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Intro

This Handbook is primarily aimed at supporting Adult Trainers in developing upskilling pathways for long-term unemployed people through creativity and art.

Creativity and arts expand the ability to interact with the world and provide a new set of skills for self-expression, understanding, and communication. This may also prove valuable for long-term unemployed adults, who need to be able to take a new perspective on their circumstances and be driven to develop alternative solutions regarding their professional realization. And this is where the RecyclART methodology comes into play.

RecyclART works on the affinity between "RECYCLING MATERIALS" and "REINVENTING YOURSELF".

In this sense RecyclART methodology takes on a bivalent meaning:

- Reuse/Recycle waste materials giving them a new meaning, utility, and value;
- Reinventing oneself by reconsidering the learner's experiences and uncovering new career perspectives and opportunities.

Projectual Creative Recycling

Projectual Creative Recycling can be seen as a different approach to recycling; the starting point is no longer the waste material, but the need from which the idea of recycling arises. The flow goes as follows:

NEED → PROJECT → WASTE → NEW OBJECT

In the same way, long-term unemployed people have the need to find new Job Opportunities.

Starting from this NEED, the RecyclART methodology guides long-term unemployed adults through a self-driven PROJECT to explore their skills, competencies, and values that they would otherwise consider a "WASTE" - and as a result, find a NEW-CAREER path.

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CHAPTER 1 | Orientation & Exploration

What is career orientation all about?

There's a lot more to a career than "just finding a job". And having a job doesn't necessarily mean having a career. This is particularly important to communicate to people who are long-term unemployed. And there's an interesting parallel to recycling that is to be made here.

The artistry of recycling is going beyond that initial purpose of a product and bringing more out of it than originally conceived.

In a similar fashion, the artistry of self-reinvention is going beyond the initial goal of finding a job by reconsidering and bringing out more of the experiences, skills, knowledge, and competencies that each of us possesses.

Naturally, every process of "reinvention" can potentially lead to "reorientation". Meaning that we might find vocational fulfillment in a field we did not originally anticipate.

With that in mind and in accordance with the time you have for the training here are some suggestions as to how you can initiate the training.

How to start learning and teaching about career orientation?

Present the goals

Introduce the aspects of professional self-reinvention that you intend to cover. Present what the learners are going to learn, gain, and do as part of the training.

Since the training is about "recycling" and "professional reinvention" the following goals are all valid points to lead the training with:

- Understand what proper career planning looks like
- Evaluate and appreciate your work-life experiences so far
- Recognize the values and interests that drive you
- Identify possible and relevant career options for yourself

Establish common language and expectations

There are two additional things to take into account when starting a training.

First, make sure that the content is relatable, so the learners can identify themselves in what is to be presented. This means that the examples you use to

set the stage for the training and later on use to elaborate different points should be such that the learners can identify themselves in the examples.

Second, make sure that everybody is on the same page, and talking the same language i.e., have a mutual understanding of the meaning with which you use keywords. Every time you introduce a term or a concept it is important to take a moment and explain the meaning with which you are going to use it. In doing so you will avoid unnecessary confusion and reduce the misinterpretation of your material greatly.

Example starter: “What is a career?”

After the initial introduction, ask the participants “What is a career?”

You can also write their answers down. What's important is that you are establishing that common ground we discussed. Once you do that you can introduce additional, unmentioned points.

Consider the following ideas:

- Paid work and voluntary work
- Working in an office and running a small business from home
- Working in the same industry all your life and working in different industries
- Working in the same sector all your life and working in different sectors

The key takeaway is this - career is not as linear and rigid, as it used to be. And the way you arrived at that point is through an interaction that has the following benefits.

First, you took the understandings that participants have about career - this allows you to peek into their minds, so you know better how they think and how to communicate with them;

Second, this makes the learners more receptive and invested as to what you are going to share afterwards because you gave them the opportunity to speak and feel heard.

Third, you take the established understanding and further expand it in a more complete, meaningful, and understandable way.

Introducing a framework for our “creative project”

Just like product recycling, self-reinvention represents a creative endeavor. However, “creative” doesn’t mean “unorganized”. This is why, once you have established some common language and goals to look forward to, it is important to propose a career orientation framework.

A framework is valuable because it turns an endeavor into a step-by-step process. In our case, we have two step-by-step processes which we call our creative projects.

Interestingly enough, both of our creative projects can be broken down into 5 fundamental steps.

On one side, we have our product recycling project where we:

- Explore our ambient
- Identify recycling opportunities
- Determine all we need
- Produce our recycled product
- Share it with the world

On the other side, we have our self-reinvention project where we:

- Self-Exploration
- Identifying Opportunities
- Determine What You Need to Do
- Enact Your Decisions
- Share your gifts with the world

The reason these 5 are “steps” is that there’s a sequence to their performance. In addition to that, when one is to deliberately teach career orientation or study their own career path, the starting point is always the “Self-Exploration”

One may think that “Identifying Opportunities” may be the starting point instead, and while this certainly can be the case, neglecting the “Self-Exploration” phase will only compromise any of the results you will get in the later stages.

This is not to say that the process cannot be broken down into less or more, smaller bigger steps. The amount of detail and time you dedicate to each step will depend on the amount of time you have for training in the first place. For example, in the index of the handbook, you can see a different nomenclature used to describe the process:

“Exploration-Adaptation-Recognition-Expedition-Communication”

The essence, however, remains the same.

The key takeaway is this - you want to drive home the point that career orientation is best to start with “Self-Exploration.” This is crucial since self-exploration is at the core of recuperating the learners’ self-esteem, as well as guiding them towards a career path they are willing, able and interested in pursuing.

Considering exercises & activities

Once you’ve introduced learners to the framework it is important to consider exercises and activities that are related to the following terms and categories.

Initial Actions

As with every following step and activity, it is important to keep on making the necessary parallels that self-reinvention and recycling carry. Since this is either day one or the first part of your training, the underlying motif is the necessity and development of a plan.

As we have established already, recycling, just like self-reinvention, is a creative project. And just like all other projects, also the creative ones require you to have a plan.

The best place to start is to perform a self-audit. This is the foundation that will dictate both the creative choices related to recycling, as well as the decisions one takes in relation to their career. It also has the benefit of guiding the learners towards building their self-esteem in a healthy way - this is because you are guiding them to look into themselves to build that better self-image, instead of looking at external stimuli and solutions.

Work appeal & enjoyment

Invite learners to explore what they enjoy the most about work. In doing so, it becomes easier to understand both the types of work that will suit a learner, as well as the ones to avoid. This will serve as a foundation to better know what skills to develop and which opportunities are worth spending time preparing for later on.

