



Coach concept for behaviour change

BEST PRACTICES



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SustainableBehaviour: Climate Action for All
2023-1-HU01-KA220-ADU-000155533

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This publication presents the good practices that were developed and refined as part of the *Climate Action for All 2023-1-HU01-KA220-ADU-000155533* Erasmus+ project and can help other organizations in their work to train multipliers.

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WHAT IS IT?

Climate Action for All is a blended adult learning programme that helps people establish sustainable behaviours in daily life, that help them to reduce their climate impact and adopt a more sustainable lifestyle in general. Topics such as chemicals, food, stuffs, transport and digital life are focussed on. The project was implemented between 12/2023 – 01/2026.

WHO WE ARE?

Baltic Environmental Forum Germany

The Baltic Environmental Forum Germany (BEF DE) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Hamburg. Founded in 2003 as part of the international BEF Group, it works to promote environmental protection, sustainable development, and behavioural change across the Baltic Sea region and beyond.

BEF Germany focuses on practical, science-based solutions for challenges related to chemicals management, sustainable consumption, climate action, and more. Its interdisciplinary team combines expertise in environmental policy, education,



communication, and behavioural science to design and implement projects that connect individuals, institutions, and policymakers.

<https://www.bef-de.org/>

Global Action Plan Netherlands

At Global Action Plan Netherlands, we focus on organisations and businesses. In our programs we combine personal and sustainable development, as we believe that they go hand in hand. With over 20 years of experience, we train and empower professionals to run our programs themselves (train-the-trainer), and we support them in this journey through coaching. It is our mission to create an increasingly growing positive impact and long-lasting change.

<https://globalactionplan.nl/>

Tudatos Vásárlók Egyesülete (TVE) - Association for Conscious Consumers (Global Action Plan member in Hungary)

TVE has been promoting sustainable, circular, ethical, fair, and just consumption and lifestyle choices since 2001. Besides campaigning, product testing, and informing consumers we put increasing emphasis on facilitating behaviour change for decreasing the ecological footprint of consumers and maximizing their social impact.

<https://tudatosvasarlo.hu/>

WHAT WE DO?

We offer a coach training for change agents to empower people to

- increase their self-awareness,
- increase their awareness of climate change,
- engage in conscious decision making,
- frame positive (climate) conversation,
- activate personal development goals,
- take focused action,
- measure progress.



Trained coaches deliver behaviour change programmes that help participants take practical steps to reduce their climate impact and improve their well-being. This could be either at work, at home or in their communities.

OUR RESULTS

- 150+ trained and mentored coaches
- 600+ empowered people
- 36% decrease in use of plastic bottles
- 35% decrease in consumption of canned food
- 25% decrease in use of one-way lunchboxes
- 20% less eating food in plastic packaging.
- 1030 m³ water saved,
- 300 trees replaced or planted,
- 7500 less plastic waste bags use
- 350 meals saved
- 1 hour/person/day gained by digital detox
- 1 hour/person/day more time in nature
- 30% less 5 minutes journey with car
- 3059 Gb less cloud-based storage



BEST PRACTICES FOR MULTIPLIER TRAINING FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The coach training elements below were used by partner organisations in the Climate Action for All project. Below, we present the theory behind the methodology and how the partners have used it, what we recommend, what to pay attention to for the training to be effective.

