

HANDBOOK COACHING ACROSS CONTINENTS

Handbook on Coaching for Intercultural Contexts aimed at inclusive and civic learning:

Developed by OCAC and OCC under the MILAGRO Project (2023–2025)
Co-funded by the European Union

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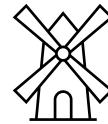
Danielle Vlaanderen – Co-Founder of OCAC and OCC

Our Philosophy

We believe coaching can be a civic intervention—an intentional act that builds connection, trust, and participation in democratic life.

We begin from the belief that every person is unique, and no one is perfect. This is what makes equality possible: not sameness, but shared humanity. From this place, we learn from one another. We grow in dialogue. We build together.





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This Handbook was developed as part of the MILAGRO Project (2023–2025), co-funded by the European Union. It was created by the Online Coaching Academy (OCAC) and reflects coaching practices and insights developed through the Online Coaching Centre (OCC).

The content of this Handbook includes two core frameworks:

- The 5Cs model
- The BRIDGE model

These models were initiated and conceptualized by Hamed Noori prior to this publication. Through the co-authorship of this Handbook, both Hamed Noori and Danielle Vlaanderen have further developed and articulated these frameworks, integrating them into a cohesive structure for coaching practice in intercultural and civic contexts.

The intellectual property rights to the original 5Cs and BRIDGE models belong to Hamed Noori. The Handbook as a whole—including its structure, expression, tools, and contextual development—is co-authored by Hamed Noori and Danielle Vlaanderen, who share full credit and responsibility for the final text. We acknowledge and honor the collaborative vision, reflective contribution, and civic commitment that shaped this work.

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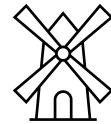
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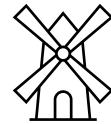




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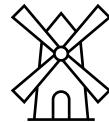
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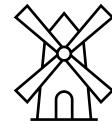
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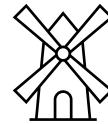


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Foreword / Preface

This Handbook was developed as part of the **MILAGRO project (2024–2026)**—a European initiative focused on strengthening inclusion, democratic participation, and social resilience in communities shaped by migration. Across five countries, local partners came together to explore how civic coaching could support individuals and communities in navigating change, reconnecting to purpose, and co-creating shared futures.

From the beginning, this work was grounded in a belief: that coaching, when practiced relationally and reflectively, can become civic intervention. It can support not only individuals, but communities—by building presence, connection, and participation across different cultures.

OCC and OCAC, as supporting partners under the coordination of Utrecht University College (UCU), contribute to the MILAGRO project by bringing their coaching vision, methodology, relational approach and lived practice. This collaboration was made possible through the thoughtful leadership of Tatiana Bruni, whose coordination at Utrecht University laid a strong foundation for connection between academic, civic, and intercultural efforts. This Handbook is one outcome of that collaboration. It reflects coaching moments across countries and languages. It is rooted in real questions, lived dilemmas, and ongoing learning—among coaches, coachees, and teams.

We offer this Handbook to those who are stepping into coaching roles in uncertain, layered, and often unjust systems. It is meant to support—not instruct. To accompany—not lead. To invite reflection—not impose rules.

About OCAC and OCC

The Online Coaching Centre (OCC) and Online Coaching Academy (OCAC) were founded at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. What began as an urgent response to social isolation quickly grew into a long-term commitment to coaching as a civic intervention.

The first OCC was launched at Utrecht University, where we supported over 2,250 students during the height of the pandemic. We trained more than 60 coaches and introduced a variety of coaching formats—from one-on-one sessions, to Nature Quest, to group coaching and reflective workshops.

Out of this experience, we developed OCAC as a platform for training and mentoring coaches working in intercultural, democratic, and community-based contexts. OCAC offers foundational training and ongoing learning opportunities grounded in relational and civic coaching.

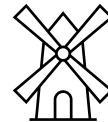
Through the MILAGRO project, OCC and OCAC are expanding into new countries and universities, with support from a growing network of local teams and central guidance from Utrecht.

The work of OCAC is guided by four founding pillars:

- Peace
- Equality
- Sharing Quality Education
- Intercultural Communication

Together, OCC and OCAC carry a vision of coaching not only as personal development—but as civic responsibility with accessibility to all





Meet the Authors

Hamed Noori – Author

Hamed Noori is an educator, coach, and civic entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience in leadership, coaching, and intercultural development. Born in Afghanistan, he was forced to leave his country after the Russian invasion—a moment that marked the beginning of a life shaped by migration, hardship, and perseverance. Having lived in multiple countries and faced repeated discrimination, Hamed draws on both resilience and vision in his work.

With academic roots in management and international law, Hamed has worked as a teacher, policy advisor, and executive coach. He is deeply committed to lifelong learning and has continually integrated his personal experiences with professional knowledge to empower others.

In 2020, he combined his background in crisis management and coaching to found the Online Coaching Centre (OCC) and the Online Coaching Academy (OCAC). Soon after, he set up the first OCC at Utrecht University, where he led efforts that supported more than 2,200 students and trained over 60 coaches during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

OCAC's first global initiative, a crash coaching course, welcomed 100 participants from four continents, including people living in areas with limited access to electricity, internet, or educational opportunity. That course marked the beginning of a wider mission: to spread the essence of coaching—non-judgmental listening, presence, and shared growth—as a civic skill.

The BRIDGE model, introduced in this Handbook, was not born in theory but in lived experience. It reflects Hamed's own journey through disruption, rebuilding, and contribution. Since 2019, he has lived in the Netherlands, where he continues to serve as a coach, trainer, and speaker at Utrecht University.

Hamed was nominated for the Diversity and Inclusion Award in 2022 and recognized as a Game Changer in Education in 2023. Today, he leads OCC and OCAC within the MILAGRO project, training coaches in the Netherlands, Italy, and Serbia to support integration and civic participation. His partnership with Danielle Vlaanderen—co-founder of these initiatives—grew from a shared belief that coaching and openness to learning can bridge difference and build democratic life.

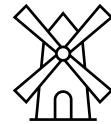
Danielle Vlaanderen – Author

Danielle Vlaanderen is an educator, trainer, and course designer with over 30 years of experience in coaching, communication, and experiential learning. Raised in the Netherlands with formative years in Suriname and the United States, Danielle grew up with a curiosity about people, society, and how we learn to live together. This led her to study sociology, and later educational sciences—fields that would shape both her teaching and her way of engaging with the world.

At Utrecht University, Danielle began teaching courses in communication skills. Her search to understand more about human interaction brought her into contact with Transactional Analysis (TA)—a body of work that would deeply influence her professional journey. TA gave her language and insight into how people relate, what patterns we repeat, and how understanding those dynamics can lead to real change. She experienced this herself. Later, she further developed her knowledge through training in psychodynamic counseling, integrating all these insights and experiences into everything she taught.

For the past three decades, Danielle has been the coordinator of the Coaching and Training course at Utrecht University. This course became a vibrant learning space—bilingual, inclusive, and shaped by the





many guest trainers, co-designers, and student-trainers who contributed their ideas and energy. Danielle's work has always been fueled by the creativity of her students, and by her belief that learning is co-created.

When Utrecht University began offering courses to students with refugee backgrounds, Danielle opened her program to include them—building on a long-standing commitment to intercultural and bilingual education. Her sociology roots came full circle, as her classrooms became places where curiosity, diversity, and relational learning could flourish.

It was through coaching, a shared belief in humanity, and mutual openness to learning that their paths crossed. Danielle co-founded OCC and OCAC alongside Hamed, contributing her deep educational experience and intercultural insight to a growing initiative grounded in civic purpose and relational practice.

That vision continues to grow through their joint work on the MILAGRO project, and is carried forward in the pages of this Handbook.

Acknowledgements

This Handbook is the result of a rich collaboration between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, ages, and experiences. It grew slowly at first—almost outside of awareness—and then evolved rapidly when we joined the MILAGRO project.

We owe special thanks to Tatiana Bruni, who invited us and OCC/OCAC to this project. Her sincere involvement and thoughtful feedback have supported us throughout the process.

Many people contributed to this work—often without knowing it. Our heartfelt thanks go to the OCC coaches and early contributors, our advisory board, the Department of Educational Sciences at Utrecht University, and the Coaching and Training course trainers, whose presence and insight made it possible to shape what we have now put into words.

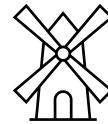
To our focus group readers, who gave generous feedback under tight time pressure: *Alice, Aman, Ebony, Famiaa, Michel, Omar, Weam*—thank you. Your remarks have been thoughtfully considered.

Our Milagro partners and participants in the Train the Trainer course for the OCC's in Italy and Serbia inspired us by setting boundaries around our ideas, expressing their needs and wishes, enjoying their learning journey and cheering us on.

As authors, we've come to know one another even more deeply through this work.

We hope you enjoy the reading.

Hamed and Danielle



How to Use This Handbook

This Handbook was developed to support coaching in intercultural, migrant, and community-based contexts, with a strong emphasis on civic participation, inclusion, and democratic values. It is designed to serve a dual purpose, in line with the expectations of the MILAGRO project.

The 5Cs model—Connecting, Contracting, Conversing, Contributing, and Celebrating—offers an accessible introduction to the core phases of coaching. This structure is particularly useful for aspiring coaches who are participating in foundational training programs, such as those provided by the Online Coaching Academy (OCAC). Each chapter introduces one of the 5Cs, accompanied by real-life examples, reflective tools, and intercultural considerations.

At the same time, this Handbook is a valuable resource for experienced coaches. The 5Cs present a fresh, context-specific model that can enrich established practice—especially in diverse, refugee-inclusive, or democratic engagement settings.

To meet these two audiences, the Handbook is organized in two parts:

- Part I: The 5Cs Model – An introduction to the core elements of coaching, designed for new and aspiring coaches, and equally valuable for experienced coaches seeking to broaden their perspectives.
- Part II: Deep Practice – A collection of advanced reflections, tools, and applications for experienced coaches seeking to deepen their work in civic and intercultural contexts.

Whether you are new to coaching or looking to refine your approach, this Handbook is intended as a companion—to support your development, sharpen your awareness, and strengthen your practice.

Why Learning Matters

Learning is at the heart of coaching. It is how people grow, reflect, and make sense of their experience. Learning is also at the heart of democracy. In a democratic society, no one holds all the answers—and everyone has something to contribute. Learning calls for humility, curiosity, and openness—values essential not only for coaches, but for citizens.

When locals learn from migrants, and migrants learn from locals, something shifts. Integration becomes mutual transformation, not assimilation. That is the spirit of this Handbook.

Four Learning Principles underlying OCC coaching

1. I'm OK – You're OK

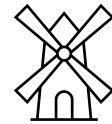
This principle affirms the value and capability of both coach and coachee. It fosters relationships grounded in mutual respect and trust—foundations for learning across differences.

2. Experiential Learning

Coaching is best learned through doing. This Handbook invites you to engage with real-life cases, exercises, and questions that support a cycle of experience, reflection, and growth.

3. Reflection

Good coaching requires ongoing self-reflection. As a coach, you are the primary instrument in your work. The more you understand yourself, the more intentional and ethical your interventions can be.

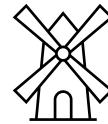


4. Self-Directed Learning

Whether you are a coachee, a coach, or someone training coaches, your learning journey is yours to shape. This Handbook encourages you to take ownership of that path—setting your own goals and exploring new ways of thinking, relating, and acting.

In coaching and in civic life, we are never done learning. Each conversation offers a chance to be changed by what we hear. Each moment of confusion is an invitation to reflect. And each connection we make becomes a step toward a more open, shared society.





General Introduction

Purpose of the Handbook

This Handbook was created for coaches and aspiring coaches working in intercultural, civic, and migration-related contexts. It grows out of the MILAGRO project, where coaching supported both newcomers and long-term residents in building connection, direction, and shared participation in community life.

Development Context: MILAGRO, UCU, OCC, and OCAC

Developed by the **Online Coaching Academy (OCAC)** and based on the experiences of the **Online Coaching Centre (OCC)**, this Handbook reflects real conversations, real choices, and the steady presence of coaching in complex moments. During the project period, coaching was provided by OCC, based in Utrecht. Looking ahead, coaching will be carried forward by local OCC and OCAC teams across partner countries, with continued support and supervision from the central team.

What Coaching Means in This Context

This Handbook is not a technical manual or a set of instructions. It is a **reflective and relational companion**—for those who already coach, and those stepping into the role for the first time. It supports coaches in listening, responding, and growing alongside others in situations shaped by migration, uncertainty, or exclusion.

In these settings, coachees often bring more than a question. They may carry layered histories—of movement, strength, loss, or transformation. The coach is not there to give answers or provide direction. The role of the coach is to **co-create conditions** where dignity, clarity, and self-direction can re-emerge, even when life feels unfamiliar or constrained.

Overview of Structure: The 5Cs and BRIDGE Models

To support this process, the Handbook introduces two core frameworks:

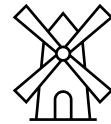
- The **5Cs model** – Five relational elements that shape coaching in context: *Connecting, Contracting, Conversation, Contributing, and Celebrating*. These chapters form **Part I** of the Handbook. Each chapter is grounded in coaching practice, with real-life stories, reflection tools, and intercultural considerations.
- The **BRIDGE model** – A needs-based lens developed by Hamed Noori based on his experience. It supports the coach in recognizing underlying needs that may arise in the lives of people navigating new systems, identities, and civic roles. These six dimensions—*Belonging, Recognition, Information, Direction, Guarantees, and Empowerment*—are referenced throughout the chapters and introduced in full in the next section.

What the Reader Can Expect

Each chapter offers practical reflections, tools, and insights to support coaching practice in civic and intercultural contexts. Some content may affirm what you already do. Other sections may invite you to look again—with fresh attention and relational awareness.

Dual Audience: Aspiring and Experienced Coaches

This Handbook serves a dual purpose:



- For **aspiring coaches**, particularly those participating in OCAC training, it introduces essential coaching phases through a culturally aware, civic-oriented lens.
- For **experienced coaches**, it offers fresh perspective and depth—inviting reflection, realignment, and growth in response to intercultural complexity.

Whether you are just beginning or already practicing, this Handbook is offered as a **companion**—to support your development, sharpen your awareness, and strengthen your coaching impact.

Understanding the BRIDGE Model

A Framework for Coaching with Newcomers

This Handbook is shaped by the experiences of OCC coaches who have supported newcomers from different backgrounds. One of the frameworks that has guided us in this work is the BRIDGE model. It is a way to reflect on what many migrants and newcomers may need in order to feel safe, grow, and participate meaningfully in a new society.

The model grew out of real experience. It was never designed as a universal theory. Instead, it offers a practical lens for listening more deeply—to both the spoken and unspoken needs that arise in coaching relationships.

