

LAND CURRICULUM REVIEW

BACKGROUND

As part of the project LungA School Growth, Project - 2023-1-IS01-KA220-ADU-000158285 under Erasmus+ Programme, Hyper Island has agreed to provide curriculum support for the LAND programme at LungA to foster leadership, team development, trust and self-leadership. A self evaluation report called *Hyper Island consultation Review of LAND 24 Winter/Spring LAND Programme (21/06/2024)*, summarising the LungA Internal Review meetings for the first LAND programme iteration, serves as a basis for the recommendations set out in this report. Hereafter, it will be referred to as *the LungA Review*. Using only this report as input for our recommendations, as this was what the scope of the project allowed for, is a limitation that needs to be recognized up front.

The purpose of this report and its recommendations is to offer options for LungA to adapt and improve the LAND curriculum for the next iteration, in order to alleviate some of the challenges encountered in the first round.

The recommendations, methods and tools in this report are proprietary to Hyper Island and should be referenced as such, unless otherwise stated, wherever LungA chooses to implement them.

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

This report is structured as follows.

- *Problem statements - as derived from the LungA Review.*
- *Recommendations of tools to implement based on the problem statements*

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

This section sets out some of the issues and challenges identified in the LungA Review. Quotes listed below each point are taken directly from the LungA Review.

1. **Heavy emphasis on *what*, but not *how*.** The curriculum is made up of week-long segments or workshops focusing on a specific piece of content or skill, but there is little that addresses *how* participants and program leaders should co-learn, collaborate, and co-live effectively. This lack of structured guidance in communal learning processes can hinder the

development of a collaborative environment.

“The participants felt that they needed more guidance to know who they can bring problems/needs/issues to us from arrival, and a more thorough introduction would be of use.”

2. **Program Directors carry a heavy burden with a 12-week-long on-site, co-living program:**
The extended duration and immersive nature of the LAND program place significant demands on the program directors, who often feel the need to manage participants' activities and input continuously.
 - a. “Program directors need to feel that the participants can have more control and not that they are constantly needing to give input and host activities.”
 - b. “Program directors feel they would need more time together in physical space as a group to build the program, and to make sure they readdress the balances.”
3. **The 'To be' weeks are essential to the program but have more potential.**
“Emphasise and consider potential content of 'To Be' weeks. Include one after long hikes (e.g. Skalanes).”
4. **Lack of trust and a common understanding of culture, behaviours and effective communication.** Differences in backgrounds and experiences create challenges in cultivating an inclusive and cohesive group dynamic.
 - a. “Some participants don't have much experience being and living around queer, trans and non-binary people; but it shouldn't be up to queer people to explain themselves and justify themselves.”
 - b. “Many of the participants came to the program not realising how living together was such a large part of being at the school.”
 - c. “the complex issue of intolerance: in this case differing manifestations of intolerance in terms of mental health, beliefs, age and gender.”
5. **More connections between the LAND and ART programs requested by participants.**
Participants desire increased interactions between the two programs to enrich their experience.
6. **Lack of structure in learning from each other and the community:**
“the program should include more opportunities to learn each other's skills and from each other's knowledge, as well as more knowledge from the community.” This would also build on the success experienced with becoming closely connected to the community, cultivating more opportunities for giving back to the community.
7. **There is a need for backup workshops and activities.** Unpredictable weather conditions affect planned activities, and a lack of alternative workshops or indoor options creates interruptions in the learning experience.
8. **Limited support for structured feedback and conflict resolution:** Participants would benefit from more guidance and tools for managing group dynamics, communication, and conflict resolution within the co-living environment.

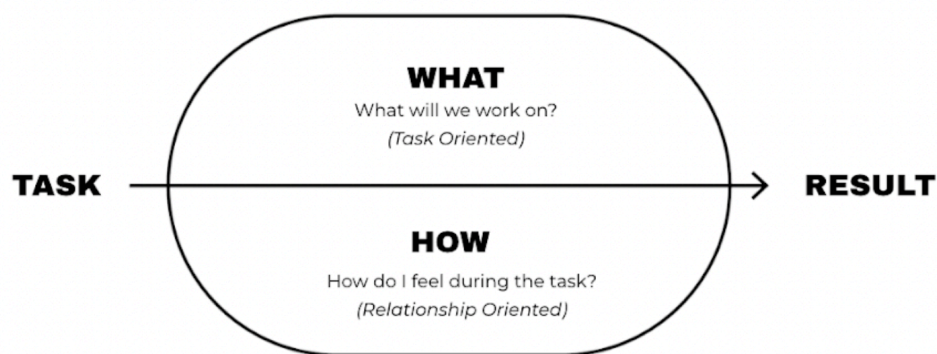
RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT PROCESS

To build a shared understanding among participants and program leaders, it's important to focus on both *what* the program will cover and *how* everyone will work together. The Content & Process Model, also known as the “Walnut” model, can help create this foundation by setting clear expectations around goals, teamwork, and communication from the start of the program.