VALUE BASED APPROACH

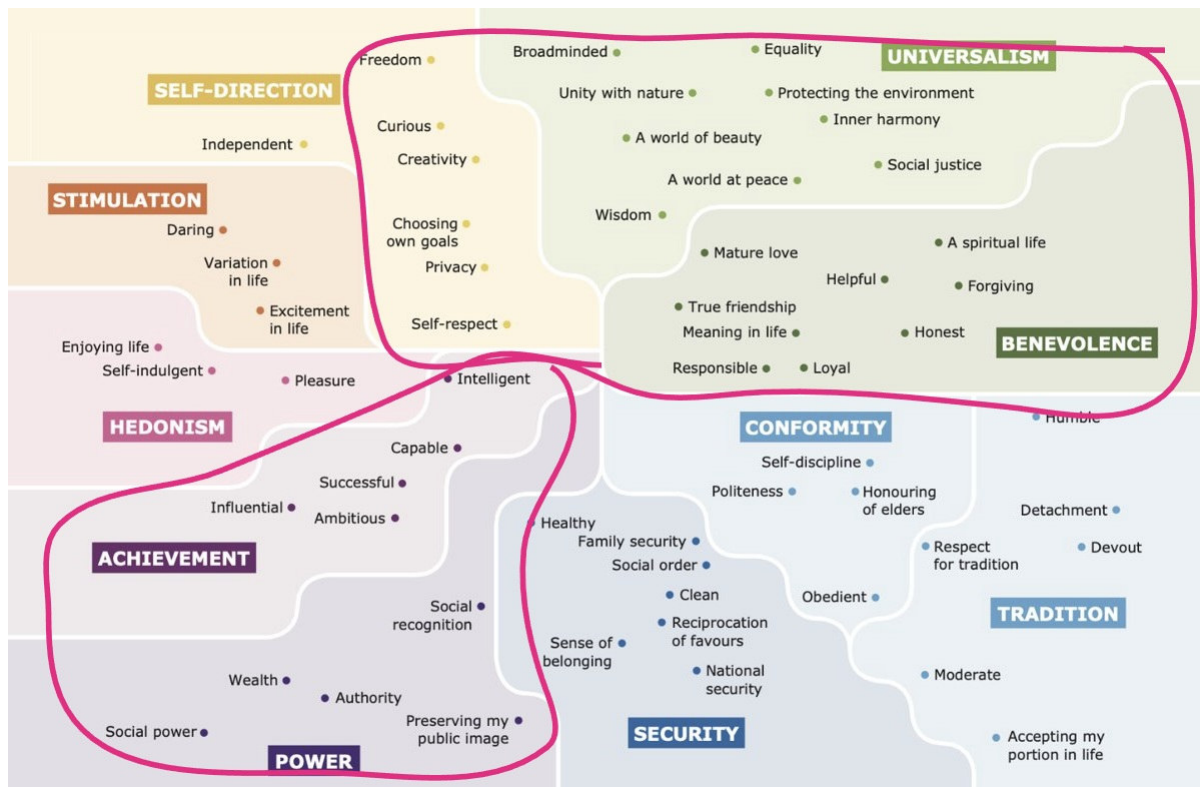
Values are qualities or standards of behaviour that guide and inform our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

Values are creating the cultural conditions for change to shift cultures away from competition, inequality, and oppression, and towards regeneration, equity, and harmony.

When we are thinking about social and environmental change, there are two groups of values that are particularly important.

- **Intrinsic values** are values that are inherently rewarding because they are based on the individual's own needs and desires, rather than on external standards or societal pressures. e.g. love for friends, community, creativity.
- Comprise values found in the benevolence, universalism, and half of self-direction categories. e.g. love for friends, community, creativity. (see graphic below)
- **Extrinsic values** are values that come from external sources, such as approval or reward. Include values in the power and achievement groups e.g. public image, wealth (see graphic below)





S. H. Schwartz Theory of basic human values <https://commoncausefoundation.org/>

Research suggests that when someone prioritizes intrinsic values -when they dance in that part of the map more in their life, the following outcomes are seen:

- Stronger connection to community
- Greater civic participation
- Higher wellbeing
- Deeper support for social and environmental policies

The opposite is also true, where outcomes listed above are less likely to be achieved when someone prioritises extrinsic values.

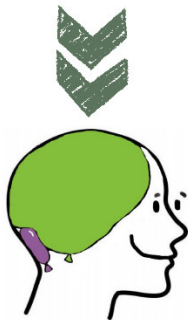
We all hold all of these values. But at different times we place more importance on some than others. See example below.



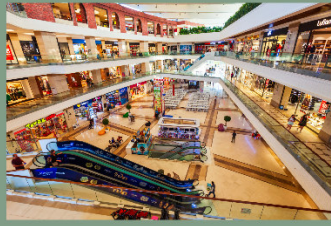
1.



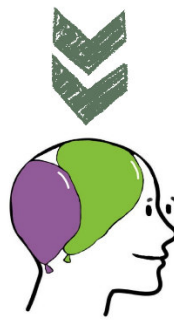
You have just been volunteering at the community garden



2.



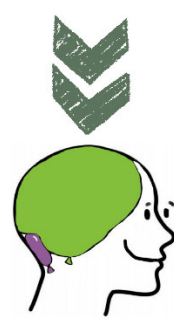
You walk down the shopping mall and see desirable design products



3.



You watch a National Geographic Nature documentary



How values work and interact?

- **Values are like muscles:** The more you exercise and use a value, the stronger it becomes.
- **Seesaw effect:** Activating one set of values weakens and discourages the opposite values, and the associated behaviours.
- **Bleed-over effect:** Activating and exercising one value also activates other values that are closest on the map.

As sustainability ambassadors, coaches, or trainers we know that **compassionate values are an enabler for action**. An extrinsic reward, like a prize or treat can motivate a person for a day, but there is no substitute for intrinsic motivation; **people can move mountains when they are doing it because they care**.

So, as sustainability ambassadors, we need to be mindful of the values we are activating and reinforcing through our work.

How can this methodology be used in training?

Goal of this method: It helps coaches and multipliers to understand how values influence the behaviour of the people they are working with, and how they can influence this behaviour positively.

It is worth bearing in mind that if there is a discrepancy between actions of people they are working with and their values, this can motivate people to act. It is easier to help people set goals if they are aware of their values.

