox is a collection of specific exercises and instruments of the methods (warm-up, drama, storytelling, working with nature, bodywork, symbol work, bottom-up valuation of prior learning) that aim to enhance the experience of positive emotions. The exercises in the toolbox were designed, revised, and tested by the partnership in two different training experiences during the project and are now available for all the trainers who would like to use them.

In this practical online tool, the activities are divided according to the methodology, each method contains approximately 5 - 6 activities. For which are indicated:

- General aim.
- Short description/background/Introduction/Tips for the trainer.
- Target.
- Suggested Group.
- Materials.
- Duration.
- Procedure/step.
- Evaluation/Final debriefing.
- Literature.

An introductory video was developed for each toolbox approach, explaining the highlights of the method in the style of each responsible partner through images and sounds. Finally, along with the toolbox, a set of cards was also produced in which a reduced version of the activities can be found, which can be printed and used during training sessions.



3. Handbook

The handbook is a tool to go in-depth into the Joy method: this is composed of a set of disciplines which focuses on providing tools to support NEET people in rediscovering themselves. Storytelling, dance, and working with nature and art are the main approaches identified. Exploring them, the partnership discovered and invented useful activities that can facilitate connection with the self. The JOY method thus tries to help these people look for the right motivation to start an educational or professional pathway.

In this handbook, by interviewing experts in various fields, the partners tried to understand why these methodologies can be particularly functional in activating positive emotions. Each partner interviewed a professional belonging to one of the above-mentioned disciplines and asked him or her how the chosen approach can support positive emotions and enhance the learnings previously acquired by people during their past experiences.

This handbook aims to demonstrate, through the words of the chosen experts, the fundamental importance of a combined method, capable of bringing together different approaches that all aim at the well-being of the person. By paying attention to what was explained by the people interviewed, it is possible to see how these methods are all closely related to each other and can easily be used to enable the person who decides to try them out to investigate his or her deepest desires. Rediscovering the self, paying attention to one's unexpressed feelings, and admitting one's limitations but also one's abilities increases self-esteem, strengthens one's self-image and enables the individual to face life with different strength and joy. Dancing, storytelling, contact with nature, creativity, and improvisation are all parts of a great self-exploration mechanism. All this, combined with an appreciation of what has been learnt in non-formal contexts, leads the individual to feel capable, once again able to have different experiences in various areas of life, no longer stuck in a sense of incapacity and frustration.

The methods presented are all to be considered as part of the same journey, the end of which is unknown, but the path is certainly full of adventures and discoveries, and it can only be good to give it a chance.

Rogers drafted the article on working with nature; GeSoB interviewed a dance professional; Astoria interviewed an actor; CSC Danilo Dolci explored the positive characteristics of storytelling by interviewing an expert on the subject; and finally, UWEZO drafted the article on art.



The handbook concludes with an article on the importance of the VPL method and the valuation of prior learning as a starting point in the context of working with NEETs, but also in educational work in general. The article aims to highlight that even what has been learnt not necessarily in formal education can be extremely useful to the person and can facilitate his or her inclusion in various types of work environments.

The manual helps to deepen and clarify doubts concerning the JOY method approaches and that it is an opportunity for personal enrichment and growth. Moreover, it explores the socio-creative methodologies with practical exercises on the Joy Toolbox, which you can find on the project website (www.joy-experience.eu). For further theoretical content on the following methodologies, it is possible to explore our Joy Model, always from our free educational resources. En-JOY the reading!

4. Core Curricula and Alternate Curriculum of the partners.

4.1 introduction

Storytelling and narrative techniques relate to the art of telling thoughts, feelings, and experiences through a process of identification. "Drama therapy is the use of dramatic techniques to promote personal growth and promote mental health. Drama therapy, as a creative arts therapy method, takes many forms and includes individual, Applicable to couples, families, and various groups." (Wikipedia) - Drama as a teaching method: "Students are fully engaged in learning through drama." This term is used in exercise therapy to refer to an approach based on soma, or "the body perceived from within." Bodywork is a general term for all techniques that work with the body. Emotions do not occur in our heads, but within our entire embodied somatic self. ART is the expression or exercise of human creative ability and imagination, usually in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works valued primarily for beauty (aesthetics) or emotional power. They draw, paint, and sculpt without thinking about their creative, artistic and aesthetic competence.

4.2 short curricula description

In the second year of the project, a one-week 'Training-of-Trainers' pilot training has been developed and held. The training was based on the experiences of the first training and on the feedback of stakeholders.



The activities have been imagined in this sequence because the goal is to let participants begin a self-discovery journey which starts from the individual to reach the collective dimension. In fact, the first activity is a dialogue with the self; the second one is an attempt to share the self with the outside world; the third one is a comparison and construction of meaning with otherness; the fourth activity can be considered as a summary of the first three. The aim is to accompany the participants in a gradual process. The basic idea is that knowledge and comparison with others are possible only if we want to discover ourselves first.

The exercises at the end of each day were steps from the valuation process and linked the learning outcomes of five methodologies (narrative, somatic, drama, art, and nature) and the process of recognising, describing, and activating acquired competencies:

1. Getting to know ... yourself and the other.
2. “Proud of ... “: describing a situation, using the STAR method
3. “Lifeline”
4. Reflection and Personal advertisement + Personal Action Plan and sustainable self-management”



4.3 Timetable as of JOY-model Training of Trainers Pilot

Time slot	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
09.00	-	Opening circle	Opening circle	Opening circle	Opening circle
09.15-10.45	-	Section 4. - STORYTELLING Methodology „Discovering the self through narration: from individual to collective awareness”	Section 8. - SOMATIC/BODYWORK methodology “Experience your Body”	Section 9b. - NATURE Methodology “Connecting with joy through the treasures of nature and the best version of ourselves”	13. Section - REFLECTION <i>Reflection on the criteria of the JOY model, and how the exercises are connected to it.</i>
10.45	-	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
11.00-12.30	Section 1. - Introduction	Section 5. - DRAMA Methodology “Voice training and Mastery of movement”	Section 8. - SOMATIC/BODYWORK methodology “Experience your Body”	Section 10. - ART Methodology “LandArt” & “Emotion Square”	14. Section - CLOSURE <i>Evaluation and feedback on the materials, closing circle</i>
12.30	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
14.00-15.30	Section 2. – STORYTELLING Methodology „Discovering the self through narration: from individual to collective awareness”	Section 6. - DRAMA Methodology “Improvisational theatre workshop with the topic of fear and anxiety”	Preparing & having lunch together	Section 11. - Nature Methodology “Connecting with joy through the treasures of nature and the best version of ourselves”	
15.30	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	
15.45-17.15	Section 3. - VPL Methodology “A : Proud of ... describing a situation”	Section 7. - VPL Methodology “B – Lifeline”	Section 9a. - NATURE Individual work – <i>connecting to ourselves in the forest</i>	Section 12. - VPL Methodology “C - Reflection and Personal advertisement” Individually: “D - Personal Action Plan and sustainable self-management”	
17.15-17.30	Closing circle	Closing circle		Closing circle	



