ArtXchange

Empowering Youth Through Creativity

A TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH WORKERS

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ArtXchange
Empowering Youth Through Creativity

1. Erasmus+ programme

Erasmus+ is the European Union's programme dedicated to supporting education, training, youth, and sport across Europe. Spanning from 2021 to 2027, it boasts an estimated budget of €26.2 billion, nearly doubling the funding of its predecessor (2014-2020). [more info]

The programme emphasizes several key priorities:

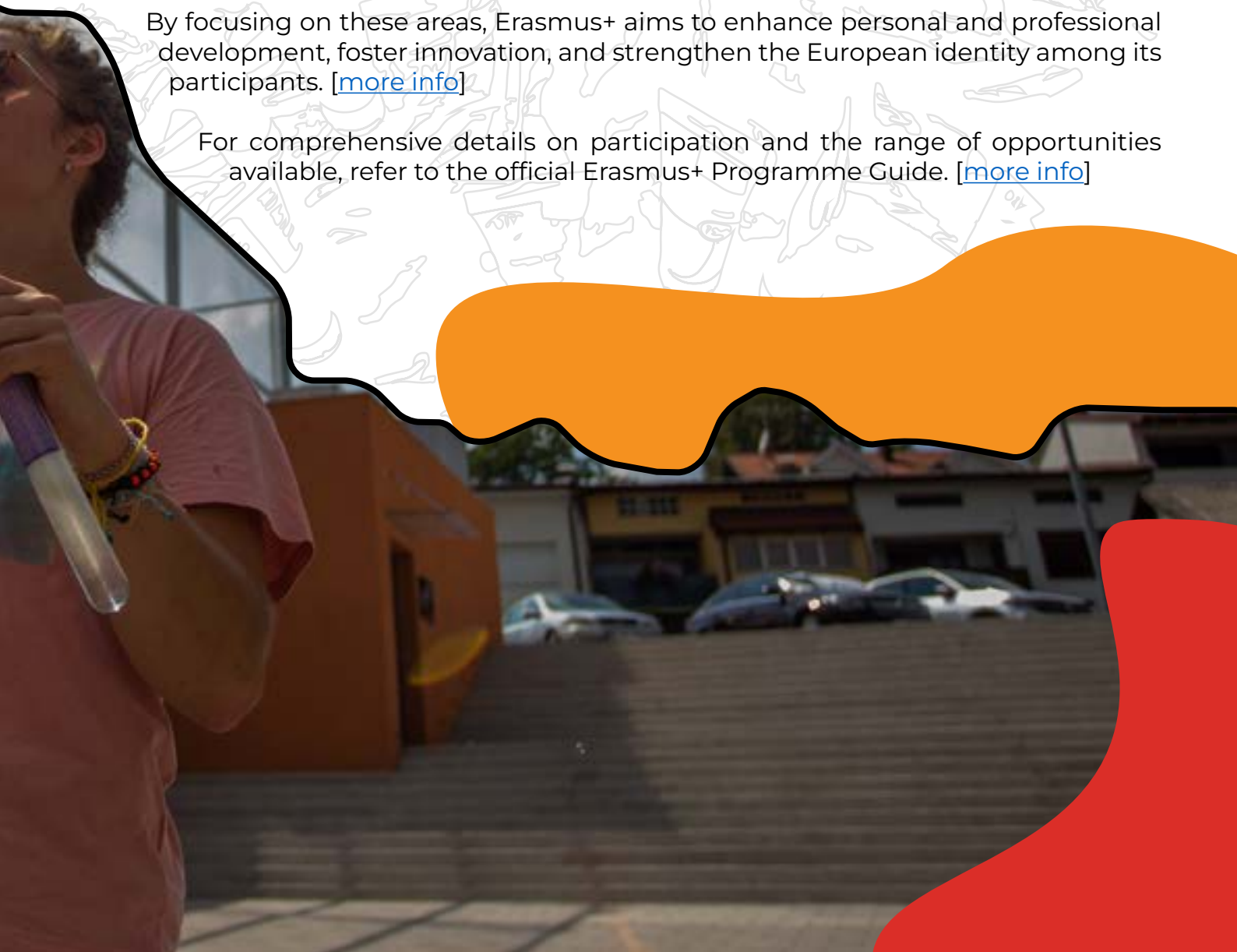
- Social Inclusion: Ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background.
- Green and Digital Transitions: Promoting sustainable practices and enhancing digital competencies.
- Youth Participation in Democratic Life: Encouraging active engagement of young people in democratic processes.

Erasmus+ offers a variety of opportunities for individuals and organizations, including:

- Learning Mobility: Enabling students, trainees, teachers, and youth workers to study or gain experience abroad.
- Cooperation Among Organizations and Institutions: Facilitating partnerships to innovate and share best practices.
- Support for Policy Development and Cooperation: Assisting in the modernization of education, training, and youth systems.

By focusing on these areas, Erasmus+ aims to enhance personal and professional development, foster innovation, and strengthen the European identity among its participants. [more info]

For comprehensive details on participation and the range of opportunities available, refer to the official Erasmus+ Programme Guide. [more info]



2. Youth worker

A youth worker is a person who supports young people in their personal, social, and educational development. Youth workers aim to empower young individuals, helping them to achieve their full potential and fostering their active participation in society. They often work in community centres, schools, non-profit organizations, or even governmental bodies, focusing on the diverse needs of youth, ranging from education and employment to mental health and community engagement.

The primary purpose of a youth worker is to:

1. Promote social inclusion and reduce inequalities.
2. Facilitate the personal development of young people by building confidence, resilience, and life skills.
3. Offer guidance and mentorship in decision-making processes.
4. Act as a bridge between young people and other community services.
5. Encourage active citizenship and participation in societal matters.

In **Croatia**, youth work is recognized as an informal educational activity focusing on personal and social development. While youth work is not fully professionalized, non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in organizing and delivering youth-focused programs. Youth workers often function as facilitators of community engagement and learning.

Slovenia has a structured approach to youth work, which is recognized as a key part of the country's social and educational framework. Youth workers are involved in addressing the challenges faced by young people, including unemployment and social integration. The country emphasizes the importance of youth participation in policy-making.

In **Portugal**, the concept of youth work has evolved significantly, with a particular focus on youth technicians. Youth technicians are specialized professionals who design and implement youth programs, particularly in areas like education, employment, and social inclusion. They often collaborate with municipalities and non-governmental organizations to provide tailored support to young individuals.

Italy views youth work as a social and cultural activity, often tied to local communities and voluntary organizations. Youth workers are integral in providing mentorship and promoting civic engagement among young people. However, youth work in Italy often lacks formal recognition and standardized training programs.

In **Greece**, youth work is primarily associated with non-formal education and community-based initiatives. Youth workers focus on empowering young people, fostering cultural identity, and encouraging participation in community and cultural activities. There is limited formal recognition, but efforts are growing to professionalize the sector.

Estonia stands out in the EU for its advanced approach to youth work. The profession of "Youth Worker" is officially recognized, and there are specialized education programs designed to train individuals for this role. Universities and vocational institutions offer courses that prepare youth workers with theoretical and practical knowledge, ensuring a high standard of professionalism in the field.

The role of youth workers is indispensable in fostering the development and integration of young people across Europe. While the approach to youth work varies by country, the shared goal of empowering young individuals remains universal. Whether through the formal recognition seen in Estonia, the focus on youth technicians in Portugal, or the community-cantered initiatives in Greece and Italy, youth work continues to evolve as a vital component of societal progress in the European Union.

3. ArtXchange - Empowering Youth Through Creativity

The idea of the project was to bring together youth workers and enable them to learn how to incorporate art in forms like photography, film, music, and visual arts in their work with young people. The project aims to empower them to use these techniques in their respective countries and introduce these creative approaches to the youth. Participants of the training have had an opportunity to explore different art forms and learn crucial segments relevant to their work with young people. This highlighted innovative and creative ways of expression, enabling young people to communicate and convey their emotions effectively. By doing so, it is expected to address the current mental health challenges faced by the youth.

Needs

I. Inspiring young people to engage in creative expression through various art forms and media.
II. Educating youth workers on how to implement these techniques effectively.
III. Promoting human rights through creative frameworks for young people to facilitate their acceptance and alleviate the burden on their mental health.

Objectives

I. Create a network of youth workers who will share work techniques and tools used in their work with young people.
II. Share good practices and find ways to implement them in partner countries, focusing on creative and artistic expression among young people.
III. Establish a safe and inclusive space, enabling all participants to express themselves equally, regardless of nationality, sex, gender, sexual orientation, language, or culture.

3.1. Partners

Zagorska kreativna udruga mladih

ZaKUM
Zagorska kreativna udruga mladih

Zagorje Creative Youth Association, founded in late 2021, emerged from the initiative of young individuals with extensive volunteering experience. The association's primary goal is to inspire young people to think creatively and express themselves in innovative ways.

To achieve this, the association focuses on several key activities: developing and implementing projects that promote and protect youth rights and interests, advocating for public policy changes, and publishing a range of promotional materials. They also organize diverse public events, including concerts, exhibitions, workshops, and seminars. By fostering a vibrant community of young creators, they provide a platform for emerging talent and fresh ideas.

As the host organization of the ArtXchange Training Course, Zagorje Creative Youth Association has demonstrated its commitment to empowering young people through creative expression and collaboration. The association has also established a fruitful partnership with XX Element and Društvo Kreativne Mladine, with collaboration ongoing for over a year. This network of partnerships further enhances their capacity to engage in impactful cultural and social projects.

Dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where creativity and collaboration thrive, the association continues to engage citizens in various cultural, environmental, and social actions, encouraging active participation and dialogue. Through these efforts and partnerships, they aim to strengthen community bonds, enhance the quality of life for young people, and ensure that young voices are heard and valued on a broader stage.

XX ELEMENT PROJECT ASSOCIAÇÃO CULTURAL

XX Element Project – Associação Cultural

XX Element Project – Associação Cultural is a Portuguese cultural association dedicated to promoting equity, respect, and inclusion for all. Their mission is centered on educating and raising awareness about the rights and responsibilities of citizens, with a special focus on the rights of women, the LGBTQ+ community, migrants, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups.

Believing in the transformative power of art to drive social change, XX Element actively develops artistic projects and social programs aimed at fostering a more compassionate and equitable society. Their activities encompass cultural and artistic awareness campaigns, social projects with vulnerable communities, and the organization of debates, conferences, and festivals. With a strong commitment to dignity, integrity, and the promotion of justice and equality, XX Element strives to make a meaningful impact through their work.

Since 2016, XX Element has been closely engaged with schools, focusing on children and young people. Through film workshops, screenings, and discussions, they address human rights and active citizenship, encouraging civic awareness and social engagement using unconventional educational methods and artistic interventions. Their approach is designed to empower individuals, provoke critical reflection, and pave the way for a more inclusive and just society.

XX Element is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting education to combat social exclusion through the arts. They support community-focused projects that encourage active participation, sustainability, and social responsibility. Their initiatives span social intervention, inclusion through the arts, and training for children and young people. Moreover, they advocate for the rights of women, the LGBTQIA+ community, migrants, and ethnic minorities, fostering debate and critical thinking on equality, human rights, gender identities, and other related issues.

The organization also focuses on gender equality, addressing topics such as dating violence and bullying among young people. By involving the public in active participation through debates and discussions, XX Element creates spaces for meaningful dialogue. They further promote films and cultural works by women, encouraging the emergence of new female directors and advancing gender equality in the cultural sector. Through these efforts, XX Element seeks to inspire change and contribute to a society where every individual is respected and included.

