



ONE YEAR FULL OF IMPACT AND LEARNINGS
2017-2018

now
LEARN • CHANGE • GROW

SUMMARY

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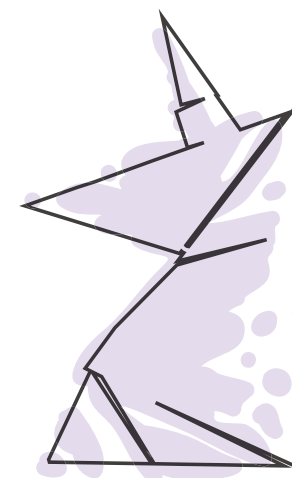
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ABOUT NOW

NOW is a Swiss-based social business that creates and implements educational programs that empower young people to find their own path and contribute to a better society. Our programs use cutting-edge educational methodologies and combine the best of online and offline learning. We foster participants' ownership of their personal development and work with a set of competences that are needed in today's world – ranging from dealing with diversity to problem-solving and giving feedback.

Our motto is to:

LEARN: create an out of the box learning environment where everyone is learning and teaching at the same time.

CHANGE: facilitate experiences that empower people to change themselves while changing the world around them.

GROW: build a community of individuals and organizations that multiply their impact and pollinate the world with positive actions.



WELCOME!

This is the **second edition of the NOW Impact Report**. Right from the start we've been committed to measure our impact and with that are learning how to ask the right questions, to listen, and most of all, how to turn what we hear into further development for our organization.

In the next pages, we invite you to get an insight into the stories and experiences that marked us in the last year and get a glimpse of where we want to take this organization from here. We start by showcasing NOW's most valuable resources: **our programs, our people and the impact we created together**. You will also be able to see how our programs are funded and what social change projects our participants have implemented.

However, at the core of this year's report lie our **learnings**. We are sharing with you the big questions that have been on our minds in 2017 – and what we have learned from engaging with them:

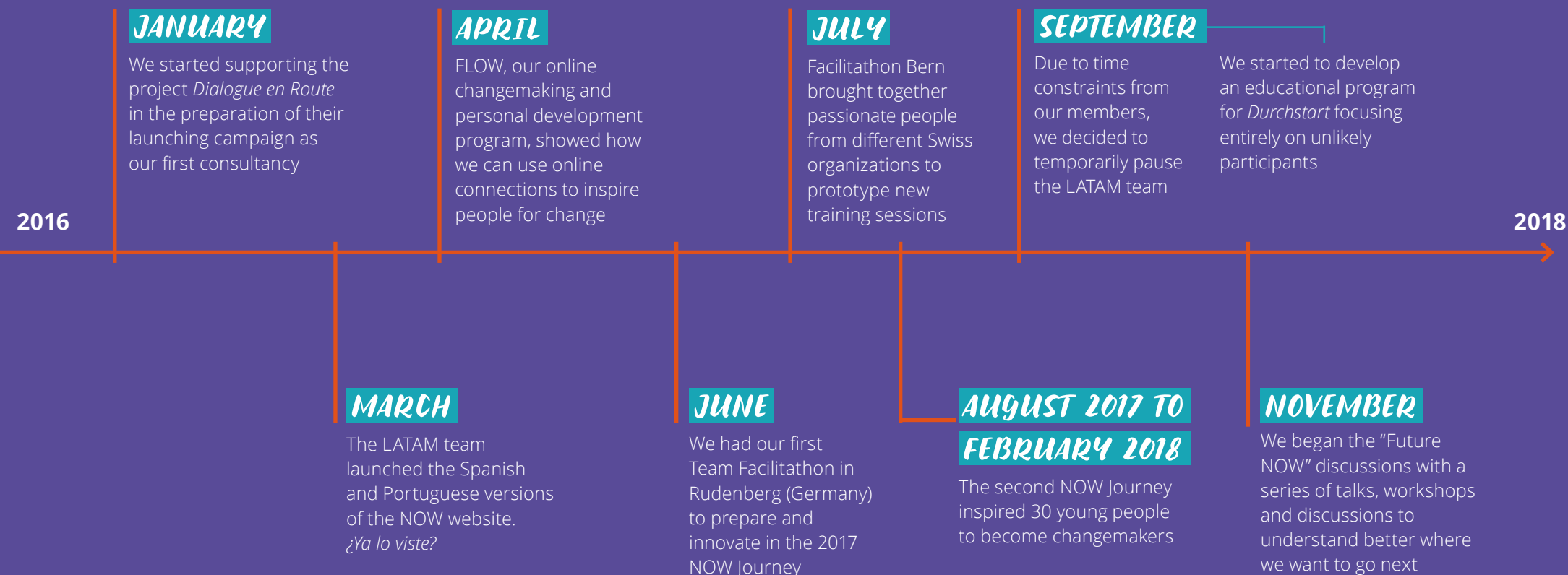
- ***How to stimulate and measure competences for the 21st century?***
- ***How to make our programs more inclusive?***
- ***How to create true connections online?***
- ***How can we change the world while practicing self-care?***

We hope that you will continue or start being part of our impact stories in the years to come.

Happy reading!

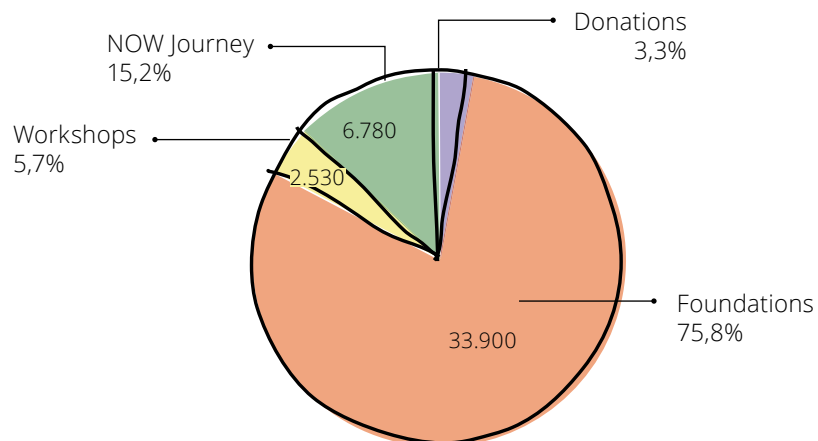


MILESTONES



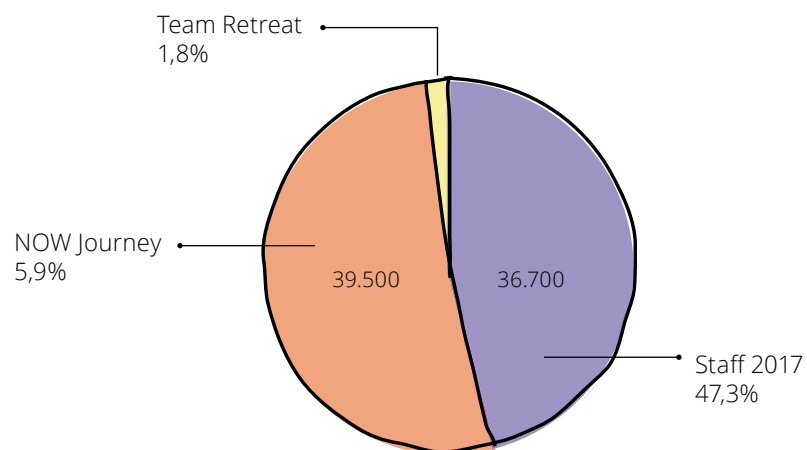
INCOME 2017

(in Swiss francs)



EXPENSES 2017

(in Swiss francs)



FINANCES

2017 was a year in which we spent more money than we earned. That was possible thanks to reserves from 2016, but this also left us with an almost empty bank account at the end of the year. Hiring a second part-time staff in 2017 increased our HR expenses (8% of our costs in 2016 compared to 47% in 2017). On the other hand, we **managed to decrease the costs of our flagship program, the NOW Journey**. All of our programs were only possible thanks to the innumerable volunteer hours of our team.