4.4 Alternate curriculum

The alternate curriculum is a 16-hour-long workshop developed by all partners, which aims to take stock of all methodologies and approaches. The developed curriculum was tested with the help of experts, and, after piloting, their feedback was used to refine the final documents. For the participants it was an experiential experience to meet their own feelings, to connect with each other and themselves through positive emotions. The opportunity to self-reflect, evaluate, and give feedback made them feel very comfortable. The JOY criteria and approaches were found to be equally applicable by practitioners from all countries participating in the NEET target group. The diversity and variety of methods were a particular highlight for participants. Each partner developed one or more alternate curriculum (16 hours) and tested this with the target groups.

Title of the training	Emocean Discovering ourselves and connecting to others through drama, movement, and nature	A journey of self-discovery: from individual to collective awareness	EN-JOY! Connecting to ourselves and nature with stories, movement, and personal sharing	Path of your JOY! Discovering your own way with nature, art, drama techniques	IN HARMONY EVOLVE WITH JOY
Country / Partner	HU / Astoria	IT / CSC	AT / GeSoB	HU / Rogers	DE / UWEZO
Main exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pink glasses - Spacewalk - Letter to myself - Nature Mandela - Speech training - Improvisation theatre: Emotions - Evaluation with symbols - What I like about you - Emotion square - Meeting a tree - Lifeline (VPL) - Reflection and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectation Tree - Letter to myself (S) - Chasing memories (S) - Orange – Mindfulness (D) - My Major Acanas (S) - Marionettes (B+T) - Jacobson Relaxing exercise (D) - Meeting my tree (N) - Becoming nature (N) - LandArt (A+N) - Emotion Square (D) - Lifeline (VPL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe space - Getting to know... (VPL) - Introduction with symbols (T) - Expectation tree - Letter to myself (S) - Proud of ... (VPL) - Activating senses (N) - Meeting my tree (N) - Becoming nature (N) - LandArt (A+N) - The feeling of being moved (B) - Nature Mandela (N) - Spiderweb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction with symbols (T) - Safe space (B) - Chasing memories - Orange – Mindfulness (D) - Lifeline (VPL) - Find your nature voice (N) - Meeting my tree (N) - Becoming nature (N) - Path of 4 elements - Letter to myself - Nature Mandela (N) - Spiderweb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectation Tree - Letter to myself (S) - Spacewalk through stages in life - Expectation Tree - Whispering positivity - Proud of ... (VPL) - Recognise our feelings (D) - Desing your T-shirt (S+A) - Promote yourself – statement. - Follow the track (N) - Lifeline (VPL) - Emotion square (D) - Cards; history and me - Self-expression and reaction (D) - Value systems and promoting yourself (VPL) - Personal Action Plan (VPL)



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Additional exercises are:

- Warming-up
- Name learning games.
- Prince, princess, dragon
- Space geometry and scores
- Ice breakers.
- Creating safe places
- Creative with music
- Feedback
- Reflection
- Closing circle



5. Learning outcomes

The Learning outcomes of the Ode-to-Joy training for the participants are:

Awareness

- Enhancing self-awareness and self-reflection.
- Being conscious of the emotion (fear, anxiety),
- Improving narrative and symbolic skills.
- Helping to reconcile with past moments.
- Imagining the future; Focusing on positivity.
- Being aware of your own qualities and possibilities.

Internal

- Linking with emotions
- Enhancing self-esteem.
- Increasing self-appreciation
- Increasing the internal ability to release and undo stress.

Valuation

- discover and point out personal qualities and competencies.
- reflect on how to 'proof' or present your own qualities.
- Link with emotions.
- Reflect on important moments in your life and find out the qualities, emotions, and conditions that belonged to these moments.
- Integral vision of your life
- Being able to use your competence, emotions, personal traits, motives, and insights to manage your 'work-life career'.
- Valuation process:
 - Step 1: Getting acquainted and aware.
 - Interview another person.
 - Introduce the other person to the group.
 - Step 2: Proud of ... describing a situation
 - discover and point out personal qualities and competencies.
 - reflect on how to 'proof' or present your own qualities.
 - Link with emotions.
 - Systematic analysing and describing of events in life.



- Step 3: Lifeline:
 - Integral vision of your life
 - Reflect on important moments in your life and find out the qualities, emotions and conditions that belonged to these moments.
 - analyse 'the transfers in your life' so far.
- Step 4: Reflection and Personal Advertisement
 - Show and convince others of who you are.
- Step 5: Personal Action Plan (PAP) + sustainable self-management of competencies
 - aware of own qualities and possibilities.
 - use your competencies, emotions, personal traits, motives, and insights to manage your 'work-life career'.
 - articulate your next personal action within the framework of a PAP.

Emotional

- More able to change feelings/ emotions.
- Acquire a skill to find calmness.
- Fast reaction/response to emotion
- Focusing on our own feelings, our companions, and the energies of nature

(Re-)action

- Preventing negativity.
- Finding a balance between positive and negative aspects.
- Developing imagination.
- Developing Introspection.
- Reflecting on how to 'proof' or present your own qualities.
- Free, respectful action with natural materials in order to develop one's own creative and creation activity.

Social:

- Attunement and connection to others
- Connecting with oneself and the environment around us
- Becoming more open and aware in everyday life
- Having the 'experience' of a design process and a result that is value-free, control-free, consists only of positive emotions in becoming and letting go.

Techniques:

- Skills in voice and body techniques



- Learning to create and elaborate stories with others discover and point out personal qualities and competences.
- Attunement to our bodies, increasing body awareness.
- Learning about space and perception of space
- Learning about somatic approaches in performative arts and self-development
- Noticing the treasures provided by nature, a more attentive presence.
- Better understanding and learning about own and other's feelings and body language.
- Learning to be an active part of a group
- Disassembling situations
- Having analysed your 'transfers' in your life so far.