Društvo kreativne mladine

Društvo Kreativne Mladine (DKM) engages young people in discussions on social and political issues, fostering active citizenship and participation. They create spaces for dialogue and experience exchange among youth organizations locally and internationally, with a focus on personal growth and integration in the Pomurje region.

DKM's strategy includes increasing youth participation in social, civic, and political activities, enhancing cooperation among organizations, and supporting vulnerable groups such as the LGBTQ+ community, Roma, and those facing challenges like school dropout. They provide project support related to youth work policy and coordinate a network of young people and organizations.

Recently, DKM opened a Youth Centre in Murska Sobota, Slovenia, promoting "Open Youth Work," where youngsters create and implement their own ideas, workshops, and activities. They organize seminars, workshops, and training sessions to promote active citizenship and social responsibility, and participate in Erasmus Plus exchanges focused on social inclusion and tolerance.

As a voluntary, independent, non-profit association, DKM collaborates with schools and NGOs across Slovenia and Europe to involve young people in non-formal education, intercultural dialogue, and volunteering. They organize various activities on topics like European citizenship, employment, and human rights, designed for both educators and motivated young people.

Through sports, art, music, and other workshops, DKM helps young people develop competencies aligned with non-formal education, encouraging them to take initiatives and become active, informed citizens.

Centro Servizi per il Volontariato Abruzzo – Ente del Terzo Settore

CSV Abruzzo operates under the guiding principles of solidarity, connection, listening, and hospitality—core values that drive the spirit of active volunteerism. Dedicated to supporting volunteers and voluntary organizations, CSV Abruzzo provides essential resources and services aimed at enhancing the impact and quality of their activities.

To foster a culture of solidarity, CSV Abruzzo develops tools and initiatives designed to both inspire new volunteer efforts and strengthen existing ones. The organization offers a range of consultancy services, including technical assistance and strategic support, to aid in the planning, initiation, and execution of specific voluntary and social projects.

Moreover, CSV Abruzzo is committed to empowering volunteers and organizations through targeted training programs and capacity-building initiatives. By providing access to valuable information, documentation, and data on both local and national volunteer activities, CSV Abruzzo plays a crucial role in ensuring that volunteers and organizations are well-equipped to make a meaningful difference.

As a member of the “Consulta Nazionale Servizio Civile Universale” representing Central Italy, CSV Abruzzo is recognized in the regional section of the register as an organization with extensive reach, boasting the largest number of offices. This wide network enables CSV Abruzzo to effectively support and amplify the efforts of volunteers across the region.

Seiklejate Vennaskond

Seiklejate Vennaskond is a youth and civil society organization dedicated to quality youth work, inclusion, and anti-discrimination education. Primarily working with young people aged 13-30, they also engage youth workers, trainers, and organizations involved in non-formal education and lifelong learning.

The organization offers a range of development opportunities, including youth exchanges, seminars, and training courses on topics like equality, racism, human rights, mobility, and environmental protection. Their activities involve volunteers who contribute new ideas and practical solutions, reflecting their belief in the potential of young people to make a difference.

With over 20 years of experience, Seiklejate Vennaskond has managed diverse projects such as youth exchanges, training courses, and strategic partnerships. Notable projects include “Stop Labeling Yourself!” and “Voices of Creativity - From Youth to Youth!” They also focus on European Solidarity Corps projects and strategic partnerships like “Include! Involve! Improve!” to enhance youth participation and project quality.

The organization boasts a team of professional youth leaders, workers, and trainers with expertise in various fields of non-formal education. This professional background supports their extensive international cooperation, particularly in intercultural learning and inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities.

Recent and ongoing projects include “Making Movies Matter” and “Take Action - Together Against Discrimination!” reflecting their commitment to anti-discrimination education and human rights advocacy. Seiklejate Vennaskond also collaborates with national programs and coordinates European Solidarity Corps volunteers.

DreamTeam AMKE

DreamTeam is a non-profit youth organization founded in 2016 and formally established in 2020. It focuses on empowering young people through local and international mobility projects and non-formal learning. Addressing issues such as environmental sustainability, climate change, inclusion of minorities, and LGBTQI+ support, DreamTeam aims to equip youth with the skills to tackle these challenges and drive positive change.

The organization's strategic objectives include promoting active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, and solidarity. They work to raise awareness of xenophobia and discrimination, encourage mutual understanding among diverse youth, and develop critical thinking skills. DreamTeam also tackles environmental issues and seeks innovative solutions to social problems while fostering active citizenship.

DreamTeam facilitates exchanges and networking among youth organizations, schools, and decision-makers, highlighting the role of youth work and non-formal education in improving employability. They are committed to sustainable international cooperation and promoting the Erasmus+ Programme and volunteering opportunities.

Working with young people, youth workers, trainers, and teachers, DreamTeam operates on the principle of "youth for youth," with young leaders driving their mission. The organization focuses on education, training, and project implementation to enhance young people's knowledge, skills, and attitudes, bringing together experts and volunteers to support youth development across Europe.

3.2. Creativity in youth work

Creativity is a vital component of effective youth work, serving as a powerful tool to engage young people, foster personal development, and inspire positive change. It reaches beyond traditional methods of education and training, tapping into the unique potential of each individual to think differently, solve problems, and express themselves in authentic ways.

Being creative in youth work means thinking outside the box and finding innovative approaches to connect with young people. It's about encouraging them to explore new ideas, experiment with various forms of expression, and see challenges as opportunities for growth. Creativity isn't confined to the arts; it involves the ability to adapt, innovate, and think critically in any situation. For youth workers, creativity is about continuously seeking fresh methods to make learning relevant and engaging, ensuring that young people remain motivated and involved.

Creativity plays a crucial role in keeping young people engaged by making activities enjoyable and relatable. When youth workers infuse creativity into their programs, they capture the interest of participants, transforming learning into an active and exciting process. Through creative activities, young people also develop essential life skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. These skills are fundamental to their personal growth, helping them navigate life's challenges with confidence and resilience.

Moreover, creativity empowers young people to express themselves in unique and meaningful ways. It allows them to explore their identities, voice their opinions, and share their stories. This process of self-expression fosters self-confidence and a deeper understanding of their place in the world. Creative activities often involve collaboration, helping to build strong relationships among peers and between young people and their mentors. Working together on creative projects promotes teamwork, empathy, and communication, laying the foundation for a supportive community.

In a rapidly changing world, creativity equips young people with the ability to adapt to new situations and think on their feet. By fostering creativity, youth workers help prepare young people for the uncertainties of the future, encouraging them to be proactive and innovative in their approach to life's challenges.

In essence, creativity in youth work is essential for cultivating an environment where young people can thrive. It opens doors to new experiences, encourages self-expression, and provides young people with the tools they need to succeed in a complex world. By embracing creativity, youth workers not only enhance their programs but also empower the next generation to imagine, create, and lead with confidence and compassion.

3.3. Training course – ArtXchange

The training course was held in City of Zabok, Croatia from 9th to 16th July 2024, with 24 participants from 6 counties. Participants were youth workers from Portugal, Slovenia, Greece, Italy, Estonia and Croatia. The training was leaded by 3 trainers with background in creative expressions.

Trainers

Marija Gebert is a graphic designer, youth worker, and the founder and coordinator of the Zagorje Creative Youth Association. She is also a member of the Youth Council of Krapina-Zagorje County. Marija is an active citizen and has been a dedicated volunteer for ten years, participating in numerous organizations within Krapina-Zagorje County. With a strong commitment to youth empowerment, she has actively participated in numerous Erasmus+ trainings and youth exchanges on various topics, including youth work, youth participation, youth councils, mentoring ESC volunteers, and more. As part of her international volunteering experience through the European Solidarity Corps project, Marija spent 10 months working with a youth organization in Chieti, Italy. During this time, she not only immersed herself in a new culture and language but also developed a wide range of skills and built a valuable network of human capital. Through her ten-month experience working with the Network of Association Zagor, Marija acquired invaluable project management skills, further enhancing her ability to lead and implement initiatives that benefit young people and the community. Her dedication to youth development and community engagement has been recognized, earning her the prestigious Volunteer of the Year award from Krapina-Zagorje County for the years 2021 and 2022. Since August 2023, she is working with the XX Element Project – Associação Cultural and assist on the activities connected to cinema, feminism, and human rights. Marija gained experience facilitating youth exchanges in Slovenia in 2023 and 2024 on various topics.

Rita Capucho is co-director of the Porto Femme International Film Festival and programmer of the Femme Sessions. She is a PhD candidate in Communication and Activism of University of Lusófona and the founder of XX Element Project - Associação Cultural. In 2018, Rita breathed life into the esteemed Porto Femme International Film Festival, where she assumes a central role as both Co-founder and Festival Co-director. Through this prestigious festival, she has ingeniously provided an innovative platform for filmmakers and visual artists, reshaping the landscape of contemporary cinema. Beyond this, Rita is the creative genius behind Femme Sessions and the ground-breaking Shortcutz Aveiro project, which she launched in 2020. Her audacious vision and unwavering passion for cinema drive her to explore novel narratives and emerging trends within the industry. Rita's global impact is also evident through her esteemed role as a jury member at various international film festivals, where her eclectic perspective and profound knowledge of the seventh art make her a highly respected voice within this diverse landscape. As a dedicated researcher, Rita enriches the cinematic field with her insatiable quest for knowledge. She generously shares her findings as an educator, nurturing the minds of future generations of filmmakers and creatives. Since 2004, Rita has been collaborating with non-governmental organizations, where she plays a vital role as a producer and project manager in the realms of cinema, poetry,

and performance. Her unwavering commitment to promoting the arts and culture is palpable through her continuous dedication. She is a founder and integral member of the leadership team at MUTIM - the Association of Women Workers in Moving Images.

Marko Lenarčič is a Vice-President and project coordinator at Društvo Kreativne Mladine from Murska Sobota, Slovenia. He is the person who keeps the city active and encourages young people to participate and contribute to change for the better with his ideas, competences, joy for working with young people. In his history, he has gained a lot of experience in the field of various youth projects, which earned him the title of the Best Volunteer of the Year of the Municipality of Murska Sobota in 2012 and the Best Volunteer of the Year by the Youth Council of Slovenia a year later. His openness to new knowledge, endless ideas and constant will, desire to organize and carry out various events for young people is a great inspiration, motivation and admirable. His vision that the association will one day run its own youth centre is not a bit too great, because the confidence with which he repeatedly mentions it is as solid as a rock. Finally, Marko and local youngsters managed in 2022 to open the first youth centre, which promotes open youth work in Murska Sobota, Slovenia. He is also active in the local politics as the representative of all young people from the region. His commitment to the youth work, the creativity he shares, the dreams he has, it is only a matter of time before they come true. Although his serious face sometimes masks it, inside he is a true joy, an immensely pleasant and amusing person who, after the first smile, can hardly remain serious.

4. Creative expressions in Youth work – activities and examples

4.1. Sorting to groups methods

Organizing participants into groups is an essential part of many workshops, training sessions, or team-building activities. The way groups are formed can set the tone for collaboration, creativity, and engagement within the session. Sorting to Groups Methods refers to various approaches that facilitators can use to divide participants efficiently and effectively while making the process enjoyable and aligned with the goals of the activity. Group sorting methods go beyond just dividing people randomly—they can be designed to foster interaction, break down barriers, and encourage connections among participants. Some methods involve fun and creative techniques to energize the group, while others focus on specific criteria, such as skills, interests, or expertise, to ensure diversity or commonality within teams.