Work values & satisfaction

An exercise like this is best utilized as a continuation of the previous. It allows you to understand even better what it means for oneself to have “a satisfying job.” Use a list of factors that imply something about one’s personality and the type of work one may recognize as valuable and satisfactory. Then, you can further rank different factors by importance. This will help the participants to not only

understand what they value but also start cutting down on factors and ideas they may have as secondary and unnecessary.

Personal Beliefs & Values

Having an activity related to one's values and beliefs can help the learner think carefully about how these might impact the work options they are drawn to.

The clearer we are on why we are doing things, the easier it is to live with the choices and trade-offs we are making.

It is important to note here that beliefs and values, albeit personal, don't have to be restricted to the wellness of the individual. This means that our desires for contribution to the collective-social wellbeing are just as important in a self-audit as are the values and beliefs related to ones own wellbeing.

Also, make sure to remind learners that there are no right or wrong answers and you can always return to the activities and update your thinking, as you progress through the training.

Interests & Fascinations

What you value in life is naturally connected to what interests you the most. An activity focused on exploring what the learners are truly interested in and fascinated about can help them to then consider how they can bring those things into their work.

A note about the word choice here. You can notice that we are not talking about "passions". This is intentional, since passion is often associated with a much narrower number of activities, and it's something that people conceptualize as something one is motivated to do and thrive doing without effort. On the other hand, interests and fascinations allow you to have a more constructive dialogue and conceptualize things you are interested in and fascinated by as something you need to build and develop.

You may take an extra moment to explain your choice of words if you find fit and your training time allows for it.

CHAPTER 2 | Adaptation

Having clarity as to what your limitations and responsibilities are can help you make a more grounded decision as to how to approach your career exploration.

Each of us have a range of personal factors that may affect our career choices. These may include:

- Earn a specific amount of money
- Your well-being
- Age
- Being the primary caregiver to a family member
- The desire to live in a specific place
- Seeking to obtain a qualification fast or one that is currently unavailable
- Being professionally recognized in a certain sector of labor

Learners may not feel as energised to consider potential obstacles as they do when exploring their interests. Nevertheless, they need a balanced assessment of their situation. Bringing this up prior to an activity related to this matter will dissolve some of the anticipated unease.

Once you do that, consider an activity like the following.

Exploring Your Capabilities

This activity helps the learners to evaluate what they need, what they have to do, and what they cannot easily do in their life at the moment. In the end, it will encourage them to think about the implications of each limitation and to see ways forward.

Present the following four categories:

- Needs
- Responsibilities
- Constraints
- Advantages

Following the career affecting factors we discussed, every learner can write down things that are connected to those categories and that they recognise as obstacles in their situation.

Then, each learner is to articulate the implications that each limiting factor has for their situation. Note that “implications” is a better suggestion than “problems”. Framing factors as “implications” indeed makes the factor seem more as only “implying” its quality of an ordeal. Because of that it leaves the necessary space to

then think of the factor as something that can be resolved. Plus, by articulating what is the exact “problem” that a given factor creates it would be easier to devise a specific solution afterwards.

Once you do that, the last step is to consider “What can I do about that.”

So, in three steps of (1) stating the limitation, (2) recognizing its implications, and (3) devising a solution you are able to gather all the necessary information to then explore and experiment with those career opportunities that are most fitting.

CHAPTER 3 | Recognition

In order to breach the gap between the current state of being and the career one desires, you need to guide learners onto understanding the tools they already have at their disposal.

This is important because it allows the learner to cultivate a quality of self-esteem that is firmly grounded in their own knowledge, skills, and competencies. This is also valuable from the perspective of progress. In other words, understanding better what you are capable of also tells you the things you need to further develop in order to get the professional opportunities you are interested in.

Self-Esteem

The first thing to consider is taking a moment to explain what you mean by “self-esteem”. A concept analysis of “self-esteem” from 2017 suggests the following attributes as being connected to self-esteem:

- Self-Value
- Self-Acceptance
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Respect
- Attitude towards oneself

Now, when you say that exploring one’s knowledge, skills, and competencies has a positive effect on self-esteem it is more clear exactly what you mean and it also demonstrates the range of positive effects it has.

Of course, it is also important to take a moment and think about a framework that allows you to draw a distinction between knowledge, skills, and competencies. The reason why we are beginning to talk about these 3 concepts from very far is

that there is no one commonly accepted definition of what each of them means. Therefore, as an instructor, you have to do two important things.

1. Communicate with the audience that there is a theoretical ambiguity around the terms knowledge, skills, and competencies.
2. Because of that, you should take a moment to articulate and communicate the meaning with which you are going to use all 3.

That said, here is an example framework you can use.

Knowledge can refer to the outcome of successful assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of **facts, principles, theories and practices** that is related to a field of work or study.

Skills may refer to practical knowledge. You may encounter skills used as a substitute for “hard skills”, i.e. creating tangible products. If you decide to use “skills” this way, then an example would be: being able to build a website, play an instrument, draft an architectural plan, fix a car, or create an excel spreadsheet.

Competencies on the other hand may be used as a synonym for soft skills. They can also be referred to as transferable skills. If you decide to use “competencies” in this way, then examples would be things like prioritizing tasks, critical thinking, time management, problem-solving, decision making, stress management.

This creative activity will help you to identify the roles you have played in your life so far and thus provide you with a basis for considering the skills they have helped you to develop.

Considering exercises & activities

Prior to getting into exercises and activities directly related to the learners' knowledge, skills, and competencies, it can be valuable to consider the roles that participants have performed in their lives up to this point. The reason we use “roles” and not “jobs” is because the prior encompasses a much broader spectrum of experiences, all of which may have allowed the participants to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies that they have but might not have considered if one is to focus solely on their professional endeavors.

Roles to attributes

In addition to having a role as an employee, each of us may fulfill a number of other roles too. You might have a role as a parent, as a friend, as a student, as a teacher - the list goes on.

For example, if you have previously been a student you would have needed the skills of learning, time management, and communicating in writing.

Perhaps you enjoy “do-it-yourself” (DIY) projects? If so, you have developed not only practical skills but planning and organising skills as well.

If you are a parent, you have developed childcare skills, but also probably those of budgeting, time management, delegating, cooking, and so on.

By chairing meetings of a club, you develop skills of dealing with people, as well as those of managing the discussion.

Once you have gone through an exercise that allows the participants to look more broadly and thoroughly into their experiences, you can now consider additional exercises investigating their knowledge, skills, and competencies separately.

CHAPTER 4 | Expedition

Now that learners have a more precise list of possible careers, they are ready to explore the opportunities. Here are some ways you can get a first-hand look at what a job role entails.

Informational interviews

Consider reaching out to a professional in your desired field to sit down with you to answer questions. You can discover the education, training, entry-level roles and other aspects they followed along their career path. An informational interview can also help you build your professional network within your intended industry, which may help your job search process in the future. Informational interviews are great not only because you can get a lot of valuable insight about the industry and work you are interested in but it may also serve as a trampoline into all other opportunities that we are about to cover.

