Welcome to the COPE Project!

COPE-EMPOWER RESILIENCE

PROJECT RESULT 3: EMPOWER RESILIENCE

EMPOWERMENT KIT

1. Introduction to the KIT

This Empowerment Kit was developed by partners in the "COPE – Learn to Cope and Grow" project co-funded by the European Union. The Empower Resilience Empowerment Kit aims to support local learning environments and promote social inclusion by encouraging local learning centres to work together in order to motivate and enable adults of all ages to learn the key competences necessary to be resilient and adaptable in the face of change and uncertainty.

This objective shall be achieved by the empowerment of their staff to promote and provide resilience training in their installations. In this way target groups addressed by this KIT include:
Adult education staff, adult training organisations, local learning centres, NGOs, community centres, local, regional, and national authorities and their respective agencies and institutions, training centres of companies.

The Empower Resilience Empowerment KIT has two main parts:
- The efficient use and promotion of resilience materials
- Networking and support amongst resilience training centres

What is resilience and why is it important

"Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands." This is a definition of "resilience" provided by the American Psychological Association. Taking this definition into account resilience is what defines how we react and grow from change and challeng

Contributing to a person's resilience capacity are three key factors:
· How a person sees and engages with the world and their surroundings
· The availability and quality of social resources and connections around a person
· Coping strategies on how a person manages to work through challenges and change mentally and emotionally

As various studies and research has shown, resilience can also be trained and practiced to improve one's resilience skills.

But why is resilience so important? If a person lacks resilience skills, they will struggle with handling challenges and adapting to change around them. That can include small changes in their daily routine, as well as big changes, like having to start a new job or losing relatives in their family. An individual with good resilience skills has the competences to handle and work through challenges and will grow from the challenges they face. Thus, enabling to continue and improve their life for the future.

Resilience and working through challenges do not mean being unaffected by something. It means overcoming something with time and care and continuing to live one's life with a perspective for the future.

What does it mean to "empower resilience"?

To "Empower resilience" includes two key definitions:

· Means to empower other people to uncover their full potential by helping them understand their capacity to overcome difficulties quickly.

· Means to give other people some kind of direction that they can stand back up, move in a different direction, and become the best versions of themselves even after being exposed to negative situations they might not fully understand.

Empowered resilience is not only the ability to bounce back, but to bounce back higher, stronger, and better. Utilising strengths to overcome weaknesses and removing unwanted patterns, replacing them with effective behaviours.

What is the purpose of this publication?

With this publication we want to empower organisations, learning centres, trainers, managers, and other interested parties to be able to build their own resilience skills, as well as guide others in building their resilience and their competences. Thus, improving their capacity to handle stress, deal with change and overcome challenges.

2. Guidance Information for the learning centres

Importance of trainer perception towards resilience training

Resilience can be encouraged and developed to create work and training environments where participants feel safe and empowered. To continue to foster trust and build greater resilience trainers need a deeper understanding of their approach to empowering individuals and teams and their communication styles. They need to consider the way they speak, act, and how they believe in the concept of resilience themselves. To be authentically, trainers also need to demonstrate their willingness to learn and grow.

Critical tasks for the trainers will be

- Prioritizing time for learning, it should not be scarified due to time limitations; even more, spend time to understand and get to know your learners
- Ongoing reflection; assess what has been learned and how this has been applied and shared
- Develop a growth mindset as part of the teaching style; the trainers' mindset is contagious; it can either empower or hamper your participants level of energy: A growth mindset sees the obstacle as a challenge that allows many options and solutions
- Positive leadership: a trainer able to provide a positive influence on the training by creating the conditions for psychological safety and openness, ensures that everyone is performing their best ability and working on common goals.
- The choice of words is important and powerful
- Being open to learn new things helps to build the resilience needed to cope with constant change
- Be open to failure and seek opportunities – nothing can beat failure other than another try
- Put down egos, titles, and territorial behaviour in order to increase collaboration
- Instil a culture of CARE – Curious, Adaptable, Resilient and Empathetic – people need to know that their contributions matter
- Monitor progress and direct learning
- Providing the right learning can improve all aspects of life (increased resistance to negativity, clarity to see the real picture, the ability to act under pressure, rebound stronger from adversity, Improved relationships, greater physical health, better group dynamics, overall well-being)
- Follow and seek good practices

How to use the products 1 and 2 to train the adult trainers of the centre

Overview of the product structure

Product 1: Teach Resilience – A training guide on the basics of teaching resilience and adaptability to adults. It aims to improve personal, social, and learning competences of adults.