We reached our goal of **increasing the share of our income generated through our services and programs** (from 10% of income in 2016 to more than 20% in 2017). In absolute terms, however, we only managed to increase our income slightly. Foundations still remain an important funding source – in 2017 mainly the Swiss foundation Movetia through the Swiss Erasmus+ programs.

The goal for 2018 is to further balance out income through services and support from foundations in order to develop a more sustainable model.

THE NOW WORLD

NOW TEAM

Africa

Morocco
South Africa

Americas

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
USA

Europe

France
Germany
Netherlands
Norway
Romania
Switzerland
Turkey

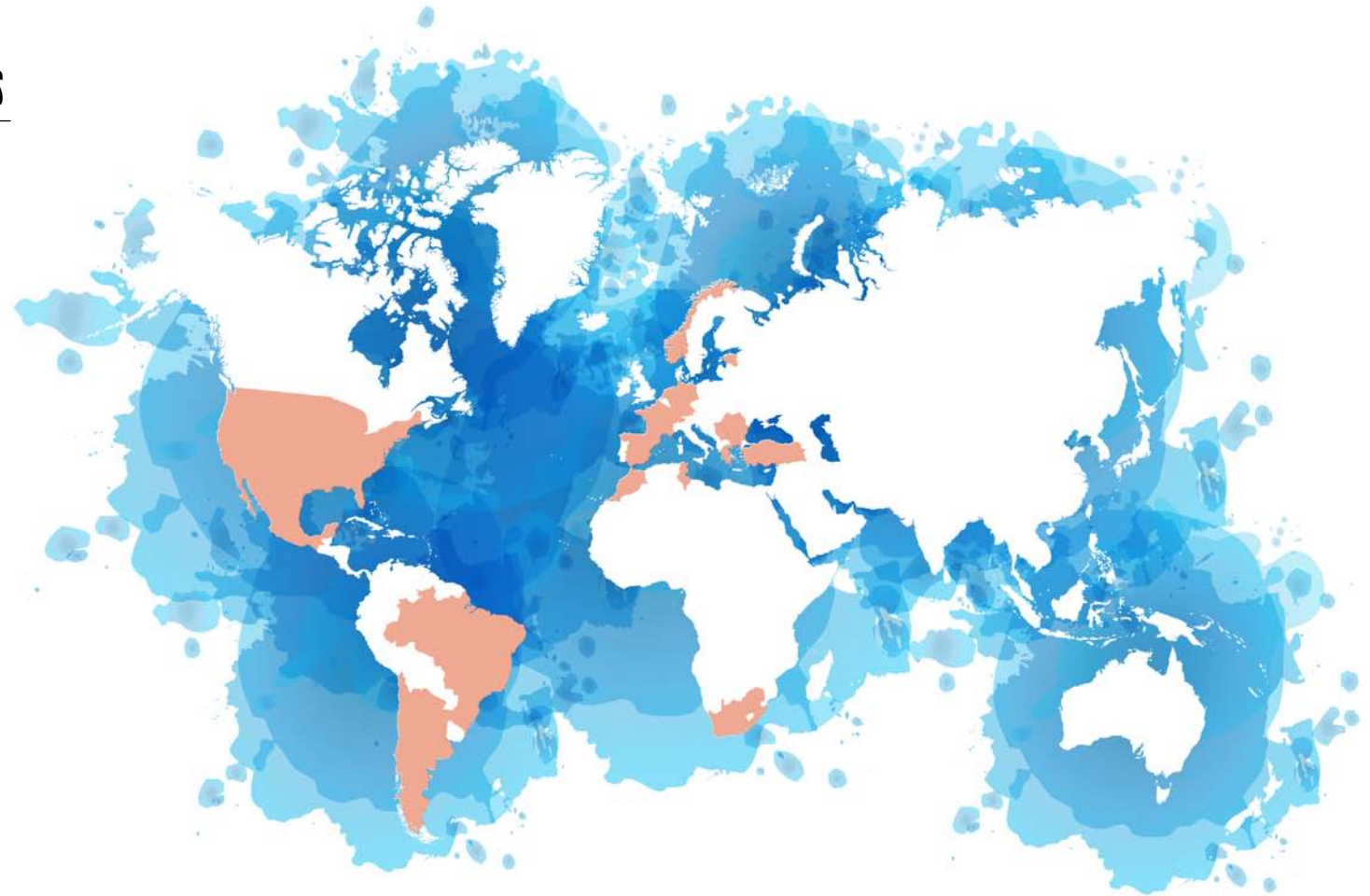
NOW PARTICIPANTS

JOURNEY 2017

Bulgaria
Estonia
Greece
Morocco
Romania
Switzerland
Tunisia
Turkey

FLOW

Brazil
Germany
Mexico
Switzerland
Turkey
South Africa



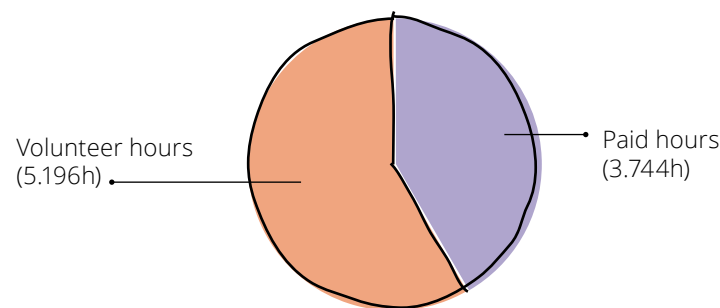
THE TEAM

After a intense and successful kick-off year, 2017 left us with **the challenge of keeping the fire alive**. Having only one part-time staff and relying heavily on volunteers, we soon started to feel the need for more human power. Luckily, with Meg we found a brilliant co-creator and manager of our online course FLOW allowing us to design and delve into a new program.

To make the second NOW Journey happen, Zlatka decided to join as a NOW staff in mid-2017 and became the backbone of the program. Throughout the year, we also engaged new volunteer team members in NOW – starting with our 6 alumni team members who joined us at the beginning of the year. You can imagine that this expansion brought some real **growing pain: our structure built on personal connection, horizontality and self-responsibility stretched to a maximum**. That's why in the last quarter of 2017 we started a transformative process that will show its fruits in 2018: re-structuring NOW into a powerful and sustainable organization for social change. You can read more about it on page 39.



