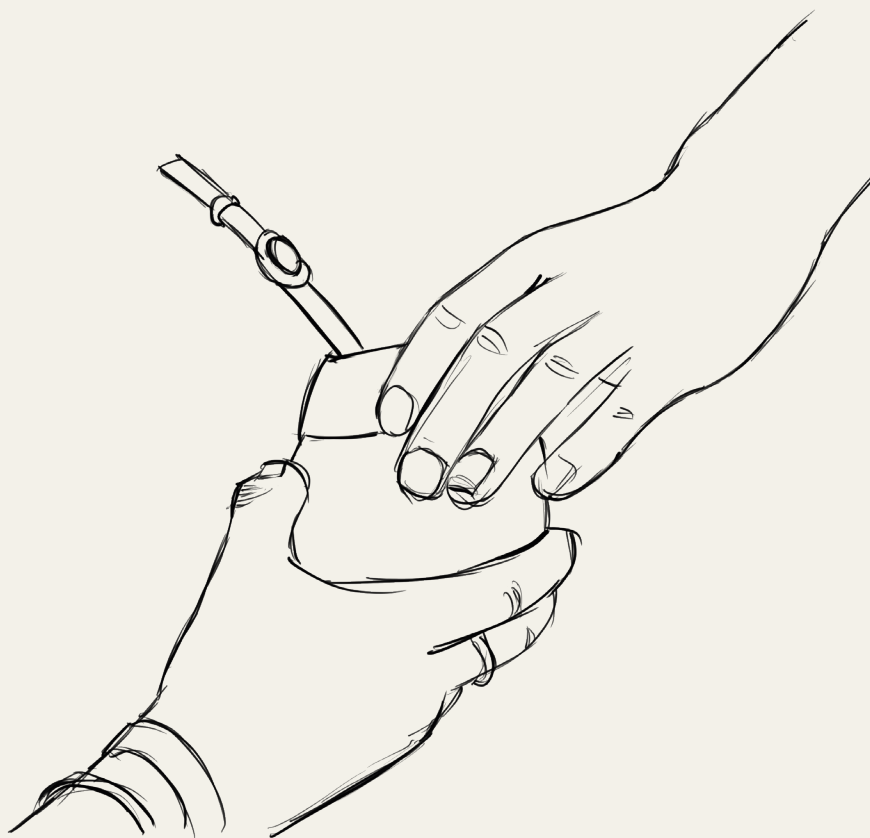


# TOMATE UN MATE

## guideline



# WHY this guideline

*A bit of context...*

This guideline has been created in an attempt to contribute to the field of design by empowering professionals in their collaboration with **circular initiatives** in Argentina. It provides support to designers in the application of the Circular Value Flower method, allowing them to leverage circular initiatives within the current context of Argentina.

**Initiative:** Self organized Processes of citizen practice that resiliently and adaptively modify the urban environment.

**Circular:** Their vision and goals are oriented towards the values of Circular Economy: optimizing the use of resources, preserving and increasing the natural capital and promoting a lifestyle and mindset based on respecting people and nature.

We are currently experiencing a much-needed transition towards a more sustainable way of life. In this systemic change, initiatives play a crucial role as game changers.

Their relevance relies mainly on providing people a safe space for experimentation and expression making them front runners for innovation. Particularly in Argentina, there is a strong inclina-

tion towards grassroots movements and addressing challenges from the bottom-up, which has deep historical roots. This inclination has had a notable impact not only on the country but also on the broader Latin American continent and even in Europe.

Despite these initiatives' aspirations to contribute to the transition towards a more sustainable model, research has demonstrated that they predominantly face challenges related to strategic internal alignment and internal communication. What's more, they are often not fully aware or explicit about these challenges.

The application of the Circular Value Flower (CVF) with the tools and principles suggested in this guideline has proven to be valuable for them in addressing these aspects and overcoming the obstacles to their development.

In this context, research has demonstrated that establishing a safe space for reflective conversations to happen regarding specific topics within the initiative is a valuable approach for addressing the mentioned challenges.

The Circular Value Flower method is an effective means to achieve this when applied in a participatory session under the appropriate conditions, which include having a facilitator and utilizing the tools presented in this guideline.

The purpose of this guideline is to help you, as a facilitator, embrace the most suitable principles and apply the tools most effectively to leverage these initiatives and enhance their impact.

# Content:

*In the following pages you will find...*

- About this guideline
- Guiding principles
- The session
  - Three phases
  - CR toolkit
  - CV map



*About this guideline...*

# Who is it for?

Whether you refer to yourself as a social innovator, participatory designer, strategic designer, but most importantly if empowering circular initiatives in Argentina is what keeps you awake every night, this guideline is for you.

# How does it work?

It works as a guide, companion, or support before during, and after a participatory session in which the CVF is employed with a circular initiative. Keep in mind that this is not a step-by-step recipe to blindly follow. It aims to ensure situated activism, encouraging a decolonial approach, and reflective learning. .