CHECKLIST for an Alternate Curriculum:

Does the Ode-to-Joy training...:	Y/N
... enhances self-awareness and self-reflection?	
... improves narrative and symbolic skills?	
... helps to reconcile with past moments?	
... helps to imagine the future?	
... focuses on positivity?	
... prevents negativity?	
... helps to find a balance between positive and negative aspects?	
... enhances self-esteem?	
... develops the imagination?	
... develops Introspection?	
... helps to learn to create and elaborate stories with the other?	
... improves the ability to concentrate?	
... learns to feel more comfortable with one own's body and other people's bodies?	
... strengthens public speaking skills?	
... creates a dialogue with the surrounding space and recognises it as a friendly place?	



2. Findings & conclusions

Joyful people are more motivated to act and participate, are much less likely to experience burnout, have better mental and physical health, and are more resilient towards uncomfortable emotions. Positive emotions (e.g. joy, pride, content, esteem, gratitude, contentment, serenity, interest/admiration, compassion, love, hope, pride, amusement/fun)

The project applied fusing of experience-based methods, such as drama, bodywork, dance, music, Symbolwork, storytelling, nature work, which helps NEETs to reconnect with their body and mind, increasing their ability to experience joy and to connect and through this experience develop a greater sense of attunement and joy, pride, contentment, and esteem. Fusing these experience-based methods with the VPL method (Valuation of Prior Learning), connects them with qualifying systems and formal VPL methods, which improve their performance in work and life (e.g. success, quality, creativity, acceptance, flexibility).

The aims of the Ode to Joy project were the following:

- To equip adult educators with tools with which they can support their target audience in personal growth through increased awareness, motivation, and positive emotions.
- To foster a virtuous connection between NEET young adults, the employment sector, and the formal and informal learning environments.
- To provide Common Guidelines for implementing the project's model and approach of focusing on fostering attunement and connection to one's emotion through experience-based methods.
- To provide recommendations for policymakers to embed the model and the process in the active labour market policies.

Previous research

During our research – both based on previous research and through the feedback of youth workers, we found that many young people lack a clear personality profile and place in life. They suffer from sadness, tiredness, lack of drive and motivation, lack of interest in hobbies and friends, fear, feelings of inner emptiness. And external circumstances increase the pressure on these youngsters, like the accelerating speed of change in this world, the high pressure to perform, the decreasing role of family structures, and having social contacts mainly via the Internet.

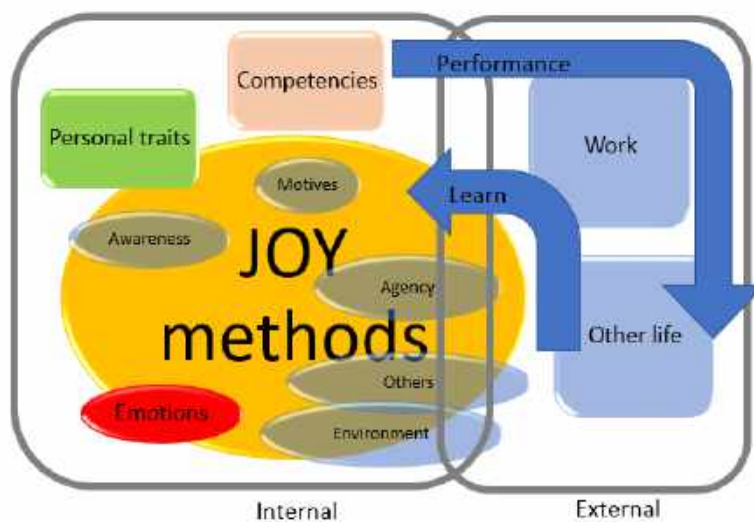


At the same time, the role of emotions in the learning process has been a growing topic of research interest over the past 20 years, and neuroscience has a specific focus on the relationship between emotions, learning, and achievement. Importantly, research revealed that emotion and cognition are sustained together and thus interdependent, indicating that rather than interfering with learning, emotions are critical for learning.

2.1. The JOY-model

During the research phase, the following two main areas related to outputs in well-being and work performance have been described:

1. External (outside): work and other life areas, physical environment, personal relationships.
2. Internal (inside): personality traits, emotions, awareness of emotions, agency, motives, competences



Coaches, counsellors, and trainers cannot have a direct impact on the “outside” of the person. Working through the individual factors can have an impact on a person as well as they have an indirect impact on the internal environment of the person. The basic interface between work and internal life is the area of competencies. We present our inner selves in work

through them. There are very functional (work-related) competencies – however counsellors or trainers do not tend to work with these. The focus in the Ode-to-Joy model is the internal world of a person: personality traits, emotions, awareness, (personal) motives, and agency.

Personal competencies are personal traits and abilities that affect our results in the workplace and life, like self-discipline, stability, stress resistance, integrity, self-reflection, creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and self-management. Social competencies are the ability to handle social interactions, having empathy, understanding the actions of



others, and communication skills. Our JOY approach has a direct impact on developing these competencies through experience. Combined with positive emotions.

The external dimension in our model is divided into “work” and “other life areas” or personal life itself. It is rather arbitrary: why mention work and not mention other important areas, like family or hobbies? It is because of the objective of our mode is: how to increase the level of participation, well-being, and further development in work-related circumstances, including preventing burnout and how to increase their employability.

The main dynamics between external areas and internal is happening through our “performance”. The important work here is to find the previously learnt and developed maladaptive patterns and behaviours and provide support in changing them.

The main areas of our JOY method is the internal world of a person:

1. personality traits,
2. emotions,
3. awareness,
4. (personal) motives,
5. agency.

JOY-criteria

Based on our model, we consider those methods of working with clients, where the practitioners take into consideration all the different factors described in our previous section.

The methods should meet the following criteria:

- Person-centred approach
- Works in safe space (transient space)
- Experience-based.
- Group method.
- Mindful approach of the actual state
- Increasing level of agency
- Validates of emotions, development of emotional intelligence



- Helps to create and maintain healthy relationships.
- Supports self-valuation, external valuation.
- Helps to be aware of our physical environment, both built and natural.
- Leads to real-life outcomes.

Strong points of the Joy model and approach

A safe basis:

The JOY approach and instruments focus on the JOY approach, giving participants a sense of security, acceptance, and being appreciated. The exercises are joyful, fearless, and nonjudgmental. A secure environment was established, in which the group could express themselves without fear and with respect for others.

