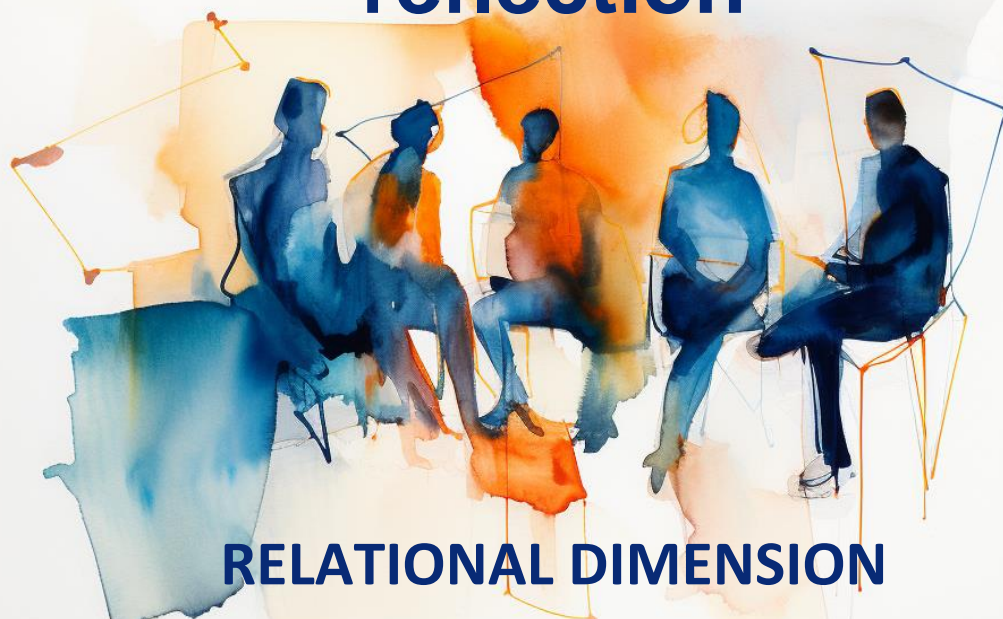# Erasmus+ Project LeaFaP

ACTIVITIES
to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection

RELATIONAL DIMENSION

Laying the foundation: Building trust and collaboration in our PLC

LeaFaP

Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities
in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice
KA220-SCH – Cooperation partnerships in school education

Relational Dimension

1.	Focus of the activity	Building connections: Initial activity to strengthen interpersonal relationships and collaboration among members of a PLC (Facilitators)
2.	Duration of practice	120 minutes
3.	Prior experience of the PLC	Participants starting in a PLC
4.	Goals of the activity	✓ Promote relational competence in the workplace, emphasizing its importance for leading, managing relationships, effective communication, and maintaining healthy connections with PLC members to cooperate and resolve conflicts through an inquiry-based and critical reflection approach. ✓ Encourage individual reflective practice as a prior resource to foster dialogue and cooperation within a PLC. ✓ Identify strengths and areas for improvement among PLC members through effective communication, clear expression of ideas and feelings as well as the active listening in group and in personal interactions. ✓ Foster empathy among team members by promoting the understanding and recognition of others' emotions and perspectives. ✓ Improve conflict management skills, training facilitators to resolve disagreements constructively, avoid tensions, and promote mutually beneficial solutions. ✓ Encourage cooperation and teamwork, promoting respectful collaboration that values each group member's ideas and contributions. ✓ Develop interpersonal flexibility, cultivating empathy to adapt to various contexts, relational styles, and emotional needs in educational environments in a respectful manner.
5.	Description of the activity	This proposal consists of three activities, each with a specified duration. It is recommended to carry them out consecutively, which would total 140 minutes. As a whole, it integrates inquiry and critical reflection within a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to enhance relationships and educational practices. At the end of the three activities, a phase of implementation and ongoing evaluation is carried out. Activity 1: Inquiry and Exploration of Context (Estimated time: 30 - 35 minutes) The goal is to develop effective communication skills and empathy by exploring participants' past experiences. Facilitators, organized into small groups, discuss previous experiences with communication (in an educational context). Through inquiry-based questions, they identify elements of effective communication and the obstacles they faced (15-20 minutes). After that, they share and reflect in a plenary discussion, for 15 minutes (TOOL 1). It is essential to create a comfortable and relaxed environment that encourages inquiry, active listening, and clear, empathetic communication, fostering the understanding of different perspectives within the team. Activity 2: Critical Reflection on Conflict Management (Estimated time: 35 minutes) This activity strengthens conflict management skills through critical reflection on past situations, facilitating the development of new practices for constructive conflict resolution. A hypothetical situation about a conflict within the team is presented (5 minutes). Facilitators individually reflect on how they would handle it, for 10 minutes. Then, they discuss various strategies for addressing it constructively (20 minutes). Reflective questions are used to assess behavior patterns and generate more effective alternatives (TOOL 2). Activity 3: Collective Construction of New Knowledge (Estimated time: 30 minutes) A collaborative activity is designed to foster cooperation. The objective is to work as a team and adjust the solutions created to improve professional relationships, promoting the collective development of new practices. Facilitators, in teams (15 minutes), design an activity to improve the relational climate of their educational context, integrating the skills developed in the previous phases