OUR COMMITMENT IN 2017



19 volunteers and
2 staff in 13 countries

THE TEAM





THE NOW JOURNEY

The NOW Journey is a **6-month non-formal education program** that brings together 30 young people from diverse backgrounds to learn from and with each other in order to **become active citizens and create social change projects in their local communities**. In 2017, we ran the second edition of the program and here are a couple of figures, we would like to share with you:

- The average age of participants was **22** years old.
- **54%** of participants identify as female.
- Participants came from **11** countries in Europe and the Mediterranean region and spoke **15** different languages.
- **25** out of **31** participants finished the program.

You can read more about our inclusion policy on page 29 and discover the projects our participants developed on the next pages.

LONG-LASTING IMPACT

In a questionnaire we distributed one year after the end of the first NOW Journey, we discovered that **41% of our alumni either continue their social change projects or have embarked on a new project** in the meantime. Over 45% of them are currently active as volunteers in different organizations and projects!

I So far, I have reached 150 children with my workshops about bullying. There are so many highlights, but my favourite is when a grandma said to me 'You teach them how to be a human being.' Through my project, I also realised that this is something I want to continue doing and turn into my work.

Kriszta, NOW Journey alumni and NOW team member

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF OUR NOW JOURNEY PARTICIPANTS

In our programs we use experiential learning, which means that participants develop the NOW competences while reflecting on real-life experiences. Every participant choose a project to develop in their communities, aiming to tackle a problem they identify. These are the projects that the NOW Journey participants in 2017 developed:

→ **Social Clichés (Romania)**

This project focused on clichés in literature, through a writing competition and workshops about stereotypes. It was ran in collaboration with an editing company and Romanian authors.

→ **Bone marrow donation (Greece)**

This project developed a campaign on bone marrow donation in Athens, Greece. The participant designed and distributed information leaflets aimed at increasing the number of donors.



→ **Exchange between retirement homes and refugees (Switzerland)**

Aiming at connecting young refugees with residents of retirement homes in the Zurich area, this project focused on combating both stereotypes against refugees, as well as loneliness and isolation among the two groups. By the end of 2017, there has been a pilot program, with two workshops and regular visits between five pairs of refugees and retirement home residents.

→ **Aware NOW? (Spain)**

The goal of this project was to inspire new ways to represent marginalised groups in the media among journalism students. The participant organised a workshop on the experience of marginalised groups and how they are represented in the media.

→ **Emotions and how to express them (Bulgaria)**

This social change project aimed at addressing the topic of aggression and bullying among youth by helping them to communicate their emotions in a caring way.

→ **Retro Prom (Bulgaria)**

This project transformed a traditional local charity event and helped it exceed its fundraising goal. The funds raised allowed not only to refurbish a school affected by a flood, but also to help two local young women to fight their illnesses.

→ **Workshop for interreligious dialogue for schools (Switzerland)**

In collaboration with the organisation *Dialogue en Route*, this project developed a workshop for schools with the question “what is home?”, creating connection and shared experiences between refugees and school children.

→ **Model United Nations experience (Turkey)**

This project aimed at organizing a Model United Nations experience in a school. Due to opposition from the school’s administration, the event could not take place. However, the participant successfully created a team, found allies amongst students and teachers and came up with creative new solutions.

→ **Thought 4 Food (Greece)**

The topic of healthy living was the aim of this project. The participant created the website www.thought4food.tk to raise awareness about the benefits of taking care of yourself – your body and mind – and living a healthier lifestyle.

→ **Bikes for daily commuting (Tunisia)**

This social change project focused on promoting sustainable mobility in a town in Tunisia, by establishing a biking platform and designing a bike path for the city.

→ Changing the world by changing schools (Romania)

With workshops for school children to raise awareness about bullying, this project counted on the help of teachers and parents to stop bullying in high schools in the participant's community.

→ Raising awareness on LGBT rights (Turkey)

This project organised movie nights and roundtable discussions about LGBT topics in the participant's local community.

→ Idea for millions of people (Bulgaria)

Funded by a grant from the municipality of Varna, this project focused on raising awareness for environmental protection as well as promoting the city in social media. The team built a heart-shaped bench at the seaside and cleaned the area, making this public space more enjoyable for the community.

→ Kids' Journey (Morocco)

"Kids' Journey" had as its main goal empowering kids (9-15 years old) facing marginalization in Agadir. The project included 8 workshops and mentoring for kids on several topics such as photography, video editing, storytelling & IT skills. In the future, the idea is to create a website where anyone can offer workshops for underprivileged children.

→ Improving financial literacy (Estonia)

Joining an existing financial literacy initiative, this project built bridges between different organisations, blogs and other stakeholders. It also contributed with the recording of an audiobook on financial literacy.

→ Equality For All (Turkey)

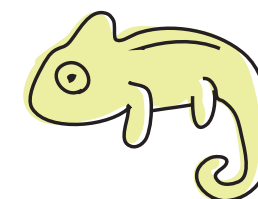
This project implemented a workshop to raise awareness about gender equality and violence against women in Turkey.

→ Awareness for our nature (Turkey)

This project aimed at raising awareness about environmental protection at a university campus in Ankara. It created a blog discussing the effects of deforestation and advocating for more green areas.

→ The power of books (Romania)

The goal of this project was to improve reading skills of elementary school children. It used books to enhance children's creativity through interactive workshops and created a website with resources and workshop descriptions to share with others.



→ **You CAN't? - Body care project (Bulgaria)**

This project developed a 30-day workout and self-care challenge to explore how discipline, commitment and motivation can benefit one's own wellbeing. The content was transformed into a platform called "You CAN't?" to encourage others to embark on a journey of self-care themselves.

→ **Animal shelter (Turkey)**

The initial idea of this project was to build shelters for stray animals at a university campus in Adana, with the aim of creating a deeper connection between people and animals in the community, and improving the living conditions of the animals. Although the participant didn't manage to build the shelters due to university regulations and bureaucracy, he did create a strong team that started raising awareness about this issue.

→ **Nature showed us the right path (Estonia)**

This project combined arts, nature and education in an interdisciplinary educational program for children. The program focused on using materials and tools from nature to produce artwork.

→ **On the way- my Bucharest in motion (Romania)**

Finding ways to ease the traffic density and create a better experience for pedestrians in the city was the aim of this project. It designed plans for potential bike lanes and created an advocacy campaign to attract attention and gain support for a sustainable urban experience for all.

→ **Creative and innovative methods of teaching (Greece)**

This project organised meetings and raised awareness about the importance of the topic. In a collaboration with a professor and a few university students, it developed a publishing platform for students' term papers and an online group, where students can share their ideas about innovative teaching methods.

→ **Network of animal rights activists (Serbia)**

This social project brought together animal rights activists in Belgrade, creating a group that takes care of street animals and helps them find new homes in Serbia and abroad.

THE NOW JOURNEY





FLOW

FLOW is a **7-week online program that empowers participants to break through inertia and become active in changing their lives and the world around them.** Each of the 7 weeks of FLOW focuses on two learning goals from the NOW Framework of Competence (see page 24 to learn more about the Framework). Topics like “Self-Reflection”, “Mindfulness” and “Creativity” give our participants new tools to awaken the change agent within themselves. The program content has a **strong focus on allyism** – meaning that we empowered participants to engage with different causes than the ones they were already part of.