The techniques and exercises are outlined following Rogerian psychology, for example, the person-centred exercises emphasize the importance of empathy from the facilitator's point of view. Positive emotions serve as the foundation for the entire model.

Function:

The used exercises address the participants' feelings, connect with their personality traits, increase the meaningfulness of their being, clearly assist in getting out of a negative spiral and negative emotions and help in the prevention of depression and other mental health issues. They are excellent in assisting with self-valuation and increasing self-esteem. For instance, somatic exercises promote relaxation and boost learning effectiveness.

The JOY method can be tailored to fit a wide range of individuals with varying personalities and in different situations.

Procedure:

1. Create a safe environment.
2. Apply a fusion of methods (Storytelling, Somatic, Theatre, Nature, Art)
3. Connect outcomes of methods
4. Valuation of prior learning
5. Plan for future development.

Participants examine many facets of themselves thanks to the techniques' differentiation.



The adaptability of the approach and its potential for repurposing in many settings, also because of its strong holistic foundation and diverse professional team,

Each participant can use the exercises independently based on their talents, knowledge, abilities, and life experience. Aiming for the same objective, there are numerous combinations of various strategies, including self-awareness, self-understanding, opening up, and strengthening the individual.

Valuation of Prior Learning (VPL)

The 5 VPL-steps support connecting the inner world of a person (Personality traits, emotions, motivation, self-esteem) with the valuation by the "outside" world of family, friends, groups/organisations/work (Warm VPL) and the formal world of qualifications and education (Cold VPL).

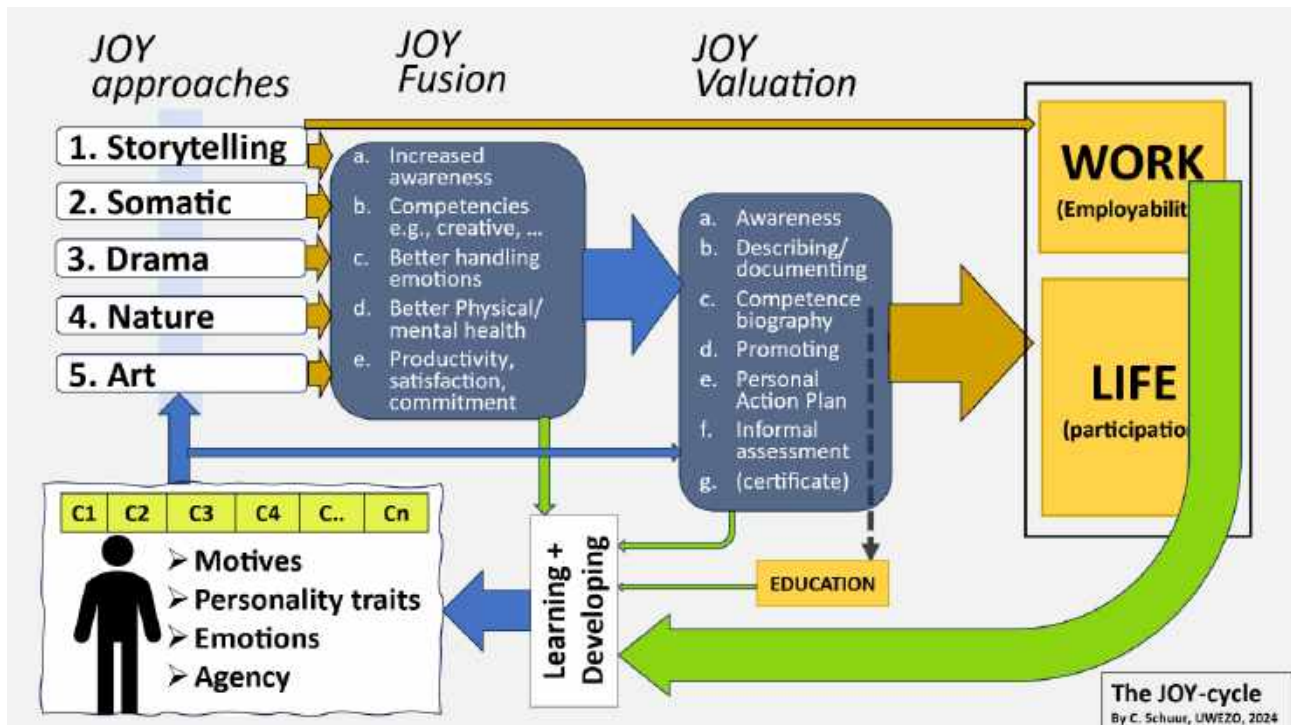
The VPL exercises create links between the joyful and secure environment of the socio-creative approaches and the realities of life.

1. Becoming more aware of their qualities and competencies
2. Analyse specific activities and situations and describe the used and developed competencies.
3. Develop a lifeline (/ start of a portfolio)
4. Promote yourself.
5. Prepare a Personal Action (/development) Plan

During all the VPL-exercises, the participants learn to train and coach each other and themselves (working in small groups).



2.2. The JOY-process



A. Fusion of socio-creative approaches

Combinations and fusions of the socio-creative methods of Storytelling, somatic, Drama, Nature, and Art, lead to:

- An increased awareness
- The (further) development of competencies, such as creativity, communication, teamwork, innovation
- A better handling and use of emotions
- Physical and mental healthier
- More attentive, satisfied and committed, most likely leading to higher productivity and fewer mistakes.

B. Valuing

The outcomes of the socio-creative exercises, combined with other personal traits, motives, emotions and agency.

- Further development of the awareness of competencies, more related to functioning in society and work.



- Analysing the personal process of putting competencies into action
- Improving ways to present their competencies to employers and in their social environments.
- Planning their personal development

C. Learning

Making their continuous learning visible and how it contributes to their sustainable development.

- Continuous informal and non-formal learning in work and society.
- Learning from the Socio-creative exercises and the valuation of their competencies
- Learning from putting their talents (competencies, personal traits, motivation, and emotions) into a “personal enterprise”.

2.3. The target groups:

The professionals

The professionals are social workers, counsellors, career guides, psychologists, trainers, and teachers, all working in support of young people who are ‘Not in Employment, Education and Training’ (NEET). During the training and the pilot training, it showed that there was a demand by trainers and professionals for learning and applying the fusing of different methods for dealing with their personal experiences, their own awareness, and how to (re-)construct their life and work.

