

# Arts-based social interventions: First results of the AMASS testbed.



Editors

Andrea Kárpáti and Melanie Sarantou

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**ACADEMIC REVIEWS**

Satu Miettinen

# Arts-based social interventions: First results of the AMASS testbed.

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amass acting on the margins  
arts as social sculpture

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# Preface

**Satu Miettinen and Melanie Sarantou**

University of Lapland



# 1

The European Commission H2020-funded project *Acting on the Margin: Arts as Social Sculpture* (AMASS) brings together artists and communities to explore how the arts can act as a vehicle for mitigating societal challenges. The project spans the margins of Europe, from Malta, Portugal, Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, the UK, Sweden and Finland. Implemented between 2020 and 2023, AMASS is an arts-based action research project aims to create concrete opportunities for people to come together and accompany artists as agents in creative projects and interpretations.

This multidisciplinary project considers a wide field of disciplines. Through participatory approaches, it uses practical methods to capture, assess and harness the impact of the arts and further generate social impact through policy recommendations. A European-wide AMASS Testbed of 35 experiments is implemented, and the research outcomes and findings will be upscaled through policy recommendations. The testbed identifies, explores, collates, evaluates and analyses existing and new innovative productions, experiments, and case studies from the perspective and the physical positioning of European countries 'on the margins' in the underserved northern, southern, western, and eastern regions.

The first AMASS Symposium was implemented on 28 and 29 May, 2021. This activity was led by AMASS Research

Fellow Professor Andrea Kárpáti from the Corvinus University of Budapest. At the two-day symposium the project partners presented the first research reports of the seven pilot studies that was implemented as part of the testbed. The reports addressed the pilot studies and their implementation. In addition, the assessment of the pilots and policy implications were presented. Up to sixty audience members participated in the symposium.

This publication presents the proceedings of the symposium, which are research reports that partly fulfils the Deliverable 2.4 *Research reports as journal publications* of the project. The fourteen research reports from the participating countries illustrate a wide variety of artistic projects of socially engaged arts and their assessment methods. Some initial reflection on policy implications deriving from the assessment are also presented. The assessment enabled new insights into the impact of the arts in societies, through the communities with whom the AMASS partners were co-creating new and shared experiences. All reports were double peer reviewed and edited by Andrea Kárpáti and Melanie Sarantou. The reports are organised according to the countries in which they were implemented. The order of the reports is not intended to set up 'margins' between the countries. On the contrary, and as the reports illustrate, there are strong similarities and comparable that strikingly remind us of the complexities of margins, and that they are persistently present across Europe and its societies.

# The Czech Republic



# 2

## Learning through emotion – the gallery permanent collection as a place for people

Richard Drury

'We have to step boldly into man's interior world or not at all.'

Wallace Stevens, *Adagia*, *Opus Posthumous*

Let me first introduce myself. My name is Richard Drury and I'm the Chief Curator of the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region based in Kutná Hora, a medieval silver-mining town and UNESCO World Heritage Site located about 70 kilometres east of Prague in the Czech Republic. Since 2010 our gallery has been based in the Baroque former Jesuit College which, after the abolition of the Jesuit Order in 1773, was used as an army barracks for more than two centuries before our gallery took over the building and its grounds, reconstructing it for gallery purposes and thus establishing a major new centre of the arts in the central Bohemian region. Our budget provider is the government of the Central Bohemian Region.

The Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region or, to use its Czech acronym, GASK, is a museum of modern and contemporary art that was founded in 1964 as part of a network of regional public galleries in what was then Czechoslovakia. At the Jesuit College we stage regular exhibitions of modern and contemporary Czech and international art. However, our primary responsibility is caring for, researching and presenting our art collection that is one of the finest in the Czech Republic. The collection includes some 6,000 works of mainly Czech art from the late 19th century up to the present day.

In 2014 I was entrusted with creating a new permanent collection for our gallery. It was a chance not only to rehang exhibits, but above all to reassess the whole meaning of why we show art to the public. Call it my little mid-life crisis if you will, but I asked myself a series of fundamental questions. What is art? What is an artist? Is my traditional curatorial approach more of a hindrance



*Fig.1. Former Jesuit College in Kutná Hora, home of GASK*

than a help to the viewer? These were questions that could only be answered by disconnecting myself from my previous practice and established assumptions. I also tried to refocus my ideas towards the viewer and their actual experience and expectations.

The result was our new permanent collection 'States of Mind / Beyond the Image'. Using the unique spiritual and architectural framework of the Jesuit College and the specific qualities of our gallery collection as my starting point, I tore myself away from the traditional time-based encyclopaedic model of the permanent collection and resolved to present art above all as something human.

To borrow Nicholas Serota's phrase, I decided to step off 'the conveyor belt of history' and present art as an expression of inwardly experienced humanity, liberating it from linear time and the often counterproductive apparatus of art-historical categorisation.

In formulating a series of states of mind convincingly reflected in artistic expression, I and my colleagues – curators and educators – were able to better unlock the universal essence of art, one that wouldn't be prejudged or 'pigeonholed' by specific national and stylistic contexts.



Figs.2-4. States of Mind permanent collection

By dismantling the scaffolding of traditional art terminology, I wanted to stress the emotional world of each artist as something to be discovered, as it were, by getting 'beyond' the formal art-historical character of the image.

A guiding light in this effort to elevate the pure humanism in art was Josef Čapek (1887–1945), older brother of Karel Čapek, who was both a writer and a painter. In Josef Čapek's work I've always been fascinated by how he expresses his ideas about the essential values of human life in closely interrelated artistic (visual) and literary (text) form. This mutually stimulating dialogue between visual and written

expression was something I wanted the permanent collection to work with, and the most suitable 'vehicle' for this proved to be the aphorism or brief quote from poems or song lyrics. In the permanent collection, the individual states of mind are thus reflected on by artworks and by aphoristic ideas fully integrated into the composition of the installation.

It's important to stress that the conception of 'States of Mind' was formulated as a source partnership between curators and educators – the GASK Learning Centre is a key player, indeed a catalyst, in the continuing development of how the permanent collection works in the social reality of the world around us.



'States of Mind' is consciously rooted in a sensitive relationship between the collection and the Jesuit College, meaning that the spaces are respected in their 'natural' state with simple white walls and no additional panels. The spaces with their enfilades providing unique perspectival views are thus allowed to work as an integral part of how the viewer experiences the permanent collection.

This 'holistic approach' includes a dialogue between the interior space and the exterior setting of Kutná Hora's historical architecture and nature enabled by windows with semi-opaque glass-fibre roller blinds. Together, the ever-changing daylight and an awareness of the horizon outside allow our visitors to orientate themselves like pilgrims on a journey of discovery!

It's important for us that we're trying to create a discursive space for personal reflection, meaning that we want our viewers to think actively in response to questions rather than having to digest the traditional 'avalanche' of pre-packaged information. It's also intended as space for the entire breadth of our mental and emotional spectrum, including irony and humour that are, for the most part, excluded from the 'serious business' of art presentation in galleries and museums.

The structure of our permanent collection is what you could call a conceptual 'ecosystem' – visual art, aphoristic ideas, the Baroque interiors and the world outside are closely intertwined and each individual element works in symbiosis with all the others. 'States of Mind' is conceived as a sustainable project given



its variability, modularity and openness. Here, we're not tied to the history of Czech modern art – we're telling the story of humanity in artworks and poignant written statements. Keep an eye out for a quote by Banksy, a painting by Matti Kujasalo and prints by Robert Rauschenberg!

This broad-threshold approach enables us to aim for inclusiveness and accessibility – if a child understands that art is about such things such as friendship, hope and freedom, then they hopefully won't grow up to consider modern and contemporary art as something alien to their lives! The GASK Learning Centre has, as I mentioned earlier, been closely involved in the social application and relevance of our permanent collection. Our educators have had haptic transcriptions of

selected exhibits made for sight-impaired visitors, they've created worksheets for teachers and for students, 'self-service' worksheets for family groups, and, of course, they provide a broad range of inspiring programmes for various social groups. They created podcasts for several exhibits spoken not by professional actors but, significantly, by local children. The GASK Learning Centre provides a structured programme of specific options for groups of primary- and secondary-school students (between the age of six and nineteen) relating specifically to the GASK permanent collection. It is introduced with the words: 'WHY States of Mind, a package of programmes developing visual perception and emotional intelligence? BECAUSE the knowledge and mastering of one's own feelings provides the path to the art of



Fig.5.GASK Learning Centre programme

interpersonal relationships.' Each programme relates to the intellectual and emotional content of one of seven selected artworks situated in the permanent collection.

Along with the haptic transcriptions and audio recordings for blind and sight-impaired visitors mentioned above, most of the GASK Learning Centre's *Inclusive* GASK programmes are based on the GASK permanent collection. This primarily means workshops for socially disadvantaged young people. GASK LC collaborates on a long-term and regular basis with the low-threshold Maják [Lighthouse] club in Kutná Hora and the Kutná Hora Correctional Facility. In the period before Covid, disadvantaged children and young people took part in the LC's programmes and workshops

once a month (as once again they will, we hope!). The LC's collaboration in this field is based on contact with a group that is mediated by the organisation caring for them. At the present time, just like everyone else, GASK LC is endeavouring to renew its collaboration with its target groups. It is continuing, for example, in its Covid-interrupted project with Maják in connection with the EDUzměna [EDUchange] Foundation Fund initiative in Kutná Hora. Since May 2021, GASK LC has been staging a once-monthly programme for elderly people at the local Barbora Retirement Home based on the master's degree project of GASK employee Věra Pinnoy that was originally inspired by a similar project at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Original paintings from GASK's collection are shown to participants in

the programme, who then create their own artworks as part of a discussion stimulating personal memory and awareness of family relationships. The GASK Learning Centre hasn't yet had the chance to welcome Marie Fulková, her colleagues and students from Charles University's Faculty of Education to our gallery as part of the AMASS Narrative Platform, but looks forward to doing so in the near future!

Returning to the conceptual structure of GASK's permanent collection, here you have the individual states of mind. There are 21 pairs, meaning 42 in total, which by happy coincidence is also writer Douglas Adams's legendary 'answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything':

Solitude / Friendship  
 Desire / Tranquillity  
 Courage / Fear  
 Selfishness / Conciliation  
 Reason / The Subconscious  
 Joy / Grief  
 Deliberation / Spontaneity  
 Equilibrium / Tension  
 Tenderness / Cruelty  
 Irony / Respect  
 Hope / Scepticism  
 Independence / Obsession  
 Idealism / Cynicism  
 Harmony / Fury  
 Compassion / Heartlessness  
 Understanding / Prejudice  
 Conscience / Resignation  
 Recollection / Forgetting  
 Confinement / Freedom  
 Vulnerability / Defiance  
 Alienation / Meditation

Each space of the permanent collection features a 'pairing' of two states of mind that are contrasted with each other but are not necessarily in opposition to each other.

The aim of GASK's permanent collection is to return viewers to the human factor transcending time, styles and nationalities in art. It tries to avoid assumptions about prior knowledge on the part of the viewer; instead, it seeks to establish a partnership. In reaction to sensory degradation caused by digital media and the internet, it encourages greater empathy and sensitivity. We hope that in understanding art better, our visitors will better understand something even more important – themselves. And all under the heading: THINKING MEANS SEEING!

The first lock-down of 2020 made us think about how to reconnect 'States of Mind' with viewers who were unable to visit our gallery in person. The best solution given the interconnected nature of the permanent collection was to create a Matterport 3D virtual tour, allowing viewers to immerse themselves in the context I've just described. What emerged out of this wasn't simply a 'substitute' for socially isolating Czech art lovers, but an international platform whose potential, if I'm quite honest with you, we have yet to fully develop.

You can find an introduction to 'States of Mind / Beyond the Image' at <https://gask.cz/en> and you can embark on the virtual tour at <https://gask.cz/en/virtual-tour-our-permanent-collection>. The tour is split into four parts spread out on two floors and there is plenty to explore. It's a world of ideas and emotions waiting for you!

## The Czech Republic



# 3

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## Assessment methods and first results (period April 2020– March 2021)

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### ABSTRACT

The following contribution reflects and summarizes the continual reporting of an assessment of the methods and first results with policy implications in the AMASS project at the faculty of education Charles University over the period of April 2020 until April 2021. Several experiments, project baselines, exploratory studies and a general research study has been either started or is still in progress at the time of this annual report. This assessment paper contains an overall overview of the research done so far and

studies which are still ongoing within the Department of Arts at the Faculty of Education Charles University. The research methods combine qualitative and quantitative standards of research implementation within the subject area of education, didactics, arts, educational psychology, cognitive psychology, art philosophy, and sociology. Five experiments have been conducted at the early stage so far where other two to three experiments are pending either subject area board approval or Ethics Committee approval.

## EXPERIMENT 1

Our first experiment with the working title *Glass at Home* conducted between March 1st 2020 - May 1st 2020 focused on the isolation of individuals and families during the COVID-19 isolation and how individuals and families could access art in galleries through educational and artistic approach in communication with the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. *Glass at Home* assignment invited participating subjects to explore an online exhibition of Czech studio glass entitled *Pleiads of Glass*. The research team of work package 3 in communication with the museums set several objectives in search for possibilities and correlations that could bring to the foreground the following issues in terms of social communication in arts: a) *maintain creative activity as a tool to overcome isolation and b) create compassion between generations and different members of social groups*. The main interest was the psychological transfer in family memories, finding which aspects of these memories remain permanent and how old art and new art is understood and perceived across generations. The experiment also brought up topic of the in quote second life in extreme and unexpected human condition the main research questions were as follows:

a) *How stable is diagnostic communication and dynamic digital mess (contemporary information sources, means of communication, unified communication channels, etc.)?*

b) *What are the possibilities of gallery education in the time of COVID-19 isolation?*

c) *What methodological frames and relevant methods can be effectively used in the COVID-19 situation when people cannot visit museums or exhibitions in person?*

d) *How do they experience extreme situations of being remote and alone?*

The research sample consisted of three groups out of which Group One consisted of family members who consented to participate in the experiment; the family group included 19 subjects of various gender and age. Group Two included seven test subjects, mostly seniors, who were able to communicate online. Group Three consisted of master degree students at the faculty of education Charles university in Prague and this group contained 14 test subjects. In total 40 subjects participated in the first experiment.

These focus groups covering almost all ages and social classes did not however include in vast majority minorities to which the project aims to focus on. Majority of the participants in the first experiment were from a middle social class based on their income and living conditions. On the other hand the cohort was heterogeneous by cultural and social habitus thus the data could be divided into categories such as: age, gender, education, jobs, hobbies, sports, activities. All participants were asked what their experience regarding COVID-19 isolation and access to gallery's art and cultural life is like. The interviews were conducted via online communication platforms such as E-mail, Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom. Using artefacts at hand in families homes the participants were active in happenings and performance and activities such as evoking storytelling, debating, listening, looking around for home exhibition objects. Overall reactions were positive and fun. Since the main focus area was glass, family members and test subjects were asked to install and document glass objects at home as if they were in a real art gallery.

The first experiment in the WP3 testbed is still under the title and organizational process, thus the two in progress names of the experiments emerged: *Working title: SKLO DOMA, pilot study/Glass at home, pilot study. Finalized title: Searching for Beauty: Art Museum Travels to Families.*

The study pilot raised questions and opened topics that blend into other experiments. Art work as an *open form* (Libera 2009) became a part of all experiments and transformed into *Cut for New Times/Artistic Open Form. The Tailor's Workshop*, the complex art-piece with performative parts always generates didactics and pedagogical content knowledge. All components are constantly evolving and changing. Processes are also constantly reflected and put into communication that is analyzed as a part of the research process.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, art-making effects, research methods and research design could not be piloted for a group of subjects with chronic disease and pain, as originally planned. Hospitals were closed and the medical researcher group served in the period of Experiment One on the Covid Department. However, in the coming period and especially currently, some research approaches are examined in order to combine methods from remote epistemic domains into new hybrids (Raudenská, Javůrková 2017).

## EXPERIMENT 2

The second experiment within the AMASS Work Package Three titled *Cut for New Times: teaching at suburban school* which started in February 2021 and ended at the end of September 2021 focused on children at suburban School Donovalska at Prague District 11. The school has been isolated for over a year due to the pandemic and measures taken by the

Czech Ministry of Health. Therefore the challenge is multifold: firstly, it is at a distance from cultural institutions which are mostly in the center of the metropolis, secondly, the conditions of families living in the housing estate, and finally, the lockdown and distance learning, which do not take art education into account. The experiment responds to the needs of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague to analyze and test the possibilities of an online curriculum for the specifics of a permanent exhibition of glass art. The main objective of the study addresses the issue of social isolation for the entire population of every age and social class. The experiment focuses on art educators' needs under lock-down and the problems of deficiency in cultural education in general.

The experiment also brought up the topic of effective communication of art within suburban school areas. The main research questions were as follows:

- a) *What should be the conditions and motivation of communication in order to create functional, cognitive, online educational programs that will mediate knowledge of culture, develop awareness of individual and collective identity (identity of a specific culture, ethnicity, employability, etc.)?*
- b) *What forms of creative work - apart from the online version - will be used and which will be effective?*

The research sample of the second experiment includes 28 primary school children of the previously mentioned suburban school, two senior researchers who are specialists in research in art education and action research in museums, galleries, artists and teachers, including museum staff trained in art education. In total, 28 school children and six

adults participated in the second experiment. The determinative criterion is given by accessibility and the specialization of the art teacher/museum educator. The experiment combines online interviews conducted with the help of online communication platforms such as MS Teams and in-situ activities in the museum and follow up at the school. Two new participants from the Contemporary Design Supermarket WC will join the research team in September 2021. They have been already working with the Museum of Decorative Arts and will triangulate concepts of the artist and other researchers.

Participants will use learning resources from the Museum of Decorative Arts and artistic/educational artefacts developed by the artist (Pfeiffer, 2020) entitled *Cut for New Times*. Assignment for protocols will be produced by the teacher - researcher and the artist. They will modify their activities to questions and challenges of protocols, they are supposed to develop Schemes and Lesson plans, a test via distance teaching strategies and collect video- audio documentation. Provided that the interview experiments will be based upon regular meetings on Teams platform (all will discuss data collected via protocols). The role of the researchers will be to triangulate (see Experiment 1 *Pleiads of Glass* which is in certain points interconnected with the Experiment 2, *Cut for New Times*. The work has a processual character both in artistic and teaching domains. It is a process of analysis and creation, including meaning-making activity, developing innovative or novel approaches to teaching and academic work. It connects artistic strategies and thinking through art with learning approaches and constructivist didactic approaches.

The second experiment seeks to help in terms of developmental and cognitive aspects of art perception, based on exercises and key tasks such as:

#### a) Development of skills, abilities

Equal for teachers, researchers, artists and pupils. Communication, dialogic approaches, discursive practice, co-creative skills, using digital platforms, development of analytical thinking in teachers and artists, development of critical thinking, visual literacy, developing curriculum creativity. Pupils: Co-creation, respect to others' ideas.

#### b) Development of behaviour (attitudes, values)

Values and attitudes targeted: professional skills, building professional identity, communication with public institutions, communication and collaboration in a professional team.

### EXPERIMENT 3

The third experiment within the AMASS Work Package Three named *Cut ofr New Times: Teaching at School for the Deaf* based at the School for Children with Special Needs at Prague, District 5, focused on the teacher and student experience during multiple forms of isolation seen from multiple lenses, the first being global pandemic connected with COVID-19 and its local legislative and protective measures, secondly isolation of a minority group of hearing disability people, who have been in social isolation even before the pandemic and are considered a minority culture and finally due to society's neglect and passive attitudes to those who are "different" and/or "special". As seen from the AMASS basic data template for the WP3 testbed, which states that:

*"Art education is taught by either enthusiastic specialists or non-specialists. In this context, education for children who suffer from hearing*

*disability shares challenges with the majority of schools.” (Hay, Fulkova, Novotna 2021)*

This approach helps to create a pro inclusive and comprehensive attitude and embedding the basic principles of inclusive education in art classes can also dissolve some aspects of feelings of isolation and hostility which groups living on the margin may experience in their daily lives. The experiment addresses issues of cultural isolation of the people with hearing disability and pandemic isolation as well. The experiment focuses on art educators’ needs under lock-down and the problems of deficiency in cultural education in general. The main research questions are as follows:

*a) What do the deaf visitors need to complete the program at the museum?*

*b) What characterizes the so-called hearing disability/Deaf culture?*

*c) What forms of creative work - apart from the online version - will be used and which will be effective?*

*d) What characteristics would a work of art need to be engaging for children from a hearing disability culture ?*

*e) What should be the conditions and motivation of communication with children and teacher/visitors with special needs (hearing disabilities) in order to create functional, cognitive online educational programs that will mediate knowledge of culture and develop awareness of individual and collective identity (identity of a specific culture, ethnicity, employability, etc.)?*

Test subjects/research participants will be 12 primary school pupils, 1 artist in a triple role of also a researcher and a teacher with background in art development and education at Charles university, 2 senior researchers and 1 primary school teacher. This qualitative case study approach may give a better insight in the needs of an art teacher's needs in the field of hearing disability art education and pro inclusive education.

The determining criteria are given by accessibility and specialization, including an international background of participants’ expertise. The teacher/researcher became a PhD student and the AMASS experiment has been incorporated into her PhD project. The teacher – PhD student will be trained in research skills necessary to carry out research adapted to online technology: qualitative research method of neo-narratives combining sociological, psychological, and philosophical inquiry as an interdisciplinary approach to research (connected with online shared collections). The artist is a PhD student trained in A/r/tography (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson 2005; Fulková, Jakubcová 2014, Gajdošíková 2018). The experiment will be supervised by the advisor from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague (Institute of the Deaf Studies ).

Due to the government restrictions and COVID-19 measures the experiment will be conducted via online platforms such as MS Teams or Zoom, while preparatory parts took place at schools and the main session of the field data collection will be run in the U(P)M museum in Prague in September 2021. The source for art exposure will be given by the Charles University, Museum of Decorative Arts (conditioned by government measures). Participants will use learning resources from the Museum of Decorative Arts and artistic/educational artefacts developed by

the artist (Pfeiffer, 2020) entitled *Cut for New times*<sup>1</sup>. (Primary documents are stored in Hermeneutic Unit 3\_HU\_3\_CUT). Teacher - participant will respond to questions and challenges of Protocols 1 and 2, she will be an author of Scheme and Lesson plans, she will develop and test via distance teaching strategies and collect video- audio documentation. Regular meetings on Teams platform (discussing data collected via Protocols 1 and 2. Expert advisors from the Faculty of Art, Charles University (Institute of Deaf Studies) will be invited to triangulate ongoing research findings. The interviewing process and products have a processual character both in artistic and teaching domains. It is a process of analysis and creation, including meaning-making activity, developing innovative or novel approaches to teaching and academic work. It connects artistic strategies and thinking through art with learning approaches and constructivist didactic approaches. In general, researchers use mixed research design adapted to online technology and interdisciplinary approach: qualitative research methods of neo-narrative combining sociological, psychological, and philosophical inquiry with methods of cultural anthropology and ethnography (netnography): Field study adapted to online shared collections of utterances and reflective writings, interviews, analysis of visual records (photography/ photo-voice, academic video). A/r/tography approach therefore seems to fit the possibility of being cognitively demanding and can provide both qualitative and quantitative results at the end when the products and interviews are evaluated (Irwin 2004, Savin-Baden, Tombs 2017).

The Developmental objectives of the exposure to the art can be then divided into several categories:

i) *Development of skills, abilities* - Equal for teachers, researchers, artists and pupils. Communication, dialogic approaches, academic communication, using digital platforms, development of analytical thinking in teachers and artists, development of critical thinking, visual literacy, developing curriculum creativity. Pupils: Co-creation, respect to ideas of others.

ii) *Development of behaviour (attitudes, values)* - Values and attitudes targeted: professional skills, building professional identity, communication with public institutions, communication and collaboration in a professional team.

iii) *Increase well-being, use therapeutic functions of art* - In order to reduce anxiety and feelings of isolation and depressive states.

The roadmap of the experiments is as follows:

During February to April of 2021 Curriculum comparative analysis: programs of Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague and the School for the hearing disability Framework, Educational Framework/ Field of Art and Culture, Revision document for Art Education and Governmental Document Strategy 2030+. Developing innovative approaches inspired by artistic open form *Cut for New Times* followed by the consultation of pre-conceptions, ideas and needs with the U(P)M Museum Education Department. The final stage is collecting data from reflective writings and communications, producing transcripts. This stage can therefore be described as the *1st level of coding*.

During The summer of 2021 the *2nd level of coding* and the subsequent *3rd level axial or selective coding* will be established by a PhD student of the Faculty of Education who will be working with student

<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://janpfeiffer.info/works/instalace-strih-pro-novou-dobu-2020/>

volunteers' newly established groups which will give additional reflective communication to the qualitative part of the study confirming the previous findings.

Since the results of this particular experiment are yet in development, we have to wait until later in order to assess the outcomes in detail. A detailed Protocol Draft/Experiment 3 and Specific Requirements for field note observation and data collection are presented in the next contribution by Hay, Novotná, Fulková, 2021.

## EXPERIMENT 4

The fourth experiment which is still ongoing since February 2021 and aims to finish during fall of 2021 coined *Cut for New Times/Artistic Open Form. Teaching Art and Culture at School with Roma Population* focuses on the nearly two decade issues of art education among Roma population in the Czech Republic. The school, teachers and students experience multiple forms of isolation: firstly, it is a pandemic, secondly students' cultural background and finally society's neglect and passive attitudes to the Roma population. Art education is taught by either enthusiastic specialists or non-specialists but there is a growing interest and activity in bringing Roma art into the spotlight. The experiment addresses issues of cultural otherness and social isolation within pandemic isolation of the entire population. The experiment focuses on art educators' and children's needs under lock-down and the problems of distance education and deficiency in cultural education in general. Since Roma culture is filled with art it seems that the western approach to fine arts is still distant from what Roma culture and people see as artful and meaningful. The main questions in this particular experiments are therefore:

a) *What are Romani children/school needs to complete the program at the museum?*

b) *What characterizes the Romany culture, education and social background/habitus?*

c) *What forms of creative work - apart from the online version - will be used and which will be effective?*

d) *What characteristics would a work of art need to be engaging to Roma people?*

e) *What should be the conditions and motivation of communication with children and teacher/visitor in order to create functional, cognitive online educational programs that will mediate knowledge of culture, develop awareness of individual and collective identity (identity of a specific culture, ethnicity, employability, etc.)?*

f) *How to articulate challenges within the Roma population/community and what is the language of this articulation? Comparative study with HU experiments.*

The experiment will include at least 20 – 40 primary Roma school children supervised by art education teachers and specialists from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University. The determining criteria are given by accessibility and specialization in art education, including an international background of participants' expertise and possibility of comparisons within AMASS research group, mainly with ELTE University, Faculty of Sciences, Hungary. The artist is a PhD student trained in A/r/tography. Expert advisor of curatorship for Roma artistic activities in Ústí nad Labem, North Bohemia with a strong Roma population and in collaboration with Faculty of Art/FUD (Purkyne University)

UJEP Ústí nad Labem (Fremlová 2020). Participants will use learning resources from the Museum of Decorative Arts and artistic/educational artefacts developed by the artist (Jan Pfeiffer) entitled *Cut for New times*. (Primary documents are stored in Hermeneutic Unit 4, AMASS\_CUT 2021). The protocol part and interviewing will be done in the same manner as experiments 2 and 3, thus giving space for comparison of these particular groups and cross examining the artefacts, outputs and overall results.

The researchers will analyze the data in a particular order:

- 1) Data coding and comparing with previously coded documents by the course participants
- 2) PhD students will be involved in data coding
- 3) Data will be coded according to the Grounded theory in 3 stages of open coding, axial and selective coding in software for qualitative research ATLAS.ti
- 4) Data coding should lead to conceptual mapping, grouping categories into super codes and – possibly - the central category. The triangulation will be accomplished by members of the research team by email, by calls, shared documents, Teams etc.).

Analyses and conclusions of the experiment will be summarized in a report for U(P)M and all the participating schools, including students of all programs of art education (Bc, MA and PhD) School for children with hearing disabilities and will be provided for internal use of all participants. The research findings will serve as a portfolio for innovation in teacher preparation courses in the Department of Art Education and other stakeholders. Research findings will serve as argument in communication with stakeholders in the Faculty of Education Dean's collegium and colleagues from

other departments, in cultural institutions, e.g. National Gallery (NG), Central Bohemian Gallery (GASK) in Kutná Hora and among teachers of Art Education and wider public. All artistic projects conceived and presented by Jan Pfeiffer on shows in 2020 and 2021 carry strong educational potential. *Glass at Home* <sup>2</sup> (Pfeiffer, 2020) has been created as an academic video during AMASS, *Cut for the New Times* emerged as a part of AMASS communications and research. All Pfeiffer's projects refer to a pandemic condition and to different kinds of emotional and cognitive reactions.

