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Personalization, Participation & Community

**MICRO-
CREDENTIAL
2025-2026**

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6 Modules

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(to be continued...)

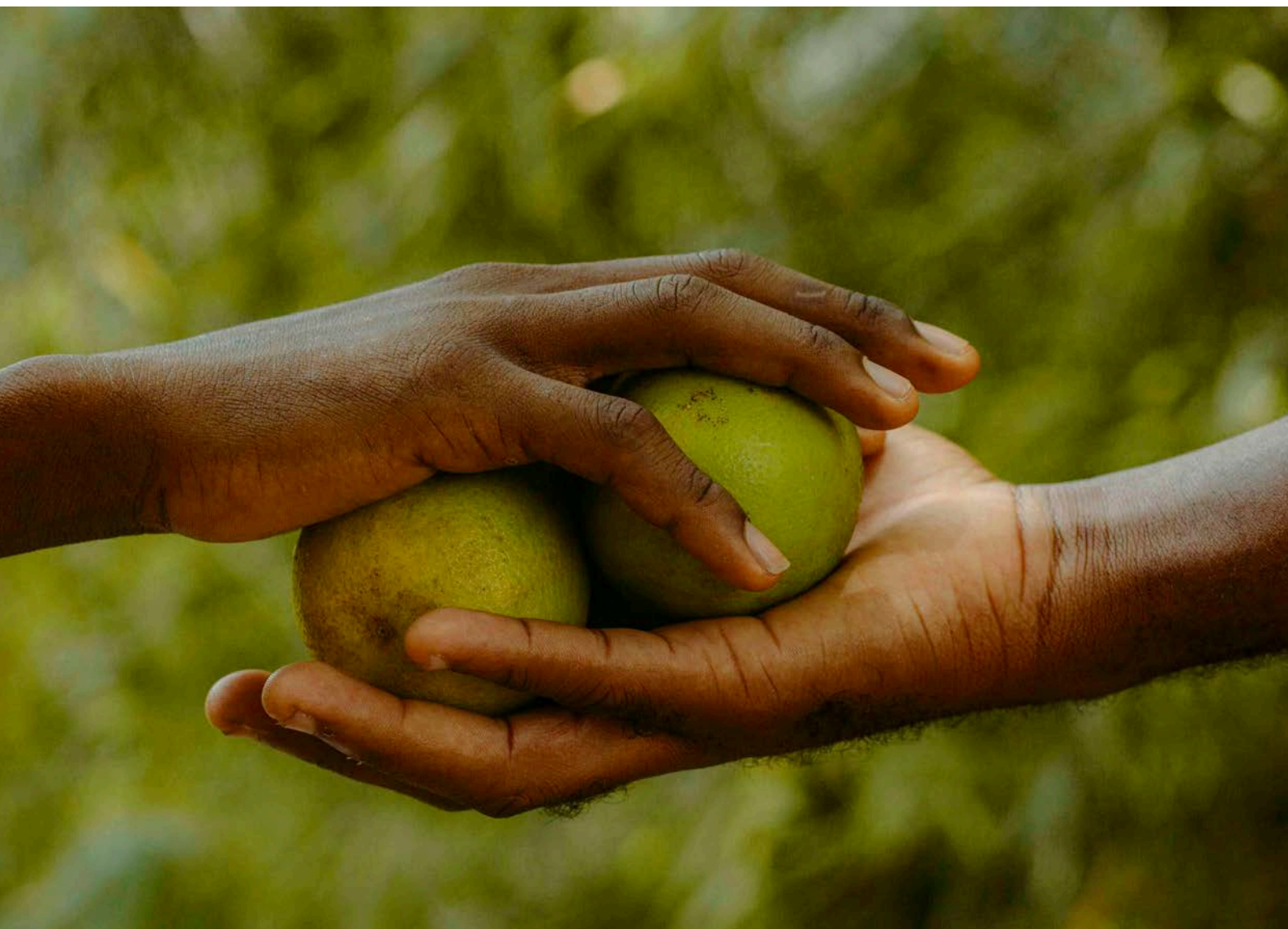


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More community through personalization: A shared learning journey

*Connecting, Caring, Belonging
and Living Together: Towards a
New Social Contract*





The Microcredencial was inaugurated at the House of Peace and Human Rights

On October 14th, 2025, the Microcredencial in Personalisation, Participation and Community began in the Gandhi Hall at the House of Peace and Human Rights in Donostia–San Sebastián.