In 2017 we ran the **first edition of the program with 9 participants.** FLOW allowed us to reach a target group different than usual. Participants were older and more experienced than the target group of the NOW Journey.

FLOW IN NUMBERS:

- The average age of participants was **34** years old.
- **67%** of participants identify as female.
- Participants were from **7** different countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America. On average they speak **3.4** different languages.
- **5 out of 9** participants finished the program.

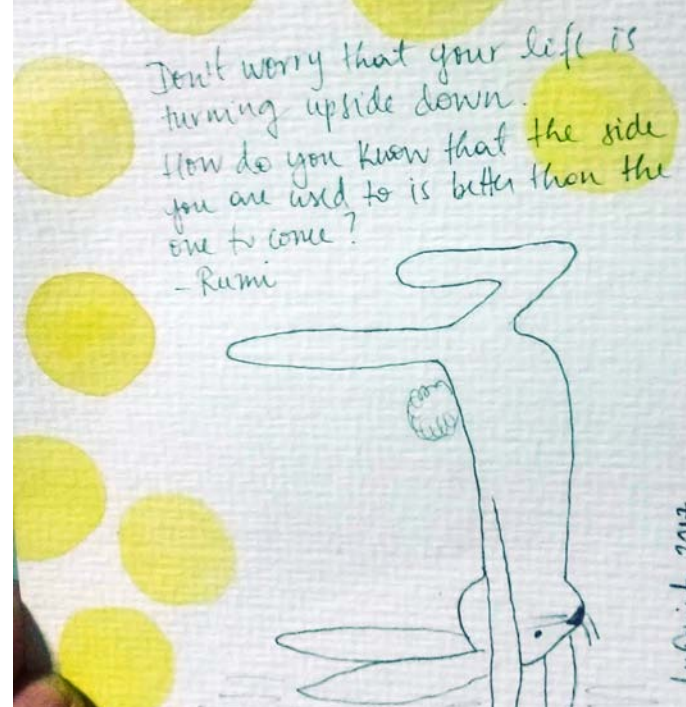
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ALLYISM?

Allyism – or allyship – describes the attitude of supporting causes which are not necessarily our own, but for which we can speak up. As guidetoallyship.com defines: “An ally recognizes that though they are not a member of a marginalized group(s) they support, they make a concerted effort to better understand the struggle.”

FLOW PROJECTS

In FLOW we invited participants to think of a **SFAG: Small Fluffy Audacious Goal**. We didn't want to overwhelm them with a big project, but rather to offer FLOW as a framework for everyone to make a small transformation in their own lives and/or the communities they live in. Most participants picked very personal SFAGs from learning to speak up for themselves to making their PhD meaningful.

As an example of an outstanding FLOW project, we'd like to feature **Luciana's transition to becoming an artist and using art to improve cancer patients' well-being in hospitals**. Her personal transformation was highly inspirational for her peers and she also contributed to the program with thought-provoking art pieces.



Two of Luciana's art pieces created during FLOW





FACILITATHON

Inspired by the concept of Hackathons, the Facilitathon was created in 2016 as a **peer-to-peer format for experienced facilitators to further develop their skills**. Between Friday evening and Sunday afternoon, participants develop a session with a clear format and test it with their fellow participants. Learning happens via feedback, shared reflections on each session as well as through sharing resources and methods.

In 2017, we organized an external and an internal edition of this program. Externally, we brought together 6 participants from organizations such as AFS, movetia foundation, Impact Hub Bern as well as from a local IT company. Participants appreciated **“stepping out of their comfort zone” and trying new things such as “facilitating difficult conversations”**.

Internally, we used the Facilitathon as a moment to reflect on NOW’s way of facilitating and fine-tune our sessions for the second edition of the NOW Journey.

FACILITATHON

I realized that having a toolkit of methods and lots of experience is great, but it only gets you to certain point. Facilitation is also a lot about soft skills. The Facilitathon also made me realize just how much I like to facilitate.

Participant of the Facilitathon in Bern

THE NOW FACILITATION *manifesto*

1. People before process.

What guides each NOW session are the needs and development of the participants – not the pre-made plan of the facilitator. NOW facilitators closely observe how group dynamics unfold, adapt accordingly and intervene when needed.

2. Taking goals seriously.

NOW sessions have clear learning goals and create an impact in their participants. NOW facilitators arrive prepared for their sessions, and know why they are there and what their role in the learning process is.

3. Everyone matters!

A NOW facilitator cares about each and every participant. This means speaking to everyone and using language accessible and inclusive to all participants. A NOW facilitator does not accept losing any participant in the process.

4. Creating powerful spaces.

A carefully created environment makes a huge difference in learning. That is why NOW facilitators try to make each space where they act a safe and inspiring setting for all.

5. Being human.

A NOW facilitator is able to acknowledge their vulnerability and ability to grow. They are transparent and open about things they do not know or that go wrong. A NOW facilitator is patient with themselves and able to show their true self to the group.

6. Holistic mindset.

NOW facilitators are genuinely curious and care about getting to know their participants at a deeper level. A NOW facilitator is able to see the participant as a whole (their heart, mind and body), and as an individual with specific experiences and needs.

7. Setting others up for success.

NOWers believe in the power of co-facilitation and are always exercising their active listening muscle. When working together, NOW facilitators support each other and trust in the other's ability to judge any given situation. Success is only real when shared.

8. Going with the flow.

NOW facilitators are learners. They are able to adapt to sudden changes and appreciate whatever outcome a session brings. Yet, the NOW facilitator is mindful of the process and ready to take responsibility for steering when needed.

9. Speaking up.

NOW facilitators are not afraid of asking difficult questions and standing up for the NOW values and their own beliefs. They know that difficult conversations offer space for development.

10. Making it light.

At NOW, we bring the unicorn spirit to facilitation: being playful, exploring our creative side and making even deep topics lighter for participants through opportunities to laugh and connect with each other.