This will address **problem statements 1 and 2**.

- **Content** refers to *what* participants will be doing—the tasks, skills, and projects within the program. It covers the hands-on parts of the work.
- **Process** focuses on *how* participants will work together and relate to each other while achieving these goals. It includes setting up routines, defining roles, and sharing values. Paying attention to this process will help participants feel supported and make teamwork smoother.



Swedish National Defence College, Jarl Siffverberg

TEAM CULTURE

Running a team culture workshop for the program directors, school director, and project manager (referred to as *janitors*) before the program begins would help set shared expectations and create a positive, collaborative culture from the beginning. This session supports **problem statement 2** by fostering alignment among all facilitators and establishing a common understanding of goals and values.

As noted in the review: *“Program directors feel they would need more time together in physical space as a group to build the program, and to make sure they readdress the balances.”*

A session design for Team Purpose & Culture can be found in [our toolbox](#).

This workshop helps teams define both their purpose (*why* they exist) and their culture (*how* they work together to achieve that purpose). Participants work individually and as a group to create a visual representation of their team’s purpose and culture, which can be displayed as a reminder of their shared goals and values.

The workshop includes exercises to:

- Reflect on the team’s mission and specific goals, such as how their work will impact the program and participants.
- Use examples from other organizations to inspire a group definition of their purpose.
- Develop a shared team culture through brainstorming and refinement exercises.

By defining these elements before the program begins, the team can work in a more focused and coordinated way, creating a supportive environment that aligns with the program’s goals and the needs of the participants.

GROUP GUIDELINES SESSION

The purpose of this workshop is to have the group of participants collectively create a set of guidelines for how they will work and be together throughout the program. It encourages participants to reflect on their own needs and the behaviors that support a positive learning environment. Establishing these guidelines can cultivate a sense of security within the group, stimulate personal growth, and enhance self-awareness.

This session supports **problem statements 2, 4, and 8** by easing program directors’ responsibilities, fostering trust, and creating a supportive environment for open feedback and conflict prevention.

Workshop Outline:

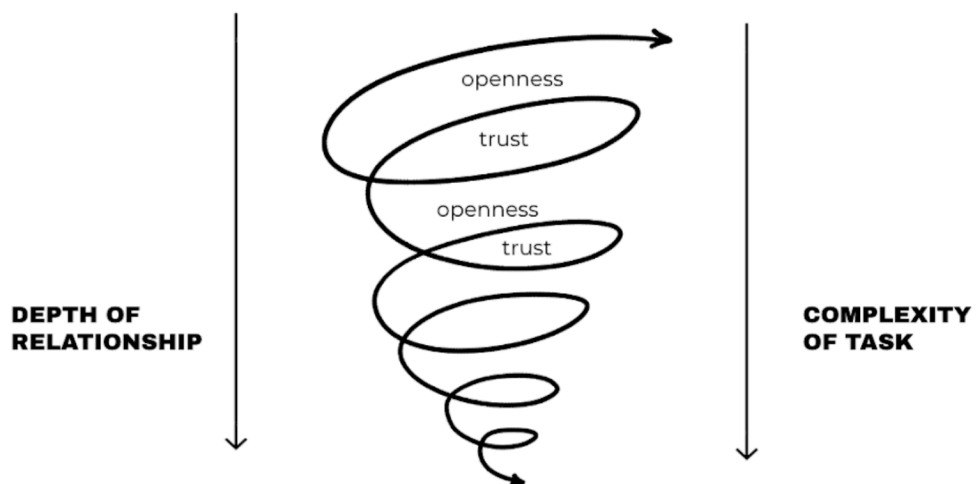
1. Individual Reflection: Ask participants to reflect on what might hinder or support collaborative learning for them in the program (3-5 minutes).
2. Small Group Discussion: Have participants share their thoughts in groups of 2-4 (5-10 minutes).
3. Full Group Sharing: In the larger group, invite participants to share ideas “popcorn style,” capturing supporting behaviors and hindering behaviors on two flip charts.
 - Start with hindering behaviors, then move to supportive ones.
 - If it isn’t mentioned, include a criterion around confidentiality.

