



EU-SIDE

European Social Innovation & Democratic Education

SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETENCE
FRAMEWORK

TEACHER GUIDE · UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Pebble in the Shoe

A pebble in my shoe — from small discomfort to social innovation.

Collaboration

Agency

Systemic Inquiry

Innovative Thinking

± 7 lessons · with teaching tips, step-by-step plans, rubrics, character cards, curriculum links & emotion wheel



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~ About this series

Everyone carries a **pebble in their shoe** now and then: a small or big discomfort that keeps nagging. In this series, upper-secondary students learn to recognise their own pebbles, understand those of others and turn them into ideas for **social innovation** — concrete actions towards the universal values of **freedom, equality and tolerance**.

Students move from personal reflection (with the emotion wheel) through research into four groups and real conversations in the outside world, to a pitch and a developed solution with a promotional campaign. Assessment uses rubrics drawn directly from the EU-SIDE competence cards for upper secondary.

~ Learning aims

- The student can **define** a personal and societal 'pebble' and link it to a feeling via the emotion wheel.
- The student **discovers** that the same situation feels different to everyone and connects pebbles to a framework of values.
- The student **researches** the lived world of a group and takes different perspectives.
- The student **collects** stories through respectful interviews and questions the status quo.
- The student **designs** a solution and a promotional campaign as a group, towards freedom, equality and tolerance.

~ Link with the EU-SIDE competence framework

● Collaboration

dialogue, empathy, perspective-taking, teamwork

● Agency

initiative, questioning the status quo, resilience

● Systemic Inquiry

critical thinking, research, systems & futures

● Innovative Thinking

design, creativity, story & communication



Lesson overview

Lesson	Time	Content	Format	Competence	Assessment
1	50 min	A pebble in my shoe — own pebbles & emotion wheel	whole class + individual	Agency	Self-reflection (Ws 1)
2-3	100 min	Researching pebbles of four groups	individual + pairs	Systemic Collab.	Rubric A
4	50 min	Out into the world: collecting pebbles (interviews)	fieldwork	Agency Collab.	Rubric B
5	50 min	Pitching & choosing a top 3	class + group	Innovative Collab.	Rubric C
6-7	100 min	Developing a solution & campaign	group work	Innovative Syst. Collab.	Rubric D

The lesson numbering follows the original idea. Lessons can be spread over several weeks; the fieldwork in lesson 4 takes time outside class.

What do you need?

Per student

- Student workbook with Worksheets 1-5
- Emotion wheel (appendix)
- Smartphone for recording (lesson 4)

Per group / class

- Character cards (print & cut out)
- Projector + sound
- Campaign materials (poster, video...)

Programmes (lesson 2-3)

- Adopted children — *Durf te Vragen*
- Refugees — *Durf te Vragen*
- Poverty — *Pano*
- Wheelchair users — *Durf te Vragen*

Resources & videos

- **Brihang** (lesson 1) — youtube.com/watch?v=F_Fn5F-Ohs0 · **play from 1:30 to 2:14**
- **Adopted children** — *Durf te Vragen* · vrt.be/vrtmax/a-z/durf-te-vragen/3/durf-te-vragen-s3a8/
- **Refugees** — *Durf te Vragen* · vrt.be/vrtmax/a-z/durf-te-vragen/2/durf-te-vragen-s2a3/
- **Poverty** — *Pano* · vrt.be/vrtmax/a-z/pano/2013/panorama-s2013a20/
- **Wheelchair users** — *Durf te Vragen* · vrt.be/vrtmax/a-z/durf-te-vragen/1/durf-te-vragen-s1a5/

The videos are on VRT MAX (free with an account; Flemish public broadcaster, in Dutch). Check availability beforehand.



~ Assessing with the EU-SIDE rubrics

Every larger assignment has a **rubric** drawn from the assessment criteria on the EU-SIDE competence cards (upper secondary). This makes visible which social-innovation competences students show, and helps them grow through the series. Each rubric works with **four levels**:

1 • Emerging

first, tentative steps

2 • Developing

with support

3 • Strong

independent and solid

4 • Excellent

deepening and convincing

Tip: use the rubrics as a **growth framework** too. Let students read the criteria beforehand and use the same rubric for self- and peer assessment alongside the teacher's.