## EXPERIMENT 5

The fifth parallel experiment in the Work Package Three testbed is entitled *Cut for New Times: Individual Work with Students with Special Needs*. The experiment engaged with the issues of inclusion of students with special needs through involvement in the project and artistic practice. They cooperated with other students who were interested in collaborative and research practice. Another issue is to improve communication with the faculty about tactics and improvements in the domains of facilitation, affirmative and effective actions. Study fields accredited at the Faculty of Education of Charles University should be accessible as much as possible to all students, including those who, due to the nature of their health condition, require modification of study conditions, removal of physical obstacles, or other special adjustments for the successful completion of the study. In a broader context of "reflective practitioner" the experiment addresses issues of educational otherness and social isolation within pandemic isolation of the entire population, challenges of distance education and deficiency in cultural education in general.

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<sup>2</sup> Glass at Home/Museum Travels to Families (Parallel artistic project) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLuonZWT6rY&t=130s>  
Described Lands (Islands) 2020 Popsané území (ostrovy) – Described Land (Islands) / 2020

In the discursive community in experiment 5 participated online via Teams 2 students of art education with special needs, 3 students of art education without special needs 1 senior researchers - specialist in research in art education, 1 artist/teacher/researcher, 2 museum education specialists and 3 stakeholders from the Faculty of Education, total number of this focus group was 12. Following issues were discussed:

1. Is participation in an artistic project a suitable way for the inclusion of students with special needs and if so, in which modalities can we describe the manifestations and/or personal and social impacts?
2. Will the direct involvement of students in the research project improve their communication and cooperation competencies?
3. How to overcome exclusionary institutional adminis-

trative tendencies and how to work with students with special needs in a small group/individually?

4. What are the needs of the heterogenous group to complete the program at the museum?
5. What forms of creative work - apart from the online version - will be used and which will be effective?

What should be the conditions and motivation of communication with students with special needs in order to create functional, cognitive online educational programs that will mediate knowledge of culture, develop awareness of individual and collective identity (identity of a specific culture, ethnicity, employability, etc.)?

In order to summarize all of the experiments, their outputs, type of research and quality, we may look at the following table:

WP3 EXP	RESEARCH TYPE	FOCUS CULTURE GROUP	N. OF PARTICIPANTS	DATA COLLECTED	SAMPLING	TYPE OF EVALUATION
EXPERIMENT 1	QUALITATIVE	FAMILIES IN ISOLATION	40	PERFORMANCE, TASK COMPLETION	SELECTIVE	DATA CODING, CONCEPTUAL MAPPING, ARTEFACT ANALYSIS
EXPERIMENT 2	QUALITATIVE	CHILDREN IN SUBURBAN AREAS	24	3 LEVEL CODING	SELECTIVE	DATA CODING, CONCEPTUAL MAPPING, DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS
EXPERIMENT 3	MIXED	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITH HEARING DISABILITIES, DEAF CULTURE	17	3 LEVEL CODING	RANDOM	DATA CODING, CONCEPTUAL MAPPING
EXPERIMENT 4	QUALITATIVE	ROMA/ROMANI CHILDREN	40	N/A	SELECTIVE	DATA CODING, SYNTACTICAL ANALYSIS, DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS
EXPERIMENT 5	QUALITATIVE	MASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITY STAKEHOLDERS	12	ARTEFACTS, FEEDBACKS, TRANSCRIPTS, DEBATES	SELECTIVE	ARTEFACT, PROCESS AND FEEDBACK EVALUATION

Table 1. Overall analysis of the experiment research typology

## EVALUATION OF ETHICAL ASPECTS OF THE EXPERIMENTS

All testbeds within the Work Package Three include Informed consent forms elaborated according to AMASS guidelines and CUNI guidelines were used, Ethics, copyright ownership falls under: artworks@Jan Pfeiffer, artworks@UPM Prague. All Photocredits belong to Marie Fulkova archive. The Czech (Charles University) research team activity is covered by the Rectors's Directive No. 16/2018. The Department of Science and Research (OVČ) at the Faculty of Education and the Data Protection Officer (DPO CUNI) has appointed Marie Fulková as a person responsible for following the guidelines set in the regulations No. 2016/679 of the European Parliament and internal Charles University Guidelines stated in the rectors directive No. 16/2018 and agreed upon the Ethics Advisory Board of the Charles University and the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education<sup>3</sup>. All measures are taken in place to assure maximum data security and giving agency to all test subjects/ research/experiment participants to give them an option to be excluded from the experiments at any given time during the research realisation.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Support for other WPs within the AMASS project will also include an analysis of the text/transcriptions of the feedback given by families, children, people suffering from a hearing disability, Roma and children from outskirts schools alike to bring up the quantitative aspects for evaluation. Via cognitive and psycholinguistic analysis of the analysed text/type of vocal output transcribed, a syntactical analysis may bring better insight into the development of

speech and decrease in cognitive deficits all test subjects may have before and after the exposure to any of the experiments listed above. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Second Faculty of Medicine at Charles University, the current aim is to test psychometric tests suitable for evaluation of one group exposed to one of the experiments in order to provide other suitable data.

## RESULTS

The process of developing the pilot study included the artistic creative processes (taking the photos; creating the glass installations; family performance etc.) and communication with participants (direct oral and distance digital) bring into foreground several qualitative aspects which are valuable (focus groups, Roma and hearing disability children and their families). One of the outcomes was video art (art product) and 3 variants of a performative art-piece. Another output is an art-environment for AMASS exhibition in La Valetta. Both the process of creation and the products are important. Through the pilot study we found main topics relevant to the educational perspective. The study exposed concepts of dialogicity, digital communication, memory and identity referring to the beauty of the glass, preciousness of the gift and the emotion of touch. The art education experience was viewed as the opportunity to create. The irreplaceable role of the teacher and or artist/teacher was revealed in bringing opportunities and motivating people. The teacher was defined as a guide provoking the actions.

The pilot study and its findings inspired us to develop another art/education piece as a visual open form for online art education with post internet assignments which will be used as a base for further experiments during Work Package Three. This form is

<sup>3</sup> Rectors's Directive No. 16/2018 <https://pages.pedf.cuni.cz/etik/>

called *Cut for New Age /Tailor's Shop* and it consists of several segments/or modules that enable the user connecting and disconnecting into new creative semiotic games of cultural meaning-making (Fulkova and Tipton 2008) while building bridges between participants and social institutions (Museum, School, University, Free users/families).

In COVID situation we were searching for possibilities, in order to overcome isolation and create compassion. In situations when all is vanishing very fast, we were interested, ourselves, in what is permanent and old. We were observing the possible forms of communication emerging from the period of isolation, although it is hard to judge all the experiments on its own merits, after the data collection and evaluation of protocols, feedbacks, transcriptions, coding and artefact evaluation is over, we may present valuable qualitative and quantitative data for publishing in order to bring better insight into what is to have agency and voice within art education for those who are currently living on the margins. Finally, we have to ask yet one marginal question. Ongoing research findings show that we should put our own concepts to test. Are the concepts of truth, ethics, freedom and openness as we understand them in our countries, truly understandable and universal by itself to everyone? And if so, are they truly universal to those who are on the margin?

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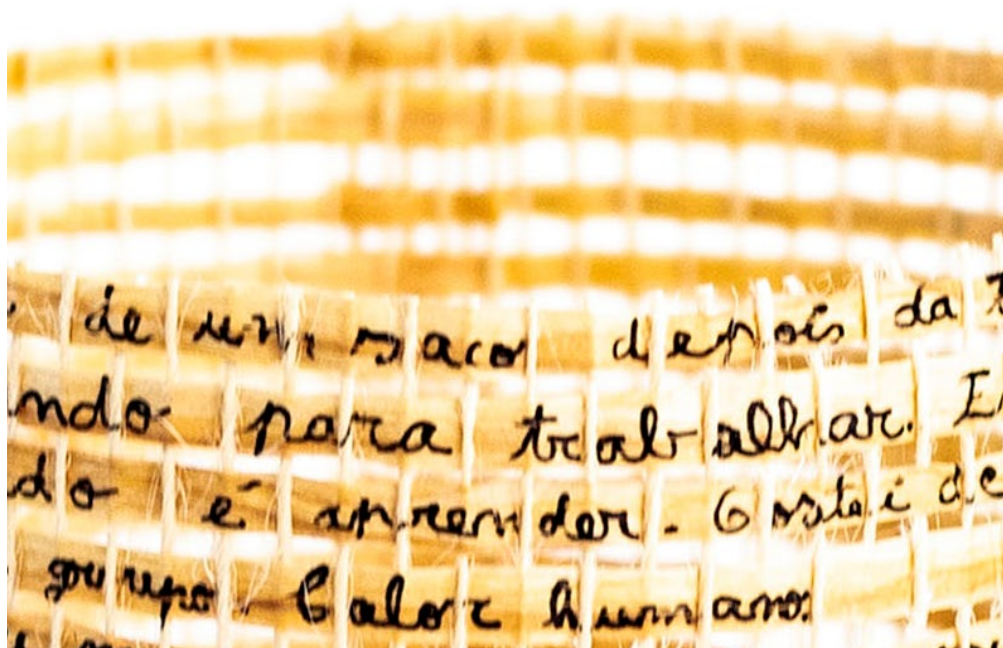
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## The Czech Republic



# 4

. 30

## Cut for New Times: Teaching at the School for the Deaf Protocol draft and specific requirements for field note observation and data collection. Assessment methods.

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1,2,3, Faculty of Education, Department of Art Education, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

This protocol refers to the third experiment described in Assessment Methods and First Results of Amass WP3. The protocol describes research sections of action research that will take place in September 2021 in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague and consequently at the School for the Deaf. Working with children in the museum could not be made on a planned deadline for pandemic measures.

### ART EDUCATION FOR THE DEAF DURING A PANDEMIC

The school, teachers and students experience multiple forms of isolation:

1. Firstly – the pandemic
2. Secondly – pupils and teachers being deaf are a minority culture and finally due to society's neglect and passive attitudes to those who are "different" and/or "special".

Art education is taught by either enthusiastic specialists or non-specialists. In this context, education for deaf children shares challenges with the majority of schools. The experiment addresses issues of cultural isolation of the Deaf and pandemic isolation as well and focuses on art educators' needs under lock-down and the problems of deficiency in cultural education in general.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- o What do the deaf<sup>1</sup> visitors need to complete the program at the museum?
- o What characterizes Deaf culture?
- o What forms of creative work - apart from the version made at school by watching exhibition online - will be used and which will be effective?
- o What characteristics would a work of art need to be engaging for children from a Deaf community and culture?
- o What should be the conditions and motivation of communication with children and teacher/visitors with special needs (the deaf) in order to create functional, cognitive online educational programs that will mediate knowledge of culture and develop awareness of individual and collective identity (identity of a specific culture, ethnicity, employability, etc.)?

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVOLVED IN EXPERIMENT:

- o Primary school teacher - specialist in art education (deaf) – Ivana Hay
- o Class teachers (deaf)
- o Senior researchers - specialist in research in art education and action research in museums a galleries - Magdalena Novotna, Marie Fulkova
- o 1 artist/teacher/researcher - Jan Pfeiffer
- o 2 museum education specialists
- o Primary school pupils: 11 (deaf children between 11-14)
- o 6th grade (5 pupils), 8th grade (6 pupils)
- o Czech sign language interpreter
- o Speech-to-text reporter (STTR)

## ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENT:

Participants will use learning resources from the Museum of Decorative Arts – the exhibition *Pleid of Glass 1946–2019*, which consist of art-exhibition glass objects, and has been expanded to include almost fifty large-scale sculptures from the collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. All of the exhibited objects document not only the creativity of Czech artists, which in its day foreshadowed the future developments in art glass in the world, but also the technical virtuosity of the master glassmakers that collaborated in the execution of these artworks.

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<sup>1</sup> When used as a cultural label especially within the culture, the word deaf is often written with a capital D and referred to as "big D - Deaf" in speech and sign. When used as a label for the audiological condition, it is written with a lower case d.

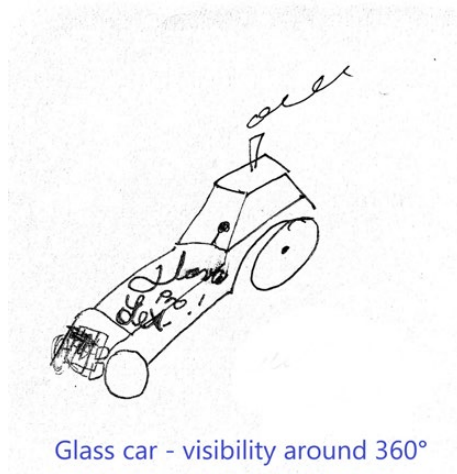
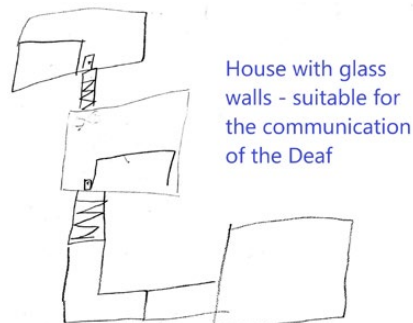
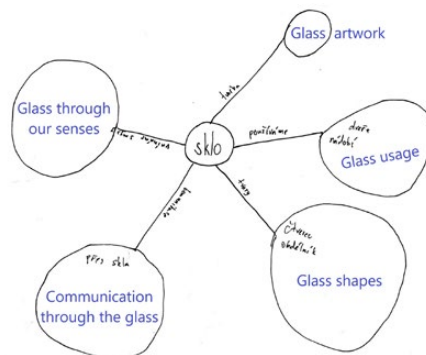
Last but not least, they also attest to the high moral and professional codex of the curators who deserve merit for instigating the creation and preservation of these works of art. The children will also see the artistic/educational artefacts developed by the artist (Jan Pfeiffer) entitled *Cut for New times*:

<https://janpfeiffer.info/works/instalace-strih-pro-novou-dobu-2020/>

## PREPARATION – ART SESSION AT THE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

With deaf pupils, we investigated the role of the glass in our lives. The questions included:

- o How is glass made
- o Glass types - artefacts or utility glass
- o Glass usage
- o Glass shapes
- o Glass as the art
- o How can we feel glass – involving our 5 senses
- taste, hearing, sight, smell, touch
- o Glass can help us with the communication (as we deaf people can lipread and understand each other through the glass seeing sign language – our visual language)
- o Children were thinking and discussing about the glass they see/use everyday



Figs. 1-9. pictures of children's drawings



Sleeping in glass bed



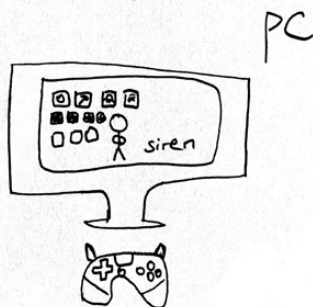
Glass key



Signing glass hands



Swimming pool made from glass



Whole-glass PC screen



Whole-glass mobile phone

## USE OF THE GLASS IN THE “DEAF ARCHITECTURE” – DEAF SPACE

- o Deaf people inhabit a rich sensory world where vision and touch are a primary means of spatial awareness and orientation.
- o Many deaf people use sign language, a visual-kinetic mode of communication and maintain a strong cultural identity built around these sensibilities and shared life experiences.
- o Our built environment, largely constructed by and for hearing individuals, presents a variety of surprising challenges to which deaf people have responded with a particular way of altering their surroundings to fit their unique ways-of-being. This approach is often referred to as **DeafSpace**. (<https://www.gallaudet.edu/campus-design-and-planning/deafspace/>)

## WHAT IS DE'VIA (DEAF VIEW/IMAGE ART) CURRICULUM?

### *Curriculum Goals*

- o The founding principle of the De'VIA Curriculum is that Deaf and Deaf-blind children are entitled to learning about their Deaf heritage, language, struggles and victories, identity and rights via visual arts.
- o With this curriculum they will also learn about traditional elements and principles of art that reinforce national art education standards.
- o This curriculum can be used with hearing children as more and more public schools are incorporating De'VIA into their American Sign Language (ASL) programs and other subject area curriculum.

## DE'VIA ART TEACHING APPROACH

- o This De'VIA curriculum is also unique because it employs a Deafhood pedagogy.
- o Dr. Paddy Ladd introduced the concept of **Deafhood** at the beginning of the 21st century.
- o Deafhood includes the belief that it is good to be Deaf and Deaf-blind. Deafhood challenges **audism** (the belief that it is superior to be hearing) and celebrates **Deaf Gain** (the belief that Deaf and Deaf-blind people have much to offer the world).
- o This De'VIA curriculum is to be taught following Deafhood Pedagogical practices.

(<https://deviacurr.wordpress.com/>)

## ROLE OF ARTIST IN OUR EXPERIMENT

- o The artist's work is at the centre. He will consult with the teacher (me) on possibilities of pedagogical content and variants of teaching approaches, with a stress on the artistic work. The metaphoric approach/meaning-making process between visual and verbal will be questioned.

<https://janpfeiffer.info/works/installace-strih-pro-novou-dobu-2020/>

- o Other stages of artistic open form will be designed and tested.
- o Artist will also consult Teacher's assignments
- o Artist will consult with Museum Educators on the possible form of online museum materials.

- o This collaboration and a previous pilot study demonstrated that collaboration between artist/researcher and teachers/researchers is mutually fruitful and inspiring.

## EXPERIMENT PLANS

- o Intertwining product and process
- o The work has a processual character both in artistic and teaching domains. It is a process of analysis and creation, including meaning-making activity, developing innovative or novel approaches to teaching and academic work. It connects artistic strategies and thinking through art with learning approaches and constructivist didactic approaches.
- o Mixed research design adapted to online technology and interdisciplinary approach: qualitative research methods of neo-narrative combining sociological, psychological, and philosophical inquiry
- o Methods of cultural anthropology and ethnography (netnography): Field study adapted to online shared collections of utterances and reflective writings, interviews, analysis of visual records (photography/photo-voice, academic video)

## DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS, ABILITIES

- o **Equal for teachers, researchers, artist and pupils.** Communication, dialogic approaches, academic communication, using digital platforms, development of analytical thinking in teachers and artist, development of critical thinking, visual literacy, developing curriculum creativity.

- o Pupils: Co-creation, respect to ideas of the others.

- o Values and attitudes targeted: professional skills, building professional identity, communication with public institutions, communication and collaboration in professional team

- o Policies and concepts of understanding the Deaf as a specific social minority with their own language and culture

- o This experiment is expected to contribute to innovative or novel artistic/didactic approaches in art education and gallery education, novel didactic approaches/models of art education for the Deaf and produce a domain specific research protocol

## METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

**Research type:** qualitative

**Sampling:** Random. Focus culture group (Deaf culture)

**Operative Definition of Text:** Behaviour, performances, material culture, words, histories, narratives, myths, ideologies, values, everyday understandings/ metaphors, analogies, artefacts, visual art works, audio, photo and video documentation

**Function of Context:** The world of subjects, not the researcher sets context. Ideologies, social political structures

**Operative Interpretive Convention:** Meanings emerge from data that are not universalized. Meanings emerge from disclosure.

**Interpretive form:** Case study

Collection of reflective writings and communications are collected from the field and stored in Hermeneutic Unit 3, (HU 3) (2021) Research data collection, Charles University.

Primary research documents: Photo and video recordings of sessions at the Museum of Decorative Art in Prague and the School for the Deaf.

Sets of video-recordings in Czech sign language

Translations and transcripts from communication in Czech sign language

**Analysis of HU 3:** Mixed. Thematic analysis, conversation/discourse analysis, visual semiotic analysis. 3 level data coding and conceptual mapping, using ATLAS.ti software.

**Resources:**

*DeafSpace.* (<https://www.gallaudet.edu/campus-design-and-planning/deafspace/>)

*Deaf View/Image Art Curriculum.* (<https://deviaccr.wordpress.com/>)

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Museum of Decorative Art in Prague: <https://www.upm.cz/plejady-skla-1946-2019/>

<https://www.upm.cz/pro-skoly/>

# Finland



# 5

## Love Talks: Integrating foreign residents into the Rovaniemi community

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### INTRODUCTION

Situated in the vicinity of the Arctic Circle, Rovaniemi is known as the capital of Finnish Lapland with a population of more than 63,000 people (Statistics Finland, 2021). Among them, 2.5 % have a foreign background or are immigrants. Compared to the capital city of Finland, where 9.9% of the population are foreigners or with foreign backgrounds, it is easy to understand that foreigners are not only a minority in Finnish Lapland (Statistics Finland, 2021) but also live in a geographically marginalised area where some services are limited or remote. The artistic project *Rakkaustalkoot*, known in English as *Neighbourhood and Love Talks* (in short, *Love Talks*), was inspired by the need to integrate people, from family members to foreigners and immigrants, into existing networks within their neighbourhoods.

The project asked how people can practice meeting the other, a neighbour, an unknown person on the street, without preconceived notions (Hiltunen et al., 2021).

The project conceptualised and implemented a participatory city festival for the young, the elderly and the rest of the citizens of Rovaniemi in the city centre during September 2020. It was based on an artistic experiment for the European Commission project *Acting on the Margin: Arts as Social Sculpture* (AMASS; 2020-2023). The research carried out as part of the project focusses on how creative and artistic processes contribute to societal change and shaping policy development. The approach of AMASS is experimental, with a total of 35 artistic experiments implemented in seven European countries constituting the AMASS testbed. The project aims to create



Fig. 2. Al-Fateh Ali Mousa and Saba Majid in front of the gate (4 meters high, 5.5 meters long, 1.5 meters wide) at the opening ceremony. Photography: Mirja Hiltunen, 2020.

opportunities for people to practice, experience, research and assess the arts. With a focus on marginalised communities, the project also employs service design for impact delivery through policy recommendations, such as the development of policy roadmaps and harnessing societal innovation. Through the use of rigorous assessment criteria, the project also aims to address the lack of a rigorous assessment of arts' impact in general and on policies.

The project *Love Talks* consisted of seven activities, mostly artistic workshops and performances. It aimed to integrate immigrants into the Finnish society and engage Finnish local people in their changing communities, in

Rovaniemi. The artistic practices aimed to respond to contemporary social challenges, such as loneliness, tensions and isolation caused by exclusion, experienced through immigration and the limitations for ageing populations. In addition, the role of local, regional and national identities and traditions were addressed. The workshops and performances led to the collaboration of artists, art educators and art education students. *Love Talks* was coordinated by the independent artist Pieta Koskeniemi, the independent artist and social media expert Titi Honkanen, and the artist-researcher Mirja Hiltunen from the University of Lapland. The video documentation of *Love Talks* was produced by the team of Karoliina Räikkönen, Nelli Pentti and Arttu Nieminen.



Fig. 2. Musical and performing arts initiatives included Finnish sleigh songs by Minna Siitonen and their Romani musical versions by Hilja Grönfors. Photography: Mirja Hiltunen, 2020.

Immigrants in Finland since 2015, the Iraqi asylum seekers and interviewees Al-Fateh Ali Mousa (social activist and artist) and Saba Majid (art educator) initiated and executed the creation of the *Ishtar Gate*, which is based on the gate King Nebuchadnezzar built in 575 BC, dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (Garcia, 2013, para. 2), as a magnificent entrance to the city of Babylon (Ruggeri, 2015, para. 1). The original gate, according to archaeological findings, was built from enamelled brick in blues, yellows and reds, and featured more than 575 animals such as bulls, lions and dragons (Ruggeri, 2015, para. 2). To foreigners visiting the city, the gate, measuring more than 11 meters high (Garcia, 2013, para. 3), would have been

an awe-inspiring and welcoming sight. *Ishtar Gate*, a public art installation built by Ali Mousa in Rovaniemi on the banks of the Kemi river is an impressive (4 meters high, 5.5 meters long and 1.5 meters wide) installation that symbolises the love of Ali and Saba for their new home country, Finland (Figure 1).

Another event, implemented by performing artists Hilja Grönfors (folk musician and Roma singer) and Minna Siitonen (folk musician and Conductor of Rovaniemi City Theatre) executed musical and performing arts initiatives including Finnish sleigh songs and their Romani musical versions (Figure 2). Sleigh songs from the nineteenth century were

known as relaxation songs because they were rich in language use, yet mundane and with a light-hearted attitude. The performers not only sang traditional sleigh songs but also improvised their own. Sleigh songs have been a strong part of the Romani singing tradition; hence, the themes and presentation clearly distinguish the Romani sleigh songs from the Finnish. Matti Martiskainen (street dancer and social worker) initiated and conducted street dancing workshops titled *One Love Jamboree*.

Among the rich array of community workshops (Figure 3; Figure 4) offered as part of the *Love Talks* project were the following:

- Niina Oinas (artist-researcher) and Pieta Koskenniemi (independent artist and project coordinator) initiated the activity *Open Gates* that questioned and embodied wishes for the future of the community, addressing how attitudes of respect for culture are developed, how empathy and acceptance can be stimulated through artistic practices to enhance the core of communality.

- Vilma Länsikallio and Anniina Jokitalo conducted the Love workshops with twelve elderly women, carried out in the daytime activity centre for the elderly *Lapin Muistiyhdistys Ry* (Memory Association of Lapland).

- Interviewees Juha Mytkäniemi (graffiti artist and arts educator) and Leena Pukki (mural painter and fine artist) coordinated a mural painting workshop in which they implemented small hidden murals in a variety of surprising locations in the city to offer joy and excitement upon their discovery by passers-by.



Fig. 3. A mural painting workshop led by artists Leena Pukki and Juha Mytkäniemi included indoors designing and outdoors painting. Photography: Mirja Hiltunen, 2020.

- Art education students from the University of Lapland, Susanna Lehtonen, Mira Sippola and Heidi Luokkanen, conducted a mural project with a youth group in Rovaniemi titled *muralhideset* during Winter and Spring (2019-2020).

## METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

*Love Talks* produced a rich array of performing and visual arts processes, that were presented through workshops and performances, documented and reflected upon during the development, preparation and implementation of the project. Throughout the duration of the project, the project coordinator and researcher, collected the following data:



Fig. 4. A sticker-making workshop led by artist Juha Mytkänimi introduced the world of sticker culture. The participants made handmade stickers on the themes of love and acceptance. Photography: Mirja Hiltunen, 2020.

○ Recorded and transcribed focus group discussions with the lead artists throughout the production phase of the project.

○ During the implementation of the event *Love Talks*, notes and personal diaries were used by the project coordinator and researcher to capture the reflections and feedback from the community regarding the seven activities delivered in Rovaniemi.

○ Photographic material and a video were produced to document the workshops and performances. The video also documented and captured the participation of public audiences, which refers to the wider community of Rovaniemi.

To assess the impact of the project, post-experiment qualitative interviews were employed. The post-experiment interviews were conducted with five of the lead artists and lasted between 23 and 48 minutes.

The interview questions addressed themes such as the scalability and sustainability of the project, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities, focussing, at the same time, on the personal processes, stories, future visions for the arts, and the acquired knowledge and ambitions of the interviewees. The list of interview questions is presented below (Figure 5).

Three of the interviewees, or lead artists, were women and two were men. The interviewees were between the age of 26 and 46. The interviews were conducted in English by the author of the present paper, who was an outsider to the project. The interviews were

transcribed and thematically analysed, following a social constructivist approach, by clustering and interpreting the main themes forthcoming from the data. The constructivist approach involved a “process of constructing meaning” and “how people make sense of their experiences” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 260, as cited in Amineh & Asl, 2015, p. 9), in addition to drawing from the experience of the researcher with the themes under discussion and subject matter. After all, constructivism is built upon the premise that new knowledge is constructed through learning (Kanselaar, 2002). Rich anecdotal recollections about the way arts can encourage communities to overcome issues of marginalisation were produced.

- **What are the stories that you conveyed through your art and how does it contribute to the idea of neighbourhood (or something else)?**
- **Through your art, how do you understand inclusion, tolerance and engagement? Are they linked?**
- **Why do you address this social issue (these social issues) of inclusion/tolerance/engagement through an arts intervention? Why does it matter?**
- **Were there any barriers you were trying to overcome in your neighbourhood through your art? How did you approach or do it, what were the outcomes and what have you learned?**
- **How do you relate to majority culture and how do you see it impacting your role in the intervention?**
- **What was novel for you in the experiment?**

Fig. 5. Interview questions for the post-experiment interviews.

The data produced by the lead artists brought forth important issues that can directly contribute to cultural policy-making for the benefit of peripheral communities and individuals. The key themes identified are certainly not novel. Instead, they are reaffirmed through the *Love Talks* assessment and serve as a reminder that policies still lack in addressing the key needs of, firstly, marginalised communities and individuals, but also of artists as grassroot participants, community members, placemakers and cultural leaders.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Ethics Committee of the University of Lapland provided ethical screening of the research. The ethical principles and guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) were considered throughout the course of the research. Ethical issues were taken into consideration at by the researcher who conducted the interview not to coerce interviewees into answering any questions they were not comfortable answering. Interviewees were informed of the questions beforehand, and the researcher scheduled the interviews at a time that was most suitable for the interviewees. Interviewees also consented to the interviews and data collection prior to data collection.