- Give a short presentation on the Schwartz basic value theory. Ensure your audience understands the theory's main effects.
- If you have limited time (1-2 min), ask your audience to suggest one or two principles or behaviours that align with some of the values on the map.
- If you have more time (10-15 min): Ask your participants to form small groups and select one or two values related to their project. They should then write a set of principles (specific behaviours) that correspond with the value of the group.



AMOEBA THEORY

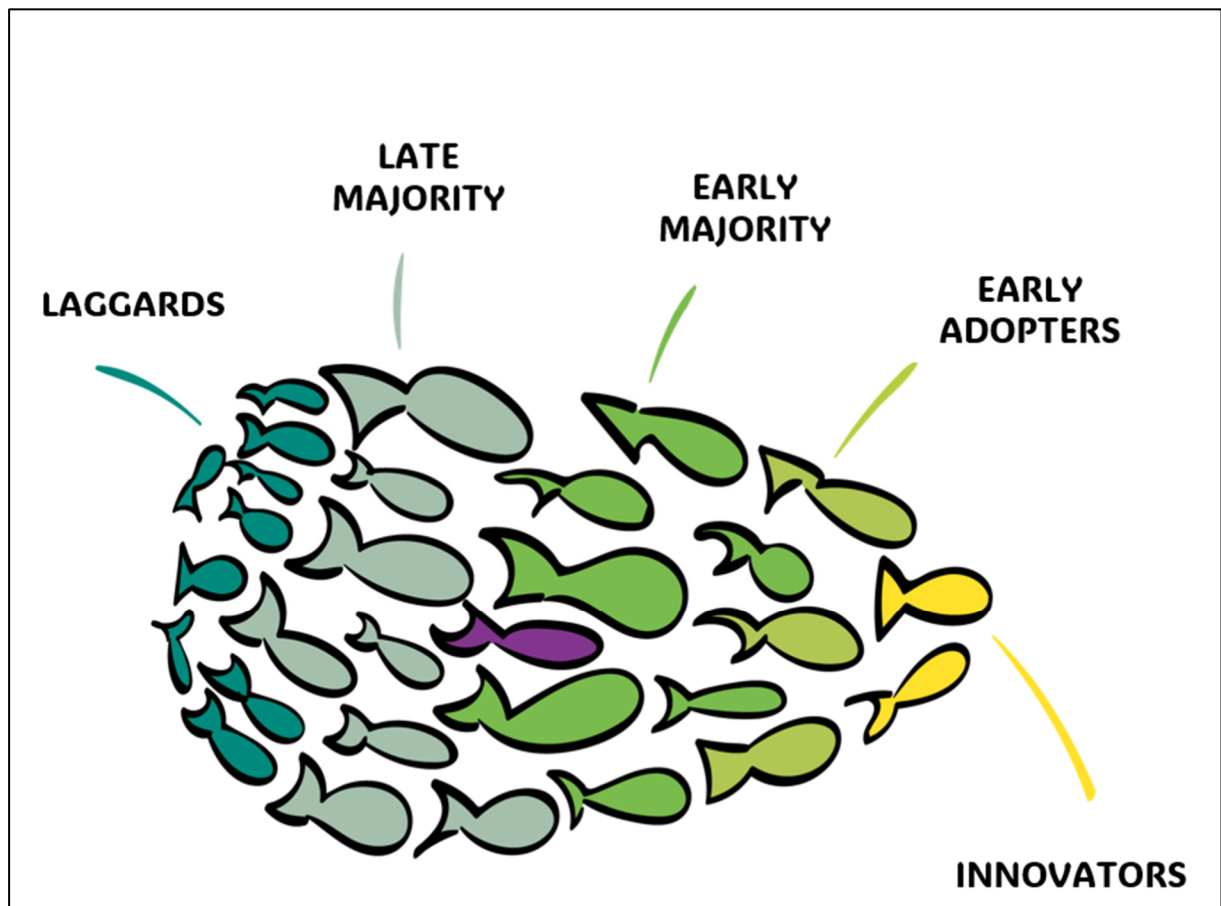
A community is defined by diverse cultural and social norms and customs, which together form the boundaries of that community. Because of these norms, we use cutlery when eating instead of picking up food with our hands.

However, we know that customs change slowly but steadily. New customs emerge and spread, while old ones fade into oblivion. These changes do not affect everyone in the same way: some people quickly adapt to them, while others try to hold on to the old ways for the rest of their lives, accepting that they will slowly be pushed to the margins of society, while others move to the centre. In this way, the community is in a state of constant change, just like an amoeba. (Alan AtKisson)

In terms of cultural change, the members of the community can be divided into the following groups:

- Innovators
- Early adopters
- Early majority
- Late majority/followers
- Laggards/indifferent
- Resisters.





Innovators are those who invent and start doing completely new things, but who are often not taken seriously by the community, and who in a sense do not belong to the community.