~ Which rubric for which assignment?

Rubric	For	Competences
A	Researching a group & taking perspective (lesson 2-3)	Systemic Inquiry Collaboration
B	Collecting pebbles through interviews (lesson 4)	Agency Collaboration
C	Pitch & top 3 (lesson 5)	Innovative Thinking Collaboration
D	Final assignment: solution & campaign (lesson 6-7)	Innovative Thinking Systemic Inquiry Collaboration

Lesson 1 is not graded: it is a safe start. Use the self-reflection at the bottom of Worksheet 1 there.



Lesson 1 · A pebble in my shoe

50 min

Aim. Students define what a 'pebble' is, discover that it differs for everyone, and connect it to a feeling and a value.

- 1 **Start with music.** Play the Brihang track **from 1:30 to 2:14** (link in the resource list). What do students think a 'pebble in the shoe' is?
- 2 **Your own pebbles.** Each student writes down **3 pebbles** for themselves on **Worksheet 1**.
- 3 **Emotion wheel together.** Introduce the **emotion wheel (appendix)**: from the six core feelings to finer nuances. Stress: every feeling is equally valid, we share in confidence.
- 4 **Connect a feeling.** Students link each pebble to a feeling from the wheel and explain where that feeling comes from.
- 5 **Wrap up.** A short self-reflection: which pebble affects you the most?

Emotion wheel — moment 1

Worksheet 1



Teaching tip. Build safety: share a (light) pebble of your own first, so students dare to follow. Keep the emotion wheel visible in the classroom throughout the series.

Lesson 2-3 · Pebbles of four groups

100 min

Aim. Students explore the lived world of a group, name pebbles and feelings, take another perspective and formulate a message around universal values.

- 1 **Watch & note.** Each student individually watches a programme about one group and fills in **Worksheet 2**: a sketch of the group, the pebbles, and the feelings (via the **emotion wheel**).
- 2 **Four groups.** Adopted children, refugees and wheelchair users (*Durf te Vragen*) and poverty (*Pano*) — Flemish TV, in Dutch; links in the resource list (see 'What do you need?').
- 3 **Towards happiness.** Reflection question on the worksheet: what could you do or undertake to move people towards 'happiness'?
- 4 **Put on different glasses.** The student reads a **character card (appendix)** and places that character's feeling on the emotion wheel. Each group has two characters with strongly differing views.
- 5 **Message.** What message would you give to strive for freedom, equality and tolerance for this group?

Emotion wheel — moment 2

Worksheet 2

Character cards

Rubric A



Teaching tip. Let students choose a group beforehand. Discuss as a class how the same situation can feel so different — use the two character cards per group for this.



Lesson 4 · Out into the world

50 min

Aim. Students take initiative to gather stories outside the classroom, question the status quo and act respectfully and ethically.

- 1 **Interview guide.** Students first draft a short interview guide (**Worksheet 3**): a few open questions from different angles.
- 2 **Consent first.** Before each conversation they clearly ask permission to record on the phone, explain the purpose and respect boundaries and privacy.
- 3 **Collect pebbles.** Students seek out other people's pebbles and note what they hear.
- 4 **Debrief.** A short follow-up: which unexpected pebbles came up?

[Worksheet 3](#)[Rubric B](#)

Teaching tip. Make clear agreements about safety and consent beforehand; you can start within the school (teachers, staff, neighbours). Briefly discuss privacy and GDPR: post nothing online without agreement.

Lesson 5 · Pitch & top 3

50 min

Aim. Students pitch a pebble clearly and convincingly, compare ideas and choose a top 3 to work on as a group.

- 1 **Pitch.** Students pitch their strongest pebbles to each other (**Worksheet 4**). What did they discover?
- 2 **Compare.** The group compares the pebbles on impact and feasibility.
- 3 **Top 3.** The group chooses a **top 3** of pebbles to find a solution for, aimed at freedom, equality and tolerance.

[Worksheet 4](#)[Rubric C](#)

Teaching tip. Use a time-box per pitch (e.g. 1 minute) and let the class follow along with the rubric for short peer feedback.