They also found that they could use elements of the training in their work with individual clients and that it could be used, besides for NEETs, for many of their client groups (elderly, women, unemployed).

For specific exercises, like the bodywork exercise, it is needed to have at least bodywork or massage experience (from the bodyworker side) or somatic experience, while for Marionettes also a somatic / dance teaching experience.

It’s good if the facilitator has an assistant so if anybody gets emotional and wants to go out the assistant can accompany the troubled person.

NEETs interest / involvement

People who are Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) is a group of persons with, amongst others, a wide variety of backgrounds and personalities, living in different situations and environments, having different demands, and different causes that have led to their NEET status.



The fusing of methods in the Alternate training can easily be adapted to the needs, demands and possibilities of the persons or group.

Having NEETs think through their existing experiences and supporting them to value themselves is a very important step in integrating them into the area of work and/or further learning, training and/or education. Also, it can help identify their learning interests and needs, helping themselves in their lifelong learning process.

Drawing attention to NEETs, their conditions, and the reasons that led them to find themselves in this situation is an important way for them to understand today's society and its mechanisms. It is essential to continue to discuss these topics to allow them to feel taken into consideration and to encourage their change of direction.

The attempt to reconcile NEETs with their past and the rediscovery of their qualities can lead to greater involvement of these people in working contexts, which can favour the reduction (at least in local contexts) of youth unemployment.

Using a non-formal methodology instead of a formal one (which often does not produce the expected results) can be a good attempt to involve NEETs on a larger scale. It takes into consideration their specific situations and capacities.

The JOY approach has been applied, as a test, in the training of Ukraine immigrants (young adults, 18-25 years). The results were positive, where the participants changed their attitude from 'having to participate in standard programmes and training' towards taking the initiative themselves in identifying and creating opportunities'. Cultural and individual differences and language problems were turned into changes and joyful challenges, even starting to steer the career guides in employment offices, who, in their turn, could provide more effective guidance.

The cultural differences and different situations of the immigrants, demand a careful selection of socio-creative methods and a focus on the valuation of their competencies. Young adults have to cope with their recent traumatic experiences, such as violence, assault, abuse, loss of family members and friends, fear for those still living in Ukraine, the stress of the immigration process, and living in a sports hall with many others (also other cultures) and/or wrong expectations of life and work within the country. Moreover, these young adults experience a loss of their identity, familiarity and a lack of stability and an increasing uncertainty and have to cope with and manage their traumas.

Further research should show the impact on large groups of immigrants and fine-tuning the socio-creative methods, VPL and the alternate curriculum.

Other groups where Joy can also apply are for instance:



- People with burnout / bore-out.
- Persons looking for a new future,
- Persons who are dissatisfied/satisfied with work and life,
- Students (regular school program) with stress, apathy, less positive emotions, looking for the meaning of life)
- Young women (50% of NEETs in Germany), partly with child
- Persons with specific social backgrounds
- People with low education
- NEETs who have a not-registered job (e.g. illegal work)
- Older immigrants, with experiences in other cultures

2.4. Method and exercises:

- The methods and exercises must be readily available to many trainers (educators, psychologists, conflict counsellors). For trainers, it should be made easy to organise the chosen methods. The methods are just an offer. All "professionals" should choose the exercises you want to teach most effectively and honestly.
- It should be possible to suggest/add/link other categories of exercises and new tools and exercises, so JOY can grow/expand.
- Creation of the possibility for communication between the participants in a closed environment (e.g. WhatsApp group) and the possibility of a follow-up workshop/training.
- More emphasis could be laid on the key competencies ('Communication', Mathematics/Science/Technology, Digital, Learning, Social/Civics, Initiative/Entrepreneurship) (spirit), culture, teamwork, problem-solving, planning/organizing/prioritizing). It could for instance be used to create a personal competence card with these competencies, together with learning outcomes of JOY training, which could be used when preparing for instance a job interview.

2.5. The target groups:

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People who are Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) is a group of people with, amongst other things, a wide variety of backgrounds and personalities, living in different situations and environments, having different demands, and different causes that have led to their NEET status.

The fusing of methods in the Alternate training can easily be adapted to the needs, demands and possibilities of the persons or group.

Having NEETs think through their existing experiences and supporting them to value themselves is a very important step in integrating them into the area of work and/or further learning, training and/or education. Also, it can help identify their learning interests and needs, helping themselves in their lifelong learning process.

Drawing attention to NEETs, their conditions, and the reasons that led them to find themselves in this situation is an important way for them to understand today's society and its mechanisms. It is essential to continue to discuss these topics to allow them to feel taken into consideration and to encourage their change of direction.

The attempt to reconcile NEETs with their past and the rediscovery of their qualities can lead to greater involvement of these people in working contexts, which can favour the reduction (at least in local contexts) of youth unemployment.

Using a non-formal methodology instead of a formal one (which often does not produce the expected results) can be a good attempt to involve NEETs on a larger scale. It takes into consideration their specific situations and capacities.

Joy can also be applied to **other target groups**:



Examples are:

- Various categories of type of NEETs, create alternate curricula for these categories,
- People with burnout / bore-out,
- Persons looking for a new future,
- Persons who are dissatisfied/satisfied with work and life,
- students (regular school program)
- Young women (50% of NEETs in Germany), partly with child
- Specific social backgrounds
- People with low education
- Immigrants with experiences in other cultures (Ukraine)
- NEETs who have a not-registered job (in grey circuit)

3. Valorisation and sustainability

3.1. Valorisation

Knowledge valorisation is the process of creating social and economic value from knowledge by linking different areas and sectors and transforming data, know-how and research results into sustainable products, services, solutions, and knowledge-based policies that benefit society.

The JOY-method significantly enhances the employability and societal participation of NEET individuals by fostering their confidence and cultivating positive emotions through targeted non-formal learning experiences. This method is particularly effective because it incorporates the vital component of peer interaction, allowing participants to connect with others in similar situations. This peer exchange not only normalizes their experiences but also promotes a sense of community and mutual support, which is pivotal for emotional healing and growth.

Understanding that the foundation for any significant life change, especially re-engagement in educational or professional endeavours, begins with emotional stability, the JOY-method prioritizes emotional security. The project is thus designed to first address and strengthen the emotional resilience of participants. By doing so, it lays the



groundwork for them to confidently explore and pursue their vocational interests and goals.