What We Mean by Need

A **need** is something essential to a person's well-being, growth, or ability to act with dignity. Needs can be emotional, relational, physical, cognitive, or structural. They arise not only from within the individual but also from the social, legal, and cultural systems around them.

In **coaching**, identifying needs helps support reflection, clarity, and self-direction. In **civic life**, understanding and responding to human needs is part of building democratic participation and social inclusion.

The **BRIDGE model** in this Handbook names six common needs often present in the lives of people navigating migration and exclusion: *Belonging, Recognition, Information, Direction, Guarantees, and Empowerment*.

What BRIDGE Represents

Each letter in BRIDGE points to a meaningful area of need often that occurs in coaching with migrants and newcomers:

B – Belonging: The need to feel accepted, emotionally safe, and part of something.

R – Recognition: The need to be seen, respected, and valued as a full human being.

I – Information & Infrastructure: The need to understand and access systems like housing, law, healthcare, and education.

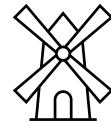
D – Direction: The need for clarity, orientation, and a personal sense of future.

G – Guarantees: The need for stability, protection, and legal or social assurances.

E – Empowerment: The need to act, decide, and contribute meaningfully in society.

A Layered Model of Needs

In practice, the BRIDGE model often unfolds across three interconnected layers:



Human Needs (Relational)

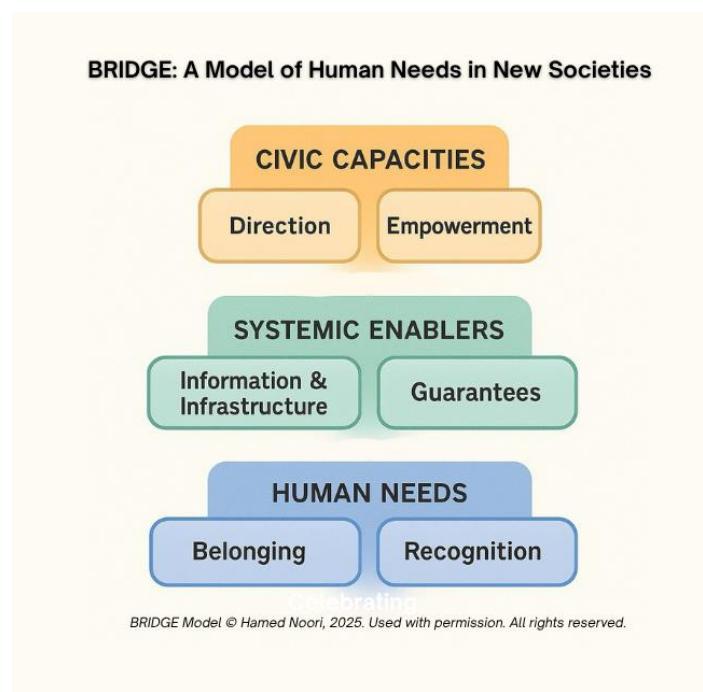
- Belonging
- Recognition

Systemic Enablers (Structural)

- Information & Infrastructure
- Guarantees

Civic Capacities (Developmental)

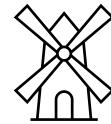
- Direction
- Empowerment



These layers influence one another. A person may have the capacity to take action, but without recognition or belonging, that contribution may not be sustained. Coaching helps surface and respond to these interdependencies—without needing to resolve them.

Why This Model?

There are many ways to talk about human development, identity, and participation. BRIDGE reflects what OCC coaches heard, saw, and encountered in real conversations. It helps coaches stay relational while attending to structural complexity. And while it wasn't designed from policy frameworks, many of its core dimensions—especially belonging, empowerment, and recognition—resonate strongly with the values of **Democratic Culture and Education (DCE)** and the **Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)**. In this way, BRIDGE offers both practical and civic relevance.



How Coaches Can Use BRIDGE

Coaches have found BRIDGE helpful in many ways. It doesn't require formal training—just a willingness to reflect and stay attentive to what might be unfolding beneath the surface.

You might use it as:

- A reflective lens: What need seems present in this moment? What might be unspoken?
- A guide in conversation: Are we talking about safety, identity, confusion, direction?
- A shared language: Can this help me and my colleagues describe what we're sensing?
- An ethical compass: When a coaching topic touches on legal or systemic barriers, is it time to collaborate with someone else?

Supporting the Coach, Too

While BRIDGE emerged from a desire to better support newcomers, it also helps coaches stay grounded.

In emotionally charged or complex settings, this model offers:

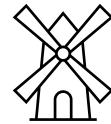
- A way to focus without reducing complexity
- A reminder that coaching is relational, not only individual
- A tool for reflection, collaboration, and self-care
- A bridge (in itself) between values and practice

You'll see references to BRIDGE throughout this Handbook. In each chapter, we connect the coaching themes with needs that often arise in migrant experiences. These links are offered as possibilities, drawn from lived examples—not prescriptions. We invite you to stay with them, question them, and adapt them to your context.

Part I – Entering Practice: The 5Cs

The 5Cs in Action

Coaching is a relational practice. It does not follow fixed steps or formulas, but unfolds through real human encounters, full of nuance, movement, and mutual influence. This part of the Handbook introduces the **5Cs**: five core coaching elements that form the dynamic of civic and intercultural coaching.



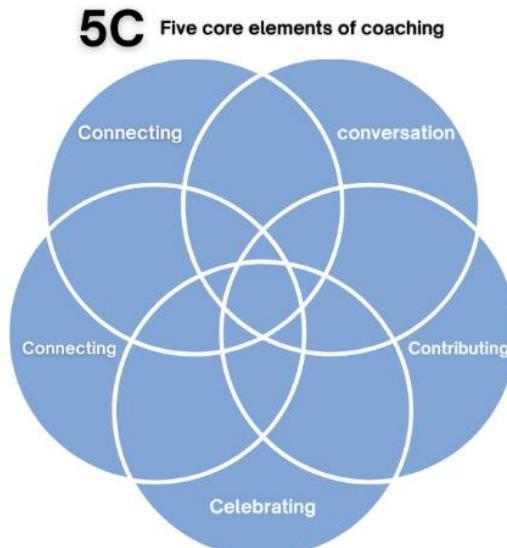
The **5Cs** are:

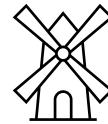
- **Connecting**
- **Contracting**
- **Conversation**
- **Contributing**
- **Celebrating**

Each “C” represents a relational moment—not a stage to complete, but a space to return to, deepen, or re-enter as the relationship evolves. These moments reflect how coaching actually happens: through presence, trust, curiosity, and shared direction.

In practice, the 5Cs are non-linear and dynamic. You might find yourself revisiting a connection, re-contracting an agreement, or noticing that celebration and challenge are happening at the same time. That’s part of the real rhythm of coaching—especially in contexts shaped by the complexity of migration and cultural differences.

Each chapter in this part offers a reflection on one of the Cs. You’ll find real coaching stories, practical tools, and reflective questions. Let each chapter support your practice—not as a formula, but as an invitation to notice what is already happening, and what is asking to be supported.





Chapter 1: Connecting

1.1 Starting Where We Are

Connecting is the beginning of every coaching relationship. It may seem small at first, a glance, a pause, a sense of being acknowledged. Yet connecting is what makes everything else possible. We've come to see that connection is a starting point, and sometimes the whole point. It creates a shared sense that both people are present, engaged, and invited into something meaningful. Whether it's between migrants and locals, strangers and neighbors, or a coach and coachee, authentic connection opens the way for learning and brings something deeply human into our shared efforts. This isn't always easy. In intercultural settings, people carry different expectations, different ways of speaking and listening, and different relationships to systems of support. That's why we see connection as more than a one-time event. It's something we return to, again and again, often in small and quiet ways.

What supports the building of meaningful connection is often quite simple, even if it's not always immediately visible. When openness, trust, and honesty are present, even briefly, they can give rise to relationships that feel real and affirming.

In our practical work through the OCC (Online Coaching Center), we've noticed that when working with newcomers, connection often takes more time to unfold. It may take several meetings before someone begins to share what really matters to them. And we've learned not to rush it. Sometimes, offering your full attention, without expectation, is already a significant gesture.

Connection is the first breeze that moves the air.

Without it, nothing turns. It's subtle and relational. You don't force it, you notice it. You sense the possibility of movement, something is present, alive, responsive. Just as a windmill needs the wind to begin turning, coaching begins with connection. It is the felt sense that something is possible here. Before structure, before conversation, before action, there is a moment of presence that stirs the air.

1.2 Needs in Focus (BRIDGE Model)

Across the coaching experiences described in this chapter, through presence, listening, or simply showing up with consistency, two core needs often become visible: **belonging** and **recognition**.

Belonging

Belonging is the need to feel emotionally safe and part of something.

For many newcomers, this doesn't happen automatically. It is sensed through small moments: a conversation that isn't rushed, a gesture that says "you're welcome here," or an environment where someone can arrive without needing to explain themselves.

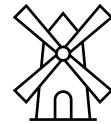
Coaches support belonging by offering steady presence, creating the conditions for connection to develop in its own time. This doesn't require solving or resolving what feels uncertain. It requires being there in a way that allows the other person to feel included.

Recognition

Recognition is the need to be seen as a full person, not as a problem to solve, a case to manage, or a story of survival.

When someone is received with respect, patience, and attention, they often begin to see themselves differently too. Voice, confidence, and presence begin to shift, not through instruction, but through relational experience.

In OCC sessions, we've seen that when coachees feel both accepted and acknowledged, they begin to share more than information. They bring their perspective, their values, and their questions, more fully and more freely.



The BRIDGE model reminds us that connection is not just a feeling, it meets real human needs. When those needs are recognized in a coaching relationship, the foundation is set for everything that comes next.

1.3 A Real-Life Moment: “Thank You for Being Here”

During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, a young single mother from Africa requested online coaching through the OCC. Life was heavy for her: she was raising a child, adjusting to a new culture, and experiencing deep isolation during lockdown. Since there is never a clear roadmap for how to start in coaching, only the sense that being fully present was what mattered most, Hamed (one of the authors) met her online with steady attention.

In the first four conversations, the coach simply listened, making room for the coachee to speak openly. There were long pauses. She shared her loneliness, the pressure she felt to succeed, and her quiet strength. The coach offered what he could: presence, curiosity, and consistency, and he valued her willingness to share.

Still, by the fifth session, the coach began to question himself. Was he doing enough? Was listening really sufficient?

And then she arrived, with completely different energy. She had a clear sense of direction. Her voice was more grounded, her words more certain. Something had shifted, not because of a breakthrough technique, but because she had been able to show up without being rushed. She had found her own way.

At the end of that conversation, she said something the coach still carries:

“Thank you for being here. I’m not the same person I was when we started. I’ve found my way.”

That sentence reminded the coach: coaching is not about fixing. Sometimes, being there, consistently, openly, and with attention, is what allows connection to deepen. And through that connection, the next steps often reveal themselves.

1.4 Coaching reflection

Trust as a Process, not a Moment

It can be tempting, especially in the early stages of coaching, to look for signs that trust has “happened”: a smile, a longer response, a sense of ease. But trust, particularly in intercultural coaching, doesn’t arrive all at once. It builds gradually, through repeated experiences of presence and respect.

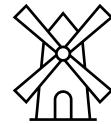
We’ve seen this again and again in OCC sessions. A coachee may appear guarded or unsure at first. They might take several sessions just to speak freely. This isn’t resistance, it’s reality. Many people, especially those navigating new systems or recovering from exclusion, have valid reasons to be cautious.

As coaches, we support trust not by speeding it up, but by staying consistent. Trust deepens when someone begins to sense: *I can be all of who I am here, without needing to justify it.*

That moment rarely comes from a clever question or perfect structure. It grows when presence is steady, interest is sincere, and respect is felt without conditions.

Safety Beyond Comfort

In coaching, especially across cultures and varied life experiences, we’ve learned that creating a safe environment doesn’t always mean creating a comfortable one. Some of the most meaningful coaching



moments arise when someone feels safe enough to speak honestly, express discomfort, or face something difficult.

Safety means the conversation is respectful, non-judgmental, and confidential. It allows someone to show up as they are, without fear of being diminished. But safety doesn't always feel easy. A conversation that seems emotionally calm might still carry tension or important shifts. And when discomfort surfaces, it may signal that something meaningful is coming into view.

As coaches, we may feel the urge to soften, reassure, or ease discomfort quickly. This is a natural response when we want to be supportive. Yet we've seen that one of the most powerful things we can do is to stay present without trying to fix or steer the moment.

We've come to ask ourselves: *Is this conversation emotionally safe, even if it's not emotionally easy?*

Staying with this question can help deepen connection, especially when someone is still learning to trust themselves, their story, or the place they're in.

Identity and Positionality of the Coach

Connection is shaped by who we are and how others perceive us. In coaching, especially in intercultural settings, our background, accent, appearance, or the institution we represent may carry meaning before we even begin to speak.

In OCC sessions, we've seen that newcomers often associate the coach with certain roles: a helper, an expert, a cultural insider, or someone with authority. These roles are not inherently negative, but if we are unaware of them, they can affect how the relationship develops.

Rather than trying to appear neutral or invisible, we've found it more helpful to stay aware of our position and, when appropriate, to speak to it with honesty. This doesn't require deep personal disclosure.

Sometimes a simple sentence, like: "*Let's find out together*", can invite trust. It shows that coaching is a shared experience, not a performance.

It also matters how we respond internally. As coaches, we may feel pressure to prove ourselves, to sound prepared, confident, or skilled. This is a common feeling. But when that pressure takes over, we risk losing touch with the person in front of us.

Coaching across cultures invites reflection, not only on who we are, but also on how we're seen. Positionality is not fixed; it shifts with context, and it becomes part of the coaching relationship when we are willing to notice and respond with openness.

Silence and Taking Time in Coaching Conversations

In many OCC sessions, we've noticed that some of the most meaningful moments didn't come from well-crafted questions or structured techniques. They emerged in the pauses.

Silence is often misunderstood as an absence. But in coaching, silence can be a sign of respect, an invitation to reflect, or simply a moment for someone to gather their thoughts, especially in a language that isn't their first.

We've seen that taking time supports emotional safety. It allows people to check in with themselves, to sense what they're experiencing, or to express something they hadn't planned to say. For newcomers navigating unfamiliar systems and expectations, this kind of pace can make a real difference.



As coaches, we may feel the urge to fill in the silence, to reassure, or to keep things moving. But when we stay with the pause, something else often becomes possible. Trust can take shape in the timing of the conversation, unforced, steady, and responsive to the coachee.

Even small choices, like waiting a few seconds before responding, can shift the tone. It signals to the coachee that there is no need to rush, and that their words are welcome.

In our experience, silence and taking time are not signs of hesitation. They are part of how connection grows.