## FINDINGS OF THE POST-EXPERIMENT EVALUATIVE INTERVIEWS

The themes identified in *Love Talks*, apart from the five additional experiments implemented in Finnish Lapland, will be integrated into the regional policy roadmap of Finnish Lapland through the AMASS project. These themes are discussed hereafter.

## THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON IDENTITY-SHAPING PROCESSES, LEARNING AND SHARING OF NEW KNOWLEDGE

All artists addressed aspects of learning and attitude change towards art processes as such. Additionally, witnessing processes of creating dialogue and conversation with the participants stimulated tolerance among people and insights into the value of the arts. Many of the interviewees witnessed attitude changes towards the arts amongst the workshop participants. One of the interviewees reported an attitude change of a parent whose child participated in one of the workshops. Initially, the parent actively discouraged the child, questioning the value of art, but after intervention by the artists, gained new insights about the value of arts in community building. The artists also reflected on their learning experience on how to improve their workshops to achieve better results in the future. Reflections on scaling the workshops and practices revealed a lack of focussed scaling, resulting in lost opportunities to create an impact of *Love Talks*, despite the rather substantial scaling of the project on a local level.

## AVAILABILITY AND USE OF RESOURCES FOR THE ARTS

A lack of resources for the production of cultural and artistic activities is a common and global policy issue (Sarantou, 2014). This lack is experienced widely by all cultural spheres and countries, especially in the area of funding, human resources and knowledge sharing, to name a few. In *Love Talks* all artists shared their views on this issue, but most importantly, they questioned the responsible use of resources that can deliver impactful outcomes for the arts.

But I don't think there's anything new. There could be something new. If you really get people together and make them work together, there is a possibility of new and novel things, but at this point I don't see any (Participant C, female, age 36-40).

For me as a professional artist they (amounts of funding) seem quite small. But it seems that for the participants they were really important and that it was really important that they could come and do it in a public space (Participant B, male, age 26-30).

In Rovaniemi I think, people would love to be more exposed to these kinds of things, and they would love to have more opportunities to engage in these kind of things (arts); If we could have repetition it would be very beneficial to the community in general and to people's well-being. We would see good results if we would have the opportunity to actually do this in a bigger scale, and more often (Participant D, female, age 40-46).

The only artists you can ask are those ones who are starting, only the artists that are starting are willing to do something when you don't have money, or if you haven't been clever enough to ask for the money (we need) that kind of policy that there is consistency, that it going from one year to another, not that this year we received the money, and next year we didn't (Participant C, female, age 36-40).

In addition, the interviewees discussed how resources can be maximised for optimal use, which they understood as the scaling of art initiatives such as *Love*

*Talks*. The narrative reflections touched on issues such as the optimal implementation of impactful art activities on both the local and national levels. The project *Love Talks* was seen by all artists as a sustainable model that can be rolled out across Finland if resources are optimally used. However, the interviewees were critical of the dissemination of *Love Talks* and the overlooked opportunities for digital dissemination via live or recorded screenings of workshops and performances, hosting of online art symposia or seminars, including talks with artists, not only on local and national but also international level. Digital platforms for arts and cultural project dissemination have become impactful during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially due to digital availability, which has raised the value of arts for cultural and emotional sustainability (Lehtonen et al., 2018; Radermecker, 2021; Sarantou, 2014).

## PLACEMAKING AND SPACES FOR ART PRODUCTION IN THE CITY

Creating visibility of minority groups and individuals through the arts was mentioned as an important outcome of placemaking. The creation of artistic practices within the city from the perspective of placemaking can directly contribute to the identity processes of marginalised groups that need to express and visibilise their heritage and culture in the environment and communities where they live. One of the interviewees reflected as follows:

So, I think it is really empowering for people, and this is also what I think street art and graffiti is about, that people are reclaiming the space (city) for themselves. And maybe marginalised people are, especially reclaiming the space and having their voice on the walls. For me it is really empowering, but I hope that for

the participants as well. It is really empowering that you can make some kind of statement, in a public space (Participant B, male, age 26-30).

I think also the neighbourhood, that you can see, is many voices on the streets, so it makes visible all the different people who are living in the city. There was a lot of people with an immigrant background coming to the workshop and also coming to paint (Participant B, male, age 26-30).

## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

The interviewees reported on the large number and variety of participants in their workshops and performances. A key factor affecting engagement is the visibilisation of minorities by encouraging them to share in community activities. Other factors include the lead artists' good interpersonal and communication skills that invite and engage community members who may be shy and insecure about participating in artistic activities, not to mention that arts may even be threatening to those who are unfamiliar with a specific creative practice. Also, sometimes, participants lack the spontaneity to participate in unknown practices. Interviewees reflected:

People are really open, to street art and public art probably in this kind of projects, and that was really nice to notice that everybody who I spoke with, or who I was calling to, were really open, really welcoming these activities to Rovaniemi. That's good (Participant B, male, age 26-30).

The people who attend to these workshops, it kind of looks like them, and they create the atmosphere, and the whole experience in the end. you have to be quite flexible and you need

to have a lot of, tolerance for surprises and improvisation. there was still no idea and no guarantees like what's going to happen and how it's going to be in the end, less control (Participant D, female, age 41-46).

There's a barrier in Rovaniemi for people to actually join in to these kinds of things. People don't really see the meaning of this and, going around the shopping centre and telling people what we actually do and telling them that they are welcome to join at any time, a lot of people were confused and surprised and pretty shy about it. So, in general I think there is a big barrier for a lot of people (Participant D, female, age 41-46).

One of the interviewees narrated the need to feel invited into local practices as an immigrant since it assists in shaping new connections to people. Once more, the time factor was flagged as a challenge for sustained engagement since the interactions with the community were usually developed in a limited time frame. One interviewee argued that the key to engagement lies in inspiring the participants to bring value and a positive atmosphere of engagement to the activities.

## THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTION BETWEEN ARTS AND OTHER SUBJECT AREAS

The limited knowledge of artists in interdisciplinary projects was highlighted, as expectations are often placed on artists to be knowledgeable of a large variety of disciplines from healthcare and education to science and technology. The role of artists in team environments where they focus on their creative strengths was emphasised. Artists as promoters of creative solutions are important in any team environment, which also

means that artists, once employed in such pivotal roles, can yield innovative outcomes. This opens up avenues for policy development to employ artists as experts of creativity in all levels and types of organisations where they can actively participate in innovative processes.

## **THE MARGINALISATION OF YOUTH, MINORITY GROUPS AND ARTISTS THEMSELVES**

All artists reported that they felt marginalised and questioned their place as members of their communities due to limited resources, expectations that they should offer their services for free, and the misunderstanding related to their contributions to building societies. Many of the cultural practices of artists may also stem from minority groups and are not valued. Once more the question of visibilising minority groups was addressed as a solution to creating more connected and tolerant societies, alongside providing sustainable livelihoods to artists through long-term projects that stimulate engagement. The interviewees reflections were for instance:

I saw these teenagers every day, who were just hanging out there because maybe they have nothing to do after school or they are seeing their friends there. So then for example they are not included, they are sort of not wanted because they are just, normal teenagers (Participant B, male, age 26-30).

Five years ago, I came to Finland, but it really is very hard. For two years I tried, but no-one to help. This thing here in Lapland is a very big problem. Here people don't like contact with other people (Participant E, male, age 40-46).

The marginalisation of artists within society also means that artists have to develop a different level of resilience compared with their co-citizens, attributed to their unique ability to function well in team and community environments that require agility to adapt to diverse circumstances. The interviewees reflected:

I'm a master of arts and still I don't have any kind of place in this society (Participant A, female, age 26-30).

I may look like I'm part but I've never felt that. I always feel myself at the margins (Participant C, female, age 36-40).

'I don't really see that I represent the majority in here in any ways. I feel like I'm a part of a very small marginalised group in here (Participant D, female, age 41-46).

Here in Finland first the problem the language. My Finnish language very little and my English not much. The second problem I don't have friends here. Really this very big problem for me, because I'm trying much, I'm trying constantly, but the Suomi people don't accept another one (Participant E, male, age 41-46).

## **TOLERANCE, FUTURE VISIONS OF COEXISTENCE AND TOGETHERNESS, AND THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE**

The role of the arts in critical reflection on communities' coexistence and tolerance, the way arts can become a vehicle for expressing openness and acceptance despite the differences that exist within communities, and the contribution of arts to opportunities for learning and stimulating discussions on the issues that relate to tolerance within communities were brought

up. Tolerance was strongly connected to visibilising minority groups within communities, with arts offering avenues to achieve this. The question of how tolerance for cultural differences, for example, the ability to speak a dominant language, was addressed, while it was acknowledged that it is often difficult to cross such cultural boundaries. Interviewees contributed reflections such as:

...how do you want other people to live with each other with different kind of backgrounds (Participant A, female, age 26-30).

When people are made visible, then you can see that there are people who are for example, immigrants. I think it would increase tolerance, in the bigger sphere of town. Because then you see, that okay these people exist and they are doing things here, and they are probably humans as we are (Participant B, male, age 26-30).

The thing with arts that, when you do these things like tolerance and understanding and neighbourhood, and you do artwork, the main thing is it makes people think about those issues (Participant C, female, age 36-40).

It's all about including people and, learning how to tolerate people who might have very different backgrounds and very different stories. And I think, inclusion and tolerance, art is a very effective way to increase inclusion and tolerance (Participant D, female, age 41-46).

Care and compassion for one another and the visions of a shared future, in the context of Finnish Lapland, were questions raised by the participants. One participant stressed the need for long-term art

projects to forge more meaningful connections among people, stimulating coexistence and tolerance through the dialogue that comes about through the common language of the arts, especially where language and other cultural barriers hamper the communication through a commonly shared language. One participant expressed, much after Ashis Nandy's (2011) understanding of tolerance, that the question of acceptance may even be asking too much, yet people still tolerate one another despite not fully accepting each other's cultural backgrounds. The role of artists as mediators of flexibility and tolerance, as facilitators of change processes, was also highlighted.

## CONCLUSION

The experiment was about understanding alternative processes of furthering social inclusion, for example, the creative expression of marginalised communities through activism, 'artivism' and 'craftivism' (see Fitzpatrick, 2018; Markus, 2019). The experiments showed that there is a potential for the arts to fulfil important roles in social innovation, but there are also drawbacks: arts are not similarly valued by everyone. The use of art workshops requires more time and resources, while arts can also be seen as threatening by some people and pose challenges for some participants who are not familiar with community arts.

While the relationships that come about during project collaborations are important, more research is needed to improve, raise awareness and creatively solve the issues arising from societal challenges. Social innovation practices, creative energy and cultural policy measures that address long-term funding through alternative resources should be considered to scale community art projects such as *Love Talks*. Data collected from the assessment of *Love Talks* and the

participating artists illustrated that impact through policy-making addressing marginalisation could be achieved through long-term project planning, at scale, with appropriate dissemination to integrate peripheral communities such as immigrants.

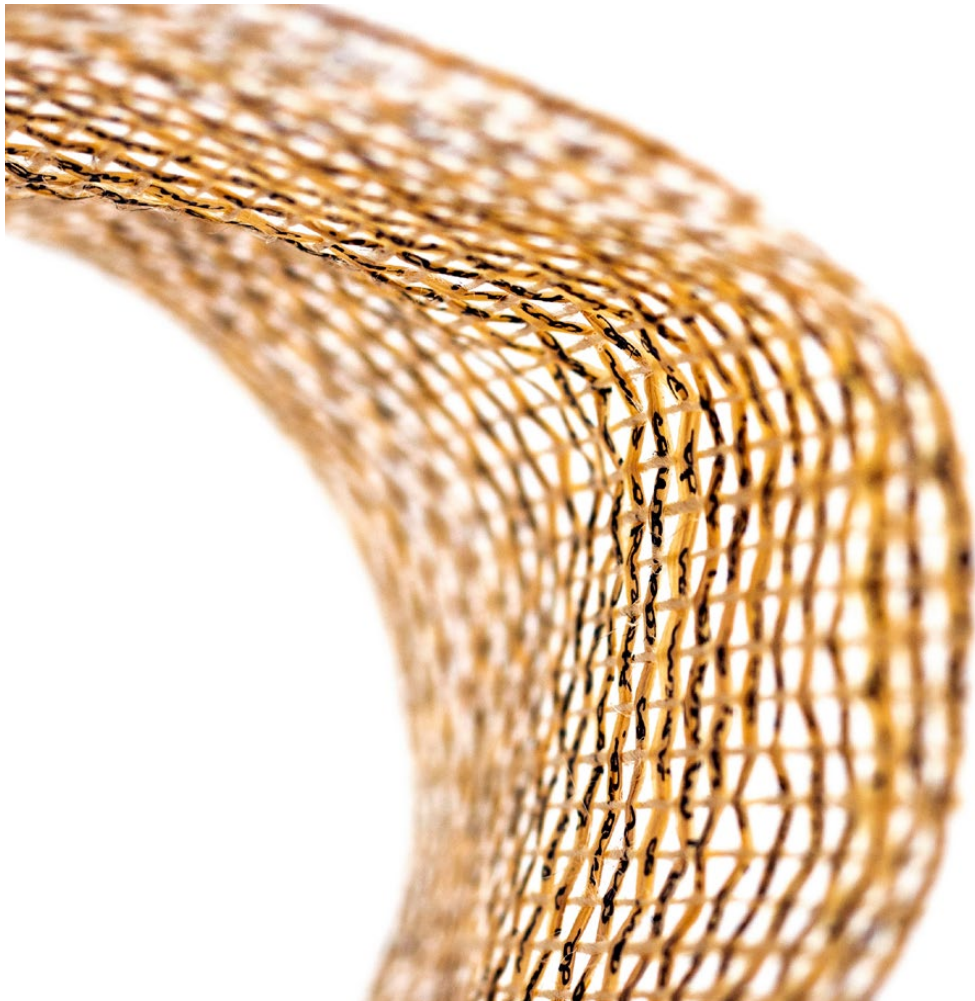
The use of the selected assessment method, post-experiment qualitative interviews, was not novel or overtly creative. As Kárpáti (2021) has illustrated, more creative and arts-based assessment methods can be successfully integrated, thereby enriching arts projects. Deeper insights into the creative and social processes that evolved through the *Love Talks* could have benefitted from employing multiple methods, including arts-based assessment methods.

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## Finland



# 6

## Assessing an online toolset and stakeholder workshop for policy-making

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### INTRODUCTION

This article assesses an online stakeholder workshop of data collection aiming at the development of regional policy roadmaps. The workshop was implemented by the partners in a European Commission H2020-funded project (2020-2023) entitled *Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture* (AMASS). Initially, the workshop was planned for in-person participation in Malta, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, Sweden, the UK and Finland, but was changed to online modality due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe, in early 2020. The workshop was first implemented as a pilot study in the partner countries before it was implemented as a larger stakeholder workshop. For the purpose of implementing successful pilot studies, the AMASS

partners received training in using the workshop toolset and guidelines. The purpose of this article is to discuss the assessment of the pilot workshop and toolset with the AMASS partners.

AMASS investigates how art can act as a vehicle for mitigating societal challenges in the margins of Europe. It seeks to develop policy recommendations and roadmaps at the national and European levels for the participating countries, addressing how arts can impact issues pertaining to marginalisation. The designers, who developed the online workshop and toolset, tackled the design problems associated with implementing online stakeholder workshops as methods for data collection with stakeholders in policy roadmap drafting processes. Due to the value added through a co-creative approach, and its applicability

**What do we want to know about policy-making?***Which tools to use?**Which roles are needed?**Which processes will enable policy-making?**Which values need to be embedded in the process?**Whose responsibility is policy-making?**Who has the power in the processes?**Who decides what in policy making processes?*

Fig. 1. The Guiding Questions for the Design of Policy-Making Processes. Satu Miettinen and Melanie Sarantou.

in a variety of contexts, stakeholder workshops are frequently used as methods in policy making (Kimbell, 2015; Young, 2005). In the case of AMASS, online tools had to be developed and used to enable the implementation of the workshop across the partner countries amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This article seeks to discuss the assessment methodology used for the pilot stakeholder workshop and toolset.

**A SHORT NOTE ON POLICY**

To design the policy process and online workshop journey, a review of existing literature and design tools of policy-making were used to initiate the process. The policy-making process is defined by Carole Weiss (1988, p. 533) as follows: "The policy-making process

is a political process, with the basic aim of reconciling interests in order to negotiate a consensus, not of implementing logic and truth. The value issues in policy-making cannot be settled by referring to research findings." Weiss's focus on the values that are underpinning policy issues informed the decisions of the AMASS design team to opt for stakeholder workshops that are centred around dialogue and discussion, apart from aiming at bringing about pleasant and more empathic experiences for the participants. The design team used several guiding questions to steer the policy process, illustrated in Figure 1.

The importance of tackling policy issues in the AMASS project is central to its key aim to mitigate societal challenges by harnessing the power of the arts. Lucy



Fig. 2. The Policy-Making Process adopted by the AMASS Consortium. Raquel Balsa and Melanie Sarantou, 2021.

Kimbell and Jocelyn Bailey (2017, p. 216), who state that policy is least answering to the needs of marginalised communities, highlight the failures of policy in the face of complex societal challenges. Tackling the failures of policy processes in the AMASS project is, therefore, central to the impact the project seeks to achieve.

### THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

An overview of the policy-making process adopted by the AMASS project is illustrated in Figure 2. The process started with an in-depth policy analysis

conducted by the University of Borås in Sweden. The policy analysis considered existing cultural policies from the partner countries and was followed by the stakeholder workshop conducted in each country, the development of the regional policy roadmaps by each partner country, and the analysis of all data collection templates and regional policy roadmaps. The analysis will be presented at a European roundtable policy event, which will finally lead to the development of a white article and policy recommendations.

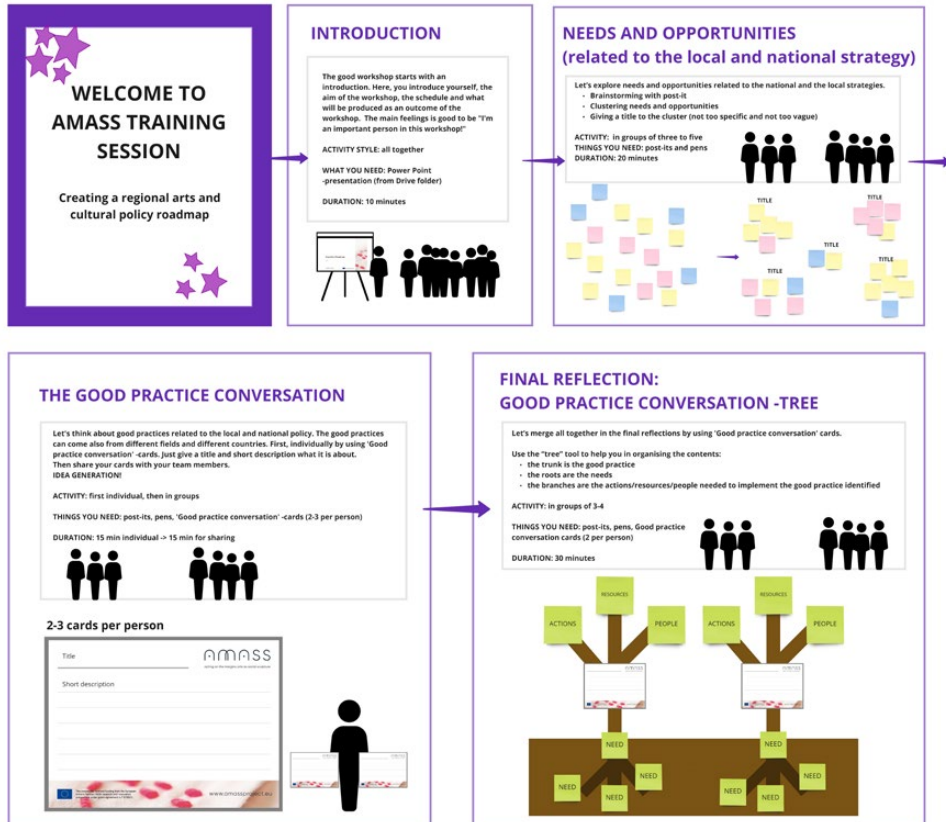


Fig. 3. Online Workshop Journey Designed in the Miro Whiteboard Interface. Author: Mira Alhonsuo (2020).

## THE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP JOURNEY

The online workshop was based on service design and gaming elements to generate an online journey in the whiteboard platform Miro that would serve as the outline of the stakeholder workshop. In Figure 3, the online journey is presented, starting with an introduction and an ice-breaker, followed by the needs and opportunities assessment and a *best-practice conversation* that aimed to collect existing and imagined

good practices for policy-making and implementation on the stakeholders' part. The final step in the workshop journey was to bring all the elements of the workshop together in a metaphorical forest titled "the good practice conversation tree" that aimed to gain a holistic oversight of the workshop outcomes. The collected data were collated and documented by each partner in one of the tools in the toolkit, a data template, which also served as a tool to produce the policy roadmaps.

The stakeholder workshop developed in the AMASS project was based on the principles of a policy think tank, a common tool that draws from the experiences and insights of different stakeholders to inform the policy-making processes, following co-creation principles (Kimbell, 2015). The think tank was organised by using the service design and gaming elements to guide the participants through an online journey that enabled them to actively participate in the discussion and take notes to express their thoughts and experiences in the whiteboard environment.

METHODOLOGY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PILOT WORKSHOP

The assessment was facilitated by the design team from Italy and Finland. The AMASS partners, who implemented the pilot workshop in their local contexts, were

the participants in the assessment. The participants were researchers and assistant researchers from Malta, Leeds, Hungary, Portugal and the Czech Republic.

The methods used for assessing the pilot stakeholder workshop were:

- A focus group discussion with the AMASS partners who facilitated the pilot workshop in their contexts and the design team, hosted and recorded on the Microsoft Teams platform to reflect on their learning and experiences regarding the implementation of the pilot stakeholder workshop and use of the toolset; Each AMASS partner had the opportunity to discuss their experiences and provide critical feedback on the pilot workshop implementation and use of the toolset; Each discussion was followed by questions and answers from other participants and the design team;

ONLINE WORKSHOP	DETAILS OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS
Group Discussion	<b>Details Of Methods For Data Collection:</b> Recorded Group Discussion Among The Amass Partners To Assess Outcomes. <b>Instruments:</b> Microsoft Teams Recordings, Laptop Computers, Internet.
Feedback template	<b>Details of methods for data collection:</b> Word document with templated content for giving feedback on the seven elements of the workshop toolset. <b>Instruments:</b> Template, laptop computers, Microsoft Word or similar software, Internet.
Online open-ended qualitative survey	<b>Details of methods for data collection:</b> Four questions on the experiences of the AMASS partners on implementing the pilot stakeholder workshop: - How did you experience the online activity? - Was it useful? - What did you learn or take away (both positive and negative) from the experience? - What were the challenges and opportunities of the experience that you would like to share? <b>Type of data collected:</b> Qualitative survey data, deidentified. <b>Instruments:</b> Google Forms, laptop computer, Internet.

Table 1. Methodology of the Assessment of the Pilot Workshop and Toolset

- An *assessment template* was used to provide practical feedback about each of the 8 elements of the workshop's toolset;

- An *online open-ended qualitative survey* in which nine respondents participated using the Google Forms tool; all respondents were anonymised by the tool to enable participants to leave critical comments to the design team.

The assessment outcomes from the group discussions, assessment template and online qualitative survey will be considered in the findings. The methods to collect data for assessing the pilot stakeholder workshop are explained in Table 1.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Ethics Committee of the University of Lapland provided ethical screening of the research. The ethical principles and guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) were considered throughout the course of the research. Ethical issues were taken into consideration at every phase of the project: planning the workshops and interaction among designer-researchers who consented to the collective design research before data was collected. Informed consent was granted by the project partners who participated in the assessment seminar when their stakeholder workshops were presented. Informed consent was provided by the participants in the stakeholder meetings hosted by the project partners in their countries, but these processes lie outside the scope of this research article.

## EVALUATION OF THE PILOT STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

The pilot workshop experiences were evaluated by nine participants, who found that the outcomes were

fruitful and that the design team achieved to deliver a complete and comprehensive online workshop with a comprehensive toolset that enabled the drafting of the policy roadmaps. However, areas for improvement and challenges experienced by the participants were also identified. The reflections from the qualitative survey emphasised some positive outcomes and the knowledge that the participants acquired. Positive feedback on online participation and specific tasks of the workshop journey were mentioned. For example, one participant reported, "The online activity was a refreshing and motivating way to re-think several important parts of the project" (Participant 4, deidentified). Regarding feedback on the journey, another participant noted, "It was a rewarding experience to work in a scaffolded environment where our train of thoughts is channelled towards a well-defined goal" (Participant 4, deidentified). Another participant commented, "the questions followed a strict logical order: the workshop framework that revealed to me how different components of policy-making and realisation are interrelated (Participant 3, deidentified)."

The workshop, including the online elements, enabled participants to learn, which was illustrated in their reflections and reports on their own processes of working, both within the AMASS project and in their organisational contexts. For example, one participant reported:

The task helped us to reflect on the kinds of things that we might lack as a team at our university, which might affect our understanding of stakeholders' perspectives, but discussions with partners who were leading this task were beneficial (Participant 8, deidentified).

The benefits of online participation and the importance of expressing empathy by being sensitive to the needs of the participants during such processes were highlighted:

The level of detail that was included in the workshop was mostly helpful; and being able to work through the process of the training workshop was a very useful experience. And being able to work on it “live” is a strong way to get a sense of how it works and also gain some empathy with the participants (Participant 7, deidentified).

This was noted in the context of how to understand and improve their experience. On an individual level, participants noted that the digital processes were useful for creating new processes within their teams and that certain metaphors and visualisations were also useful: “It [the online workshop] helped me to reorganise some of my thoughts about our project; especially the tree as a symbol with different pillars helped me understand how we should start [and] involve other people (stakeholders, etc.) (Participant 6, deidentified).”

Important feedback for the design team included the challenges experienced by the participants, which were highlighted in the survey. Most of the challenges were directly related to online participation and learning. These offered meaningful insight to the design team on how the online processes could be improved and refined. For example, the lack of physical contact and physical learning material made it difficult for some participants to gain a strategic view of complex issues, such as cultural policy. One participant commented:

In order to give a more in-depth answer to policy-related questions (for example, major merits and difficulties stakeholders face), some browsing in the documents would have been needed. As the experimental workshop was time-limited, there was no chance for this (Participant 3, deidentified).

This challenge could have been overcome by engaging in pre-event activities or spending more time creating overviews of the types of documents under discussion. Some participants found some tools and visualisations, such as the forest metaphor, too abstract: “I found the tree metaphor a bit abstract; I wasn’t sure whether my interpretation of it coincided with what we were asked to do (Participant 6, deidentified).” Others found that the visualisation that is possible in the whiteboard platform benefitted the policy work process.

The clarification of terms and language use was highlighted as an important aspect of online learning: “A main challenge was language use in the platform and tasks (Participant 8, deidentified).” Finally, challenges related to digital competencies were identified, and suggestions to overcome them were offered, especially integrating participants more carefully into technical aspects of the digital tools that have been selected for a workshop. One participant reflected:

The learning curve (both in terms of technology, which might be a factor as we continue, and also the concepts and/or metaphors used) can be challenging for certain users. . . [and] does need to be considered—perhaps some kind of “onboarding” which might be available before the workshop (Participant 7, deidentified)?

Feedback from the feedback template assisted the design team to understand the effectiveness of the toolset, and the improvements that needed to be made. One of the AMASS partners commented on the planning tool: “the tool was very important to understand the phases and objectives of the workshop” (Researcher, female, age 30-35). The data collection tool had to be improved several times as it appeared too abstract or included aspects that could not be discussed due to time limitations, which was the most challenging limitation experienced by all the AMASS partners during the pilot workshop. Partners were generous in their feedback and delivered constructive feedback and critique, for instance, one reflection on the guidelines was:

The training guidelines are explained in great detail and designed in a user-friendly way. It helped our team to focus on the essentials, such as selection of ideal stakeholders for the pilot workshop, and understanding the different stages of the work package process. But it felt a little prescriptive, which is understandable from a comparative perspective, but it might have allowed for more flexibility amongst partners to find their own approach. Miro initially felt like an unnecessary tool to learn, though with COVID restrictions, it proved to be virtually the only tool we could use (Researcher, male, age 50-55).

The value of the online toolset and whiteboard tool was recognised as a strategy and solution to overcome the isolation and limitation of in-person participation during the pandemic. Digital tools enabled continuation in work processes that would have otherwise not been possible.

## LESSONS LEARNT, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The key lessons from designing, implementing and assessing the workshop was that policies and circumstances can be influenced by community involvement, business development (profit and non-profit sectors), stimulating learning environments and learning, as well as ongoing research. Especially pertinent to policy research is to uphold a critical view on policy design, which means to move away from modernist approaches to design (Decolonizing Development Studies, 2018), and instead co-design with the communities (Badham, 2013). As stakeholders are distanced from one another, the challenge is to bring together communities and decision-makers (Kimbell & Bailey, 2017). A focus on how policy processes can better serve communities is key to policy work, exemplified by the guiding questions the designers used to develop the policy-making process and stakeholder workshop, with the goal to collaborate and create dialogue with local communities to bring about change.