Lesson 6-7 · Solution & campaign

100 min

Aim. Students develop a solution in a group following a design cycle and run a promotional campaign that tells the message powerfully — the final assignment.

- 1 Frame.** The group chooses a pebble and analyses the problem and the underlying assumptions (**Worksheet 5**).
- 2 Design.** Through a mini design cycle (idea → prototype → test → refine) they develop a feasible, meaningful solution.
- 3 Value-driven.** How does the solution contribute to freedom, equality and tolerance? Consider the systemic impact.
- 4 Campaign.** The group creates a campaign (poster, video, social or action) with one clear core message, tailored to the audience.
- 5 Present.** Each group presents both solution and campaign to the class.

[Worksheet 5](#)[Rubric D — final assignment](#)

Teaching tip. Assign groups to different values and build in a short interim pitch halfway for adjustment. Show the final campaigns to a real audience if possible (another class, parents, neighbourhood).



~ Rubric A — Researching a group & taking perspective

Systemic Inquiry

Collaboration

Lesson 2-3

Criterion	1 · Emerging	2 · Developing	3 · Strong	4 · Excellent
Researching group & context	Describes the group very generally, without sources.	Sketches the group with a few facts from the programme.	Describes context and challenges, supported by examples.	Analyses with nuance, weighs perspectives and acknowledges uncertainty.
Pebbles & feelings (emotion wheel)	Names one pebble, with no feeling.	Names a few pebbles and chooses fitting feelings.	Connects pebbles to precise feelings and explains them.	Distinguishes fine nuances and explains where they come from.
Taking perspective (character)	Gives their own opinion instead of the character's.	States the character's view in broad terms.	Steps into the character and places the feeling on the wheel with reasons.	Reflects critically on their own frames, prejudices and differing views.
Message around universal values	Formulates a vague or clichéd message.	Formulates a message around one value.	Formulates a respectful message around freedom, equality and tolerance.	Formulates an ethical, purposeful message, tailored to the group.

Based on the *Systemic Inquiry* and *Collaboration* cards (upper secondary).



~ Rubric B — Collecting pebbles through interviews

Agency

Collaboration

Lesson 4

Criterion	1 • Emerging	2 • Developing	3 • Strong	4 • Excellent
Initiative & questioning the status quo	Waits and asks mostly obvious questions.	Takes initiative and questions a few assumptions.	Actively seeks out people and questions the status quo.	Challenges taken-for-granted practices with sharp, open questions.
Interview guide & multiple views	Asks a few loose questions without a guide.	Makes a simple guide with mostly closed questions.	Makes a thoughtful guide with open questions from different angles.	Tailors questions to the person and surfaces multiple viewpoints.
Respectful & ethical conduct	Asks no consent or handles privacy carelessly.	Asks consent but acts somewhat unsure.	Clearly asks consent and listens respectfully.	Acts ethically and empathetically, builds trust and respects boundaries.
Persevering & reaching the goal	Gives up at the first refusal or difficulty.	Persists after a setback, with help.	Reaches the goal despite difficulties.	Adapts the approach independently and gathers rich conversations.

Based on the *Agency* and *Collaboration* cards (upper secondary).



~ Rubric C — Pitching & choosing a top 3

Innovative Thinking

Collaboration

Lesson 5

Criterion	1 • Emerging	2 • Developing	3 • Strong	4 • Excellent
Clear & convincing pitch	Tells it incoherently, hard to follow.	Brings the pebble across clearly, but not convincingly.	Pitches clearly and engagingly, tuned to the class.	Convinces with a strong pitch, tuned to audience and purpose.
Story with examples & evidence	Gives only an opinion, without examples.	Supports it with one example or source.	Weaves examples and evidence into a clear story.	Builds a convincing story with well-chosen data and testimonies.
Comparing & selecting ideas	Chooses at random, without arguments.	Chooses a top 3 with limited reasoning.	Compares pebbles and justifies the top 3 with criteria.	Weights impact and feasibility towards the universal values.
Deciding together	One voice dominates or no one takes responsibility.	Most take part in the choice.	Everyone contributes equally and listens respectfully.	Integrates everyone's input into a shared decision.

