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**THE POWER OF ART**

**Foundation bricks**

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<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
INTRODUCTION	4
1. DEFINITION OF THE TARGET GROUP	5
a. Facts about Amsterdam Nieuw-West	5
b. Facts about Toxteth	6
c. The target group - general observations	7
d. Characteristics	8
e. External issues	9
f. Internal issues	9
g. Specific characteristics	9
h. Obstacles met in the recruitment phase	12
i. How to recruit the target group?	13
j. How to keep the target group engaged?	14
2. SOFT SKILLS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	16
a. The future of the labour market	17
b. Soft skills relevant to the labour market	18
c. Multiple intelligence	20
3. CREATIVITY AS A TOOL FOR SOFT SKILL LEARNING	21
a. Photography	22
b. Dance	23
c. Storytelling	27
d. Music	32
CONCLUSION	36

## INTRODUCTION

Though most European economies are growing, reducing youth unemployment still is a significant challenge within the European Union. A large unemployed youth population immediately affects various social and economic fields. In this project we are focussing on the areas Nieuw West in Amsterdam and Toxteth in Liverpool, both multicultural areas within the cities. People living here face multiple social and economic challenges and significant numbers of young people do not participate in employment, education or training activities.

The reduction of youth unemployment being one of the priorities of the municipalities of both cities, many large scale government 'youth employment' programs have been implemented. However, these initiatives so far have had a limited impact on the figures.

From our conversations with young people in the two neighbourhoods have taught us that many do want to participate in society and make valuable contributions to their community, but that they often find obstacles in their way; mostly governmental rules and procedures, sometimes also social and cultural issues, or family related problems.

We have noticed that many employment programs focus on acquiring hard skills. Based on our research and especially on our experience in working with vulnerable youth in Amsterdam Nieuw-West and Toxteth, we have come to the understanding that in most cases these young people do not lack the right education. More often a lack of soft skills is their problem. In this project we therefore focus on their acquirement of soft skills like self-esteem, communication skills, self-reflection and collaboration skills.

We will work on the development of a creative, sustainable and transferable method to help them to acquire these soft skills with the aim to contribute structurally to their employability. Though we have gathered quite some information already by working directly with the target group in former projects, we are well aware of the fact that there is still a lot to learn and to discover in the field of soft skill learning.

In this document we lay the foundation for our joint journey.

## **1. THE TARGET GROUP**

The Power of Art project aims at working with young people that are unemployed or in a job that is not in line with their educational level or level of experience. In the following chapter we try to further define this target group.

But first we need to emphasize the (cultural) differences between the countries involved in this project; The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The specifics can even differ from city to city within the same national context.

### **1.a Facts about Amsterdam Nieuw-West**

According to the most recent information provided by the Amsterdam Office for Research, Information and Statistics in 6.7% of the labor force 2016 was unemployed.<sup>1</sup> Unemployment was highest among 15-24 year olds (11%) and 55-64 year olds (9%), and lowest among 25-34 and 35-44 year olds (both 5%) and among 45-54 year olds (6%). Highly educated people were the least likely to be unemployed (4%), and the least educated the most (13%). Of those who had received secondary education 8% was unemployed. Finally, the unemployment rate of Amsterdammers with a non-Western migration background was 10%. The unemployment rate of Amsterdammers with a Moroccan background was 12%. The unemployment rate of Amsterdammers with a Dutch background and of Amsterdammers with a western migration background was 5% respectively 6%. Labor participation in Amsterdam Nieuw-West was among the lowest In Amsterdam: 64%. (The lowest was in Amsterdam Zuidoost, another cultural divers neighbourhood: 59%)

Compared to the rest of the Netherlands the unemployment rates in Amsterdam were slightly higher: 6% versus 6,7%.

#### Specific information about Amsterdam Nieuw-West<sup>2</sup>

Amsterdam Nieuw-West was built in the 50's of the last century. It is also called Western Garden cities. Sloterveer was the first of the Western Garden cities to be developed according to the principles of the General Expansion Plan. Other neighborhoods like Geuzenveld, Slotervaart, Overtoomse Veld and Osdorp followed. The Nieuw-West area is spacious and remarkably green.