Product 2: Practice Resilience – A practical toolkit of activities for adults which can be applied online and face-to-face by the adult trainers and learners.

Both products are structured after five key areas:

- Prioritising one's own health
- Social and emotional learning
- Coping
- Self-efficacy
- Optimism and self-compassion
- These five areas were identified throughout the project as the main areas of improving one's resilience and resilience competences

Teach Resilience

- Afterwards the guide identifies different learning objectives, based on the Knowledge someone can learn, the Skills that can be mastered and the Attitude that can be adapted.
- Each area provides a lesson plan with activity duration and homework suggestions which can be implemented in a training.
- Trainers and learners can then find further reading in the last chapter of each area, allowing more research into the topics.
- Each section includes an engaging infographic giving a general overview over "Must-Do's" which can help improve the level of each skill area.

Practice Resilience

The Practice Resilience toolkit provides a 30-day programme, 6 days for each area: Each day offers a small introduction into the skills that will be targeted that day and a daily task that shall be completed that specific day.

The 30-day programme is available either as a MOBILE APPLICATION or as a WEB BROWSER version. Thus, learners can check in on their daily task at home or on the way to work or another appointment, making the whole programme more adaptable and easier to engage with.

The daily tasks include worksheets and further materials, which can be found on the COPE platform and the mobile app as well.

Recommendations and do's and don'ts during training

- When teaching adult trainers, it is recommended to give them more insight into who the materials are for and that they need adaptation if used with a different target group, as well as what this adaptation might look like.

- Trainers need to adapt the learning materials and structure depending on the group of learners. Some might already have experience with resilience training and have an open and motivated stance to it. Others might think it unnecessary and first need more convincing and understanding of its purpose and benefit. Some learners might have more difficulty learning about resilience than others. The trainer needs to be considerate towards such differences and should be prepared to adapt specific areas of the programme and the guide depending on who the learners are.

- Different from teaching the end beneficiaries, adult trainers should have experience training and conducting workshops. Thus, when teaching them about resilience and resilience training, it should be highlighted that this only widens their practices and skills and is not because their skills in teaching are lacking or otherwise questionable.

- The facilitator must make it clear that the materials are not forced onto the learners. Often when struggling with resilience and stress already, the learners do not need more materials that feel like a mandatory commitment but should feel like a choice of their own and something that can improve their daily quality of life.

How to provide the Practice Resilience toolkit to their learners for self- training

As the Practice Resilience toolkit is available online, it can also be used in self-training. The mobile application and the browser version do both offer an introduction towards the content of the toolkit but it is always recommended to offer a small introduction to the purpose and the 30-day programme before directing someone to it.

Who should the programme be recommended to?

The 30-day programme is recommended for

- Adults who would like to improve their resilience skills

- Adults who should improve their capacity to overcome challenges and handle change

- Adult trainers who would like to improve their own resilience competences and would like to teach others about resilience and resilience skills

Instructions needed for self-training
- Compared to group or face-to-face learning courses, self-learning has its own benefits and advantages.
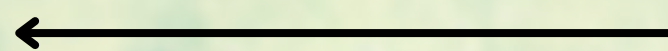
Increases personal motivation to learn → Learning in one's own pace

↓

Foster problem-solving skills ← Improve personal management of time and priorities

While self-learning is more suited for individuals which might have problems keeping up with the learning pace of a group, want to focus on specific sections or learn better when they are learning individually, there are a few risks and challenges which the facilitator or trainer should be aware of when recommending someone for self-learning.

Commitment: Group courses and having a direct teacher/ trainer leads to a sense of commitment and responsibility, as dropping out of the course needs to be clarified with another person or needs to be actively initiated. When a learner faces a problem with self-learning, they might just drop the learning, feeling less of a sense of commitment. At the same time, learners shall not be forced or stressed into the programme, as this is counter-productive. The facilitator could suggest support and help in case a learner loses motivation in self-learning to avoid this commitment problem.