Based on the *Innovative Thinking* and *Collaboration* cards (upper secondary).



~ Rubric D — Final assignment — solution & campaign

Innovative Thinking

Systemic Inquiry

Collaboration

Lesson 6-7

Criterion	1 · Emerging	2 · Developing	3 · Strong	4 · Excellent
Framing the problem & assumptions	Takes the pebble as it is, without analysis.	Names the problem and one underlying assumption.	Analyses the problem and the assumptions with evidence.	Exposes connections in the system and weighs uncertainties.
Design cycle & solution	Thinks of one idea, without development.	Develops an idea, but does not test or improve it.	Runs through a design cycle to a feasible solution.	Develops a creative, tested and meaningful solution.
Systemic & value-driven	Loses sight of the universal values.	Loosely links the solution to one value.	Aims the solution at freedom, equality and tolerance.	Outlines the systemic impact and thinks in scenarios.
Campaign & story	Campaign is unclear or has no message.	Campaign brings a simple message.	Campaign tells a clear, convincing story with evidence.	Campaign is powerful, original and tailored to the audience.
Collaborating in a group	Work is unevenly shared; little coordination.	The group divides tasks, with some help.	Everyone contributes equally and resolves conflicts together.	The group self-directs and reflects on process and each contribution.

Based on the *Innovative Thinking*, *Systemic Inquiry* and *Collaboration* cards (upper secondary).



Appendix — Character cards

Lesson 2–3 includes the exercise ‘**put on different glasses**’. Each group has **two characters** with strongly differing views. Print the cards and cut them out. Each student gets one character, reads the card and places that character’s feeling on the **emotion wheel**.

The characters are fictional and meant to practise perspective-taking — not a generalisation of an entire group. The views differ strongly; let students discover this for themselves, place the feeling on the emotion wheel and discuss the differences towards the values of freedom, equality and tolerance. Ensure a safe classroom climate.

● Adopted children

Lena · Mathis

● Refugees

Amir · Dries

● People in poverty

Sam · Lars

● Wheelchair users

Tibo · Iris

**Lena** age 17

ADOPTED CHILDREN

WHO AM I?

I was adopted from abroad as a baby and grew up in Flanders.

MY PEBBLE

People constantly ask me: 'but where are you *really* from?' — as if I don't belong here.

“I feel completely at home here, but those questions keep stinging.”

MY VIEW

I am proud of my story and want adoption to be seen as completely normal. Rather optimistic, but sometimes hurt.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

Mathis age 17

ADOPTED CHILDREN

WHO AM I?

A classmate who has no patience for complaints about adoption.

MY PEBBLE

I don't get why adopted kids complain.

“They got every opportunity here, didn't they? They should just be grateful and stop whining.”

MY VIEW

I think adopted children shouldn't complain and should be grateful for the opportunities they got.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

**Amir** age 17

REFUGEES

WHO AM I?

I fled a war zone two years ago and now go to school here.

MY PEBBLE

I have to prove everything — the language, my papers, that I 'belong'.

"I am grateful for the safety here, but I miss my grandparents every day."

MY VIEW

I am hopeful and driven: I want to build something and contribute. At the same time I carry grief for what I left behind.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

Dries age 17

REFUGEES

WHO AM I?

Someone who mainly views refugees with suspicion.

MY PEBBLE

Refugees, in my view, mostly come here to take advantage.

"They get all sorts of things while we work hard. They are only here to profit from our system."

MY VIEW

I think refugees are mainly here to take advantage and that they take something away from us.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

**Sam** age 16

PEOPLE IN POVERTY

WHO AM I?

There is little money at home; at weekends I work a job to help out.

MY PEBBLE

I can't join trips or expensive outings, so I just say I 'don't feel like it'.

"I feel ashamed sometimes, but I'm also proud that I already contribute at home."

MY VIEW

I don't want to be seen as 'pitiful'. I am resilient and take on what I can.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

Lars age 18

PEOPLE IN POVERTY

WHO AM I?

Someone who thinks poverty is mostly your own fault.