Job shadowing

This activity involves spending a day, a week or another short period observing a professional on the job. You may accompany them to meetings or watch them demonstrate how they complete their typical daily work. You can also ask them questions throughout your time with them to better understand their career path and experience.

Volunteering

Voluntary work is unpaid work, usually carried out in your own time.

Some organizations may allow you to volunteer for tasks that your ideal role would handle to gain more hands-on experience. This can also help you determine whether you can enjoy working in that role, industry or type of workplace.

Remember that voluntary work requires commitment, just like a paid job. Therefore, you need to be realistic about how much of a contribution you can offer alongside your existing work and personal commitments. It might be that the occasional ‘one off’ event or a short-term project best suits the time you have available. Alternatively, you might find a regular, more long-term but contained commitment, like an hour each week, easier to sustain.

Use the following questions to prompt your thinking about voluntary work.

- Why might you be interested in volunteering?
- What causes would you see as worthwhile?
- Do you have any specialist skills or expertise, you are willing to share with others?
- Are there any particular personal qualities that you feel suit you to working as a volunteer, such as the ability to make others feel comfortable, or to empathize with them and their situation? Or are you good at practical problem-solving?
- Would you want to work with a particular client group such as elderly people, children, or adults with learning difficulties? Or in a particular field such as the environment, homelessness, or adult literacy?
- How much time could you realistically offer, and are you looking for a short or a longer-term commitment?
- What voluntary work might suit me?
- Would you need to cover your basic expenses in order for you to get involved as a volunteer?
- How far are you prepared to travel to undertake the work?
- What kind of fulfillment do you want to gain from voluntary work?
- What do you think you might find most challenging about voluntary work?

Internships

Consider an internship for more direct field experience. These opportunities are likely to give tasks more relevant to your intended role.

Part-time work

Part-time versions of many jobs may be available with fewer entry-level requirements. You can find them in specific companies that you might consider working for and in assistant-type roles that directly interact with your intended role.

Find a mentor in the industry

Watching an experienced mentor and listening to them talk about the realities of a career can be very informative. You can consider applying their career path choices to your own planning to identify steps that may also work for you.

Courses

If you pursue any form of higher education, consider choosing courses related to possible career choices. These classes can provide you with foundational information and training through projects and essays, which can help you understand some of the basics of a career.

Reaching out

An important thing to consider is that each solution represents also an opportunity to network and meet people that may be doing something similar to what the learners are interested in. Because of that, it is important to consider the way they are reaching out to people and institutions. Here are some important questions to consider developing training exercises and activities around:

- Should I email them, telephone or speak face-to-face?
- What should I say to them about why I have approached them?
- What questions should I ask, about what they have to offer?
- Have clear aims – set goals you can reasonably achieve in that period.
- Understand your needs – they should fit with the organisation that is offering you work experience.
- Find support – ask for a named person who is responsible for helping to make your work experience successful.
- Get feedback – ask whether you have shown an aptitude for the work or demonstrated learning of the skills needed.
- Build your contacts – look for opportunities to make contacts, remembering chats during coffee or lunch breaks can be perfect for this.
- Review what you have done – what did I learn about the work, the employer or myself from this experience?

CHAPTER 5 | Communication

Once you have your new recycled product complete, it is important to share your gift with the world. The same is true with finding a place to realise yourself professionally.

As learners start exploring and finding career opportunities, it is important for them to know how to communicate all the things they know about themselves to others. This is where all the information they've gathered and know about themselves further culminates into content that is shareable.

There are two types of questions you are almost guaranteed to be asked in a job/internship interview, as well as when you are networking, meeting new people, or even when you are creating online content.

The first is “Tell me about yourself”

The second will most certainly be a variation of a behavioral question, such as:

“Tell me about a time you did X-Y-Z.”

Questions like these may seem like a “small-talk” exchange, but their utility goes beyond that. We use questions like these to better understand what person stands before us, as well as to gain an insight as to their own self-perception - all things that are important to ...

Because of that, it is important to:

- Spend time reflecting on your experiences
- Articulate not only what you did, but also how you did it
- Communicate the effect your previous experiences have had on your thinking, and attitude towards work.

Let's talk articulating proper answers to key questions like the two mentioned.

“Tell me about yourself”

Consider an answer that provides some relevant background information about your interests, and fascinations. Then, make sure your answer is related to your current professional endeavors i.e., a field you are studying, wanting to work in, or currently gaining experience in.

In a networking situation, you'd like to have a more general answer, which serves you as your "business card" and invites people to be curious and have a conversation with you about the things that you are interested in.

In a job/internship interview, you'd like to have your answer a bit more tailored in accordance to the opportunity for which you are interviewing. The information you want to share about yourself should represent the interests, and experiences you have that are relevant to the position you are interviewing for.

Either way, the best way to think of your answer is a 2-minute story of what you are good at and/or why you are a good fit for a certain position.

How to Craft Your Answer

Use the following questions as guides to craft a solid "tell me about yourself" answer.

1. How did you become interested in the given industry?
2. What experiences (classes, internships/jobs, books, acquaintances, conversations, etc.) sparked your interest in the given field?
3. What have you done in this field to explore/pursue your interest or that confirmed your interest?
4. What are you interested in right now (in a networking situation)
5. Why are you interested in this position right now (in an interview situation)

Answering each of these questions with 2 to 5 sentences will generate enough content for you to craft your story.

Once you've answered all the questions make sure to put them together as one paragraph.

Make sure to edit everything together, so when you read it as one it sounds coherent.

Finally, in order to memorize your story, and really own it, practice telling it out loud. In doing so you will feel a lot more confident and comfortable sharing it with others.

“Behavioral Questions”

Behavioral questions usually start with “Tell me about a time when” or “Give me an example of a time/experience when...”

The difference between a behavioral question and the “tell me about yourself” question is that behavioral questions are more specific. And whoever is asking is looking for a concrete example that demonstrates your specific skills and qualities.

Similar to any other question you answer, you want to think of your response as a story. In this case, because your story is supposed to be about a specific example, then it's a good idea to also have a specific structure that provides enough context, relevant detail, outcomes, and what you learned from the experience.

One way to structure your story is by following the “**S.A.R.A**” model, which is a mnemonic acronym for the following 4 steps: Situation, Action, Result, Application.

Situation This is the setup for your story.

Articulate an answer to:

“What was the situation?”

“What was the problem or opportunity you were facing?”

Action this is the solution you decided to apply.

Articulate an answer to:

“What action did you take?”

Result this is what happened as a consequence of your efforts.

Articulate an answer to:

“What was the outcome based on the action you took?”

(Be sure to provide specific details and quantify your results where possible)

Application what did you achieve as a result of this situation

Articulate an answer to:

What lessons did you learn?