Only a small part of the community is open to novelty: they are the so-called **change agents** who learn and are the first to apply innovations. Most of them are often in leadership positions or are the initiators of initiatives that have a long-term impact on the norms, and thus the functioning of smaller or larger communities. While they are open to pushing and transcending their own cultural and community boundaries, in many cases they are also opinion leaders who have a major influence on those who listen to and follow them. They believe in what they are committed to and are persistent enough to achieve their goals.

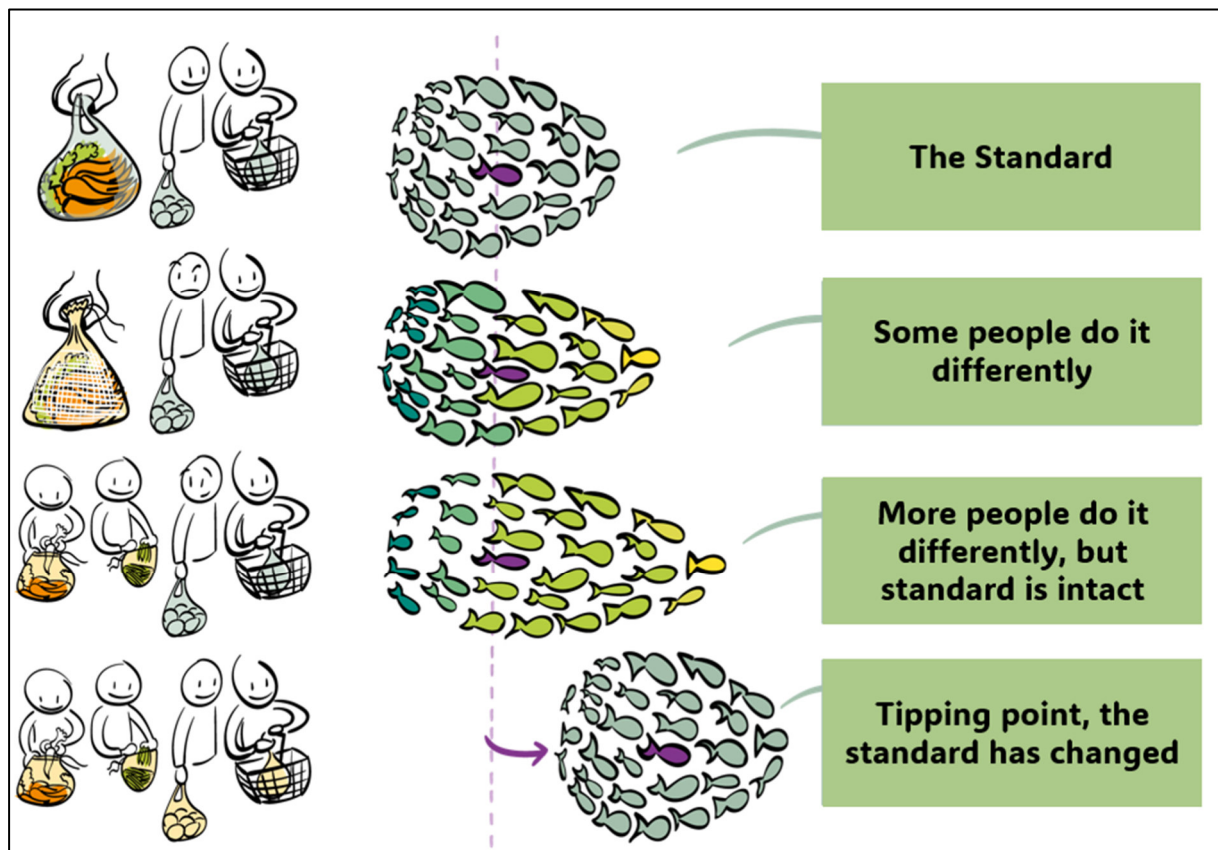
Over time, more people hear and understand them, and more people join the idea they represent. Smaller groups form around them: these followers become the **early adopters** of the innovations.

If the innovations are sufficiently attractive to others, then even more people will adopt them, sooner or later bringing the community along with them—first the so-

called **early adopters**, then the **late majority**, for whom it will become almost natural to do so and who do not want to be left behind.

Finally, there will be those who **lag behind**, who find change difficult but have no doubt that it is normal, and only a small group of **resisters** will be unwilling to change.

How change happens?



- People behave according to accepted central norms. Suddenly, a new form of behaviour appears that is completely different from their current behaviour. It is outside their field of vision; they do not pay attention to it (because "it is not us").
- Compared to the central norm, people on the periphery (change agents) notice it and begin to imitate it, followed by early adopters, but the majority continue to conform to the (old) norm.
- Early adopters are followed by early majority, then late majority.
- When the majority starts doing this, it becomes the norm, while those who lag behind and resist continue to follow the old norm. In

fact, the position of the original custom has changed, but in such a way that customs have moved in a new direction, adapting to the new norm.