Policy-making processes should be mindful to transfer methods into local businesses and municipal policy processes and to question their suitability to open policy-making that is accessible to citizens. In addition, creative engagement with stakeholders can stimulate participation. However, problems with implementing onboarding activities for participants who find online and digital policy-making processes challenging should be addressed to avoid further marginalisation. In addition, questions central to policy-making processes and sustainable collaboration include:

- “who listens and who hears?”,
- “who are the decision-makers and are they present and participating?”,

- “how to build bridges and dialogue?”,
- “how ongoing involvement in processes can continue?”, and
- “how will participants know about the outcomes and will they be informed?”

Due to the positivist, linear and evidence-based approaches to policy-making, challenges of policy processes include high levels of abstraction that participants have to deal with when engaging with policy-making. In addition, areas of policy application are often ill-defined and suffer from a lack of common language and research. Policy-making is hampered by power structures between stakeholders and decision-makers, and as a result, even though policy-making processes are supposed to be more open and collaborative, the growing divide between stakeholders remains a challenge.

Opportunities for improved policy-making processes that concretise the usual abstract policy concepts and strategies are indispensable. Technological developments and online participation offer new approaches to more accessible policy processes, in addition to providing participants with more control over the research process and alternatives to working with marginalised peoples.

## CONCLUSION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This short article explored the opportunities and challenges of an online stakeholder workshop that was implemented by the AMASS project partners through the data obtained from the participants via evaluation methods, such as an online focus group

discussion, a qualitative open-ended survey, and a feedback template. Due to high levels of motivation among the AMASS partners, participation levels were also high. However, other stakeholders may not have such high levels of motivation and may not be willing to participate in workshops under similar circumstances. Sharing and disseminating best practices will not only benefit grassroots-level policy-making, participation and intervention but also drive the development of digital tools and online training initiatives for improving policy-making processes.

Ongoing trials and research are needed to improve the challenges faced by participants and enable further scaling of the online workshop format. For example, experimenting and testing a sprint workshop for policy development has been identified as challenging by stakeholders who lack the time and are digitally exhausted, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, to encourage grassroots-level and open policy processes (Kimbell, 2015), the use of art-based approaches and methods in digital platforms have been shown to ensure empathic processes that could stimulate citizen participation in open policy processes. Ongoing experimentation has been identified to improve learning and research outcomes in refining online policy-making processes. This research need has been previously identified by Kimbell and Bailey (2017, p. 216), who promote a “spirit of experimentation” amongst researchers to enhance policy-making processes.

In addition, the learning experiences of the AMASS partners can contribute to opportunities for the innovation and development of policy-making processes for the upcoming post-COVID era and beyond. For example, more resources can be optimised through online policy-making processes

by virtually bringing together diverse stakeholders. Opportunities for sustained involvement of a variety of stakeholders throughout the policy-making processes can assist in bridging the gap between stakeholders and decision-makers.

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# Hungary



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## Enhancement of cultural identity through social media: An unusual, though effective arts-based intervention

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### ROMA WOMEN: A STRONG BUT VULNERABLE COMMUNITY

In a statistical analysis about the social situation of Roma women in Hungary, Tibor Cserti Csapó (2019) confirms previous qualitative studies with data: *traditional female roles often define their fate*: they result in early school dropout that is often due to early childbirth. With a toddler or two, it is very hard to continue education or to get a job. However, this study, undertaken as part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion initiative, 2005-14, goes deeper than that: Cserti Csapó examines ethnic demarcation, and the legal issues of freedom of identity among what is perhaps the most vulnerable population in our country. The measurement

system he uses is called the *Roma Integration Index* (RII, 2015). It shows that the improvement of life opportunities of women is worse than that of the Roma men – which is not a success story of equal opportunities either (cf. Kertesi & Kézdi, 2011). The RII shows how the exclusive Hungarian social systems works: there is an exceptionally high social distance that increased by 21 points between 2005 and 2014.

In 2015, the employment rate of Roma women was lower than the rate of Roma men by 6%. Twice as many of them are employed in the informal sector (no pension, no healthcare) than majority Hungarians. When seeking employment, they have a history of negative



Fig. 1. István Csók: Roma wooden tub makers. 1903. St. Luke's Bath, Budapest

discrimination. "In his research on national identity among Hungarians, sociologist Guy Lázár found that the majority's image of Roma bears strong negative relation to the self-image of the majority. Within this self-image, the Roma represent a negative reference group, mainly in terms of diligence, honesty and lifestyle. The views of Hungarians about Roma have been well-documented: a 1994 survey on prejudice found that roughly nine tenths of the interviewees, in a sample which did not take into account the ethnic affiliation of the respondent, agreed with the statement that *'the problems of the Gypsies would be solved if they finally started to work'*; approximately two thirds agreed that *'inclination to commit crime is in the Gypsies' blood'*; and almost three quarters share the perception that *"the increasing Gypsy population is a threat to society's security"* (Bernáth & Messing, 1999, my emphases, A.K.).

Gábor Kerényi (2001) detected a similarly gloomy imagery of the Roma community in Hungarian media

after the political changes that were supposed to free the press, too, from old clichés based on prejudices. "In times of instability – yesterday the world wars, today the transition out of communism—images associated with Gypsiness appear in the Hungarian media: the dark-haired criminal paraded in handcuffs, the swarming family of 10 living in squalor, the passionate musician," a Hungarian journalist argues. "These images have dangerous consequences for the Roma—stifling exotic stereotypes, inferior citizenship and, at worst, physical violence" (Kerényi, 2001, 63).

These statements and images would have less public support today, but media representation is still dominated by negative stereotypes. The image of Roma in the press is still related to the public opinion about the Roma minority as a social group. However, there are initiatives to provide a more truthful representation of the problems of the Roma community. In order to provide authentic information and negate stereotypes, young



Fig. 2. Learning as a mother of a toddler is not impossible for students of the Roma Cultural Influencer Training. (Photo by Lajos Kovács)

Roma journalists created “*Ame Panzh* (in English: *Five of Us*), an informal media group inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and outraged by Hungarian Neo-Nazi gangs who were marching on the streets of Budapest as a reaction. The group aims at presenting the real life of the Roma community: their struggles and achievements, their aspirations, and obstacles. Their biweekly program on the Baxtale community television channel will be one of the good examples presented to our students. Our attempts in the AMASS project to change the dark media scene also point in this direction. We hope our course will help associate the image of a disadvantaged and disregarded community with its rich artistic heritage and achievements in other areas of culture.

#### THE BASIS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION: AUTHENTIC, ENJOYABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

Roma girls and women are capable of learning and creation when at least the minimal educational

enrichment is available. Luckily, kindergarten attendance (compulsory from five years of age, available for children aged 3-6 years) has reached a considerably higher percentage between 2005 and 2014, from 42% to 70%. However, boys are sent to *Sure Start Centres* – kindergartens with a social inclusion program – and other, less inviting facilities for small children 3 % more often than girls. Getting into a beneficial educational environment later than boys (if at all), 4% less girls could enter primary school at the appropriate age, six years, in 2015. Subsequently, they lagged behind Roma boys in completing the 8-year, compulsory primary school. From those who manage to enter secondary education, fewer girls receive a school leaving certificate (and a vocation or the chance to continue their studies in higher education) than Roma boys – who in turn are only about one tenth of the successful graduates. But those girls who finish secondary school, have high chances to obtain a diploma. (Cserti Csapó, 2019).

The proportion of young people dropping out of training, and employment is also significantly higher among the Roma, especially among Roma women, who are primary (often sole) caretakers of their children. Even majority Hungarian families cannot live on one salary only, so female employment is increasing. Roma women, too, must seek employment and be breadwinners – and suffer from the consequences of the lack of education and mentoring for working life (Minority Rights Group International, 2021). The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) also emphasizes the gravity of early school leaving and suggests promoting inclusive and high-quality education of Roma in Hungary. Teacher recruitment and training should also consider the need for teachers of Roma origin, and Hungarian teachers also have to be furnished with educational strategies to employ in disadvantaged areas (Council of Europe Newsroom, 2020).

These problems have been raised repeatedly in the last decades, and many public initiatives are actively working on providing accessible and relevant education for Roma children and youth. One of the most successful examples, the educational program integrating social skills development with cognitive growth and creativity is the *Genuine Pearl Foundation*. The text on the ir home page described the way this nationally renowned program started: “As a new first-time educator, Nóra L. Ritók, the founder of the Genuine Pearl Foundation, had to face the fact that the knowledge she obtained at university would not be sufficient in a class where the majority of the children were disadvantaged, handicapped, or as the would society see: problematic. A less motivated teacher would have raised her voice to gain the attention of the group of troublesome children who were generally rejected and neglected by their teachers, peers and school administrators. At

that point in their education, other teachers would have found it difficult to intervene or motivate students. However, Nóra began exploring her other passion: she sat down to draw. Since it was an obvious choice, she started to draw the children. They were first examining the final works with surprise then they complimented the artwork and finally felt the motivation that they had been lacking. The common work began...” and resulted in an *arts-based cognitive, affective and psychomotor training program*. It involves an art school, after-school development in day-care, community development, job creation and social entrepreneurship.

We consider this ongoing and highly successful program an inspiration for developing our media-based intervention that also intends to teach through expression and creation. Influencers with a cultural agenda may have a role in making education a priority for the young Roma. In the social media, men as influencers are overrepresented. In the majority Hungarian vlogosphere on YouTube, for example, Roma life is mostly shown in stereotypes of violence and crime or is reduced to entertainment music.

*Roma cultural identity needs expression*, and social media seem to be ideal for this. Easily accessible, free platforms like Instagram, Facebook or YouTube may distribute knowledge about Roma culture: arts, crafts, customs, and the related visual and verbal heritage. Moreover, digital literacy and communication skills are a big advantage at school, during training and in the job market. *If we develop communication skills, we may increase the chances of success at school*, where knowledge often means verbalisation. Moreover, we provide means of self-representation that may be handy when seeking employment or creating their own small enterprises.



Fig. 3. Front page of the portal, for the Genuine Pearl Foundation, <https://igazgyongyalapitvany.hu/en/home/>

Mentored innovation, a model based on needs analysis, slow and careful introduction of new educational strategies, continuous mentoring and adaptation of interventions has proven to be successful in developing key competencies as numeracy, literacy and social skills of primary school children, attending Multigrade schools of undivided spaces for several age groups and classes (Kárpáti, Molnár & Munkácsy, 2014). Communication skills are equally vital – through their development, and through the power of the arts, the educational program reported here may be successful again.

#### THE ROMA CULTURAL INFLUENCER TRAINING: OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

A detailed description of the first part of the Roma Cultural Influencer Course was published in another paper (Kárpáti & Somogyi-Rohonczy, 2021). Now we focus on contextualising the course, provided in the first two, introductory parts and emphasized in this part as well.

#### Fighting cultural empowerment

The major objective of the *Roma Cultural Influencer Training Program*, realised in two parts in the framework of the AMASS Project is to design and implement a verbal, visual and digital communication skills development program that is motivating and useful in many ways for young Roma girls and women. As the program involves creation and development of social media sites about Roma culture, creativity development is also envisaged. The first course was realised in September-January 2020, before and during the first outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, we had to develop skills that are vital in times of crisis: to be flexible without losing originality; to be resilient and able to develop appropriate adapting strategies and divergent thinking; to be self-assured through the adequate use of communication skills. These features assure a *sustainable creative attitude*, whether at school or already employed.



Fig.4. Mrs. Antal, a young Roma entrepreneur arrived with her project the Nonna baby. Her mission is to offer high quality and hand-made toys for disadvantaged children and ensure happy childhood for them. She is one of the next Roma Cultural Influencer Training Program's participants, where she will further develop her product page and her social media presence..

Figure 4. Mrs. Antal, a young Roma entrepreneur arrived with her project the Nonna baby. Her mission is to offer high quality and hand-made toys for disadvantaged children and ensure happy childhood for them. She is one of the next Roma Cultural Influencer Training Program's participants, where she will further develop her product page and her social media presence..

Several journalism courses for aspiring Roma newsmen and -women had been offered in Hungary before, with little lasting effect. To become a TV or radio anchor or shoot a documentary film, get your article into the printed press one needs a good network of mentors and much luck – features outside the range of possibilities of most young Roma. However, social media are there for everyone. Success depends on knowledge

and skills, creativity and perseverance – skills and emotions can be cultivated through educational and mentoring programs. In our special social media course, we intended to enhance visual and verbal communication skills in primarily visual, social media that is easier accessible and highly acceptable for them.

*Why organise a “cultural influencer” course?* Roma culture is practically invisible in Hungary. There is no museum dedicated to Roma visual arts, crafts, music, literature, or folklore tradition, although some initiatives, like the planned establishment of the Contemporary Roma Art Gallery and the already existing Gallery8 – Roma Contemporary Roma Art Space funded by the ERCF European Roma Cultural Foundation in 2013.

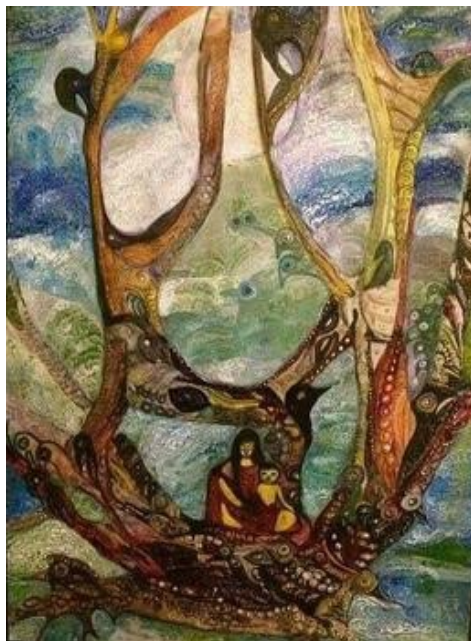


Fig.5. Klára L. Lakatos: *The Mandalas of Szatmar County*, 2017. Gallery8 – Roma Contemporary Roma Art Space, Budapest.

While preparing them for individual creation of social media pieces, we also motivated them to *explore and represent their cultural heritage* integrating it with contemporary social issues concerning Hungarian Roma in a youthful, easily accessible environment. A well-trained and engaged cultural influencer of Romani origin could be vital in the manifestation of these values in an inspirational way.

Artists are leading our vision to develop a program that focuses on self-expression, rooted in cultural traditions. (Erizanu & Cîrlig, 2020). The main aim of the project is to empower young Roma girls and women to *effectively express their cultural heritage, contempo-*

*rary, social issues and achievements* through social media and thus disseminate knowledge and change negative attitudes about the Roma minority. Some communication skills are essential in this mission: creation of oral and written media pieces, photos and videos and different genres in journalism.

### Development of social media literacy

The most important attitude enhanced by program: *self-assertion* through acquaintance with values of Roma culture for Hungarian society. Communication skills (oral and written, face-to-face and digital, were established in laboratory practice and will be further developed in the studios of a radio and a television channel as well as the Roma Press Centre of Hungary. Though our objective is to prepare our course participants for work in social media, we want them to learn from the best professionals about mass media genres and their adaptation for their social sites.

The girls came from a wide variety of social environments. We had a doctoral student, who came to polish here science communication skills, a few university students who wanted to use social media to spread their cultural knowledge, a young entrepreneur who intended to learn how to popularise her craft products (beautiful knitted children's toys), and several girls who recently finished secondary education and were curious about media career paths. They all have to be furnished with conflict management skills to negotiate prejudice, develop a better self-knowledge and self-understanding. Many of them need to acquire basic life skills (planning their work, making decisions, pursuing a goal systematically). We also invite them to engage in creative activities like filming, photography and multimedia arts that increase their well-being and contribute to their self-esteem.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS, ASSESSMENT METHODS AND DATASETS

Research questions of the participatory action study focus on evaluating *quality and sustainability of the course*. In the systematic literature review performed by the AMASS team at Borås University, a lack of detailed documentation and assessment efforts was diagnosed in the majority of projects – a feature that prevents the wider dissemination, often even the repetition of the socially targeted educational interventions (Lindström, Ed., 2020). Therefore, we have followed the first and are following the second part of the Roma Cultural Influencer Training with a system of developmental, mixed methods assessment toolset. Here is an outline of the research questions and related methods that may prove or disprove them.

**1) Level of skills development:** is it possible to acquire basic knowledge and skills as well as a healthy media related identity and critical attitude during two, relatively short

courses of 30 lesson hours each?

*Portfolio assessment* is the central part of the toolset that shows the development of digital, especially media literacy and visual competence of our course participants. All the works produced during the course are collected in digital folders, accessible only for the student and her mentors:

- o introductory selfie of the aspiring influencer and later self-portraits
- o the first pitch about her planned cultural channel, and later, more sophisticated oral descriptions of her channel idea

- o course tasks: photos and videos with or without accompanying textual explanation (e.g. an Instagram entry, a PhotoVoice sequence)

- o self-reflection texts

**2) Establishing a social identity:** can young women of Roma heritage establish themselves in social media through cultural messages?

In the first course, only the tutors and group member reflected on the works of each other. The continuation of the course will give us an opportunity to enrich the evaluation angle with the employment of a *mentor from the majority Hungarian culture and a tutor – evaluator from the Roma culture*. Júlia Nyári is an experienced majority Hungarian trainer of media professionals. Maria Baranyi, a Roma journalist, who has taught the girls during the first part and now appears in two capacities: as a lecturer on exemplary representations of Roma culture in traditional and digital media, and an evaluator of the cultural channels of the students. *Peer review* will also be more intensive through comments under vlog, Instagram, or Facebook posts of fellow course participants as well as face-to-face discussions of the directions these new identity-strengthening channels take. As these social media channels will be public, they will hopefully be commented on by interested viewers as well, that provide an insight in acceptance by the cultural community and members of the media. Methods employed:

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*Fig.6 (page 70). Digital collage by Katalin Godó, participant of the Roma Cultural Influencer Program. Text: "Who I am? Identity searching switched on - Woman of my love, the member of the Godó Family, member of the István Wáli Roma College for Advanced Studies of the Reformed Church, teacher, stemming from Tiszanána, PhD student of the University of Debrecen. Hungarian or Roma? – No! Roma in Hungary"*

My Company



# Ki vagyok én?



Párom  
Kedvese



A Godó család  
tagja

A Wáli István  
Református Cigány  
Szakkollégium  
tagja



Identitás-keresés  
bekapcsolva...



Tanárnő



Tiszanána  
település  
származottja



A Debreceni  
Egyetem PhD  
hallgatója



*Magyar vagy cigány? – NEM!*  
*MagyarCigány*



- o oral analysis of peer reviews by course participants
- o written mentor reports
- o peer / audience reactions as posts

*Jury assessment of PhotoVoice sequences as cultural messages:* the image collections will also be analysed by three experts, who will now look at the works as an interested audience, disregarding skills development, or any other technical issue. Experts will be selected from the Roma community to represent different angles again: a middle-aged female artist, with strong presence in Roma cultural debates; a mother of young children, interested in the life perspectives of her family members and a Hungarian political science researcher with a publication record in Roma issues. They will watch the photo collections individually, online, provide their assessment about authenticity, clarity, and expressivity, and then come together to discuss their judgments.

### **3) Appeal for minority and majority peer groups:**

can the new cultural influencers attract their own community and also the Hungarian youth to their channels?

*A moderated evaluation session* of the new Roma cultural channels will be organised through an open call of interested young people (aged 18-30 years) from both the majority Hungarian and the minority Hungarian Roma community who have not seen the new cultural channels yet. Participants will judge them, as experts did before, for authenticity, clarity, and expressivity.

*Comments under each channel post of the participants* will also be analysed to see the thematic range and tone of unsolicited audience reaction in the posts.

### **4) Impact resulting in attitude change majority**

**peer groups:** can they have an impact on the attitudes and publication practices of mass media covering Roma issues?

This is one of those research questions that can only be answered in the future. However, the future can be brought closer through *intensive propaganda campaigns about the new channels*, targeting the media that was so eager to report on the first iteration of the course (17 different organs published 23 reports).



Fig.7. Tamás Péli's painting at the Ministry of Human Resources, Budapest

## CONCLUSIONS

There are many courses that teach you about successful social media presence, and filming and photography workshops are also abundant. *What is the difference?* This was the question that our participants asked us when they applied. The difference is linking these two course types with a strong immersion in the artistic heritage of the Roma nation and teaching young girls and women to show their culture in a medium that is appealing and easily accessible to their peers. The experiences of the first course have shown us that its *content and methodology was appropriate*.

- o Despite basic media literacy, young people are unaware of the intricacies of social media presence and should be taught about its potentials and dangers.
- o Despite frequent use of a variety of visualising apps, they should be taught to compose, edit, critique, complete with text, select and showcase their images and videos.
- o Despite living in a Roma environment, knowledge about and appreciation of their own cultural heritage needs to be substantially enriched.

We have learnt a lot about digital literacy skills development for creative use of social media and have made substantial changes in the subsequent Roma Cultural Influencer Course II. This training program is open to the participants of the first course, but also to new applicants who have acquired basic experiences in creating social media elsewhere and want to improve their competencies. Much more time and effort are needed for a synergic development of visual and media skills, both on the side of the tutors and tutees.

o Effective social media presence needs a sophisticated set of verbal, visual and media skills, as well as personality characteristics. We must help participants find their voice as well as the genre and format that would suit them best. Therefore, we increase hands-on activities in the media laboratory and teach about creation in a variety of genres.

o Roma cultural heritage should be introduced through successful media representations that show the way of selecting content, setting, narrative and style. Therefore, we introduce a series of lectures followed by discussion about feature films, art works, documentary photos and videos, theatrical performances, literary works etc. about Roma life and culture.

o Tutoring (teaching new knowledge and developing skills) and mentoring (supporting experience-based learning) should be more personalised. Therefore, we have employed an experienced journalist and coach to support our participants in their way to establishing their social media presence through a cultural channel. This coach will observe our course participants during their work at the seminars and in the media lab and offer individual consultation or small group coaching.

Why girls and women? After journalists had asked their first question about the mission of cultural influencers, their second question was always about the exclusion (or non-inclusion) of boys and men. The AMASS project intends to support the most disadvantaged individuals and groups within a selected community. As we have shown in the first part of this paper, within the Roma community, girls and women are more disadvantaged than men in working life. They are rarely present as influencers in social media, as they are not used to

making their voice heard. While teaching the first part of our course, we have learnt that their viewpoints are unique, so their perspectives of Roma culture needs to be presented. We have seen that their ideas are needed: some of them have already been recognised by the Roma media and even offered jobs. We have seen how one participant managed to improve her small business through a more effective media presence and how another has learnt about visualisation formats that she is using now in her research papers as a doctoral student. The community of Roma girls and young women has many voices and we hope to make them heard.

Roma cultural heritage and current social issues should be expressed through *the synergy of creative arts and media pieces*. Apart from creating their own expressive works, we intend to encourage them to report on exemplary arts education projects at schools or showcase Roma artists, craftsmen, musicians, scientists or ordinary people who succeeded, by learning and hard work, to change their life for the better. Reports on them in social media, when presented in a youthful and creative manner, will be much more inspiring than speeches and slogans.

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## Hungary



# 8

## Evaluation of the museum educational projects

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To disseminate the results of the experimental project of the AMASS- Hungary team at the Ludwig Museum and the Hungarian National Gallery, we organised in-service professional development courses. The course organised by the Hungarian National Gallery focused on theoretical and methodological knowledge that facilitates the use of 19<sup>th</sup>-century artworks from the museum's collection in teaching Hungarian language and literature and history in secondary education. In harmony with AMASS objectives, this program facilitates learning these two basic school disciplines through their integration with works of art that *express cultural phenomena or historic events in an engaging aesthetic form that supports their appropriation* by students with learning problems. The training program of the Ludwig Museum, with an internationally reputed collection of contemporary works of art, focused on *socially oriented trends in end*

*of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century visual arts* and their teaching methodology. The relevance of this theme for the objectives of the AMASS lies in the power of the arts in revealing and healing social conflicts through their aesthetic conceptualisation and expression.

The two institutions worked as a team, and structured their educational programs and assessment methods similarly, to provide comparable data for the evaluation of the two courses. In both museums, the in-service training course lasted 30 hours. It was divided into three 8-hour theoretical teaching units and a single 6-hour practical session.

The two in-service training courses of the museums were harmonized in terms of their *completion requirements*, too: After the conclusion of the course, participating teachers worked on their final assignment



Fig.1. Online presentation on the Ludwig Museum's teacher training with student's work

for five weeks. They developed a series of lesson plans about teaching socially disadvantaged children about the focal topics of the two training courses: social issues and cultural history as represented in visual arts. The course concluded with the presentation of the final assignments and a peer and mentor review.

In order to present their work, participants developed a presentation of maximum 10 slides, the detailed plan of their project and self-reflections about their project. The final work of the teachers involved learning programs that they realised in their classes. These projects were documented through photos and video recordings during the activities (with student consent). Student art works were also documented, and teachers enriched their presentations with these.

Visual records of their innovative teaching programs were uploaded by the participants to a storage space provided for them, so they were already accessible for the course instructors before the actual presentations for assessment. In the case of Ludwig Museum, participants had to upload a page-long self-reflection in which they could report aspects of their personal development. The uniform system of requirements allowed us, the mentors of the training programs, to use the uploaded materials as a base for a deeper analysis of the course results. Interesting comparisons of teaching strategies were drawn when several educators chose the same artwork or topic to be the subject of their school project.

The three course days and the final presentation session were realized online in ZOOM, so the analysis of the teaching days and their video materials can be

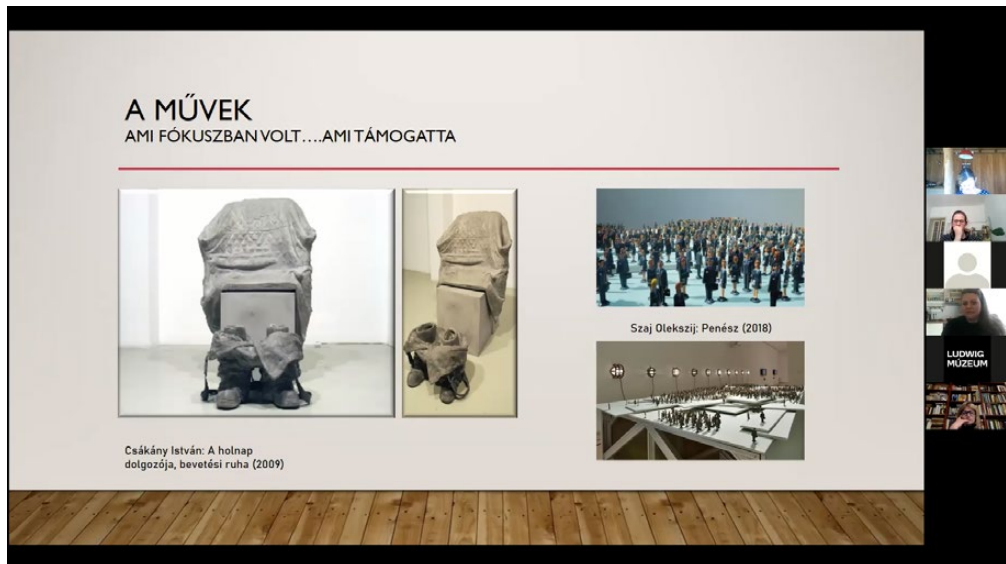


Fig.2. Presentation on the Ludwig Museum: teacher with the slide about contemporary artworks used as inspiration

carried out with the help of the NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

In the course of the evaluation of the 30-hour continuing professional development courses for educators, the *criteria for quality assurance and the obligatory evaluation survey* published by the Education Authority were also completed. Filling out the survey was compulsory for every participant after the completion of the course, as the training provider institution is supposed to send in a summary of the results within 30 days after the end of the course to the National Educational Authority. The survey was simple: some questions required the assessment of different aspects of course quality, other required a text-based evaluation of some of its features. Survey data allowed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. At the Ludwig Museum,

we did not share the survey questions on paper, as usual, but created a Google Form with the questions developed by the National Educational Authority and sent it to the participants. This way, data collection and processing was made a lot easier. However, we decided to use an oral interview method to collect more information about the open-ended questions that were consistently skipped by online respondents.

The survey questions proposed by the Education Authority covered the success factors of the course both in terms of professional and organizational matters:

- o Has the professional development course achieved its objectives? Has it met your expectations?

- o How innovative was the information provided at the course?
- o How useful do you feel the course was from a practical, school based point of view?
- o How appropriate were the teaching and mentoring methods used during the course?
- o Were the completion requirements of the course reasonable?
- o Were the assessment methods appropriate?
- o What do you think of the course instructor(s)/ trainer(s)' job and professional expertise?  
(1 – poorly prepared, 5 – expert)
- o Were the facilities (general facilities, tools, supplements, reading list) adequate?
- o Was the course properly organized?

