

## Subunit 5.4: Working with others

### Learning goals

- Work together and co-operate with others to develop ideas and turn them into action.
- Create a Network.
- Solve conflicts and face up to competition positively when necessary.

### Definition

Collaborating and cooperating with others means working closely with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders to create circular value chains. Collaboration is key in developing new solutions that advance circular economy goals.

### EntreComp's guidelines

EntreComp gives the following hint:

*"Team up, collaborate and network."*

### How?

The competence is related to building a network of partners committed to sustainability. Engage in collaborative projects that allow for sharing resources and knowledge.

Working with others, especially in the context of advancing circular economy goals, is an essential aspect of sustainable business practices. Collaboration and cooperation play pivotal roles in this endeavor, enabling organizations to harness collective wisdom and resources to develop innovative ideas and transform them into actionable strategies.

When we talk about working together and cooperating with others, it goes beyond mere teamwork within an organization. It extends to forging partnerships and alliances with suppliers, customers, and various stakeholders across the supply chain. The goal here is to create circular value chains, where products and materials are used efficiently, reused, and recycled to minimize waste and environmental impact. Circular economy principles advocate for a holistic approach, emphasizing the need for all parties involved to collaborate seamlessly.

Networking is a crucial component of this collaboration. Building a network of like-minded partners committed to sustainability is not just beneficial; it's imperative. These connections serve as the foundation for sharing knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions. In a circular economy, knowledge transfer is essential as it helps streamline processes, reduce resource consumption, and promote sustainable product design.

Moreover, engaging in collaborative projects can yield significant benefits. By pooling resources and expertise, organizations can tackle complex sustainability challenges more effectively. These projects often result in the development of new technologies, processes, and business models that align with circular economy principles. The collective effort ensures that the transition towards a circular economy is more comprehensive and impactful.

Conflict resolution is also a part of working with others. While collaboration is essential, conflicts may arise, especially when competing interests are at stake. However, addressing conflicts positively and constructively is crucial in maintaining the momentum of circular economy initiatives. Rather than seeing competition as a hindrance, organizations should view it as an opportunity to drive innovation and push for continuous improvement.

### Competence step by step

- Educate Yourself on Diversity and Inclusion
- Reflect on Personal Biases and Attitudes
- Cultivate Empathy
- Develop Emotional Intelligence (EI)
- Learn and Practice Active Listening
- Engage in Diverse Environments
- Continuous Learning and Feedback
- Advocate and Share.

## Methodologies and tools

### 1. Accept Diversity (People's Differences)

**Methodology:** Cultural Intelligence Workshops: Implement workshops that focus on developing cultural intelligence among team members. These workshops should include activities that highlight the importance of understanding and respecting different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives.

**Tools:** Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Assessments: Use tools like the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) to help individuals recognize unconscious biases. Incorporate surveys or assessments to measure the organization's cultural competence.

### 2. Develop Emotional Intelligence

**Methodology:** EI Training Programs: Develop a training program focused on the four components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Include exercises that enhance empathy, self-regulation, and emotional literacy.

**Tools:** Emotional Intelligence App: Utilize apps or online platforms that offer EI training, daily emotional check-ins, and exercises to improve self-awareness and empathy.

### 3. Listen Actively

**Methodology:** Active Listening: Learn the principles of active listening, including paying full attention, showing empathy, reflecting, clarifying, and summarizing what others have said.

**Tools:** Feedback Mechanisms: Implement tools like 360-degree feedback systems that encourage open communication and active listening. Use role-playing video simulations to practice and assess listening skills.

### 4. Team Up

**Methodology:** Team Formation Exercises: Use methodologies to form balanced teams based on personality types, strengths, and weaknesses. This helps in understanding how different individuals can contribute to a team's success.

**Tools:** Team-building Platforms: Leverage platforms for team communication and project management, fostering collaboration and team spirit in a digital environment.

### 5. Work Together

**Methodology:** Collaborative Project Methodology: Adopt agile project management methodologies that emphasize collaboration. These frameworks facilitate regular check-ins, shared responsibilities, and collective problem-solving.

Tools: Collaboration Software: Use collaboration tools to enable real-time document editing, sharing, and communication, ensuring that team members can work together effectively, regardless of location.