FACILITATION





CONSULTANCIES

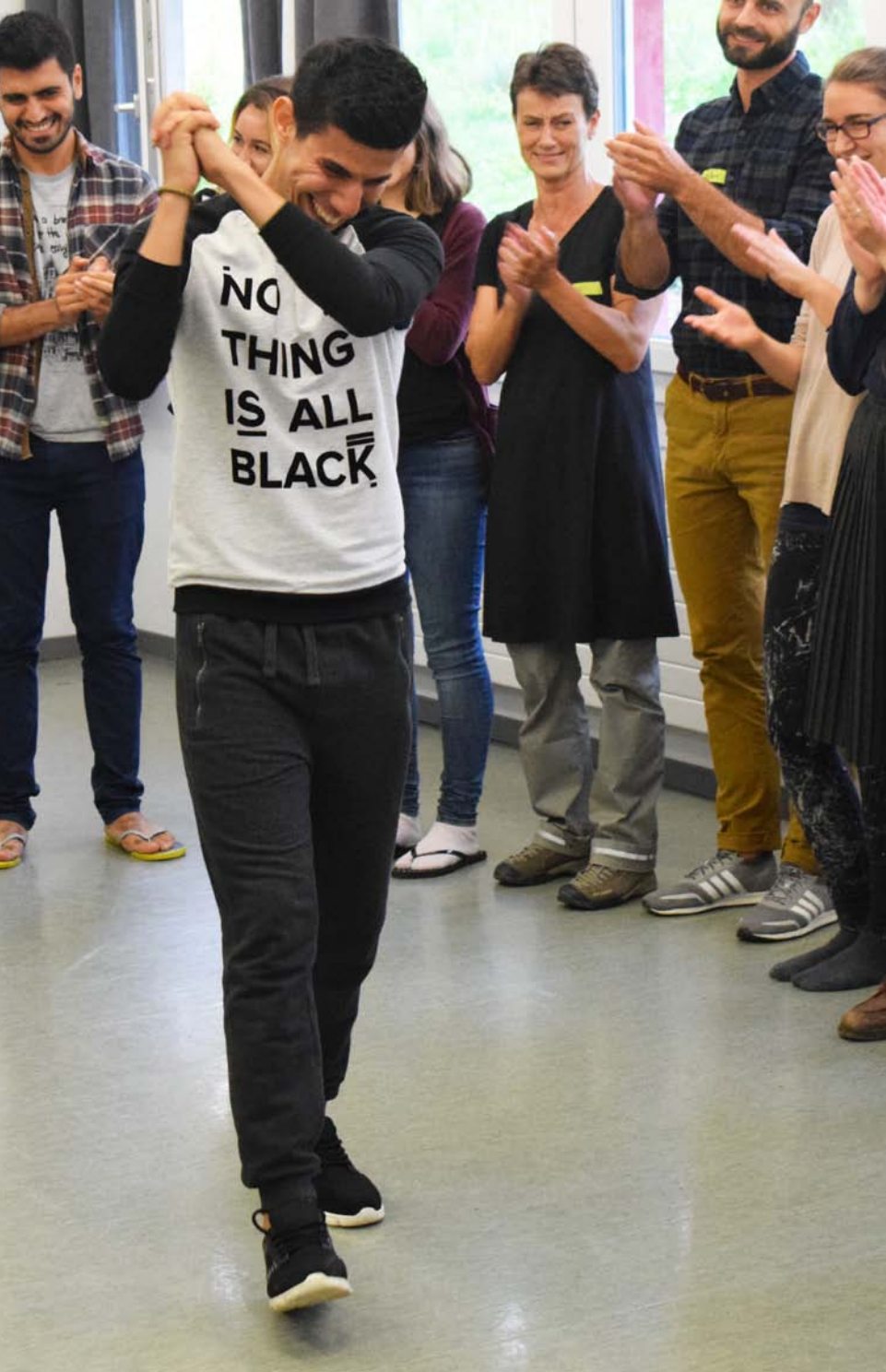
durchstart. **Durchstart** is a Swiss-based social business that was founded in 2017. They organize economic integration programs for young people depending on social benefits due to unemployment, mental health issues and marginalization. Durchstart hired the NOW team to design its program and create its framework of competences.



**DIALOGUE
EN ROUTE**



Dialogue en Route: The Swiss umbrella organization for interreligious dialogue, IRAS COTIS, included NOW in the creation and implementation of the launching campaign of Dialogue en Route – a project aimed at giving schools and other organizations access to religious and cultural institutions through the eyes of young “guides”. One of these guides also participated in the NOW Journey 2017 sponsored by the organization.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

NOW is committed to fostering a larger community of changemakers and offering opportunities for learning and connection. In 2017 we have organised the following events open for our whole network:

→ February 22nd - NOW Panel: Can Art Change the World?

With the participation of Tiago Minamisa (Brazil), creator of a collection of children's books about diversity; McKensie Mack (US), from Art+Feminism; and Haveit (Kosovo), a group of public performers who go beyond everyday pleasure, moralistic rules and who refuse to agree with the matters that are being served.

→ April 6th - FLOW e-Panel: What can I do for Refugees?

With Hadi Althib (Syria), a peace builder working in Turkey, Emily Elsner (Switzerland), co-founder of Capacity, and Christian Heinze (Germany), expert on migration processes and civic engagement.

→ October 7th - Online Workshop: Coding for Changemakers

Organized by 2016 NOW Journey alumni Serhat Ataman (Turkey), a computer engineer and developer of a project to improve schools, and 2017 NOW Journey participant Anastasia Tsitiridou (Greece), a computer engineering student involved in a project to get girls into tech and coding.

OUR 2017 BIG QUESTIONS

1. HOW TO STIMULATE AND MEASURE COMPETENCES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY?
2. HOW TO MAKE OUR PROGRAMS MORE INCLUSIVE?
3. HOW TO CREATE TRUE CONNECTIONS ONLINE?
4. HOW CAN WE CHANGE THE WORLD WHILE PRACTICING SELF-CARE?



1. How to stimulate and measure competences for the 21st century?

LEARNING FACILITATION

2017 has been the year in which we took our **commitment to the NOW competences** to the next level. The 30 competences on our Framework are the ones we believe are crucial to create social change in the 21st century. In 2017, we have managed to really streamline our Framework: each learning session we implemented in our programs was closely linked to the learning goals related to our competences. We also took the time to update and improve the Framework itself before using it for the NOW Journey 2017. Check page 35 for the biggest changes.

However, it is not the framework itself that makes it possible for us to stimulate and track the development of our participants in these competences. It is rather a learning methodology that we developed that makes the difference: in 2017 we created and successfully tested the **“Learning Facilitator”** model.

Each of the NOW Journey participants has been accompanied in their learning by a pair of NOW facilitators who helped them to set and track their own learning goals. Using methods ranging from coaching to mentoring and online workshops, these learning facilitators enabled participants to connect the different program elements with their learning goals. Guided by questions like “In which elements of my project can I train my learning goal of “tolerance of ambiguity”?” and “Which online learning session works best to learn more about privilege?”, participants were able to not only reach many of their learning goals, but also take full ownership of the competences they wanted to develop.

WHAT IS A LEARNING FACILITATOR?

Learning facilitation is a methodology developed by NOW that focuses on accompanying participants in their individual learning journey. Throughout the program, learning facilitators help participants set learning goals and reflect on their development. Reflections happen both in peer groups and in individual conversations.

WHAT IS THE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES?

To be able to measure the development of our participants, NOW has created a **Framework of 30 competences divided in 5 Learning Areas**. The Framework allows participants to evaluate and track their development throughout the program using a mix of self- and peer assessment as well as evaluation by the learning facilitators.

1. How to stimulate and measure competences for the 21st century?

THE POWER OF PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING

Learning facilitators have also proven to be a **powerful tool to increase accountability and commitment**. But they're not doing it alone! Our peer reflection groups gather regularly and share the responsibility of keeping everyone active and engaged. Reflection groups happen both in-person at NOW events and virtually during the online phase.

These reflection groups are also how we try to turn learning into a collective experience. We strongly believe that **we “learn better when we learn together”**. So this is very the magic really happens: reflection groups allow participants to share with each other and reflect on the Journey they are on.

Peers are also key in NOW's evaluation process. For our Learning Certificates, we use three different perspectives and focus on both formative and summative results. In practical terms, this means that each participant is evaluating their own skills and development, which is complemented by the perspectives of their peer groups and of their learning facilitators. **Our participants shared that hearing from their peers about their development is encouraging and boosts their self-esteem.**

“Through the close contact with the reflection group I facilitated, I have grown more confident in my own skills and trust in my ability to grow with each challenge that lies ahead of me. I have learned to give feedback in a more sensitive way and generally grown more considerate of how my behavior affects others.