1.5 Techniques & Tools

Supporting Presence and Trust

Connection is more of a way of being than a set of techniques. Still, certain practices can support coaches in becoming more aware, attentive, and open. The tools below are offered as possibilities, meant to be adapted with thoughtfulness, depending on the context and the person in front of you.

Relational Presence

Before focusing on structure or outcomes, arriving with genuine presence can create the conditions for connection. This means setting aside distractions, assumptions, or the urge to “help” too quickly. A calm, open posture, both physically and emotionally, can communicate more than any question or method.

Radical Listening

This kind of listening goes beyond collecting information. It means listening with care and attention to the whole person, so that the coachee feels respected and acknowledged. When offered sincerely, radical listening builds trust and strengthens the relationship.

Awareness of Cultural Differences in Communication

What feels like connection in one culture might feel intrusive or distant in another. As coaches, we don’t need to be experts in every background. What we can do is remain open to differences in tone, pacing, formality, and non-verbal expression. When unsure, respectful curiosity is more helpful than assumptions.

These practices are most effective when they come from real presence, not from a fixed method. They support trust and relationship when shaped by timing, context, and the voice of the person across from you.

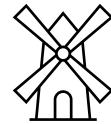
1.6 Exercise: Practicing Connection Through Listening and Presence

This exercise invites participants to experience how connection can grow through presence, openness, and trust in the process, often more than through explanation or problem-solving. It offers a practical way to explore how attention and respectful listening support the deeper needs that often shape coaching relationships.

It can be used in group coaching training, supervision sessions, or intercultural learning spaces.

Step 1: Paired Listening Walk

- Ask participants to form pairs.
- Invite them to go for a short walk together (10–15 minutes).



- One person begins by answering a prompt such as:
 - *“Can you tell me about a place where you feel welcome?”*
 - *“What do you notice when someone truly listens to you?”*
- The other listens without interrupting, advising, or shifting the focus.
- After a few minutes, they switch roles.

Encourage participants to allow pauses. It's okay to walk quietly before or after speaking.

Step 2: Seated Reflection

Back in the group, invite participants to reflect on their experience:

- What helped you feel connected, or created distance?
- What was it like to listen without responding?
- Did anything shift when the pace slowed?

Optional Extension

In small groups, explore how this practice connects to your work as a coach:

- How do I offer presence without pressure?
- What helps me stay grounded when nothing “seems to happen”?

This exercise supports core needs identified in the BRIDGE model, such as **belonging** (feeling welcome, not rushed) and **recognition** (being listened to without interruption). It gives coaches a chance to practice meeting these needs not through theory, but through shared attention and relational presence.

1.7 Takeaways

These reflections are not rules or conclusions. They are themes that have shown up again and again in our coaching work. You may find they appear differently in your own context, and that's part of the learning process.

For the Coach

Stay curious without needing everything to be clear.

Connection often deepens when we release the need to perform and bring openness, patience, and full attention. Trust grows through presence, not pressure.

For the Coachee

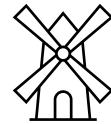
Your voice carries strength, even in uncertainty.

You don't need to begin with answers. Sharing your thoughts, questions, or simply choosing to show up is already an act of courage.

For the Observer or Facilitator/Trainer

Support a learning environment where people feel accepted without needing to perform or prove themselves.

Sometimes, being in a setting that isn't rushed, measured, or controlled makes it possible for people to feel truly acknowledged, for some, it may be the first time.



1.8 Insight Question

- When do you feel truly connected to someone?
- What made connecting possible?
- Whose need for belonging or recognition may be going unseen, and how might coaching make a difference?

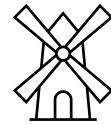
This question is not meant to be answered immediately. You can bring it into reflection sessions, peer learning, or revisit it during moments when connection feels uncertain or fragile in your coaching.

It may also help you notice who is present but not yet fully engaged, and what might still be needed for connection to grow.

1.9 Closing Reflection

Connecting is rarely instant, and often unexpected. It can begin with silence, a shared glance, or a moment of being heard without interruption. In coaching with newcomers, connecting is both a beginning and something we keep building, an ongoing process shaped by presence, attention, and trust.

When coaches support the conditions for connecting to take place, they are already engaged in meaningful work, work that unfolds across time, together.



Chapter 2: Contracting

2.1 Agreeing on How We Work Together

Before a coaching relationship can grow in depth or direction, it needs something foundational: a shared understanding of how we want to work together. This doesn't require formality or perfection. It begins with clear, mutual agreement, about roles, expectations, and how the conversation will be held. Naming the purpose of the coaching is an important part of this process: What are we here for? What does the coachee want to explore, and how can we create the conditions to support that?

In our experience, especially when working across cultures, languages, and life contexts, this kind of agreement supports both the practical structure of coaching and the relationship it rests on. While we use the word "contracting," we recognize it may sound formal or distant. At its core, contracting is about improving connection through shared understanding.

As a practical step, contracting:

- Helps define what is possible within the coaching process
- Sets boundaries that protect time, attention, and responsibility
- Clarifies how sessions will begin, flow, and end
- Includes discussion of confidentiality and mutual respect

As a relational moment, contracting:

- Builds trust by asking what the coachee needs and wants
- Creates a more balanced environment for decision-making
- Signals that the process is co-created, not imposed

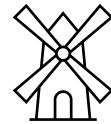
Coaches and coachees often bring different assumptions into the first session, especially in intercultural settings. The coach may be seen as an expert, or as someone with system knowledge, status, or linguistic advantage. These impressions may come from past experiences, not from the coach's intention. Some people may be used to hierarchical roles; others may not trust systems at all. In this context, contracting is not just about clarifying logistics, it is about building safety through shared understanding.

Setting expectations and boundaries is part of this shift. It supports emotional safety, for both coach and coachee. Expectations might include how much structure the conversation will have, how decisions will be shared, and how confidentiality will be respected. Boundaries might involve what the coach can offer, and where outside support may be needed.

This process is not a one-time step. Contracting can, and often should, be revisited throughout the coaching relationship. A shift in goals, a moment of discomfort, or a change in pace might call for re-contracting: pausing to revisit what has been agreed, and adjusting together. It's also important to acknowledge that the focus of coaching may not be clear in the first session. Deciding what to work on can develop over time. These moments of re-alignment don't interrupt the coaching work, they deepen it.

In OCC sessions, we've seen how clear, co-created agreements can offer a sense of steadiness, even in times of uncertainty. We've also come to recognize how easily a contract can be assumed, without being fully discussed. When that happens, misunderstandings can arise, not from lack of care, but from different cultural or personal expectations. Taking time to articulate what matters to both people is part of how we begin well.

One helpful way to hold this process is through the lens of the three Rs:



- **Relationship:** How do we want to be with each other in this process? What kind of tone and atmosphere are needed?
- **Results:** What are we working toward? What does the coachee hope to explore, achieve, or understand more deeply?
- **Responsibility:** What belongs to the coachee, what belongs to the coach, and what might need to be shared or revisited along the way?

Agreements can also include practical elements such as the number of sessions, how progress will be reviewed, and how we'll know when it's time to close. Coaching conversations have purpose, they are not endless. Revisiting the agreement helps keep that purpose alive.

When these elements are shaped together, contracting becomes more than a technical step, it becomes an act of mutual respect, trust, and connection.

Just as a windmill needs a solid frame to turn with the wind, a coaching relationship needs clear agreements to move with energy and trust. The frame doesn't restrict the flow, it makes it possible. Contracting gives the relationship structure, not to control it, but to support it. When expectations are named and boundaries respected, the coaching can respond to momentum, change, and discovery, without spinning out of control. Like the windmill's steady arms, coaching becomes grounded and responsive, turning steadily with what arises.

2.2 Needs in Focus (BRIDGE Model)

Contracting supports more than structure, it responds to specific needs that often show up in the early stages of coaching with newcomers. Within the BRIDGE model, three needs become especially visible during this phase: information, guarantee, and direction.

Information

Newcomers are often navigating unfamiliar systems, legal, educational, social, while also trying to understand what coaching is and how it works. A clear, co-created agreement helps ensure no one is left guessing. Clarifying roles, expectations, and purpose is a way of sharing information that supports trust and reduces confusion.

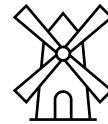
Guarantees

When life feels uncertain, the boundaries and commitments of a coaching relationship can offer something rare: reliability. Naming what coaching can and cannot offer doesn't close doors, it builds a foundation of trust. Guarantee here means mutual understanding and follow-through, which help both coach and coachee feel anchored in the process. It can also help determine when other kinds of support (legal, psychological, social) may be needed.

Direction

Coaching often invites forward momentum. But without shared understanding, this momentum can feel disorienting. Contracting, especially when revisited, helps keep the process focused and aligned with what matters most to the coachee. It ensures that direction is co-created, not assumed.

When approached with presence and mutual care, contracting becomes more than a first step. It becomes a way of affirming: you are included, you are respected, and we are shaping this together.



2.3 A Real-Life Moment: Navigating Boundaries and Expectations

Danielle, one of the authors, coached a Syrian woman who came seeking support with important life decisions. At the beginning of their coaching relationship, the coachee expected clear advice and direction, while Danielle saw her role as creating space to explore the coachee's own values and inner compass. This difference revealed the importance of contracting.

In their first conversation, they set clear expectations: the coaching would not focus on giving direct advice, but on supporting the coachee's reflection and self-directed choices. They discussed their roles, established boundaries, and agreed on how they wanted to work together. This conversation laid the foundation for trust and mutual understanding.

As the coaching progressed, the coachee brought up a different theme, how to bring more meaning and structure into her daily life. They paused to revisit their earlier agreement. Through this re-contracting process, they adjusted the coaching focus and reaffirmed how they wanted to continue. These check-ins helped the relationship stay grounded and responsive to the coachee's evolving needs.

Later in the process, the coachee invited Danielle to meet in person for coffee. Danielle recognized this as a turning point: the coachee was seeking something beyond the coaching relationship. In their next session, they addressed it openly and directly. Danielle acknowledged the importance of connection, while also clarifying that coaching had its own boundaries. Together, they reflected on the kinds of relationships the coachee was looking for in her wider life, and how she might move toward those in meaningful ways.

This experience reminded Danielle that contracting is not a one-time step. It is a dynamic, relational process, something to return to when the situation shifts, when boundaries are tested, or when new questions emerge. In this case, the clarity they shaped together helped preserve trust and kept the coaching relationship honest, focused, and supportive.

2.4 Coaching Reflections

Clarity Without Control

Setting the terms of a coaching relationship does not mean the coach leads the agenda. It means that both coach and coachee are invited to speak clearly about what they need and expect. In intercultural settings, the word *coaching* may carry different meanings: structured advice, emotional support, mentorship. Clarifying roles and intentions early on helps avoid confusion later.

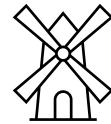
Clarity, in this sense, is not about rigid structure. It is about offering enough orientation that the coaching can move with freedom rather than friction.

Revisiting Expectations

Even with a thoughtful agreement, expectations shift. Life circumstances change. Trust deepens. Priorities evolve.

What we've learned is that re-contracting is part of the work. It does not mean something has gone wrong; it means the process is alive. Revisiting agreements allows both coach and coachee to adjust, check in, and stay connected to what matters now. This kind of flexibility responds to both external uncertainty and internal curiosity, especially relevant for newcomers, who may discover new needs or goals over time.

Supporting with Awareness and Balance



In coaching, especially with newcomers, differences in language, cultural familiarity, or access to systems can create power imbalances. These do not need to be emphasized, but they do call for awareness. As coaches, we stay attentive to how we show up and how we are perceived.

A strong coaching relationship is based on mutual respect, not expertise. The coach supports the process without leading it. By staying clear about our role and encouraging the coachee to take ownership, we create a relationship that feels balanced and trustworthy.

2.4 Techniques & Tools

Building Shared Understanding

Contracting becomes meaningful when it is built on mutual agreement and real listening. The tools below can support coaches in building clarity without control, especially in the early phase of the relationship, but also in moments when things shift.

Setting the Frame

Begin by inviting a conversation about what coaching is and what it is not. Ask the coachee what they expect, and offer a simple description of your role. Clarifying this early helps avoid confusion and opens the door to shared decision-making.

Clarifying Boundaries Together

Boundaries support trust and safety. You might ask:

- “Is there anything you don’t want to talk about right now?”
- “Here’s what I can offer as a coach, and what I can’t.”

These questions help the coachee feel both respected and in control of their experience.

Setting Expectations Together

Explore practical questions such as:

- “What would make these sessions feel helpful to you?”
- “How do you prefer to communicate, in a direct, slow, or open-ended way?”

These conversations do not need to be formal, but they do create shared language and understanding.

Re-Contracting Moments

If the focus of the sessions changes or the relationship feels out of sync, invite a short check-in:

- “Would it be helpful to revisit how we’re working together?”

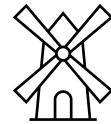
Re-contracting is not about starting over. It is a way of recognizing that the process is alive and may need to adapt.

Acknowledging Different Understandings of Coaching

Some newcomers may associate “coaching” with giving advice or holding authority. Rather than correcting this, stay open and invite dialogue:

- “When you think of coaching, what comes to mind?”

This can help uncover assumptions and support a more honest and co-created relationship.



2.6 Exercise: Practicing Contracting Conversations

With Real-Life Scenario: Coaching Rahim

This exercise invites coaches to practice contracting in real time using a realistic scenario. It focuses on how to build connection while co-creating clarity around expectations, roles, and boundaries. It is suited for coaching training, supervision, or peer reflection sessions.

Contracting is more than an opening step, it is part of how we support key needs identified in the BRIDGE model, such as direction, belonging, recognition, and mutual understanding. When done with presence and care, contracting becomes a way to affirm: *you are welcome, you are heard, and we are shaping this together.*

Step 1: Roleplay – Coaching Rahim

Form triads: one coach, one coachee (Rahim), and one observer.

Scenario

Rahim is a 20-year-old Pashtun man with strong ambition and limited formal schooling. He has recently applied for coaching and arrives with a clear question:

“How can I get a job?”

As the coach, your task is to respond to Rahim’s request by inviting a contracting conversation. Define your role, ask about his expectations, and clarify boundaries. Do this through connection, not instruction. Recognize that “getting a job” may reflect a deeper need. The question may not be a coaching question in its current form, but it offers a starting point.

Avoid dismissing the question. Stay with Rahim’s energy and curiosity. Try to learn more about what is behind his question and what matters most to him right now.

Coach prompts might include:

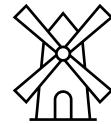
- “Thank you for bringing that. Can I ask what kind of work you’re hoping for?”
- “Would it help if I shared what I can offer as a coach, and what I may not be able to do?”
- “Let’s talk about how we want to work together, what would feel helpful to you?”
- “Is there anything important for you to know about how these conversations will work?”