We added two more questions to the survey to help further development and improved organization of the course:

- o Would you participate in the course or recommend it to your colleagues if it were not free of charge?
- o Do you have any other comments about this course?

The last element of the evaluation system for the course was the *video interview* taken after the end of the course. This could not be done with every single participant due to their high number, so we asked 5–6 participants from every group, through a selection

based on their region, school type and occupation/ subject to do the deep interviews over the summer. The in-depth interview was based on the answers given to the quality assurance survey, but it focuses on personal experiences, the applicability of the knowledge gained and the degree to which they can be included in the participant's career model.

The program results demonstrate clearly that the interpretation and museum education methodology can be widely used in school education. The contemporary artworks can be integrated with the history, literature, visual art, and geography curriculum and contribute to a more profound understanding of the thematic area and also provide factual knowledge.

We can differentiate two categories of the participating teachers: the art teachers and non-art teachers (Kindergarten educators, geography, history, and literature teachers and homeroom teachers). The use of the methodology acquired depended on the professional background of teacher. Art teachers typically used the new methods without constraints about their relevance for their discipline (a fear that teachers of other disciplines may have experienced). Their educational strategies were more varied and they could personalize the ideas. In the case of non-art teachers, acquiring modern and contemporary art knowledge was the most significant challenge; they integrated the methodology they were presented by tutors without adaptation. Most of the teachers used the trichotomous structure in their projects: pre-visit school unit, museum activity, post-visit creative activity at school. Using a printed or projected copy of the artwork as inspiration was a crucial part of their pre-visit activity; the personal observation was defined by the museum activity. During the third, school-based part of the program, students based their artworks on their own experiences. The

final artistic results of the project were variable in the techniques: posters, collages, paintings, and drawings. Approximately 40 % of the project is based on a discussion about the artworks.

In consequence of the COVID19 pandemic, the aggravating circumstances of realizing the in-service training program limited the results. The compulsory lockdown of the museums and the galleries had forced the online realization upon the teachers. The teachers used different practices to cut down the limitation of personal contacts during the projects: sending materials by post before the online workshop, sharing links of motivating music, giving flexible deadlines were appropriate practices for the post-COVID period. The online implementation training program could help teachers change their attitude about online learning and share good practices to organize team works, projects, and middle-term art projects on digital platforms.

As part of the AMASS research, the museums agreed to launch two continuing professional development courses free of charge, after which the museums can keep the right to organize the courses again (the Education Authority granted the licenses until 2025). The high number of course applicants and the high scores given in the satisfaction surveys—the museums typically achieved an average score higher than 4.5 in every category—show that there would be demand for the continuing professional development courses held by the museums in the future.

The two participating museums also have museum education programs, in co-operation with a primary school (Grades 5-8, ages 11-14) and their teachers in two subsequent semesters. The programme of each semester is divided into subject units, namely preparatory school classes, museum classes and

follow-up school classes. Restrictions during the epidemic, closing the museums and online teaching at schools resulted in serious difficulties for completing the first semester, when not all the planned activities could be realised on site in the museum. Considering this, the first semester can be taken as a pilot of the usability of the research tools, and as a period of the groups familiarizing themselves with the museum, the museum educator and the way of participating in the research.

The development of the museum education programs, a detailed *plan* is prepared for both museum based, and school based educational units by the instructors based on the present and mutually agreed-upon guidelines. These unit plans and educational objectives can be understood as a kind of baseline, the successful fulfilment of which can be compared with the video recordings made for research purposes during school and museum activities. *Making video recordings* is an established practice in educational studies, but it is rarely used in museum spaces. This means that our experiences gained about the use of this research method could have significance for education methodology research in museums as well. A less regulated use of museum space, with simultaneous communication, and more frequent group work make video observation much more difficult compared to classroom observations. The recordings can be effectively used for *evaluating discussions* as well, in which the research coordinator discusses experiences with the museum educator and the participating teacher after the activities. Besides on-site observations and experiences, recorded interviews allow the documentation of conversations between the students or between the students and the instructor that could not be recorded by the camera. Beyond the evaluations of the actual



activities, the interviews also let the researcher gain a deeper insight of the professionals' mindset and way of organizing work.

The interviews helped to analyse the educational situations from the teacher's and museum educator's point of view and correctly judged the activity of the students. The second museum educational program is an excellent example for this multilateral analysis: the museum educator felt the students were passive and not involved, but the form teacher of the group was delighted with the students' creativity and work.

The third element of the research tools is *the analysis of the works created by the students*, which allows the investigation of personal development. For that, participants work with the same artworks and themes in both semesters. They revisit the thematic units of the first semester in the second semester in a new context and observe them at a deeper level. The topics of the teaching units: identity, discrimination, major society and minority group; representation of the city and the personal environment; effects of our decision and acts. The aim of the creative workshops is to help better understand the universal themes transmitted by the contemporary artworks.

Each of the artworks can be connected to the curriculum of the school disciplines history and Hungarian language and literature, so the activities give an opportunity to increase academic knowledge and to continuously monitor the growth of visual literacy as well. The process of monitoring is carried out by the application of conceptual knowledge during

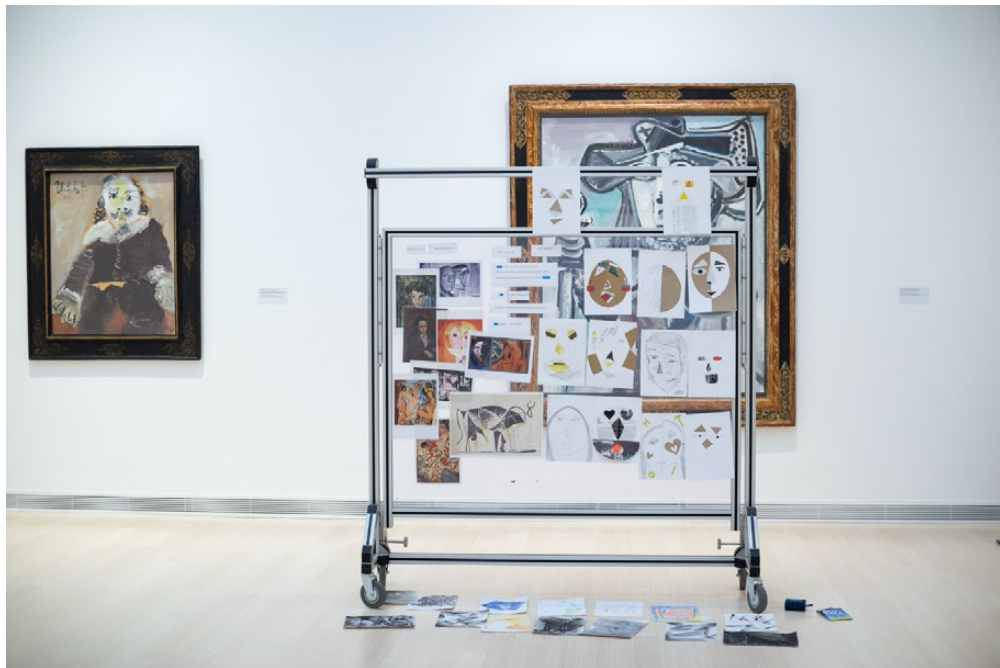


Fig.4. Student's work from the museum educational program in the Hungarian National Gallery

the activities, by verbal questioning, and by assigning interactive questionnaires and tasks.

We end the year-long cooperation by *interviewing the participating students, head teachers and institution management*, exploring their personal experiences and the observations of the educators less involved in the activities about the results and changes art activities brought to the students' behaviour and communication, and if there is some improvement seen in other school subjects too by any chance.





*Fig.6. Cubist portraits created by students inspired by Picasso (Ludwig Museum)*

As we see it, the stakes of museum education research are no less than a deepening of the cooperation between museums and schools, museum educators and schoolteachers, and the development of a methodological toolkit that can be integrated in other institutions as well to make the application of art in a school environment as effective as possible.

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*Fig.5 (page 83). Student from the Burattion Primary School during the creative activity in the Ludwig Museum*

# Italy



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## #Daimieiocchi participatory photography laboratories

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PACO Design Collaborative

This paper discusses the testbeds within the Acting on the Margin Arts as Social Sculpture Project (AMASS), run by PACO Design Collaborative in Italy from December 2020 through July 2021.



### INTRODUCTION

Visual literacy (VL) is knowing how to read images. It refers to the ability to construct meaning from images (Kennedy, 2010), using our cognitive skills as tools to enhance our intellectual capacity. At least 90% of all the information we are exposed to every day is taken in visually. We can use VL as an invitation to reintegrate the capacities of our senses, especially today, in the image-saturated digital age, to learn how to better read our surroundings, images as texts, and texts as images. VL is multimodal, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and collaborative. Images can be a universal language. As human beings, our brains are hardwired to think and register meanings in images (Jensen, 2001).

According to the "Annual Report 2021 - The Situation of the Country", by the Italian National Institute of Statistics, as of 2020, there are more than 2 million families living in absolute poverty, representing 7.7% of the population, as well as more than 5.6 million individuals. Since poverty is a complex phenomenon, when we refer, in particular, to poverty affecting children, we cannot only speak about economic poverty. Educational poverty often undermines school performance; children at risk may have limited opportunities for personal success and future integration into society due to this educational disadvantage (Caruso & Cerbara, 2020).

Visual literacy involves a process of transmediation, which is the act of translating meanings from one sign system to another (e.g., moving from photography to storytelling). It has been shown to deepen students' critical thinking skills, thus, promoting the generation of new ideas and creating more opportunities for reflective thinking (Siegel, 1995). Consequently, VL training acquires greater relevance when it is aimed at children and adolescents who do not have opportunities to access cultural initiatives due to their economic or educational vulnerability, which, combined with participatory artistic activities, may also offer them the agency of creation. Providing marginalized youth with new tools to express their voice can help them take a more critical look at and reflect on their lives. When combined with a safe space to share these thoughts, this could boost their self-esteem and self-confidence to take ownership of their reality.

Dai miei occhi (*From my eyes*) is the Italian name of a program involving five participatory photography laboratories that aim to explore the potential of children and adolescents living in situations of marginalization (e.g., extreme economic or educational poverty) to be agents of change, allowing them to express their

feelings, thoughts, and voice through photography. These laboratories are run in five different Italian cities in direct collaboration with the Albero della Vita Foundation and seven local photographers.

### The research questions are:

- o How can participatory art raise awareness among youth that everyone has the chance to express themselves and that every perspective has value?
- o How can participatory art help youth to become agents of change?

The first laboratory was the pilot project. The next three were completed in July 2021. The last one was completed during the first week of September 2021. The cities where the laboratories took place were selected according to where the Albero della Vita Foundation has a head office: Milan, Genoa, Naples, Catanzaro, and Palermo. This foundation operates throughout Italy and in some developing countries, promoting services for the protection of minors in distress, host communities, foster family networks, maternity support services, distance support, and awareness campaigns on the issue of children's rights in the world.

The participants of the laboratories are children and adolescents from families already followed and supported by the Varcare la Soglia (*Crossing the Threshold*, in Italian) national program. For more than seven years, this program has been concretely fighting poverty in Italy, helping families with children escape poverty.

The Albero della Vita Foundation is in charge of the recruitment of the participants for the laboratories. Our contact person at the foundation put us in



Fig.1. Participants portraits by Carolina Gutiérrez Novoa, PACO Design Collaborative.

communication with the general coordinator of these laboratories, who, in turn, put us in contact with the coordinators of the centers in each city. To proceed in compliance with AMASS' ethical protocols, the procedures for managing the youth's data and the material produced by them, the foundation's coordinators provided the youth's parents with information about the program and its objectives. Subsequently, enrolment in the laboratories was done by having the participants' parents sign two consent forms. The first form gave us informed consent for the collection and use of all types of material generated within the laboratories, whether audio, video, or photographs, in academic publications, social networks, exhibitions, and events. The second form was a copyright release for the exclusive use of the material generated within the AMASS project.

For each city, one or two professional local photographers were involved to guide the children in the world of photography. They participated in all the sessions; they were responsible for the theoretical introductory lesson on photography and for providing technical guidance during the practice sessions. The fact that they are local photographers is relevant because of their knowledge of the local culture, dialect, and neighborhood.

The five laboratories were held in five peripheral districts in five different cities and involved a total of 62 children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 13. The name and logo of each laboratory were adapted to the name of each district.



Fig. 2.

CITY OF ITALY	DISTRICT	PARTICIPANTS
MILAN	BAGGIO	12 CHILDREN
CATANZARO	ARANCETO	17 CHILDREN
NAPOLI	PONTICELLI	14 CHILDREN
GENOA	SAMPIERDARENA	7 ADOLESCENTS
PALERMO	ZEN 2	12 CHILDREN

Table 1.

OBJECTIVES

Through the participatory photography laboratories, the children and adolescents are asked to tell the story of their neighborhood through their eyes. During the lessons, the participants learn the main concepts of photography and immediately put them into practice by capturing their surroundings using an analogue camera.

The photos become a pretext for feedback sessions in which the participants are asked to talk about their feelings and thoughts, about their life in the community, and the neighborhood in which they live. After the final laboratory session, the photos are selected and displayed in an exhibition in the district to share the outcomes and involve the community.

At the beginning of each laboratory, each participant is given a starting kit consisting of:

- o A tote bag with the project logo printed on it;
- o A notebook and a pencil for note-taking;
- o A rechargeable analogue camera;
- o A roll of 35mm black and white film.

These laboratories bring a cultural initiative to children and adolescents in situations of social, educational, or economic marginalization, who do not usually have access to this type of activity. It is the first approach to photography as a means of expression through practical and theoretical exercises, ranging from the photographic captures of selected objects, places, or moments, to a subsequent reflection on the intentions and motivations that guided those decisions. The aim is to explore the world of the youth to understand how

participatory artistic activities can help them generate greater confidence in their thoughts and abilities and a deeper understanding of their lives.

### The pilot project in Baggio, Milan

We had to start the pilot project late due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and given the dates within the AMASS project. In December 2020, we were forced to adapt all the activities to digital sessions instead of on-site, face-to-face sessions. With this change, the foundation decided to kick-off the program since the children in this district had received a tablet from the foundation during the pandemic's lockdown months so they could continue their schooling. Thus, we were able to take advantage of this resource, despite the normal Internet connection problems.

The #baggiodaimieiocchi kit consisted of:

- o A tote bag with the project logo printed on it;
- o A notebook and a pencil for note-taking;
- o A laboratory flyer with information about the program;
- o A #baggiodaimieiocchi selfie frame;
- o Consent forms to use when taking photos of people.

### The pilot project's methodology

This first laboratory began at the foundation with a presentation of the project to the families with individual in-person meetings where we presented an explanatory video of the laboratory with texts, images, and music,

and where we had the parents sign the participation consent forms and handed out the welcome kits.

One week later, the course was presented in a series of virtual meetings of 1.5 hours every two weeks through Zoom, where we invited the youth to actively participate by sharing their photos on a shared board in Miro.

During the first lesson, the participants were introduced to the laboratory. We made introduced the youth to the team, provided a broad description of the AMASS project, an overview of the lessons to be presented in the laboratory, and briefly described the digital tools with which the project was going to be developed. Thereafter, the photographer gave an introductory lesson on photography.

Throughout the weeks without lessons, we remained in contact with the youth by WhatsApp to remind them to shoot and share the photographs they were taking.

The second lecture was about sharing and reflecting on the photographs the children and adolescents had taken and shared during the first week. This session aimed at deepening what the youth had been thinking about and looking at since the laboratory started. They were then invited to caption each of their photos, creating a space for dialogue to share their feelings and thoughts about them.

The support of the foundation's educator and the photographer were fundamental to guiding the youth to better develop their ideas. It was the first exercise in transmediation, where they had to assign meaning to their images and translate them into titles or phrases.

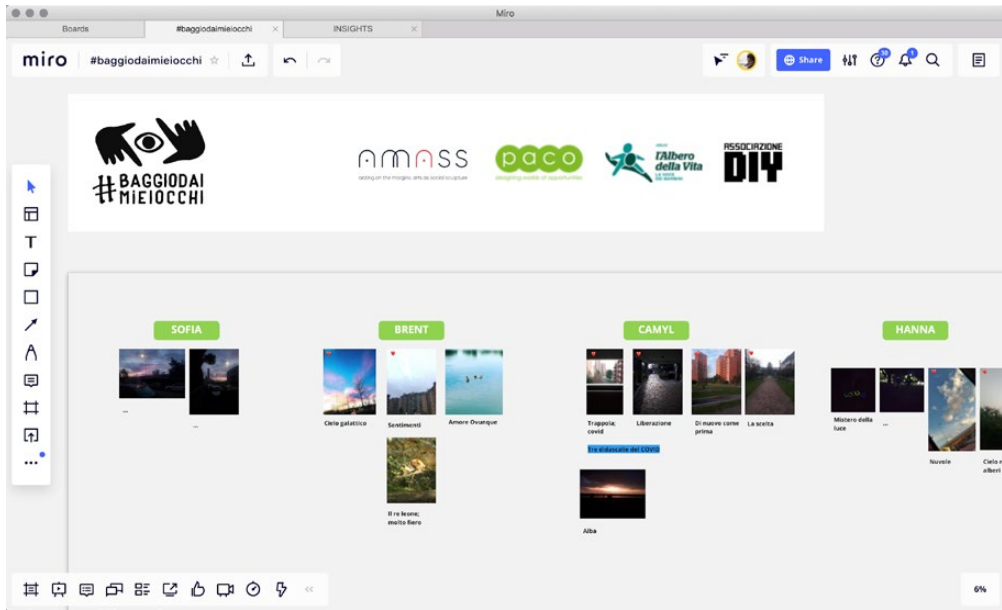


Fig. 3. Second virtual lesson. Screenshot of the Miro Board.

During the third lecture, we met the youth in three groups of five each, in sessions lasting 45 minutes. The objective was to reflect on how the project was going so far, and to have the participants discuss their experiences, feelings, and expectations. These encounters were crucial to directly involving the participants in the laboratory activities, leveraging their engagement and a sense of belonging to the project and the group by meeting other participants, and expressing their opinions and feelings in an open and safe environment, which was difficult to do during the online sessions. To close the session, we printed one or two photographs for each participant and gave them as a Christmas gift. This part of the meeting was significant because it generated a general feeling of joy. Creating an atmosphere of

confidence during the conversations allowed us to understand the ways in which the youth feel they are lacking, such as having the means and space to have a voice and, even more profound, having a place where they can feel heard and valued.

In June 2021, after the difficulties due to the pandemic, we were finally able to conclude this laboratory with an in-person session to share the photos and collaboratively design the final exhibition: #baggiodaimieimioocchi. On this occasion, we used VL by observing all the photographs printed on small-scale paper, and the participants had to create a joint narrative for the exhibition.

## Insights and conclusions from the pilot project

Below, we present some of the insights and information we gained from the pilot project that we consider relevant for reformulating the participatory laboratories:

- o Because it is not certain that all children and adolescents have access to a good Internet connection or own a mobile device, it is necessary to be able to give the same opportunities for participation to each of them. This was one of the reasons why we decided to return to the initial idea of analogue photography if the restrictions due to the pandemic allowed us to do so.
- o Physical presence is essential to ensure participation and engagement in the activities, especially when the participants do not know each other.
- o It is necessary to allow time for the children and adolescents to explore at their own pace, so we decided to shift from offering one activity a week to one activity every two weeks.
- o It is useful to give the participants specific exercises to photograph; this helps guide and inspire them.

## #Daimieiocchi participatory laboratories on analogue photography

The main objective of these laboratories is to conduct qualitative research to answer the proposed research questions.

## METHODOLOGY

Ethnography is the study of the social interactions, behaviors, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organizations, and communities. The use of participatory observation enables researchers to immerse themselves in a setting, thus generating a rich understanding of social behaviors and their subtleties in different contexts (Reeves et al., 2008).

Since we would be working with young people for whom we were strangers, we conducted ethnographic research to understand, through their photographs and narratives, how they live and how they perceive their lives. This is a slow and fluid process, where, encounter-by-encounter, they would become familiar with us and the photographic technique, and feel more comfortable participating in the discussion sessions. This qualitative approach allowed us to observe, talk, and ask questions to guide the discussions, record audio, and take photos in an atmosphere of comfort and trust with each group of participants. This facilitated access to natural and deeply-felt dialogues about the motivations and intentions behind the photographs that were taken.

Using photography as a means of expressing feelings and reflections, and being able to generate a dialogue around them to discuss one's perception of oneself and one's own life, allowed us to interact with the youth. Photographs, like other visual data, offer the opportunity for collaboration between participants, as they are easy to share. Printed on paper, they can be touched, rearranged, and sorted (Kanstrup, 2002). Photography is an optimal way to collect qualitative data because it provides information that cannot be heard, seen, or noticed, momentarily stopping the



Fig. 4. Photographs of the lessons by Carolina Gutiérrez Novoa, PACO Design Collaborative.

flow of life. Photographs make worlds visible; they allow people to display their culture, and their analysis can encourage reflection and make sense of the information acquired through other means.

All the collected data were unraveled with the progression of the activities lesson by lesson. The laboratories were designed in the same way for each of the four cities. The program consisted of four in-person lessons every two weeks, plus a fifth meeting where a closing photographic exhibition was held in the district to share the outcomes with the participants' families, friends, and community.

Because of the reduced use of space due to pandemic security regulations, we had to divide the participants into two groups, as we could only have a maximum of six to seven participants per lesson. Therefore, the first three lessons were structured in 1.5-hour sessions per group. In Genoa, where we had a group of seven adolescents, it was possible to hold 3-hour sessions for each lesson. The last lesson, due to its relevance, had a longer duration of 2 to 3 hours per group, depending on the requirements of the coordinator of each city.

#### o **First lesson: Welcoming the participants and introducing them to the laboratory**

After a brief presentation of the team, the photographer, the educators affiliated with the foundation, and the participants, the laboratory begins with an introductory theoretical lesson on analogue photography guided by the local photographer. Afterwards, the kits are handed out to each participant and they are invited to open their camera, load the film, into it, and go outside to try using it in a short practical session. The aim is to address and overcome their initial technical concerns.

The children and adolescents are invited to handle, for the first time, an analogue camera of their own with a roll of 35mm black and white film. They are instructed to take a maximum of 36 photographs for one week. They are given an unfamiliar tool that they have to rely on "with their eyes closed", without being able to see the results immediately, as is the case with a camera on a mobile phone. The need to wait to see their pictures caused anxiety in some of the participants and a lot of excitement and impatience in others, which was a good hook to make them come to the second lesson.

The following week, the photographer is responsible for collecting the cameras that the children and adolescents

LESSON 1	ONE WEEK LATER	LESSON 2	LESSON 3	ONE WEEK LATER	LESSON 4	CLOSURE
WELCOMING AND INTRODUCTION TO THE LABORATORY  BRIEF THEORETICAL PHOTOGRAPHY LESSON + KIT DELIVERY!  FIRST PHOTOS WITH THE ANALOGUE CAMERA	THE FIRST FILMS ARE COLLECTED AND DEVELOPED	ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION WITH THE FIRST PRINTED PHOTOGRAPHS  DISCUSSION	WE GO AROUND TAKING PICTURES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD	THE SECOND AND THIRD FILMS ARE COLLECTED AND DEVELOPED	ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION WITH THE PRINTED PHOTOGRAPHS  SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND PREPARATION OF THE EXHIBITION	PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY  LABORATORY WITH STAKEHOLDERS
DELIVERY OF AN ANALOGUE CAMERA TO EACH CHILD WITH THE FIRST BLACK AND WHITE FILM		THE CAMERAS ARE LOADED WITH THE SECOND FILM, IN COLOUR	THE SECOND FILMS ARE COLLECTED. THE CAMERAS ARE LOADED WITH THE THIRD FILM, IN BLACK AND WHITE.			

Table 2.

would have left at the foundation to develop the film and send us the images.

o **Second lesson: Reflection and discussion session**

During this lesson, we bring the participants the first developed photos printed on paper to generate a dialogue around them. “Through photography, it is possible to learn to see through natives’ eyes. Verbally we can interview natives and share the realism of their visual context” (Collier et al., 1985, p. xvii). This is the first analysis and interpretation session of the

laboratory. First, the photos are analyzed individually. Then the ideas are shared with the group by revealing the selection of the five favorite photos.

We guided the discussion by asking questions about the motivations behind each shot. This is the first exercise of transmediation where the participants try to assign meaning to their work. At the end of the lesson, the camera is returned to the participants, loaded with a new roll of film, this time color film, so they can continue taking photographs for the next two weeks.

### o **Third lesson: Photography session in the neighborhood**

The third lesson is entirely practical. It is guided by the photographer and followed by the foundation's educators. The cameras are reloaded with a third roll of film (this time, black and white), with another 36 shots, and the participants are invited to go outside to take photos around the neighborhood. The purpose is to give the youth more reliance on the discipline of analogue photography, and to resolve any technical or conceptual doubts they may have. They are accompanied by the photographer and the educators, who encourage them to take pictures consciously and intentionally.

The roll of color film and the second roll of black and white film are developed and printed the following week to be delivered during the last lesson.

### o **Fourth lesson: Reflection session and co-creation of the exhibition**

This meeting is fundamental for the research. At this session, we bring all the photographs printed in small format (100 photos on average per participant) and propose to co-design the final exhibition, going from the personal reflection and individual selection of photos, to a co-creation activity where, once again, we seek to unveil and understand the motivations behind each image. The aim is to create a collective narrative, connecting the different meanings, coherently making sense, and unleashing the world that is revealed by each of the participants. In this lesson, they are already familiar with all the external actors in the project (researchers and photographers). Thus, because this is the second time they engage in reading and interpreting the images, it is possible to access more elaborate, complex, and deeper narratives.

### Assessment methods

We used the same proposed data assessment methods for all the laboratories. We tried to understand how the participants felt before, during, and after the experiment and whether the artistic process helped them understand that we can all be agents of change. Specifically, we tried to assess:

- o Their participation in the project;
- o Their verbal/non-verbal communication;
- o Their perception of the neighborhood we worked in;
- o Their approach to change; approach to becoming agents of change;
- o Their perception of their role in society.

We selected different methods to collect the data needed for the assessment:

- o Observation and note-taking during the workshop;
- o Voice recording of all the reflection sessions and transcription of the audio recordings;
- o Focus groups with the educators and photographers involved in the workshop;
- o Focus Groups with target group participants;
- o Photos analysis of target group participants: collected/documented and summarised.

LESSON 1	LESSON 2	LESSON 3	LESSON 4	CLOSURE
OBSERVATION AND NOTE-TAKING	FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS	OBSERVATION AND NOTE-TAKING	FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS	INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANTS IN FRONT OF THEIR PHOTOS
	PHOTO ANALYSIS		PHOTO ANALYSIS	OBSERVATION AND NOTE-TAKING
	OBSERVATION AND NOTE-TAKING		OBSERVATION AND NOTE-TAKING	

Table 3.

After the end of the experiments:

- o Focus group with the photographers who participated in the experiments.
- o Focus group with the educators who participated in the experiments.

## DISSEMINATION OF THE RESULTS

### 1.The exhibitions

After the final session at each of the laboratories, five public photographic exhibitions were planned in the districts where the laboratories took place. These events, aimed primarily at the participants, intend to celebrate the closing of a cycle and share the results of their efforts and commitment with their loved ones and the community.

To give greater importance and solemnity to the participants' creative efforts, a graphic communication was developed for each exhibition. This included a banner for the dissemination of the event on social

networks, a printed poster with an introduction to the project, and another poster with information about the Albergo Della Vita Foundation and its Varcare la Soglia program, as well as, a catalogue of each exhibition with all the photographs displayed and their respective authors and collaborators.

We have completed four of the five exhibitions. In all of them, we provided a brief introduction to the AMASS project and the #daimieiocchi laboratories to contextualize the visitors, followed by the educators, photographers, and the youth's words. Thereafter, people were invited to view the exhibit, and drinks and snacks were provided. The formats and arrangement of each exhibition were adapted to the conditions presented in each neighborhood:

#### o #Baggiodaimieiocchi, Milan

After obtaining authorization from the municipality, the photographs were exhibited on a wall under a bridge in the district by attaching the photographs, printed on paper, directly onto the wall using glue. Given the large dimensions of the space, the



Fig. 5. Photographs of the exhibitions by Carolina Gutiérrez Novoa, PACO Design Collaborative.

photographs were printed in A4 and A3 formats. Up to 50 people attended the event.

#### o **#Ponticellidaimieiocchi, Naples**

The photographs of the children who participated in the laboratory in Naples were exhibited in the Communal Garden of Ponticelli. We were allowed to use the space where the foundation already does some activities. For this occasion, we printed a large-scale photo of each participant, which was arranged on a stick and then displayed along the wall available in the space. The rest of the selection, in 10x15 cm prints, were hung inside a tent set up on-site. Twenty people attended the event.