4. Commitment to Guidelines: Confirm that everyone is willing to commit to the list of supportive behaviors as a set of collective guidelines for the program.
5. Accountability Discussion: Ask participants to suggest ways they can hold each other accountable to these guidelines throughout the program.

The result is a shared set of helpful behaviors that everyone has committed to and can revisit as needed to reinforce the group's learning environment.

OPENNESS AND TRUST

A key building block in the *how* is creating safe spaces for everyone to feel seen and heard. It does not happen by accident but is rather created by carefully designed experiences to let participants open up, which creates trust, and in turn more openness and more trust. The more complex a group task is, the more openness and trust there needs to be. The LAND program at LungA is indeed complex, with participants co-living, engaging in outdoor activities as well as with the local community. By working intently with openness and trust as described below, you alleviate issues of distrust as described in **problem statement 4**.



Source: [Wendelheim, A \(1997\). Effectiveness and process in experiential group learning: Comparing a Process-directive Encounter Group \(PEG\) and a Self-directive Study Group \(SSG\) Approach. Akademityck AB: Stockholm](#)

By understanding how trust and openness work together, participants can choose to be a bit more open to cultivate trust, thereby contributing to the group's psychological safety and development towards an effective team.

Relationship building in a group is not a linear process where a depth that is once achieved will always exist. Groups go up and down in the "spiral" all the time for many different reasons, but once you have had a certain level of openness in the group, it is usually easier to get there again.

An effective way to create openness and trust is through the exercise *Three Things That Shaped Me*. Participants each get an A3 paper and some time to reflect on three things (or relationships or whatever it might be) that have shaped who they are today, that could be good for the others to know. They draw their 3 things and take turns presenting and explaining them to the group.

For a lighter version, try the [3 Questions Mingle](#) approach.

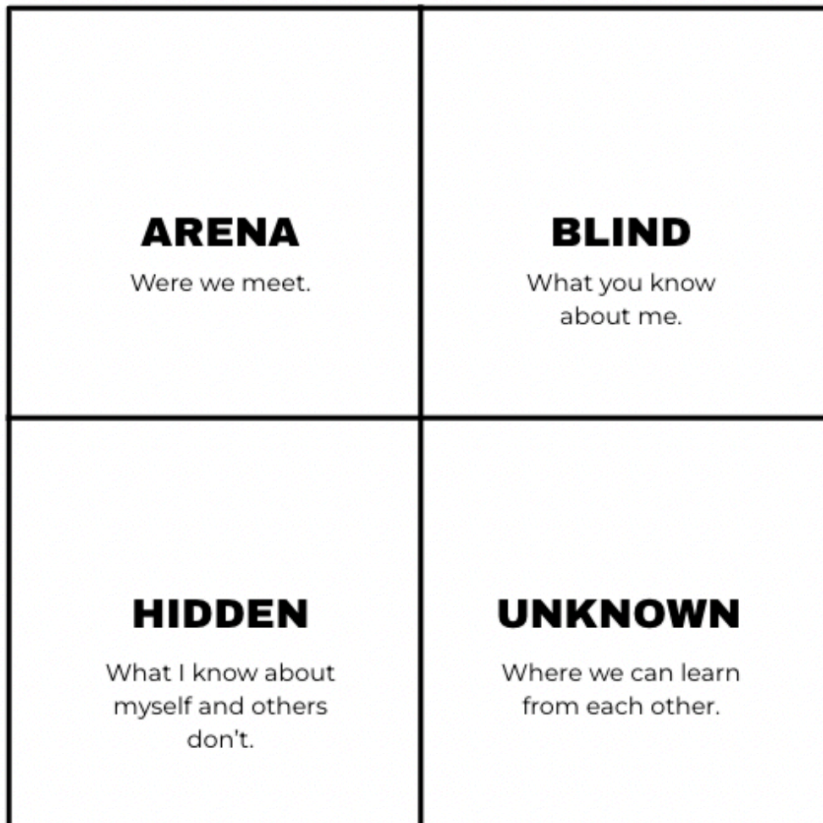
JOHARI WINDOW

The **Johari Window** model is another way to look at relationships and how communication can help us understand ourselves and one another better, creating conditions for better collaboration.

The model includes four "panes":

- **Arena:** What both self and others know; openness here builds trust and mutual understanding.
- **Blind Spot:** What others know about us that we don't; feedback helps reduce this area, promoting self-awareness.
- **Hidden:** What we know but choose to keep private; sharing reduces this area and increases transparency.
- **Unknown:** What neither self nor others know but can be discovered through shared experiences.