The observer silently watches the conversation and notes:

- How the coach builds connection
- How roles, boundaries, and expectations are introduced
- What the coach pays attention to (emotion, tone, language, pace)
- Whether the coachee feels invited into the process

Step 2: Debrief in Triads

After the roleplay, reflect together:



- **Coach:** What helped you connect with Rahim? How did you approach the question? Was anything challenging to bring into the conversation?
- **Coachee:** What helped you feel understood or included? Did the conversation feel clear? Was anything missing or confusing?
- **Observer:** How did connecting help with contracting? What did the coach notice and respond to? Were boundaries, roles, and expectations made clear and shared?

Encourage the observer to focus on relational dynamics, what was said, and what may have gone unsaid but shaped the tone of the conversation.

Step 3: Re-Contracting Moment

Stay in the same triads. Now imagine the coaching relationship is three sessions in. Rahim arrives with a different energy. He begins speaking about family pressure, difficulty reading formal documents, and feeling ashamed of asking for help.

The coach senses that the conversation is shifting and invites a brief re-contracting check-in.

The Coach might ask:

- “Would it help to check in about how we’re working together?”
- “Has something changed in what you need from these conversations?”
- “Is there anything you’d like to do differently going forward?”

Then debrief again:

- **Coach:** What was it like to revisit the conversation agreement? Did anything surprise you?
- **Coachee:** Did you feel supported in speaking honestly about the shift?
- **Observer:** How was the re-contracting moment handled? Did it support clarity or connection?

This exercise helps surface assumptions, build confidence in having relational contracting conversations, and strengthens a coach’s ability to remain flexible and connected as coaching unfolds. It emphasizes that contracting is not about setting fixed terms. Contracting is about building a shared path that can adapt as the relationship grows.

2.7 Takeaways

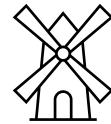
These reflections are not conclusions, but reminders that contracting is not just a step at the beginning. It is part of the coaching relationship itself. Contracting can be revisited, reshaped, and refined as trust deepens, roles evolve, or direction shifts.

Contracting also responds to key needs described in the BRIDGE model. It creates space for sharing information, establishing mutual understanding, and building trust through clarity and reliability. Done with care, it supports both structure and relationship.

For the Coach

Clarity builds trust.

Taking time to co-create expectations, roles, and boundaries helps both people feel grounded and supported. When things shift, re-contracting keeps the process honest, responsive, and aligned with what matters now.



For the Coachee

You have a say in how this relationship works.

Coaching is not something done to you, it is shaped with you. Sharing your needs, expectations, or uncertainties is part of your voice in the process, and a way of supporting your own growth and direction.

For the Observer or Facilitator/Trainer

Stay attentive to what is assumed and what is spoken.

Supporting coaches means noticing when something feels unclear, unstated, or off balance. Reflecting on roles, expectations, assumptions and relational shifts helps deepen the practice, not just refine the technique.

2.8 Insight Question

- **How do we reach agreement when we start from different places?**
- **What helps both coach and coachee feel clear, respected, and involved in shaping the relationship?**

This question can be used in supervision, peer reflection, or coach training settings. It invites coaches to reflect on how expectations are formed, and how they can be revisited over time without tension or defensiveness.

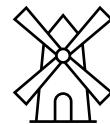
It also reminds us that contracting is not just a procedural step. It is relational, and it responds to real needs identified in the BRIDGE model, such as the need to be informed, to feel acknowledged, and to experience mutual reliability in the coaching process.

2.9 Closing Reflection

Contracting is not only something we do at the beginning. It is part of how we stay connected throughout the coaching relationship. It brings clarity when things feel uncertain, and alignment when things begin to shift.

When approached with respect and flexibility, contracting becomes a way to practice shared responsibility, even across difference. It supports needs identified in the BRIDGE model, such as being recognized, knowing what to expect, and moving forward with purpose.

It reminds us that coaching is something we shape together, step by step and conversation by conversation.



Chapter 3: Conversation

3.1 Coaching as Civic Dialogue

Conversation as Shared Human Practice

As coaches, we are trained to listen, to ask with purpose, and to support others in finding clarity and direction. We know how to structure a conversation. What this chapter explores is something less technical and more human: how coaching conversations become meaningful, especially in civic and intercultural contexts. In our work with newcomers and migrants, conversation becomes a place where trust is built, belonging is felt, and personal direction is explored. It is also a place where cultural differences, emotional histories, and unspoken assumptions often emerge. Conversation, in this setting, is not only a method. It becomes a shared act of presence, and a delicate one.

A meaningful coaching conversation invites the coachee to participate without pushing, to speak freely, and to pause without fear of being misunderstood. For migrants, who may carry visible and invisible wounds or navigate unfamiliar environments, conversation requires attentiveness to tone, pace, and readiness. The coach is truly listening and responding to what is emerging in the moment. Even small comments can carry weight. A phrase like "I didn't expect that!" may be intended as encouragement, but received as underestimation. Encouragement may unintentionally reinforce a sense of being judged. The role of the coach is to attune and apply their skills to notice what resonates and to create space where the coachee can bring more of themselves.

Conversation as Orientation and Discovery

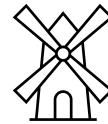
When someone has been uprooted, geographically, emotionally, or socially, conversation becomes part of re-rooting. There is no script. Cultural cues around trust, silence, or disagreement vary. In these moments, we are not guiding a known process; we are learning a new rhythm together. Coaching conversation is less like performing a routine and more like discovering a shared dance, where both partners adjust, where steps are improvised, and where presence matters more than perfection. Migrants may not always feel like experts in their own lives. Displacement, system navigation, and underestimation can blur that sense. The coach's role is to support the conditions in which the coachee can begin to reclaim their voice and sense of authorship, at a pace that feels right for them, and in a way that reflects their own meaning. We steward the conversation with structure, attention, and care, not by leading, but by walking alongside.

Purpose, Energy, and Civic Meaning

Coaching conversation makes room for reflection, presence, and difference. It is also a goal-oriented learning conversation, where progress is shaped by the coachee's insights and direction. In every session, it helps to have a shared sense of purpose. That purpose does not need to be fixed or final. It may take shape through the conversation itself, guided by the coachee's questions or pauses. In the context of migration, this kind of clarity becomes even more important. Many coachees carry a strong desire to move forward, yet feel stuck or unsure. Coaching supports that process. What makes coaching distinct is that it builds trust while also supporting forward direction and sustained momentum, at a pace set by the coachee.

Insight may emerge through metaphor, posture, or a few carefully chosen words. Each coaching dialogue has the potential to generate momentum when approached with intention and care. In the windmill metaphor, conversation is not simply elegant motion. It is the turning of blades, where energy is gathered, shaped, and transferred. It depends on balance, timing, and attentiveness. When coaching conversations become intense or emotionally charged, the coach stays steady. Awareness of boundaries, clear agreements, and thoughtful presence help protect the process and keep it ethical and supportive.

This chapter explores how coaching conversations can support personal and civic transformation. It asks what makes conversation feel respectful, inclusive, and alive, and how, in our context, dialogue becomes a way of meeting difference while moving toward shared possibility.



3.2 Needs in Focus (BRIDGE Model)

Conversation in coaching supports several of the key needs described in the BRIDGE model. Through attentiveness, relational presence, and co-created purpose, the coaching dialogue becomes a place where voice is reclaimed and personal direction begins to take shape.

Recognition

Recognition begins when the coachee is seen and received as a whole person. This often shows up in how the coach listens, respects the pace of the conversation, and stays with the person rather than their story. *This supports the need to feel acknowledged, respected, and received as a full human being.*

Direction

Direction does not always start with a goal. It can take shape gradually through the dialogue itself. This matters deeply for migrants who may feel stuck or unsure about future steps. Coaching makes it possible to explore direction without needing to define it too quickly.

This supports the need for orientation, forward momentum, and a sense of possibility.

Empowerment

Empowerment becomes visible when the coachee experiences the process as theirs. With mutual pacing and shared understanding, they begin to choose how they participate, what they express, and how they move forward.

This supports the need for autonomy, self-expression, and ownership of one's path.

Conversation is where voice and direction meet. In the windmill metaphor, it is the turning motion that transforms presence into energy. When coaching dialogue is supported with trust, awareness, and shared focus, it becomes a subtle form of civic participation, where someone who has been silenced begins to speak again.

3.3 A Real-Life Moment: “It Was the First Time I Asked Myself That”

During an OCC coaching session, a coach met with a young woman from Afghanistan who had been in Europe for over a year. She came to the session saying she wanted to “work on confidence,” but it quickly became clear that the word meant different things to each of them.

At first, the conversation felt unclear. The coachee responded politely but briefly. When the coach asked, “What would confidence look like for you?”, the coachee paused for a long time. Instead of moving on, the coach stayed with the pause, then said, “You don’t have to have an answer right now.”

After a few moments, the coachee said, “That’s the first time anyone has asked me that, and meant it. I always thought confidence meant speaking like other people do here.”

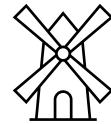
From there, the conversation shifted. The coachee began to explore not just what confidence looked like externally, but what it meant to her: feeling strong in her decisions, being taken seriously, and trusting her own thoughts, even if they didn’t come out fluently.

By the end of the session, there was no checklist or fixed goal. But there was a different kind of energy, one that came from hearing her own voice in a new way. The conversation became a moment of recognition and quiet direction, shaped entirely around what felt real for her.

3.4 Coaching Reflections

Radical Listening: Beyond Words

In many intercultural conversations, listening is not only about what is said. It is also about sensing what matters. Migrants may choose their words carefully, speak through layers of past experience, or carry



hesitation shaped by systems that did not listen well. In these moments, listening becomes a form of recognition.

Radical listening means being fully present with the person in front of you, with intention and attention. It includes hearing pauses, noticing posture, and offering presence that communicates: “you are welcome to take your time”. It is not a technique, but a way of being.

The Pace of Trust

Coaching conversations with newcomers often begin with uncertainty, about the process, the setting, or even the purpose. If rushed into structure or tasks too quickly, the coachee may struggle to feel present.

Trust builds gradually. It often begins at a slower pace, across repeated meetings. This pace allows the coachee to bring their full self, not only what they think is expected. Moving slowly does not mean falling behind. It means making room for something real to take shape.

Intention and Attention

Conversation becomes more powerful when the coach is clear about intention, why they are here, what they are offering, and focused in their attention, what is happening in the moment, what might be shifting.

Intention helps guide the structure. Attention helps deepen the connection. Together, they allow the conversation to stay responsive and grounded. When we bring both, we can notice what is being said and what is being signaled just beneath the words.

Staying Present with Discomfort

In coaching with migrants, discomfort may emerge, from emotional content, cultural difference, or relational uncertainty. Coaches may ask themselves: Am I doing enough? Is this helping? Is this safe?

These questions are part of the learning, not signs of failure. Staying with discomfort, both our own and of the coachee, can lead to deeper understanding. Coaching does not require ease. It requires presence, flexibility, and a willingness to remain with what is unfolding.

Respect Across Difference

Rather than assume, coaches can ask and stay open to learning, about the person, their culture, and the meaning behind what is shared. Respect is not a one-time gesture. It is shaped through tone, posture, and how we respond. It becomes what sustains the conversation when understanding feels fragile.

Supporting Direction Through Dialogue

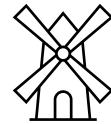
Coaching is about understanding and also support forward movement. Direction may not come as a fixed goal or plan. It may appear through a pause, an image, or a word that resonates. The coach supports the coachee in noticing these moments and identifying what feels meaningful.

By attending to energy, timing, and readiness, the coach helps shape a process that feels both safe and purposeful. Even a small step, when co-created with presence, can begin to shift what once felt immovable.

3.5 Techniques & Tools

Supporting Presence, Purpose, and Dialogue

While coaching conversations can benefit from structure, their depth often depends on how the coach shows up, with awareness, humility, and relational attention. These practices are not fixed methods, but flexible tools that help deepen connection, support progress, and respond to the moment with thoughtfulness.



Co-Creating Purpose

Even when a coachee arrives with uncertainty, every coaching session can support direction. This does not require a fixed outcome. It can begin with a shared intention.

You might ask:

- “What would make this conversation feel useful to you today?”
- “Is there a small step or shift you’re hoping for by the end of our time?”

These questions offer focus without pressure, and invite the coachee to shape the session alongside you.

Begin with a Check-In

Starting with a moment to arrive, mentally and emotionally, can help the coachee feel grounded. You might ask:

- “How are you today?”
- “Is there anything you’d like to share before we begin?”

This opens the conversation and invites the coachee to bring their full self.

Use Radical Listening

In intercultural coaching or when trauma is present, listening means more than words. It includes tone, pacing, silence, and body language.

Radical listening is a way of being fully with the person in front of you. It invites the coachee to speak from where they are, without pressure to explain.

It supports understanding and forward momentum. When we listen with full attention, we begin to notice what is ready to emerge.

Check for Cultural Meaning

When a word or reaction feels loaded, or something feels off, you might ask:

- “Can I ask what this means for you?”
- “How is this talked about in your culture or community?”

This helps avoid assumptions and invites shared understanding.

Ground in the Present

If a conversation feels overwhelming, invite the coachee to reconnect to the present moment. You might ask:

- “Can you tell me what you feel in your body right now?”
- “Would it help to take a breath before we continue?”

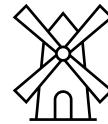
These questions support emotional steadiness, especially when navigating strong feelings or uncertainty.

Stay Grounded as a Coach

Being with someone else’s pain or uncertainty can be intense, especially when it touches on trauma or exclusion. Coaches benefit from practices that help them stay connected to themselves while remaining present with the coachee.

One simple way to stay present is to acknowledge what you are noticing internally just for yourself.

- “I’m aware that I...”



- “I’m aware that you...”

This shift from focusing only on the coachee to including the coach’s awareness supports presence without detachment or overload.

3.6 Exercise: Sensing Progress in Coaching Conversations

This practice invites coaches to engage in a real coaching conversation from three different perspectives: coach, coachee, and observer. It is built around real-life situations, and supports deeper awareness of how a conversation can shift thinking, open new directions, or change how someone relates to a challenge.

Each participant rotates through the three roles. Across three rounds, every person has the opportunity to speak as a coachee, offer coaching support, and observe the interaction.

Structure of the Practice

- Form triads: Person A, Person B, and Person C
- Each round lasts 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of reflection
- Rotate roles each round:
 - Round 1: A coaches B, C observes
 - Round 2: B coaches C, A observes
 - Round 3: C coaches A, B observes

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin with a Real Situation

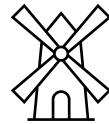
Before the round begins, the person in the coachee role shares a real-life situation that feels unresolved. It can be personal or professional, something they care about but haven’t yet figured out how to move through.