The Ode-to-Joy project created and successfully tested alternate curricula, in which different types of socio-creative approaches (Storytelling, Somatic, Theatre/dance, Nature, and Art) are linked together. The target group were professionals who work with NEETs. The combination of exercises from the different approaches 1) increased the awareness of their competencies, b) stimulated the creative, innovative, communication, collaboration, network and cultural skills, all skills which are considered essential for success in the rapidly and ever-faster changing and interconnected society and work environment in the 21st century.

Secondly, the Ode-to-Joy project, linked the socio-creative approaches with the Valuation of Prior Learning, important for the ongoing, dynamic valuation processes, dealing with the demands of work and life in society 5.0 and industry 5.0 and the influence of artificial intelligence and robotics. Valuation is an important step toward validation (formal recognition). Cedefop (2023) stated, “However, despite EU and national policy efforts, concrete use and availability of opportunities for validation of non-formal and informal learning are currently still lacking.”. Understanding that the foundation for any significant life change, especially re-engagement in educational or professional endeavours, begins with emotional stability, the JOY method prioritizes emotional security. The project is thus designed to first address and strengthen the emotional resilience of participants. By doing so, it lays the groundwork for them to confidently explore and pursue their vocational interests and goals. The participants learned the four different standards for valuation from the perspective of the person (self, social, organisational and formal) and the valuation exercises trained the participants to describe a work/life situation and their use of competencies, to understand how they dealt with making a personal advertisement and making a personal Action Plan for their employment/ participation in society, for further development and for identifying affordable, meaningful opportunities for validation.

The social value substantially increased. The participants became more self-aware of their competencies, there was an increase in self-esteem, a better understanding of positive emotions (e.g. satisfaction, pride, contentment, esteem, confidence, hope, interest, gratitude, excitement, joy) and methods to cope/ deal with negative competencies.

The methods and exercises stay online available to trainers (educators, youth workers, psychologists, conflict counsellors). Trainers can easily organise the chosen methods and exercises. It is always possible to suggest/add/link other categories of approaches and new tools and exercises, so JOY can grow/expand.



The JOY approach emphasises the required competencies in the 21st century: ‘Communication’, Mathematics/Science/Technology, Digital, Learning, Social/Civics, and Initiative/Entrepreneurship) (spirit), culture, teamwork, problem-solving, planning/organizing/prioritizing. The participants learn how the learning outcomes of their JOY training, can be meaningful and used to demonstrate their value for work or in society.

3.2. Sustainability

The training showed sustainable results in terms of participants’ own strength, self-esteem, thoughts, and actions. First trials, such as with (trainers of) Ukraine Immigrants, demonstrated the power of Joy training, as the participants increased their self-awareness, their self-esteem, the awareness of their competencies. They learned to understand the culture of employment and participation in their new environment, and extremely importantly, they learned, by pairwise training and roleplay, how to clarify their needs, and wishes and their plan for further development.

Target groups

The JOY training was for most of the target group of trainers, social workers, pedagogues, career guides, an eye-opener for themselves. After the training, they continued with the exercises. Further development of JOY (e.g. through participatory research) is needed, also to make the results more evidence-based and to see the long-term effect of JOY. To facilitate the expansion of the method, it is fundamental to focus on training additional trainers within partner organisations. These trainers will be equipped to disseminate the method further, not only within their organisations but also to other entities interested in adopting this innovative approach.

Preparation of the participants for their future “non-NEET” status should become part of the JOY training.

In the future, more bridges between informal socio-creative exercises, informal recognition, and acceptance by society and work environments must be established.

The training needs to be tried out with more different groups (elderly, immigrants, reintegrating women, volunteers) to allow evaluation and further development. Some of the partners are already engaged in the project design of a proposal aimed at using the JOY method with the elderly population, recognizing that the core principles of enhancing positive emotions and fostering social inclusion have universal applicability.



Responsibility:

The partner organisations involved in the JOY project are fully committed to ensuring its continued impact beyond the official conclusion of the project. Through their collective effort, these organisations aim to sustain the momentum gained during the project's lifecycle, ensuring that the benefits of the JOY method extend well into the future and continue to positively affect lives across diverse groups.

Update/development/ensuring expertise and input.

Once the project concludes, the themes it addresses—particularly those centred on emotional empowerment, social inclusion, employability, and wellbeing—will continue to hold significant value for the involved organisations. Given its importance, the JOY method will serve as a reference and model for similar initiatives and will be routinely consulted for guidance and inspiration in related efforts. This ongoing utilisation underscores the method's foundational role in shaping approaches to emotional and social development across various settings.

By maintaining a dynamic and responsive approach, the organisations involved commit to keeping the project's outputs vital and applicable to current and future needs, reinforcing their dedication to fostering lasting positive change.

3.3. Cost-benefit

Costs:

The cost of training can vary depending on various factors such as the level of the trainees, the group size, the duration of the training program, the type of exercises, the level of expertise of the trainers, translation (for immigrants), and the location.

The optimal group size is 8-12 persons. This size is not too large, so individual attention is possible, and it is large enough to do group activities and/or to divide into smaller groups. The combination of different types of methods makes it possible to address the challenges from different angles and is more cost-effective.

The optimal duration of a JOY training is 3-4 half days (=3h) divided over two weeks, plus homework in between. The training has sustainable results in terms of participants' own strength, self-esteem, thoughts and actions and the start of sustainable management of their own competencies. And above all, it is the joy/fun that young people have in going through the different exercises. For VPL, it is a way of getting people interested in valuing their competencies.



The training is cost-effective, but most persons will need financial support for this training. In Germany, job centres are interested in the Joy approach and training, but testing in a larger group will be necessary. At the national and EU levels, it supports the qualifications and Validation of Prior Learning policies. The use of this (top-down) Validation is still marginal, and the bottom-up approach will help the NEETs (recognised by themselves, socially, and by employers) and prepare them in case a validation procedure is needed.

Benefits

The JOY training is an investment for life. Once they are aware and understand their competencies and the demands from society and work, and have experienced the positive energy, they are able to continue their learning path and make better use of their learning outcomes.

One of the results with immigrants was that they could better explain to the case manager of the employment centre their needs, their competencies, and their needs/wishes and formulate their questions and take over a part of the initiative.

They have learned that they can get answers and solve problems by working and learning together. They become each other's and their own trainer and guide, taking over the power of control and the steering of their own development. It can reduce subsequent costs, like career guidance, psychological support, formal training.