This Microcredencial was born from a commission by the Department of Social Policies of the Province of Gipuzkoa, which invited us to create a postgraduate programme on Personalisation in social services.

We experienced that commission as both a great opportunity and a responsibility — to give real meaning to a word that, often repeated, risked becoming empty.

The idea of creating a conventional postgraduate course for professionals, taught in university classrooms and structured along academic lines, was far from our purpose. We wanted to create a learning space that was diverse and inclusive — a university proposal that was shorter, more open and more accessible — bringing together professionals, neighbours, family members, students and activists to learn together how to build a society that cares without excluding.



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The Microcredencial format, just one credit short of a postgraduate programme (14 ECTS instead of 15), offered the flexibility we needed to give coherence and meaning to the proposal:

- Accessibility and democratisation of university learning: The Microcredencial opens the doors of academia to people without prior university studies, removing structural barriers.
- Diversity in the teaching team: Unlike formal postgraduate programmes, the Microcredencial allows us to include, for example, people whose expertise comes from lived experience.
- An economic and inclusive alternative: Thanks to Next Generation funding, the programme offers an affordable pathway to university education, connecting directly with the idea of social justice.
- A link with the international movement for personalisation and full citizenship, with European recognition.

We shaped the proposal and submitted it for validation to the European Union so that it could be co-financed by the Next Generation funds through the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, as well as to the different committees of the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU).

The collaboration of the Faculty of Psychology and the strong commitment from the Department of Integrated Centre Management were key to the project's development. The Microcredencial was born from the collaboration of three institutions: the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa, the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU) and Matia Foundation — an organisation whose mission is to accompany people in their ageing process, ensuring dignity and autonomy through knowledge, personalised services, and environments that foster independence in a sustainable way.

We imagined an open and diverse learning space — an accessible and flexible university initiative that brings together professionals, neighbours, families, students and activists to explore how we can build a society that cares without leaving anyone behind.

A Symbolic Beginning: Culture as a Meeting Point

MARIA MUÑOZ EZKERGAIN
RESIDENTIAL DIRECTOR AT MATIA

The Microcredential began at the House of Peace and Human Rights, located in the Aiete Park — a space well known in San Sebastián that includes gardens, a cultural centre and exhibition halls open to the public. We wanted our first gesture to be a public act, not an academic one.

The House of Peace and Human Rights was founded as an expression of the city's commitment to promoting, educating and raising awareness of the values of peace and respect for human rights.

The Gandhi Hall holds the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on its walls, written in several languages.

The Microcredential opened with a film forum featuring “Patrice”, a film by Ted Passon, where Patrice and Garry seek a way to get married — revealing that, in the United States, marriage between people with disabilities is still a right that comes with a price. The session was hosted by Josemi Beltrán, Director of the Human Rights Film Festival of Donostia–San Sebastián.



Starting from culture was no coincidence.

Art and cinema allow us to speak of what is human without hierarchies — to build bridges between different realities and to transcend our individuality to recognise ourselves as part of something larger.

That first gathering reminded us that rights, community and personalisation are not learned from manuals, but through the shared emotion of watching a story together and asking what connects us.

In a sense, that screening was our first lesson: culture as a common language and a starting point for full citizenship.

From Commission to Purpose: Human Rights and Full Citizenship

Working from a perspective of rights and full citizenship helps us understand personalisation as the recognition of each person as unique and connected — a person who belongs, chooses and participates.

The programme follows a logic that helps us rethink the historical journey of care and support through the lens of rights and full citizenship. It invites us to question approaches that offer only partial answers — for example, those shaped by ableist assumptions that exclude so many from society that we can no longer accept them as valid.

Before discussing “deinstitutionalisation strategies,” we wanted to explore how to prevent institutionalisation: How can we help create communities that embrace diversity as a key value for human coexistence? How do good communities foster good lives, and how can we prevent people from becoming isolated or separated from their neighbourhoods, from the communities they belong to or wish to belong to?

That is why the programme begins with a module on Human Rights and ethical frameworks, where jurists, activists and people with lived experience reflect together on what it means to have — or not have — control over one’s own life; what it means to live with rights, and what it means to live without them.

We learned that preventing institutionalisation is about recognising existing strengths and assets, about understanding ourselves as vulnerable, interdependent and interconnected beings, and about opening communities — working *with*, *from* and *among* them.