MY PEBBLE

Whoever is poor, in my view, usually has themselves to blame.

"They apparently do have money for an expensive phone or cigarettes — so it can't be that bad."

MY VIEW

I think people in poverty largely have themselves to blame and should simply try harder.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

**Tibo** age 18

WHEELCHAIR USERS

WHO AM I?

Since an accident I use a wheelchair. I love sport and stand up for accessibility.

MY PEBBLE

Thresholds everywhere, narrow doors, no lift — the world wasn't designed for me.

"It's not my wheelchair that's the problem, but the stairs no one thinks away."

MY VIEW

I am determined: accessibility is a right. Sometimes angry, but above all resolved to change something.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?

Iris age 17

WHEELCHAIR USERS

WHO AM I?

I have used a wheelchair since childhood. I mostly want to be treated as normal.

MY PEBBLE

People talk to my assistant instead of to me, or help without being asked.

"I don't want pity — I want you to simply ask me."

MY VIEW

Being patronised tires me out. I long for ordinary, equal interaction.

Where do you place my feeling on the emotion wheel? _____ Why?



~ Appendix — Alignment with the Flemish curriculum (upper secondary)

The new **minimum goals (attainment targets)** of the second and third stage of Flemish secondary education are no longer organised by subject, but around **16 key competences (KC)**. The table below shows, per lesson, the key competences this series aligns with. The full, exact minimum goals per stage can be consulted at onderwijsdoelen.be.

Lesson	Activity	Key competences	How does it align?
1	A pebble in my shoe	KC 1 (emotional awareness), KC 14 (self-awareness & self-expression), KC 5 (social-relational)	Students name and share feelings with the emotion wheel and reflect on themselves in a safe classroom climate.
2-3	Researching four groups	KC 7 (citizenship & living together), KC 5 (social-relational), KC 16 (cultural awareness), KC 4 (media literacy), KC 13 (information processing & critical thinking)	Students analyse a media programme, take perspectives, recognise prejudices and connect this to universal values.
4	Collecting pebbles (interviews)	KC 2 (Dutch — oral interaction), KC 4 (digital competence & media literacy), KC 13 (research skills), KC 5 (social-relational), KC 15 (initiative)	Students design and conduct an interview, record on the phone, ask consent and respectfully question the status quo.
5	Pitch & top 3	KC 2 (Dutch — presenting & persuading), KC 13 (critical thinking & collaboration), KC 15 (entrepreneurship), KC 5 (social-relational)	Students give a convincing pitch, compare ideas with criteria and choose a shared top 3 together.
6-7	Solution & campaign	KC 13 (innovative thinking, creativity, problem-solving & systems thinking, collaboration), KC 7 (citizenship), KC 10 (sustainability), KC 15 (entrepreneurship), KC 16 (cultural expression), KC 2/4 (communication & media)	Students run a design cycle towards a value-driven solution and run a promotional campaign — the integrated final assignment.

Read the key competences together: KC 13 (learning competences: research, innovative thinking, creativity, problem-solving & critical thinking, systems thinking, information processing, collaboration), KC 7 (citizenship, incl. living together), KC 5 (social-relational), KC 16 (cultural awareness) and KC 14 (self-awareness & self-direction) form the core. Source: onderwijsdoelen.be — minimum goals second and third stage (definitively approved 12 July 2023).



~ Appendix — Emotion wheel (working tool)