Zlatka, NOW Learning Facilitator

“The role of a learning facilitator is to assist and guide people during the process of their learning. But mine was beyond that! She was an inspiration for many of us in this Journey. In both offline and online phases, she helped us improve ourselves not just professionally but also personally. She motivated each one of us to implement our projects by giving feedbacks and providing us with confidence, honesty and support.

Tugce, NOW Journey Participant

1. How to stimulate and measure competences for the 21st century?

THE NOW COMPETENCES

Which competences do our participants develop the most during our programs? For the NOW Journey, we analyzed the frameworks of our participants, their self and peer evaluations, as well as the evaluation by learning facilitators. The overview on the next page shows how many participants developed each competence.

Showing Vulnerability leads the field: 43% of participants managed to take a leap in this competence, followed by Understanding Privilege and Learning from Failure (both 42%). On the lower end, only 10% of our participants developed in the area of Understanding Global Challenges and 13% and 15% respectively developed their Proactivity and Inclusiveness.

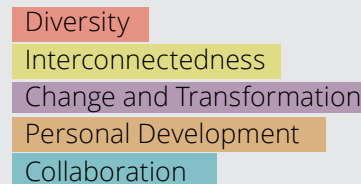
In FLOW, on the other hand, Inclusiveness was the competence developed by most participants (80% of the ones who finished the program) followed by Multiplication, Mindfulness and Showing Vulnerability (60%).*

The most developed competences in the NOW team in 2017 were: Understanding privilege, Feedback, Proactivity, Learning from failure and Self-management. This reflects our organizational challenge of fostering individual initiative and collaboration as a team.

* given the smaller scope and shorter duration of the FLOW program, we worked with a selection of 14 competences for all participants.

THE NOW LEARNING AREAS

We structure our participants' development around the following five Learning Areas:



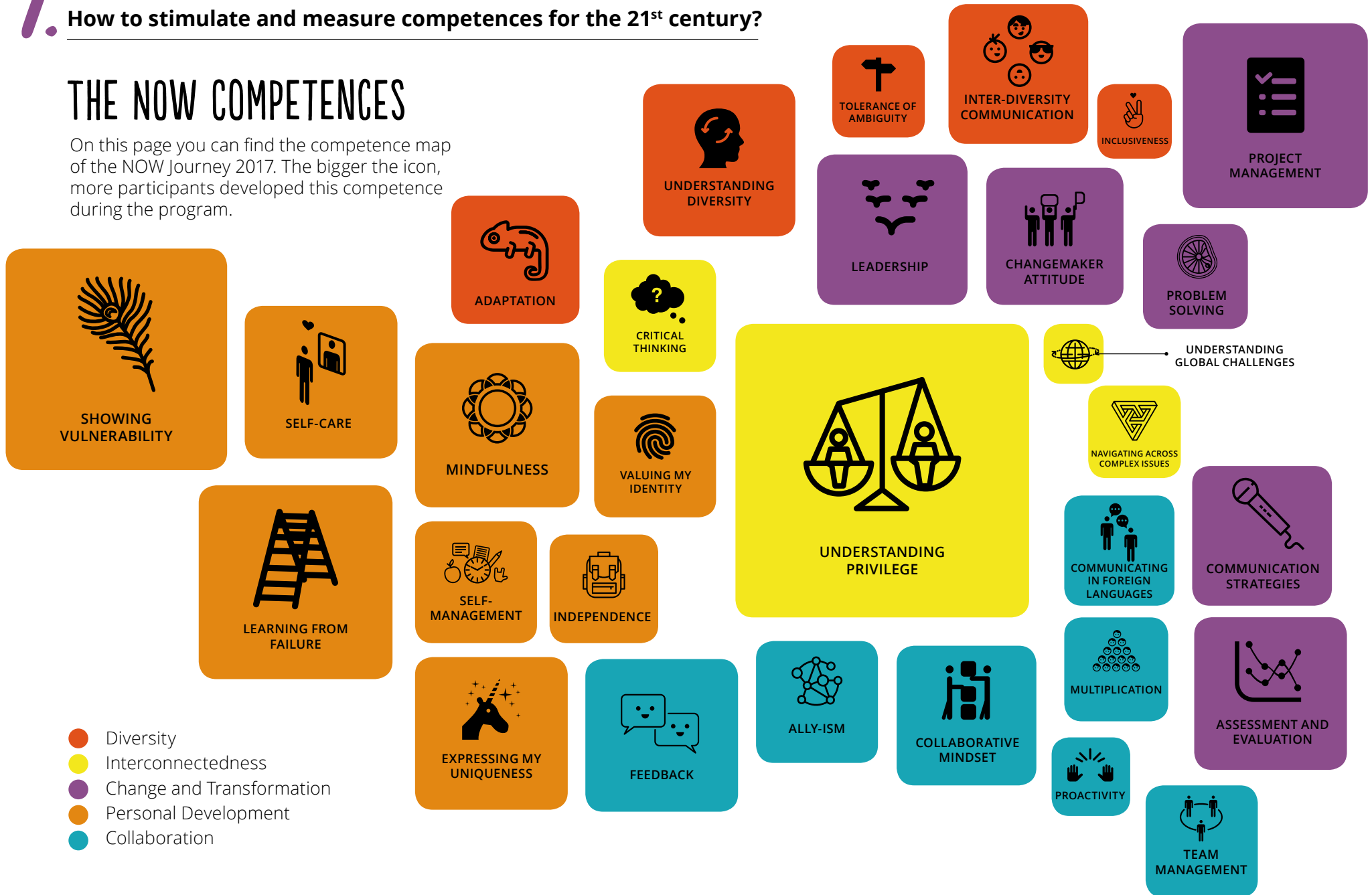
WHY DO WE SPEAK OF COMPETENCES?

At NOW we understand competences as the ability and commitment a person has to deal with a certain situation, encompassing the three levels of "skills", "attitudes" and "knowledge". In other words, **our competences build the set of tools we can use in our daily lives and work to solve problems, reach our goals and develop ourselves as a human being.**

1. How to stimulate and measure competences for the 21st century?

THE NOW COMPETENCES

On this page you can find the competence map of the NOW Journey 2017. The bigger the icon, more participants developed this competence during the program.



2. How to make our programs more inclusive?

NOW'S APPROACH TO INCLUSION

One of the big reasons why we created NOW in the first place, was the observation that **existing transformative learning opportunities were hardly inclusive**. We started off wanting to create a program for “unlikely participants”, those who usually do not participate in exchange programs or entrepreneurial learning opportunities. At the beginning, that was a rather vague description and it took us a while to grasp what unlikelyness actually means for us.

Today, we define “unlikelyness” as the combination of at least 2 of the following criteria:

- **Having little access to financial resources**
- **Being part of a minority (cultural, religious, because of sexual orientation, or other reasons)**
- **Having a physical and/or mental disability**
- **Living in a rural area**
- **Being a parent or having other strong family responsibilities**
- **Speaking little to no English (no more than A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)**
- **Having traveled abroad less than 2 times in their lives**

In the NOW Journey 2017, 13 participants, more than 1/3 of all participants, have fulfilled at least 2 of the criteria above. This proportion has remained steady from 2016 and is our aim for all programs that we offer. In FLOW, we haven't yet fully reached that level, with only about 20% of participants being unlikely.