Loss of motivation or interest: Some learners appreciate the group learning aspect of courses and lessons and become less motivated or disheartened when self-learning. The facilitator promoting the self-learning could suggest some motivational exercises or taking a timed break to recover the learner's interest and motivation.

Too much learning content: When self-learning it is often hard to determine where to start learning, what topics to choose and what are the important areas to focus on. This should always be highlighted either by a facilitator beforehand or in the self-learning material itself.

Lack of support: In case of lessons or a course, the trainer can give support and help to the learner when they encounter a problem or do not understand something. This is usually not the case for self-learners. They learn on their own, and often without a contact point for support. It is recommended to highlight contact and support points in the learning materials where the self-learners can direct questions and concerns to or, if a facilitator can give instructions before the start of the self-learning journey, the facilitator shall inform the learner about the possibility to come to them for support.

Before recommending the self-learning, the facilitator shall look out for these challenges and must actively work to overcome them by giving better and more adapted first instructions and providing support in between the self-learning if it ever becomes necessary for the learner.

2 .How to develop own online and offline resilience trainings

Face-to-face resilience training

There are clear benefits and advantages to conducting a face-to-face training compared to an online training, most notably the participation, commitment, and motivation of the learners who are taking part in the training. Compared to an online training, there are usually less distractions and more group work as it is easier to interpret the actions, thoughts, and feelings of others.

Furthermore, no one is dependent on a stable internet connection to hear others and see them in real time.

In the following paragraphs, we go deeper into what a resilience training structure could look like, what aspects must be considered for an offline training, and what activities could be included in such a training

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR OWN TRAINING

There are a few general requirements a face-to-face training has:

LOCATION	Compared to an online training, participants are not situated at home but are together in one room. Thus, the location of the training needs to be large enough to hold all the participants comfortably. Other location aspects which should be considered: echo, electrical equipment (projector, computer, speakers, etc.), temperature.
TIME	Depending on the local culture different times of the day might be uncommon or unpopular for a training. Keep in mind that a training should not be too early or too late, should not cut too much into lunch or dinner time, and should not cut into holidays. Recommendations: In case of a longer training day (+3 hours), it is recommended to incorporate the lunch/dinner into the training time: e.g., 3 hours of training + 1 hour lunch break + 2 hours of training.
DURATION	The overall duration of the training: how long do you have someone's motivation and attention? There will always be a point where participants grow tired and cannot take in any more input in that day. It is recommended to structure the overall duration according to previous experiences or the content of the course, and adapted to the group of learners: e.g., parents or caretakers of family members might need to get the children from day care or only have half a day available for training.
BREAKS	One thing that can help motivate participants and keep them interested and attentive are regular breaks in between. This does not mean there should be a break every single hour but at reasonable intervals. It would be good if there is one coffee break in the morning and one in the afternoon (outside of regular lunch and dinner time). Breaks are usually good after completing an intense activity and reflection or after providing a high amount of information to the learners. It gives them time to freely think about the learned content.

Here is an example schedule for a training (full day):

DURATION	CONTENT
15 minutes	Introduction and welcome Short overview of the planned training and schedule
30-45 minutes	Easy activity to introduce the participants to the topic and to each other
10 minutes	Break time
1 hour	Activity 2 + Reflection of activity
1 hour	Lunch break
1 hour	Activity 3 + Reflection of activity
10 minutes	Break time
1 hour	Activity 4 + Reflection of activity
15 minutes	Conclusion, clarification of open questions

If the training is more than one day, the second day can have a shorter introduction and can immediately start with more engaging and detailed activities. It is not necessary to do an introduction activity each training day unless the topic or the participants change from the previous day.

EVALUATION

The last day of the training should always include 10-20 minutes of evaluation time where the learners give feedback to the trainer/ facilitator about the training:

- Are you satisfied with the training?
- Did the training fulfil your expectations?
- What was most interesting about the training?
- What could be improved?
- Will you use the learned content in the future?

This evaluation is for the improvement of training. It is not the same as a reflection round which should always be implemented at the end of an activity.