By using intentional sorting methods, facilitators can create balanced groups, ensure inclusivity, and provide a foundation for meaningful collaboration. Whether aiming for light-hearted icebreakers or goal-oriented division, these methods add structure and an element of fun to the group formation process, making them a valuable tool for any facilitator.

4.1.1. Mixed Count - counting technique

This technique is widely used for sorting participants into groups. To enhance its effectiveness, you can apply the "*Tornado*" rule before counting, which helps mix participants more thoroughly. Another way to make this method more engaging is to incorporate different languages. For example, ask participants to say their assigned number in their native language, or challenge them to say the number in any language they know, except their mother tongue. You can even add a rule where a language cannot be repeated consecutively.

Be creative with the rules you set—it will create a more dynamic environment, making participants more active and engaged in both non-formal and informal learning.

Basic Instructions:

I. The facilitator explains how many groups are needed.
II. Starting from the left, the facilitator points to each participant and assigns them a number corresponding to their group.
III. After the demonstration, participants continue saying their assigned number in order until the last person has been assigned to a group.
IV. If the facilitator decides to use a different method for assigning numbers, clear instructions should be given beforehand.

Creative Variation:
The facilitator can use alternatives to numbers, depending on the target group. For example, instead of numbers, the facilitator can use types of fruits to separate participants into groups.

4.1.2. Movement Match

In this engaging activity, participants will form teams by matching movements. Instructions: Preparation: Begin by creating a set of cards, each featuring a specific movement, such as clapping, stomping, or a simple dance move. Make sure there are multiple cards for each movement so that participants can form teams.

Distribution: Randomly hand out the cards to participants, ensuring they keep their movement a secret.

Finding Teammates: Participants will then move around the room, silently performing the movement shown on their card. Their goal is to find others who are doing the same movement and form a team.

Completion: The activity continues until all participants have found their teammates. Once the teams are formed, the facilitator can check to ensure everyone is correctly matched.

Variation: For added complexity, you can include more intricate movements or combine multiple actions on a single card. Alternatively, introduce a time limit to create a sense of urgency and excitement as participants search for their teammates.

During ArtXchange training, trainers incorporated a variety of creative and fun roles to bring the Movement Match activity to life. Here are some of the cards they used:

- *PAINTER*: Participants were asked to "Act exactly like Bob Ross as he gives a tutorial on how to paint a forest," encouraging them to channel the calm and deliberate movements of the famous artist.
- *BALLERINA*: Another card instructed participants to "Try to stand on one leg, as if you are truly part of Swan Lake," capturing the grace and balance of a ballerina in mid-performance.
- *DANCER*: With the "Show your group the best salsa moves" card, participants brought energy and rhythm, dancing as if they were leading a salsa party.
- *GUITARIST*: For a more rock-and-roll vibe, the "Show us your best guitar solo at a rock concert" card had participants mimicking the passionate strumming of a lead guitarist on stage.
- *POET*: A dramatic flair was added with the card that read, "Act out the most famous Hamlet scene: To be or not to be, that is the question," where participants embraced their inner Shakespearean actor.
- *SINGER*: Finally, the "Give us your best Madonna impression" card encouraged participants to channel their inner pop star, performing with the confidence and style of the iconic singer.

Additional Variations: Facilitators can adapt this activity to suit different themes or topics. For example, instead of using detailed descriptions, you can use images without explanations, such as a ninja, samurai, cowboy, or warrior, allowing participants to interpret and act out these roles in their own creative ways. Alternatively, the activity can take a more playful turn by having participants imitate animals depicted on the cards, such as a monkey, chicken, elephant, or crocodile. These variations add flexibility and can be tailored to the group's interests and the training's objectives, ensuring that the activity remains engaging and relevant.

YOU ARE
PAINTER

"Act exacly like Bob Ross when he is giving tutorial on how to paint forest"

YOU ARE
BALLERINA

"Try to stand on one leg, like you are truly a part of Swan Lake"

YOU ARE
DANCER

"Show your group the best salsa moves"

YOU ARE
GUITARIST

"Show us your best guitar solo on the rock concert"

YOU ARE
POET

"Act the most famous Hamlet scene. To be or not to be, it is a question"

YOU ARE
SINGER

"Give us your best Madonna impression"

YOU ARE
PAINTER

"Act exacly like Bob Ross when he is giving tutorial on how to paint forest"

YOU ARE
BALLERINA

"Try to stand on one leg, like you are truly a part of Swan Lake"

YOU ARE
DANCER

"Show your group the best salsa moves"

YOU ARE
GUITARIST

"Show us your best guitar solo on the rock concert"

YOU ARE
POET

"Act the most famous Hamlet scene. To be or not to be, it is a question"

YOU ARE
SINGER

"Give us your best Madonna impression"

NOTE: Print this page and cut out the card shapes. Print as many copies as you need. If you want to reuse the cards, laminate them for durability. Enjoy the activity!

4.1.3. Colour stickers

This method offers a simple and engaging way to randomly divide participants into groups.

Preparation: Prepare stickers in various colours, ensuring you have enough to match the number of participants and the number of groups. For example, if you need four groups with five participants each, prepare five stickers in four different colours.

Distribution: Place all the stickers in a box or container. Ask each participant to reach into the box and randomly select one sticker.

Grouping: Once everyone has chosen a sticker, have participants group themselves according to the colour of their sticker. Each colour will represent a different group.

For younger groups, you can make the activity even more fun by using different types of candy instead of stickers. Give each participant a piece of candy and instruct them to keep the wrapper. You'll need a variety of candy types, with each type representing a different group. Participants will then form groups based on the type of candy they received.

This method provides a fun and random way to assign participants to groups, while still allowing them an element of choice—whether through selecting a coloured sticker or enjoying a sweet treat.

4.1.4. Sorting participants by country

This method creates groups with one participant from each country, fostering diversity within the teams.

Instructions: Line Up by Nationality: Ask participants to line up in a row, standing next to others from their country. If there are multiple participants from the same country, they should stand together in a single row. The first row should be filled with one participant from each country.

Forming the Groups: Once the first row is complete, the next row of participants should line up directly behind them, continuing this pattern until everyone is in a line based on nationality.

Creating the Groups: After the line-up is complete, instruct the participants in the first row to turn around and face those standing directly behind them. The participants standing behind them form their group. Each group will now consist of one person from each country.

This method can be easily adapted depending on the number of participants from each country, ensuring a diverse and balanced grouping.

4.2. Energizers

In the context of workshops, trainings, and group activities, an energizer is a short, interactive exercise designed to boost participants' energy, promote engagement, and create a positive and dynamic group atmosphere. Energizers often involve fun, light-hearted activities that encourage movement, laughter, and collaboration, making them an essential tool for fostering connection and focus in group settings.

The primary purpose of an energizer is to revitalize a group, especially during periods of fatigue or lack of concentration. Whether it's used to break the ice at the start of a session, to re-energize participants after a break, or to bridge transitions between activities, energizers create a lively environment that enhances participation and creativity.

Energizers are highly adaptable and can be tailored to suit different group sizes, settings, and themes, making them an invaluable resource for educators, trainers, youth workers, and facilitators.

4.2.1. Wink and Swap Energizer

Objective: Enhance communication, and spontaneity, and create a lively atmosphere within the group.

Duration: 10-15 minutes (adjustable)

Group Size: Ideal for a group with an odd number of participants.

Materials: Chairs arranged in a circle facing the centre of the circle

Instructions: Arrange chairs in concentric circle, with participants sitting in the inner circle and standing behind a chair in the outer circle. Ensure that there is one empty chair in front of a person in the outer circle.

Explain the rules to the participants: Participants in the inner circle must stay seated. Participants in the outer circle must stand behind a chair and have an empty chair in front of them. The goal is to find an empty chair in front of them by winking at someone in the inner circle.

Start the energizer: Begin the game and let participants make eye contact with others in the inner circle. The person without a partner (empty chair in front of them) winks at someone in the inner circle. If a person in the inner circle is winked at, they must quickly get up and move to the empty chair in front of the person who winked at them. After a successful swap, the person who was left without a partner becomes the winker for the next round. Continue playing for a few rounds, encouraging participants to be quick, observant, and to enjoy the fun and spontaneity of the game.

Energizing Elements: Quick thinking, non-verbal communication, teamwork, and laughter.

Adaptability: The game can be adjusted based on the group's comfort level and preferences. Encourage participants to be respectful and ensure that everyone feels included and enjoys the activity.

Debriefing: Wrap up the activity by discussing the experience. Ask participants how they felt during the game, what strategies they used, and if they noticed any patterns in the group dynamics.

4.2.2. Find the Leader

“Find the Leader” is an engaging activity designed to enhance observation skills and foster group dynamics. This fun game promotes subtle coordination and active participation, making it perfect for energizing groups during workshops or team-building sessions.

Instructions
Setting Up the Game: All participants form a circle, facing the center. One volunteer is asked to step away from the group, ensuring they cannot see or hear what is happening in the circle.

Choosing the Leader: While the volunteer is away, the group secretly selects one person to be the leader. The leader’s job is to initiate simple, repetitive movements, such as clapping, head tapping, or waving, which the rest of the group will imitate.

The Leader’s Role: The leader begins performing the chosen movements, and the rest of the group discreetly follows along. To avoid revealing their identity, participants should mimic the leader’s actions carefully and without making direct eye contact.

Volunteer’s Challenge: The volunteer returns to the circle and takes a position in the middle. Their task is to identify the leader by observing the group and deducing who is initiating the movements. The leader must subtly change the movement after a few repetitions, keeping the group’s actions dynamic and making the leader’s identity harder to guess.

Guessing Attempts: The volunteer has up to four attempts to guess the leader’s identity. If they guess correctly, the round ends, and the leader is revealed. If they fail after all attempts, the group reveals the leader to close the round.

Game Duration: This activity takes about 10–15 minutes, depending on the size of the group and the volunteer’s success in guessing the leader.

4.2.3. The Warrior or Samurai

“The Warrior or Samurai” is a fast-paced, high-energy game designed to improve focus, coordination, and quick thinking while engaging participants in an entertaining and interactive experience. Using a series of specific sounds and movements, this activity fosters teamwork and sharpens reflexes, making it an excellent icebreaker or energizer for workshops and team-building sessions.

To begin, all participants stand in a circle, evenly spaced, ready to channel their inner warrior or samurai. The game revolves around three simple sounds: “ha,” “he,” and “hi,” each accompanied by an action. The first player initiates the sequence by raising their hands above their head, locking eyes with another participant in the circle, and swinging their arms down toward them while shouting “ha!” The recipient of the “ha” must immediately respond by raising their hands above their head and shouting “he!” Simultaneously, the two participants standing beside the receiver must react by performing a cutting motion toward the receiver’s midsection (without touching) while shouting “hi!” The sequence then continues, with the receiver becoming the new initiator and targeting someone else with a “ha.” This rhythm keeps the game dynamic and ensures that every participant stays alert and focused.

Before starting, it’s important to practice the sequence a few times to ensure everyone understands the rules. The pace should gradually increase as participants become more comfortable with the actions. Mistakes, such as slow responses, incorrect sounds or actions, or being out of sync when shouting “hi,” result in elimination. Players who are eliminated step out of the circle while the game proceeds, eventually leaving one winner as the ultimate warrior or samurai.