What skills did you gain?

What qualities did you develop through this experience?

How will they help you contribute to the prospective employer's team in the position for which you are interviewing?

Describing Your Experiences

The same way you put together stories to share when meeting people, you can share the stories behind your experiences in your written presentations (CVs, Resumes, Cover letters)

Use Bullet Points

Bullet points are action statements that showcase what you contributed in previous roles, so that the employer can see the skills you bring to them. Under each experience on your resume, you'll include these descriptions in bullet point form.

How to Create Strong Bullet Points?

Start with an action verb that illustrates a transferable skill.

- For this, learners can use what they have previously generated as skills that they have.
- Then, they can compare their own skills to those that the employer is looking, and see which skills match.
- One thing to keep in mind and look out for is semantics. Meaning that the employee and the employer can be talking about the same/similar things but using different words. When applying for a job, the learner is to pay attention to this and identify such skills and adapt the words they use to describe their experiences to the language of the employee. In doing so, you establish common ground and assure that everyone speaks the same language.
- Share specific information about what you did, how you did it, and why you did it.
- Avoid repetitive language.
- Quantify, when possible, to demonstrate impact.
- Include relevant tools or equipment (i.e., Excel, Python, Adobe Photoshop, mass spectrometry, SPSS, Westlaw, etc.)

How to Develop Bullet Points

Just like with every other case we looked at previously, one way to ensure that you are creating a truly impactful description for each of your experiences is to follow a structure that would allow you to do that.

In this case you can do so by answering the following questions for each of your experiences: What, How, and Why

WHAT

What did you do?

What was the situation, problem, or challenge you were facing?

What were your responsibilities or goals?

HOW

How exactly did you do it?

How did you accomplish your tasks?

Did you use any tools, equipment, or computer programs?

Did you work as part of a team or independently?

WHY

Why are these actions important?

How did they benefit the organization?

What was the result or outcome of your actions?

Can you quantify the results?

Note 1: In relation to the last question, not every bullet point on your resume must be results-oriented.

Note 2: You don't have to answer all of the listed questions. What is important to keep in mind is that, just like when you are having a conversation, your answers are basically telling a mini-story of your experiences.

Part 2: Projectual Recycling Activities

Introduction

In the following segment, you will learn a number of recycling activities designed for you to introduce as part of your curriculum.

This section is designed as a guide to better understand the format in which the activities are described.

Each activity consists of an introduction segment, where you can find all the materials needed to have your projectual recycling workshop; the projectual recycling process, as well a soft-skills section.

Each exercise follows RecyclART's projectual creative recycling formula:

NEED → PROJECT → WASTE → NEW OBJECT

Here's what you can expect on each of these 4 stages.

NEED

This segment describes a range of needs that the exercise can satisfy. The two main types of needs are personal (aimed at the learner) and environmental (aimed at preserving nature). You may also find other needs, like social, as well as arguments as to when and why producing your own recycled goods may be a better idea than buying a readily available product.

PROJECT

Just like any other product, the production of recyclable goods is a project. As such, learners are to be introduced to a high-level framework that represents the major steps of a project. These steps are:

- Introduction
- Planning
- Execution
- Conclusion

Depending on the anticipated final result, the contents of these 4 steps may vary.

As a trainer, it is important to make clear the relationship between a recycling project and a self-reinvention project. It is no coincidence that the steps of both those endeavors are quite similar. The only difference is the words that are used to describe otherwise two almost identical processes.

Second very important thing is to point out the fact that your course is not only training but also a project that learners are taking part of. This is especially valuable because it can be introduced as an additional experience and achievement in the resume of the participants (if the training encompasses the subject)

WASTE

This segment is meant to offer you some additional points of interest related to the waste material, as well as to synthesize some of the main bits of information that may be valuable for you to know about it.

NEW OBJECT

This section summarizes the qualities of the new recycled product that you and the learners have created. You can also consider these as ideas of vocabulary which you can use to facilitate the qualities of the new product. In doing so you keep reminding the learners of the purpose of the product, the activity, and what they will eventually “get” as a result of their efforts.

SOFT SKILLS

This section represents a selection of soft skills that learners develop as part of their projectual recycling endeavors. Think of the suggested soft skills as a path to demonstrate how even a “simple” activity like creating a new recycled good involves a much wider spectrum of skills, all of which the participants are cultivating and demonstrating during the training. Learning and teaching about relevant soft skills may also give the learners a new perspective on the rest of their experiences and reinforce the parallels between projectual recycling and self-reinvention. Remember that all suggested soft skills are not meant to be an exhaustive list, so if your creativity leads you to find parallels that aren’t described, you are welcome to use them.

Recycling activity 1

Name: Recycled Jeans to Bags

Time: 5 hours

Recycle: Jeans

Tools & Materials

- Old jeans,
- Needles,
- Thread or yarn,
- Scissors,
- Spline/rubber,
- Ruler
- Chalk
- Table to put the jeans pieces and to sketch and design
- A place to work for (room, or space)

General Description

The activity of recycling jeans consists in the production and the selling of shopping accessory bags made from recycled jeans to limit and replace the use of plastic bags in supermarkets and shopping centers. Unused jeans of all types could be used as recycled material for shopping bags. Plastic bags could be replaced by recycling jeans and creating denim bags. Jeans are a strong resistant material that is easy to trim and personalize.

Activity

In the case we are treating, as mentioned previously, pairs of jeans that are in stock remained from previous campaigns made with the financial support of other donors (such campaigns are done in various universities in Albania) are used for producing shopping bags.

The procedure starts with cleaning the raw material (jeans) sending them into the dry cleaning point. After taking back cleaned jeans starts the procedure of ripping by making them into different pieces according to the old cut they had.

Then follows the process of designing and sketching the bag that will be done with such

pieces.

Then it continues with the cutting process according to the design and in the end with its sewing.

Work is divided between the designer Bukuroshe Sinanaj and the two sewing workers.

Tips/suggestions for the activity

The sewing of denim bags is done from different parts of the side(pairs), which gives uniqueness to each of them. Other details that give the product its specialty is that it can be sewn either by hand or with the sewing machine. It can be decorated over also with flowers or other ornaments taken from other used clothes. In our case, no such details were used.

Participants can bring the material from their closet so that the collection and the clean-up phase can be skipped during the workshop.

As a trainer, in order to implement this activity, it is suggested to have 2 people who you can work with as assistants (might be participants from the group), so you can demonstrate the process first-hand.

NEED

- Personal need - making shopping bags from used jeans and reducing the usage of plastic bags.
- Environmental need - this activity is completely environment-friendly and reduces waste on two fronts. It reduces jeans waste, by reusing and upcycling, and reduces the use of plastic bags.
- Societal need - Individuals involved in this project will help raise awareness of a part of society, starting from family, their friends, relatives, etc.
- Need alternatives - the replacement of plastic bags can be done also from bags by other materials like dock, cotton etc.