What activities should you include in your training

Nowadays even in face-to-face training, the facilitators often just show presentations and slideshows with information on it, instead of interacting and exercises. If this is the whole content of a training, it could also be held online. When conducting an offline training, it should take advantage of the possibility to directly talk to each other, see someone without a screen in between, and to move around the room together.

Activities which are recommended for a face-to-face training:

- Group discussion and debates
- Simulations and role play
- Exchange of experiences and storytelling (as they allow for wider perception of emotions, interaction, seeing the story teller's gestures, etc.)
- Movement exercises
- Collaboration activities (collective drawing, having to build something together, etc.)

Furthermore, breaks shall be a time when the participants can leave the room and get some fresh air. This allows for better focus when the group reconvenes and continues the training.

Online resilience training

While face-to-face training has its benefits, sometimes the circumstances just do not allow an in-person training. In that case, it is common to revert to an online training. Online training has benefits and advantages as well but the challenges and obstacles shall be considered before and during the training to achieve proper impact and a constructive training.

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR OWN TRAINING

Similar to the offline training, the facilitator must consider different aspects of the online training:

LOCATION	Since all participants are online there is no necessity for a large room or facilities for a group of learners. At the same time, all participants should have enough space around them to move, should not have any distractions around them (e.g., other people, television, phone, pets, etc.).
TIME	Same as with the offline training, depending on the local culture different times of the day might be uncommon or unpopular for a training. Keep in mind that a training should not be too early or too late, should not cut too much into lunch or dinner time, and should not cut into holidays.
DURATION	Looking at a screen for hours takes its toll on participants. Thus, the facilitator should consider that the activities are varied and use various tools to keep the learners' attention and keep them motivated. If an activity is longer it is recommended to include writing notes, interacting on a digital drawing board, etc., something that makes the participants interact and change from the usual meeting screen.
BREAKS	Breaks are essential for a digital training. It is recommended to add one break in the morning and one in the afternoon in a full day training, each one around 10-15 minutes. During the breaks the participants should move away from the screen, go outside, move around their location, etc. The break should not be spend surfing the internet and sitting in front of the screen even longer.

FACILITIES FOODS AND DRINKS	Since all participants are online there is no necessity for a large room or facilities for a group of learners. At the same time, all participants should have enough space around them to move, should not have any distractions around them (e.g., other people, television, phone, pets, etc.). It should be clear from the beginning of the training, if participants are allowed to eat or snack during the training or not though.
STABLE INTERNET CONNECTION AND TOOLS	To avoid unnecessary interruptions and screens suddenly going black, each participant should have a stable internet connection, camera, and microphone. If their laptop or computer does not have a camera or microphone, a smartphone can also be used. The facilitator should always clarify before the training if the participants enter with their laptops or smartphones, as a smartphone has a smaller display, meaning the participants will not see as clearly as someone on a bigger screen.
COMMITMENT TO THE TRAINING	It can happen that many learners are participating in the online training from home. This often results in the training seeming more informal and less serious. While this can be advantageous for activities that need movement, it can also result in participants adapting to a stance of irresponsibility, e.g., coming late, leaving early, taking longer breaks than was agreed on, switching off cameras to take care of other chores, etc. The facilitator is responsible for making it clear to the participants that the training is a commitment and responsibility. Furthermore, this will lead to an improved sense of having learned something as the participants will take it more seriously and be more engaged in actively taking part and contributing.

The trainer has to clarify all these points and requirements before the training with the participants, to assure that everything is in order and there are no sudden bathroom breaks, interruptions by other people.

The trainer should always keep in mind that internet connections can fail, blackouts can happen, and microphones can be broken. The trainer should keep calm in case of such situations and try to solve the situations as best as possible. A good solution might be switching the tools off and on, reconnecting to the meeting session, or using the chat options if the microphone fails.