(communication, empathy, conflict management). Finally, each team presents its proposal to the group, adapting it according to the feedback received (15 minutes).

Phase of Implementation and Continuous Evaluation
(Estimated time: 25 minutes)
This final phase intends to promote a cycle of action-reflection for continuous improvement in relational practices. Facilitators can implement collaborative plans in their teams, which will later be analyzed in a reflection session.
As a concluding activity, a poster is created where each member answers questions summarizing the process and offers alternatives. The dynamic is as follows: 5 minutes are given for participants to think and write their responses on sticky notes, then each person places them in the reserved space on the poster (around 5 minutes). Finally, the responses are discussed reflexively and collectively, with a focus on identifying areas for improvement for 15 minutes (TOOL 3).

Conclusion
Through its various phases, this activity integrates inquiry and critical reflection to enhance interpersonal relationships and foster a collaborative approach in transforming professional practices by developing relational skills. Participants will be able to improve their team interactions, as well as their leadership and management abilities.

6. PLC dimensions addressed	✓ Relational competence. ✓ Shared learning and knowledge. ✓ Inquiry and reflection. ✓ Collaborative dimensión. In summary, it is essential to work on strategies for building trust and empathy in group settings, as they foster positive interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal skills, such as empathy and respect, should be demonstrated through verbal and non-verbal language, while responding appropriately to the emotional signals of group members. Activities that promote respect and openness within the Professional Learning Community (PLC) should be implemented, along with creating and maintaining a safe space for all members. On the other hand, a collaborative culture will be promoted, encouraging active listening, interpersonal communication, and fostering cooperation.

7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<u>What knowledge will the participants develop?</u>
	
	Participants will develop an initial understanding of relational competence, focusing on effective communication, empathy, constructive conflict management, and valuing diverse perspectives. They will also learn strategies for critical reflection to identify team behavior patterns and explore conflict resolution alternatives.
	
	Thus, the learning outcomes for each of the dimensions:
	• Relational competence:
	  - Role-playing to practice empathy, conflict resolution, and effective communication.
	  - Self-awareness and emotional management exercises to improve relational skills.
	• Shared learning and knowledge:
	  - Work groups where each member contributes their knowledge and experience.
	• Inquiry and reflection:
	  - Socratic questioning (open questions) to encourage deep reflection.
	  - Reflective journal on experiences and learnings for critical analysis.
	• Active listening:
	  - Paraphrasing technique to ensure correct understanding.
	  - Dedicated speaking time for each person without interruptions.
	• Interpersonal communication:
	  - Non-violent communication to express emotions and needs without judgment.
	  - Constructive feedback to offer useful guidance for improvement.
	• Cooperation:
	  - Project-based learning, distributing tasks and responsibilities.

What skills will the participants develop?

Participants will enhance key abilities such as: the ability to actively listen, empathy, conflict management, and clear communication. They will also acquire critical reflection skills to adapt their approaches based on group dynamics and challenges.

Skills according to dimensions:
- Relational competence:
    - Developing empathy.
    - Conflict management in group interactions.
- Shared learning and knowledge:
    - Adapting approaches based on group dynamics and challenges.
    - Improving teamwork through reflection and adaptation.
- Inquiry and reflection:
    - Critical reflection on personal practices.
    - Analysis of group dynamics and adjustment of strategies.
- Active listening:
    - Improved active listening for more effective communication.
- Interpersonal communication:
    - Practicing clear and effective communication.
    - Using tools to express ideas and resolve conflicts.
- Cooperation:
    - Enhancing the ability to collaborate in teams.