This activity typically lasts 10–15 minutes, depending on the group’s size and the number of eliminations. It’s not only a fantastic way to energize a group but also an effective tool for building focus, fostering quick reactions, and creating an atmosphere of playful competition. The Warrior or Samurai is sure to leave participants laughing, engaged, and ready to take on the next challenge.

4.3. “Getting to know” activities

Getting-to-know activities are structured exercises designed to help participants familiarize themselves with one another in a comfortable and engaging environment. These activities play a role in building rapport and fostering a sense of community, especially in newly formed groups or teams. They provide a fun and interactive way for participants to share their names, interests, experiences, and expectations, creating the foundation for meaningful connections.

The primary purpose of getting-to-know activities is to break the ice and establish an inclusive atmosphere where participants feel at ease interacting with others. By encouraging open dialogue and interaction, these activities help to bridge social barriers, create trust, and set the tone for collaboration throughout the session.

Getting-to-know activities are versatile and can be adapted to various contexts, from team-building sessions and educational workshops to youth programs and social events. By thoughtfully incorporating these activities, facilitators can ensure participants are engaged, comfortable, and ready to collaborate effectively, laying a strong foundation for a successful group dynamic.

4.3.1. Erasmus Book

The Erasmus Book Game is a fun and interactive way for participants to get to know one another during a workshop or training session. It involves filling out and exchanging personalized sheets to promote connections and build group camaraderie.

Each participant receives a sheet designed as their “Erasmus Book” profile. It includes fields for participants to share basic and personal information. (Such as: name and surname, pronouns, country of origin, age, relationship status, social media handles (Facebook/Instagram), favourite artist, eye and hair colour, likes and dislikes, favourite TV show or movie, etc.)

Instructions

Starting the Game: The facilitator hands out a copy of the Erasmus Book sheet to each participant. Participants fill out the first section (1.) with their own information.

Collecting Papers: Once participants have completed section 1, they place their paper face down in the centre of the room. The facilitator mixes the pile of papers, ensuring they’re shuffled thoroughly. Each participant then picks a random sheet.

Finding Each Other: Participants read the sheet they picked and must find the person in the group whose details are listed in section 1. Once they’ve identified the person, they engage in conversation and fill out the second section (2.), adding new information or answering specific questions.

Repeating the Process: The cycle continues for each subsequent section (e.g., 3, 4, etc.), with participants exchanging and interacting to gather details for each part.
Final Round: Portrait Drawing: For the last section, participants draw a simple portrait of the person they've been interacting with. It's an entertaining way to cap off the exercise with humour and creativity.

For longer sessions, workshops, or trainings, the facilitator can set up a display area in the room where completed Erasmus Books are showcased. This allows participants to revisit each other's profiles throughout the event, fostering a stronger sense of familiarity and group connection. This game not only energizes the participants but also provides a lasting keepsake of the group's experience and interactions.

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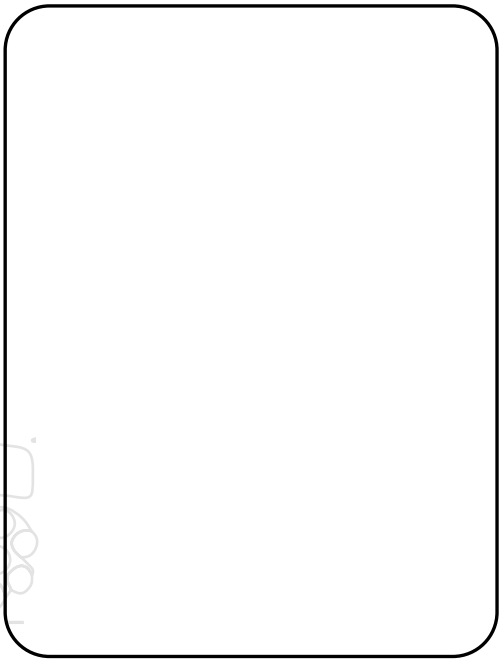
Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

ERASMUS BOOK



1. NAME AND SURNAME:_____
   PRONOUNS:_____
   COUNTRY:_____

2. AGE:_____
   RELATIONSHIP STATUS: _____
   FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM PROFILE: _____

3. MY FAVOURITE ARTIST:_____
   EYE COLOR:_____
   HAIR COLOR:_____

4. I LIKE:_____
   I HATE: _____
   MY FAVOURITE TV SHOW/MOVIE:_____

NOTE: Print this page and cut out the shape. Use the template for the "ErasmusBook" get-to-know activity. Each sheet represents one person. To save paper, print the template in A5 format. Enjoy connecting!

4.3.2. The story behind the name

Objective: To build connections and foster a sense of community by sharing personal stories related to participants' names.

Materials Needed: None

Participants: 10-30 people

Duration: 20-30 minutes

Instructions

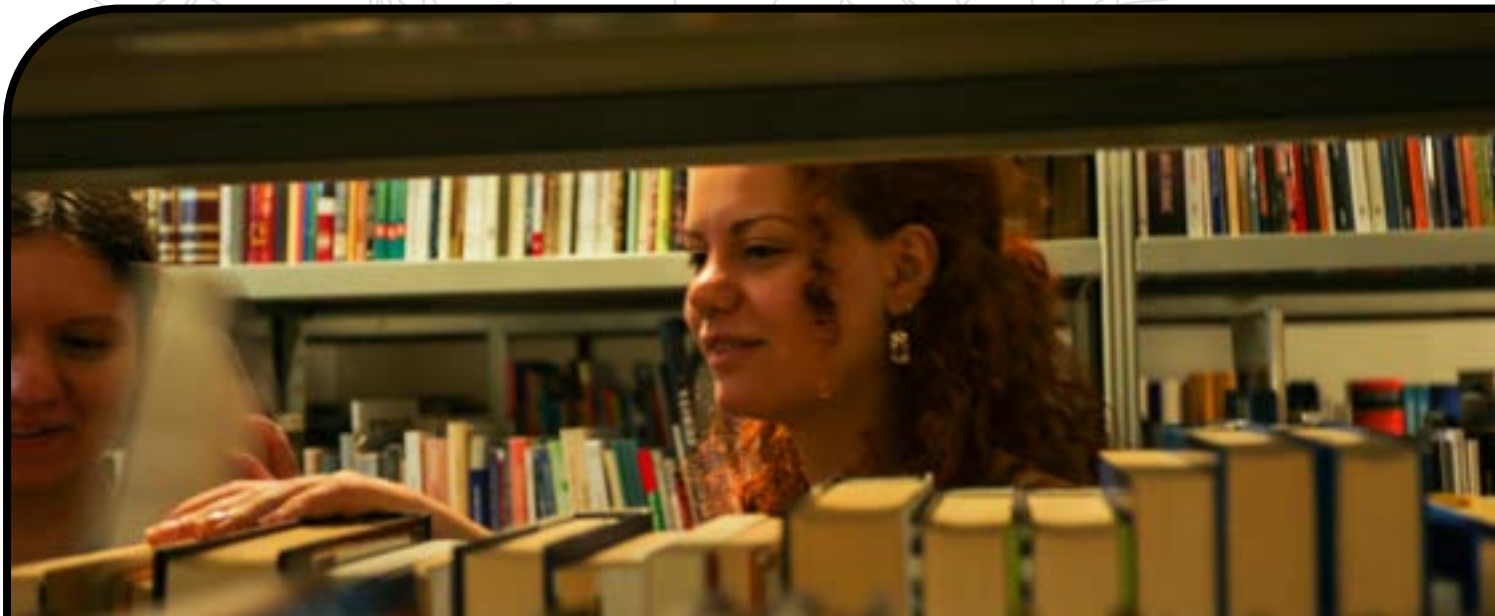
Introduction *(2-3 minutes)*: Begin by explaining the activity. Each participant will share the story behind their name. This could be how they were named, the meaning of their name, or a personal story associated with it.

First Round - Pair Sharing *(5-7 minutes)*: Ask participants to find someone they don't know well and form pairs. In these pairs, participants take turns sharing the story behind their name. Encourage them to listen attentively and ask questions if they wish.

Second Round - Group of Four *(5-7 minutes)*: After everyone has shared in pairs, ask each pair to connect with another pair, forming a group of four. In these groups of four, each participant briefly repeats their name story, allowing the other pair to hear it and share their own.

Third Round - Full Group Sharing *(10-15 minutes)*: Once the group of four has shared, continue connecting the groups until the entire group forms a large circle.
In this final round, each participant shares their name story once more with the whole group. Encourage participants to listen and reflect on the diversity and uniqueness of each story.

Reflection *(Optional, 5 minutes)*: Conclude with a brief reflection on the experience. Discuss how the activity helped participants learn more about each other and the significance of names in different cultures and personal histories.



4.3.3. Name crossword

In this activity, participants will create a crossword-style puzzle using their names to foster interaction and teamwork.

Setup: The facilitator begins by writing a word or name related to the session on a flipchart. This could be the facilitator's name, the name of the project, or the topic of the session.

Activity: Participants are given the task of incorporating their own names into the crossword puzzle. They need to place their names on the flipchart in such a way that the letters overlap with existing letters from the initial word or name.

Rules: Each participant's name must be placed in the puzzle without reusing any letters that are already occupied. For example, if the initial word is "CREATIVITY" and a participant's name includes the letter "T," they can use that "T" in their placement, but cannot use it again elsewhere.

Sharing: As each participant writes their name on the flipchart, they briefly introduce themselves to the group. This allows for both name recognition and an opportunity for participants to learn more about each other.

Reflection: Once everyone has added their names to the crossword, the group can review the completed puzzle. The facilitator may lead a discussion about the activity, highlighting how the diverse names and intersections create a unique representation of the group.

4.3.4. String of Facts

Objective: To encourage participants to share personal information in a fun and engaging way, helping to build connections within the group.

Materials Needed: Strings of varying lengths

Participants: 8-30 people

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Instructions

Preparation *(2-3 minutes)*: Before the activity begins, facilitators prepare strings of various lengths. These should be long enough to wrap around a finger multiple times. Place the strings in the centre of the room.

Choosing Strings *(2 minutes)*: Ask each participant to come to the centre and randomly choose a string.

String Wrapping and Sharing *(10-15 minutes)*: Instruct participants to wrap their string around one of their fingers. They should continue wrapping until the string is completely used up. For each full loop they make around their finger, they must share one fact about themselves with the group. Participants can share anything they feel comfortable with, such as hobbies, interests, memorable experiences, or something unique about themselves.

Reflection and Group Discussion *(optional, 5 minutes)*:
After everyone has shared their facts, encourage a brief discussion about the activity. Ask participants how it felt to share and listen to others' stories and whether they learned anything new or surprising about their peers.

Creative Tip: If available, use strings of different colours. After the sharing session, group participants based on the colour of their strings to discuss something related to the facts they shared.

4.3.5. Open space workshop

Objective: Empower participants to take initiative, express their ideas, and take responsibility for organizing and leading activities. Foster creativity, leadership skills, and active engagement while promoting the principles of open youth work.

Target Group: Youth workers, young people, and mentors looking to explore open youth work practices.

Reference: Inspired by the "Open Space" method, adapted for youth work settings.

Required Materials: Flipchart paper or whiteboards, Markers and pens, Sticky notes, Large space with multiple smaller rooms or defined areas for workshops

Game Description: The Open Space Workshop is a dynamic and inclusive activity designed to introduce participants to the principles of open youth work. It emphasizes accessibility, universality, and freedom of expression. Participants co-create the schedule by proposing and leading activities they are passionate about. This activity fosters creativity, leadership, and collaboration while providing young people with the opportunity to shape their learning environment.

