



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module – Empathy and Resilience

Method – Action Research

Case study



Module 6 - Empathy & Resilience

Case study - Community Voices in Action

Related Method - Action research

Context and Background

Organisation: A local adult learning centre in Southern Europe focusing on civic participation.

Target Group: Adults aged 25–55, including unemployed jobseekers and migrants.

Scope: The programme aimed to empower learners by involving them in analysing and addressing real community issues, strengthening their resilience and sense of agency.

Problem / Challenge Presented

Learners often felt powerless in the face of community challenges (e.g., lack of public services, workplace exclusion). Many reported that decisions affecting them were made “from above” without their input. This created frustration, disengagement, and low self-confidence.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

The facilitator introduced action research as a participatory tool.

Groups identified local issues they cared about (e.g., stress from overcrowded services, poor communication in workplaces).

Learners conducted informal interviews and observations in their neighbourhoods.

Findings were mapped collaboratively using flipcharts and shared in plenary.

Each group proposed realistic solutions and presented them to peers and local representatives.

Outcomes and Results

Learners developed stronger teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Participants reported feeling more **empowered** and “listened to” by peers and community representatives.

Some of the suggested solutions (e.g., peer-support groups, clearer workplace communication practices) were piloted locally with positive feedback.

Learners noted increased resilience, stating that they felt more capable of coping with challenges when they worked collectively.

Lessons Learned

Even small-scale research projects can shift learners’ confidence and engagement.

Community-based learning becomes more effective when participants are given real ownership of the process.

Action research strengthens not only analytical skills but also empathy, as learners consider diverse perspectives.



Key Success Factors

Facilitators provided structured but flexible guidance.

Activities were linked to real-life issues learners cared about.

Collaboration and peer-to-peer support created motivation and accountability.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed

Some learners were sceptical about the value of their input; facilitators emphasised small but meaningful changes.

Limited literacy made it hard for some participants to document findings; alternative formats like drawings and oral reporting were used.

Time constraints limited depth; activities were broken into shorter steps to maintain progress.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

Start small: even a single-session inquiry can empower learners.

Always link action research to issues that matter for the group.

Use inclusive tools (visuals, storytelling, oral reports) to overcome literacy barriers.

Encourage learners to connect their findings with empathy and resilience in daily life.