What attitudes will the participants develop?

Participants will acquire attitudes of openness and respect towards diverse opinions and experiences, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. They will also develop a disposition for self-reflection and continuous improvement, as well as a proactive attitude towards conflict resolution.

Attitudes according to dimensions:
- Relational competence:
    - Respect for diverse opinions and experiences.
    - Proactive attitude towards conflict resolution.
- Shared knowledge:
    - Commitment to collective learning.
    - Inclusive attitude that promotes collaboration.
- Inquiry and reflection:
    - Willingness for constant self-reflection.
    - Critical attitude towards group dynamics.
- Active listening:
    - Open and attentive listening, valuing others' contributions.
    - Empathy as the foundation of active listening.
- Interpersonal communication:
    - Clear and assertive communication of ideas and emotions.
    - Respectful expression of opinions, creating a safe space for all.
- Cooperation:
    - Collaborative attitude, prioritizing team success over individual interests.
    - Willingness to adapt to group needs and challenges, working to strengthen team cohesion and effectiveness.

8.	Activity format	Individual, pair and group activities.
9.	Materials & tools	Tool 1: Inquiry Question Table.
		Tool 2: Reflective Questions Table on Behaviors.
		Tool 3: Reflecting on Our Practices: More, Less, Start, Stop, and Keep doing.

10. Room & preparation	The chairs and tables in the room will be arranged in a circle to make both oral and visual communication easier. Participants will also be provided with tools in photocopied sheets.
11. Dimensions of inclusion	The dimension of inclusion is developed comprehensively throughout the phases and activities described, focusing on ensuring that all voices and perspectives are valued, respected, and considered. Equitable participation ensures that all facilitators express their ideas while valuing diverse perspectives to foster mutual understanding. Active listening and empathy help each member feel respected, and conflict management is approached inclusively and collaboratively. Collective creation and adaptability integrate all voices into decision-making, while critical reflection helps identify and transform potential exclusions. Finally, constructive feedback promotes a culture of learning and continuous improvement.
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	In the inquiry and reflection activity described, several values and democratic practices essential for teamwork and the educational field are developed. Below are some of these values and practices: 1. Active participation and equity. 2. Active listening and dialogue. 3. Empathy and respect for diversity. 4. Peaceful conflict resolution. 5. Cooperation and collective construction. 6. Critical reflection and responsibility. 7. Transparency and constructive feedback.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	For this format, a virtual session should be established using a platform such as Webex, Zoom, Meet, etc. This general session can link to small breakout rooms for working in smaller teams. To showcase results, interactive "bulletin board" tools such as Padlet, Microsoft Whiteboard, Lucid Spark, etc., can be used.
14. References & suggested sources	Project documents created: Reports, Results, Guide. The tools are of our own creation.
15. Appendix following	Yes. See the tools detailed below.

APPENDIX

TOOL 1: INQUIRY QUESTION TABLE

The following table provides five possible inquiry questions to facilitate Activity 1: Inquiry and Context Exploration. The idea is for each participant to respond to them individually, and then share their answers as explained in the phase development.

These questions will help participants reflect on their experiences of communication, empathy, and emotional management, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and develop key skills in their relational competence.

TOOL 1: INQUIRY QUESTION TABLE		
QUESTION	GOAL	ANSWER
How did you feel when you tried to communicate an important idea in an educational or work context, and how do you think that emotion impacted the effectiveness of your communication?	Explore the connection between emotions and effective communication.	
What obstacles did you encounter when trying to understand others' viewpoints in that situation? What do you think you could have done to improve mutual understanding?	Study in more detail the challenges of practicing empathy in communication	
How did people react to your message in that situation? Was there any difference between what you wanted to express and what others understood?	Reflect on potential misunderstandings and how to improve the clarity of the message	
What strategies did you use to manage emotions (yours or others') during the interaction? Do you think they were effective? Why?	Investigate emotional management and its impact on communication	
When you listened to others' perspectives, how did it influence your approach to the conversation? What did you learn about the value of active listening in that situation?	Explore the role of active listening in fostering empathetic understanding.	