2. Define the Starting Point

Together, the coach and coachee agree on an initial coaching question. This sets direction for the conversation, while leaving space for new insights to emerge.

3. Engage in the Conversation

- The **coach** listens closely, asks open and thoughtful questions, and supports the coachee in exploring the issue more deeply.
- The aim is to stay with the coachee’s own thinking, not to offer suggestions or advice.
- The coach may help the coachee uncover what the real question is, especially if the original focus begins to shift.
- The **coachee** shares honestly, responds to questions, and stays connected to their own experience and reflection.
- The **observer** pays attention to how the coach supports exploration. They notice:
 - Which questions helped the coachee think in new ways
 - Moments of change in the coachee’s thoughts, emotions, or sense of possibility



- When the coach made assumptions or moved too quickly
Observers do not interrupt. They write down their observations to share later.

4. Reflect After Each Round (10 minutes)

After each coaching round, spend 10 minutes reflecting together in this order:

- **Coach reflects first**
 - What choices did I make in the conversation?
 - What felt natural, and what was difficult?
 - Did I stay open and focused on the coachee's process?
- **Coachee reflects second**
 - What helped me see things more clearly?
 - Did anything shift in how I think or feel about the situation?
 - What question stayed with me?
- **Observer reflects last**
 - What did I see in how the coach supported the conversation?
 - Which questions seemed to open something new?
 - Where did I notice pressure, assumptions, or missed opportunities?

The goal of reflection is **learning**, not evaluating. Observations are shared with care and without judgment.

3.7 Takeaways

Conversation in coaching is more than dialogue. It is a co-created process shaped by presence, attention, and shared focus. In intercultural settings, the way we engage in conversation can either support voice and direction or quietly reinforce disconnection.

A well-attuned conversation can respond to several needs described in the BRIDGE model. It can offer recognition by listening with full attention. It can support direction by helping the coachee explore what matters to them. And it can offer a sense of guarantee through the stability of the coach's presence and the mutual agreements that shape the process.

For the Coach

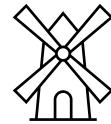
Support forward motion by listening for what is taking shape.

Presence is active. Paying attention to tone, pacing, and what feels meaningful allows new understanding to emerge. Shared purpose grows when the conversation is guided by trust, consistency, and mutual respect.

For the Coachee

Your voice and your direction matter.

You are not expected to have all the answers or move quickly. What becomes possible in coaching is shaped with you and belongs to you.



For the Observer or Facilitator/Trainer

Look for how meaning is being shaped, not only where it is spoken.

Listening for patterns in tone, energy, or pause can reveal how the relationship is unfolding. Supporting coaches means attending to the relational depth of the conversation, not just the content.

3.8 Insight Question

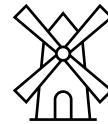
- **How do I recognize when a conversation is beginning to shift, and how do I support that direction without taking control?**
- **How do I stay grounded in my role when I feel the urge to help, guide, or fix?**

This reflection invites coaches to consider how they respond to moments of change in conversation. It highlights the balance between presence and self-awareness, between forward movement and shared authorship. These questions can be used in supervision, team reflection, or personal practice to deepen awareness of how meaningful coaching conversations unfold.

They also speak to key BRIDGE needs, such as supporting recognition through deep listening, offering direction that is co-created, and sustaining empowerment by staying relational instead of being directive.

3.9 Closing Reflection

Coaching conversation is never only about what is said. It is shaped by tone, body language, timing, and what is not said aloud. It carries the potential for movement, even when nothing feels resolved. When we meet the coachee with presence and shared intention, the conversation becomes more than an exchange. It becomes a moment of recognition, a sense of direction, and a quiet assurance that something is possible. From that place, change can begin.



Chapter 4: Contributing

4.1 From Receiving to Shaping

The earlier chapters explored how coaching supports connection, mutual understanding, and shared dialogue. These moments help prepare the ground for something else to unfold: contributing.

Contributing is more than action. It is the experience of bringing something forward, an idea, a decision, a presence, that begins to shape the world around you. For migrants and newcomers, this can be a powerful shift: from being seen as someone who receives support to becoming someone who takes part.

Many systems position migrants as recipients of services, guidance, or attention. Coaching offers a different perspective. It supports the coachee in recognizing what they carry, what they value, and what they wish to bring into the world. This could be a step forward, a shift in expression, or a growing readiness to act.

Contribution does not need to be dramatic. It might appear in a decision, a gesture, or a new kind of question. It may develop gradually. Yet when it is acknowledged, it can strengthen the coachee's sense of presence, direction, and participation.

Many coachees carry stories of resilience, shaped by the experience of continuing despite limited support or recognition. Resilience includes strength, self-awareness, and a connection to what matters. Coaching can help reconnect this resilience to self-direction, to the inner confidence that progress is possible, even when the way ahead feels limited.

Coaches support this by recognizing growth, encouraging experimentation, and making room for new possibilities and creative risk. Experimenting allows coachees to try out ideas, explore unfamiliar directions, and learn from what emerges. It turns uncertainty into movement. Coaches can use brief, intentional interventions, such as offering a metaphor, suggesting a short exercise, or reflecting back a meaningful phrase, to help the coachee see their own thinking more clearly. When done with care, interventions support momentum without overriding the coachee's voice.

Contributing, in this context, is not about adjusting to someone else's framework. It is about becoming more fully engaged in one's own path and offering something that reflects personal values, perspective, and intention. Sometimes this leads to outward action. Other times it means choosing a direction that feels aligned and true.

In the windmill metaphor, contributing is the energy produced. It is what becomes possible when presence, trust, and direction come together. That energy may not transform the entire system, but it can shift how the coachee relates to their own path. And that shift opens the way to something meaningful.

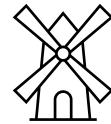
This chapter explores how contribution takes place in coaching, how it can be supported, and how coachees can begin to recognize and act on what they wish to bring forward.

4.2 Needs in Focus (BRIDGE Model)

Empowerment, Recognition, and Direction

Contributing is where the effects of coaching often become visible. When the coachee begins to take action, or even to consider what meaningful action could look like, they begin to step into a direction that feels their own. For many migrants, this step is both personal and civic. It reflects the capacity to respond to life, even in systems that may be unfamiliar, uncertain, or unwelcoming.

Empowerment



Empowerment becomes visible when the coachee experiences the coaching process as theirs. This includes choosing their own pace, shaping their goals, and expressing themselves freely. Contributing is a powerful way to bring empowerment to life, when the coachee says or does something that reflects what truly matters to them.

This supports the need for ownership, self-direction, and active participation.

Recognition

Many coachees carry contributions that have long gone unnoticed, skills, insights, or personal strengths that remained invisible in other contexts. Coaching can be a place where these contributions are acknowledged and valued, not through praise, but through attentive presence and respect.

This supports the need to be seen, valued, and affirmed as a full person.

Direction

Contributing is rarely aimless. Even small steps point toward something deeper. Coaches help coachees explore what kind of action feels aligned with their values, questions, and voice. Coaching remains focused on what the coachee has chosen to explore. Within that focus, direction can take shape meaningfully.

This supports the need for orientation, purposeful engagement, and forward momentum.

Supporting contribution is not about urging someone forward. It is about offering a shared space where what already lives within the coachee can come into view, take form, and begin to move, on their own terms.

4.3 A Real-Life Moment: “Look Where It Got You”

One of the authors, Danielle, coached a migrant coachee who began their sessions with a practical question: “How can I find an internship?” At first glance, it did not seem like a coaching question. But as they continued talking, something deeper emerged. Beneath the surface was a different kind of question: “How can I feel more confident in myself?”

He had faced repeated disappointments. Language barriers were part of the challenge, but so was self-doubt. He appeared hesitant and unsure of how to present himself. Through their conversations, they explored possible pathways. One opportunity stood out: a volunteer position with an organization supporting a specific vulnerable group.

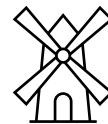
When Danielle asked, “What’s holding you back from reaching out to them?”, the moment felt tense. Still, he chose to engage. He framed it as an experiment, approached the organization, and was welcomed in.

He began using his ICT skills to assist others, showing participants how to turn on a computer or use a mouse. One of the participants said to him, “Now I feel part of this society because I know how to turn the computer on.”

Danielle reflected this moment back to him:

“Can you imagine what a change that is for someone, and that you helped make it possible?”

That comment, along with the recognition he received from others, helped him see his own contribution. It wasn’t abstract. It was grounded in how people responded to him, and how he began responding to himself.



The shift did not happen all at once. It grew gradually. Danielle noticed it in the way he sat, how he expressed his preferences, how he made eye contact, and how often he laughed. She reflected these changes back to him in small, authentic ways throughout their sessions.

At the end of their coaching journey, they took a moment to look back to their scaling question. Danielle said: “You’ve gone from a three to a seven on your confidence scale. That’s a lot. And you made that happen.”

They spoke about how things felt different from their first meeting. The change wasn’t only in what he had done, it was also in how he saw himself.

Eventually, he found paid work. He continues to volunteer at the same organization, which remains a place where his contribution feels tangible, meaningful, and connected to who he is becoming.

Throughout the process, Danielle offered steady, encouraging reflections:

- “I see you smile when you talk about it.”
- “Let’s try it out.”
- “Thank you for speaking your mind.”
- “I like that you brought this up.”
- “Look where it got you.”

Each phrase was a small recognition, an affirmation of growth and agency. It wasn’t about completing something. It was about pausing long enough to notice what had shifted, and to honor the ways he had begun to contribute.

4.4 Coaching Reflections

Contributing May Already Be Happening

Coaching often begins with a question like, “What do you want to achieve?” But sometimes, contributing is already underway. It can be seen in how the coachee shows up, keeps going, or dares to speak honestly. Coaches who truly listen can support the coachee in recognizing what they are already offering, sometimes even before they see it themselves. This reflects the BRIDGE need for recognition: the human need to be seen not only for what one carries, but for how one is already participating.

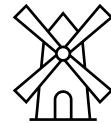
Self-Direction Is Not a Luxury

In systems shaped by exclusion or control, self-direction can feel like a luxury, or a risk. Many migrants are continually adjusting to the expectations of others. Within coaching, they may find one of the few spaces where their own values can come forward. Supporting this means honoring the coachee’s pace while staying attentive to the strength and intention they already bring. This meets the BRIDGE need for empowerment, a sense of choice and authorship in one’s own direction.

The Dilemma of Encouragement

When a coachee takes a step, how do we reflect it without sounding performative or rushed? A phrase like “You made that choice” or “That decision came from you” can affirm agency without adding pressure. Coaches often navigate a subtle tension between acknowledging movement and unintentionally shifting attention away from the coachee’s process. It takes care to say less, and mean more.

Encouragement becomes meaningful when it strengthens the coachee’s sense of contributing, rather than measuring their progress.



Resilience as a Living Resource

Resilience is not only what helped the coachee endure the past, but also what they bring into what comes next. If we speak about strength only in the past tense, we risk missing its ongoing relevance. Coaching supports contributing when it helps the coachee recognize resilience as something active, flexible, and available. Within the BRIDGE model, this relates to empowerment and also to the need to feel useful, an often overlooked need that speaks to belonging, dignity, and participation.

Choice Inside Constraint

Sometimes there are real and pressing limits: legal, linguistic, financial. In such moments, it can be tempting to soften the truth or look away from what feels fixed. Yet contributing does not require perfect freedom. It begins with presence, reflection, and the courage to ask: “What is still mine to choose?” Supporting this question helps meet the BRIDGE need for direction. It reminds both coach and coachee that even within constraint, something meaningful can still move forward. This is what gives coaching its civic dimension, it becomes a practice of shaping one’s path, even when the landscape is difficult.

4.5 Techniques & Tools

Supporting Emergence and Ownership

Supporting contribution in coaching does not mean pushing for action. It means staying present to what is forming and offering tools that help the coachee make sense of it, on their own terms. The techniques below invite reflection, self-direction, and sustainable action.

Ask for Values, Not Just Goals

Contribution grows from what matters. Begin with open questions that invite deeper reflection:

- “What matters to you in this situation?”
- “What would feel meaningful to move toward?”

This approach supports the BRIDGE need for empowerment by connecting direction to personal meaning, not external pressure.

Use Visual or Embodied Mapping

When thoughts feel unclear or distant, mapping can help externalize the process. Use simple tools such as sticky notes, drawings, or placing key words on the floor, to support exploration:

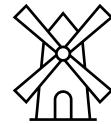
- “What might be a first step?”
- “What’s in your way?”
- “What resources do you already carry?”

This helps the coachee see their own position more clearly and begin to identify what is possible, even in constrained contexts.

Phrase Movement Clearly

When something shifts, reflect it in simple, grounded language:

- “You chose that.”
- “You brought this forward.”
- “That’s something new I’ve heard you say.”



Such statements support the BRIDGE need for recognition. They affirm what is happening without interrupting the process.

Invite Small Experiments

Action does not need to be large or permanent. A small experiment, a single message, a brief conversation, can help test what feels right.

- “Would it make sense to try this once and see how it feels?”
- “What’s one action that feels possible this week?”

This supports coachees in taking initiative without requiring certainty. It encourages ownership while staying responsive to readiness.

Check for Readiness, Not Pressure

Sometimes movement arises from external pressure rather than personal readiness. Slow down and check:

- “Is this something you feel ready to try?”
- “Does this still feel like your direction, or is something else coming into view?”

These questions reflect the BRIDGE need for self-direction and help protect the integrity of the coachee’s process.

4.6 Exercise: Practicing Contributing Through Small Change

This exercise invites coaches and coachees to explore what contributing looks and feels like in practice. It uses a real-life situation, something small but meaningful, that the coachee is considering changing. The focus is not on solving or advising, but on supporting direction, experimentation, and self-authored steps. The exercise helps coaches strengthen their ability to offer encouragement without shifting focus away from the coachee’s process.

This practice responds to several BRIDGE needs: direction (what change matters to me?), empowerment (how do I choose and carry it?), and recognition (what does it mean to be seen as someone who is already taking part?).

Structure

In Pairs (Coach and Coachee)

Duration: 30 minutes total (20 minutes for coaching, 10 minutes for reflection)

Step 1: Choose a Real Situation

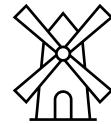
The coachee selects a small change they’ve been thinking about. It can be something concrete or subtle:

- Drinking less coffee
- Going to bed earlier
- Saying no in a specific situation
- Taking more initiative in a group

The important thing is that the change feels real and relevant to the coachee, even if it seems small.

Step 2: Enter the Conversation

The coach invites the coachee to reflect on the change using open questions:



- “What makes this change feel important right now?”
- “What have you already noticed about how this shows up?”
- “What would a first step look like for you?”

