

# the leadership upgrade you can hear: growing the art of listening

LEAP program; july 2025

**oikos**

**PRME**  
an initiative of the  
United Nations Global Compact



## turning up the volume on listening

in july, we explored **listening** as a guiding value and powerful communication tool.



we revisited shared stories, **practiced active listening**, and reflected on what it means to **truly hear and be heard**.



**breathing techniques** helped us **ground in presence** and **expand our listening capacity**.



we left with **personal commitments** to **deepen our listening**, connecting inner shifts to collective impact and sustainable change.

## participants

**53**

of you took a moment **before the workshop** began to share where you were starting from.

**42**

of you **reflected on the experience afterward** and offered thoughtful insights.

**33**

participants stayed with us **from beginning to end**.

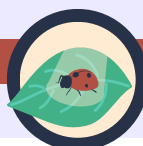
## tuning into the frequencies of listening

we gathered data on skills such as:



**active-empathic listening**

(AELS; Bodie, 2011) measured on a scale of 1-7



**attentional control**

(ATTC; derryberry & reed, 2002) rated 1-4.

## the growth of active-empathic listening & the deep current of attentional control

**listening**  
(AELS)

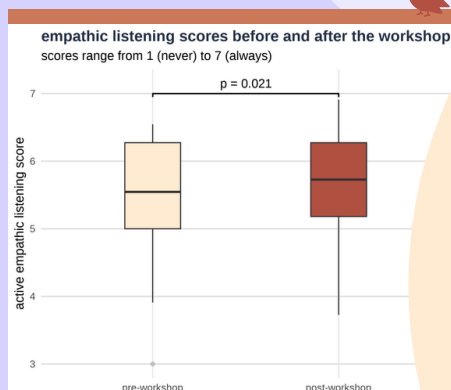
**5.36**

before

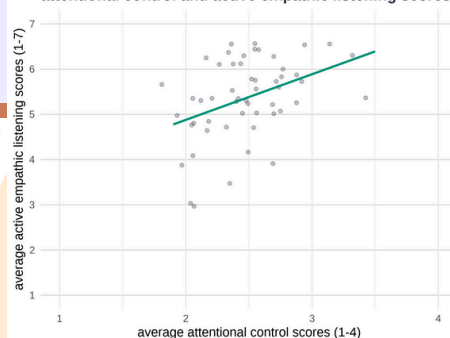
**5.66** / 7

a **statistically significant increase**

( $p = 0.02$ ) with a modest, but meaningful, effect size ( $d = 0.42$ ).



a moderate positive current:  
attentional control and active empathic listening scores



**attentional control**  
(ATTC)

**attentional control & listening** at the start of the workshop were **moderately positively correlated** ( $r = 0.40$ )

attentional control **did not predict** changes in listening ( $r = -0.17$ ,  $p = 0.945$ )

the observed **growth in listening skills** likely **stemmed from the workshop** itself, and not from pre-existing traits

# when silence speaks: what we learned from listening deeply

truly listening while the other person shared stories of aliveness revealed how powerful different levels of listening can be—for both speaker and listener. our reflections showed the **deep impact of active, empathetic listening** on **connection, well-being**, and **understanding**.

## 1. listening cultivates deep connection and psychological safety

- "when my partner was speaking, I tried to listen as one. [...] by listening we formed a bond, that allowed us to connect much easier (virtually) without judgement." - cherene
- "being listened to and heard felt validating and encouraging - it created a safe space where I felt respected and valued." - uliana

## 2. attentive listening enhances empathy and personal growth

- "different levels of listening mostly influence our empathy and how much we can feel and re-live the same experience." - anastasiia
- "the task of paraphrasing what was shared forces us to really lend our ears 100%." - patrick

## 3. mutual respect and validation are essential outcomes of being heard

- "it's amazing when you understand that the respect and the momentary connection is mutual and is accepted from both sides." - alisa
- "i appreciate how focused my partner was and emotionally connected to my story despite having some background noise." - muhammad

# your journey, our future: personal development for a sustainable planet

we reflected on how **personal development** can be the **fundamental driver** for **effective sustainable development** and **positive global impact**. three interconnected themes emerged:

## 1. personal transformation fuels sustainable change by building self-awareness and empathy that drive positive impact

- "personal growth is the seed of sustainable change. when we develop self-awareness and empathy, we naturally make choices that nurture the planet and society. our inner transformation shapes the impact we have on the world." - uliana

## 2. individual growth in listening and perspective-taking drives better collaboration on complex global issues

- "key to build collaborations, key to understand perspectives about what it means to be sustainable - complex problems (different levels, scales, 1st, 2nd, 3rd level consequences)." - ana
- "personal development and attentive listening in particular lead to being more sensitive and responsive to any problems that are not necessarily related to you personally." - alisa

## 3. personal growth builds the broad perspective needed for interconnected, sustainable solutions

- "to be able to connect better to the people and impact in different levels not just material, as being we are multidimensional and the universe as well." - ana