Due to the economic crises the area development and renovation of homes has slowed down. Only recently the municipality, housing corporations and private real estate developers have started building and renovating again and will continue doing so in the

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<sup>1</sup> Amsterdam in cijfers 2017, Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek

<sup>2</sup> Taken from 'Gebiedsplannen 2017 Osdorp, geuzenveld Sloterveer en Slotervaart', <https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/stadsdelen/stadsdeelnieuwwest/gebiedsgericht/>

following years. One of the objectives of these renewal operations is to diversify the population of the neighborhoods of Nieuw-West; social-economic and culturally. For that reason parties also invest in houses for sale and more expensive rental properties.

Notwithstanding these developments Amsterdam Nieuw-West still counts an above average number of residents with a vulnerable socio-economic status. This is certainly the case in the neighborhoods in which urban development has been at a standstill for a couple of years. For residents of these neighbourhoods it is difficult to participate fully in society due to - among other reasons - language deficiency, poverty, low level of education, health problems and/or social isolation.

To enable everyone to participate in society it will be necessary to combat these 'obstacles'. Investments in the area of housing, safety and environment are also important and necessary for the creation of a living environment that is pleasant and safe for all residents.

Amsterdam Nieuw-West has a relatively large youth population. More young people living in Nieuw-West are dealing with psychosocial problems, poverty and debt compared to their peers in most other parts of the city. Moreover, the number of youth with a backlog in education is higher than the Amsterdam average. The municipality and associated organizations made it one of their priorities to invest in work opportunities for young people in the coming years.

### **1.b Facts about Toxteth**

Our youth provision is currently delivered in the Liverpool area of Toxteth through partnerships with youth centres, community and cultural organizations and within after school contexts. We provide open access youth arts activities (including dance, music, carnival design and making, spoken word and digital filming making) in the afternoon/early evening, at weekends and during school holidays. Also, we support young people whose environments or personal circumstances have prevented them from accessing high quality provision.

Participants' backgrounds include young people:

- From low-income neighbourhoods;
- Who are not in education, employment or training;
- Who are disabled with a range of physical, medical, emotional and learning difficulties;
- From Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Another problem is that schools are cutting creative subjects from the curriculum, so some young people do not feel engaged anymore.

Our delivery area ranks as one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Britain, where young people face multiple social, economic and cultural challenges. Our beneficiaries' interests and ambitions form an essential part of our planning process, ensuring that we develop needs-based services. Needs assessment is embedded within activities, using a young person-centred quality framework evaluation, allowing us to monitor and review face to face interaction in real time. Our motivation for this project comes from our belief in the power of 'the arts' when it comes to youth development; educational re-engagement; employability; entrepreneurship and contribute to an inclusive and democratic society. We recognise the importance of culture in the development of progress processes. We have identified the needs and challenges, which show that we:

- Need to share, contrast and explore models of arts engagement and best practice to improve the quality of non-formal learning and volunteering, enhancing synergies and complementarities with other education systems, the labour market and society;
- Need to test arts and cultural learning methodologies, through blended mobility experiences that support workers and young people with fewer opportunities; combat social exclusion and re-engage youth people in social/cultural action.
- Need to develop collaboration within the arts and cultural sector through capacity building activities that support modernisation and internationalisation.
- Need to develop non-formal learning mobility experiences targeted at workers and young people with fewer opportunities with a view to improving their levels of competence and promoting their active participation; re-engage young people in civil society by stimulating them to make positive contributions to their communities through social/cultural action.
- Have to recognise non-formal learning pathways for young people and should better understand opportunities to work with cultural professionals, thus developing skills.

The challenges facing local public services for young people in Liverpool are considerable. With limited resources and continued budget cuts, the focus is on early intervention to the benefit of the most vulnerable, with the result that for many young people there is little or no provision. In the future, the city may no longer be able to offer young people help, but the willingness to find new partners is a step towards meeting the needs of young people.

### **1.c The target group - general remarks**

In this project we work with young people between the ages of 18 and 30. This age group is no longer obliged to follow an education. Although you can expect that this age group has a basic education, we expect to work with a high percentage of so-called drop-outs: young

people who left school at a young age and other people who have not completed their education and therefore have no papers. Since most EU programmes consider everyone up to the age of 30 to be young, we have decided to take 30 as the upper limit. We are aware of the fact that the level of development of an 18-year-old person can be very different from that of a 30-year-old person and therefore think that it is best to work with groups consisting of participants of more or less the same age (18 - 21; 21 - 25; 25 - 30).

We expressly choose to work with young people who are at risk ('youth at risk'). S. Whiteley defined this group as follows:

*“Young people who experience difficulty negotiating their life options after completing school and do not engage in further study or employment.”<sup>3</sup>*

This limits our definition to the areas of active citizenship and work, thus excluding health problems, gender issues, psychological problems and other issues.