By sharing more about ourselves (e.g. through *Three Things that Shaped Me*), we can grow the Arena by reducing what we keep hidden. Receiving feedback from peers also reduces our Blind Spot, fostering a culture of openness and trust. The bigger the arena, the better we understand each other and the better are the conditions for healthy and effective collaboration.



Source: Adapted from Luft and Ingham (1955)

This tool directly addresses **problem statements 1 and 4** by creating a shared understanding of group dynamics and encouraging openness, ultimately building a trusting, cohesive environment.

CIRCLE OF TRUST

Another important piece of work needs to be done to improve tolerance among participants (also part of **problem statement 4**) and make people aware of their own bias. The Circle of Trust is a tool that can be used both individually and for groups. You can rate your circle of trust - think of your 'inner circle'; work, school, or another group - to see how diverse the group of people you trust is.

Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, are the underlying attitudes and stereotypes that people unconsciously attribute to another person or group of people that affect how they understand and engage with a person or group.

Affinity bias, also known as similarity bias, is the tendency people have to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds.

[The Circle of Trust](#) tool helps to uncover unconscious and affinity bias and again, increase our understanding of ourselves and others.

STINKY FISH

Another tool from the Hyper Island toolbox is called the [Stinky Fish](#) and is a handy go-to that does not require a lot of preparation.

It is a short activity to run early in the program focused on sharing any concerns related to the overall theme. The purpose is to create openness and "clear the air" within a group. The stinky fish is a metaphor for "that thing that you carry around but don't like to talk about - but the longer you hide it, the stinkier it gets." By putting "stinky fish" on the table, participants relate to each other, get more comfortable sharing, and uncover areas for learning and development.

This tool can be used at the beginning but it can also be something that you come back to several times during the program, again to clear the air. It can also serve as a "spare workshop" when the weather hinders a planned outdoor activity, and as such addresses **problem statement 7**.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NEEDS AND BEHAVIOURS

To build further trust and understanding into a group, its members also need to understand themselves and others, how they behave in different situations and why.

The FIRO model (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation), developed by Will Schutz, identifies three core interpersonal needs—inclusion, control, and affection—that influence group dynamics and behavior. These needs connect to our feelings of significance, competence, and likeability, all of which shape how we interact within a group.

Need/Dimension	TO BE INCLUDED	TO HAVE CONTROL	TO FEEL AFFECTION
I WANT TO BE PERCEIVED AS	Valuable	Competent	Worth loving
MY FEAR IS	To be excluded	To be deemed incompetent	To be rejected
MY BEHAVIOR (TO AVOID FEAR BEING REALIZED)	Avoiding/Pushy	Passive/Dominant	Formal/Intimate
WHAT BEHAVIORS FROM OTHERS MIGHT FULFILL MY NEEDS?	Invite for lunch/coffee, listen attentively, say hello, including body language...	Give choices, appreciate, contributions, create sense of autonomy...	Tell people they're valuable regardless of their contribution, that you appreciate them, be open...

Source: Based on Schutz, W.C. (1958) FIRO: A Three Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour

This model serves as a basis for reflection, particularly after group activities, helping participants understand their default behaviors and core needs. Reflection questions include:

- How did I behave in this situation (e.g., passive or dominant, formal or intimate)?
- What underlying needs influenced my behavior?
- How might I adjust my behavior to better support myself and the group?

By understanding these interpersonal needs, participants can gain greater self-awareness and empathy, which enhances their ability to build trust and work collaboratively. This tool directly supports **problem statement 4** by fostering an inclusive and understanding group environment, ultimately contributing to group cohesion and effective collaboration.

NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

The way we communicate matters when it comes to how our message is received by our counterpart. Practising non violent communication will help in effective group communication, conflict resolution and to avoid misunderstanding.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a method developed by Marshall Rosenberg that promotes compassionate communication by focusing on empathy, self-awareness, and effective expression. NVC helps individuals connect with each other through an understanding of universal human needs and a structured way of expressing observations, feelings, needs, and requests. Practicing NVC supports effective group communication, conflict resolution, and minimizes misunderstandings.

The **NVC Model** includes:

1. Observation: Describing behavior without judgment.
2. Feeling: Sharing genuine emotions in response to observations.
3. Need: Identifying unmet needs that fuel those feelings.
4. Request: Making a clear, actionable, and respectful request.

To further improve communication, the **I-message** technique (Gordon, T., 1970) helps individuals express their feelings clearly and take ownership of them, rather than placing blame. An I-message typically follows this structure:

- Observation: "When I see/hear..."
- Feeling: "I feel..."
- Need: "Because I need..."
- Request: "Would you be willing to...?"