How can this methodology be used in training?

Goal of this session: Help participants to understand that the social changes and positive behaviours they want to achieve will not happen overnight. Understand who is their main target group. They should focus on involving this group in their activities and projects without wasting time on laggards.

Multipliers working in the green movement often want to convince and involve those who are not interested at all onto the "right path." The Amoeba model helps us understand that the process has only one direction: can only start with the change agents and move towards early adopters; the sequence cannot be changed. In other words, it is neither possible nor worthwhile to expect late majority or laggards to be the first to adopt a new desirable norm.

It must also be accepted that there will always be those who will never join or only do so extremely late. It is not worth investing energy in "convincing" them, because this effort should rather be directed towards reaching early adopters.

It must also be accepted that not all desirable positive behaviours will become the new norm if the criteria are not met.

The plastic bag example helps training participants to visualize the process in practice. Other examples can also be presented, such as urban cycling, reusable water bottles instead of disposable plastic bottles, and vegetarian meals.



EMPOWERMENT SPIRAL

The essence of empowerment is that we do not use the usual methods and tools to persuade others to do something (in this case, to change their lifestyle). We want to achieve long-term change, which requires that it be fuelled by an inner need and commitment. A complete change of mindset and recalibration is not possible otherwise.

Therefore, the first rule of empowerment is that it is **invitation-based and voluntary**. **Anyone who joins the process must actively participate in it, be open to change, and understand that change does not come by itself, but requires effort**. In other words, just because I buy a gym membership does not mean I will become more athletic—I also must go to the gym to work out.

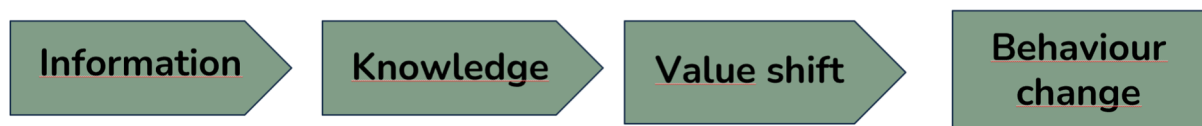
However, contrary to the traditional **linear approach to behavioural change**, it is not enough to simply say this or provide information. Even if I say something or show something to someone, it does not guarantee success.

The desired/expected action does not automatically follow from the information. The person must also hear the message, which **requires interest and concern for the matter**. Only then will the person be truly open to my information and want to learn about the given topic if I succeed in arousing their interest.

Linear, mind- focused model



Behaviour change



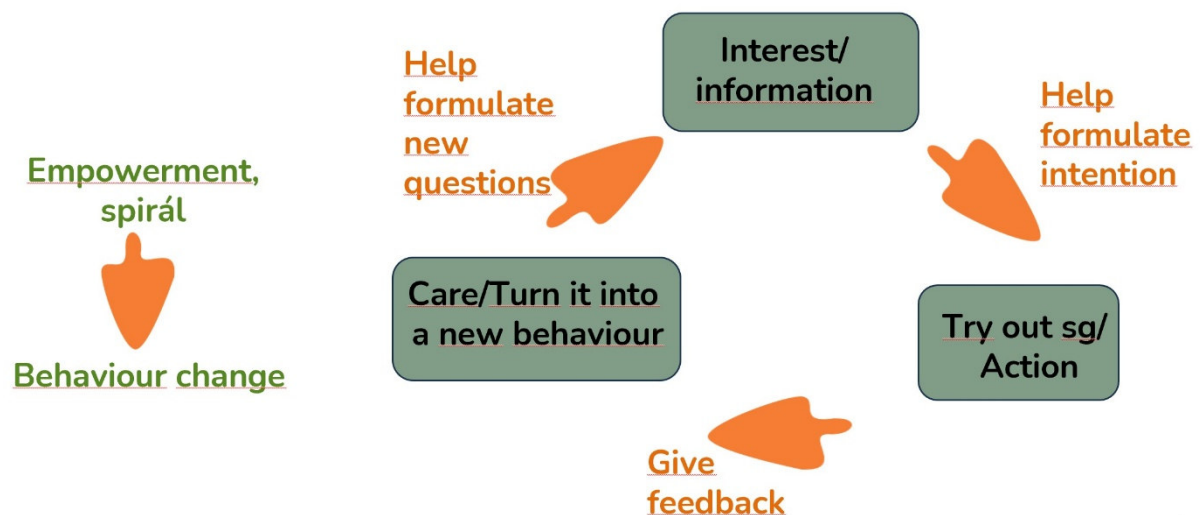
In addition to involvement based on invitation and voluntariness, another way to develop a personal connection to a given thing is to **ask someone not what they think about it, but how they feel about it**. While thoughts are captured by the rational self and do not necessarily involve the individual, encouraging an objective and external attitude, emotions operate on a much deeper and more personal level.