The coach supports reflection, pacing, and emerging direction. No advice is given. The focus remains on what the coachee feels ready to choose and how they describe that movement.

Step 3: Coachee Experiments with Contributing

Now the coachee shifts slightly. They speak aloud about how they want to move forward, as if testing the language of action. This could be:

- “I want to try this once next week.”
- “I think I’ll tell a friend about this plan.”
- “It feels possible to start tomorrow.”

The coach listens closely and reflects back any contributing statements using simple affirming language:

- “You’re choosing what feels right to you.”
- “That came from you.”
- “I hear something new in what you just said.”

Step 4: Debrief Together

After 20 minutes, take 10 minutes to reflect in pairs.

Coachee reflects first

- “What helped me explore this change?”
- “What did I notice when I spoke about action?”
- “Did I feel encouraged without being directed?”

Coach reflects second

- “How did I stay with the coachee’s direction?”
- “What kind of encouragement felt natural?”
- “Where did I sense the coachee taking ownership?”

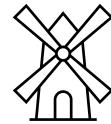
This exercise helps develop confidence in supporting contributing without stepping in to solve. It emphasizes coaching as a relational space where agency is recognized, not assigned.

4.7 Takeaways

For the Coach

Contributing is not something to provoke, it’s something to notice and respect.

Support self-direction by clearly acknowledging movement and allowing the coachee to stay in ownership of what comes next. This responds to key BRIDGE needs, including direction, empowerment, and recognition.



For the Coachee

You shape what contributing means for you.

Even when options feel narrow, your actions, decisions, and reflections carry significance. Direction can begin in one word or gesture, when it comes from your voice.

For the Observer or Facilitator/Trainer

Pay attention to how contributing begins to take form.

A change in tone, a new idea, or a willingness to try can all signal direction. Support coaches in seeing what is taking shape, without rushing or defining it too early. These early signals often reflect BRIDGE needs already at play, especially recognition and agency.

4.8 Insight Question

- When a coachee begins to make a choice, how do I respond in a way that supports their ownership, without shaping the direction or rushing the moment?

This question invites coaches to reflect on how they remain aligned with the coachee's agency, especially as the coaching shifts from reflection to action. It calls for awareness, restraint, and trust in the coachee's experience of contributing, recognizing that direction is most sustainable when it is chosen, not steered.

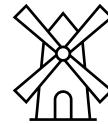
4.9 Closing Reflection

Contributing is not always loud. It doesn't always come with a title, a certificate, or a role. Sometimes it appears in the way a person makes a choice, reclaims a skill, or begins to see themselves with more confidence than before.

In coaching with migrants, contributing may take shape within systems that are slow to change or unable to respond. Yet even within those systems, the coachee can begin to shape something, however small, that reflects their values and direction.

Coaches support this process not by pushing for results, but by recognizing the strength it takes to act from within. We reflect what we notice. We affirm what is real. We invite ownership.

And in doing so, we accompany a process where change becomes real, lived, and self-directed.



Chapter 5: Celebrating

5.1 Celebrating Change: Closure, Pride, and New Direction

Recognizing What Has Grown

Celebrating is often seen as something light, a reward, a final step after the work is done. In coaching, especially in work with migrants, celebrating carries greater depth and meaning.

It is a moment of acknowledgment. A way to say: You were here. You moved. Something changed through your own choice. Celebrating may happen at the end of a coaching process or at the close of a single session. It can take the form of a word of recognition, a shared pause, or a silence that reflects the journey. Progress is marked through both visible outcomes and the deeper internal shifts: new language, decisions made, or the courage to let something go.

Joy sometimes arises in these moments. So does pride. When a coachee begins to recognize their own growth, they reconnect with their strength. Pride can thus provide energy for future steps and support ongoing change. Celebrating also includes letting go. In coaching, there may be farewells of places, people, roles, or possibilities. For many migrants, contributing and transforming happen alongside loss. Home, family, identity, some of these may not return in familiar ways, and the coachee may not return to them either. Coaches stay present with what is emerging and what is passing. Mourning deepens the meaning of celebration and makes it more real.

Closure as a Mark of Choice

Bringing a coaching relationship to an end is part of the process. It is built into the shared agreement and deserves thoughtful attention. Empowerment includes the ability to end the coaching process with awareness and choice.

For those with refugee experiences, closure may carry emotional weight. Sudden departures or incomplete goodbyes often shape their past. In coaching, an intentional and relational farewell can offer a different kind of memory, one shaped by presence and shared understanding. This closing moment brings strength to what has been and steadiness to what is still to come.

Some coachees never celebrate a birthday. Others have never heard the words, “This thing you did, that mattered.” A single word of appreciation can offer more than encouragement. It can affirm presence. When recognition takes root, dignity grows.

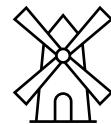
Continuity Through Celebration

The purpose of coaching is not to finish something, it is to support growth that continues. Celebrating allows us to recognize what has been shaped. It marks learning, effort, and presence. When a coachee feels proud of their path, that is empowerment in motion. It becomes energy for what lies ahead.

The coach also celebrates. We acknowledge the choices made, the voice expressed, and the meaning of having shared this part of the journey. Walking alongside the process, we recognize the privilege of having been part of it. The experience of coaching leaves something with us too.

In the windmill metaphor, celebrating is the moment when the motion is felt. The wind has turned the blades. The energy has moved through. We pause with awareness and appreciation. Something meaningful has come into being, and we choose to name it.

This chapter explores how celebrating can take shape in coaching, as a relational and civic act. It makes dignity visible, acknowledges change, and strengthens what comes next.



5.2 Needs in Focus (BRIDGE Model)

Celebration in coaching is a moment where something is seen, named, and held. It is not a final reward. It affirms the value of the coachee's voice, presence, and learning. Within the BRIDGE model, celebration speaks directly to the needs for Recognition, Empowerment, and Belonging, especially when those needs have been unmet elsewhere.

Recognition

In many migrant journeys, growth happens without being seen and without acknowledgement. Coaching offers the chance for that growth to be noticed, not in grand statements, but in moments of reflection. When a coach says, *"I see what shifted,"* or *"I learned this from you,"* they are returning the coachee's progress to them as something they own.

Empowerment

Ending well is part of empowerment. When a coachee feels they can step away from the coaching relationship with clarity and confidence, they carry their learning with them. Celebration reinforces that what was built belongs to them, and continues beyond the coaching space.

Belonging

For coachees with refugee or migrant backgrounds, closure can be emotionally layered. Many did not get to say goodbye on their own terms. A conscious, relational ending in coaching can offer something different: a moment where presence was shared, growth was honored, and the goodbye was complete. That experience, even in its simplicity, can support a deeper sense of belonging, to one's story, to one's future, and to the relationships that shape us along the way.

5.3 A Real-Life Moment: "I Just Needed a Nudge"

A migrant coachee came to coaching feeling stuck, uncertain about the future and unsure how to move forward in a new environment that still felt unfamiliar. Beneath his questions was something stronger than confusion: a quiet frustration with feeling stalled, and a clear eagerness for change.

He didn't need to start from zero. He had already done the thinking. What he needed was a space to see his thoughts laid out clearly, and to find a way through.

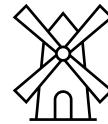
In their session, Hamed, one of the authors, offered a simple visual exercise. First, the coachee named what mattered most to him. He described the kind of life he wanted to build, one that felt steady, meaningful, and true to his values. He wrote this down on sticky notes and placed them on the floor.

Then he began creating a path toward it. Each new note captured a barrier he saw, a challenge he felt, or a step he could imagine taking. He named the resources already with him, his determination, his awareness, and his need for something to shift.

The process was deliberate. At times, Hamed invited him to step back and observe the path from a different angle. The conversation moved slowly, shaped by attention and choice. As the session unfolded, the coachee's posture shifted. His voice steadied. What had felt like a wall began to look like a way forward.

At the end of the session, he carefully gathered the notes. With calm confidence, he said, "This was really insightful. Now I know what to do."

When asked if he wanted another session, he replied, "I just needed a nudge."



This was a moment of celebration. Not because everything was resolved, but because something essential had become visible. The coachee saw his own direction, and claimed it.

Sometimes a single session is enough. When readiness is present, and reflection is supported with care, one clear step can become a turning point. The coaching did not give him an answer. It gave shape to what was already waiting to move.

5.4 Coaching Reflections

Celebration Can Be Subtle

Sometimes what changes is visible. A coachee may speak with more ease, breathe differently, or arrive with a new energy. As coaches, we learn to notice these shifts and invite reflection, not to close something, but to give it meaning. A sentence like “That seems like a shift” can carry forward long after the session ends.

Joy and Mourning Can Be Present Together

Celebration does not always come with a smile. Especially in the context of migration, each step forward may stand beside something that had to be left behind. We recognize progress, while staying attentive to what has changed and what has been lost. As coaches, our presence matters in both experiences.

Honoring growth while acknowledging grief is part of what makes celebration whole.

Dignity Grows Through Recognition

Many coachees have lived with their strengths unseen. When a coach reflects what has shifted, through grounded, respectful language, it supports dignity. A phrase like “I can see what changed,” returns the moment to the coachee. Ownership of growth becomes clearer, and the learning settles more deeply.

Recognizing the Right Moment

Celebration is not a method, it is part of the relationship. The question is not when to celebrate, but what the coachee is ready to recognize. Attentiveness to timing, language, and expression keeps the focus where it belongs. We celebrate when meaning becomes clear, not through results, but through presence and shared attention.

The Coach Grows Too

Each time we celebrate a coachee’s step, we also reflect on the coaching relationship itself. We see how trust, presence, and shared effort shaped what emerged. There is learning here, for both the coachee and for the coach. We become more aware of when to speak, when to affirm, and when to allow something meaningful to settle on its own.

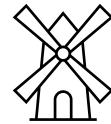
When a coachee says, “I did this myself,” we are reminded of what coaching truly is: a relationship where growth belongs to the coachee, and where the coach walks beside that process with care.

In the BRIDGE model, celebrating responds directly to **Recognition, Empowerment, and Belonging**. It affirms what has been shaped, strengthens the coachee’s confidence in their path, and creates a sense of inclusion in their own story.

5.5 Techniques & Tools

Practicing Presence, Timing, and Recognition

Celebrating in coaching is not a final step. It is a moment of shared recognition, shaped by presence, timing, and tone. The tools below support coaches in noticing what is ready to be acknowledged, responding with care, and marking the transition in a way that feels honest and relational.



These tools help meet several BRIDGE needs:

- **Recognition** – What is acknowledged and returned to the coachee
- **Empowerment** – How ownership of growth is supported
- **Belonging** – How the closing moment is shaped and shared

1. Reflect What Has Shifted

Offer simple, concrete observations. Choose phrases that affirm the coachee's role in their own process.

Examples:

- “You sound very sparkly when you say this, it seems full of energy.”
- “I see how you’re responding differently now.”
- “This feels like something you’ve shaped over time.”

Use this as a way to return the learning to the coachee, not to evaluate, but to affirm.

2. Ask What Feels Meaningful to Acknowledge

Invite the coachee into the moment of recognition.

You might ask:

- “Looking back, what stands out to you?”
- “Is there something you want to mark before we end?”
- “What would feel meaningful to carry forward?”

This creates shared authorship of the closing, instead of placing celebration solely in the coach’s hands.

3. Practice Closing with Intention

Let the ending be part of the coaching, not outside of it.

Consider:

- “This is our final session. Is there anything you’d like to say, or hear, before we close?”
- “How would you like to bring this to a close?”
- “What do you want to remember about this process?”

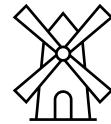
This helps shift the coaching relationship from active support to thoughtful closure.

4. Use a Small Ritual or Gesture

A consistent way of marking closure can support emotional integration and memory. This might be:

- Returning to the initial goal or question and asking, “Where are you with this now?”
- Sharing a short reflection on the coachee’s growth over time
- Offering a word of thanks that names something you’ve appreciated in the process

These gestures do not need to be elaborate. What matters is that they are sincere and co-created.



5. Prepare Yourself as a Coach

Before a final session, take a moment to reflect:

- What did this coachee shift or grow into?
- What did I learn in this process?
- What do I want to acknowledge in the coachee, without directing the moment?

This supports the coach's presence in the conversation and helps make space for a closing that feels steady and respectful.

5.6 Exercise: Experimenting with Celebration

This exercise invites coaches to explore the timing and tone of celebration as a relational act. Through four short rounds of role-play, participants experiment with what happens when celebration is missing, premature, delayed, or well-timed. The exercise ends with a real closing moment, including a thank-you and goodbye, to support reflection on how coaching relationships end.

This practice responds to several BRIDGE needs:

- **Recognition** – What becomes visible and acknowledged
- **Empowerment** – Who names the learning and owns the change
- **Belonging** – What is shared in the ending

There's room for seriousness and laughter here. The tone is thoughtful, relational, and reflective, without being rigid.

Structure

Time: 50–60 minutes

Format: Duos (Coach and Coachee work in pairs)

Step 1: Set the Scene (5–10 min)

Each coachee chooses a real or recent coaching situation where something meaningful happened and the relationship is near completion. They describe the moment to the coach (2–3 minutes):

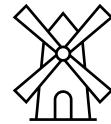
- What made it meaningful?
- What change was beginning to show?
- How close were they to a sense of closure?

Step 2: Four Short Rounds (20–25 min total)

Using the same situation, coach and coachee go through four quick rounds, each lasting about 3–4 minutes. After each round, they briefly debrief with each other (1–2 minutes).

1. No Celebration

Coach offers no acknowledgment or closing remarks.
→ Debrief: What felt unfinished or missing?



2. Too Early Celebration

Coach acknowledges something before the coachee seems ready.

→ Debrief: What shifted? How did it land?

3. Too Late Celebration

Coach waits too long, then reflects on a meaningful moment.

→ Debrief: Did it still feel sincere? Or disconnected?

4. Just Right

Coach offers celebration with presence, timing, and relational tone.

→ In this final round, **Coach says goodbye** and offers a **genuine thank-you** to the coachee.

→ Debrief: What made this feel more aligned?

Step 3: Final Reflection (10–15 min)

Each participant reflects on this question:

What did this experiment make you realize about celebration in coaching, and how you want to close your next coaching relationship?

Encourage coaches to write or speak one sentence they would like to carry into future closing conversations.

Examples:

- “This is your work, and it’s been powerful to walk beside it.”
- “What you’ve shaped here matters.”
- “I want to thank you for what this process has also meant to me.”

5.7 Takeaways

Celebrating in coaching is essential. It is part of how transformation becomes real. It gives the coachee a moment to see themselves differently and recognize what they’ve built or reclaimed, or stepped into. It also offers the coach a moment to step back, reflect, and close the relationship with full presence and care.

For the Coach

Celebrate without directing.

