



## Third Book Launch, Workshop and Next Steps “Follow Your Heart. The School for Multipotentialites”

### Authors:

Margherita Paola Poto, Research Professor, Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, ECO CARE Principal Investigator

Emily Margaret Murray, Author, ECO CARE Researcher, and Media Content Creator, France

Valentina Russo, Author, and Illustrator, Mucho Amor, Italy

Laura Vita, McMaster Student, ECO\_CARE Practicum Student, Canada

### Illustrations:

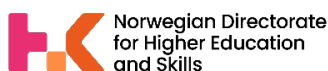
Valentina Russo, Mucho Amor

### Pictures:

Emily Margaret Murray & Igor Peftiev



Figure 1. The poster of the event created by Valentina Russo



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## **Summary**

The overall aim of this report is to document the experience and knowledge gained during the third book launch and the third experience of a creative and emotional education bilingual workshop based on the book [Follow Your Heart: the school for multipotentialites](#). Continuing along the lines of the two book launches held in Shepton Mallet, UK (February 2023) and Turin, Italy (March 2023), the three authors, in collaboration with Laura Vita (McMaster graduate student collaborating with ECO\_CARE for her practicum), organized a third event inviting multilingual educators working in southern France. This event was held in Marseille, France in a large, bright event space owned by Prozon, a local company that serves businesses with locally-sourced technical equipment supplies through an online digital platform. In line with the previous book launches, the purpose of this event was to present the scientific and playful components of the book, engage with members of the community with an interest in emotional and environmental education, and carry out activities connected to the themes of Follow Your Heart. The proceeds from the Marseille book launch and workshop, which were collected through book sales, were donated to Centre Social St. Gabriel—a non-profit organization based in Marseille which provides social and cultural activities and support for children, youth and families. In continuity with the previous reports for the [launches in Shepton Mallett](#) and [Turin](#), this report aims to share the key lessons learned from the event and suggest future actions that the Follow Your Heart Team is willing to undertake within the field of emotional and ecological education, in line with the project ECO\_CARE. The report is accordingly divided into the following sections: (1) Aim of the workshop and content; (2) Participants; (3) Activities; and (4) Ways forward.

## **Acknowledgments**

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Figure 2. The book authors together with Laura Vita, May 2023. Photo credit: Igor Peftiev

## Aim of the workshop and content

### The third book launch in France

The aim of the third book launch for the educational resource *Follow Your Heart: the school for multipotentialites* was to engage in discussion regarding the importance of emotional and ecological education with educators and seek feedback on the Follow Your Heart educational philosophy. Participants were encouraged to converse with one another discussing and reflecting on questions such as “What did you want to be when you grew up? What are you doing now?” and “What does it mean to Follow Your Heart”. The event format began with a presentation of the book and a reading and explanation of The Story of Cora, which then transitioned into a “mix and mingle” learning environment while participants engaged in various activities related to the co-created activities chapter from the book. The event wrapped up with all participants coming together to listen to a TedTalk-inspired presentation on one of the upcoming developments of Follow Your Heart, the CoraConnects series.

### An innovative co-created approach through book launches and workshops

As mentioned in the previous report on the second book launch, the authors take a different approach with their Follow Your Heart book launch and workshop series. Rather than focusing on profit sales and marketing their recently published book, the events take a co-created approach by involving the participants in conversations that spark future Follow Your Heart developments and carrying out activities related to the book. Moreover,

the proceeds from any book sales are donated to a local initiative with similar values to Follow Your Heart. This innovative and slightly more academic approach to a typical “book launch” targets multiple audiences and has been shaped around varying demographic factors (age, ethnicity, profession, etc.) depending on the context. For example, the previous event held in Turin, IT focused on children and their parents, whereas the event in Marseille, FR focused on young adult educators. The engaging atmosphere that the book launch and workshop series embody is open and encouraging, and participants are reminded that the event is meant to be easy-going and not stressful in any way. This approach gives the authors and supporting coordinators an opportunity to observe the way different audiences interact with the book and the different activities, contributing to future research developments that move continue to create a learning space that is more than *just a* standalone resource.

## Participants

The key participants in this event were formal and informal educators. Participants included teachers, educational assistants working in multilingual educational settings, au pairs, researchers and parents, many of whom were multilingual and multipotentialites. The event was a diverse gathering of people from many nationalities and across a wide range of ages. Participants represented countries such as France, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the USA, Spain, Mexico, Italy, Canada, Ukraine and Brazil, ranging in age from two to fifty years old. Co-Author of Follow Your Heart and author of The Story of Cora, Emily Murray, invited many participants through her community of connections in Marseille. In addition, posters were placed in the windows of two different stores located in the same neighborhood as the book launch location in the week leading up to the book launch to inform the public about the event. A children's bookstore, from where resources for the multilingual library were obtained, and a language school, were specifically chosen. Twenty participants in total took part in the event.