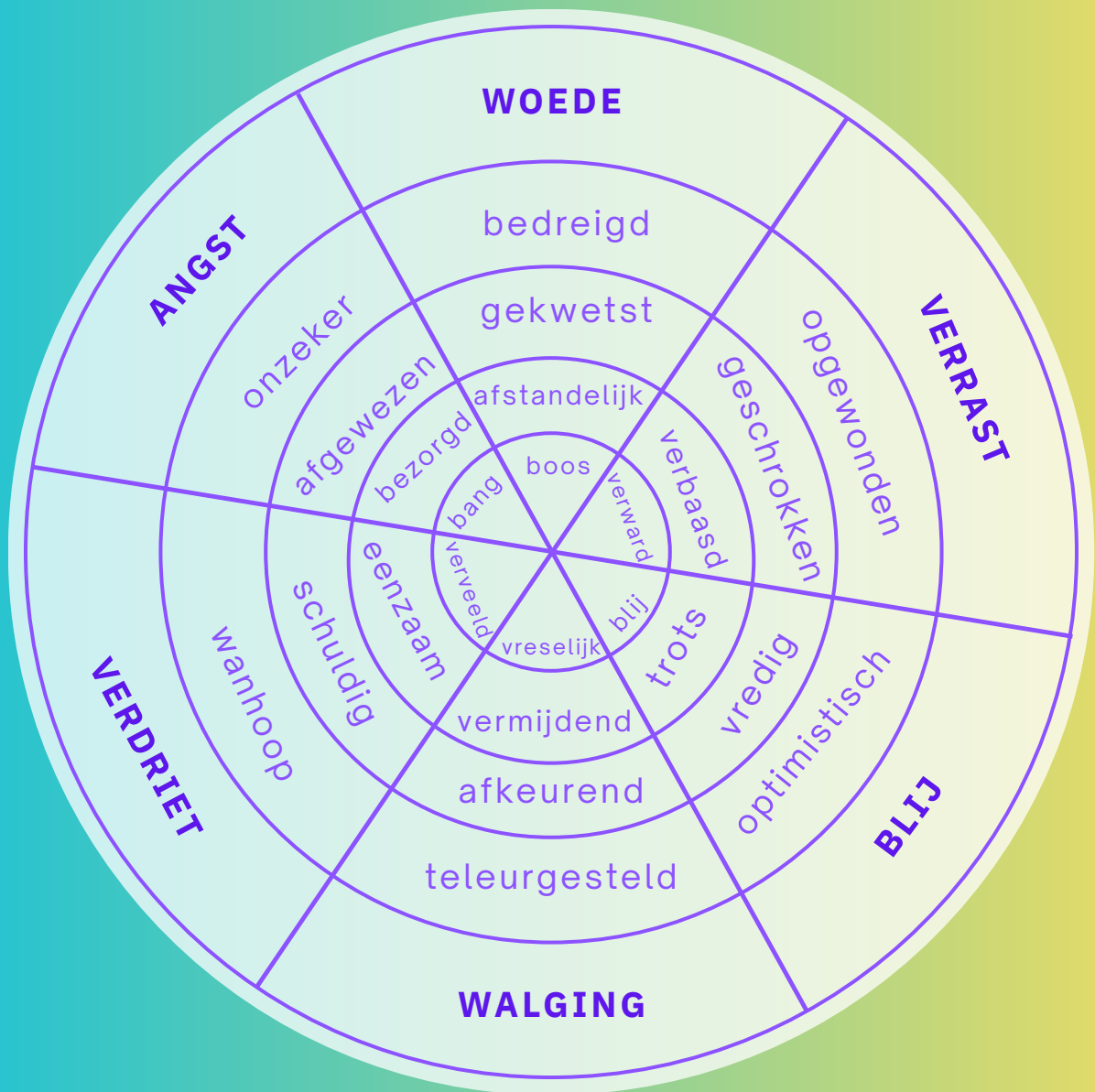
The **emotion wheel** helps to name a feeling more precisely: from the six core feelings in the centre (anger, fear, sadness, joy, disgust, surprise) to ever finer nuances on the outside.

Use this tool in **lesson 1** (linking your own pebbles to a feeling) and in **lesson 2-3** (placing the feelings of a group and of your character). Ground rule: **every feeling is equally valid and we share in confidence.**

The full emotion wheel is on the next page and may be copied freely as a worksheet. The wheel itself is in Dutch.
Credits: Tim Mortier, Ludo Feringa; Éilis Treacy & Ross James Leacy.

EMOTIEWIEL

Gebruik dit wiel om je gevoel / emotie te beschrijven.
Elk gevoel is evenwaardig. We delen in vertrouwen.



NOTITIES BIJ DE DENKVRAAG:



PEBBLE IN THE SHOE

EU-SIDE · Social innovation lesson series

Developed by **Kimberly Verhaest** (Howest)

in collaboration with the EU-SIDE partners



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