2. How to make our programs more inclusive?

UNLIKELY PARTICIPANTS IN 2017



I have started to listen more and speak less, providing space for others to express themselves.

Pavlos, NOW Journey Participant

The numbers are clear: unlikely participants have steeper learning curves than their peers. Although in the learning area **Change and Transformation** “likely” participants developed more strongly in 2017 and there was hardly any difference in the learning area **Personal Development**, generally speaking **unlikely participants developed in 11% more competences than their peers**. We get a similar result if we look at which participants developed the most according to their Learning Facilitators and if we track the competences developed through their frameworks. Among the 8 participants with the biggest learning leaps, 7 fall into our categories of unlikelyness.

However, that’s not the only reason for keeping our policy of unlikely participants. They are also key to bringing diverse perspectives into our programs. Like, for example, Anne Marie who brought a unique contribution to FLOW when sharing her reflections on parenting. She explained how much she learned about her own needs by interacting with her son: “He is much more connected with his ‘wants’ than adults are, and I’m learning to make the difference between ‘want’ and ‘need’ very clear.” That perspective allowed her to help the group bring the conversation on minimalism and self-awareness to the next level.

Unlikely participants have also shown a very high commitment to NOW’s cause: they are **highly represented within the group of participants who want to continue to be involved in NOW**.

2. How to make our programs more inclusive?

INCLUSION, POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Having **Diversity** as one of the 5 learning areas of our programs and focusing on the inclusion of unlikely participants means that we have to continue challenging ourselves and our own assumptions. **What is our position of power as facilitators of these programs? Are we able to treat all participants with equity? How do we deal with our own blind spots due to privilege?**

It has been tough for us to realize in the middle of a program that we are not fully equipped to support all of our participants with their unique needs, traumas and expectations. It touched us deep down in our values when we started having doubts about some of the activities we do. Are we exploiting some (usually unlikely) participants to create moments of learning for the group? Are we sure we can handle the situations that might arise from the experiences we provide? It was in those moments, when the depth of inter-diversity learning and working with unlikely participants really caught up with us.

We don't have the answers to these questions, but we will continue raising them in our team, and more and more also with our participants.

WHAT IS INTER-DIVERSITY LEARNING?

Inter-diversity learning is a non-formal education approach that we are developing at NOW. Based on intercultural learning, it dives deep into the many layers of identities of each person and the interconnected societies we live in.

We cannot exploit the life stories of some of our participants to create learning opportunities for others. Like with everything: it will be the privileged ones to benefit and the underprivileged to get hurt.

Rahel, NOW Team Member



“ Everything is connected to diversity- I can appreciate difference so much more because NOW provided a framework to explore it practically and theoretically.

Fabio, NOW Journey Participant

“ I learned that with a good stimulation and support everyone can make a change in world. People have the ideas, but sometimes they're afraid to apply them.

Petre, NOW Journey Participant

3. How to create true connections online?

IS ONLINE LEARNING ENOUGH?

One of the biggest tests in 2017 was our program FLOW, with which we tried to offer the NOW Journey experience in a shorter format in an online space and make it accessible to more people. **If we are honest with ourselves, then FLOW wasn't a complete success story.**

The online nature of FLOW allowed us to reach a broad range of individuals across the world who held diverse perspectives and had very different backgrounds. It also allowed working professionals to invest in their personal development while managing work, families, and other commitments.

While all participants were dedicated to the learning goals of FLOW, we quickly realized that it was challenging to bring everyone together and engage in virtual collaboration and discussion. **Different time-zones and work schedules, varied levels of commitment to "log in" daily, and diverse communication styles limited our ability to foster relationships in a 100% online environment.** By the end, we understood that online learning provides flexibility and a low-cost option to connect and learn with others, however, without the initial personal connection and trust-building provided by a face-to-face experience, the virtual space falls short of its potential.

On the other hand, FLOW had a lot of elements that we consider successful: **using microlearning, peer-to-peer connections, online coaching and working on personal learning goals are all elements in which FLOW has enriched our experience and toolkit.** These elements were brought into the second edition of the NOW Journey and helped to make the online phase much more engaging and successful than in the first edition. Our participants were able to truly open up and use the spaces that the learning facilitators created to push their development and connect with their peers online. **In short: online learning alone doesn't fully work... but blended learning can be really powerful.**

I *I think what makes NOW's blended approach in the NOW Journey special is that we manage to bring true connections, trust and mutual care to the online space.*

Meg, NOW Learning Facilitator

3. How to create true connections online?

WORKING TOGETHER ONLINE



Combining online connections with short but impactful offline moments is also the approach we have used to consolidate the NOW collaboration model. Since the very beginning, the NOW team was spread over different countries and our meetings were always held online. In 2016, the NOWers met for the first time during our first in-person event (the NOW Encounter 2016) and for many it was unbelievable how close we had grown by working together virtually. In the meantime, we have come a long way in developing our online collaboration. **It's not just about Slack or Trello, it's about how we are using these tools to create human connections while also getting work done.** We have experimented with an online peer review, check-in with the group every Monday and have regular reflection sessions in smaller groups where we share how our lives are going and how we feel about NOW.

In 2017, due to the growing team and the challenge of making NOW's structure more sustainable, **we started a new online challenge: going through a restructuring and visioning process.**

You can read more about NOW 2.0 on page 39. There is already a lot of learning coming from it, but results will only become fully concrete later in 2018.

I've learned that it is possible to build relationships from scratch by working together online, and that it's key to spend informal time together online, and not just having work meetings.

Elis, NOW Team Member

3. How to create true connections online?

WHEN IT DOESN'T WORK OUT

In 2017, we have also tried hard to start a whole new set of activities in Latin America. We aimed especially at creating a NOW Journey in the region similar to the one in Europe. We found a great team of engaged people and we hoped that our shared expertise in project development, fundraising, and facilitation would help us take this big step. Unfortunately, the environment in Latin America made this step more difficult than we had imagined:

- **Many people were amazed by our mission and activities and wanted to contribute, even though they had very busy lives. Unfortunately, we were not able to turn motivation into action, when the time people could dedicate to NOW was so little;**
- **Our present online collaboration model needs constant connection and does not provide options for people who would only like to contribute from time to time;**
- **The funding opportunities were much more limited and focused mostly on projects that were already running. Seed funding to start a new project was hardly available;**
- **it is much harder and costly to institutionalize an organization in the region. Yet, this is a fundamental step to receive funding.**

In the face of these difficulties and the constant delay in organizing actual activities, the team grew more and more demotivated and invested less time in the tasks. We eventually decided to pause the activities of the Latin America Team in September 2017. However, some Latin American team members are still involved in NOW and we hope we can still bring some NOW activities to the region in the future! We certainly have learned our lesson and will take smaller and more customized steps when expanding to new regions in the future.

It was not easy to identify fully with NOW while working 100% online. The European team had already met in person and had much stronger connections. Also, there are many more opportunities in Europe than in Latin America. With the failed attempt of creating a NOW team here, I had to learn to deal with frustration and to be critical of my self-management competences.