In some sessions, the voices of those who have experienced rights violations resonated powerfully. Women who have faced gender violence, young people segregated during their schooling, people institutionalised since childhood, activists with functional diversity, or migrants from the Maghreb who came seeking a dignified life and collided with the bureaucracy of immigration law. Their stories did not seek pity — they restored truth. Listening to them was like touching the essential: they reminded us that working for personalisation and community is not a technical task, but a commitment to life itself.

In their words, we also found the emotion that, perhaps unknowingly, had inspired our vocation.

From this first block onward, each of the six modules begins in a different community space — a civic centre, a school, a cultural house, a public service...

Sometimes families, teachers or local workers join out of curiosity.

These spontaneous encounters are, in fact, the essence of the project: a university that opens itself to life, and a community that opens itself to learning.

THE LANGUAGE THAT TRANSFORMS

As we move along this journey, we are also learning that language itself is a tool for transformation.

Words create worlds.

If we speak of “service users” or “cases,” we build silos — limiting people to a function.

If we speak of “people” and “community,” we open spaces of encounter.

For that reason, we are learning to take care of how we name, how we listen, and how we narrate.

This care is expressed through a small ritual we repeat in every session with each member of the teaching team — a team made up of people who are experts through lived experience, academic knowledge, and professional practice.

Before beginning, we ask each speaker: “How do you contribute to your community?”. And at the end of the session, we ask: “What does a good life mean to you?”.

These two questions frame all learning. The first reminds us that knowledge only makes sense when placed at the service of others — it emerges and grows when it is shared.

The second reminds us that fullness is not measured by individual achievements, but by bonds, reciprocity, shared meaning and transcendence.

In essence, these two questions serve as the programme’s compass: they teach us to think with the community, not about the community.

Learning by Making ² Community

We learn to identify the assets and talents that already exist, to weave networks of mutual support, and to strengthen the social capital that sustains everyday life.



The second block of the Microcredential is devoted to full citizenship and community participation, grounded in the values of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model.

Each session functions like a living organism that grows with the people who take part in it: a film forum on inclusive schools sparks dialogue between neighbours and students; a roundtable on housing gathers municipal technicians and residents; a workshop on support networks inspires spontaneous projects that continue long after the class ends.

In this way, the Microcredential becomes a living space of learning and encounter, where knowledge flows horizontally and academic insight intertwines with the wisdom of experience.

Self-Directed Support

Personalisation finds its most powerful expression in the block dedicated to self-directed support and personal budgets. Guided by international references in the field, this module helps us understand that real change happens when power and decision-making shift from institutions to people.

Personal budgets are not just a financial mechanism — they are instruments of freedom and citizenship.

They allow each person to decide how they want to live, who accompanies them, and what support they need.

To personalise is to trust — and trust itself is a form of recognition.



GROWING IN DIVERSITY

Another dimension that runs through the entire Microcredential is inclusive education.

We reflect on how segregation in childhood shapes a collective imagination in which not everyone fits.

When schools separate, societies learn to exclude.

That is why this training is conceived as an inclusive learning experience for adults as well.

Here, people with diverse professions and life paths sit side by side, united by the desire to understand and contribute.

Often, the most transformative conversations arise between those who had never met before — it is in that mixture that community recognises itself.

Before closing this second block, we hold the Airea Day, led by Ester Ortega.

Each student invites one other person — seeking diversity within the group — and together they spend the day exploring a neighbourhood, engaging with the community through an appreciative lens.

It is a practical synthesis of the theoretical learnings on Community Mapping and the ABCD model.



Deinstitutionalisation processes



From these conversations come proposals that go beyond care models to reach the roots of the social fabric: the need to cultivate communities that sustain, include and recognise.