# Why “tomate un mate”

Because we know that nothing creates such a cozy, familiar, and reliable space for conversations like sharing a round of mate. Moreover, applying the CVF in a session, as will be suggested, encourages members of the initiatives to make a pause in their busy schedules, much like taking a short break to enjoy a warm and tasty mate.



# Principles





As previously mentioned, many circular initiatives in Argentina face challenges related to internal alignment and communication, often without even being aware of these issues.

Just like sharing mate always fosters a warm and trusting environment, this guideline aims to empower you to facilitate and create conditions for a safe space where members can freely express themselves and reflect upon these aspects.

Before delving into the phases and activities proposed for this type of intervention, we will discuss four overarching principles. The idea behind this is to equip you with the fundamentals of the most suitable approach, enabling you to make informed choices within this specific context.

# Sentipensar

*Principle 1: Set the proper mindset- feelthinking*

As explained at the beginning this is not a recipe or a step-by-step guide you can follow to ensure a specific result. Quite the opposite, it is highly encouraged for you to adopt a mode of thinking known as SENTIPENSAR. This term comes from the Spanish words SENTIR (feel) and PESNAR (think) and it was developed by Latin American popular movements.

It is a mode of thinking that refers to a way of knowing and understanding the world integrating rational thinking and emotions. It emphasizes the synergy between intellectual analysis and empathetic engagement, valuing diverse perspectives and lived experiences in the process of generating knowledge and addressing complex issues.

**Tip from experience:** To achieve this, I suggest you employ all your senses, stay attuned to your emotions, and recognize local knowledge.

It is helpful to spend some days previous to the session sharing their daily activities, having informal conversations, and keeping a journal as a personal debrief.



# Harmonious inclusivity

*Principle 2: Including all voices does not entail everyone speaking at the same time*

During the conversations and mostly, during the session when the CVF is applied, bringing all the members together is not always enough to give everyone a voice. In fact, it might even create the opposite effect. Therefore, as a facilitator, we need to understand what each group or member needs to be able to express themselves.

It's undeniable that we need to hear all voices, but some individuals may only speak up when others are not present. Some may require more time to articulate their thoughts, while others may feel more comfortable expressing themselves in casual conversations during their regular activities.

It is advisable to recognize and account for the varying levels of influence that certain members may have over others, as well as the different levels of commitment that certain topics may carry when discussed among them, and adjust the participation accordingly.

**Tip from experience:** Remain with them even beyond regular work hours for those “off the record” conversations, and allow for silence to happen, it is a great trigger for people to express themselves. The moments of waiting for example, which might initially appear as time wasted, can often turn out to be opportune for addressing certain subjects. It is essential to remain vigilant utilizing all your senses.



# Balancing and decolonizing

*Principle 3: Be open to learn, immerse yourself, and more importantly, be open to unlearn*

When a participatory approach is employed to work for societal change, as in this case, we aim to have a positive impact on our society. However, even if unintended, we can create power-imbalanced dynamics that play a fundamental role in decision-making and the perpetuation of oppression.

As facilitators, we can mitigate this by proactively paying attention to the power dynamics within the community, particularly in how we engage and foster relationships with its members.

Tip from experience: Listen, observe, and participate in the community's regular activities. Get immersed. From sharing their means of transport when commuting to the location to perform their daily activities always remembering that they are the experts. If you are interested in diving deeper into this topic, se-

veral other authors have developed very interesting tools to help us in this process. Hereby some of the ones I have found very insightful: Crossing Cultural Chasms action cards (by Annemiek van Boeijen), Reflective Questions for a Decolonial Process (by Fabiana Tomasini), Power Literacy booklet (by Maya Goodwil and Kennisland).



# Flexibility

## *Principle 4: Plan prioritizing and feel the moment*

Most of these communities are quite organic in the way they work and they solve challenges day by day. So even though the CVF method implies certain activities as it will be explained, it is important to be open and flexible.

Aligned with the idea of *sentipensar*, paying attention to the present, and being attentive to what's happening will help you understand how to adapt your plan. As in any participatory activity, many things can be arranged in advance, and many others need to be tailored on the spot, that is why having clear expectations, and goals and being familiarized with the method will help you enhance your flexibility.

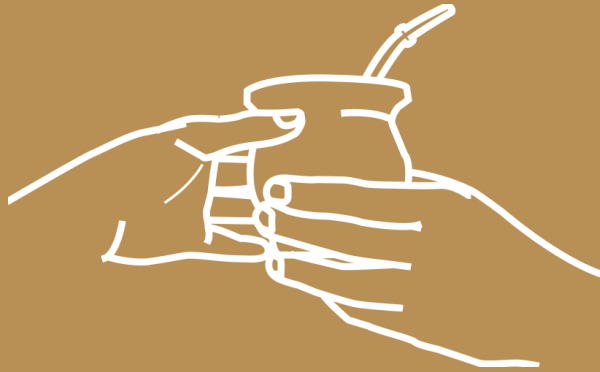
By spending time together, discover the best moment to talk about certain aspects or how to set the best conditions for expression.