As we said, not everyone we work with will have graduated, which means that not all participants have certificates/qualifications (lack of hard skills). Other participants will have the right certificates, but for other reasons will not be able to find a job. In the latter case we often find that one of these reasons is that they do not have sufficient social or communication skills (lack of soft skills). In some cases, participants lack both skills.

#### **1.d Characteristics**

Job search activities, participation and entrepreneurship within our target group are usually entangled with family and friends; informal and trust-based.

The target group often experiences a strong feeling of exclusion from society and isolation. This US versus THEM feeling is reflected in their distrust of official organisations and services.

A large part of our target group faces financial difficulties. Many of the young people are in debt and find themselves in a difficult situation because of limited incomes and the absence of financial back-up.

Another problem is their negative self-image. Many within the target group are raised with a different set of values than the values that are generally accepted by the society they live in. This can result in a feeling of disconnection, and then in a feeling of isolation and of being left out.

All these elements contribute to a diminishing chance to fulfil personal possibilities and dreams.

The listings in the next paragraphs give an overview of some characteristics of our target group. These are characteristics that we need to be aware of in the construction of the

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<sup>3</sup> S. Whiteley - Youth Studies Australia, 2001



method and the case studies. Of course, not all people in our target group share all these characteristics. But addressing these topics will help them to face their challenges.

Below we have listed the main problems the young people we work with are facing:

#### **1.e External issues**

- not the right certificates / qualifications
- no papers / no qualifications
- discrimination (for example, employers do not want to hire staff with migrant background; many youth with migrant backgrounds say that they experience this often. However, profound studies to this matter are not known)

#### **1.f Internal issues**

- no papers / no qualifications
- low education
- low self esteem
- low communication skills
- low social skills, including  
no self discipline  
no self-management
- not enough language skills

We notice that is often due to a combination of various factors that someone becomes a 'youth at risk'. Thus, working with youth at risk requires a multi level approach.

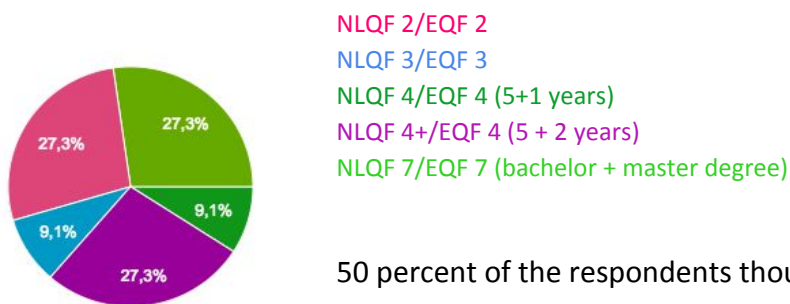
The Power of Art project will be executed in neighbourhoods where many different cultures live together, often called migrant neighbourhoods. This requires good knowledge of these cultures, including the street cultures. It is therefore advisable to involve representatives of the target groups in the execution of the project. The use of role models, certainly in the recruitment phase, can be of great value as well (see also under general direction for recruitment).

#### **1.g. Specific characteristics**

To mirror all the characteristics described above, coming from different sources and researches, we did some interviews with youth in the neighborhoods we are going to work in. Their answers were partly in line with our earlier findings, but we also found some differences.

First of all, low education is not always the reason why they do not find a job. The young people we interviewed weren't all low educated. In the Netherlands, more than half of the respondents had completed a higher education (university or college).

What's the highest level of education you've completed?



50 percent of the respondents though stated that they were unemployed. The other half was employed but looking for another job.

Most respondents in the latter category said they had a job below their level, or a job that no longer challenged them. A minority wanted to change jobs because they wanted to earn more; others gave different reasons. Only one person was looking for a job because of an external reason: his/her contract would be terminated.

What we found out most of all is that the young people we interviewed are really looking for work that suits their level and - perhaps even more importantly - their passion. They don't want to work because they have to work and they certainly don't want to be bored. As one of the respondents stated:

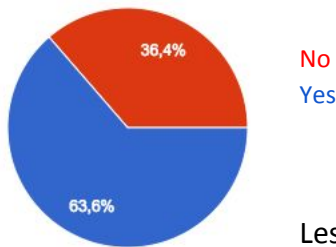
*I can easily find a job, but it's something I don't like and can't learn from. I've done a lot of that kind of work in recent years and feel like I've wasted my time. I want to do something with my passion, something I can learn from and achieve something.*

We also asked what competencies they lacked (according to themselves) to get the job they wanted. Most of the respondents were able to look honestly at their competencies. Apart from some practical skills (such as the technical side of making a tattoo), most of them mentioned presentation skills and the ability to translate what is in your head into written or spoken text (in fact also part of the presentation). The skills to build up a network was also mentioned.