## **6. Expand Your Network**

Methodology: Networking Strategy Workshops: Offer workshops that teach effective networking strategies, focusing on building meaningful relationships, rather than collecting contacts. Emphasize the importance of offering value, being authentic, and following up.

Tools: Professional Networking Platforms: Encourage the use of platforms like LinkedIn for online networking, and provide training on how to create engaging profiles, connect with industry professionals, and participate in relevant groups and discussions.

### **Circular Economy application**

Applying the Circular Economy (CE) principles requires a collaborative approach, making the competence of working with others particularly crucial. The transition towards a CE is inherently complex and multidisciplinary, necessitating diverse skills, perspectives, and stakeholder engagement.

1. Accept Diversity (People's Differences) CE Perspective: Embrace diverse perspectives from various stakeholders including designers, manufacturers, consumers, and waste managers.
2. Develop Emotional Intelligence: CE Perspective: Emotional intelligence is key in navigating the complexities and challenges of transitioning to a CE.
3. Listen Actively: CE Perspective: Active listening ensures that all voices, including those of marginalized or less vocal stakeholders, are heard.
4. Team Up: CE Perspective: Forming multidisciplinary teams is essential for addressing the various aspects of CE, combining expertise in design, engineering, economics, and environmental science to develop holistic and effective solutions.
5. Work Together: CE Perspective: Collaboration is at the heart of the CE, requiring seamless cooperation within organizations and across value chains.
6. Expand Your Network: CE Perspective: Expanding your network is crucial for spreading CE principles and practices.

### *Practical activity: Collaborative Mind Mapping*

**Objective:** This activity aims to engage an individual attending an online course in exploring and deepening their understanding of the "working with others" competence, focusing on collaboration, emotional intelligence, active listening, and network expansion. It's designed to be a creative and introspective exercise that utilizes only a pen and textbook, encouraging participants to reflect on and connect various concepts related to teamwork and collaboration.

#### *Materials:*

- A pen
- A textbook (related to the course content, preferably with sections on teamwork, emotional intelligence, or communication).

**Time:** 20 minutes.

#### *Methodology:*

**1.Mind Mapping Start Point (5 minutes):** A Mind Map provides a fluid and creative approach to brainstorming, enabling the generation of ideas without the constraints of linear thinking. By visually connecting concepts, tasks, or words to a central theme, it creates a dynamic framework that mirrors the natural flow of thought. This non-linear graphical layout transforms mundane information into a vibrant and organized diagram, enhancing comprehension and retention by aligning with the brain's intuitive processes.

On a blank page or in the margins of your textbook, begin your mind map by writing "Working with Others" in the center. Draw a circle around it.

From this central idea, draw lines outward to create branches for each key aspect you want to explore: Accept Diversity, Develop Emotional Intelligence, Listen Actively, Team Up, Work Together, and Expand Your Network.

**2.Expansion and Exploration (10 minutes):** For each branch jot down ideas, quotes, or concepts that relate to each aspect of working with others.

Use the margins for detailed notes or directly link concepts to your mind map branches with arrows or lines, indicating how they connect to the central theme of collaboration and teamwork.

Where possible, add personal reflections or questions that arise as you link textbook content to the competencies of working with others. This could include thoughts on how to apply these ideas in real-world situations or in online team projects.

**3.Personal Reflection and Action Plan (5 minutes):** Review your mind map and the connections you've made between textbook content and the competencies of working with others. Reflect on how these insights can enhance your ability to collaborate effectively in various settings.

On a new section of the page or in a clean margin, outline a brief action plan based on your reflections. This could include personal goals for improving your emotional intelligence, strategies for active listening in online discussions, or ways to foster diversity and inclusivity in team projects.

#### *Food for thoughts:*

By the end of this activity, you will have created a visual and textual representation of how various aspects of working with others interconnect, informed by theoretical concepts and personal reflections. This exercise not only reinforces learning but also encourages the practical application of collaborative competencies in both academic and real-world contexts, all with the simple use of a pen and textbook.

#### Learning materials suggestions

Barkley, E. F., Major, C. H., & Cross, K. P. (2014). Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Brand.

Chen, G., Webber, S. S., Bliese, P. D., Mathieu, J. E., Payne, S. C., Born, D. H., & Zaccaro, S. J. (2002). Simultaneous examination of the antecedents and consequences of efficacy beliefs at multiple levels of analysis. *Human Performance*, 15, 381-409.