Andrés, NOW Team Member,
Latin America

4. How can we change the world while practicing self-care?

CHANGEMAKER COMPETENCES

We started the first edition of the NOW Journey in 2016 with 4 Learning Areas (Change & Transformation, Interconnectedness, Diversity and Collaboration) only to realize that a lot of what our participants learned was not encompassed in any of them. We started to see that in order to create a positive impact in the world, we need to find a balance between our heart and mind, and be able to take care of our wellbeing, our body and our relationships. As a result, we added **the 5th Learning Area to our Framework of Competences: Personal Development**. It includes the following competences, which soon became crucial elements of our programs:



It's not just through the interaction with our participants that we started to grasp the importance of looking at the personal side. **Self-care and self-management** were key topics of our team reflections since the beginning of NOW. Together, we have learned that we won't be able to create impact in the world if we are not able to set priorities and say "no" when we are getting overwhelmed.

4. How can we change the world while practicing self-care?

EMBRACING OUR SHADOWS



|| *The NOW Journey taught me that it is not that difficult to get up laughing when you fall.*

Fatma, NOW Journey Participant

With our NOW programs, we're not just supporting our participants to create social change projects, we are, above all, preparing them – and ourselves – to be active citizens and make a meaningful contribution to society. That is why important questions for our programs are: **How do we learn to deal with the uncomfortable? How can we embrace failure and our individual limitations?** We believe that only when we face our vulnerabilities will we be able to align our actions with our values and change our attitudes in the long-term.

For example, only if we truly dedicate ourselves to act upon inequalities in our society – and are able to understand diversity and privilege – will we manage to make a difference together.

Our learning in 2017 has shown that, with the right setting, we can create the needed trust and safe space for ourselves and the participants to share what we are not yet good at, to show vulnerability and express our doubts and fears. It's a first step towards finding solutions together.

4. How can we change the world while practicing self-care?

IT'S ABOUT FINDING THE BALANCE

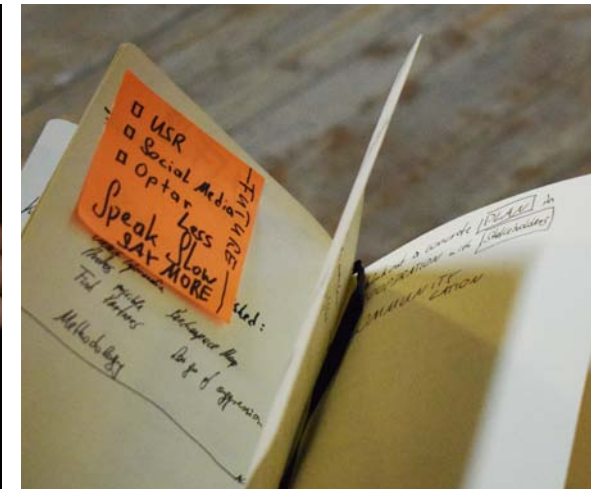
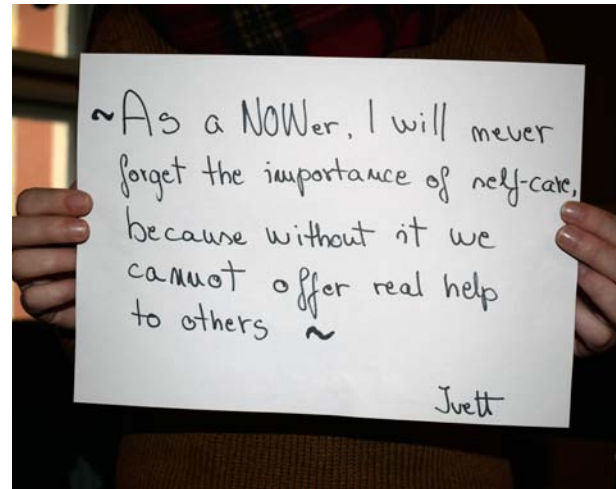


Becoming a changemaker requires us to be willing to work on ourselves, to look deeper into who we are, and to take action on the things we truly believe in. During our pilot of FLOW, we realized just how important it is to give people an opportunity to explore themselves as changemakers. As such, **we offered our FLOW participants an opportunity to actually take time for themselves, to get involved in changemaking and to start asking themselves questions that allowed for personal growth.** In each of the seven weeks, the program had at least one **Personal Development** competence among its learning goals.

Despite being highly committed to **Personal Development** as a key element of our programs, we are also aware of its dangers. There is always the risk of getting lost in our problems, of showing vulnerability just for the sake of showing it, or even of becoming too comfortable in being in a victim position. **Training our Personal Development muscle must always be in balance with taking action and fighting for the things we believe in.**

|| *The living realities and personal stories of both team and participants have reminded me several times that I am in a very privileged situation. With that, I feel the need to take responsibility for my strengths, my opportunities, my unique contribution for social change and, last but not least, my personal needs and longings.*

Wouter, NOW team



The NOW Encounter literally changed my life - a 180 degree turn, which I really thankful for. I am more open to people's feedback and perceive it as a tool that could help me develop, rather than just an opinion that could hurt me. I learned to listen not for the sake of replying, but to hear what the other person has to say and see what I can learn from it.

Tsveti, NOW Journey Participant

NOWER: a person who
listens, learns, dreams
and acts to improve
oneself & the world

Sara Luna from Estonia

NOW GOES 2.0

How do we develop our organizational structure further to make it sustainable and agile? How do we decentralize responsibility and empower everyone to take initiative? How do we make use of each person's unique talents and contributions? That's what NOW's current restructuring process is all about.

With NOW 2.0 we want to further stimulate our entrepreneurial spirit and become independent from funding from foundations.

We have already prototyped a new way of working together during our consulting work for *Durchstart* last year and with our current project UP (see next page): small, committed teams with clearly distributed tasks working independently from the bigger NOW community – but fully aligned with NOW's core values and methodologies. In line with these experiences, we are currently creating our new organizational structure as a powerful network of smaller project teams – allowing us to scale and expand our impact gradually and sustainably.

We are also diving into a whole new experience by **creating the NOW App**: a new tool that combines the NOW approach of working with 21st century competences and Learning Facilitation with adaptive learning. With the App, it will be even easier to track and stimulate each individual participant's development.

If you would like to join us for a future NOW project or have a great project proposal, please reach out: ideas@nowornow.org



NEW PROGRAMS ON THE HORIZON

The newest NOW project is called UP and started in early 2018. Together with our local partner, Mentorprogramma Friesland, we are creating a solution to tackle the lack of economic integration of refugees in the Netherlands. UP is part of a bigger initiative called CREATE YOUR FUTURE.

The UP Challenge is a 9-week program for refugees with a residence permit in Friesland. In teams, the refugees solve challenges submitted by companies and, by doing so, they learn more about the Frisian (business) culture, discover their unique skills and improve their self-esteem and proactivity.

With UP we are making a NOW dream come true: using our methodologies and experience to help bridge the growing gap between the job market and people in need of economic stability.

If you would like to contribute to the creation of UP or would like to help us bring it to other cities, please reach out through up@nowornow.org.



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THANK YOU!

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In memory of FLOW participant, artist and changemaker Luciana Quinto.