PROJECT (Phases)

Initiation - in order to start:

- All described tools and materials are required
- Participants need to be in groups of 2 or 3
- A budget will be needed for the workshop to be properly organized and effective so that individuals who participate will gain the right skills.
- No public authorization is required

Planning:

- Decide how many pockets you want to have
- Decide how many straps you want to have
- Decide which pieces you can use for the body, straps and pockets
- Decide which pieces from the jeans you are not going to need

Execution:

- Mark the places where you need to cut the jeans; this includes:
 - Marks for the body of the bag
 - Marks for the straps
 - Marks for the pockets
- Cut all marked pieces
- Mark the paths you need to follow to sew back the components together
- Sew the body of the bag
- Sew the straps
- Sew the pockets

Monitoring & Control

- Make sure to test the durability of your sewing by pulling or filling the final product with goods to see how well it holds up.

Closure

Celebrate, by showing off your new product and having a discussion about the things you've learned - what went well, what didn't go well, what would you have done differently; what do you plan to do more with your next (or current) product.

WASTE

- It is important that **before** the training you communicate the need for participants to wash and bring unused jeans that they have.
- Finding the waste is easy, since most people already have unsued jeans laying around in their closets. Alternatively, they can search clothes-containers for jeans that someone else decided to get rid of; wash them and bring them to the training.
- The size of the bags won't be particularly big, however, you may need enough space to place all your tools. That plus the size of your group should dictate the training space that you are going to need for the activity.

NEW OBJECT

Your new jeans bag:

- Stands out with its design and material
- Has an oval shape
- Can have straps
- Can have pockets
- May vary in size and color
- Is easy to wash
- Is durable and strong
- Can be further customized

Activity Related Soft Skills

As part of the overarching RecyclART theme, it is important to always take a step back and acknowledge some of the soft skills that participants are developing along with the activity, and how these translate in the context of professional career reinvention. Here are some suggestions.

Self-confidence plays a big part throughout the entire exercise. This is especially true if participants are creating a product like this for the first time. Although cutting and sewing are hard skills they require a good amount of self-confidence - both while planning and while executing. You also get to receive immediate feedback if you are doing a good job or not, because your bag will either hold or not.

This is where it is very important to make the point that self-confidence is not about being able to get things done from the first try. Rather, every action and result (whatever it may be) is meant to serve you as a guide as to what you are doing well, the things that require more of your attention, as well as your next steps.

A great example of this is the infamous interview with Thomas Edison on the invention of the light bulb.

When a reporter asked, "How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?" Edison replied, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps."

And it's important to note that the same thing is true with one's career - all you need to do is substitute "light bulb" with or "career". You can use that as an example to drive your point home.

Creativity is another nurtured skill and this is not only because of the nature of the exercise. The nature of the final product allows the participants to further develop the design of their bags, even if this is long after the actual bag is finished. They may decide to paint it, write something, or sew and additional element.

The point here is that creativity means “creating” in an ever-evolving way. And just like you can add new elements to your new and amazing product, you can do the same with your skills and knowledge. This is to also say that reinventing yourself is not always about learning new skills, but actualizing skills and knowledge you already have.

The PROJECT phase is another important element. In this case it demonstrates that getting to create something new, just like getting a new job, is not about just the actual process, but there are also a lot of things to take into account in order to successfully reach the moment of having the new product/new job.

You need to consider preparation, tools, materials / skills, knowledge, abilities, values, interests ...

Recycling activity 2

Name: Decorative Glass Containers

Time: 30min - 2 hours

Recycle: Glass

Tools & Materials

- Clean, dry, glass containers
- Paints and/or markers
- Paper or fabric towels
- Brushes or sponges
- Beads, Buttons & Fabrics (optional)
- Glue (optional with the previous)

Activity General Description

The work begins with the cleaning of the container inside and out and continues with the preparation of the surface, depending on the materials to be used, to ensure proper adhesion, and consequently, durability and longevity. The learner chooses the design and medium and starts the decoration. Then the decorations have to dry. Some time the decoration can happen in different stages in order to wait for the previous layer to dry. Some times a protective lacquer is used. Each piece is unique.

Tips/suggestions for the activity

- Use of used glass containers in good condition (integer (not broken) and clean)
- If you use paint, make sure that is compatible with glass
- If you want to stick elements to the surface, make sure that you have strong and glass compatible glues.

NEED

Primary need: Using glass containers, simple colours and other preferred materials, the primary need is to create decorative or everyday use objects, with an artistic touch.

Environmental need: Besides the fact that glass waste is not dangerous to the ecosystem and it does not enter the food chain, it causes aesthetic problems, particularly to the beaches. Also, the reuse of glass reduces the need to for raw materials.

Social need: The final product is decorative, recycling product. Because of that it has artistic value that can inspire in the creator's social circle appreciation for recycling and motivation to consider giving the craft a try

The preference in reusing and recycling methods promotes waste prevention, local independence in terms of raw materials supply, and saving of natural resources (in the specific case - sand).

PROJECT (Phases)

Initiation

- First step is the collection of the used glass containers. This may start by collecting the jars from various goods you have previously bought, as well as from shops with high level use of such containers.
- Second step is sorting the glass containers according to size, shape and color.
- No public authorization is necessary
- Money is only needed for the necessary tools (paint brushes and colours, or other simple materials, such as small plastic parts of various shapes)

Planning

- Think what is the easiest way to gather the necessary materials
- Consider all the materials that you are going to provide, as well as materials that the learners can bring themselves
- Consider prior communication with students on any one thing they may need to provide themselves
- Think of the necessary space you are going to need to place your materials and for the learners to work comfortably

Execution

- Clean the glass objects attentively
- Prepare your added materials
- Plan your design
- Apply the materials to the glass surface
- Leaving the glass products to dry for some hours
- (Optional) Apply external varnish for protection and shine.

Monitoring & Control

- Make sure you, another person, or a team is allocated to taking care of the safety measures (good ventilation of the working place, keeping the glass materials and the chemical colours so as to avoid breaking or leakage, care to remove non-recyclable waste).
- One milestone is having your glass objects clean from glue
- Second milestone is the application of colour
- Third milestone (or if no color is applied, then it's again second) is the application of fabrics and other materials on the surface
- Fourth milestone is having the final products dry

Closure

Celebrate, by showing off your new product and having a discussion about the things you've learned - what went well, what didn't go well, what would you have done differently; what do you plan to do more with your next (or current) product.