Instructions

Introduction *(10-15 minutes)*: Explain the concept of open youth work: an alternative form of education that is open to all young people, providing opportunities for personal growth and self-expression. Emphasize the values of universality, inclusivity, and free participation. Share examples of how open youth work empowers young people to design and lead their initiatives.

Create the Schedule *(15-20 minutes)*: Prepare a large flip chart with three time slots (or more, depending on the length of the activity). Leave spaces under each time slot for participants to add their workshop ideas. Invite participants to propose their own activities by writing them on the chart. Encourage creativity and assure them that they'll have support if needed. Explain that whoever suggests an activity will also be responsible for leading it.

Activity Implementation *(Time as per schedule)*: Begin the first time slot, with all activities starting and ending at the same time. Allow participants to join the activities they find most interesting. Repeat for the second and third time slots, encouraging participants to explore new activities and spaces.

Wrap-Up *(10 minutes)*: Conclude with a brief thank-you and acknowledgment of all participants who led activities. Highlight the importance of their contributions and initiative.

Questions for Debriefing:

I. *How did it feel to have the freedom to propose and lead your own activities?*
II. *What challenges did you face while organizing or participating in activities?*
III. *How did the open space format help you express your ideas and interests?*

IV. What new skills or insights did you gain from this experience?
V. How can open youth work principles be applied to your daily life or projects?

Key Outcomes

Participants will:

I. Gain a deeper understanding of open youth work principles.
II. Build leadership and organizational skills.
III. Strengthen their creativity and sense of responsibility.
IV. Experience the benefits of collaboration and inclusivity.

This activity serves as a practical demonstration of how open youth work empowers young people, promotes personal growth, and supports a participatory approach to education.

4.3.6. Name and gesture Circle

Objective: To help participants learn each other's names and build group cohesion through a fun and interactive icebreaker.

Materials Needed: None (just an open space for the circle)

Participants: 8-20 people

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Instructions

Form a Circle *(2-3 minutes)*: Ask all participants to stand in a circle where everyone can see each other clearly.

Name and Gesture Sharing *(10-15 minutes)*: Start with one participant who introduces themselves by saying their name and performing a unique gesture. The gesture can be anything simple, like a wave, a clap, a spin, or any movement they feel comfortable with. The next person in the circle then repeats the first participant's name and gesture before sharing their own name and gesture. This continues around the circle, with each new participant repeating all previous names and gestures in order, then adding their own.

Group Repetition *(5 minutes)*: Once everyone has shared their name and gesture, the entire group repeats the names and gestures together, starting from the first person and going through to the last. This helps reinforce memory and creates a shared experience of fun and movement.

Group Discussion (optional): Ask participants how it felt to perform their gesture and hear others repeat their name. Discuss how such activities can break the ice and foster a sense of unity in the group.

4.2.7. Life Timeline

Objective: To facilitate personal reflection and group bonding by creating a shared visual timeline of significant life events.

Materials: Duct tape (to create a line on the floor), sticky notes or small pieces of paper, markers

Participants: 8-30 people

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Instructions

Preparation *(5 minutes)*: Lay a line of duct tape on the floor, long enough to accommodate all participants' contributions. Mark one end of the line as the present day (the start of the training course) and allow the timeline to extend as far into the past as participants wish.

Writing Life Events *(20-25 minutes)*: Distribute sticky notes or small pieces of paper and markers to each participant. Instruct participants to think about significant events in their lives—important milestones, achievements, challenges, or memorable experiences. Ask them to write down each event on a separate note, including their name and the date of the event (if known or approximate). Once written, participants should place their notes on the timeline, positioning them according to when the events occurred.

Sharing and Discussing *(30-40 minutes)*: Once all the notes are placed on the timeline, gather the group around the timeline. Invite participants to walk along the timeline and read the events. Encourage participants to share the stories behind the events they wrote down. Allow anyone who wishes to explain why they chose certain events and how they've impacted their lives. Facilitate a discussion on any patterns or commonalities observed in the timeline, fostering a sense of connection among participants.

Reflection Time

Group Discussion *(10-15 minutes)*: After the sharing session, facilitate a group discussion with questions like:

I. *What did you learn about your fellow participants through this activity?*
II. *How do your past experiences shape your current outlook and goals?*
III. *How does seeing your life events visually represented on a shared timeline change your perspective?*

Creative Tip: For an added layer of creativity, participants could use different coloured notes or markers to represent different types of events (e.g., personal achievements, challenges, or turning points). You could also encourage participants to decorate their notes with small drawings or symbols that represent the event.

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4.4. Teambuilding activities

Team-building activities are designed to enhance collaboration, communication, and camaraderie among group members. These activities often involve tasks or challenges that require participants to work together towards a common goal, fostering stronger relationships and improving group dynamics.

The primary purpose of team-building activities is to strengthen teamwork, build trust, and improve interpersonal skills. They help participants understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, encourage problem-solving, and create a more cohesive and supportive team environment.

In the context of Erasmus+ projects, team-building activities play a crucial role in creating effective and harmonious international teams. They help participants from diverse backgrounds and cultures to break the ice, overcome initial communication barriers, and collaborate more effectively. By engaging in team-building exercises, participants develop a deeper sense of mutual respect and understanding, which is essential for successful cross-cultural projects and partnerships. These activities contribute to the overall success of Erasmus+ initiatives by promoting a positive group dynamic and enhancing the collaborative spirit needed for impactful project outcomes.

4.5. Activities to work with young people

4.5.1. European Umbrella

Objective: To introduce participants to the Erasmus+ program in an interactive and engaging way.

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Materials: Blue umbrella, String, Coloured A5 paper (various colours), Markers, Information and statistics about the Erasmus+ program

Step 1: Begin by writing key information about the Erasmus+ program on the coloured A5 papers. On four identical pieces of coloured paper, write the following words: Education, Training, Youth, and Sport, which represent the four main themes of the program throughout all its phases.

Step 2: On two more identical coloured papers, write €26.2 billion and 2021-2027, which signify the program's total budget and the duration of the current seven-year cycle.

Step 3: Next, on three identical papers, write: Social Inclusion, The Green and Digital Transitions, and Promoting Young People's Participation in Democratic Life. These represent the three main themes for this seven-year period.

Step 4 (optional): You can also write the 8 key competences for lifelong learning on eight separate coloured papers. These competences are:

1. Multilingual competence
2. Personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence
3. Citizenship competence
4. Entrepreneurship competence
5. Cultural awareness and expression competence
6. Digital competence
7. Mathematical competence, and competence in science, technology, and engineering
8. Literacy competence

Step 5 (optional): For further depth, you can include eight more pieces of coloured paper, each representing one of the eight EU programs that were merged under the Erasmus+ umbrella. These are:

1. Erasmus+: Comenius (for school education)
2. Erasmus+: Erasmus (for higher education in Programme Countries)
3. Erasmus+: Erasmus Mundus (for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees)
4. Erasmus+: Leonardo da Vinci (for vocational education and training)
5. Erasmus+: Grundtvig (for adult learning)
6. Erasmus+: Youth (for youth non-formal and informal learning)
7. Erasmus+: Jean Monnet (for EU studies)
8. Erasmus+: Sports (for the field of sports)

Please note that some of these programs may no longer exist in their original forms, but this activity serves as an introduction to show the diversity of opportunities that Erasmus+ offers by integrating these previous programs.

The Fun Part: Crumple each piece of paper into a ball and hang the blue umbrella in the middle of the room, using the string. Place all the crumpled paper balls inside the closed umbrella.

Activity Flow: Introduce the European Umbrella, representing the Erasmus+ program, and explain that participants will explore it in a playful way while helping out.

Start by inviting four volunteers to grab four pieces of coloured paper with the same colour, representing the four main themes of Erasmus+: Education, Training, Youth, and Sport. They need to pick them up as quickly as possible. Afterward, they read out what's written on the paper, and you discuss these themes together.

Next, ask two volunteers to pick up two papers representing the program's budget and duration. Once they have picked them up, discuss the meaning of these figures.

Invite three volunteers to select three pieces of paper with the themes Social Inclusion, Green and Digital Transitions, and Promoting Youth Participation in Democratic Life. Again, they pick these up in a fun or creative way, followed by a group discussion on these topics.

Then, get eight volunteers to quickly grab the papers with the 8 key competences for lifelong learning. Once again, this is followed by a presentation of the competences and a discussion.

(Optional) Finally, if time and knowledge permit, invite eight volunteers to gather the papers listing the eight programs that were merged under Erasmus+. Afterward, give a brief overview of these programs. If you don't feel comfortable discussing these, this part can be skipped.

Debrief: Wrap up the activity by asking participants what they have learned, what was new to them, what they already knew, and what they will take away from the session. Encourage an open discussion to reflect on the key points.

This activity is designed to be dynamic, educational, and fun, while helping participants get a better understanding of the Erasmus+ program and the opportunities it provides.

THIS IS A
VERY EUROPEAN
UMBRELLA

4.5.2. Tree of Competences

At the start of the program, the facilitator prepares a large tree illustration on flipchart paper, with the Youthpass competences written on it. This activity can focus on the eight Youthpass competences or the nine youth worker competences, depending on the participants and the session's objectives. Furthermore, this method of self-reflection can be adapted for other forms of learning and competence development.

The facilitator introduces each competence, explaining its meaning and relevance to the participants. Throughout the program, participants are encouraged to use sticky notes to record moments of learning or self-discovery. They write down what they have learned, reflect on it, and assign their sticky notes to the competence categories displayed on the tree.

At the conclusion of the activity, during the final reflection, the facilitator collects and reorganizes the sticky notes, ensuring they are placed under the appropriate competence categories. The facilitator then explains this organized "tree of competences" to the group, highlighting their achievements and moments of growth.

This activity offers participants a creative and visual way to track their learning journey. By noting down their "AHA!" moments and attaching them to specific competences, they can better understand and assess their progress. It transforms the abstract concept of learning into a tangible and rewarding process of self-assessment and recognition.

Tips for the Facilitator

Pairing with the European Umbrella Activity: The Tree of Competences can be effectively used alongside the European Umbrella activity. Together, activities provide an interactive and interconnected approach for participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Erasmus+ programme and the non-formal learning processes involved.

Encourage Active Participation: Regularly remind participants to write down their moments of learning and reflection as they occur. This helps them stay engaged and think critically about their experiences.

Support Individual Learning Styles: Be mindful that some participants may need prompts or examples to start identifying and associating their learning moments with the competences.

Create a Welcoming Atmosphere: Foster a non-judgmental space where participants feel comfortable sharing their “AHA!” moments and reflecting on their learning journey.

Using this activity in combination with others not only makes the learning process more holistic but also deepens participants’ understanding of the key aspects of non-formal education and competence building.

4.5.3. Yes - No timeline

This activity can be implemented on the various topics where the goal is to express the opinions and to start the discussion.

Objective: To encourage participants to express their opinions, engage in discussion, and explore different perspectives on various topics.

Materials Needed: Tape to divide the room, two signs labelled “YES” and “NO”, a set of sentences/statements/facts related to the topic of discussion

Participants: 10-30 people

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Instructions

Setup *(5 minutes)*: Divide the room into two equal parts using tape on the floor, creating a clear boundary. Place the “YES” sign at the end of one side of the room and the “NO” sign at the end of the other side.