Two Dutch respondents replied that they lack the right diplomas/certificates to do the job they really want. It is interesting to note that almost 20 percent of the respondents do not (yet) have the right qualifications. This is in line with our assumption that some of the young people we would want to engage in the project have chosen the wrong education for practical reasons (stable basis / income).

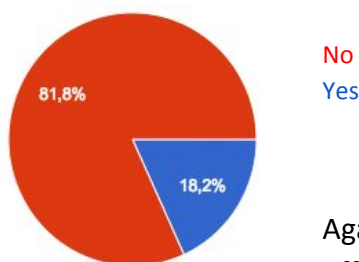
Most of the respondents (64%) already followed trainings/workshops to develop their competences. These were mainly focused on professional competences, but also soft skills such as social skills and presentation skills were mentioned.

Have you followed training and/or workshops to work on improving your competencies?



Less than 20% said they felt they were well prepared for the labour market through school. They were supported in their search for work / development of competencies to get a job by others than their schools, usually by friends and family, sometimes by colleagues and job shops for temporary work.

Do you think that you are well prepared for the job market during your education?

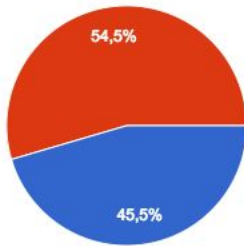


Again, we see that young people do not make use of official/government opportunities, such as work centres etc. In another project (Creating Opportunities for Youth Entrepreneurs via E-Commerce) we have already seen that young people with a migrant background often distrust governmental organisations in the field of employment and entrepreneurship. Our small study tends to similar findings.

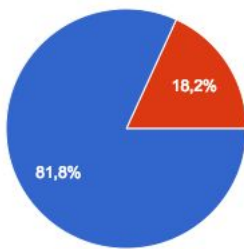
Less than 30 percent of the respondents think that their cultural background, gender or other specific identity reduces their chances of finding a job. 36 percent do not know and 36 percent indicate that their 'identity' is not an obstacle to getting the job they want. Although some studies indicate that both gender and cultural background play a role in finding a job, it is encouraging to see that the majority of respondents in this study do not feel discriminated against. Of the respondents who believe that their cultural background has no negative influence on their job prospects (36%), one is of Dutch origin (the only one in the survey). The others have a Moroccan, Turkish or Polish cultural background. The respondents who think that their cultural background does have a negative influence on their chances of finding a job, have a predominantly Moroccan, Turkish or Estonian background.

It is painful to read that one of the respondents is considering not wearing her hijab when she applies for a job. She felt that her cultural and religious background was one of the main reasons for not getting a job.

Do you ever spend your free time practicing art?



Although less than half of the respondents actively participate in creative activities, more than 80% believe that you can learn a lot from them.



Do you think you can learn something from being creative?

No  
Yes

Respondents mainly think that creativity can contribute to competencies such as creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving and unbiased thinking / stepping out of your comfort zone. 60 percent also believe that their creativity can add something to the development of society, especially by sharing their story (in words, but also in images, text, etc.) to inspire others.

### 1.h Obstacles encountered in the recruitment phase

In January we started with the first talks to recruit young people for the case studies that are part of this project. We mainly met professionals working directly with the target group and policymakers / managers at the local level.

In these meetings we came across two obstacles that hamper the successful completion of the project:

1. Original target group is diminishing
2. Scepticism about using creativity

#### Original target group is diminishing

We have experienced problems in recruiting participants to the Power of Art project. We think this is due to the growing economies of both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This implies that there are more vacancies in different areas at different levels. Youth who are still unemployed is often unable, or unwilling, to work.

Given the reduced interest of people in our initial target group to participate, we went looking for other target groups. We think we have found a new target group with refugees with a status (status holders) and young people who have a job, but not a job in which they find that they can develop themselves. Some young people have chosen rationally for a

study and a job, because they felt that a stable base / income was more important than doing something that drives their passion. This often results in being unhappy. We often see this in people who would like to work in an artistic field, but do not dare to follow their passion for economic reasons.