WASTE

Making objects for home decoration from used glass containers is worthy, as it saves raw materials, boosts independence and creativity, gives chances for personal and unique creations. Here are some important things to consider

- Find a proper place (well ventilated, with space enough both for keeping a sufficient quantity of materials and for the creation of the new objects).
- Consider the need for a place for drying the final products as well
- Think of the access you may have to shops or non-profit organizations to offer your products.
- Make sure that that the glass containers weren't used for toxic or dangerous materials.
- Partly eroded glass is more likely not to be accepted for selling afterwards, so take that into consideration

NEW OBJECT

Your new glass container:

- Adds uniqueness to a personal place.
- Can have whatever everyday value you assign to it
- Has decorative value, which you can fit to your environment
- Can serve a creative everyday use.
- Is environmentally friendly and saves on natural resources

SOFT SKILLS

Presentation skills are often an underestimated palette of soft skills. In classical recycling, colors represent one of those presentational elements. In the context of professional reinvention, the words you use can play a similar role.

Just like a jar or a bottle painted equals “reinvented and not wasted”, how learners describe their professional experiences and achievements can have a much greater impact on how others perceive them, and it also allows learners to grow a new and greater appreciation for themselves. And this is important both in the context of creative development as well as in cultivating greater self-esteem.

Recycling activity 3

Name: Nespresso Brooches

Time: 2 hours

Recycle: Nespresso Coffee Capsules

Tools & Materials

- Empty Coffee (e.g. Nespresso) Capsules
- Clasps
- Hot glue (+ glue gun)
- Safe working surface (e.g. wooden chop board)
- Rolling pin
- Knife
- Pliers
- Roll Grip
- Scissors

General Description

It lasts over two hours and consists of 4 parts: introduction, recreation of a given pattern, designing your own brooch, summary.

The main objectives of this activity are to grow the participants' confidence while working with this special type of waste material; enhance their creative thinking and evoke the experience of success and self-esteem.

After completing the activity participants will know what materials and tools are needed in order to create a Nespresso Brooch; how to plan the process of designing and producing this particular piece of jewellery; how the material acts and what shapes they may get with it, as well as how to connect different pieces in order to obtain the desired final design.

Activity

The activity consists of 4 parts:

- introduction
- recreation of a given pattern
- designing own brooch
- project summary.

A more detailed description is placed in the section Project Phases.

NEED

Personal need - to create a new piece of jewellery – a brooch.

Environmental need - Nespresso caps (material that is going to be used to produce the brooch) seem to be useless after its usage. They are usually thrown away by consumers. Since caps are made of aluminium, and metal is harmful to the environment the activity will have a positive environmental impact.

Social need - Individuals involved in this project will help raise awareness of a part of society, starting from family, their friends, relatives, etc.

It is possible to satisfy this need in a different way, for example by a) purchasing a brand new brooch in a store, b) buying a second-hand brooch c) creating the brooch out of other material than the one suggested in the activity.

Purchasing a brand new brooch in a shop is adequate with spending more money and leaving the resources that one already poses useless. However, buying a new piece of jewellery costs more and is connected with the risk of having an object that was produced on a mass scale. Creating your own jewellery allows you to avoid that. You save money, you get a unique piece of jewellery and also get the satisfaction of a work well done.

PROJECT (Phases)

To start the activity you need to collect the material and tools. No money, nor authorisation is needed.

The materials include:

- a) For the 1st exercise: 7 empty Nespresso cups, some clasps, some felt, hot glue (glue gun). Tools which are needed are: chopping board (preferably wooden), rolling pin, knife, pliers, a roll grip, scissors,
- b) For the 2nd exercise: next 7 empty Nespresso cups, some clasps, some felt, hot blue, different small ornaments used for the brooch:

For the first activity, participants create their brooch by following along.

1. Introduction to Nespresso recycling initiative (5 min)
2. Presenting materials and tools needed for the activity (5 min)
3. A Flower Nespresso Brooch – recreating the given pattern (40 min)
 - 3.1. Start off by cutting the caps. To do so slide the knife in and run it around the edge, peel the metal cover off, empty out the coffee leftovers. Now you have dirty empty capsules - clean them out and dry them precisely.
 - 3.2. Next, you want to flatten the capsule. One way to do that is to put each capsule upside down, put the chopping board on it and press. This way, you get the flat Nespresso cup.
 - 3.3. Making petals from the flat cups. To make a petal hold a cup and fold it in half (coloured surface inside). Try getting it as symmetrical as you can. Pinch in the middle and do that to six of them.
 - 3.4. Making the petals open up. For this, you need mole grips. Put the folded petal between the grips. Press it and fold it out.
 - 3.5. To make the rose in the centre you cut the outside part of a cup, bend around the outside round with tweezers, then roll it round and cut the rest.
 - 3.6. Cut out the felt in the shape and size of the petal. Take one petal and glue a felt circle onto the back of the disk.
 - 3.7. Put some glue in the middle of the petal and glue the rose.
 - 3.8. Once the rose holds firmly put more glue around it.
 - 3.9. Put ready petals by repeating the pattern, one after the other. Place them down and push them into the glue behind the one in front. Be sure to squeeze the glue in in-between.
 - 3.10. Sometimes the rose pops up after placing petals on the disk, in that case, use fliers to give it a push back down.
 - 3.11. Turn the brooch over and draw a line of glue. Put the clasp on it. Press it down and avoid touching the glue.
4. Design your own Nespresso Brooch (60 min)

For this second activity, participants will work independently.

Your instructions should guide them to:

- 4.1. Dedicate time to figure out a design
- 4.2. Dedicate time to plan
- 4.3. Collect materials and tools
- 4.4. Produce their prototype

5. Presenting Individual Nespresso Brooches (10 min)

5.1. Take a close-up picture of your brooch, pin it to your blouse, jacket, scarf or bag. Take a picture and post it on FB :)

6. Reflecting on the activity (10 min)

While executing the activity each participant may check if everything is going in the right way by observing the trainer, asking questions and comparing their work with others or the checklist given in the training material.

WASTE

In order to implement the activity, you have to look for used Nespresso caps. This is a very specific type of waste.



Nespresso caps are used for coffee machines all around the world. The cups filled with coffee turn out to be a waste after one usage. The coffee grounds, which are inside the capsule, are biodegradable waste and ends up as a compost ingredient, company transfers it to Nespresso coffee farms in West Java, Indonesia. The aluminium capsules are usually thrown away by consumers. Sometimes it is collected by companies selling Nespresso coffee machines, which deliver them to an aluminium processing company. Although Nespresso company puts a lot of effort into promoting the recyclability of its products, still lots of single users treat it as a waste and throw it away.

In many countries, metal and aluminium are collected separately. For instance, in Poland, each citizen who decides to segregate their waste has to put metal waste aside, together with plastic waste.

Unfortunately, it is not easy to collect the aluminium Nespresso caps if you do not have access to the Nespresso coffee machines. In this case, one may need to search for people who use Nespresso on a daily basis. It could be also advisable to get in touch with specialized stores or small cafes using Nespresso machines. Once you get the material it is quite easy to be stored. After being cleaned Nespresso caps can be put one into another to form a pile. In this way, they do not require much space to be kept at home.