Introduction *(5 minutes)*: Explain the purpose of the activity: to express opinions and engage in a discussion on various topics. Inform participants that they will be presented with a series of statements or facts. Based on their opinion, they should position themselves along the “YES” or “NO” side of the room. If they strongly agree or disagree, they should stand close to the corresponding sign. If they are uncertain or moderately agree/disagree, they should stand closer to the dividing line.

Activity *(20-30 minutes)*: Read the first statement aloud and ask participants to move to the side of the room that represents their opinion. Once participants have positioned themselves, facilitate a discussion by asking participants to explain their reasoning. Encourage dialogue between both sides, allowing participants to share their views without judgment. After the discussion, give participants an opportunity to change their position if they have reconsidered their stance based on the discussion. Repeat the process with additional statements until you decide to conclude the activity or the discussion goals are met.

Reflection and Conclusion *(5-10 minutes)*: Conclude the activity by reflecting on the discussions. Ask participants how the exercise influenced their perspectives and if they felt comfortable expressing their opinions. Highlight the importance of respectful dialogue and the value of considering different viewpoints.

Creative Tip: This activity can be adapted to various topics where the goal is to stimulate discussion and explore opinions. Consider using visual aids, such as images or videos, to introduce each statement or topic.

4.5.4. World Café

The World Café is a facilitation technique commonly used for hosting large group discussions and conversations. It creates an informal, café-like setting where participants can engage in meaningful dialogue, share ideas, and collaboratively explore complex topics. The method fosters a creative and dynamic exchange of thoughts among participants.

Objective: large group discussions and conversations; It creates a non-formal, café-like setting

Duration: 45-60 minutes (adjustable based on the group size, preferences or topics)
Materials: paper, flip charts, markers, pens

Instructions: Divide the large group into smaller, more intimate groups, ideally seating 4-6 participants per table. Assign a facilitator or a "table host" to each table. This person stays at the table throughout the session and helps guide the discussion. Begin with a brief introduction to the World Café format, emphasizing the importance of collective exploration and diverse perspectives. Present a central or "focus question" related to the topic under discussion. This question should be broad and open-ended, encouraging thoughtful responses.

Participants engage in a focused discussion at their tables, responding to the initial question. Encourage the use of visual aids, drawings, or keywords to capture key points on the tablecloths. After the first round, participants rotate to different tables, except for the table host who remains to provide context to new participants. Each participant brings insights from the previous table to enrich the conversation at the new table. Participants continue the discussion at the new table, building upon the insights shared in the previous round. Encourage the exploration of new perspectives and the development of ideas.

Depending on the time available, conduct additional rounds with new focus questions or refined perspectives. Participants continue to rotate between tables, contributing to and building upon the evolving discussions.

Toward the end of the World Café, bring everyone back together for a "harvesting" session. Invite each table host to share the key insights, ideas, or common themes that emerged from their discussions. Facilitate a collective sense-making process where participants discuss the overall themes, connections, and insights that have emerged from the World Café.

4.5.5. The sound map activity

Duration: 10-15 minutes (adjustable based on the group size and preferences)

Materials: Speaker, Wi-Fi access, flipchart paper, markers

Objective: Use a large piece of paper to draw a 'sound map' while sitting quietly in the forest, marking the sources of different sounds they hear on their map with symbols or drawings, using natural materials to add texture or colour.

Process: This activity focuses on mindful listening and the recognition of the forest's resilience through its sounds, from the rustle of leaves to the flow of a stream.

Sharing: Discuss the variety of sounds in the forest and how this diversity contributes to a resilient ecosystem, drawing parallels to the diverse experiences and qualities that contribute to personal resilience.

Adaptability: The activity can be adjusted based on the group's comfort level and preferences. Encourage participants to be respectful and ensure that everyone feels included and enjoys the activity. Activity can be done in a closed space using the sound of the forest on the phone/PC.

4.5.6. ARTACT: Artivism Workshop

Themes: Environmental Issues, General Human Rights

Group Size: 20 participants divided into 4 groups

Duration: 2 to 3 hours

Overview: This workshop focuses on Artivism and media art, using photography and sculpture to help participants express their viewpoints on various situations or issues. Through this activity, participants will explore how art can be a powerful tool for activism, known as artivism.

Goals/Objectives:

I. To represent participants' perspectives through photography and sculpture.
II. To develop teamwork, creativity, and soft skills.
III. To explore how art can be used as a form of activism (artivism).

Materials Needed: cameras or smartphones with cameras, clay or plasticine for sculpting, a projector for displaying photos, coloured markers or stickers to assign groups, printed photos or paintings for the ice-breaking game.

Preparation

Group Assignment: Distribute coloured markers or stickers to participants to form four groups, ensuring each group has a distinct colour.

Photography Basics: Prepare a brief presentation on photography fundamentals, including composition, balance, and colour theory, along with examples of impactful photography.

Sculpting Materials: Have clay or plasticine ready for the sculpture activity.

Projection Setup: Set up a projector for the final presentation of photos and sculptures. Workshop Structure

Ice-Breaking Game *(5 to 10 minutes)*. "Perform the Photo": Begin with an ice-breaking activity where participants are given an image and must use their bodies and objects around them to recreate the scene depicted in the photo. Discuss the significance of the photos and how they relate to artivism.

Forming Groups *(5 minutes)*: Assign each participant a colour. Without speaking, participants must find others with the same colour to form their group.

Photography Introduction *(15 minutes)*: Present key photography concepts such as composition, balance, and colour theory. Explain how photography can convey powerful messages and raise awareness about important issues.

Artivism Introduction *(15 minutes)*: Discuss the concept of artivism—using art as a form of activism—and the role of photography and sculpture in representing and addressing social and environmental issues.

Walk Around *(30 minutes)*: Each group takes a walk around the environment, photographing elements or landscapes where their assigned colour is present.

Sculpture Creation *(30 minutes)*: Groups use clay or plasticine to create a sculpture that represents their assigned colour and reflects the themes of environmental issues and human rights.

Photo sequence and Projection *(30 minutes)*: Groups arrange their photos into a sequence and present them using the projector. They also present their sculptures, explaining the connections between the photos and the sculpture.

Reflection Time *(30 minutes)*: Facilitate a group discussion on what participants wanted to express through their photos and sculptures, and what they discovered about their environment. Reflect on how participants can use art in their daily lives to express themselves and raise awareness about important issues.

Debriefing and Evaluation: Discuss whether participants felt the activity helped them express their viewpoints effectively. Highlight any surprising or particularly impactful photos or sculptures. Reflect on the experience of using art for activism and the importance of artivism. Encourage participants to consider how they can continue using art to address issues in their communities.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: Organize a local exhibition showcasing the photos and sculptures created during the workshop. Encourage participants to initiate a community artivism project focused on a local issue they are passionate about.

4.5.7. DiscriminACT

"Discrimination is not done by villains. It's done by us."

Themes: Discrimination, General Human Rights, Social Rights

Group Size: 10+ participants

Materials: A4 paper (one sheet per participant), pens or pencils, a box or container to collect the stories

Duration: 180 minutes

Overview: DiscriminACT is a powerful theatre activity where participants are divided into groups and tasked with acting out someone else's personal story of discrimination. This exercise fosters empathy, self-expression, and encourages participants to explore strategies for confronting and addressing discrimination.

Objectives:

I. To encourage self-expression and creativity.
II. To foster empathy by allowing participants to step into someone else's shoes.
III. To explore ways of addressing and challenging discrimination.

Instructions

Story Writing *(20 minutes)*: Ask participants to write down a personal story of discrimination they have experienced or witnessed. Reassure them that they can share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with. Once written, have participants fold their papers and place them in a box.

Group Formation *(5 minutes)*: Divide participants into groups of 3-5 people, depending on the total number of participants.

Story Selection and Scene Preparation *(60 minutes)*: Each group selects a story from the box and spends time creating a short theatrical scene based on that story. Encourage them to focus on accurately conveying the emotions and dynamics of the situation.

Scene Presentation *(5 minutes per group)*: One group at a time, participants act out their scene in front of the others. Each scene should last approximately 5 minutes.

Debriefing and Discussion *(10-15 minutes per group)*: After each scene, facilitate a debriefing session where the audience can ask questions to the characters, exploring the emotions and motivations behind their actions. This is also an opportunity to discuss how the situation might have been handled differently to prevent or address the discrimination.

Repeat for All Groups: Continue with the next group, following the same process of performance and debriefing until all groups have presented their scenes.

Debriefing and Evaluation
After each scene, invite the audience to ask questions like:

I. *How did you feel when that person did that?*
II. *What led you to act in that way?*
III. *What could you have done differently?*
IV. *How might the actions of the other person have influenced your behaviour?*

Discussion: Encourage participants to reflect on how the situation could have turned out differently. Discuss alternative actions and the broader impact of discrimination. Ask the audience how they would have addressed the situation and what lessons can be learned.

Tips for Facilitators: When sharing personal stories, ensure participants understand how their stories will be used and that they only share if they are comfortable with the outcome. Emphasize the importance of respecting each other's experiences, and remind participants to approach the activity with seriousness and empathy.

Provide clear instructions at the beginning, explaining the entire process and the purpose behind the activity. This helps participants stay focused and understand the goals. Organize the reflection and discussion part carefully. Start by summarizing the scene to ensure everyone understood it, then guide the discussion with prepared questions. Encourage participants to connect with the stories and share any personal reflections. While personal stories can create deep connections, consider using fictional stories in some cases to prevent discomfort. This allows for open discussion about whether participants have experienced similar situations without making anyone feel vulnerable.

Choose an energizer before starting this activity that helps participants become present and start connecting with others. It should set the tone for the reflective nature of the workshop.

Provide participants with the opportunity to share their thoughts on the activity. Ask them if they felt the exercise helped them express their viewpoints and what they learned about discrimination.

Consider discussing the idea of using art and theatre as tools for social change, emphasizing the role of empathy and understanding in addressing social issues.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: Consider organizing a follow-up discussion or workshop focusing on concrete actions participants can take to address discrimination in their communities.

Encourage participants to use their newfound insights and skills to create a theatre piece or project that raises awareness about discrimination and human rights.

4.5.8. Feel Free to Move – A Body Movement Experience

”Feel Free to Move” is an enriching body movement experience that warms the soul while releasing the body. This activity blends elements of mindfulness, performance, and music, guiding participants on a journey to connect with their true selves and the environment. It serves as a powerful tool for unlocking creativity, fostering self-expression, and nurturing deeper connections among participants.

Facilitators play a crucial role in shaping each participant’s experience. They must remain sensitive, using thoughtful words and creating an inclusive, supportive environment. If someone seems uncomfortable, the facilitator should provide alternative instructions to ease tension discreetly without singling them out.

Number of the participants: 20–30 participants, preferably with an even number, as the exercises are designed for pair work.

Materials: a large, open space such as a big room, sports hall, or garden.; a speaker connected to a device (laptop or phone) to play music; the environment should be safe, controlled, and spacious enough to allow free movement for all participants.

Instructions

The session begins with the facilitator welcoming participants into the space, setting a calm and peaceful tone. The facilitator’s voice should remain soothing throughout, creating a sense of safety and trust. Talking during the activity is not permitted to maintain focus and mindfulness. Participants are regularly reassured that they can adapt exercises to their comfort level and warned in advance of any potentially intense activities.

The experience unfolds in four structured phases:

1. Warmup / Mood Setup

The activity opens with calming music in the background. Participants engage in gentle stretching and breathing exercises to ground themselves. They then walk silently around the room, focusing on presence.