Figure 3. Some of the participants, the authors and master's practicum students at the end of the book launch event

## **Activities**

The following activities were held during the event. The book launch started with a brief presentation of the project by Emily Margaret Murray in collaboration with the other two authors. Focus was given to the moment of storytelling, with the presentation of the Story of Cora, followed by three co-created activities. The second, third, and fourth activities in particular were set up at the beginning of the event and the participants were able to free-flow between the activities, mingling and conversing as they participated. This served the event's aim, sparking conversation, as there was a balance of time to converse and participate in the activities at the convenience of the individual



*Figure 4. Laura Vita and Valentina Russo preparing the materials for the Arts and Crafts workshop.  
Photo credit: Emily Margaret Murray*

### **Activity #1: The Story of Cora**

As in the previous editions, particular attention was given to telling the Story of Cora, her personality and different expectations when brought in front of the dilemma of what to do when she grows up. Surrounded by her classmates who all seem certain about their passions and career interests, Cora shares her inner thoughts which portray the many different career aspirations that she has and her frustrations around having to choose just *one* path. The Story of Cora is thoughtfully embedded into the Follow Your Heart book through Cora's discovery of a book at her local library with the same cover as Follow Your Heart: the school for multipotentialites (Figure 5), which leads to Cora learning about what it means to be a multipotentiality and the way that innovation and a meaningful life are born at the intersection of having multiple interests and skills.

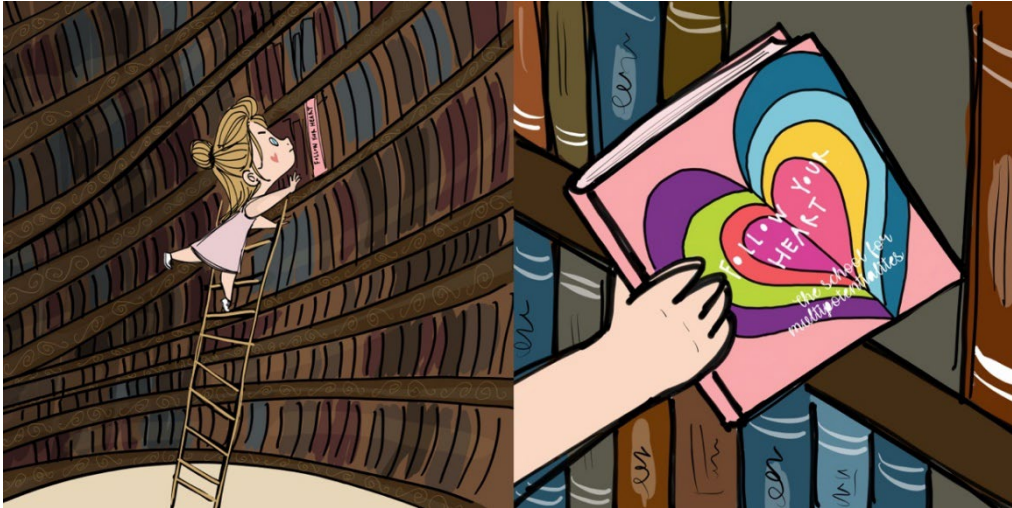


Figure 5. Illustrated page from *The Story of Cora* by Emily Murray and illustrated by Valentina Russo

### **Activity #2: Continuing the co-creation of the Follow Your Heart banner**

To carry forward the work done at the previous two book launches, guests used various crafting supplies (ribbons, buttons, pompoms, glue, etc.) to decorate the letters created from upcycled cardboard that composed the book's title, "Follow Your Heart". Crafting supplies were placed on the table, and using a self-directed approach, guests were able to decorate a letter or heart however they desired. This open-ended invitation to create and imagine allowed individuals to express their creativity and imagination as they wished. Participants shared with one another how the experience of creative self-expression without the confines of direction or a specified "goal" allowed them to truly enjoy the process. Many indicated they felt calmer after participating and said that creating for the sake of enjoyment and expression was not something they had done recently. Observing adults take time to create and express themselves was touching, and listening to the conversations about how the experience impacted their emotions was nothing short of inspiring.