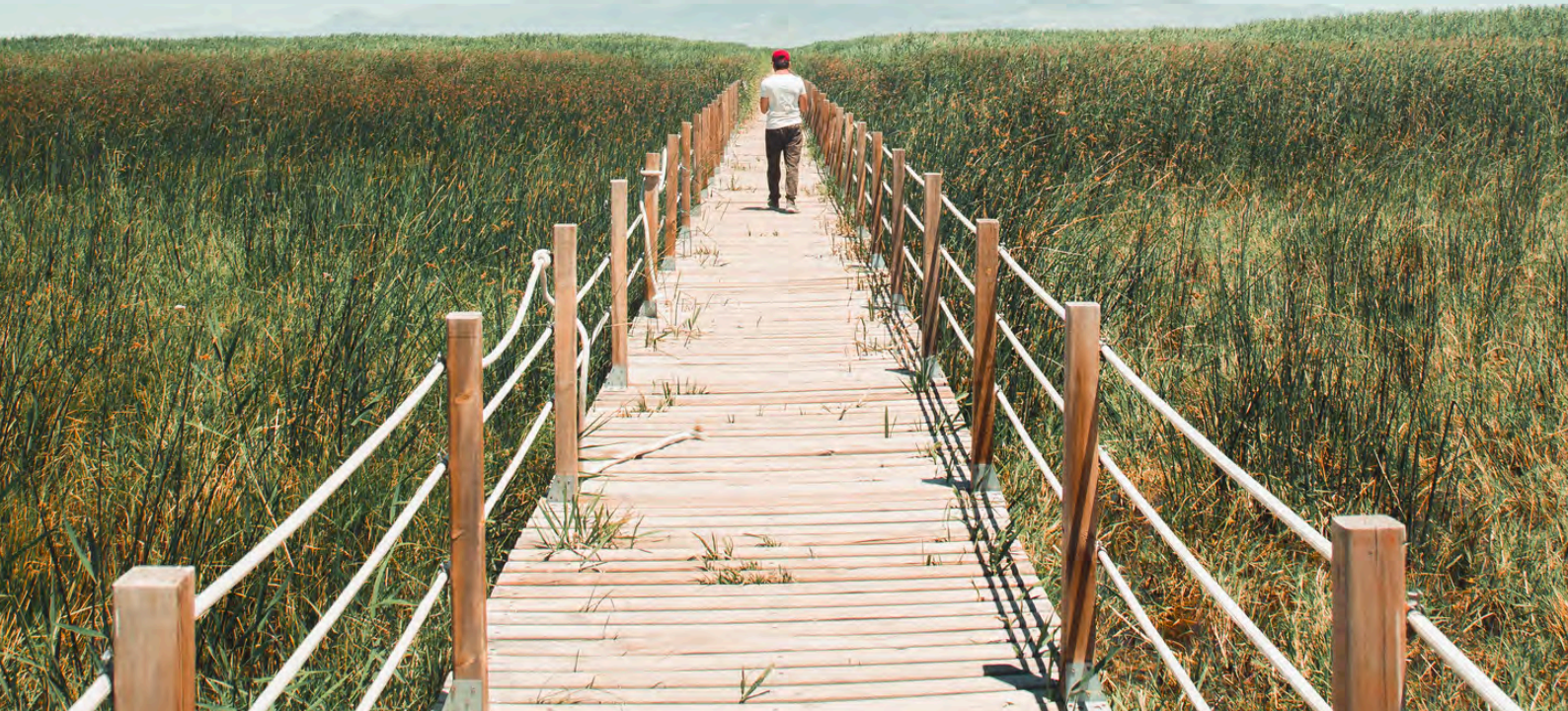
We come to understand that deinstitutionalisation is not only about transforming structures — it is about transforming mindsets. Throughout this block, we reflect on how institutions — whether buildings, services or ways of thinking — tend to organise people's lives according to logics of control, efficiency and homogeneity. But life, by definition, is diverse, unpredictable and relational.

We work on how to co-generate communities, how to strengthen the local ties that allow people to live and participate in their own environments.

Strategies for deinstitutionalisation are explored through real examples — collaborative housing, neighbourhood networks, personalised support in rural settings — and through the experiences of those who have undergone change. They remind us that there is no universal roadmap, only an ethical commitment: to place life at the centre.

Essential questions emerge in every session:
 How can we design services that do not replace, but accompany?
 What role do municipalities play in this transformation? And the administration?
 How do we guarantee the right to belong without conditions?

Personalization Models and Methodologies : From the plan to the purpose



After travelling through Human Rights, full citizenship and deinstitutionalisation, we finally arrive at the block that inspired the Microcredential's creation: personalisation and person-centred practices. Here we move from theory to practice.

We explore approaches such as MAPS, PATH, Essential Lifestyle Planning and the Person-Centred Approaches Model — not as technical tools, but as forms of deep conversation and mutual understanding.

The goal is to learn to plan according to each person's values, will and life project — not according to deficits.

Each methodology becomes a doorway to discover desires, talents and relationships, and to translate them into real supports that make a chosen and connected life possible.

Through participatory dynamics, students practice the art of listening without directing, accompanying without replacing, and designing supports that respect self-direction.