TOOL 2: REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TABLE ON BEHAVIORS

The following table provides three possible inquiry questions to facilitate Activity 2: Critical Reflection on Conflict Management. The idea is for each participant to respond to them individually, and then share their answers as explained in the phase development.

TOOL 2: REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TABLE ON BEHAVIORS		
QUESTION	**GOAL**	**ANSWER**
What were the reactions or behavior patterns you observed in yourself or others during previous conflict management, and how did those behaviors influence the resolution of the conflict?	Identification of patterns: Facilitate participants in recognizing their own behaviors and those of their peers in conflict management.	
What strategies or approaches could you have used to address the conflict more constructively, and how might these changes have impacted relationships within the team?	Exploration of alternatives: Encourage facilitators to consider new strategies for addressing conflicts constructively and reflect on how these changes can improve team relationships.	
What communication and active listening practices could you implement in future situations to prevent the escalation of conflicts and promote a collaborative environment?	Fostering Effective Communication: Encourage the adoption of communication and active listening practices to prevent future conflicts and create a collaborative and positive environment.	

TOOL 3: REFLECTING ON OUR PRACTICES: MORE (OF), LESS (OF), START, STOP, AND KEEP DOING

This dynamic corresponds to Phase of Implementation and Continuous Evaluation: Implementation and Continuous Evaluation, where the reflective and continuous improvement approach is facilitated through a series of prompts in the form of sentence beginnings. Each participant individually considers these prompts and then writes their responses on colored sticky notes.

Participants are given 10 minutes to think and write their answers on the sticky notes. Once the responses are written, each participant places their notes in the designated space on the poster (which takes about 5 minutes). Finally, the responses are discussed reflectively and collectively, aiming to identify common areas for improvement and reinforce positive points. The prompts are as follows:
- More of…
- Less of…
- Start to do…
- Stop doing…
- Keep doing…

Each response to the prompts will be thought through individually by the participants and written on sticky notes, which can be in various colors depending on the questions or prompts.
The format of the poster where the sticky notes will be placed is as follows:
(Here, a visual design or scheme can be included to separate sections for each prompt, facilitating the placement of responses.)
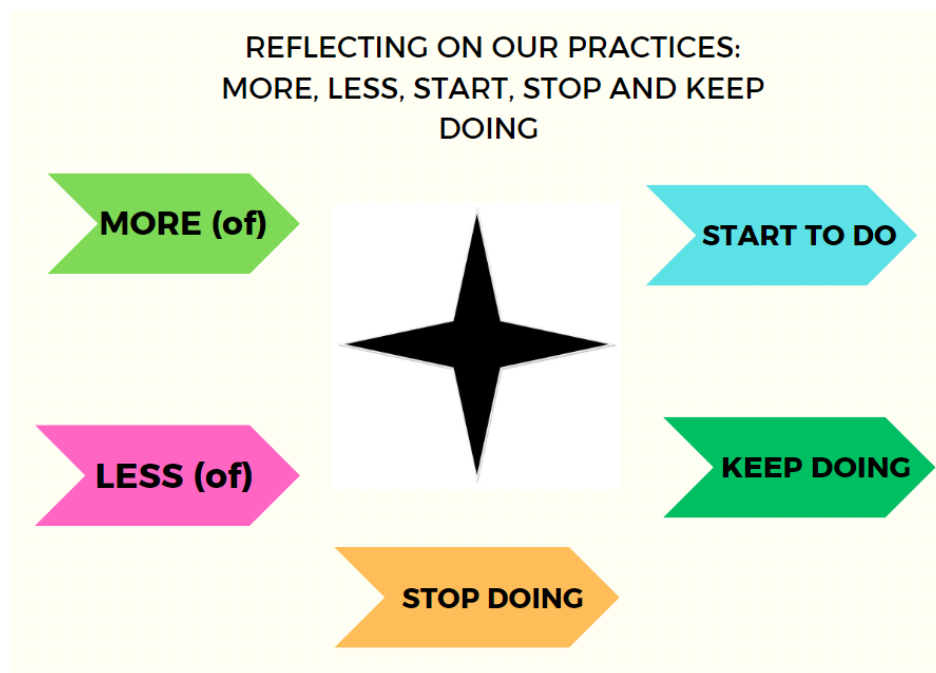
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Enriching lives, opening minds.