Offer words that reflect what you’ve seen, not what the coachee should feel. Pay attention to their expressions that signal a moment of growth. Ending a coaching relationship with warmth and mutual clarity is a skill that shapes how the process lives on.

Afterward, take a moment for yourself. Notice what you learned, how you showed up, and how the relationship continues to live in you. Acknowledge your learning and tend to your feelings, individually, and with peers through reflection or shared closure.

For the Coachee

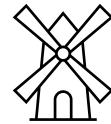
This ending is yours to carry forward.

The way you end matters. It reflects your effort, your courage, your learning. Whether this step was small or significant, it belongs to you, and it can shape what comes next.

For the Observer or Facilitator/Trainer

Closure reveals the quality of the relationship.

Notice what unfolds in the final moments: Is growth acknowledged? Is something left open? Is dignity



present? Reflect on what you took from the process, what insight stayed with you, and how it contributes to your growth as a reflective coach, observer, or facilitator.

5.8 Insight Questions

- **What does a conscious ending look like for you as a coach?**
- **How can you co-create a closing ritual that feels meaningful in an intercultural context?**

These questions invite reflection on closure beyond formality, and as a relational and civic moment. Endings may carry memory, pride, or mourning. Exploring them with care opens space for future learning, shared understanding, and thoughtful attention to how coaching relationships conclude.

5.9 Closing Reflection

Celebrating in coaching carries a certain tension. It honors what has been shaped, while also marking the end of something meaningful: the coaching relationship itself. That ending can feel layered, especially when the process has been built on trust, presence, and mutual effort.

For many coachees, particularly those with refugee or migrant backgrounds, leaving a space where they felt seen and heard may stir emotions that are not easily named. In these moments, celebration is not a performance. It becomes an act of shared recognition, of growth, change, and transition.

The lasting impact of celebration is rarely in the words alone. It is in what stays with the coachee after the conversation ends. A clear and respectful ending becomes part of how they remember their own development. It can strengthen not only what has taken place, but also how they continue forward.

Final Reflection: Closing the Cycle of the 5Cs

Coaching does not follow a straight line. It is built through relationship, one moment at a time. The 5Cs, Connecting, Contracting, Conversation, Contributing, Celebrating, do not form a rigid model. They are elements that emerge and return, shaped by context, timing, and readiness.

Each chapter in this Handbook has explored one of these dimensions. Not as steps to follow, but as experiences to notice, and remain in dialogue with.

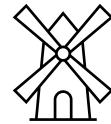
Coaches working in intercultural and civic contexts with migrants carry a distinct kind of responsibility. They accompany people through moments of transition, of grief, hope, uncertainty, or ambition. They hold the boundary and the invitation. They support others in seeing themselves more clearly and shaping their own direction, even in systems that may not be designed for them to thrive.

This work is complex and sometimes invisible, it matters, since it makes a difference.

The 5Cs are more than a technique to apply. They are a lens through which to understand what is happening in the coaching relationship, and to sense what might be possible next. They offer language for what is already present.

Now that you have walked through all five, we invite you, coach, facilitator, partner, to continue shaping what this work means in your own context.

Each conversation is unique. Your next coachee will bring a different story, a different dynamic. And so, the 5Cs begin again, as a new learning journey to explore.



Part II – Deep Practice

Deep Practice and the BRIDGE of Needs

Coaching does not stop at conversation. It moves inward—into emotion and the unspoken layers of meaning that often shape a person’s ability to act, belong, or be seen. **Part II of this Handbook explores coaching as deep practice:** relational, reflective, and responsive to what lives beneath the surface.

This part of the Handbook invites you to engage with themes that don’t always fit into a structure or method. Here, the work becomes slower. More subtle. More layered. It is less about technique, and more about **staying present with what arises**—even when it is uncertain, uncomfortable, or unresolved.

Each chapter in Part II focuses on a dimension of coaching that supports deep civic presence:

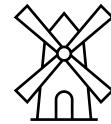
- **Relating**
- **Imagining**
- **Doing**
- **Growing**
- **Owning**

These themes are not a substitute of the 5Cs. These themes invite you to explore the deeper layers that make each C meaningful in practice.

Throughout Part II, you’ll also find references to the **BRIDGE model**. It’s a framework that fits coaching conversations with migrants and people navigating exclusion. BRIDGE names six essential needs: *Belonging, Recognition, Information, Direction, Guarantees, and Empowerment*. These are not categories to follow, but **needs to notice**, support, and explore in real time.

This section is not about answers. It is about **staying in relationship**—to complexity, to the coachee, and to yourself as a coach.

Let these chapters offer you a mirror, a pause, or a nudge toward what coaching can become when we give it time, attention, and depth.



Chapter 1: Relating

Deepening the Human Thread

Why Relating?

Connection can begin in many ways—a glance, a gesture, a shared breath.

But relating asks something ongoing. It invites us to return. To stay in contact. To tend to what lives between us.

In coaching, especially across cultures, relating is not something we establish once. It is something we return to over time. It allows trust to grow, silence to be meaningful, and learning to take shape in its own way.

This chapter explores what it means to remain in relation—not just at the start, but throughout the process.

BRIDGE Needs in This Chapter

Relating speaks to multiple needs in the BRIDGE model. It supports **Belonging**, as people begin to feel part of something shared. It builds the foundation for **Recognition**, as presence is acknowledged without pressure. And it supports **Dialogue**, not just in words, but in shared attention.

Real-Life Moment: The Return

During an online OCC coaching session, Amira—a young Afghan woman living in the Netherlands—joined but remained silent. The coach didn't push. After the session, the coach sent a simple message:

"Thank you for being there today. You don't have to speak to be seen."

Two weeks later, Amira returned to her next coaching session. She brought a drawing: a river, with two people standing on each side.

"I couldn't talk that day," she said, *"but I felt safe."*

This was not a moment of transformation through talk. It was a moment of trust built in silence. Relating doesn't always need words. But it does ask us to stay.

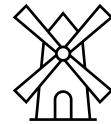
Practices & Tools: Being With, Not Fixing

To work relationally in coaching, we can practice:

- **Reliable presence** – Returning over time means more than dramatic insight.
- **Relational attention** – Noticing how connection forms, who pauses, who returns.
- **Pacing** – Respecting the tempo that feels natural in the moment.
- **Reciprocity** – Coaching is not a one-way process. Sharing a moment, a truth, a memory can bring warmth and humanity into the exchange.

These ways of working ask for attention, consistency, and emotional courage.

Exercise: “The Thread Between Us”



For pairs or small groups:

1. Begin in silence, facing each other.
2. One person says:
“One thing I carry with me is...”
3. The other responds:
“One thing I hear in that is...”
4. Continue slowly, allowing silence between exchanges.
5. Close with:
“What stayed with us just now?”

This is not a conversation for content. It is a process for presence.

Reflections

- When did you remain in connection even when nothing was said?
- In what relationships do you feel returned to—not just received once?
- What makes someone want to come back to a coaching setting?

These reflections can support peer sharing, team dialogue, or supervision.

Intercultural Layers

Relating carries different meanings in different cultural contexts.

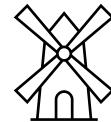
- In some cultures, relational warmth may be expressed through formality and distance.
- In others, closeness may involve openness, disclosure, or shared ritual.
- Participants may carry relational trauma—especially where authority was misused.

There is no universal way to relate. But staying attentive to difference and to human dignity helps coaches stay present.

Insight Question

➤ **What allows someone to return—not once, but again and again—to a shared process?**

Let this question accompany you as you are coaching. You don't need to answer it. Just let it stay close to you.



Chapter 2: Imagining

Seeing What Doesn't Yet Exist

Why Imagining?

At the heart of every shift lies an act of imagination.

Before someone steps into a new role, shares a truth, or co-creates something civic, they must first sense hope or a possibility that isn't yet real.

Imagining is not decoration. It is not what happens once the “real work” is done.

It is part of the real work. It expands what could be within and around us.

In coaching, imagining opens the door to new roles, stories, and directions. For people navigating migration or displacement, it can loosen the grip of old roles—refugee, burden, outsider—and ask something bold:

“What if I am more than this?”

“What if something new is possible here?”

BRIDGE Needs in This Chapter

Imagining activates **Initiative, Growth, and Belonging**. It gives people room to wonder, to dream, to move toward what matters. And it helps them reconnect with a sense of authorship in their own civic and personal life.

Real-Life Moment: A Doorway Appears

In an online OCC coaching session, Rashid—a young Pakistani man living in the Netherlands—was thoughtful but often cautious in his responses. One afternoon, the coach asked:

“If your day tomorrow could go exactly the way you’d like, what would it look like?”

Rashid paused. Then he smiled.

“I’d wake up and not worry about my papers. I’d open a small tea shop. Just simple. I’d play music.”

It was the first time they spoke of the future without fear. The coach didn’t turn it into a plan. She simply said:

“Sounds like a place I’d love to visit.”

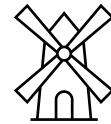
That moment didn’t solve Rashid’s situation.

But it reclaimed something vital: his ability to imagine.

Practices & Tools: Supporting Vision

To support imagination in coaching, we can invite:

- **Future scenarios** – “What would it look like if...?” opens more than answers.
- **Metaphor and imagery** – “If this situation were a landscape, what would it be?”
- **Creative mediums** – Drawing, collage, poetry, or music can express truth beyond words.
- **Story-shifting** – “What story have you been told about yourself? What story feels true now?”



These invitations are not for escape. They are for reclaiming authorship.

Exercise: “The Imagined Day”

1. Invite participants to close their eyes or lower their gaze.
2. Say:
“It’s six months from now. You wake up in a place where you feel free. Walk through the day. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Who is with you?”
3. Let them draw or write what came to them.
4. In pairs, invite them to share what felt most surprising, real, or moving.

This practice is not about goals. It’s about naming inner landscapes.

Reflections

- What images or ideas have helped you keep going?
- When do you feel safe enough to imagine?
- How can imagining shift the way someone navigates civic or public systems?

Intercultural Layers

Imagining is shaped by culture, memory, and belief.

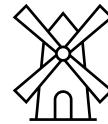
- In some traditions, imagination is sacred—ancestral, spiritual.
- In others, it may be discouraged as unrealistic or even shameful.
- Some may have learned that dreaming is dangerous.

When someone chooses to share a vision, they are offering something deeply personal. Receive it with presence.

Insight Question

➤ **What futures are people carrying inside—still unspoken, still unfolding?**

Let your coaching be a place where those futures can begin to take shape.



Chapter 3: Doing

Learning Through Action

Why Doing?

At some point, what was imagined begins to ask for form.

A thought becomes a gesture. A wish becomes a step. A possibility becomes something lived on.

Doing, in coaching, is not about achievement. It is not about outcomes or fixing.

It is about small, chosen acts, actions that arise from within, that say: *“I can try.”*

For many participants in OCC, especially those navigating migration, bureaucracy, or exclusion, doing is an act of affirmation. It does not erase complexity. But it affirms presence, intention, and participation.

BRIDGE Needs in This Chapter

Doing relates to **Initiative**, **Growth**, and **Empowerment**. Taking action, even something small, can restore a sense of capability. It brings to light a person’s capacity to choose, to respond, and to affect their surroundings, capacities that may have been buried under systems, long periods of waiting, or fear. Doing also deepens dialogue, as actions often invite others to respond.

Real-Life Moment: A Small First Step

In an OCC coaching session in Utrecht, Fatou—a woman from Senegal living in the Netherlands—spoke of wanting to volunteer at a local school. But each time she thought about it, her worries surfaced:

“My Dutch isn’t good enough.”

“What if I don’t understand the children?”

After listening, the coach asked:

“What would it feel like to simply walk by the school once this week?”

Fatou smiled. *“That I can do.”*

She did. The next week, she waved to a teacher through the fence. Three months later, she began volunteering.

The shift didn’t start with paperwork or planning. It began with a walk.

A real act. In the real world. And it matters.

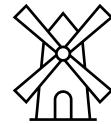
Practices & Tools: Inviting Action Gently

In inclusive coaching, action is not assigned. It emerges.

Some useful approaches include:

- **Micro-actions** – “What’s the smallest step you could try?”
- **Body anchoring** – What happens in the body when a step is imagined?
- **Reflective follow-up** – “What did you notice while trying?”
- **Safe experiments** – Role-playing, mock conversations, community practice within a peer group.

Doing is not the opposite of reflection; it gives form to reflection.



Exercise: “One Brave Thing”

1. Invite participants to bring to mind something that matters to them now.
2. Ask:
“What’s one brave thing—however small—you could do this week to move toward that?”
3. Let them write it down.
4. In pairs, invite sharing.
5. One week later, revisit:
 - a. What happened?
 - b. What changed?
 - c. What surprised you?

The purpose is not success. It’s noticing what doing teaches you.

Reflections

- When did you do something small that felt big inside?
- What makes an action feel truly yours?
- How do we honor stillness or inaction when the time isn’t right?

Intercultural Layers

Action is shaped by culture.

- In some communities, initiative is praised and rewarded.
- In others, caution and restraint are signs of wisdom.
- Migrants may come from systems where speaking out or taking initiative carried risk.

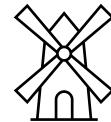
Doing is not always loud or visible.

Sometimes, it is a pause. A gesture. A walk around the block.

Insight Question

➤ **What becomes possible when someone chooses to act—on their own terms, in their own time?**

Let this question guide how you invite and respond to doing in your coaching.



Chapter 4: Growing

Becoming Through the Process

Why Growing?

Growth is not a destination. It is a slow unfolding.

It doesn't always look like confidence or clarity. Sometimes it looks like pausing. Asking a different question. Standing up taller in a space that once made you shrink.

In coaching, growing is not measured by outcomes but by shifts in awareness, relationships, and permission given to yourself.

It can be fragmented, nonlinear, and deeply personal.

For those navigating migration or exclusion, growth may involve unlearning shame. It may mean reclaiming one's voice or staying present with complexity without needing to resolve it.

BRIDGE Needs in This Chapter

Growing touches **Growth**, of course, but also **Recognition**, **Empowerment**, and even **Belonging**.

When someone notices they've changed, even in subtle ways, it strengthens how they see themselves and how they relate to others.

Real-Life Moment: A Different Kind of Milestone

In an OCC coaching session in Utrecht, Mariam—a Syrian mother living in the Netherlands—had been circling the same question for weeks:

Should she enroll in a language course or stay home to care for her daughter?"

One day, she arrived late and tired. She sat down quietly and handed the coach a drawing her daughter had made: two figures walking hand in hand, surrounded by scribbled hearts.

"I realized something," Mariam said. *"My daughter learns from how I make choices—not just what I choose."*

She hadn't made a final decision about the course. But something had shifted. She was growing into herself.