Newcomers/refugees often lack certain skills or knowledge (e.g. of the new language and culture) to find a good job immediately. Being new in a culture challenges your self-esteem and self-respect. You have the feeling that you cannot function properly. Being able to express yourself in the new language is an important factor in the process of self-realisation.

The methods we want to develop in this project offer a combination of language learning (one of the 'hard' skills) and some soft skills, which are often related to dealing with cultural codes.

### Skepticism about using creativity

In our encounters with people in the field, we have come up against scepticism regarding the use of creativity and the development of soft skills. We have found that most professionals working with unemployed young people prefer to work with 'training methods' that offer or promise fast and concrete results: a job or a new study. The focus in these trainings is on practical skills: how to make a good CV, how to conduct a good job interview. Useful skills, of course, but we believe that in order to find the right job and keep that job, you need more skills than just these practical skills.

We really hope (and expect) that the final results of our project will help to convince more professionals of the value of using creative tools to improve someone's soft skills and the importance of this for (among others) people who are looking for a (new) job.

#### **1.i How to recruit the target group?**

Recruiting participants to join the workshop will not be easy. It is very important to stress 'what is in it for them'. Not everybody will be convinced straight away that creativity is a useful tool for developing useful skills that will help in finding the right job, so it is necessary to convince potential participants. The use of incentives (free drinks, a little reward when someone passes a certain level, maybe even a certificate) can help to motivate people to join.

The target group often does not use the regular ways of getting informed. Printed matter, like posters, flyers and brochures won't have a big effect, though it might be handy to distribute them at strategic locations like job centres, refugee centres and other educational institutes.

We believe that recruitment through social media, especially Facebook and Instagram, is more effective. Many young people are active in these digital meeting places and get their

information via social media platforms. The use of videos and images is recommended, especially as young people with few communication skills are not used to extract information from written text.

In addition, we strongly recommend recruiting young people on the streets, simply by talking to them. This is a fairly specialised way of recruiting that cannot be done by everyone. It is important that the work is done by someone who feels connected and trusted by the target group. Ideally, it should be someone with the same background as the target group. Working together with local youth organizations can help with street recruitment.

Finally, we advise to involve an ambassador or role model in the recruitment campaign; someone who is famous (at least in a local context) and who is looked up to. He or she can inspire and encourage young people to participate in the project.

### **1.j How to keep the target group engaged?**

This chapter will address some general issues to be taken into account when working with 'at risk' young people (whether they are young people with a low level of education or with low social and communication skills). In this section we will explore some ways of working with young people and how to keep them involved in the process, as well as some specific aspects that need to be addressed.

First of all, it is important to help the participants to come to the workshops. They may not be able to pay the travel costs - in this case, the workshop organiser may be able to pay these. Food and drink during the workshop session(s) should also be offered.

It may be useful to call (or message) each participant one day before each session to encourage him/her to appear in the next session. This is even more effective if the caller is one of the participants (and not the workshop organiser). In that case, the costs of the phone calls must of course be covered by the organization by reimbursing the caller or by having him/her call via a phone of the organization.

If some participants drop out, it is advisable to discuss with the remaining participants the reasons why they dropped out. You might even ask them to try to get the dropouts back.

The involvement of the participants can be increased by giving them a number of incentives. These can be film tickets, gift vouchers, etc.

The workshop should preferably be held for consecutive days to maintain group dynamics and keep the participants involved.

In order to keep them involved, trainers should pay particular attention to the motivation of young people. Young adults need to know why they are learning something and what its benefits will be.

It is also important to celebrate the achievements of the participants during the workshop. This can be done in an informal way, for example when a participant has contributed to the group work, or has taken a step in the direction of her/his own personal goals. The achievements can also be 'officially' confirmed in the form of a certificate. A certificate for the participants in the Power of Art project provides them with a paper qualification to show to potential employers. This is something tangible they can be proud of.

Another way to keep participants involved is by giving them responsibilities during the process. A simple way to do this is to involve them in the work: learning should not be based on a vertical relationship (the trainer is the only one who has the knowledge) but on a horizontal level (each participant has something to teach about). Trainers can ask the participants to come up with ideas for, for example, a workshop to be organised by them. Or they can give them responsibility for the daily tasks: for example, if something has to be bought at the supermarket for the group, the trainers can make one or two participants responsible for it.

It may also be helpful to assign young mentors. Depending on the young people working together and the general atmosphere, there are two ways to organise a mentoring. The principle of mentoring in this context also means that the mentor himself is a participant in the workshop. The trainers can identify the 'leader' in the group and give him or her the role of assistant.