NEW OBJECT



The new object is a brooch, a piece of hand-made jewellery. The flower-shaped, big brooch might be pinned onto the jacket, scarf, blouse or bag. The silver and coloured aluminium contrast with each other giving the impression of precious material. The structure of the flattened and folded aluminium makes it really difficult to recognize “the original material” used to produce this object. All the features underline its uniqueness.

SOFT SKILLS

There are a number of skills needed to implement the activity including open-mindedness and patience. Brooch designing allows all participants to enhance their creativity, and design thinking.

Creativity lies mostly in the second part of the activity, where participants are asked to produce their own brooch design. This is also the part in which they learn to design and plan their work.

Problem-solving is one of the most useful soft-skill every professional should have in their arsenal. Problem-solving is about finding solutions when things take an unexpected turn. And during this activity, as well as any other, there are a lot of things that may turn out differently than anticipated. This is great because it gives you the opportunity to communicate that unexpected situations are something completely normal. In the context of self-reinvention problem-solving is found where our abilities reach their limits. And just like during an artistic recycling activity, we need to be comfortable with the unexpected and be creative in finding alternative solutions related to the career that we are interested in.

Recycling activity 4

Name: From Useless Oil to Soap

Time: 1h 30m

Recycle: Oils

Tools & Materials

- Fat (frying oils, curds or any other fat, oil residue)
- Caustic soda (Sodium Hydroxide - NaOH)
- Deionized water
- Coconut oil (optional)
- Essential oils (optional)
- Perfume (optional)
- Color (optional)
- Cooking Hob
- Thermometer
- Glass stirrer (or better a hand-mixer)
- Heating Glass Container OR a stainless pot at least 1000 ml and 3 heating glasses 500ml
- Volumetric cylinder
- Stainless steel container
- Electronic scale
- Special silicone molds of various shapes.

General Description

Conversion of waste and used oils or fats into soap and other cosmetics

Activity

Procedure

Step 1: Weighing and heating the fats until the coconut oil melts

Step 2: Dissolve in a conical flask, in distilled water, a certain amount of caustic soda NaOH (at this point we can add the essential oils).

Step 3: Let the temperature drop to 40 oC

Step 4: Pour the dissolved caustic soda carefully into the stainless steel container with the oils and stir vigorously.

Step 5: Add some perfume or essential oil

Step 6: pour the mixture into special molds to get the soaps a specific shape

Step 7: leave the forms for 24 hours to get the shape.

NEED

- Personal need - personal care and hygiene
- Environmental need - preventing useless oils from entering the environment and turning them into something useful
- Social need - product can be sold and used by everyone
- Soap is not necessarily an expensive product, however, creating your own - natural soap has the added benefit of being from any unnecessary chemicals that are usually added into the substance.

PROJECT (Phases)

Initiation & Planning

Prepare all the tools and materials that you need.

- 1 Stainless container
- 1 Glass container
- Thermometer
- Cooking hob
- Colour
- Perfume
- Essential Oils
- Sodium Hydroxide
- Shape forms
- Hand mixer
- Kitchen or lab bench

Make sure that you have a well-ventilated space

Execution

Step 1: weighing and heating the fats until the coconut oil melts

Step 2: dissolve in a conical flask, in distilled water, a certain amount of caustic soda NaOH (at this point we can add the essential oils).

Step 3: let the temperature drop to 40 oz.

Step 4: pour the dissolved caustic soda carefully into the stainless steel container with the oils and stir vigorously.

Step 5: add some perfume or essential oil

Step 6: pour the mixture into special moulds to get the soaps a specific shape

Step 7: leave the forms for 24 hours to get the shape.

It takes place about 1:00 - 1:30 hours to make the soap and 24 hours to freeze and take the shape you prefer. You can add colour, perfume or essential oil to create something unique.

Monitoring & Control

The temperature of the mix with a thermometer and after 24 hours you can check with your hand if the soap has its final shape.

Closure

Celebrate, by showing off your new product and having a discussion about the things you've learned - what went well, what didn't go well, what would you have done differently; what do you plan to do more with your next (or current) product.

WASTE

There are no particular features that the waste has to have. The one important thing is to have the oil clean of other organic pieces. The material can be easily found in any household or an oil press. If you use oil to cook, then you have the material readily available. You can store it little by little until you have the necessary amount to turn it into the desired new product. Alternatively, consider Oil presses in the area and/or friends and family who are willing to store their used oils away for you to take

NEW OBJECT

Your new daily soap environment and human-friendly, with fewer added chemicals. Everyone can make it at home, it is natural and the cost of production is very low.

- When presenting the final product, the features that are to be highlighted are its shape, color and perfume.

SOFT SKILLS

Well-being consideration is another very underestimated soft skill. Although more and more attention is put towards the overall well-being of employees, one of the most misunderstood elements remains the fact that well-being consideration and maintenance is a skill. As such it needs to be cultivated. This exercise is a perfect example of that, as we see that it is important to consider the participants' health. In this case, we do so by considering in advance the space in which we perform the activity - a decision dictated by our knowledge of the chemical substances that we are going to use for painting and finalizing our new products.

Recycling activity 5

Name: Vase with Flowers

Time: 3 hours

Recycle: Plastic

Tools & Materials

- used plastic containers of different colors (clean),
- sheets of paper,
- crayons,
- scissors /cutters,
- rulers,
- lighters / candles,
- tweezers,
- permanent markers of different colors,
- glue,
- glitter.

General Description

During this activity, the participants will learn to build a vase with flowers using used plastic containers. It is an activity that can include a number of 15 to 20 participants for a duration of approximately 180 minutes.

Activity

The activity will be started with a brief description of the process of transforming used plastic into decorative objects (and the overall introduction of the RecyclART project, if needed). It will be presented the way of carrying out the entire activity. Part of the activity will be carried with all participants and for some parts, the participants will be divided into 4 groups. Introduction into activity, design, division of tasks, construction of elements, assembly and presentation of the final object will be the 5 phases of the activity.

It will start together by drawing and designing the petals and stems of flowers. Then participants will be divided into 4 groups. The first group will cut the plastic containers. The second group cuts the stems and petals of flowers using the templates. The third group shapes the petals and stems of flowers. The fourth group will assemble the flower petals on the stem. Together will refine and present the final object.

Tips/suggestions

In case of a small group of participants and/or limited time, the activity can be carried out without being divided into groups so that each participant will build a vase with 3 flowers, or only one flower. Alternatively in the case of a very large group of participants they can be divided into groups and each group will build their own vase of flowers.

The activity can also be used as a construction contest - who builds the most beautiful vase with flowers or flowers. It is possible to impose a time interval or certain aspects that must be taken into account in the construction. The contest can be individual or in groups.