In these sessions we also pause to ask: How can we focus on personal outcomes rather than service goals?, How do we prevent tools from becoming bureaucratized? How can we involve diversity and co-creation? How do we keep listening alive in institutional contexts? The answers appear in collective practice: when planning stops being a document and becomes a shared process, personalisation stops being a verb and becomes a relationship.

This block acts as a bridge between ethics and action, reminding us that to personalise means to recognise each life's uniqueness as a source of knowledge.

Ethics of Accompaniment: Caring Without Replacing

The ethics block, present throughout the entire Microcredential, finds its dedicated space near the end of the programme.

Here we explore what it means to accompany others through an ethics of recognition and reciprocity — an ethic not only centred on “doing good” for someone, but on recognising the good that each person brings into the world.

We engage in dialogues around everyday value conflicts — autonomy and safety, consent and protection, power and responsibility — which cut across all support relationships. Lectures, workshops and debates invite us to rethink the roles of professional, citizen and administration, and to view ethics not as a fixed code, but as a living practice — a constant commitment to the dignity and freedom of each person.

This block, right before the programme’s closing, acts as a moral and human compass.

It reminds us that personalisation cannot exist without an ethics of care, without listening, and without dialogue.

And that every social innovation, no matter how ambitious, only makes sense if it honours the fragility and interdependence that make us human.



Evaluating Through the Lens of the Good Life



The journey concludes with a module on evaluation and innovation, focused on personal outcomes and subjective quality of life.

We do not evaluate how many actions have been taken, but rather what has changed in people's lives.

Have we truly listened?

Have people been able to choose?

Do they feel part of something they value?

Have they discovered new ways to contribute?

Evaluation thus becomes a collective learning tool — a way of being accountable to life, not to the system.

In this process, concepts such as local ecosystems of care and “buen vivir” (good living) emerge, reminding us that wellbeing arises from relationships and equity, not from performance or productivity.

“Rooted in connection and belonging, the students have built a learning community and a vibrant network of shared practice.”



THE FINAL PROJECT: GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY



The final project is not handed in to the university — it is returned to the community. It is a way of giving thanks, of transforming learning into something that improves, even in a modest way, everyday life.

Each participant closes their journey with a final project, not as an exam or a technical report, but as an action with meaning. The format is free — a project, an experience, a gesture, a creative proposal — but all share the same purpose: to create a small positive impact in a person, a group or a community.

Some participants design personalised supports for someone close; others organise a community event, an artistic intervention, or a transformative conversation in their workplace or neighbourhood.

Each project becomes a mirror of the learning process itself — a unique way of personalising what it means to *participate and build community*.

The presentations take place in an open poster session — not an evaluation, but a collective celebration of learning. It is a moment to look back and recognise that knowledge, when shared and placed at the service of others, creates movement.

Thus, the final project becomes both a synthesis and a symbol of the entire programme.

It does not aim to measure, but to connect.

It does not seek to prove, but to give back.

And in that gesture of reciprocity, each participant becomes an agent of change.

Towards a New Social Contract



As we move forward, we realise that the Microcredential is, in fact, an experiment in a new social contract.

We believe that one of the great challenges of our time is to rebuild the bonds that hold our societies together — to recognise that our own wellbeing depends on that of others, and that care is not an obligation but a form of shared justice.

This Microcredential puts that vision into practice on a small scale: to form committed citizens, not just competent professionals; to promote communities that care for one another; and to demonstrate that the university can be a living actor in building the common good.

A Community That Learns

Today, the Microcredential in Personalisation, Participation and Community is much more than a training programme.

It is a space where people come together to think about how we want to live and care for one another — a place where knowledge becomes encounter, and learning becomes relationship.

Between the two questions asked to every speaker — How do you contribute to your community? and What is a good life for you? — unfolds the deepest meaning of education: learning to live together.

After all, personalisation is not a technique — it is a way of seeing, listening and building community.

And so, we continue walking in that direction, weaving alliances with networks such as Citizen Network, convinced that only through language, culture, dialogue, community and shared responsibility can we move towards societies in which every person can contribute, choose and belong.



MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MICROCREDENTIAL

MICROCREDENTIAL IN PERSONALIZATION, PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY

[https://mikrokredentzialak.ehu.eus/
en/activity/personalizacion-
participacion-comunidad](https://mikrokredentzialak.ehu.eus/en/activity/personalizacion-participacion-comunidad)



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