If I can express my feelings about something (which our society so often prohibits), it opens up new perspectives and evokes a greater level of engagement, which makes it much easier to care.

However, even this does not guarantee that I will do anything with the added information. Action also requires **willpower**, otherwise I will not do anything.

Willpower, on the other hand, presupposes that I believe I can do something about the matter at hand. Without this, not only will I do nothing, but I will not even be interested in the matter—and I will be back where I started. Information cannot therefore be a simple solution; it must also show whether it will bring about change.

How does the empowerment spiral work?



If someone has already done something, the most important thing is to give them feedback and positive reinforcement. Without this, they may easily give up on what they have started. **Positive feedback, on the other hand, maintains their interest, which leads to further information gathering, and so on.**

Empowerment can therefore best be described as a spiral-like process that continuously moves forward.

A coach who works in the spirit of empowerment helps people:

- understand the context of their actions;
- focus on solutions rather than problems
- define their own goals and find opportunities;
- articulate their intention to change and what they need;
- see the results of their behaviour changes.

4 steps of empowerment for coaches

Create a safe environment

Your primary task in relation to the individual or group is to create a safe environment in which everyone can ask for and give help to each other.

Listen carefully

Listen attentively and respectfully (Deep Listening). Let the speakers know that you are following and understanding them.

Focus on solutions

Ask questions! "Be yourself": accept your own emotional reactions to events, whatever they may be. Practice waiting – follow the process! Use "I" messages, do not speak on behalf of others.

Give yourself a pat on the back!


The fourth basic element is realizing that all this is much easier said than done. Give yourself a pat on the back when things are going well, but don't blame yourself when you see that things aren't going so smoothly after all.

How can this methodology be used in training?

Goal of this method: Help coaches communicate better with final beneficiaries and guide them more effectively toward their own solutions for behaviour change.

It is worth illustrating the theory with a practical example. Let us go through a specific example step by step with the students. Collect helpful questions together that we can use to move the target person from one point on the spiral to another.

If we have enough time, we can do the same thing in small groups so that they can practice more.



INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Inner Development Goals (IDGs) provide a powerful **framework for strengthening the inner capacities** people need in order to create meaningful and lasting change. Originally developed as a complementary initiative to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the **IDGs focus not on external targets, but on the human qualities that enable progress towards them.**

While the Sustainable Development Goals describe what needs to change in the world, the Inner Development Goals focus on who we need to become to make that change possible.

The IDG framework is structured around five interconnected dimensions:



In our behaviour change programmes, the Inner Development Goals are highly relevant. **Sustainable transformation is rarely achieved through information alone.** People may understand the urgency of climate change yet still struggle to adapt their behaviour. **The gap between knowledge and action** is not primarily a technical issue, it is a human one. It concerns **mindset, motivation, confidence, and the ability to navigate complexity.**

The IDGs do not rely on rules or pressure, but on ownership and intrinsic motivation. By strengthening self-awareness (Being), individuals become more conscious of their values and the impact of their choices. Through improved systems thinking (Thinking), they better understand how everyday actions are connected to wider ecological and social systems. By developing empathy and perspective-taking (Relating), sustainability becomes less abstract and more personal. Collaboration skills enable people to work collectively (Collaborating) towards shared goals, while the acting dimension (Acting) builds the courage and resilience required to experiment with new behaviours.

How can this methodology be used in training?

The IDGs can be integrated into a sustainable behaviour change programme in several ways:

Reflection exercises can help participants clarify their personal values and purpose.

Dialogue sessions can foster empathy and deepen mutual understanding.

Visualisation exercises and systems mapping can strengthen long-term and holistic thinking.

Team challenges can build collaboration skills

Small, achievable action commitments can cultivate confidence and agency.

We incorporate various exercises in our behaviour change programmes, so that personal development and sustainable development go hand in hand.

An example is the **Personal Compass** we created for participants in our behaviour change programmes. By scoring where you stand now and where you go for, participants have personal development goals as part of the change process.



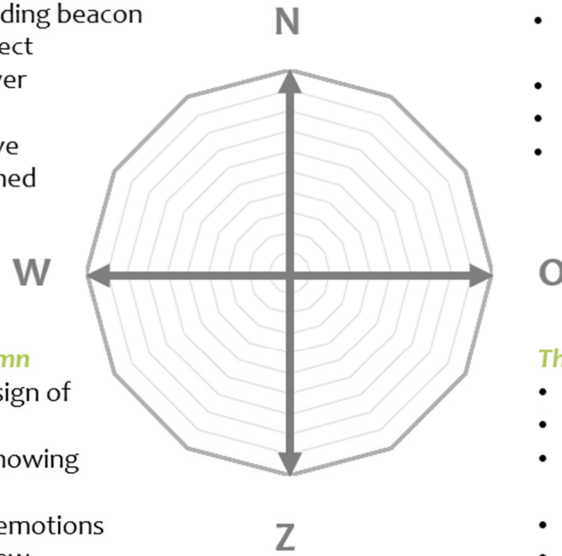
Personal Compass

Your navigator in times of change



The North – Earth – Winter

- Northern Light is a guiding beacon
- Sign of logic and intellect
- Gives energy to discover
- Stability, strong roots
- Going inward, reflective
- Integrate lessons learned