The coach later reflected: *"Some changes can't be seen until you feel their weight shift."*

Practices & Tools: Noticing Change

To support growing, coaches can practice:

- **Naming shifts** – "You sound different when you talk about this today."
- **Looking back** – "Where were you a month ago with this?"
- **Mapping emotion** – Use timelines or memory lines to track not events, but feelings.
- **Normalizing tension** – Growth often comes with fatigue, doubt, or grief.

Growth doesn't move in a straight line. It loops, pauses, and deepens.

Exercise: "Then and Now"

1. Invite participants to reflect on who they were when coaching began.



2. Prompt with questions like:
 - a. What did you believe about yourself?
 - b. What felt impossible?
 - c. What has shifted since then?
 - d. What are you still exploring?
3. Optional: Use drawing, metaphor, or poetry as a way of expressing.

This is not a closing activity. It's a recognition point along the way.

Reflections

- What are the more subtle signs of growth you've learned to notice?
- How do you support someone when their progress pauses or turns back?
- What part of your own growing still surprises you?

Intercultural Layers

Growing can look different across cultures.

- In some places, it's about voice, visibility, and action.
- In others, it may show through listening, patience, or subtle strength.

For migrants, growth may involve releasing old roles—or reclaiming parts of themselves that systems tried to erase.

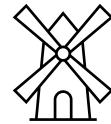
There is no single shape to growth. Ask:

“What does growth mean to you?”

And truly listen.

Insight Question

➤ **What if growing is not something we chase—but something we allow ourselves to return to?**



Chapter 5: Owning

Stepping into Voice, Power, and Contributing

Why Owning?

There comes a moment in coaching when something shifts.

A person no longer waits for the next question.

They bring something forward: an idea, an action, a commitment.

They recognize their own presence as part of the process.

This is owning.

Not control or perfection.

But a sense of authorship in one's life—and sometimes, in community.

In OCC coaching conversations, owning has taken many shapes:

- A participant choosing to continue reflective conversations beyond coaching.
- A migrant stepping into civic dialogue with local peers.
- A coach saying: *"This work reshaped how I relate to others."*

Owning is not a conclusion. It is the beginning of a shared contribution.

BRIDGE Needs in This Chapter

Owning strengthens **Empowerment, Initiative, and Dialogue**. It invites people to see themselves as active participants in the contexts they live in. When someone recognizes their ability to influence relationships, decisions, or direction, they begin to show up differently, in ways that extend beyond the coaching conversation.

Real-Life Moment: From Participant to Contributor

During a series of one-to-one OCC coaching conversations in the Netherlands, Hamid - a confident and engaged coachee - often brought energy and ideas to the dialogue. He was curious, reflective, and eager to explore new possibilities.

In one conversation, he spoke about how much he appreciated the space to think out loud without being judged. A few weeks later, he described how he was supporting a neighbor who was going through a difficult time.

Near the end of the coaching process, he said:

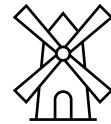
"I think I've started to use some of the same listening in my own conversations. Maybe I can offer others what I've experienced here."

Hamid hadn't become someone different.

He had recognized that how he learned to listen and reflect already mattered and made a difference for others around him.

This is owning.

And it opened a path from personal learning to relational contribution.



Practices & Tools: Supporting Emerging Contribution

Owning cannot be assigned. But it can be invited. Coaches can:

- **Ask sustaining questions** – “What might continue from this after coaching ends?”
- **Name contribution** – “You brought something valuable into this conversation today.”
- **Encourage self-reflection** – “What has shifted in how you respond to others?”
- **Link present insight to future practice** – “Is there someone in your life you’d like to share this kind of conversation with?”

Owning grows when reflection becomes practice—and when contribution feels real.

Exercise: “From Me to We”

1. Invite reflection:
“What do I want to carry forward from this experience?”
2. Then ask:
“Where might I offer what I’ve learned to others?”
3. Each person writes an intention in the form of a one-liner—something they choose to offer in their own context.

This is not a task. It’s an invitation to extend our presence into action.

Reflections

- When have you felt that how you show up made a difference?
- What conditions make contribution feel possible or meaningful?
- How can coaching leave room for leadership to emerge naturally?

Intercultural Layers

Owning is shaped by cultural norms and life experiences.

- In some communities, contributions are vocal and visible.
- In others, contribution is quiet, relational, and offered without credit.
- For migrants, the idea of leading or influencing may feel risky or unfamiliar.

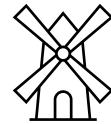
Coaching is not about defining ownership.

It’s about noticing when someone begins to take part on their terms.

Insight Question

What does it mean to take part in your own way, without needing permission?

Let this question open new ways of seeing leadership, contribution, and presence.



Final Reflection

Where Coaching Meets Civic Practice

Coaching, as explored in this Handbook, is not a linear journey. It is a relationship that unfolds. It deepens learning. The **5Cs**—*Connecting, Contracting, Conversing, Contributing, and Celebrating*—are not steps to complete, but conversation elements that reappear throughout the coaching relationship. Each one invites presence and responsiveness and contributes to building trust.

Together, the 5Cs form a circular dynamic:

- A new conversation may begin with reconnection.
- A moment of growth may require renewed contracting.
- A celebration may lead to fresh clarity or direction.

This dynamic reflects the truth of civic life: that transformation is rarely straight or smooth. It requires a willingness to stay engaged, even when things feel uncertain or unresolved.

The Role of the Coach in Civic and Democratic Culture

In intercultural and migration-informed contexts, the coach's role goes beyond personal development. Coaching becomes a **civic act**—a way of fostering dignity, voice, and participation in systems that often silence or exclude.

The coach does not lead. The coach does not fix.

Instead, the coach is present. Together with the coachee, they co-create a space where learning can take root and growth can emerge, even in constrained conditions.

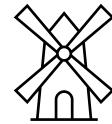
This is what coaching contributes to democratic culture:

- Not solutions, but connection.
- Not control, but co-creation.
- Not perfection, but participation.

How BRIDGE Supports This Work

Throughout this Handbook, the **BRIDGE model** has helped us to distinguish needs that often shape the experience of coachees navigating migration, exclusion, or social uncertainty. These needs—*Belonging, Recognition, Information, Direction, Guarantees, and Empowerment*—do not follow a fixed path. But they do offer a lens.

By listening for these needs in coaching, we stay aware of the **human and structural conditions** that shape each conversation. We begin to understand that coaching is not only personal—it is contextual. That every story is lived inside larger systems. That even small relational moments can offer healing, clarity, and agency.



Coaching as Democratic Participation

Coaching, in this way, becomes part of democratic life. It cultivates the **competences and conditions** needed for people to participate—not just in systems, but in shaping their own lives within them.

When a person feels heard, they may begin to speak.

When someone sees their own growth, they may begin to act.

When mutual recognition is present, the foundation for shared participation begins to take shape.

This is where coaching meets practice.

This is where presence becomes participation.

And this is where democracy lives—not only in policy, but in relationship.

Coaching as Civic Practice

The 5Cs do more than shape a coaching process, they mirror the values and capacities of democratic culture. When we support a coachee in building trust, setting boundaries, sharing voice, taking action, or closing with recognition, we are also practicing the principles of civic life: dignity, dialogue, participation, and responsibility. These same principles are reflected in the Council of Europe's frameworks for Democratic Culture and Education (DCE) and the RFCDC.

In coaching, these values are not taught, they are lived. They emerge in how we listen, co-create, respond to differences, and hold ethical boundaries. Each of the 5Cs offers not just a coaching lens, but a civic one. They help make democratic culture visible and real, one conversation at a time.

Table 1 : The 5Cs and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)

5C	Primary RFCDC Areas	How They Connect
Connection	- Valuing human dignity and human rights- Empathy- Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs	Coaching begins with relational contact. Connection supports mutual respect, curiosity, and emotional awareness, creating the ground for civic learning.
Contracting	- Responsibility- Tolerance of ambiguity- Self-efficacy	Co-creating agreements supports autonomy, trust, and shared responsibility. It helps both coach and coachee manage differences and define limits ethically.
Conversation	- Listening and observing- Analytical and critical thinking- Communication skills	Coaching conversations foster civic dialogue: turn-taking, curiosity, reflection, and the ability to articulate and question ideas respectfully.
Contribution	- Autonomous learning- Cooperation skills- Civic-mindedness	When coachees begin to act or share ideas, they engage in civic participation. Contribution is how individual growth turns outward and becomes shared.
Celebrating	- Respect- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self- Flexibility and adaptability	Ending well reinforces the coachee's capacity to reflect on growth, hold emotional complexity, and recognize themselves as active, evolving citizens.

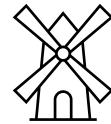


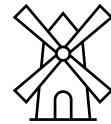
Table 2 : The 5Cs and Key Dimensions of Democratic Culture and Education (DCE)

5C	Connection to DCE
Connection	Establishes the foundation for democratic interaction: trust, presence, and mutual recognition. Enables empathy, curiosity, and respect, key relational dimensions of civic life.
Contracting	Models participatory agreement and shared responsibility. Mirrors democratic processes by inviting dialogue, setting mutual expectations, and negotiating power ethically.
Conversation	Practices civic dialogue in real time: listening, reflecting, navigating disagreement, and exploring complexity together. Encourages pluralism and mutual understanding.
Contribution	Activates civic participation: the coachee moves from reflection to action, finding their voice and role in society, even in constrained or transitional conditions.
Celebrating	Honors growth and recognizes voice. Supports emotional closure, memory, and continuity, especially for those excluded from traditional rites of passage. Builds civic identity and self-worth.

Table 3 : Understanding BRIDGE in Practice

This table helps coaches identify what each BRIDGE need might look like in conversation and how it connects to the underlying human experience. It is a practical aid for reflection and ethical awareness.

BRIDGE Need	In Coaching Conversations	Underlying Human Needs
Belonging	Feeling welcomed, included, or safe to return	Safety, connection, acceptance
Recognition	Being seen and acknowledged for one's story or effort	Visibility, affirmation, dignity
Information & Infrastructure	Navigating life through practical systems (housing, law, education)	Access, functionality, orientation
Direction	Asking what matters, exploring next steps	Purpose, clarity, agency
Guarantees	Seeking safety, legal protection, stability	Security, trust, predictability
Empowerment	Taking action, expressing voice, contributing	Autonomy, self-worth, civic presence



Sources

Two lifetimes of learning from experience, experimenting, listening, reading of coaching literature (and a lot more) and talking about it underlie this handbook. Finding your meaningful sources is your is already part of the learning.

For readers who want, some suggestions to start or continue their reading in coaching

A lot has been written about **coaching**.

The OCC and OCAC like to work with these books:

Christian van Nieuwerburgh - An Introduction to Coaching Skills. A Practical Guide

Christian van Nieuwerburgh & David Love - Advanced Coaching Practice Inspiring Change in Others

Christian van Nieuwerburgh & Robert Biswas- Diener - Radical Listening

There are many **approaches to coaching**. There are several books with overviews.

OCC has worked with:

Stephan Palmer and Alison Whybrow (eds.) The handbook of coaching psychology. A guide for practitioners

On **transactional analysis**, it's hard to choose, a small selection:

Eric Berne - Games People Play

Thomas A. Harris - I'm OK, You're OK

Maarten Kouwenhoven - Strategisch Coachen

Karen Pratt - Coaching Distinctive Features - Transactional Analysis Coaching

Julie Hay - Transactional Analysis for Trainers

Claude Steiner – The Warm fuzzy tale

Information on contracting:

Charlotte Sills on contracting matrix (Transactional Analysis)

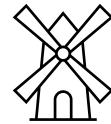
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97eRq3pQhZs&t=917s>

Adrienne Lee on process contracting (Transactional Analysis)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKixi7yI7N4&t=2s>

About **non-violent communication** and the perspective of **needs**

Marshall B. Rosenberg - Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life



Ted talks to see for sure:

Brene Brown – The power of vulnerability

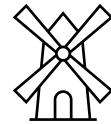
https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability

Brene Brown – Listening to shame

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame

Carol Dweck – the power of yet. About the growth mindset <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2Ic>

Material from Online Coaching Academy – [Online Coaching Academy - YouTube](#)



Vocabulary in Handbook Coaching across Continents

1. Coaching Roles & Identity

Term	Notes
Coach	Always used (not facilitator, trainer, or guide)
Coachee	The person in conversation—center of ownership
Coaching relationship	Emphasized as relational, mutual, co-created
Peer coach / Observer	Used occasionally for training contexts
Coaching partnership	Reflects mutual learning and shared presence

2. Core Coaching Actions

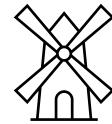
Term	Notes
Support	Your preferred word—replaces “guide,” “help,” or “lead”
Walk alongside	Used as a metaphor and action—non-hierarchical
Co-create	Reflects shared direction and agency
Reflect / Mirror / Affirm	Common verbs used to describe coach’s contributions
Invite	Used instead of “direct” or “instruct”
Ask / Listen / Stay present	Describes core behaviors in sessions
Witness	Describes the coach’s presence in emotional or civic moments
Hold (e.g. hold the space, hold complexity)	Describes ethical/emotional containment without control

3. Coaching Language & Tone

Term	Notes
Contribution	Central to Chapter 4—defined as self-directed action, not performance
Ownership	A key coaching goal—used often in contrast to coach-led direction
Self-direction	Treated as an internal capacity and a developmental goal
Reflection	A practice, a moment, and a tone throughout the Handbook
Recognition	A dignifying act, closely tied to the BRIDGE model and coaching presence
Empowerment	Defined through coachee choice and coaching restraint—not something the coach “gives”
Celebration	A form of relational closure, honoring change and transition
Clarity	Used instead of “solutions”—focus on awareness and direction
Dignity	A foundational coaching value in intercultural contexts

4. Values-Based Coaching Concepts

Term	Notes
Relational coaching	The primary stance in the Handbook
Trauma-sensitive	Used thoughtfully—never diagnostic, always context-aware
Intercultural	Describes the complexity of cross-background coaching



Civic practice	Coaching as part of social participation, not just personal growth
Emotional memory	Used to describe how endings, loss, and closure are held
Mutuality	Key idea—coaching as shared effort, not one-way service
Ethical boundaries	Framed clearly, especially in contracting and celebrating

5. Tools, Techniques & Framing Devices

Term	Notes
The 5Cs	Connection, Contracting, Conversation, Contribution, Celebrating
BRIDGE Model	Belonging, Recognition, Information, Direction, Guarantees, Empowerment
Coaching conversation	Defined as intentional, relational dialogue—not casual talk
Coaching process / Coaching moment	Used instead of "intervention" or "technique"
Radical listening	Deep presence, especially across culture or trauma
Re-contracting	Framing coaching as an evolving agreement
Reflection question / Insight question	Terms used to invite coach awareness, not instruction
Celebratory closure	Describes relational and empowering endings