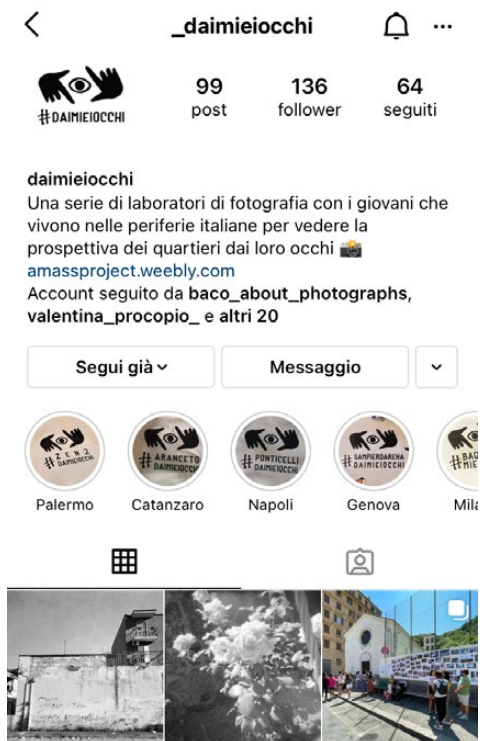
#### o **#Arancetodaimieiocchi, Catanzaro**

In Catanzaro, the exhibition was held outside the foundation's headquarters and took on a more participatory character thanks to the educators. One photograph per participant was printed in a large and rigid format; the rest of the photographs were printed on 10x15 cm paper and hung on the walls.

The coordinator of this center, who has been working in the field for more than 20 years, took this opportunity to deepen the educational objectives, actively involving the children and adolescents, with whom they organized a short opening and participatory activities, such as inviting visitors to enter a circle made by the youth holding the large-format photographs to select one and share their motivations for that choice. This activity created an enriching moment for the participants, giving them a greater sense of the value of their creative efforts. Up to 50 people attended the event.

#### o **#Sampierdarenadaimieiocchi, Genoa**

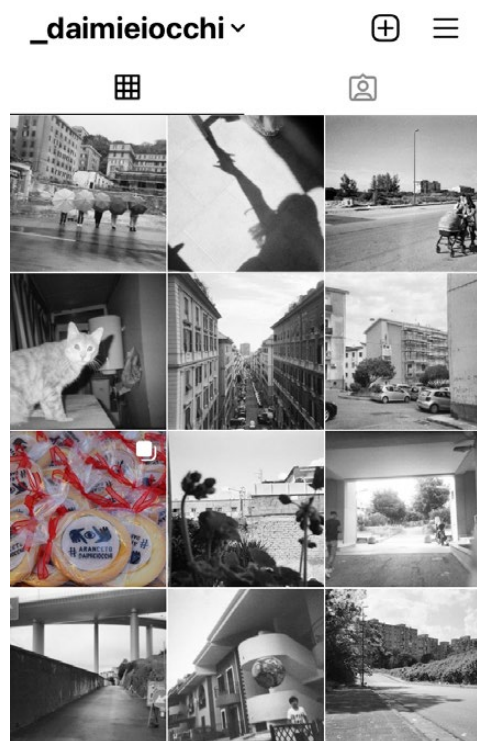
For this exhibition, we were able to utilize the wall of the communal football field near the foundation's office, which was a white wall facing the street with pedestrian traffic. Thanks to the dimensions of the wall, we could print the photos in A4 and A3 formats on laminated paper, which allowed us to adhere them to the wall and leave them there without any problems, should it rain. This was the only exhibition that could remain on-site for more days. Up to 20 people attended the event.

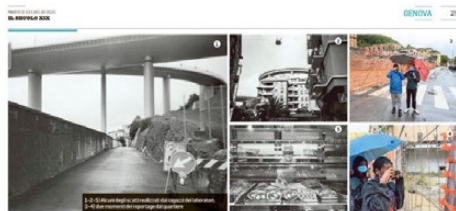


Figs. 6-7.

## 2.Instagram channel

To disseminate the results of the experiments to a larger audience, an Instagram account (@\_daimieiocchi) has been set up. Currently, it has about 100 posts and 150 followers. The posts are mainly photos made by the participants and some of the laboratories' lessons and the final exhibitions. In the highlighted stories, it is possible to visit all the experiments in the different cities.





## L'anima della periferia negli scatti dei bambini in Valpolcevera «Noi vi vediamo così»

LA FOTOGRAFIA

**Ricordi d'infanzia**  
Sono le immagini più preziose dell'infanzia. E in questa rubrica, che si chiama "L'Anima della periferia", si raccontano le storie dei bambini che vivono nelle periferie delle città. In questa rubrica, che si chiama "L'Anima della periferia", si raccontano le storie dei bambini che vivono nelle periferie delle città.



Il bambino che ha scattato la foto del suo compagno di squadra.

Il progetto, ideato e realizzato da un gruppo di giovani fotografi, ha permesso di raccontare la vita nelle periferie delle città. In questa rubrica, che si chiama "L'Anima della periferia", si raccontano le storie dei bambini che vivono nelle periferie delle città. In questa rubrica, che si chiama "L'Anima della periferia", si raccontano le storie dei bambini che vivono nelle periferie delle città.



## FIRST INSIGHTS

### The importance of using a multidisciplinary approach

The collaborative job between the design and research team (PACO Design Collaborative), the educators of the Albero della Vita Foundation and the local photographers, allowed a constant updating of the rhythm of the lessons, timing and complexity of the activities that could be carried out according to each reality, which conceded an optimal alignment of the research, the educational objectives and the interests toward the final results.

Promoting a continuous dialogue among all the actors, enabled everyone to learn from each other to make the experience as fruitful as possible for the youth. It was

Figs. 8-9.

## 3. Articles in newspapers

To reach local administrators and, consequently, citizens in the cities where we have worked, we have asked local journalists to write articles about the experiments.

To date, three articles have appeared in newspapers:

- Two articles in the newspaper, *Gazzetta del Sud*, in Catanzaro, Italy.
- One article in the newspaper, *Il Secolo XIX*, in Genova, Italy.

a harmonious commitment between the disciplines of design, education and photography.

### o Educational achievements through art

Three aspects can be considered to be the educational achievements when teaching an artistic discipline, such as analogue photography, to young people in situations of marginalization and poverty:

**1. Responsibility and patience.** Working with an analogue camera allows the youth to experience a sense of responsibility. This tool (the camera) belongs to them from the first day of the laboratory until the end of the activities, and they are solely responsible for its proper functioning. Moreover, the lack of immediacy of the results (as the photographs taken with 35mm film have to be developed) also helped them foster patience.

The youth discovered that the functioning of digital cameras, in their case, taking photos with a mobile phone or a tablet, is based on capturing light on a photosensitive film. The fact that the number of photos available is limited with an analogue camera due to the length of a physical roll of film, required them have to think about and select what to photograph before shooting the picture. They also had to consider technical aspects, such as focus, framing, and available light, which in this case, cannot be previewed on a screen. This added greater complexity to the exercise of taking photographs because, while it distances them from what they are used to, it simultaneously pushes them to be "more conscious" of what they do, to work on the intention, and to consider the meaning behind their decisions.

**2. Commitment and respect.** The fact that the participants had to wait and show up in class to see the results of their efforts (and receive a new roll of film), encouraged them to attend the laboratory sessions and to respect the timing of an analogue process that was unfamiliar to them. The implementation of participatory art activities was invaluable in engaging the participants throughout the process, as well as encouraging them to see their results in a public exhibition that depended solely on their efforts and commitment. The excellent job of the educators contributed to enhancing the participants' commitment to the process. Moreover, involving the participants' families was essential, as they are a fundamental component of fostering discipline and, consequently, respect for the commitment that is made when working with minors.

**3. Self-awareness.** Self-awareness was developed by an exercise that was repeated twice during the laboratory. The participants had to stop and look carefully and individually at the analogue photographs, taken one or two weeks before, and then select a few of them to share with their peers and explain their motivation for taking the shots. This enabled them to move from a concrete image to an abstract concept. This helped them observe and reflect on their lives and their experiences with their loved ones and in their neighborhoods, which are practices they are not used to doing. In some cases, we could observe how the VL exercise helped them better articulate their ideas. This has facilitated their ability to engage in reflective thinking and critical thinking. It has also enabled them to work with intention, which has invited them to reflect on the value of their thoughts, opinions, and actions, promoting a greater sense of self-awareness and accountability if they want to bring about positive change.

## o Ethnographic outcomes

The strategy of developing the same laboratory in five different cities from the north to the south of Italy enabled us to learn more about the similarities and differences experienced by children and adolescents in situations of geographical and/or socio-economic marginalization. On the one hand, we observed differences in the photographed objects according to age, with the youngest participants' photographs being linked to their closest world, such as their family, friends, and pets, mainly, situations in which they experience joy, security, and love. On the other hand, the adolescents predominantly selected objects outside their immediate circle and began to look at wider world with a more conscious and critical gaze.

We could also appreciate differences concerning the surrounding geographical context in which the children and adolescents live. As the photographs are taken spontaneously or with intention, but not mounted or edited, we can state they are a true reflection of the participants' reality. There are several differences in what the youth pay attention to depending on the environments they inhabit. It is common to see many photographs of animals in rural contexts, as well as many photographs of nature taking by children and adolescents living in urban contexts, pointing out, for instance, their absence and desire for it.

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# Malta



# 10

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## Being Positive about being HIV-Positive: Tackling stigma and misinformation through Theatre-based research

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**Keywords** - theatre based intervention, HIV knowledge, sexual health, stigma reduction

The research project 'Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture' (AMASS) has involved partners in the development and implementation of various arts-based studies with different social groups. While planning for the AMASS testbed, the University of Malta opted to work on a different societal challenge for each experiment. The testbed covered areas as diverse as health, migration, urban development and gentrification, intellectual disability and challenges faced by the elderly. This variety allows for a broader reach and dissemination of results amongst different communities and stakeholders in the country. Reaching more communities potentially gives more publicity to the goals of socially engaged arts, hence

helping to give social engagement a more strategic role in cultural discourse and policy on a national level.

**1.** This article will describe a pilot study conducted by the University of Malta AMASS team in 2020-2021, focusing on the team's work with a creative entity, an NGO and themes that evolved throughout the development of the study. A more detailed analysis of assessment strategies will be presented in a separate University of Malta article. For its pilot study, the University of Malta team decided to focus on a topic that is largely characterised by misinformation, stigma and harmful stereotyping in the local context: HIV. The topic was suggested by the team's supporting

creative enterprise, Culture Venture, while the research process was developed over a series of meetings that involved various stakeholders, including MGRM (Malta LGBTIQ rights movement). Research on this project was quite challenging, given the fact that the topic is considered sensitive and relates to the health conditions of persons living in Malta and also Maltese individuals based outside the country. Initial meetings suggested that this 'taboo' topic was discussed openly by virtually nobody in the country and that there was no real 'community' of persons living with HIV. This meant that, throughout the project process, the researchers and the artistic team collaborated closely and were consistently mindful of the socially sensitive aspect of the subject. Spaces for feedback from the participants, MGRM as well as other theatre practitioners were put in place at crucial points of the process to ensure the subject was dealt with ethically and sensitively. The methodology used throughout, starting from the interviews, which were administered by the MGRM, to collect the participants' stories right through the scriptwriting and the performance considered the treatment of the participants and their right to confidentiality and anonymity (Sieber & Stanley, 1988). Two work-in-progress zoom reading sessions were held for a select invited audience, made up of MGRM members and theatre practitioners, whose feedback after each session was taken on board with consequent significant changes made to the script and the very title.

Arts-based research methods in educational and community-based settings are well-researched (Coemans & Hannes, 2017) while arts-based research projects with participants in medical environments or individuals experiencing challenges affecting their health such as arts-based health research (ABHR)

are benefitting from an increase in interest amongst academic communities, health care workers, artists and policy-makers. Research making use of health-related arts-based methods has shown enhanced engagement of audiences and participants in their participation in the arts (Parsons et al., 2017). Arts-based methods in health settings have been shown to provide researchers, especially those working within a researcher-as-practitioner paradigm, with meaningful information about lived experiences of health and illness (Archibald & Blines, 2021).

In studies relating to arts-based research about HIV, it has been found that participatory, arts-based approaches to research contribute positively to HIV-prevention interventions and other interventions relating to gender injustices (Wood, 2012). Performance-arts based projects about HIV with young people have been shown to have educational benefits and to improve baseline HIV knowledge amongst workshop participants (Campbell et al., 2009). International research in fields like Cultural Geography about countries with a high prevalence rate of HIV has shown that the arts can help to counter fear and taboo and facilitate dialogue, leading to attitudinal and behavioural change (Nabulime & McEwan, 2010). In contrast, no research about participatory practices in the arts and HIV exists until now in Malta.

The pilot study at the University of Malta revolved around the societal challenge of stigmatisation and misinformation about HIV in Malta by focusing on this research question: How can theatre advocate for the rights of persons living with HIV? This question was approached through a combination of arts-based methods, qualitative methods and quantitative methods of research, which has been shown to facilitate integration of data as well as data analysis



Fig. 1. (left) The poster used for the online rehearsed reading of the performance. Photo: Chris Jung

Fig. 2. The poster used for the performance. Design: Bloom Creative



and concept formation (Archibald & Gerber, 2018). The project in Malta aimed to involve persons living with HIV in the creation of a script leading to a play in Maltese about their lived experiences. However, participating persons living with HIV in Malta contacted by MGRM requested complete anonymity due to the stigma associated with their condition. This meant that the participatory aspect of the creative project was largely indirect, and negotiations between participants and the research team always passed through an intermediary support group, MGRM. Christian Jung, a Danish HIV activist and also an actor by profession, was the only person living with HIV who accepted to take part in the whole process and in fact, he also performed in the play. One of the main outcomes that emerged from the arts-based, qualitative and quantitative methods that the team employed is that persons living with HIV in Malta feel stigmatised yet would like to portray their condition in a positive light. This led to the final version of the play being given a new title (*Il-Pozittivi* or 'The Positives') and publicised as a comedy. This change in title and

overall approach to the theme was also reflected in the poster used to publicise the play: while the first poster (Figure 1) used for the rehearsed reading showed a rather ambiguous naked male torso in black and white, the second poster (Figure 2) used for the online filmed version had a bright pink background and showed the colourful characters in a playful mood.

Data collection methods were varied. Anonymous interviews between social workers and persons living with HIV were conducted in the early stages of research. Other MGRM members were also invited to participate in an online survey prepared by the University of Malta research team. Data generated during interviews and discussions with a participating actor living with HIV helped to develop the play's script. An online rehearsed reading with an audience composed of MGRM members and members of the local theatre community was held. The reading was followed by an open discussion, during which several aspects of the play like the script, characters and social issues surrounding HIV in Malta were debated.



Fig. 3.A still taken during online rehearsals with actors and production team.

The audience was also invited to participate in an evaluation survey. Following this rehearsed reading, the script writer and theatre director revised the play's script based on audience feedback and the title of the play was changed. Delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and other factors led to some changes in the play's cast. A second online reading was held with a limited audience for further feedback. A theatre owned by the University of Malta was then used to rehearse and film the play in a more professional setting, and two audiences made of members of the research team and MGRM members functioned as the play's audience. MGRM members present at these performances were invited to fill in paper and pencil audience surveys. Unfortunately, the numbers of people present during these events was restricted due to Covid-related regulations in place at the time. Finally, the filmed play was shown online to

a general public, and all viewers were invited to fill in online audience surveys. MGRM members were also invited to attend this online filmed event in order to collect their feedback through the audience survey. Several dissemination activities on social media, television and the press helped to throw a spotlight on the play and HIV-related challenges.

An analysis of the integrated data shows that there is an interest to use the arts to contribute to the promotion of the rights of persons affected by HIV. This emerged in the pre- and post-assessment surveys and also in the interviews with persons living with HIV conducted in the initial stage of the research project.

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Fig. 4 (page 106). The characters of 'Axel' (Stephen Mintoff) and 'Marcus' (Chris Jung) during the performance. Photo: Elisa von Brockdorff





Fig. 5. The character of 'Susan' (Josette Ciappara) during the performance. Photo: Elisa von Brockdorff

The idea that art can be used to raise awareness of the realities of persons' lives was discussed during the interviews. A large percentage of audience members in the first online reading also indicated that they would like to learn more both about HIV issues and about similar artistic activities. Many participants in the survey evaluated the online reading positively and indicated that their expectations of socially engaged arts are high. The majority also indicated that they would consider attending similar artistic events in the future, which demonstrates that there is definitely scope for other researchers and theatre companies to develop projects revolving around similar health-related societal challenges in Malta.

The data also revealed that *Il-Pozittivi* had made the audience understand the challenges that people living with HIV face because of stigma, lack of information and misinformation in Maltese society about this condition. Various members in the audience mentioned that, prior to watching the performance, they were not aware that the medication exists for persons living with HIV that helps them get an undetectable viral load, and that this means that they do not pass HIV on, not even through sex. The audience reported clear significant positive changes in HIV knowledge and HIV awareness after watching *Il-Pozittivi*, and consequently their attitudes changed. Previous international research based on theatre-based interventions, also about sex health

education, mainly targeted towards adolescents have shown similar results. The fact that *Il-Pożittivi* was performed in Maltese by an all Maltese cast, except for one actor, could have made it all the more real and relatable for the audience; Lieberman et al.'s study in 2012, reveals that when the actors resemble the audience in terms of age, gender, race, the theatre based-intervention is more effective, certainly more than the traditional teaching methods which the control group in the same study was administered. Not only are such interventions more effective and acceptable than traditional teaching methods but the effects also last longer (Lieberman et al. 2012; Lightfoot et al. 2015, Taggart et al. 2016). *Il-Pożittivi* clearly had an impact on people's attitudes towards discrimination and this was done mainly through changes in HIV knowledge and HIV awareness and the empathy with the characters.

An important category that emerged from a thematic analysis of the interviews was the utter lack of communication and support amongst HIV positive persons in Malta. There is no real community or support group and the reason for this is fear and stigma:

*I would like to have more contact with other people who are positive, I guess, and see what I could do, that is part of the reason of why I wanted to take part in this (project).  
(Participant 2 – interview)*

But it remains a desire, a desire and simultaneously a fear to reach out, that is echoed by other participants in their interviews. This theme was picked up by the script writer and developed in *Il-Pożittivi*. One of the key messages underlying the whole performance is actually the beauty of connecting; connecting and helping others who are living the same challenges

with HIV. This theme is a red thread that weaves through the tapestry of the script. Susan, the only female character living with HIV in the play, is a bubbly, loud, perhaps overfriendly character at times (Figure 5). She is the one who starts a conversation at the clinic where none of the clients dare talk to each other. She gives out her business card to them while her house is an open house for all and in the last scene she manages to get all the characters together for a feast where all lies are revealed. *Il-Pożittivi* portrays the possibilities, opportunities and impact that having the right attitude to life and connecting with others could result in.

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## Malta



# 11

## Assessment methods for socially-engaged arts AMASS studies

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### INTRODUCTION

Socially engaged arts studies such as *Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture* (AMASS) that aim to involve a large number of participants from various peripheral communities in various innovative performing and visual arts activities and to design service solutions to address new and existing societal challenges require appropriate methodological solutions. Since AMASS aims to collect new evidence about the role of arts and culture in mitigating societal challenges through the arts, and due to a large number of involved participants from various peripheral communities who are usually difficult to access and include in collaborative community-based socially engaged arts, this study applies a comprehensive and flexible mixed methods approach to collect the evidence necessary for policymaking and the delivery

of new, research-based culturally-focused approaches to socially engaged arts. This mixed methods approach was considered as the most appropriate for AMASS study because it aims to apply a collaborative approach to data collection and analysis and, in this way, empower and support participants to address some of the pressing social challenges in the increasingly diverse European county.

There are various definitions of the mixed methods approach. Despite the term being relatively new (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007), this approach has a long tradition (Guest, 2013) in the research domain of advocacy for social change (Hall, 2003). Tashakkori & Creswell (2007, p. 4) stated that in mixed methods studies, "the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches

or methods in a single study". This research design involves a combination of exploratory and explanatory methods (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). It also provides the opportunity for an "objective approach that is contextually, historically, and culturally situated, embraces the subjectivity of individuals being studied, and doesn't hide the values of the researcher" (Cortina, 2015, p. 395). In short, the mixed methods approach was selected for this study because its applications allow a dialogical, creative, critical and participatory approach (Taylor & Raykov, 2020) that can meet complex research objectives and answer various research questions AMASS study addresses.

Following several waves of debates regarding methodological and epistemological issues of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003), an increasing number of scholars accept mixed methods as a third methodological movement (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). Their views are based on philosophical foundations of pragmatism, transformative-emancipation, dialectics, and critical realism (Shannon-Baker, 2016).

Pragmatism emphasises that knowledge is both real and constructed and requires communication and shared meaning-making (Biesta, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A critical realism perspective as a paradigm for social science (Bhaskar, 1975) claims that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are partial viewpoints. A full understanding of any research problem requires diverse viewpoints and dialogue (Maxwell & Mittlepalli, 2010). Similarly, the dialectical approach (Greene & Hall, 2010) emphasises the need for social change, pluralism of viewpoints, the need for "respectful dialogue" and the usefulness of tensions between different approaches that lead to a more comprehensive understanding of research problems.

The AMASS study emphasises the participatory approach, co-creation and the empowerment of marginalised communities and the most appropriate paradigm to adopt for this study is the *transformative-emancipatory perspective*. This paradigm accentuates intentional collaboration and positive relations with marginalised social groups. It also matches the researchers' positions on values, social justice, inequity, ethical and epistemological beliefs (Mertens, 2003).

Based on one or more of the above-mentioned philosophical approaches, an increasing number of arts studies use mixed methods. This approach is chosen because of its ability to deal with the complexity of research problems that they examine (Fitzpatrick, 2014; Shulman, 1979). This approach also realises the holistic approaches to research (Leavy, 2020), and facilitates the development of critical consciousness (Holm, 2008), "to complicate and to extend the analyses of qualitatively driven research" based on a dialectical approach (Shannon-Baker, 2015). It also solves practical problems based on the pragmatists paradigm (Leavy, 2017). According to Leavy (2017, p. 9), "mixed methods research (MMR) involves collecting, analysing, and in some way integrating both quantitative and qualitative data in a single project" in order to enhance single method approach to synergy and since qual and quant data can inform each other (Modell, 2009). There is general agreement among scholars who use mixed methods research that the critical, and also most difficult (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010) part of the mixed methods approach is to integrate qualitative and quantitative data in order to obtain a rich a comprehensive understanding of the pervasiveness of a research issue and to understand both, the context as well as experiences of the participants (Leavy, 2017; Creswell, J., & Plano-Clark, V. (2007).

## QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

In addition to interviews (Seidman, 2006), focus group interviews (Bloor et al., 2001) and artists' diaries (Bijoux & Myers, 2006), qualitative data collection also included the PhotoVoice technique. This assisted the researchers in gaining insight into the process and the outcomes of the innovative artistic production through AMASS testbed activities. PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) was applied as a well-theoretically grounded technique based on Paulo Freire's (1972, 1973) critical pedagogy and education for critical consciousness and feminist theory (Wang, 1999) as an inclusive and collaborative a community-based participatory action research (PAR) method which consists of a "process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369).

## QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Quantitative data collection was focused on three aspects of the participants' engagement in arts: their past engagement, present experience in socially engaged arts (interests in learning about arts, attained knowledge and skills, attitudes, value, motivation, and ability to apply attained knowledge), and plans for future involvement in arts-related activities. The selected strategy for data collection based on a quasi-experimental pre-post design (Reichardt, 2009; Schneider & Rohmann, 2021) was designed to make it possible for researchers to answer research questions and evaluate the short-term outcomes of the AMASS project. The nature of testbed activities necessarily required the participation of a relatively small number (six to twelve) participants in the various testbed activities. Here, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed to provide a better

understanding of the attitudes and experiences of participants in socially engaged artistic activities.

The study also included cross-sectional surveys for the collection of visitors' experiences and opinions about socially engaged arts. It was expected that 30 to 40 visitors of each testbed study would accept to participate in this study. All pre-test, post-test and visitors' surveys contained comparable sets of core questions related to the experience and attitudes toward socially engaged arts. Therefore, integrating data from all studies was expected to provide sufficient responses for reliable conclusions about the main aspect of socially engaged arts and their impact on the empowerment of participants and their wellbeing. Due to the limited possibilities for contacts during the Covid-19 pandemic, the data collection strategy was adapted to the conditions at the time of data collection, and in addition to the paper-and-pencil surveys, online surveys and standardised computer-assisted or online interviews (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014) were applied to protect the participants and researchers of infection according to the official social distancing measures at the time of data collection.

In addition to the standard forms of survey questions for collecting quantitative data such as multiple-choice, yes-no questions, Likert scales and open-ended questions (Bryman, 2016; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2012), the collection of quantitative data also included an adapted version of semantic differential scales (Osgood, 1964). The semantic differential scales were part of the surveys for all five testbed studies. They included standard bipolar scales (Stoklasa, Talášek & Stoklasová, 2019; Asghar, Torrens & Harland, 2020) to evaluate testbed activities. The main objective was to examine and compare participants' attitudes toward different aspects of socially engaged arts.

This approach was selected to enable comparisons of different activities and exploration of affective, behavioural, and cognitive (ABC) dimensions of participants' attitudes toward socially engaged arts. A comparable shooter set of bipolar scales was also included in cross-sectional visitors' surveys to examine their experiences of attending various performances and exhibitions that resulted from the AMASS socially engaged testbed studies.

### QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This study is primarily qualitative and included textual, audio, visual, and video materials collected through the AMASS testbed studies. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse the transcripts from interviews, focus groups, and artists' diaries (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009). Upon completion of the testbed studies, analyses also included photos and video material produced during the testbed studies. The analysis was supported by Maxqda software for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). All transcripts were imported into Maxqda, and thematic analysis was used as a technique. During the initial phase of the analysis, the qualitative material was reviewed through several iterations and coded to produce the initial results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially, the collected data were organised into descriptive codes and subsequently developed into analytical codes in order to describe and explain participants' experiences and attitudes toward socially engaged arts. Based on this inductive data-driven approach, the identified initial codes were organised into potential themes and finally integrated into themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Obtained results from the thematic analysis were also related to quantitative data and the research questions focused on the participants' attitudes and experiences in each testbed study.

### QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data analysis in the study of socially engaged arts included exploratory, descriptive and inferential statistical to describe and identify patterned relationships between various factors that determine participants' engagement and the outcomes of their participation in socially engaged arts (Agresti et al., 2018; Tukey 1977). All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software. Results of the descriptive analysis were reported using means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics and difference tests among various groups of participants were conducted using comparisons between the means and t-tests and analysis of variance. Since the number of participants in testbed studies was relatively small, appropriate non-parametric techniques were used as the main techniques for comparisons (Field, 2009; Siebert & Siebert, 2017). In addition, data visualisation techniques (Evergreen, 2019) were combined with qualitative data analysis to illustrate the main patterns of participants' responses and explain the identified tendencies.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

First results from national testbed studies already demonstrate valuable results. Studies of HIV positive persons who contributed to the development of a theatre play (Gatt, Raykov & Vella, 2021) and a study of migrants' experiences in a screen printing workshop demonstrate various positive outcomes regarding the participants' experiences and attitudes toward socially engaged arts. The participants in the studies mentioned above have exceptionally high expectations from socially engaged arts regarding the improvement of the status of the members of marginalized social

groups. Most of them also demonstrate positive experiences during their participation or attendance in theatre plays. Our studies also demonstrate that the participants in testbed studies much more frequently perceive discrimination toward their community than it is usually reported in studies based on the opinions of the general national population.

Also, the results demonstrate the strong interest of the visitors to attend socially engaged arts events. This is a promising indicator of the impact that socially engaged arts projects have on the public since the increased awareness of such issues can change public opinions, improve the status of marginalized groups, and contribute to overall social cohesion. The great majority of the participants and visitors indicated their readiness to participate in similar projects, recommend participation to other people to attend events that present the results of socially engaged art projects. Overall, the first results are encouraging and demonstrate the need for expanding the practice of socially engaged arts in order to contribute to the quality of life of the local and broader community members.

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# Portugal



# 12

## Learning Spaces Pilot study in Portugal

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APECV

### INTRODUCTION

As part of the AMASS Project: Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture (870621 — AMASS — H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2018-2019-2020/H2020-SC6- TRANSFORMATIONS-2019)<sup>1</sup> a pilot project was carried out in Portugal with the collaboration of two non-profit organizations - APECV (Portuguese Association of Teachers of Visual Expression and Communication) and ASSOL (Social Solidarity Association for vulnerable people in the region of Lafões).

To better understand the pilot project, where the context in which it operates was important, we begin this article with the problem of social inequalities with minority communities in the Portuguese context. We

will focus on the reality of people with mental health characteristics, important to understand some participants in this study, and its state in Portugal, where there is a diversity of access to opportunities and resources.

More than 50% of the participants in this study belong to a social minority of people with mental illnesses diagnosis, living in a rural area of the interior of the country called Oliveira de Frades. This geographical location distances them even further from the necessary resources, especially with the global pandemic experience (Covid19) lived during the experience.