The East – Air – Spring

- The sun rises, a sign of new beginnings
- Fresh vision, spirit or insight
- Pleasure and positivity
- Lively and creative

The West – Water – Autumn

- The sun goes down, a sign of completion
- Movement from not knowing to wisdom
- Intuition, feelings and emotions
- Long term change, a new direction

The South – Fire – Summer

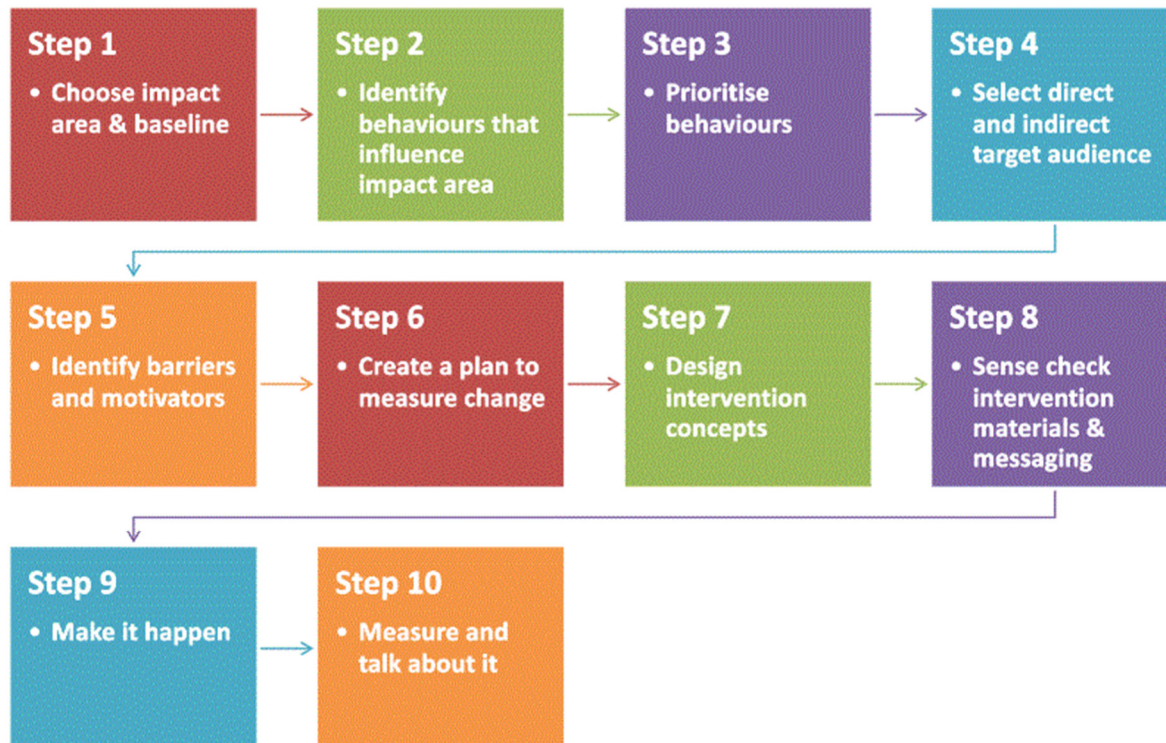
- The sun high in the sky
- Matters of the heart
- Warmth, energetic, transformative
- Inspirations to undertake
- Open-up, embrace life

Source www.greenempowerment.nl

STEP BY STEP PROCESS

By following the 10-step approach, you work towards designing a successful campaign that leads to behavioural change for yourself and other participants. Depending on the number of people (colleagues or community members) you would like to involve, it may be worthwhile to form a team. Each team member contributes to designing the campaign and ensures that people within their part of the organisation or community are engaged. In this way, together you reach everyone who wants to and is able to contribute.

- BEF using 10 tips instead of the steps: goal, what are people already doing, barriers, why want to get there, first actions
- TVE using it for coaches and participants too: goal, why is it good for me, first 2 steps within a week, barriers, helper,
- GAP NL is using 10 steps as part of the train-the-trainer sessions for programme coaches, so they can design and implement their own behaviour change campaigns



The 10 steps:

1. Choose impact area and baseline

You explore the impact areas in more depth. Which of these impact areas do you consider important for yourself? And which are important for the organisation or community? You also define when this campaign will be successful for the organisation, as well as for you personally. Finally, you map the starting point so that you can measure the positive impact after your campaign has finished.