### **Activity #3: Answering the question "What does Follow Your Heart mean to you?"**

To encourage reflection and inspire connection, the "What does Follow Your Heart mean to you?" banner was co-created. A large tablecloth was placed across a table in a quieter section of the space with the question "What does Follow Your Heart mean to you?" written across the centre. Multicoloured markers were scattered across the table, and guests were invited to reflect on and answer the question throughout the event (writing in their preferred language). Responses varied from "being brave" and "stepping outside your comfort zone" to "finding joy in the little things" and "to feel happy...to feel sad...to taste the life and enjoy it as it is" with many responses in between. These anonymous contributions showed reflections on emotions, decision making and life goals and displayed that each participant related to the question uniquely (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Participant answering the question. Photo credit: Emily Margaret Murray

#### Activity #4: A Multilingual Library

Alongside the creative activities, there was a separate table of print resources purchased from local bookstores in both Canada and France. These print resources were a variety of multilingual children's books on emotions and the environment, some of which are listed in the *Suggested Readings* section in the back of *Follow Your Heart: the school for multipotentialites*. These resources were displayed for participants to look through and learn from at their leisure and to show the range of children's books accessible to the public. These resources were also presented to spark ideas and conversation about integrating emotional and environmental education in children's lives from an early age. At future book launches and other events, these resources can also be used as learning opportunities for both children and adults.



Figure 6. French and English books displayed at the book launch. Photo credit: Emily Margaret Murray

### **Activity #5: Presentation of the CoraConnects Series**

To conclude the event, Emily Murray presented the vision for the next step of Follow Your Heart, the CoraConnects Series, in an engaging TEDTalk-style format. The presentation started by outlining evidence-based research supporting the importance of transitioning to digital educational resources and the many learning benefits (improved accessibility, more engaging materials for children, etc.). After highlighting the gap in digital emotional and ecological learning resources, the presentation moved to introduce the next phase of Follow Your Heart—building an online platform with accessible learning resources consisting of both a podcast and video series called “CoraConnects”. As will be further explained in the following section *Ways forward and the next event*, CoraConnects will bring the themes and concepts of Follow Your Heart to life with personal stories around the question “what do you want to be when you grow up?” and short animated videos that will create part of the “curriculum” of this educational approach. The presentation concluded with a request for feedback on all aspects of Follow Your Heart (philosophy, activities, methodology, CoraConnects series) to encourage the co-creation aspect of this approach. The ideas behind this next phase of Follow Your Heart and the script for the presentation were written and polished by Emily and Laura.

### **Ways forward and the next event**

Based on insights from evidence-based research and analysis of previous book launches, the authors identified a gap in accessible educational resources that combine emotional and environmental literacy. To bridge this identified gap, the Follow Your Heart Team is planning to develop and eventually launch the CoraConnects series—a digital learning resource supported by the theoretical foundations of Follow Your Heart which aims to spark a movement toward a healthier and more sustainable future.

CoraConnects will have two primary components: (1) CoraConvos, a podcast created to bring real-life perspectives to the learning themes of Follow Your Heart, and exploring multipotentiality by asking questions such as “What did you want to be when you grew up, who have you become, how did you get here, and who do you hope to *still* become?”, and (2) the CoraCurriculum, a series of short, ‘crash course’ style educational videos that will also explore core concepts and themes from Follow Your Heart such as emotional intelligence, ecological literacy and multipotentiality. In line with the book, which is playful yet scientific, these digital resources will act as knowledge translation tools, converting the plethora of scientific evidence on emotional and environmental education into tangible, bite-sized pieces of information that are easy to understand and digest. CoraConnects aims to target students and educators by creating community-based research content that applies to a broad audience. With the increasing need for activities and lesson plans that integrate sustainability, emotional education, and climate change, the content will be developed while keeping general primary and secondary curricula in



mind. This approach will help educators link these novel topics with traditional school subjects. CoraConvos and CoraCurriculum will complement and build off each other, with the podcast conversations inspiring content creation for the CoraCurriculum, and the video themes and topics serving as talking points for CoraConvo interviews.

Pending the securement of further funding, the book launch and workshop series will possibly extend to other locations in Autumn 2023 (Norway, Tanzania, Canada) to continue engaging with different audiences and gathering feedback for emotional and ecological education and research supporting Follow Your heart. Moreover, The Story of Cora has been translated into Mandarin (by Giuliano Bertolotto Bianc, practicum student of Margherita Poto in the Bachelor's Program on Business and Administration, Department of Management, University of Turin) and a new project cover about Cora in the Arctic has been realized by Valentina Russo, to mark a new milestone in the development of the project. The Story of Cora, translated into Mandarin, has also been contextually adapted with new illustrations to identify with the Chinese community at large.

The online content associated with Follow Your Heart (CoraConnects, publications, etc.) will be delivered through the recently developed website *followyourhearteducation.org*. Currently, the website has sections devoted to the book itself (The Book), Cora, Resources, News, Events, and contact information for collaborations or inquires (Get Involved and Contact Us).

The CoraConnects digital online learning resources, the website, future book launch and workshop events, and further iterations of The Story of Cora all contribute to the overall teaching philosophy of Follow Your Heart and build upon the original resource which has taken unexpected, yet exciting directions.

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