What activities should you include in your training

Activities for an online training differ greatly from offline training activities. Recommended activities and methodologies are:

- Group discussions and debates: Discussions and debates can be started by presenting a joint drawing board (e.g., Padlet) where everyone can add their opinion to a question or statement. Afterwards the facilitator reads out the sentences and each participant can comment on their added opinion or discuss further what was added in general. This visualisation supports the participation of everyone.
- Another option can be asking each participant to vote on different opinions and statements and then asking different learners why they choose the option.
- Interactive works: The internet offers a lot of possibilities to make joint drawings, collages, texts, etc. The facilitator can use this to produce interaction and group work during the training
- Smaller groups: Group work or assignments are sometimes easier if done in smaller groups online. Zoom offers breakout rooms or the trainer can ask the participants to open a new session in their tool to talk to each other. This can be used for group work, group presentations, discussions, etc.

Afterwards the group can come back together and the smaller groups can present the outcome of their work with feedback from the other participants.

Movement, audio, and video are methods which are easier to use in offline training but can also be used for online training. In the case the facilitator wants to use them in their course, they should consider:

- Do the participants have enough space to move?
- Does everyone have a stable internet connection to hear the audio/ see the video without it buffering/ lagging?

Guaranteeing that the participants have enough space to move, can be done by informing them ahead of the training. In case of the internet connection not being strong enough, there are digital meeting tools that allow background music, and videos can also be send via link in the chat for the participants to watch. The facilitator should set a time for them to watch the videos and then reconvene in the group meeting.

Advantages and disadvantages of an online and offline resilience training

As already mentioned, there are many advantages and disadvantages to offline and online training, each having its own benefits and challenges. For a better overview and better judgement on which might be more suited for a situation, here is an additional list to consider:

OFFLINE/IN-PERSON TRAINING	ONLINE / DIGITAL TRAINING
Location	
When together in a room, participants are more committed and motivated in a training	Learners can participate from their home and avoid transport and traveling times, as well as feel more comfortable and safer in their own home.
Time and duration	
Offline trainings allow for longer duration of each training session as there is direct interaction between people and they can converse and communicate, making them more awake and attentive.	Online training needs regular breaks during sessions but do allow for an earlier start or later ending of the training, as participants can skip out on the traveling before and after the training. Furthermore, they can make their food in the breaks without needing to go anywhere to eat.

OFFLINE/IN-PERSON TRAINING	ONLINE / DIGITAL TRAINING
Videos and images	
While videos always bear the risk of being interruptive in face-to-face training as the trainer is bringing the participants back to the screen, images can be printed out which allows the images to be handed around in the group. This could be used for collages and similar activities.	Videos and images have the advantage of not being interruptive of online training but offering a chance to hold the learners' attention and provide a variety of learning tools.
Group discussions	
Group discussions and debates are suited for both types of training but need to be adapted depending on the type.	
Movement	
In-person training will always have the advantage that participants can move better together, making interactive moving exercises more interesting and motivating.	Movement exercises allow for a change of tools and content in online training but has to be adapted properly. The trainer should test the exercise with colleagues online before doing the exercise with learners.

How to guarantee impact and sustainability:

Whether the trainer conducts an offline training or decides to do the training online, all training should have:

Introduction: an introduction to the topic and the schedule, as well as the other participants. This allows for more motivation, interest, and commitment from the participants.

- Regular but reasonable breaks
- Interactivity: Activities should be interactive and engaging and make the participants act and interact. If all activities are the trainer talking and presenting, the participants will quickly lose interest and motivation and the training will not have much impact.
- Reflection: All activities must include a reflection. If participants learn about something they need to do a reflection on the learnt lessons. This allows for more learning sustainability, as well as fostering the critical thinking of the participants.
- Conclusion: To provide a proper ending to a training, each training should include a conclusion, summarising what was learnt that day. This also provides a chance for participants to ask questions and voice concerns.

Including these parts increases the quality and impact of any training. To guarantee a sustainable impact of the training the trainer can:

- Provide further resources: The trainer can provide further resources and links the learners can check out to keep up with the topic or to further improve their knowledge in the future.
- Hand out learning materials: In case there were worksheets or other materials involved in the training the trainer should provide them for the participants either digitally or in paper. Thus, the participants can refer and check on the materials again in the future
- Reflection: Reflection rounds are always recommended and should be a fixed part of every activity and training. At the same time the reflection should not just be Yes/No questions, e.g., "do you think this exercise was productive?", but should also be user-led. The learners need to understand what they learned or, in case of role play and simulation, need to analyse how this simulation is related to their life and behaviour in their daily work.
- Catch-up with participants: Whether it is questions that participants thought of later or it is to check for sustainability and changed behaviour, the trainer can set a time for themselves where they check back in with the participants. This can be a few weeks or 1-2 months later, it can also be a regular catching up with them. The trainer can clarify any new question, as well as talk with the participants whether the training helped them and whether the learned knowledge and skills are used in their daily life.