2. Identify behaviours that influence impact area

You create a longlist of actions that could bring you closer to the success you have defined.

3. Prioritise behaviours

It is not advisable to address all actions from the longlist in a single campaign. In step 3 you select several actions from your longlist and decide where you intend to implement them. Review the longlist once more and identify which actions:

- are most likely to be carried out;
- contribute most strongly to achieving your defined success;
- are the easiest to implement.

Now you have identified your low-hanging fruit: the most effective actions for your campaign. The rest of the long list you keep in mind for next campaigns, as successful behaviour change happens over a longer period of time involving multiple behaviour change campaigns.

4. Select direct and indirect target audience

Now that you know which actions you will introduce and where, it is time to identify your target groups. These are the people who will take action and change their behaviour. In addition, there may be others who can support the actions.

Consider what you already know about your target groups and what you might still want to ask them. What is important to them? And how can you best reach them?



Sometimes it is a good idea to ask people to join one behaviour altogether and give them space to choose personal actions in addition. In this way people are empowered to join and feel engaged because they can make their own choices.

5. Identify barriers and motivators

There will certainly be challenges to overcome or opportunities to seize. In this step you consider how to turn potential barriers into opportunities and how to strengthen motivations. This may well be the most important step.

6. Create a plan to measure change

This step focuses on measuring impact. You determine which indicators you will use during the campaign. It is important that the measurement plan is effective, but also simple. You do not want to spend too much of your own or others' valuable time collecting data or completing questionnaires.

7. Design intervention concepts

Develop key messages for the campaign based on intrinsic values. A strong key message reinforces your target group's motivation and/or helps to overcome any remaining barriers.

Communication materials support you in spreading your key message and reminding your target group, at the right time and in the right place, of the actions you have chosen.

8. Planning and division of tasks

You can create an annual plan for your campaign(s). Also consider whether you can align with existing initiatives. This allows you to link the launch of your campaign to momentum that is already there. There may also be times when it is better not to start anything new. For example, if an internal audit is scheduled, or during certain holiday periods or public holidays.

If you are working on the campaign with a team or group, make sure to divide the tasks clearly among you.



9. Make it happen

Launch your campaign with an engaging kick-off to really bring it to life. Throughout the campaign, continue introducing new communication tools and materials. Carry out measurements and collect data along the way.

Once you have gathered some quantitative data and qualitative feedback, it is valuable to report these results. This allows you to adjust the campaign if necessary, or to confirm that you are on the right track. You can also use these results to inspire people to keep going and to take the campaign to the next level.

10. Measure and talk about it

Collect all data and measure the final impact of your campaign. At the start (step 1) you defined what success would look like, both personally and for the organisation or community. Has this been achieved? What worked well? Where is still room for improvement?

The efforts of everyone involved deserve to be celebrated. It is also an important moment to let everyone know the campaign has ended, to share your results, and to explore ideas for a next campaign.

In case you work with a more standardized programme or with smaller groups, it is possible that the 10-steps can be condensed, meaning less steps to prepare for the change to happen.



NETWORK EVENTS

Organizing a face-to-face event for project participants has a lot of added value. It provides an opportunity to:


- Present the results of the project to the participants and celebrate the successes together.
- Award certificates of recognition.
- Present plans for the future and opportunities to get involved in them.
- Strengthen the sense of community, the feeling that we are "one big team," which can sustain commitment to the program in the long term.
- Allow program participants to get to know each other if they have not previously been in the same place or (work) group, thereby fostering new informal relationships.
- It can also serve as a kind of professional "training" if we incorporate an expert-led workshop or lecture into the program. This could even be a DIY activity, which has the advantage of allowing participants to take away something tangible from the program in addition to knowledge.
- We can invite potential customers and future partners, who can thus learn about the results and effectiveness of the program and become involved in the project in some form in the future, e.g., client companies, local governments, institutions.

What to consider when organizing an event:

Venue:

- It should be accessible by public transport.
- The size of the room should be appropriate for the planned number of participants. A room that is too large may give the impression that there is little interest, while a room that is too crowded can quickly become oppressive, causing participants to leave early.
- If catering is provided, it should fit in with the message of the project, e.g., waste minimization, meat-free meals.

Communication

- Start advertising the program early.
- 

- It is a good idea to register participants in advance, as this increases commitment and makes it easier to plan for the number of attendees.
- Don't forget to send several reminder emails before the event (without spamming the participants, of course).
- Such a celebration can work well with 20 or 200 people, but the program and venue must be adapted accordingly.
- If the event is open to more than just program participants, ask an influencer/expert to promote the event on their own channels, so that you can attract participants from outside your own bubble.

Program

- Include segments where participants have the opportunity to get to know each other and connect. These can be sessions specifically dedicated to this purpose or smaller workshops help also well this goal.
- If you are holding a lecture or workshop with an external expert, it is worth inviting a well-known person, which will increase the appeal of the program.