This project was carried out with the participation of the AMASS Project partner, the Portuguese Association of Teachers of Visual Expression and Communication

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ulapland.fi/AMASS>

(APECV)<sup>2</sup>, and the AMASS stakeholder ASSOL<sup>3</sup>, a social solidarity Association for vulnerable people in the region of Lafões, during the period June 2020-December 2020 with 21 participants. The study was conducted using a methodological approach rooted in participatory action research integrating arts based collaborative tools, following the main theoretical approaches of both organisations: Freire's pedagogy (Freire, 1972) for APECV and Interdependence Pedagogy ("Gentle Teaching") (John McGee, 2007) for ASSOL.

Paulo Freire's Pedagogy is developed in Brazil, in the 60s, with a humanist basis, of adult education, which provides the individual with autonomy, critical awareness and decision-making capacity. This theory is based on respect for the student and the achievement of autonomy. The Interdependence Pedagogy or Gentle Teaching is a method used primarily with people with disabilities, is based on the inherent equality of all people and the use of non-violence and aims to make vulnerable people feel safe, loved, involved in community life and able to love.

## PORTUGAL

Portugal is a country with a small land surface, about 91 000 km<sup>2</sup>, in southwestern Europe, with about 11 million inhabitants. The country's coast is the most inhabited, being a country with many social and cultural inequalities, due to the difference of opportunities and cultural offer in the interior of the country, compared to the coast. As the coastal area offers the most employment opportunities and access to cultural events. The Portuguese population is ageing, with an increase in average life expectancy

and a decrease in birth rates (Infopedia, 2021).

In terms of mental health, which is important for understanding the relevance of this study, Portugal is the second country in Europe with the highest prevalence to psychiatric illnesses (Caldas, 2013).

"the issue of access to care in Mental Health has been one of the most in-depth areas in recent years, and several of its determinants have already been identified:

- o Stigma and ignorance regarding mental illness;
- o Shortage of human and structural resources;
- o Low priority in terms of policy option;
- o Disproportionately low budget for the burden of disease involved;
- o Inadequate organization of psychiatric services, with concentration in large centralized institutions and poorly articulated with primary health care." (Plano Nacional para a Saúde Mental, 2012)

There is still a long way to go to ensure quality access for all to education, health and culture.

According to the WHO (World Health Organization) Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020, Portugal, like other countries, will have four major challenges in the area of Mental Health by 2020 (World Health Organization, 2013):

Strengthen leadership and promote effective management in the field of Mental Health;

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.apecv.pt>

<sup>3</sup> <https://assol.pt>

Provide comprehensive, integrated and reactive Mental Health and social services within communities;

Implement strategies for promotion and prevention in the field of Mental Health;

Strengthen information systems, scientific evidence and research in the field of Mental Health.

## CONTEXT OF COVID-19

At the end of 2019, the planet begins to be hit by a global pandemic, with the virus Sars Cov 2 (COVID-19), suddenly transforming social dynamics, forcing urgent adaptations.

In Portugal, the COVID-19 pandemic started in February 2020 with the first cases identified and required the general confinement of the population in March 2020. This confinement increased the differences between communities, placing marginalized communities even more in the margins, because they didn't have access to new technologies, which was the only adopted alternative for communication, health treatment, cultural and educational services in many Portuguese and European organizations. (CARMO; TAVARES; CÂNDIDO, 2020)

Unfortunately, the AMASS project started with these contingencies, forcing all agents of action to think about completely new methods of action that would respond to the characteristics of this context. In Portugal all in-person activities had to be postponed and all community had to think differently about working together in distance.

## PARTICIPANTS

From June to December 2020, the project began with the addition of 21 people (social designers, researchers, caregivers, artists and people with multiple disabilities). For the constitution of this group, two organizations joined: APECV and ASSOL, who provides therapy, leisure and professional activities for people with mental health limitations in the rural area of Lafões.

The two organizations had already worked together in the past, which facilitated the contact and trusting relationships between the participants, very important for the development of the project, which requires knowledge among the group's participants for greater loyalty, participation and credibility among all.

### -APECV: Association of Teachers of Visual Expression and Communication

This non-profit Portuguese Association was founded in 1989 and has been working continuously for the quality of artistic education for all. Having as main objectives:

- A. Develop transcultural methods for art education: working with art educators, artists and teachers from around the world in the development and experimentation of educational and social art practices;
- B. Develop pedagogies through art to foster competencies to equip learners to social and environmental challenges: Design and implement art education training events to develop learning methods fostering creativity; visual communication; art expression; design thinking; problem solving skills through art, crafts and design processes and technologies.

C. Implement learning through small scale arts programs for communities: Identify groups with nonexistent art education programs or a lack of offer of art activities as learning, specially marginalized groups (disability, minorities, social excluded). Establishing protocols with stakeholders (associations; municipalities; social centers; charity organizations, schools; etc.) offering learning through arts' activities for their members/users/learners. Design a coherent program of workshops with the participants responding to the needs of the community.

In this pilot project, four staff members participated, specialists in social design, research, art education and participatory action research; three guest artists, one from performance area and two from plastic arts.

**-ASSOL (Association of Social Solidarity of Lafões - which supports adults with disabilities)**

ASSOL was founded in 1987 to be an instrument that facilitates the response of the community to the needs found in the communities of Lafões, namely to improve the life of adults with multiple disabilities.

ASSOL tries to increase the quality of life of people supported by pedagogy of interdependence approaches within the international network called Gentle Teaching (McGee, 2007), where affection, love and respect for individual abilities are valued.

From ASSOL, other participants in the the project were Two caregivers and 12 users.

**Ethical considerations**

All participants were volunteers. External Artists were invited by APECV and were paid for their work during the workshops, APECV researchers involved in AMASS project were paid for their work; educators who acted as observers and internal evaluators were part of APECV staff. The workshops were held during the ASSOL day care activities for the group of Wednesdays with people who accepted to integrate the project. All participants were explained the objectives of the project and how the study would be conducted. Permission to use real names and photographs and images with persons was sought using specific forms. All participants were legally entitled to sign consent forms.

**METHODOLOGY - ISOLATE WITH LOVE**

The Pilot project started in June 2020 and ended in December 2020, with the participants mentioned above and in various locations chosen by them.

To carry out the pilot project, we used a participatory action research methodology, where, in a collaborative approach, all participants contribute to the project's realization. With activist engagement inspired in the gentle teaching movement (McGee, 2007) and Paulo Freire's ideas for pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1992).

At the beginning and in preparation for the first session, APECV staff crafted a kit for ice-breaking activities under the motto "Isolate with Love", to unite all participants and build a connection to start the activities - a contract made through the gift (the gift was used to initiate connection between the participants). The kit slogan played with the words social isolation, rejecting the isolation of pandemic times. It claimed places and thoughts linked to love, acknowledging distance was necessary to take



Fig. 1. Kit isolate with love.

care of the other. The Kit consisted of a handmade bag and face mask (see figures 1-4) - with the motto Isolate with Love, a container to put water (synonymous with hydration and protection of the individual body, for greater immunity), a Polaroid camera (for each participant to take their photos to share with the group).

In the first session, held at ASSOL's headquarters, we all sat in a circle, with the safety distance, talked about the project, about individual interests, about the pandemic times we were experiencing and about everyone's wishes for the coming times and for the project.

This collaborative participation was maintained in all sessions, in which voices were heard, voices from

APECV team (researchers, educators and artists) and the voices of ASSOL users, their caregivers, researchers, artists or designers.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The sessions were built gradually and according to the group's wishes, divided into five sessions. We called 'stops' to each one of the session (as when we travel by bus), in these sessions we shared together what we were working on; made art works and drew the path to the next stop. The concept of STOP, for the sessions was understood as a pause to reflect about the journey we were experimenting together.



Figs. 2-4. First stop.

## ONE

At **the first stop**, 3 hours session in June 2020, in ASSOL's headquarters, we shared with all the participants the handmade kit: "Isolate with Love" (referenced above) and metaphorically opened a blank paper that would serve as a map for the sessions that followed, explaining we would make a joint journey during several months. We all have the same empty map, a map to be built by everyone. APECV team challenged the group to start a photovoice experiment, by taking photographs about the places where we learn. This challenge was important to show everyone our past, present and our desires for the future.

## TWO

At **the second stop**, 3 hours session in June 2020, in the ASSOL's garden, we talked about the photographs taken, the paths already taken and the ones we would like to take and share together, for a personal evolution. We talked about places of learning revealed in the photographs: schools, the ASSOL institution, people, family, books, television, newspapers... but other places of learning also emerged photographs:



shadows, light, silences, nature, rivers, small things, animals. Elements that made us understand an enormous sensitivity to our surroundings.

## THREE

Alfusqueiro River, 3 hours session in September 2020.

Some of the participants referred to the river as a place of learning and ASSOL caregivers arranged the next stop near one of the rivers of the photographs. The **third stop** took place on the banks of the river Alfusqueiro, where we felt the water, the breeze and the sounds around us. It was a storytelling activity, to share stories, with the mediation of the artist Dori Nigro, who brought us stories of his African and Brazilian ancestors connected to water. In the conversations we discovered the folk tales participants from ASSOL knew.

In the end of the session, Dori Nigro invited everyone to draw with line on a transparent fabric the cartographies of the paths we had made and symbolically uniting all the paths of the group, in a collective map.





Fig. 5. Second stop.

Between the third and fourth stop ASSOL caregivers invited us, from APECV to collaborate in the work people from ASSOL was doing: the interpretation of the legends of the lands of Lafões (important to better understand where they live; create relationships and imaginaries about the place/community), participants deepened the legends and drew the characters, which served as the basis for the work.

#### FOUR

The **fourth stop**, took place in the ASSOL hangar, a 3 hours workshop in September 2020 with the mediation of plastic artists, Juliana and Carlos. At this stop, the artists set up, at ASSOL's facilities, a

manual printing studio, where, in addition to sharing techniques, they built objects that made all the community proud: posters and bags inspired in the folk tales which inspired APECV designers to make a Product-Manifest.

#### FIVE

After the fourth session Participants from ASSOL invited participants from APECV to remix their narratives in visual forms. To exchange the works we used the postal services, because during these months, due to the Government measure to fight pandemic, ASSOL couldn't receive visitors. The artworks were exhibited in Oliveira de Frades public

library, the exhibition was organized by ASSOL. Due to the pandemic restrictions, we could only see it through the glass wall of the library.

## SIX

### Product-Manifest “Isolate with Love”

For three months we built a Product-Manifesto “Isolate with Love” that aims to react to the fragility of our times. A Product-Manifesto filled with symbolism, with characters from ASSOL folk tales that we can symbolically transport with us:

- o the drawings, starting from the legends of the places, to add to the images of our shared memories.
- o the lace, in the form of a mandala, invoking timeless dreams, to help us keep what is most dear to us.

All the pieces were made with attention, affection, patience, rigor and time that an object made individually and by hand takes. We want to take care of others, dress affections and spread hope.

APECV designers edited 5 drawings from ASSOL drawings about folk tales and the brand 'Isolar com Amor'. ASSOL participants chose 2 characters for embroidery. The first author of this paper received the sponsorship of textile company in Vila Nova de Gaia TEXIBÉRICA who produced 150 bags and masks with the embroideries. The product was put on sale in APECV webpage and ASSOL store from the The profit of this Product Manifesto revert to ASSOL.



Fig. 6. Product-Manifest “Isolate with Love”.

## SEVEN

### Exhibition - bridge with other communities

To finish this pilot project we stopped for the last time. This time was spend planning an preparing one exhibition in a city more than 100 km away from ASSOL's headquarters, in the area of the second largest city in Portugal, Porto, in the north of the country. The stakeholder was the contemporary art gallery Casa da Imagem who received the proposal

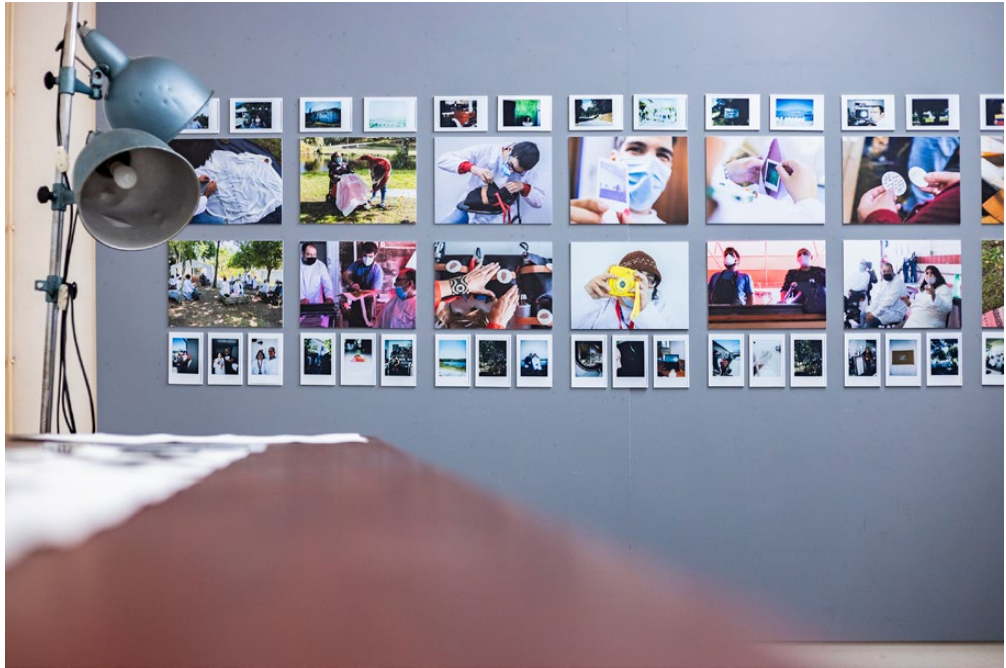


Fig. 7. Exhibition - bridge with other communities.

with great satisfaction and provided their largest room for the exhibition, which was available to view from December 2020 until April 2021.

With this exhibition, the work carried out was valued by sharing it with other communities (the public who had the opportunity to visit it), alerting them to social inequalities, to recognize the abilities of different people, to listen to their visual narratives for participants of the study, all of us, it served as personal emancipation, development of self-esteem, community pride, strengthening of desires and building new paths understanding our potential for transformation.

## CONCLUSIONS

when we started this project we didn't think it would be such an atypical year, but the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed that changes in the future will be constant and we have to start testing strategies that respond to the different changes needed.

Because the methods used in artistic practices in communities are based on issues inherent to contemporaneity: social problems, minorities, environment, sustainability, etc. with creative tools, the arts are capable of quicker adaptation.

Working with communities must be collaborative and participatory work, co-authored, so it is always new, created for a specific place, according to those involved. The work between ASSOL and APECV has proven that artistic strategies and practices improve the social, professional and human capacities of people with disabilities and those who are part of the group (people without disabilities).

In this article we show a working method, where patience, affection, love and time are essential for success. The process shows the way and the contributions of each member of the group are valued, giving autonomy and greater dependence to build the project on their own.

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## Portugal



# 13

## Evaluation of the pilot study in Portugal

Ângela Saldanha, Teresa Eça, Raquel Balsa and Célia Ferreira

APECV

The evaluation Acting on the Margin: Arts as Social Sculpture (AMASS) pilot study in Portugal was designed taking into account the community-driven approach to research, evaluation, and social change of Portuguese Association of Visual Expression and Communication (APECV) team. The Research group adopted participatory action research principles for evaluation. Central to the evaluation principles were the collaboration. Participants were involved in the same evaluation activities in a non-hierarchical structure. By participants we mean the researchers; artists; designers; educators; caregivers and people with mental disabilities who worked together during the period June 2020-December 2021 in the Pilot project. In a participatory action research project, it is essential that the strategies selected for management and support be based on operational principles that reflect

the values of mutual respect, maximum involvement, informed decision making, and power sharing assuring the availability of appropriate resources and support for individual team members who experience barriers to participation (Danley & Ellison, 1999). By refusing the distinction between researcher and researched, we aim to ensure equity of voice, leadership, and decision-making. Crucial in the pilot project was the objective of empowering people, through participation in the process of constructing and respecting different knowledges and capacities based on Freire's pedagogy (Freire, 1972). This lead us to structure evaluation as a conversation process, involving all the participants in every stage.

## THE GROUP

The research group included 21 members aged between 21 and 55 years old very different academic training and professional experiences.

From APECV: Four persons from the staff of the Portuguese Association of Visual Expression and Communication (APECV) working in the research group of the association, an independent participatory action research group, called Research Group on Arts Community and Education, engaged in transformative practices through arts and art education activism based on pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1992). And three APECV collaborating artists were invited to join, they were selected because of their experience in community art projects.

From ASSOL: Two caregivers and 12 users from ASSOL (Social Solidarity Association for vulnerable people in the region of Lafões). ASSOL is a solidarity organization funded by the Portuguese Social Security proving therapy; leisure and professional training for vulnerable people in a rural region of Portugal. They use a methodology based on pedagogy of interdependence, and are part of the international network 'gentle teaching' (McGee & Brown, 2007) (who consider that all people, with or without disabilities, should have the same opportunities, giving them autonomy, independence to build, through affection, more complete lives).

The group included nine people with so called average mental abilities and twelve men and women referred as suffering of diverse mental disabilities by the national Health System (four people born in Latin America, the others born in Portugal). As follows:

Raquel B, social designer and AMASS editor, who likes to work with communities in margins; Angela, social designer, researcher and AMASS coordinator in Portugal, who likes walking pedagogies and cartographies; Pancho, designer and caregiver in the Organization where the pilot project was carried out: ASSOL, he likes book bindery; one performance artist Dori Nigro, born in Brazil, he likes afrobrazilian rituals; two plastic artists Carlos and Juliana, they like art printing; art education researchers and educators Teresa and Celia, they like art education; caregiver Raquel A, she likes art therapy; Francisco, who practices in ASSOL daycare creative writing and illustrating activities; MariLucia, born in Venezuela, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, she likes photography; Vera, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, she likes embroidery; Deolinda, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, she likes embroidery; João Carlos, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, he likes philosophy; João Bonjour, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, he likes travelling abroad; António, born in Brazil, attends bindery activities in ASSOL, he likes storytelling; Rogério, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, he likes reading newspapers; Paulo Vera, born in Brazil, attends papier mâché activities in ASSOL, he likes photography; Carla, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, she likes art making; and Diogo, who attends bindery activities in ASSOL, he likes book bindery. We use the real names, as agreed in consent forms in order to reinforce the voice and authorship of participants in all stages of the research.

ASSOL: organization was selected for the Pilot project because it included a group of people social isolated, and also because of previous collaborations with APECV. The selection of the group in ASSOL was made by ASSOL caregivers, ensuring that all participants were volunteers for the project activities.

AMASS OBJECTIVES	APECV EXPECTATIONS	ASSOL EXPECTATIONS
<div><div>○ DEVELOPING MULTIDISCIPLINARY METHODS FOR CAPTURING, ASSESSING AND HARNESSING THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF THE ARTS</div><div>○ REDUCING ISOLATION AMONGST WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MINORITY GROUPS FROM PERIPHERAL EU REGIONS THROUGH VARIOUS FORMS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS.</div><div>○ EDUCATING WOMEN AND CHILDREN THROUGH VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND PHILOSOPHIES OF PARTICIPATION THAT ARE INFORMED BY ARTS-BASED APPROACHES</div><div>○ EVALUATE AND DEVELOP NEW POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR USING ARTS TO OVERCOME SOCIETAL CHALLENGES.</div><div>○ VALUING AND LEARNING THROUGH ALTERNATIVE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS WITH THE PURPOSE OF DECOLONISING INSTITUTIONS, ENABLE COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES.</div></div>	<div><div>○ INCREASE EXPERIMENTS FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS WITH GROUPS FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES.</div><div>○ DIVERSIFY ARTS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION.</div><div>○ ENABLE VISIBILITY OF DIFFERENT VOICES THROUGH ARTS-BASED APPROACHES.</div><div>○ PROMOTE EVIDENCE TO DEMONSTRATE THE CONTRIBUTE OF COMMUNITY ARTS TO OVERCOME SOCIETAL CHALLENGES.</div><div>○ CONVINCE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ARTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.</div></div>	<div><div>○ PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES THROUGH ARTS.</div><div>○ REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION: CONNECTING WITH OTHERS.</div><div>○ PROMOTING ACTIVITIES TO RAISE CULTURAL AWARENESS SELF-FULFILLMENT AND SOCIAL COMPETENCIES THROUGH ARTS.</div><div>○ EMANCIPATORY EXPERIENCES FOR THE PARTICIPANTS</div></div>

Table 1.

DESIGNING THE EVALUATION PLAN

Participatory evaluation implies that researchers, facilitators or professional evaluators collaborate in some capacity when doing an evaluation with individuals, groups or communities who have a decided stake in the program, development project, or other entity being evaluated (Cousins, 1998). In order to satisfy this condition the evaluation strategies and periods of evaluation were decided in advance through conversations between APECV staff and ASSOL staff, taking into account AMASS requirements for evaluation; APECV ongoing evaluation processes based on observation and focus groups and ASSOL evaluation methods based on periodical open questionnaires and focus group interviews.

INDICATORS

Through participatory action research lenses evaluation is a developmental process where, through the involvement of less powerful stakeholders in investigation, reflection, negotiation, decision making and knowledge creations individual participants and power dynamics in the socio-cultural milieu are changed (Cousins, 1998). AMASS project aims and objectives were explained to everyone during the invitation day were the group expectations for the project were expressed in a focus group interview in June 2020. The indicators for evaluation were further developed taking into account the different perspectives; AMASS international perspective; APECV perspective and ASSOL perspective (see table 1).

One of the first indicators agreed by APECV team and ASSOL caregivers was relevance, we wanted to check out if the project activities were significant for the participants and stakeholders. The second one was effectiveness, we wanted to check out if the objectives and expectations were achieved. We knew that our group was vulnerable and ethical issues should be crucial such as for example respect; beneficence; justice and equity. So all the members of APECV staff were reminded that people should be treated as autonomous and in same time we should protect people with diminished autonomy. The question being to maximize benefits and minimize risks for participants and, this was highly controversial in the decision to use real names and publish photographs of people. The publication of images of the process, activities and artifacts produced, develops in the group and in each element of the community a greater self-esteem, sense of belonging and pride in their work. By publishing photographs, without blurring, and real names, participants are more aware of the impact and value of their work outside their community.

According to social science research guidelines these data would be protected, but would it be a fair decision? To hide the voices, and deny public recognition of the visual stories of participants? We balanced the risks in light of justice and equity, and altogether we agreed that the different voices should be made public without loosing authorship.

## DESIGNING INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Evaluation tools and instruments for data collection were constructed as long as the project took shape. The group in ASSOL and APECV team had an evaluation culture based on conversations in circle, letting the conversation flow around few questions.

Moderated by facilitators (caregivers, researchers and observers) with skills in group facilitation, formal observation and data collection.

In terms of data collection, for ongoing evaluation and also to analysis evidence related to the agreed indicators, we decided to record photographs and videos during the activities (Raquel was the person responsible for it), taking notes and making a summary of the conversations during the sessions and during the meetings for preparation of the sessions, where evaluation issues could be present (Teresa and Angela were responsible for the coordination of notes). As far as findings emerged from the analysis of data collected they were shared with participants in the next group conversation. A final evaluation group conversation was conducted in the end of the pilot sessions (December 2021). We also decide to use a short written questionnaire with open questions in the end of the project, the questionnaire was designed by APECV coordinators and ASSOL caregivers. The application of the questionnaire with the group took place in the end of the Pilot (December 2021). This type of evaluation required relationship-building in order to let the conversations flow naturally integrating topics about expectations and achievements, produced a large amount of oral and image data requiring time and human capacity to analyze.

## FINDINGS

During the conversations, photographs and In the questionnaires, participants stressed several points that might help us to make a tentative list of findings:

- o The Project strengthen relations between local entities for joint work, such as: the relationship with the textile company, TEXIBÉRICA or with the art galleries;

o The Project promoted collaborative learning through art actions, with work carried out in groups, bringing together designers, artists, social agents;

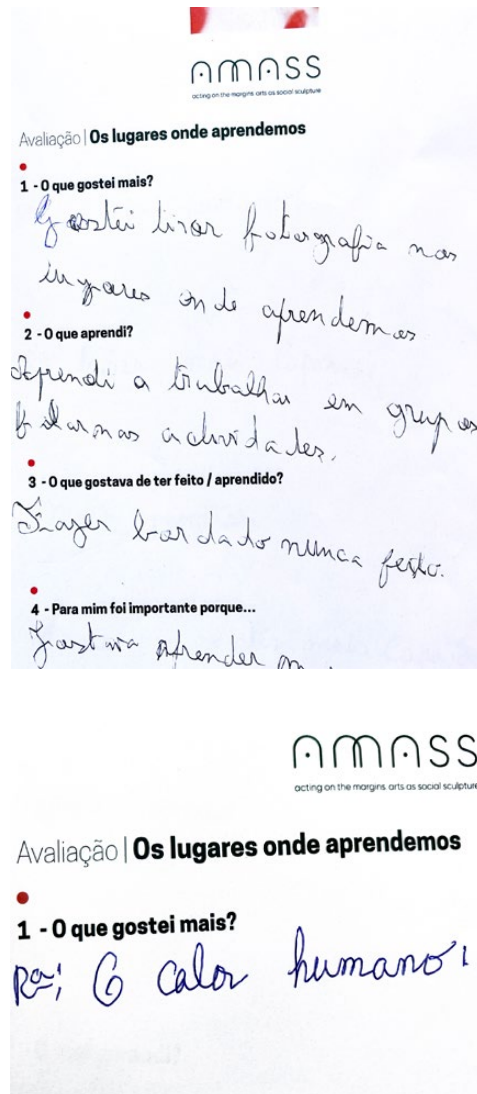
o The Project promoted visibility of the voices of minority groups, allowing, for example: the dissemination of their work and activities outside the local community;

o The Project built practices that generate intimacy and social relationships through art making.

## CONCLUSION

In the beginning of the project strengths, vulnerabilities, opportunities, and risks were listed to help us the planning. The situation of the Pandemic Covid-19 was a serious risk we would have to face and we would need flexibility, quick adaptation to changes in the timetable, cancellation of activities and events. Physical distance and social isolation threatened the project in many ways, we could not opt for virtual sessions with the group because many participants didn't have access to cellphones or computers connected to internet. We had to reduce the number of activities because of the lockdown measures and travelling restrictions, visitors were not allowed to go to ASSOL and ASSOL participants were closed at home during several months. This situation reduced the number of conversations; number of sessions and joint events during the planned exhibitions.

However, the team revealed adaptation capacities, and creativity to overcome the difficulties. The first conversations related with Learning Places, were a way to built strong relationships and understand the expectations of the participants, photovoice



Figs. 1-2

and storytelling activities were considered a good choice to begin by everyone. 'Isolate with love', the motto, was accepted as a reply to the situation and a symbol for hope in times of social distance, it was considered as a positive trust strategy. In between, a shared relationship was constructed by exchanging stories, the stories proposed by ASSOL about the folk tales and the interpretation and adaptation of the stories by APECV team of researchers, educators and artists bringing up technical expertise to produce the visuals and artifacts. Visibility of the voices in the two exhibitions, presentations in congresses, and articles wrote in the project webpage and journals helped to spread out our contribution for using arts to overcome societal challenges.

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# The United Kingdom



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## A Storytelling Method Reflection: Demonstrating and sharing immigrant heritage through an sps strategy during COVID-19

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### INTRODUCTION

Storytelling is an ancient art form and, as the act of telling a story has the potential to connect people, plays a central role in many diverse cultures (Sylaiou & Dafiotis, 2020). It is regarded as one of the oldest forms of teaching and learning, and can attract the attention and engagement of listeners or audiences, as well as evoke memories of people's past experiences (Villaseñor, 2007). The process of storytelling intertwines with the structure of people's social lives, and also strongly harmonises with the method by which the human memory works (Polletta et al., 2011). However, storytelling

is not just a tool for delivering information; it also represents a method of creating an immersive experience that helps listeners/audiences use their individual imaginations to understand the story content. Thus, it constitutes the expression of an experience, and also an experience in itself (Lewis, 2011). Storytelling has been described as the 'interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination' (National Storytelling Network, n.d.). Crafting and telling stories is motivating and memorable, and is mainly conducted in one of three ways: direct storytelling by storytellers, indirect storytelling by listeners, and

participatory storytelling involving both storytellers and listeners (Syllaiou & Dafiotis, 2020). Participatory storytelling, a democratic and collaborative method, has been applied in many community-based art and heritage activities. It facilitates understanding of the complexities of local communities and, thus, fosters aesthetic perception, cultural sensitivities, and creativity (Zhao, 2020). Further, this method also affords the creation of open dialogue that motivates stakeholders to actively participate in different stories and gain an in-depth understanding of listeners' experiences and personal views.