3. Networking and how & where to look for support in developing and delivering resilience trainings

To further improve training quality, reach of training provision and opportunities, organisations and trainers can build a network to support, exchange, and learn from each other.

How to identify quality provision of training

While one's own training quality is important, it is essential to be able to recognise what a quality and constructive network contact is and what contact does not contribute to future development and improvement.

Direct access contact	Policy contact	Distributor	Further resources
• Works directly with the end beneficiaries • Provides resilience training to the end beneficiaries • Wants to learn from your resilience training to improve practices	• Is an entity involved in policy making of education and training • Sets rules, guidelines, and proitorities of adult education in your region • Can use your training as best practice and example for other training centres and organizations	• Works directly with the end beneficiaries • Solely a promoter of your resilience training, do not implement training themselves	• Works directly with the end beneficiaries • Can be any kind of organisation that can help the end beneficiaries AFTER receiving the training

Each contact category is important and can help to further improve your network and training practices.

Direct access contact

- Can help to improve the training
- Exchange best practice
- Collaboration of training and learners if they cover areas of training which you do not cover

Policy contact

- Can help further disseminate your training
- Can improve overall situation of education in your region

Distributor

- Can help further disseminate your training, also to groups of learners you might not have a connection to

Further resources

- Can help the end beneficiaries receive further education and/ or help

Depending on what you want to achieve with your training, different contacts and contact categories are important but it is always good to promote it to each category.

Once you have identified a possible contact that is useful for you and your end beneficiaries, the adult learners, you need to find out whether a contact is reliable and organised and fits with your entity. The following checklist is a general checklist the contact should fulfil to be effective as a contact for your network. A quality contact does not have to fulfil all of the listed requirements, as there might be difference depending on what kind of contact point it is but should fulfil most of the sections, as collaboration might be hard or unconstructive otherwise.

Resilience background and content	Checked
The contact has worked in resilience trainings before and can exchange experiences OR is interested in your resilience trainings, incorporating it into their own practices or learning from your best practice.	
The contact has direct contact with organisations, companies, personnel, adult educators, and adults who could benefit from a resilience training.	

Reliability and responsibility	Checked
The contact answers emails and calls regularly OR returns calls, in an appropriate manner of time.	
The contact works in an organised and clean way.	
The contact is punctual with appointments and delivery of tasks.	

While it sounds easy, the importance of responsibility and punctuality are often underestimated for networking. Especially in teamwork and collaboration, these aspects are essential for successful application of training and creating combined practices.

Continuous networking connections:

After identifying and contacting the possible network connection, it is just as important to maintain and nurture them. This means:

- Regular contact
- Continuous exchange of information and practices

Building a network, especially an effective one, means maintaining contact and keeping in touch with all parties involved in the network. If a contact is not maintained, then a network loses its purpose. At the same time, the quality of contacting is important as well: If you are just sending a newsletter without any comments each month but otherwise do not contact anyone, it does not count as an effective and working network. To achieve a functioning and constructive network, quality contact is required.

See the following checklist to see what counts as maintaining a contact and what actions should be implemented:

Action	Quality contact	Regular contact
Sending regular emails, calling regularly for news and exchange of important information	✅	✅
Sending organisation newsletters	❌	✅
Inform oneself on the activities of the contact point (areas of activities, areas which might want to be explored in collaboration)	✅	❌
Collaboration on projects or events, if appropriate	✅	❌
Create community groups with the target group	✅	❌

Maintaining a suitable network partner with quality and regular contact is the key factor of establishing an effective network that can support each partner participating in it.

References

- https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience

- https://www.upskilled.edu.au/skillstalk/benefits-of-self-study

- https://community.today.com/parentingteam/post/17-tips-for-effective-and-easy-self-education