The valuation process can be the first step toward formal validation. The Lifeline and the Personal Action Plan could stimulate the participant to take a next step direction validation or to make a well-considered decision not (yet) to do so.

At a higher level, the gap between the professionals working with socio-creative approaches and those working with valuation and validation of prior learning will decrease, which will benefit the potential users of the JOY approach.

Funding

Access to the materials and resources developed through the project is free of charge. Professionals can utilize these tools to foster positive emotional and motivational states in NEET individuals, further extending the project's impact.

The comprehensive training programs require significant organisational effort and resources. A quotation of a JOY training can be presented to the stakeholders, those organisations that will benefit from the outcomes of a JOY training. Examples of these sources are:

- The NEETs, who will invest mainly their time in training, with an outlook of personal



benefits, e.g. employment, resilience stress reduction, and well-being.

- Companies and organisations which take up their social responsibility, offering their (potential) workforce the benefits of the Joy training and improving the performance of their employees.
- The professionals, in further development of their experience in working with NEETs.
- Supporting organisations like employment offices, who benefit directly by making their work more efficient and effective and the outcomes more sustainable.
- National and European funding for scaling up the Joy-method, ensuring its sustainability and its accessibility to a broader audience.

3.4. The acceptance

The Joy training is easy to understand, learn and implement by the participants, independent of their background and needs. It aligns with their self-image, personality, emotions, social role, and motivation.

The effectiveness is shown by the interest, motivation, and joyful participation of the professionals for their own situation, own development and for the other socio-creative and/or Valuation approaches and exercises. Continuous feedback, feedforward and feed-up loops, and opportunities for improvement are built in, which is essential for acceptance of the training. Trainees feel that their input is valued, and that the method can evolve based on their own experiences and insights.

The training is scalable to almost all other groups. First initiatives with Ukraine immigrants were successful and interests exist of using the joy method. Separate from the project, parts of the approaches have successfully been used for example for refugees, integrating women, soldiers, elderly people, volunteers, students, pupils, and teachers.

The value of the JOY method to politicians and policymakers lies not only in its potential to reduce unemployment rates and combat social exclusion but also in its profound impact on individual well-being. This holistic learner-centred approach facilitates a person's journey towards becoming not just employable but also a more engaged and responsible citizen. By focusing on emotional empowerment and positive psychological development, the method enhances individuals' capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. One of the main challenges is that the national and EU policies (EQF, NVQ, VPL), educational institutes, and branch organisations support the top-down, offer-driven, adult education and static Formal Recognition of Competencies (VPL), both with a limited acceptance. The



bottom-up, demand-driven, dynamic, person-directed approach is still less applied. We are convinced that very soon this will change because the increasing speed of change in which many (low level) jobs will disappear and, according to the outcomes of studies, most of the jobs in 2030 do not exist yet. Consequently, the vocational education for those jobs do not exist yet. The Joy approach prepares and strengthens the individuals to cope and exploit the opportunities in the society to come. These individuals are better equipped to sustainably enter the workforce, create meaningful relationships, and contribute positively to their communities. This not only benefits the individuals directly involved but also enriches society as a whole. By fostering a sense of belonging and purpose, the JOY method helps to cultivate a more cohesive and resilient society.

Ethics is extremely important for acceptance and participation in work and society. The Joy training starts with creating a safe, respectful environment, in which everything can be said, but only if they want to.

3.5. Advice for the future of “Joy”

The training needs to be tried with more groups to allow evaluation and further development.

- Further development of studying JOY (e.g. through participatory research) and making it evidence based.
- The range of practice must expand.
- Sustainable results in terms of participants' own strength, self-esteem, thoughts, and actions.
- Create engaging social content to engage young people in training and increase interest in the project's results.
- Prepare the participants for their future non-NEET status.
- Build more bridges between informal socio-creative exercises and formal requirements.

Promotion of JOY

The project has already seen considerable promotion through a variety of channels in the past, including events, training sessions, meetings, and more. This strategic dissemination has been instrumental in raising awareness and garnering support for the JOY-method among a wide audience. The partnership responsible for this project has leveraged these platforms not only to introduce the method but also to demonstrate its effectiveness in fostering emotional well-being and enhancing



employability among NEET individuals.

Looking forward, the partnership is committed to continuing these promotional efforts.

One key strategy involves incorporating the JOY-method's exercises into other project designs. By doing so, the partnership aims to further validate the method's applicability and benefits across various contexts, particularly those dealing with similar themes of social inclusion, education, and employment. Additionally, the partnership plans to articulate the benefits of the JOY-method in contexts that address these themes, thereby broadening its impact. This will be achieved through ongoing engagements with educational forums, workshops, and collaborations with influencers in the education and social welfare sectors.



6. Recommendations towards and EU-wide application of JOY

The Ode-to-JOY partners strongly encourages to adopt the JOY-method and tools. To do so, JOY proposes the following key recommendations:

1. Make use of the **strength of European diversity** by using a **modular system** from different types of socio-creative training combined with a Valuation of Prior Learning Training.
 - a **core training** for all stakeholders supporting the
 - the **flexibility to adapt around the core** with a choice of exercises, to fit into the national, branch, educational, VPL-systems and procedures.
2. Apply the **bottom-up approach in the valuation of prior learning**. Recognise the variety of valuation pathways and standards, from self- and social norms and values, organisational standards, labour market, training standards and the NVQs/EQF. This means the promotion of **relevant informal recognition of competencies** adapted to the needs of the NEETs, the families, the social environment, the labour market, and education.
3. **Easy access** to the JOY model, tools, and training/exercises under Creative Commons.
 - The implementation of the “**individual-centred approach**” principle since JOY-valuation Ode-to-Joy aims at empowering individual NEETs and making them self-responsible by giving them the power of control.
 - The implementation of Alternate Curricula
 - A network of JOY-trained professionals working with NEETs.
 - Creative Commons of the JOY-materials
4. **Encourage trainers and career guides working with NEETs and other target groups to exploit JOY results**. Encourage Practitioners working with NEETs to use JOY **tools for self-valuation** and have the opportunity to upskill and have access to further education and training.