To establish a connection, participants find a partner, lock eyes in silence, and contemplate one another for a few seconds before shuffling to new pairs. This process is repeated until giggles and nervousness dissolve, allowing participants to settle into the experience.

2. Exchange Pairing / Meetings

In this phase, the participants take part in pair-based exercises designed to build trust and creativity. After shuffling around the space to find new partners, participants engage in activities such as:

I. Mirror Game: One participant leads with movements while the other mirrors them, with subtle hints from the facilitator about who leads (e.g., tallest, lightest shirt). Over time, roles may alternate fluidly.
II. Touching Game: Participants close their eyes and gently explore touching their partner’s face, hair, or ears.
III. Musical Expression: Participants use body movements to express the emotions evoked by music and create a non-verbal “conversation” with their partner.

IV. Trust Exercises: These activities foster confidence and emotional safety within pairs.

Exercises are tailored by the facilitator based on the group's energy and progress. Music is used to enhance emotional intensity and creative flow.

3. Release Moment
After around 30 minutes, the session transitions to a release phase. Participants shuffle once more and find a partner to reconnect through a mindful gaze. This exercise is repeated a few times to help the group release any residual energy.

Participants are then invited to move freely, using self-expression through any exercise they feel drawn to. For those unsure of what to do, the facilitator provides gentle suggestions or uses variations in music to guide the process.

4. Sharing Moment
The activity concludes with a reflective sharing phase. Participants gather in a circle to share their experiences, express emotions, and discuss memorable moments. Alternatively, participants can take a quiet walk alone before reuniting to share insights with the group.

Objectives:

I. Enhance non-verbal self-expression and empathy.
II. Develop present-moment awareness of oneself and others.
III. Foster creativity and confidence in body movement.
IV. Build meaningful connections within the group.

By balancing structure with freedom and mindfulness, "Feel Free to Move" delivers a transformative experience that energizes, inspires, and unites participants in a shared journey of exploration and expression.

4.5.9. Creative Personal SWOT Analysis

Objective: To explore personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats through creative expression, fostering self-awareness and goal-setting.

Group Size: 8-28 participants

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials Needed: Magazines, newspapers, or printed images for collage, scissors and glue, large sheets of paper or poster boards, cameras or smartphones for taking photos, access to a printer (if needed) for printing photos, markers, pens, and other art supplies

Instructions

Preparation *(10 minutes)*: Set up a creative workspace with magazines, newspapers, glue, scissors, and art supplies. Ensure that participants have access to cameras or smartphones if they choose to use photography. Explain that instead of writing, participants will express their SWOT analysis through visual art forms.

Understanding SWOT Analysis *(5 minutes)*:

I. Strengths: Internal attributes that help you achieve your objectives.
II. Weaknesses: Internal attributes that may hinder your progress.
III. Opportunities: External factors you can leverage for your benefit.
IV. Threats: External factors that may pose challenges to your progress.

Creative Expression *(40 minutes)*: Participants can choose one of the following methods to express their SWOT analysis;

I Collage Creation:

I. Strengths: Find images or words in magazines/newspapers that represent your strengths. Cut them out and create a collage in the Strengths quadrant.
II. Weaknesses: Identify images or words that reflect your weaknesses and add them to the corresponding quadrant.
III. Opportunities: Look for visuals that symbolize potential opportunities and place them in the Opportunities quadrant.
IV. Threats: Search for images or words that represent threats or challenges and include them in the Threats quadrant.

II Photography:

I. Strengths: Take a photo that symbolizes one of your strengths. This could be an image of an achievement, a skill you possess, or something that represents your confidence.
II. Weaknesses: Capture a photo that reflects a personal weakness or an area where you need improvement.
III. Opportunities: Photograph something that represents a potential opportunity in your life or career.
IV. Threats: Take a picture of something that signifies a threat or challenge you are facing.

III Digital or Printed Visuals:

I. Strengths: Search online for images that resonate with your strengths and print or arrange them digitally in the Strengths quadrant.
II. Weaknesses: Find images that represent your weaknesses and include them in the corresponding quadrant.
III. Opportunities: Collect visuals that illustrate opportunities and place them in the Opportunities quadrant.
IV. Threats: Identify and include images that symbolize threats.

Group Sharing and Discussion *(20 minutes)*: Form groups of 4 participants and share your visual SWOT analysis. Discuss your choices and what the images or photos represent. Encourage group members to provide feedback and share their insights.

Analysis and Action Plan *(15 minutes)*: After discussing your visual SWOT, identify patterns or key areas of focus. Collaboratively brainstorm actionable steps based on each participant's analysis. Consider questions like:

I. How can you use your strengths to capitalize on opportunities?
II. What steps can you take to address weaknesses and mitigate threats?

Example of a Creative SWOT Analysis:

I. Strengths: A collage of images representing communication (e.g., a microphone, a conversation); a photo of a recent achievement, like a certificate or a completed project.
II. Weaknesses: An image of a clock symbolizing procrastination; a picture of a public speaking stage with empty seats, reflecting a fear of public speaking.
III. Opportunities: A visual of a networking event flyer; a photo of a new online course.
IV. Threats: An image of a stormy sky, symbolizing uncertainty; a picture of a crowded job fair, representing competition.

Conclusion: Using art forms like collage, photography, and visual representation allows participants to engage more deeply with their personal SWOT analysis. This creative approach not only makes the activity more engaging but also helps participants visualize their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a way that is tangible and meaningful. Encourage participants to revisit and update their creative SWOT analysis as they progress in their personal and professional development.

4.5.10. Privilege awareness

In this activity, participants will explore the concept of privilege and understand how it impacts our lives. Through role-playing, participants will reflect on different aspects of identity and gain awareness of intersectionality.

Topics: Gender Equality, Equality, Human Rights

Number of Participants: 5-30 participants

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Materials: walkable space, paper, pens, methods

Setup: Begin by gathering participants in an open space where they can move around freely. Ask participants to stand in a straight line, side by side.

Character Assignment:
Assign each participant a note with a character description reflecting different aspects of identity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, mental health, level of education, nationality, etc.

Instruct participants to read their character note privately and spend a few minutes reflecting on the character's life, adding details, and considering the challenges or privileges associated with their identity.

Role-Playing Exercise:
Read aloud a series of statements that describe various actions or experiences the characters might encounter. For example:

I. *"I can walk home at night feeling safe."*
II. *"I can afford to buy a house."*
III. *"I'm able to rent a house without problems."*
IV. *"I can hold hands with my partner in public without fear."*

Participants will then embody their characters. If they believe their character would completely agree with a statement, they take a step forward. If they disagree, they remain in place.

Continue reading statements, allowing participants to move as they feel appropriate for their character.

Observation and Discussion: After all statements have been read, have participants look around and observe their positions relative to each other.

Allow time for participants to reflect on their feelings and thoughts. Then, have each participant reveal the character they were assigned.

Reflection Time
Facilitate a group discussion with questions such as:

I. *What did you notice during the activity?*
II. *How did it feel to move forward or stay still?*
III. *What insights did you gain about privilege and intersectionality?*
IV. *How did embodying a different identity affect your understanding of privilege?*

Encourage participants to share their reflections on what privilege means to them and how this exercise changed their perspective on societal advantages and disadvantages. This activity aims to build empathy and deepen understanding of how different forms of privilege and oppression intersect in our lives, highlighting the importance of recognizing and addressing these dynamics.

Creative Tip: Enhance the Privilege Awareness activity by providing participants with pictures to inspire their characters. Allow them to select a picture and create a character based on it, imagining the identity, background, and life experiences of the person in the image. This visual element can help participants connect more deeply with their characters and bring the role-playing exercise to life.

4.5.11. Rap/Poetry Workshop

Rap is a universal language that speaks directly to the hearts of youth, making it a perfect medium to help them explore self-expression. This engaging and creative workshop aims to teach youngsters how to craft their own lyrics, rhymes, and poetry in a playful and impactful way. Through rap, they will discover how to express their feelings, tell their stories, and gain confidence both in life and on stage.

Not only will participants learn the art of lyricism, but they will also have the incredible opportunity to perform their creations. With guidance from professional rappers, they can take their skills to the next level while sharing their message with others.

Duration: 90 minutes

Location: Can be held anywhere with sufficient space and equipment.

Materials: Papers, pens, speaker, microphone.

Number of Participants: up to 25 participants

Objectives:
The workshop is designed to help youngsters achieve the following:

I. Craft their own lyrics and poems using foundational techniques for rhyme and rhythm.
II. Explore the connection between art forms and the expressive potential of oral language.
III. Develop confidence in expressing personal experiences and emotions.
IV. Collaborate and connect with peers through shared creative experiences.
V. Gain basic writing skills for poetry and rap that can evolve into artistic and self-expressive tools.

Through deconstructing poems and rhymes, participants will first engage with words as sound and rhythm, and then as vehicles of ideas. This playful approach encourages interpretation, theatricality, and deep emotional connections to their creations.

By the end of the workshop, participants should be able to confidently create and perform their own poetry and raps.

Example Verses
To inspire participants, here are sample verses showcasing basic rhyming techniques:

Example 1:
I move slow, like a turtle
Today the sky is purple
I float like balloons
I float to the moon

Example 2:
I don't really talk, I don't really fit
I have all these scars, I don't really fit
I don't really draw, I don't really fit
But when I make art, I paint it with spit

Method

The workshop begins with an introduction to rap structure, including examples or video performances by famous rappers like Big L or Eminem. This serves as inspiration for participants to understand the rhythm, rhyme schemes, and wordplay typical in rap music. The sessions can be conducted as standalone workshops or a progressive series. Over time, participants advance through increasingly complex rhyme schemes and techniques. Guest producers may also join to teach the instrumental aspect of rap, enriching the experience.

The content can be adapted to various themes, such as nature, activism, social awareness, or climate change, providing a creative outlet for different ideas and topics.

Word-Pile Activity
One core exercise involves constructing piles of rhyming words. For instance:
Pile A: flame, pain, rain, insane, veins
Pile B: art, heart, dark, part, spark

Participants choose four words from two piles to craft a verse. This structured approach helps them focus on rhyme while encouraging creative wordplay.

Stages of the Workshop

Stage 1 (20 minutes): Participants select words from two piles, write a verse, and return the words.

Stage 2 (20 minutes): They select words from another two piles and write a second verse.

Stage 3 (30 minutes): Each participant performs or presents their verses (1.5 minutes per participant).

Stage 4 (20 minutes): Reflection and feedback. Participants discuss their experience, share thoughts, and receive guidance on how to refine their techniques.

This workshop is a vibrant, inspiring, and empowering experience for young people to explore their creativity, gain confidence, and connect with their peers through the transformative power of rap and poetry.

4.6. Open youth work

Open youth work represents an inclusive and innovative approach to learning and personal development for young people. It is open to all, embracing the principles of equality, inclusivity, and opportunity. Everyone has the right to be supported in their educational journey and personal growth. Through open youth work, young people gain the freedom to express themselves, acquire skills, and develop competencies for life. Central to this approach is youth-led engagement: young people initiate and realize their ideas with the guidance and support of youth workers.

4.6.1. Key Principles of Open Youth Work

Accessibility for All
Open youth work must be universally accessible to every young person, regardless of physical abilities, mental health challenges, or socioeconomic barriers. Its opportunities and structures are designed to break down barriers and foster inclusion. Professional youth workers ensure a responsive, adaptive approach, ensuring all young people can participate on equal footing.