NEED

Personal need - creating a new piece of decoration out of something that would be thrown away.

Environmental need - It is known that in Europe, only part of the plastic ever produced is recycled. Most containers end up in landfills or are burned and emit toxic particles. Some of them end up in rivers, seas and oceans, where they pollute the waters. Some of these microplastic particles return to humans. Fish and other water species consume them, and some of these fish species end up being eaten by humans. So the need to reuse these plastic containers is very high and this activity has a pretty big impact on the community.

The need to remove plastic from landfills or from seas and oceans can also be met by eliminating the use of disposable containers in everyday life and by creating more collection centres. It is very important that these centres are in close contact with plastic processing factories; otherwise, the plastic will, again, end up in landfills, seas and oceans.

These innovative methods of transforming plastic into new objects, although they cannot solve the problem of plastic, are much friendly with the environment. Each piece of recycled plastic poses a potential threat to the environment. The process of melting and recycling plastic produces VOCs (volatile organic compounds), fumes that can damage the lives of plants and animals near the industrial site.

The heat required to melt the plastic also generates carbon emissions, which contributes to global warming. Also when unrecoverable plastic is found in the recycling center, which includes pieces containing food waste or debris, it can be disposed of improperly.

Social need - Individuals involved in this project will help raise awareness of a part of society, starting from family, their friends, relatives, etc.

PROJECT (Phases)

All materials and tools needed for the activity can be found in each home, as they are everyday use objects. There is no special tool that is needed. So no money, nor authorisation is required.

The materials needed are 10-15 plastic recipients (different colors if possible), sheets of paper, crayons, permanent markers, glue (for plastic if possible) and glitter (can be used eyeshadows glitter).

The tools needed are scissors, cutters, rulers, lighters, candles, tweezers.

Planning - the activity is divided into 5 phases: activity introduction, design, division of tasks, construction of elements, assembly and presentation of the final object.

Introduction – 15 minutes

Brief description of the activity of transforming plastic into decorative objects. Presentation of the way of carrying out the activity and of the final product that you want to reach. Images or videos can be used.

Planning

Design – 15 minutes

Altogether, participants will inventory the plastic containers they have and choose the container which will be transformed into a vase; the remaining will be used for flowers. On a sheet of paper they will draw different shapes of flower petals and stems. Participants will choose the petal shapes they want to use and build templates that they will use in the next stage. Depending on the number of participants, in this stage, will be established the number of flowers we want to make and the length of the stems. It is recommended to cut the stems to a height slightly higher than desired at the end because, by twisting, the stems can be shortened by 1-3cm.

Division of tasks – 30 minutes

Participants will be divided into 4 groups and explained their tasks. The first group will cut the plastic containers so as to extract rectangular or square pieces. The second group cuts, from the extracted pieces, the stems and petals of flowers using the templates. The third group shapes the petals and stems of flowers so as to mimic the wavy movements of flowers.

Group four will assemble the flower petals on the stem. As the first 2 groups finish their

tasks, they can join groups 3 and 4 to help further. At the end of the activity, all participants will assemble the vase with flowers and decide together what to add (leaves, colour, glitter).

Execution

Construction of elements – 80 minutes

It starts with the extraction of rectangles and squares pieces from the plastic containers from which, using the templates, the flower petals and the stems will be cut. Once cut, the flower petals and stems are exposed above the candle flame to give the plastic a consistency that can be easily shaped. First, the edges of the petals and stems will be exposed to the flame so as to eliminate the sharp edge. Then, also under the influence of the heat from the candle flame, the plastic petals will curl like flower petals.

The plastic stems will be twisted to ensure that they have sufficient stability to support the flower. The flowers will be glued to the stems. In the end, the bottle for the vase will be cut at the right height and will be exposed to the heat of the candle so that the sharp edge will be eliminated and maybe to give another shape similar to a vase. It is recommended that the stems of flowers are 3-5cm higher than the vase. If the stems are much taller than the vase there is a risk that the latter will overturn.

Monitoring & Control

In order to prevent problems that may occur during the activity, the trainer will closely monitor each stage of construction and each participant; will ensure that spare material remains (including for the vase); will show different types of petals for inspiration; will shape, as an example, petals and stems.

Because not all participants will move the same way and because different people may be more agile than others, the trainer must be prepared, at any time, to reassigned tasks to different participants.

There is a possibility that a participant may be better at cutting and not so good at modelling or vice versa - the trainer must be able to notice this and act accordingly before the construction is compromised.

Conclusion

Assembly and presentation of the final object – 40 minutes

The flowers are placed in the vase. At this stage, a few flower leaves can be made according to the same procedure as the petals. Some petals could be coloured and some petals could be decorated with glitter. In order to give even more stability to the vase, some stones or other small heavy objects can be placed in the vase. The final object it's now ready to be presented.

WASTE

Plastic recipients are very easy to find, in every household. All plastic bottles and containers that we bought with beverages and food that we've consumed can be collected. We can ask family and friends to collect them for us. It only needs to be washed and dry.

Large and very large containers, stored, can take up a lot of space but they can be cut to be stacked and at the same time there is the possibility to be reused to turn them into decorative objects.

NEW OBJECT

Various decorative objects made of plastic containers can be used to decorate your own home or to make a gift. They can also be widely used as decorations for shop windows, for decorating schools, kindergartens or to decorate Christmas trees. Everything that can be bought to decorate the home, office or other space can be

replaced with various decorative flowers or other objects made of used plastic containers. Some plastic containers can be turned into flower vases or plant pots. There are so many possibilities. Obviously, being made by hand, they are unique and friendly with the planet and with your budget.

SOFT SKILLS

Accomplishing this activity requires a multitude of soft skills like communication, organisation, creativity, and adaptability.

At the end of this activity will be developed and enhanced the following soft skills: teamwork skills, punctuality, critical thinking, social skills and interpersonal communication

The activity has an overall environmental protection component by using a component that it's one of the main problems on the planet. The participants will be more aware of the plastic issue in the world and will learn one small solution to this problem.

In the phase of design, Construction of elements and assembly and presentation of the final object each participant will have the opportunity to display creativity and play with their creativity. At the same time, they will be encouraged to show their design skills. In the last phase, each participant can contribute to the final object and give ideas if necessary.

Teamwork is one of the soft skills that stand out in this activity and it's one that organizations think of highly. This exercise is a great opportunity for you to explore topics related to teamwork, feedback, as well as self-assessment. The last one is particularly important to one of the core steps in self-reinvention. In this case, the self-assessment is related to the recognition of the things one is good at and the things that one may want to improve. However, more importantly, just as a trainer is to assign every participant to the team in which they would be able to contribute the most during an activity, the same way - when someone makes career decisions, they are to be driven by the things they can first; all other things that they are to further develop should come second.