5. Improve **cost efficiency, affordability, and sustainability** by applying the JOY products working in groups of up to 12 persons. The participants are implicitly trained to train each other and to train themselves, taking steps in their development that go deeper and beyond individual guidance.
6. Apply the bottom-up method of valuation of competencies in synergy with the socio-creative approaches, to make an important deep-going, but also pleasant support for **formative assessment**.
7. The JOY approach contributes to the European Commissions 'vision **of Industry 5.0** aiming beyond efficiency and productivity as the sole goals and reinforces the role and contribution of industry to society as places for the well-being of the worker at the centre of the production process. It also prepares young people for **Society 5.0**, with special attention to problem-solving & value creation, diversity, decentralisation, resilience, sustainability & environmental harmony.
8. EU policymakers should enable the **further development and deployment** of fusion activities between socio-creative methods, combined with a bottom-up method for sustainable management of competencies.

1. Annex A: Alternate curricula.

Title	1. Creating a safe space by getting to know each other	2. Discovering the self through narration: from individual to collective awareness	4. Discovering the self through narration: from individual to collective awareness	5. Voice training and Mastery of movement	6. Improvisational theatre workshop with the topic of fear and anxiety
Approach:	INTRODUCTION / BODYWORK	STORYTELLING	STORYTELLING	DRAMA	DRAMA
Length/part.	1,5h / 20p	1,5h / 20p	1,5h / 20p	1,5h / 20p	1,5h / 20p
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perception of others and ourselves - Enhancing self-awareness and self-reflection; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing self-awareness and self-reflection. - Improving narrative and symbolic skill image - Helping to reconcile with past moments. - Imagining the future. - Preventing negativity. - Finding a balance between positive and negative aspects. - Enhancing self-esteem. - Developing Introspection - Developing Introspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing self-awareness and self-reflection. - Improving narrative and symbolic skills. - imagining reconciling with past moments. - Imagining the future. - Preventing negativity. - Finding a balance between positive and negative aspects. - Enhancing self-esteem. - Developing Introspection - Developing Introspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skills in voice and body techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being conscious of the emotion (fear, anxiety), - acquire a skill to find calmness.

		- Learning to create elaborate stories with the others	- Learning to create other's stories with the others		
Activities	Space; rules; symbols; expectation tree; name learning	Letter to myself; Chasing memories	- My major Arcanas; A walk in the woods; a narrative story	Encounter; Mindfulness, Mastery of movement; Speech training; Feedback	Fear simulation. Theatre improvisation with fear. Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique
Comments		Discovering journey: 1) dialogue with the self, 2) share the self with the outside world	- Self-discover / share journey. - share the self with the outside world		Not compulsory to participate - van be audience. Pref. with assistant

Title	8. Experience your body	9. Connecting with joy through the treasures of nature and the best version of ourselves	10. LandArt & Emotion Square	11. Connecting with joy through the treasures of nature and the best version of ourselves
	SOMATIC	NATURE / ART	NATURE / ART	NATURE
Length/part.	3h / 20p	1,5h / 20p	1,5h / 15p	1,5h / 20p
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attunement to our bodies, increasing body awareness. - Attunement and connection to others - Learn about space and perception of space. - Learning about somatic approaches in performative arts and self-development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to connect with oneself and the environment around us - to become more open and aware in everyday life - to notice the treasures provided by nature, a more attentive presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free, respectful action with natural materials to develop one's own creative and creation activity. - Having the 'experience' of a design process and a result that is value-free, control-free, consists only of positive emotions in becoming and letting go. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to connect with oneself and the environment around us - to become more open and aware in everyday life - to notice the treasures provided by nature, a more attentive presence. - to focus on our own feelings, our companions, and the energies of nature

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing self-appreciation - Increasing the internal ability to release and undo stress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to focus on our own feelings, our companions, and the energies of nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better understanding and learning about own and other feelings and body language. - More able to change feelings/emotions. - fast reaction / response to emotion - learning to be an active part of a group - dissembling situations 	
Activities	<p>Arrival to space and body</p> <p>We are a network.</p> <p>Space geometry and scores.</p> <p>The feeling of being moved.</p> <p>“Marionettes”</p>	<p>Meeting my tree.</p> <p>Plantwindow;</p> <p>Observe like an ant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of place for creation. - Find a theme. - Plan the steps. - Compose the object. - Narrate and play; Initial story and emotional play in groups of 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensory mapping. - Path of 4 elements (earth, water, fire, air:
Comments	<p>Trainer: bodywork or massage experience or somatic experience and somatic dance experience</p>	<p>Experience in various ways.</p> <p>Observing the external environment.</p> <p>Relationship with nature</p>	<p>Trainer: describes roles of players</p>	

2. Annex B: VPL-exercises

Title	Getting to know – present the other	Proud of /START	7. Lifeline	12. Reflection and Personal advertisement	12. Personal Action Plan and sustainable self-management
	VPL - Intro	VPL - 1	VPL - 2	VPL - 3	VPL -4
Length/part.	30-60 min / 12p	1,5h / 12p	1,5h / 12p	1,5h / 12p	1,5h / 12p
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quick thinking about what is important. - Explaining to the other - Good listening - Prepare a pitch (for the other) - Pitch to the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discover and point out personal qualities and competencies. - reflect on how to ‘proof’ or present your own qualities. - Link with emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integral vision of your life - Reflect on important moments in your life and find out the qualities, emotions and conditions that belonged to these moments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connecting with the reality of life/work. - Personal profile of values - Link with outside demands. - Personal promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is aware of their own qualities and possibilities. - Analyse of ‘transfers’ in life so far. - ... can use competence, emotions, personal traits, motives, and insights to manage your ‘work-life career’. - articulate the next personal action within the framework of a PAP.
Activities	<p>In Pairs: Explain to the other.</p> <p>Plenary: pitch by the other (max 1,5 minutes)</p>	<p>Describe performance; KSA/competencies/connection to emotions + proof; Interview in pairs.</p> <p>STAR – Situation-Task-Activity-Result-Transfer</p>	<p>Drawing lifeline</p> <p>Get a picture/vision of your life.</p> <p>Role of emotions & personality traits</p> <p>Start portfolio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gathering and systematise the outcomes. - Profile of values - Picture of relevant competence/values in the external world - Describe the demand/need by others, relevant to the person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decide goal. - Describe SMART action in the Personal Action Plan - Present a Personal Action Plan in a small (2-3p) group of participants (be creative, use different material)



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ERASMUS+ programme – Cooperation Partnership in Adult Education

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Ode to Joy - Developing Attunement through the Experience of Joy

Project ID: 2021-1-HU01-KA220-ADU-000028311