Free and Voluntary
Participation in open youth work is free of charge, removing financial barriers and ensuring that young people can engage on their terms. Its voluntary nature creates a sense of freedom and choice, allowing young people to feel empowered rather than obligated.

Educational Opportunities
Open youth work bridges formal and informal learning environments, enabling young people to develop their skills, explore interests, and navigate their transitions to adulthood. Through collaboration with peers and mentors, they acquire both practical and life skills, contributing to their holistic development and encouraging active citizenship.

Creating Welcoming Spaces
Youth centres and spaces embody openness and inclusivity. They are places where young people feel accepted, heard, and respected. Constructive activities, creative endeavours, and meaningful interactions define the experience, fostering a sense of belonging and self-expression. Youth workers' warmth and commitment play a crucial role in encouraging participation and cultivating a positive atmosphere.

Providing Safety and Security
Open youth work prioritizes the physical and emotional well-being of young people. With trained professionals at the helm, youth centres are safe environments where experimentation, personal expression, and social interaction can flourish in supportive, harm-free conditions.

Fostering Social Learning
Interpersonal skills and collaboration are integral aspects of open youth work. Young people learn to navigate diverse social scenarios, cooperate effectively within groups, and engage respectfully with people from different backgrounds and cultures. They develop adaptive communication skills, learning to tailor their approaches to suit varied contexts and relationships.

4.7. Using Poetry Slam as a Tool for Youth Workers: An Artistic and Artivist Practice

What is Poetry Slam?
Poetry Slam is a competitive performance art form where poets present original texts following specific rules. Each poem must be performed within three minutes, without the use of props, and judges are audience members selected on the spot. This format gives the event a dynamic and participatory character, encouraging the audience to engage with the performances and creating a vibrant interaction between artists and spectators.

Since its creation in 1986 at the Green Mill Jazz Club in Chicago by Marc Kelly Smith, the movement has grown internationally. Inspired by baseball and bridge competitions, the term "slam" reflects the energy and competitiveness of the practice. Today, slams take place in many countries, featuring local, national, and international competitions.

The Fundamental Elements of Poetry Slam
Smith and Kraynak (2009) identified five pillars of Poetry Slam: poetry, performance, competitiveness, interactivity, and community. These elements not only distinguish slam from other artistic practices but also create an inclusive, dynamic, and transformative space.

Poetry Slam as a Tool for Youth Workers
Poetry Slam is a powerful tool for youth workers as it combines artistic expression with social engagement. Here are some ways it can be used with young people:

- **Creative Writing and Performance Workshops**: Teach young people to write and perform their poems, exploring emotions and personal or social themes.
- **Thematic Debates and Reflection**: Address topics such as inclusion, gender equality, sustainability, and social justice, fostering critical thinking and awareness.
- **Local Events and Competitions**: Organize slams in schools, community centres, or cultural events, allowing young people to share their voices with their communities.

The Agora and Artivism Dimensions of Poetry Slam
Poetry Slam can be seen as an "agora," a public space for exchanging ideas where poetic performances become acts of resistance and social transformation. According to Paulo Raposo (2015), artivism connects art and politics, fostering social and collective interventions through poetic and performative strategies.

Somers-Willet (2009) highlights that, from its inception, slam has had an identity and political nature, being a space of inclusion for voices marginalized by gender, race, class, or sexual orientation. These characteristics make slam a valuable tool for artivism, empowering young people to express their experiences and struggles creatively and impactfully.

Benefits of Poetry Slam for Youth Workers

- **Inclusion and Diversity**: Creates spaces that welcome young people from diverse backgrounds and realities.

- **Empowerment and Identity**: Provides a platform for young people to share their stories, fostering self-esteem and a sense of belonging.
- **Skill Development**: Improves writing, public speaking, and artistic performance skills.
- **Social Engagement**: Raises awareness of social issues, encouraging young people to become agents of change.
- **Community Building**: Strengthens connections among young people and their communities, promoting collaboration and mutual respect.

Conclusion

Poetry Slam is more than a poetic competition; it is an educational and transformative tool that combines art, politics, and community. For youth workers, it offers a way to engage young people, promote inclusion, and drive social change through creativity and expression. This dynamic and interactive format, deeply rooted in diversity and artivism, makes Poetry Slam an ideal practice for working with young people in various contexts.

4.8. Expressive art therapy

Expressive art therapy enables individuals to communicate their inner worlds through non-verbal means such as visual arts, music, dance, drama, writing, and performance. It bridges conscious and unconscious experiences, supporting personal growth and self-awareness. This therapy doesn't require artistic skill—its value lies in the process, not the product.

By employing artistic forms to address emotions, behaviours, and traumas, expressive art therapy can help young people overcome challenges such as anxiety, stress, grief, and the effects of trauma or life transitions. It is particularly effective in creating a non-judgmental environment for self-expression and personal exploration.
For youth workers, this approach provides a toolbox of creative methods to build trust, encourage dialogue, and foster positive emotional and social development in young people.

1. Mindfulness Exercise (15 min)
Begin by guiding participants through a grounding mindfulness exercise. Encourage them to focus on their breath, observe emotions without judgment, and connect with their physical sensations. This prepares them for deeper exploration through creative means.

2. Self-Portrait through Art (50 min)
Encourage participants to represent themselves through art. Provide diverse materials such as watercolours, crayons, or clay.

Process:

- Participants create a visual representation of themselves—abstract or concrete.
- During the presentation, they can reflect on how specific components of their artwork represent emotions, values, or personality traits.
- Optionally, transform the art into melodies or movements for further exploration.

Purpose: Enhance self-awareness and encourage open dialogue through a playful, non-verbal medium.

3. Mask-Making Activity (45 min)
Explore the symbolic "masks" people wear in their daily lives.

Process:

- Begin with a mindful minute, inviting participants to visualize their symbolic mask.
- Using provided materials, participants craft their "best face mask" or one that represents their authentic selves.
- Role-play using the masks to express different aspects of their identity and hidden challenges.

Purpose: Foster self-reflection, coping strategy development, and emotional expression.

4. Postcard Writing and Drawing (30 min)
This activity creates space for participants to express feelings they may hesitate to verbalize directly.

Process:

- On one side of a postcard, participants illustrate their emotions related to a particular person or situation.
- On the other side, they write what they wish to communicate.
- Reflect on the process with guided questions, discussing how self-expression can support emotional clarity and advocacy.

Purpose: Enhance communication skills and facilitate emotional release in a safe and structured format.

5. Spider net Exercise (15 min)
Foster gratitude and connection among participants.

Process:

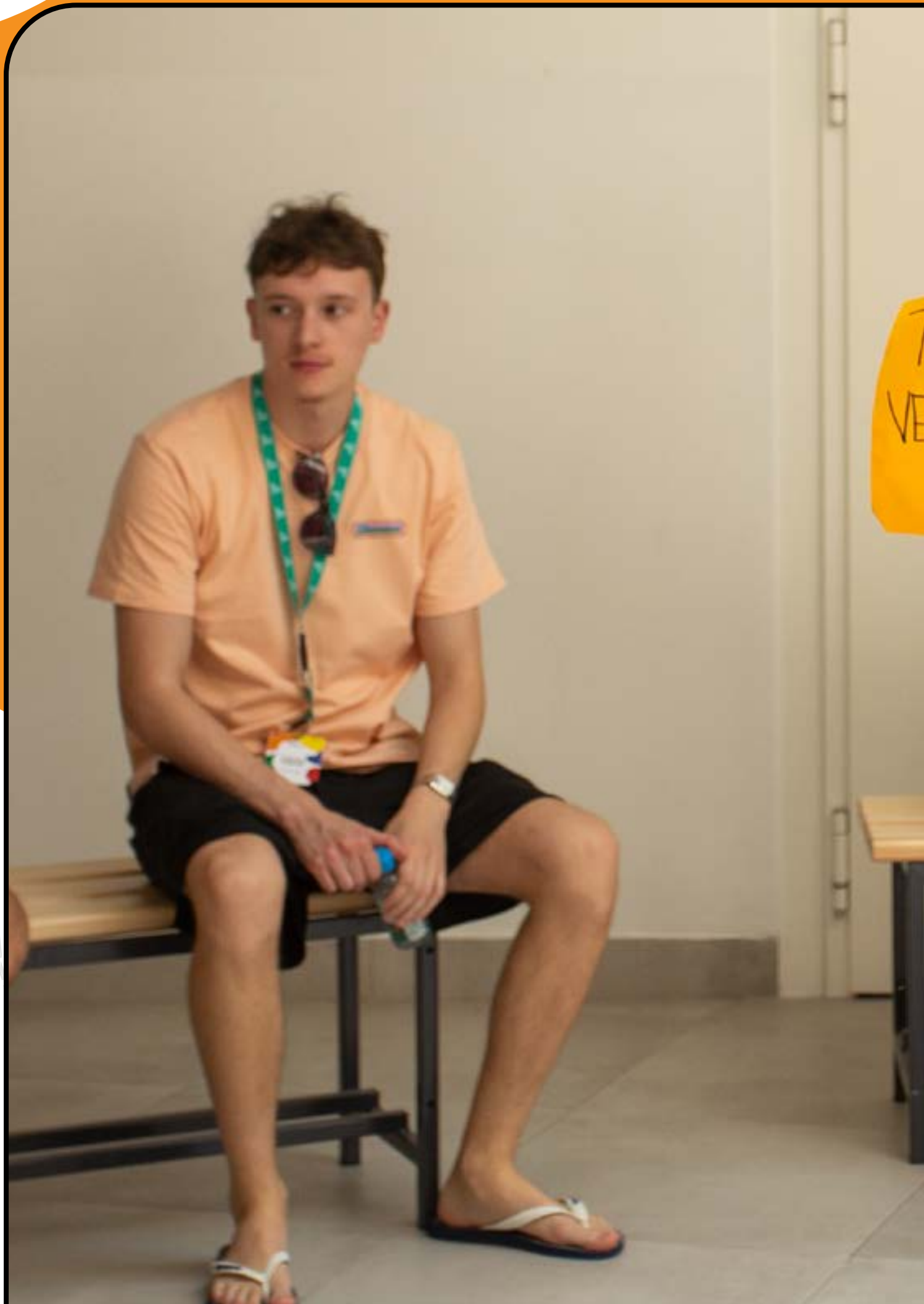
- Participants pass a ball of yarn, expressing gratitude to the next recipient silently.
- As the web forms, they visually recognize the strength of their connections. The exercise ends by untangling the web, with feedback shared between participants.

Purpose: Build trust and a sense of community within the group.

Why Use Expressive Art Therapy in Youth Work?

I. **Accessible Expression**: Offers multiple modalities—art, music, movement, writing—allowing individuals to express themselves in the way that feels most comfortable.
II. **Engages the Subconscious**: Encourages self-discovery by gently bypassing defence mechanisms.
III. **Non-Verbal Healing**: Facilitates emotional release and understanding without requiring verbal articulation.
IV. **Builds Self-Esteem**: Highlights strengths and talents, fostering confidence and self-awareness.
V. **Inclusive and Non-Judgmental**: Removes pressure related to artistic skill, focusing instead on emotional and experiential depth.

Expressive art therapy offers youth workers a creative and transformative toolset, helping young people navigate their emotions, articulate their experiences, and explore their identities. These activities not only support individual growth but also strengthen the bonds within groups, fostering resilience, empathy, and connection.



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