**Tip from experience:** “Practice makes the master”. Get familiar with the CVF method and the tools Ciruclar Communities offers you before you start collaborating with the initiatives. The more you know them, the more you can tailor the planning and the way it is applied. Feel the moment, connect with the members, and own the method.



# The session



As highlighted in the introduction, the CVF method is a valuable means to create a safe space to trigger the necessary conversations among the members of the initiative.

To achieve this, a collaborative session needs to be carefully planned, performed, and debriefed by a facilitator. Two primary tools have been purposefully designed to assist you in this process. These tools are the Circular Reflection toolkit (CR toolkit) and the Circular Value map (CV map). Both of these have been carefully designed to help you embrace the four principles outlined in the previous section while applying the CVF.

# Three phases

## *Applying the CVF method in a collaborative session*

In this section, find a concise overview of the phases needed to apply the CVF, (1) Getting ready, (2) Performing, and (3) Reflecting.

Each phase is briefly described along with an explanation of the activities that should be conducted with the respective tools.



1

## GETTING READY

During this phase, become familiar with the CVF method and immerse yourself in the community.

Take the time to plan the session by customizing the CR toolkit to suit the specific characteristics of the initiative. It is also very important to clearly communicate with the initiative members what is going to happen and set the appropriate expectations.

2

## THE SESSION

This is the moment to initiate crucial discussions about the unspoken or assumed aspects of the initiative.

Employ the CR toolkit as a physical support, select a comfortable space, and make use of all the necessary time while being aware of their other responsibilities.

3

## DEBRIEFING

Time to look back and capitalize on the conversations as useful insights. Use the CV map to debrief the session and reflect on the findings.

Consolidate the key insights on the CV map as a tangible deliverable for the community and allocate time to review it with them, reflecting on its content together

# The Circular reflection Toolkit

*This toolkit is intended to support reflective and critical discussions among the members of the initiative regarding specific aspects of their community and project.*

The overall idea is to use this toolkit to guide, nudge, and track reflective conversations about each layer of the CVF among the members of the initiative.

Using the kraft paper as the canvas to work on, (although other types of paper can be used, avoiding black pages can help prevent “blank page syndrome”) bring the first Theme Tiles to the table. Each of these tiles corresponds to one layer of the CVF, serving as a guide for discussions by identifying the approached topic. Within each topic, there are several Triggering Tiles which should be introduced one by one. These tiles are designed to direct the conversation toward specific aspects of the topic through prompts or questions that trigger expression. These prompts should be highly relatable to the

participants and linked to concrete experiences, encouraging them to provide specific and detailed responses.

Provide markers and Post-its to each participant and encourage them to create small drawings representative of their answers or jot down keywords. This practice helps in keeping track of the conversation, fostering thoughtful contributions, and ensuring balanced participation.

A valuable addition to this approach is pictures, emojis, or icons which can be displayed on the table and accessible for everyone. These elements are intended to stimulate active participation, enhance creativity, and enable the expression of feelings and emotions while facilitating various forms of expression.




You can download a model of these elements for you to intervene with from the following link: [www.https://circularcommunity.org/resources](http://www.https://circularcommunity.org/resources).

All the components of the CR toolkit can be easily accessed and replicated in almost any location within the country. Therefore, don't hesitate to adapt any of them, taking into consideration their primary features and roles within the system. Do not hesitate to reinterpret any of them consi-







dering their primary features and roles within the system.

**Tips from experience:**

Before the session, plan and customize the elements. tailor the wording and pictures or emojis to whatever is most familiar to the member of the initiative. Plan the order of the triggering tiles to ensure covering the most important ones while leaving room for changes.

During the session, voice recording is useful, but be aware of the potential discomfort this could create. Collaborating with local designers can be useful to have extra eyes and ears in the session is a valuable alternative.

Encourage moments of speaking, but also and mainly moments of thinking and listening.

After the session, use the post-its and images employed to debrief in addition to input from your local colleague.

# Circular Value map

*This map is meant to compile all the insights gathered during your entire interaction with the community*

This element aims to act as a final deliverable from the designer to the community condensing all the insights collected during the intervention. The purpose of this final map is not only for the community to reflect on the conversations that took place, but also to uncover new connections and insights derived from them thanks to your analysis.

It provides you with a structure for debriefing all the findings and to structure this analysis. Therefore, use it as a canvas to guide your debriefing. Rather than creating a mere summary of the conversation, prioritize the organization and hierarchy of the content to make it truly insightful for the community.



**Tips from experience:** Bring nuances and insights into this map more than descriptive data. Using quotes and metaphors makes it more relatable and impactful as well as adapting the color scheme to that representative of the initiative. Include icons and/or images to enhance readability and make it more attractive.

The borders of each topic are not well defined in practice therefore insights could span multiple sections. Yet, for the sake of clarity, maintaining their order is advantageous.

You can download a model of these elements for you to intervene with from the following link: [www.https://circularcommunity.org/resources](https://circularcommunity.org/resources).