This tool directly addresses **problem statements 4 and 8** by encouraging participants to express themselves openly and respectfully. It provides a foundation for structured feedback and conflict resolution, helping participants navigate both everyday interactions and moments of conflict. This approach builds a collaborative and supportive group environment.

ACTIVE LISTENING SESSION

This workshop supports participants in developing their listening skills, creating a foundation for better communication and mutual understanding. Through structured roles, participants practice being fully present with one another, learning to listen without interruption or the need to respond immediately. This session can enhance group cohesion and support an open, trusting environment for the program.

This session addresses **problem statements 4, 5, and 8** by developing communication skills that improve group dynamics, build trust, and encourage deeper self-awareness among participants. Active listening also provides a foundation for constructive feedback and conflict resolution, making it a valuable tool for maintaining a supportive and collaborative group environment.

A full session guide for Active Listening can be found in [our toolbox](#).

By introducing active listening early in the program, participants will have a structured way to connect with one another, helping to create a more understanding and respectful group environment.

APPRECIATION TRAIN

This activity is a fast-paced, engaging way to strengthen interpersonal bonds, trust, and appreciation within the group. Participants take turns giving each other positive, appreciative feedback, rotating so that everyone has a chance to give and receive affirming comments. The exercise is especially effective as a wrap-up or mid-program activity, creating a high-energy, supportive group environment.

This session supports **problem statement 4** (Lack of trust and a common understanding of culture and behaviors), by promoting mutual respect and recognition. It helps participants build a foundation of trust and appreciation, fostering a more inclusive and cohesive group dynamic.

A full session guide for the Appreciation Train can be found in [our toolbox](#).

THE WELL OF KNOWLEDGE

The curriculum in its current state is dense with content experiences. To create space as well as depth in the learning, we recommend using reflection as a tool throughout the program. It could also be a way to shorten the workshops from 5 days to 4 days and use Fridays for reflection. Additionally, common reflection sessions could be used to integrate the two programs ART and LAND at times.

We also recommend regular reflection sessions in which you revisit the culture rules and behaviours set together as a group at the starting point.

Reflecting both individually and as a group helps participants make sense of their experiences, uncover personal insights, and consider how they can adapt or change moving forward. Reflection sessions provide a structured time to question, in a constructive way, what each experience means personally: *What does this mean to me? How does this affect my thoughts or behaviors? Is there a different way to approach this in the future?*



Source: Swedish National Defence College, Jarl Silfverberg

In group settings, participants share their reflections, allowing them to explore different perspectives and adjust thoughts or behaviors that may not be serving them. Group dialogue encourages mutual understanding and helps participants consider what to improve or continue based on what's working well.

Typical reflection questions include:

- What happened that affected me?
- What did/do I feel about this?
- What did I learn—about myself, others, or groups?
- How might I apply what I learned in future situations?

This will address **problem statements 5 and 7**. Reflection can also be used both in groups and individually during the To Be Weeks, which would address **problem statement 3** as well.

Step-by-step instructions can be found in our [Toolbox](#).

SKILLS BARTERING

To cultivate co-learning with the local community, we suggest hosting one or more Skills Bartering Workshops where participants and community members come together to exchange knowledge and skills. In these workshops, attendees can post skills they want to learn on one wall and skills they can teach or introduce on another. A facilitator guides the connections between participants and community members, establishing a structure for how and when these learning exchanges will happen. This setup may lead to impromptu workshops, requiring dedicated time and space for effective exchanges.

These workshops directly address **problem statement 6** by fostering peer-led learning and community engagement. If both ART and LAND programs participate, this also promotes integration, addressing **problem statement 5**. If the local community can't join, the skills bartering workshop is still valuable for LAND participants, helping them learn from each other.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

By implementing the recommendations set out in this report, we believe that the LungA LAND curriculum will achieve a greater balance between the *what* (content learning) and the *how* (the way we work together). This approach will empower learners with greater agency, which can also help to ease the demands on program leaders.

We have also provided ideas for how learners can give back to the community and interact with the ART program in a semi-structured way. Altogether, these suggestions address key problem areas highlighted in the LungA Review.

Hyper Island remains available for expertise in implementing the recommendations by facilitating workshops onsite, although as a possible separate engagement from the current project. Hyper Island also offers [courses](#) that cover some of the same themes as outlined in this report, should the LungA team wish to deepen their understanding of how we use our tools and methodologies.