Storytelling also represents an effective contextual and inclusive means of conducting research involving diverse groups of participants who are not familiar with digital technology. This paper introduces a case study concerning a series of virtual workshops and fieldwork involving three British-Chinese families. The aim of this study was to explore interactive-technology-based design strategies that can potentially encourage British-Chinese immigrants to share important intangible information regarding their immigrant heritage. In particular, this paper reflects on the potential of digital storytelling as a method and tool for helping immigrants convey their family histories and experiences and demonstrate their heritage in local communities and societies.

## A SHORT STORY OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The rapid development of computer science has led to the creation of a new interdisciplinary domain known as the 'digital narrative' or 'digital storytelling sector', which collects and groups audio, video, images, and text to form an on-screen story that creates an immersive experience for an audience (Spierling, 2005). Similar to traditional storytelling media, digital storytelling primarily focuses on maintaining a coherent narrative structure and dramatic tension (Spierling et al., 2002). Digital storytelling has been extensively utilised in user experience (UX) design and human computer interaction (HCI). As a supportive method and tool, it helps researchers and stakeholders effectively gain insights into target people/groups, and helps audiences build social empathy and emotionally connect with these people/groups. Digital storytelling can also help the target people create personal personas to reflect their experiences and/or concerns and thoughts regarding certain topics. To explain how storytelling works in design studies, UX designers have summarised and applied Aristotle's seven elements of a good story (Teo, 2021). The seven elements of storytelling are, in order of importance: Plot—The targeted achievement and potential outcomes; Character—How the target people's true needs are identified; Theme—How a trustworthy image is built; Diction—How the content is presented and a dialogue created; Melody—How emotional feeling and sympathy are established; Décor—How the visual aesthetics of the story are presented; and Spectacle—How the story is made memorable. It is worth highlighting that visual demonstrations, speech, nonverbal communication, and written words, as the key components of Décor,

can potentially create immersive experiences for the audience that helps improve their understanding of the aesthetics within the stories.

Digital storytelling has frequently been applied in diverse interdisciplinary studies to explore the potential of digitisation and interactivity for solving societal issues. For instance, in the field of migrant and immigrant studies, digital storytelling has been integrated with interactive interfaces and algorithm-based 3D models to reflect migrants' and immigrants' cultural values within domestic settings and support their self-expression (Rutta et al., 2018; Sabie et al., 2020). Furthermore, digital storytelling can be utilised as a means of revealing the core elements of people's cultural lives, creating a new form of artistic expression and meaning; it can also enhance public cultural engagement. In heritage and museology studies, the communication process relating to digital storytelling in this field has been described as a re-experiencing of one's own heritage, thereby reinforcing identity and a feeling of belonging to a community (Abrahamson, 1998). For instance, based on a platform of interactive interfaces and digital archives, digital storytelling has been effectively applied to support, among cross-cultural audiences, aesthetic appreciation of and engagement with intangible cultural heritage (Zhao et al., 2018, 2019). Moreover, in the 'CHESS' project (Pujol, 2012), digital storytelling and socio-personal interactions were utilised to create an innovative conceptual and technological framework that enhances the experience of heritage in archaeological museums. Digital storytelling also has the potential to improve education, well-being, and mental health among children, patients, women, and other vulnerable groups. For example, Smith et

al. (2019) combined story distribution and complex gestures on an automated software platform to enhance primary-school children's engagement and willingness to interact with a digital system. Meanwhile, through integrating game narratives and characters within storytelling, Bowman (2018) developed a virtual support group for alleviating loneliness and fostering a sense of companionship among patients with cancer. Further, a HCI study conducted in Ireland demonstrated how digital storytelling can support the rejection of false narratives and raise awareness of the realities of abortion laws; this study also offered design considerations for fostering empathy and polyvocality in local communities and society (Michie et al., 2018).

## CASE STUDY

To further explore the potential of digital storytelling to represent a valuable tool for supporting cross-cultural immigrants' expression of their heritage, the following section describes a case study on this topic.

This case study specifically explores how interactive technology can help British-Chinese immigrants express and demonstrate their cultural heritage and identities to local communities and other stakeholders. Based on the methodology of the participatory action research (PAR) approach (Hayes, 2011), a digital-storytelling approach was developed for these families through a two-stage process. First, a series of exploratory semi-structured interviews (online) were conducted during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic to record the immigrants' stories and concerns regarding previous heritage-sharing experiences. Then, a series of

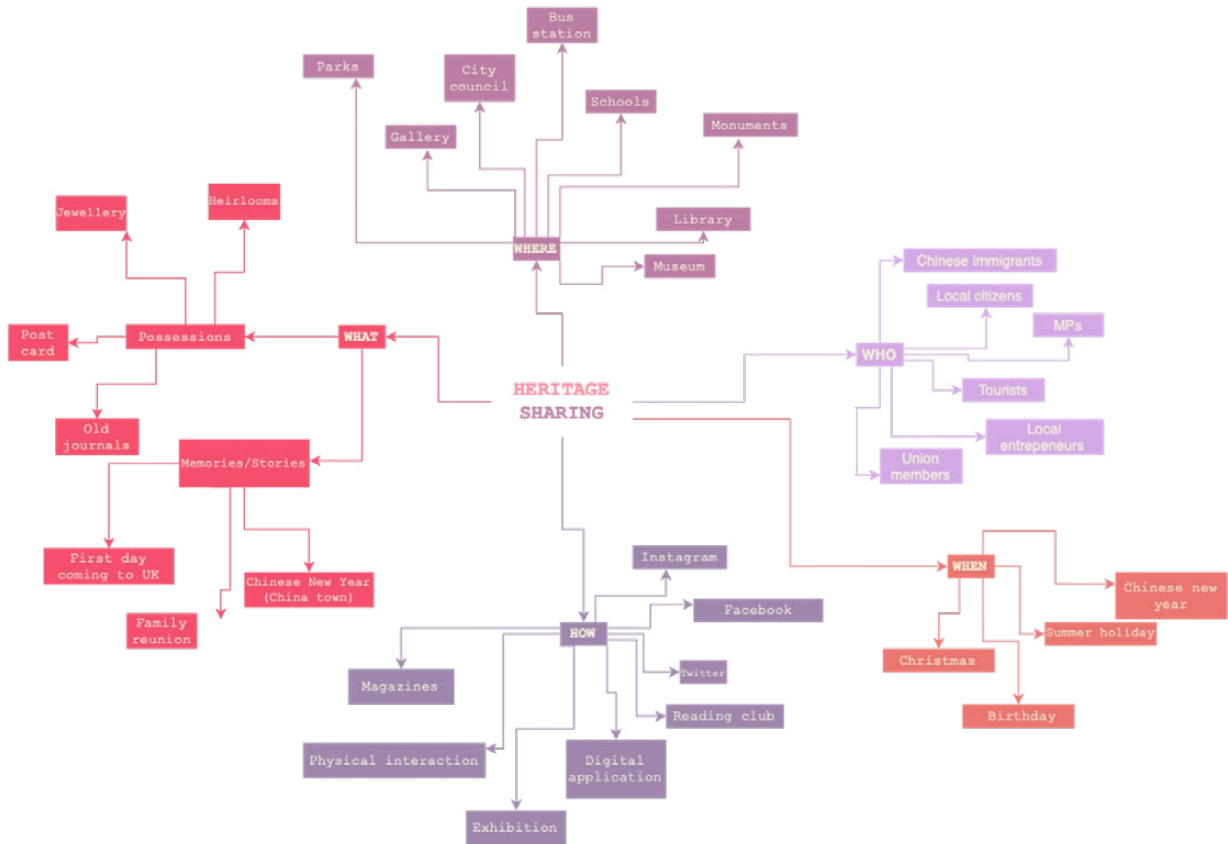


Fig. 1. Mind maps generated from the online workshops with participants (source: Zhao, 2021).

family-based participatory design online workshops were conducted to collect stories concerning family possessions and heirlooms bequeathed by previous generations, and to investigate each family member's preference concerning different technological approaches. Through these discussions with the families, keywords and mind maps were generated (which were illustrated on whiteboards), and were utilised as the main strategies for encouraging families to share their heritage (Figure 1). The final

mind map comprised five dimensions, asking: 1) who are the main listeners? 2) what do the families want to share in terms of their cultural heritage and stories? 3) when would the families like to share their cultural heritage and stories? 4) where would the families like to share their cultural heritage and stories? 5) how would the families like to share their cultural heritage and stories?

MPs: Members of parliament.

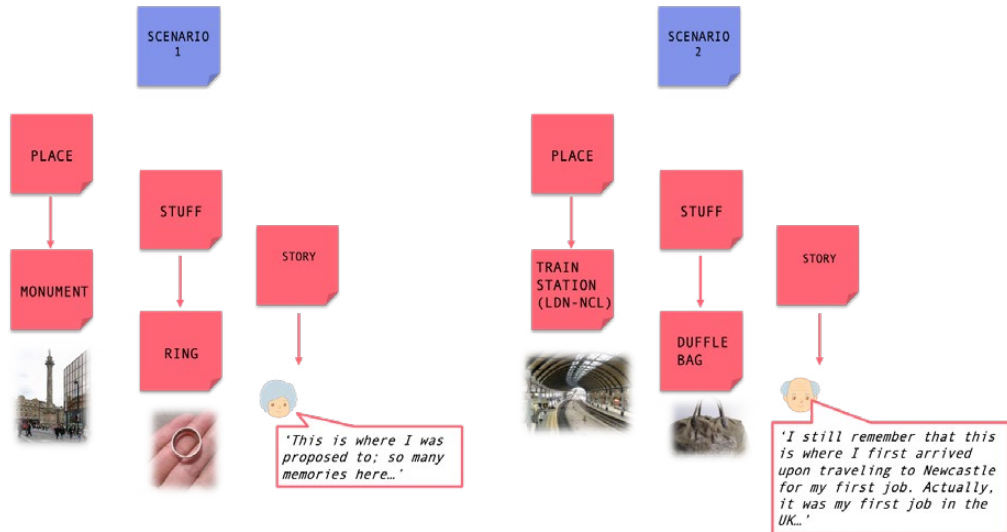


Fig. 2. Two scenarios generated by family members, reflecting on places, possessions, and stories (source: Zhao, 2021).

Family members were encouraged to use old possessions or collections to demonstrate their experiences and stories. During the participatory design workshop, with technological support from the main researcher, the participants created different scenarios to reflect their design ideas for sharing their immigrant heritage. Figure 2 presents two examples of scenarios that were designed by different families. Storytelling represents an effective contextual and inclusive

means of conducting research involving diverse groups of participants who are not familiar with digital technology.

LDN: London; NCL: Newcastle upon Tyne.

Based on the different scenarios discussed, the family members also co-designed a video-based online exhibition by generating content that related to 'what' they would like to share and 'how'

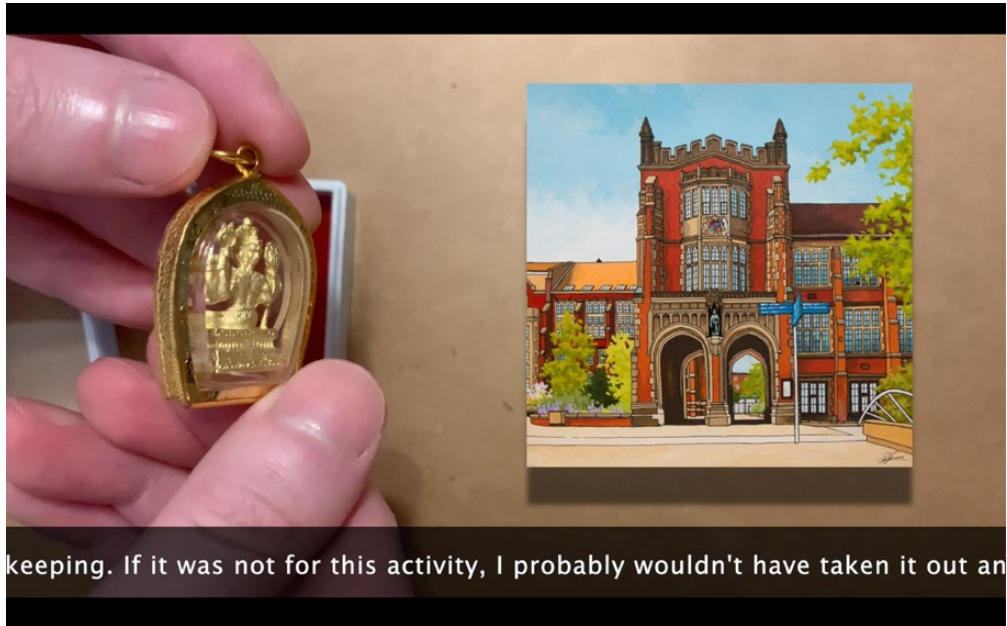


Fig. 3. Screenshot from a family-created video in which the family present and discuss a possession (source: Zhao, 2021).

they would like to share it. Figure 3 contains a screenshot from one of the videos a family created to exhibit a possession (a golden Buddha); the video has transcribed subtitles for non-Chinese speakers and features a split screen, with a video of the possession in question on one side, and an image of the location it relates to on the other.

## REFLECTION

This section elaborates on two main perspectives regarding how digital storytelling can be used to support heritage-sharing among immigrants. First, design strategies for the storytelling method are discussed. Second, a series of reflections on the design considerations of community-based

storytelling and engagement are presented.

Demonstration and sharing of heritage were the main topics highlighted in this study. All of the interviewed families integrated their old stuff with interesting stories. This form of integration potentially gives the old stuff the intangible significance of being able to help younger generations or other groups explore the exclusive immigrant heritage of the British-Chinese. Furthermore, such integration might also help preserve immigrant heritage in the long term since the possessions (collections, heirlooms) and related aural or visual data were audio- and/or video-recorded. From the perspective of safeguarding heritage, this kind of integration valuably connects intangible and tangible immigrant heritage, allowing

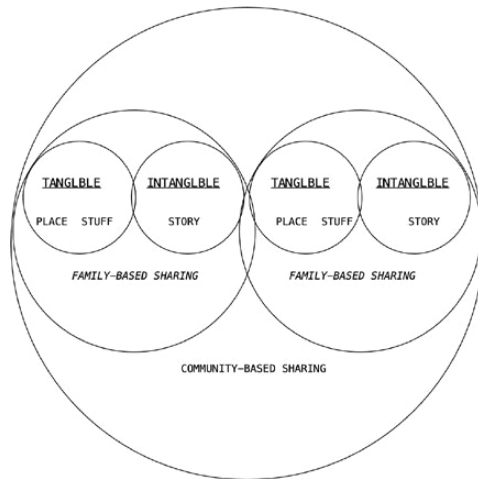


Fig. 4. The 'SPS' Strategy, integrating places, stuff, and stories (source: Zhao, 2021).

a more comprehensive demonstration of heritage. Furthermore, the case study also shows that, to generate a greater social impact within society, many possessions (representing fragments of memories) require a companion narrative. Figure 4 demonstrates a design strategy that integrates places, stuff, and stories (the PPS strategy) – a strategy for effectively demonstrating and sharing heritage.

Considering the above, the design challenge is how to integrate family heirlooms and other significant objects with audio and video data to form a narrative that can attract attention in local societies. It is also worth mentioning that the application of PAR, alongside a series of participatory design workshops, as a theoretical foundation helped the immigrant families to collaboratively develop a dialogue for comfortably sharing their heritage. Acceptance of immigrant heritage represents a huge challenge for immigrants, especially during

the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, interactive technology has the potential to support the sharing of immigrant heritage in local communities.

## CONCLUSION

One of the main design strategies concerns supporting the potential audience's interaction with immigrant heritage, and the conducting of interactive demonstrations within local communities. The engagement of British-Chinese and local citizens in the design process of interactive technology is vital; the design process is also regarded as part of the heritage demonstration. It is worth noting that physical interaction with heritage collections was deemed to be the best means of engaging people who are also interested in sharing their heritage. However, determining how to surmount cross-cultural barriers (e.g. the language in which the stories are told) and the sustainability of sharing heritage in society are prominent technological challenges for the post COVID-19 era. As part of a community practice regarding civic participation, further studies should focus on co-design workshop-based activities to design interactive technology that supports the sharing of immigrant heritage.

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# Conclusions

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## From teaching life skills to promoting cultural emancipation: research-based developmental effects of the arts in AMASS projects

### Conclusions of the 1. AMASS Symposium: First results of arts-based social interventions

The beneficial effects of the arts on the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation, creativity – to mention only some from the long list of important personality traits – are repeatedly emphasized in curriculum prefaces, research journal articles and lighter documents intended for policy makers. However, our arguments are rarely considered when lesson hours, teacher employment or school funds are allocated. The reader of the present collection of papers will hopefully understand the grounding of our claims for recognition at school and increased support for extracurricular arts programs – especially for those in need. Be it a serious

learning, behaviour or health problem, membership in a disadvantaged minority group or low socioeconomic status, children and young adults need all the support they can receive to heal their bodily and spiritual wounds and unfold their potentials. The arts can offer much more than an escape from everyday reality – in fact, they prepare you to confront the challenges of life, enhance creativity and self-expression, increase self-confidence and support further studies and work in a wide variety of ways.

All these praises have been heard before – but AMASS can provide research results about the effects of the arts and support evidence-based policy making from the grassroots level of communities to national, even European level. Our assessment methodologies reveal how the major constituents of the skill structure the European and American visual literacy frameworks may be developed through practicing different forms of visualisations – some of which, like social media, are generally considered unsuitable for formal education.

The Visual Task Force of the Association of College & Research Libraries published a detailed description of visual skills needed for higher education studies and named this objective for one of the four major clusters of the skill set: “*Pursue social justice through visual practice*”. (ACRL, 2011, 3.) The European Network of Visual Literacy (<http://envil.eu/>) highlighted the importance of metacognition as an umbrella concept of the Common European Framework for Visual Literacy (Wagner and Schönau, 2016) later renamed Common European Framework for Visual Competency (Kárpáti and Schönau Eds., 2019). The Framework includes, among others, *interpret*, *empathize*, *value* and *judge* as important subskills (subcompetencies).

Drama education has long been considered a *major developmental methodology for self-concept, social skills and is proven to modify problem behaviours* (cf. for example Freeman et al., 2010). The frameworks and summary of research quoted above are based on systematic literature reviews and analyses of educational documents. The AMASS project, however, has undertaken 35 experiments with authentic and in-depth assessment about the value of the arts. Results are therefore useful on two levels: as *tested methodologies of arts-based interventions and as skills development studies* with a special population

rarely targeted by skills research: disadvantaged children and youth.

“Love Talks”, the *neighbourhood networking initiative of the University of Lapland* creates opportunities for a marginalised community to experience, practice and reflect on the arts. These processes are closely followed through the service design model, that assures optimal impact delivery through policy recommendations previously collected from local stakeholders. The post-experiment qualitative design involved surveys that addressed the scalability and sustainability of the project and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews are often employed to elicit evaluative remarks from participants about project activities, who – in most cases – are appreciative. Here, however, researchers searched one level deeper: they invited community members to recall stories associated with the neighbourhood, elaborate them through arts-based interventions and formulate ideas about key concepts of meaningful coexistence like inclusion, tolerance, and engagement.

Finnish majority and Sami minority citizens as well as immigrants shared their views on barriers they face and their relationship with majority culture. These dialogues did not evaluate the course – they assessed individual trajectories towards a better social climate that the activities aimed at facilitating. Thus, the interviews often turned into heated emotional narratives and thus, the assessment of the change of mindsets and action repertoires was smoothly integrated in the fabric of the workshop.

Storytelling is at the centre of another AMASS project, realised by the School of Design of the University of Leeds. The research group employs *participatory storytelling*, a democratic and collaborative method

facilitates cognitive skills necessary to understand the complexities of local communities. In a community of Chinese immigrants, digital storytelling as a method to elicit personal memories and heritage values was successfully employed. As this project involved the audience of the tales: members of the local community, mostly from the majority British culture, assessment had to involve the process – formulating a story and prepare a shareable digital version – and its reception by the audience.

Telling and listening to stories *enhance the perception of symbols and foster cultural sensitivity*. Apart from verbal and visual competencies, digital skills are also developed, if the platform of telling your tale is virtual. A digital narrative is an on-screen story including audio and video files, images and text that result in a multimedia, immersive experience – one that activates a wide array of skills in the audience as well. Designing an authentic form of assessing participant development is difficult, when the process you intend to dissect is an expressive, quasi-artistic performance. Therefore, it is the applicability of the intervention model that may and should be evaluated.

The author of the paper about this project, Shichao Zhao, shows us how this is done, starting with the use of mind maps as service design tools that enable future storytellers formulate the contents and structure of their tales. In this model, the starting point for weaving the plot is an object – a piece of artistic heritage that evokes a multitude of memories. Reflecting on places, possessions, and stories, a scenario is developed by family members. Assessment of the process of story construction can be perceived as a cultural anthropological study: verbal and *symbols* (objects, places, and their descriptions), *protagonists* interacting with them and *memories* of the community they recall

provide an artistic rendering of the dynamic structure of the community. Like a butterfly, the experience itself is difficult to capture without destroying its effects. Few focus group members will be able and willing to give details on a cathartic, transformative experience.

Using a similar transformative-emancipatory perspective, researchers and workshop facilitators of the University of Malta were often faced with special challenges, working with youth infected by the HIV-AIDS virus or impoverished immigrants with limited knowledge of the local language and culture. They employed participatory design based on co-creation as a form of the integration and empowerment of various peripheral groups in a creative community through innovative performing and visual arts activities. A wide variety of approaches are used to mitigate societal challenges through the arts with different methods that constitute a real challenge for assessment. The mixed-methods design, using a combination of *exploratory and explanatory methods* is ideally suited to these projects. The research group collected narratives through the PhotoVoice technique and revealed how workshop participants identified, represented, and strengthened the self-esteem and mutual understanding of their community and its majority culture. Pre- and post-hoc surveys and analysis of art works reveal their previous and current experiences with socially engaged art forms and knowledge and skills gains. Change of attitudes and values as well as increase of motivation and ability to apply attained knowledge was evidenced through participatory observation and interviews. As the Maltese projects involved artistic interventions that were different in genre and creative methodology, semantic differential scales are also employed to reveal how different forms of arts-based social engagement are received by certain disadvantaged groups.

APECV, the Association of Teachers of Visual Expression and Communication in Portugal, has also adopted *non-hierarchical, participatory action research principles to involve stakeholders in the evaluation of their project*, “Isolate with love”, encouraging safe collaboration through art during the pandemic. The artistic journey through a Portuguese town offered personal experiences of the self, the group, and the environment through sensory and creative exercises. At the “stops”, group members experienced and reflected on nature and absorbed reactions of fellow participants. These individual experiences and their arts-based processing is in the focus of the assessment.

An important *starting point of the assessment design was the involvement of all stakeholders*. Through focus group interviews, representatives of institutions, art educators, researchers and prospective project participants collaboratively defined the success indicators of this research and development project. Most of the indicators can be assessed in the future only, as they imply long-term attitude and motivation changes, but the emancipatory aspects of the artistic experience and the increased visibility of art education as an agent of social change will be observable through interviews and other narrative reflections.

PACO Design Collaborative embarked on an ambitious educational mission: bringing analogue photography as a powerful expressive tool to youth living in poverty and marginalisation. In a world of instant pleasure, carefully selecting the environment, choosing the optimal composition, observing movement and light, waiting for the right moment to shoot one of the few pictures the film roll allows is a profoundly different attitude and behaviour. Therefore, project objectives are formulated in behavioural terms: *responsibility and patience* to create, respecting the potentials and

restrictions of the camera; *commitment, and respect* to learn from a professional photographer to appreciate and capture their surroundings, literally in a new light, in a more positive way; and *self-awareness* while observing their own works that reflect on their lives, with their families and friends in a neighbourhood that has probably never experienced an art show before.

Changes of attitudes and refinement of working behaviour as well as the development of visual literacy was observable during the sessions as the project unfolded. A training opportunity with the photographer enhanced observation and composition skills as well as media proficiency, while the discussion of their works with local tutors and researchers increased the relevance and professionalism of their efforts. The climax of the workshop, the public exhibition of children's photographs in the neighbourhood they were created, increased the self-esteem, and strengthened the attachment of young participants to their community. These processes were documented through *video interviews and on-site photo documentaries* by the researchers and a local photographer.

*External observation through video narrative* of the three experimental sites was also used to capture moments of community building and skills development: a highly innovative methodology that fosters visual literacy through creative group dynamics. This observation procedure involved a series of visits to all three sites during or near the final phase of the project allowed for a comparison of the methodology in socially and culturally different, though equally disadvantaged neighbourhoods. We concluded that one of the most important results of this experiment is the adaptability of its methodology. Poverty and exclusion have many faces – through the lenses of the analogue cameras of the children, beauty and ugliness, hope and fear

were identified, expressed, shared and processed. Photographs healed through the power of art.

Hungarian projects also involve both short- and long-term developmental objectives. We intend to enhance media skills for a positive cultural presence of the disadvantaged Roma community and welcoming students of schools of poverty – stricken areas at museums in the hope of improving learning-to-learn skills through art. Our research team, involving artists, teachers and trainers, has selected use *unusual venues for innovative interventions*. Young Roma girls and women are invited to benefit from the experiences of media experts of an outstanding European university of business, economy and social science, Corvinus University. They are trained and mentored to become *Roma Cultural Influencers*: social media content providers who share the values and challenges of their artistic heritage with young both the Roma minority and Hungarian majority. Their creative processes are documented in narrated media portfolios, their cultural engagement is revealed through PhotoVoice sessions and their aspirations and challenges documented through surveys and mentoring discussions. In the end, individual trajectories towards the authentic representation of their disadvantaged, prejudiced and misinterpreted culture will be revealed to serve as a basis for future interventions.

Inviting schools in the neighbourhood of the Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Arts in Budapest means *crossing invisible, still impermeable boundaries*: the elegant, prize-winning modern edifice of the museum is situated at the edge of a high-poverty region of the capital city. Teachers of the schools had been trained first, to make sure they feel at ease with introducing contemporary visual language that often conceptualises social issues but is not easy to

appropriate. Assessment of the *encounters of teachers and students from a disadvantaged neighbourhood with cutting-edge visual culture* involves mainly qualitative methods: action analysis of video-recorded workshop sessions, teacher surveys, and content analysis of museum education projects developed and subsequently realised by teachers as part of their in-service training program. Quantitative data on knowledge gains and attitude changes of students will be revealed through pre- and post-hoc surveys. This arts-based intervention seeks to open (mental and real life) gates to contemporary works with a social or personal agenda. Being the most difficult topic of the art education curriculum worldwide (cf. Adams, 2010), results will involve tried and tested educational models as well, for schools in all sociocultural settings.

Innovation in exhibition development has turned this primarily academic institution more and more visitor friendly and show intersections of art and life (Osorio Sunnucks et al., 2019). Richard Drury, Chief Curator of GASK, the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region in Kutná Hora, shows us how a special juxtaposition of works of art may create an exciting spiritual journey through ages and themes – a journey that can be used as an initiation into the world of artistic experiences for underprivileged children and youth. To facilitate these artistic encounters, a series of exciting *museum-based artistic interventions* are being organised by the team of Charles University in Prague.

One of the projects involves hearing impaired (deaf) visitors, who, as the experiment has revealed, inhabit a rich sensory world with vision and touch supporting spatial orientation. The role of the artist and the art educators facilitating the museum course reaches beyond lessons in art appreciation: they intend to develop important life skills. *Communication using*

*digital platforms, development of analytical and critical thinking and creativity* all contribute to the enhancement of visual competency – a language of special importance for those who cannot experience and interpret sounds. In describing the goals of this project, Iva Hay emphasizes that the developmental process involves all participants: when interacting with students with special needs, artists and educators also develop their communication skills and collaboration techniques, and thus strengthen their professional identity. An important outcome of this research will be policies and concepts of understanding the Deaf as a specific subculture. *External observation through video narrative* will also be used here to capture creative processes and reveal group dynamics of this project.

The online model and toolset of data collection developed under the guidance of the University of Lapland team supports the creation of regional policy roadmaps. This model and tools are crucially important contributions to the AMASS agenda, as they ensure sustainability, adaptability, and scalability. This policy making model starts with an analysis of existing efforts, followed by stakeholder workshops conducted in each country and experiments built on the results, to meet existing needs. The innovative tool that both facilitates and documents the process is housed in the Miro Whiteboard Interface, co-authored by Mira Alhonsuo, Silvia Remotti, Carolina Gutierrez Novoa and Melanie Sarantou in 2020 and successfully piloted in all partner countries.

Assessment results of the AMASS projects will serve as the foundation for building national and regional policy roadmaps, that will be discussed on local and European level. National stakeholder meetings run in parallel with the experimental projects, so they can

mutually enrich each-other, and keep research and practice in synergy. A White Paper and a published collection of good practice will show how policy makers and educators may appropriate objectives, disseminate methodologies and assessment results and thus make full use of the advantages of arts-based social interventions.

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Arts-based  
social interventions:  
First results of the  
AMASS testbed.

Editors

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amass acting on the margins  
arts as social sculpture