The trainer could also appoint a tutor in the group, who supervises the proper functioning of each activity and acts as a mouthpiece for participants who have encountered difficulties during the activity (which they would be less likely to express without such an intermediary ...).

#### Some practical activities to maintain young people engaged

Step 1, important, is to create a safe and comfortable environment (Zemke, 1995) and to build up good group dynamics in all participants. Making them feel safe and confident is a necessary step in the learning process. Different "icebreakers" or "warm-up" activities can be used for this purpose.

Closing a workshop day with an activity which addresses the skills or resources developed during the day is an important step in making participants aware of the meaning and purpose of the workshops. The trainer can introduce a so-called 'check-out' activity, in which the participants name what they have learned or noticed that day.

Trainers can also think about crazy tasks as homework for the next session. In the first place because it keeps the participants involved and in the second place because this can motivate them to come back to the next session so that they can show off their 'homework'. In addition, it can stimulate the curiosity of participants towards the next session, which is also a way to keep them involved.

## **2. SOFT SKILLS AND THE LABOUR MARKET**

In this chapter we focus on the importance of soft skills for the labour market. First, we describe a number of changes that analysts foresee in the labour market and in the importance of soft skills in the workplace in the next two decades.

One of the guidelines is Paul Collard's statement that, in this rapidly changing world, we need jobseekers rather than jobseekers.

We also focus on the current situation and on how companies, academics and policymakers describe those soft skills that employers find particularly important in the 21st century and probably even more so in the future.

Our project stimulates young people's and workers' innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship by involving them in training, arts and cultural initiatives; volunteering in local and international contexts, with an impact on their understanding of world citizenship and encouraging them to make a positive contribution to their own development and the development of others.

The project delivers results that enhance the participant's professional competences, including entrepreneurial skills, developed through transferable skills such as critical thinking, learning to learn, problem solving and the ability to work together. These skills are set out in the European Commission's publication "Rethinking Education and Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes" (November 2012); skills that are essential to prepare people for today's diverse and unpredictable career paths and jobs.

Our project aims to explore the arts and cultural sectors as a tool to achieve innovation, jobs and growth in different and disadvantaged community contexts. In all phases of the project we will see a number of innovative cultural activities, realised by artists and young people, neighbourhoods and communities. The final results will be visible at large-scale cultural festivals, carnivals or events. Art has always been used as a means to develop capacity, celebrate diversity and support innovation. Our project ensures that the participants are involved in all of the above; providing and supporting the development of intercultural works of art so that they can build their professional capacity.

In the PoA project, we identify actions and initiatives within the creative and cultural sectors that enhance young people's work-related skills. We believe that artistic practice has the potential to provide global opportunities for youth development, as art is applied globally as a source of identity, innovation and creativity and is an important factor in social inclusion, poverty reduction and the provision of sustainable economic growth.



## **2.a The future of the labour market**

Changes are coming, the importance of soft skills is growing

With the emergence of new technologies - artificial intelligence and machine learning, robotics, nanotechnology, 3D printing and genetics and biotechnology - more and more experts talk about a Fourth Industrial Revolution that – together with broader socio-economic, geopolitical and demographic developments - will have a major impact on the labour market in the coming decades. Some of these effects can already be felt:

- Curriculums become outdated rapidly in many academic fields: “50% of subject knowledge acquired during the first year of a four-year technical degree outdated by the time students graduate, according to one popular estimate” (World Economic Forum, 2016)
- In many countries current jobs that are most in demand did not exist 5-10 years ago (according to the World Economic Forum, 2016)

To illustrate the scope and pace of the forthcoming changes, here we quote some experts in the field:

- “60% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don’t yet exist” (World Economic Forum, 2016)
- “About half of all work activities globally have the technical potential to be automated” (McKinsey & Company, 2017)
- “By 2030, 75 million to 375 million workers (3 to 14 percent of the global workforce) will need to switch occupational categories” (McKinsey & Company, 2017)
- “All workers will need to adapt, as their occupations evolve alongside increasingly capable machines” (McKinsey & Company, 2017).

Machines are better than humans at carrying out routine tasks, such as physical work in a predictable environment or data collection and processing. Thanks to the rise of pattern recognition methods, computers are also getting better at solving non-routine cognitive tasks, like automatic speech recognition, automatic recognition of images of human faces, or the interpretation of medical - X-ray, MRI, ultrasound – images. As a result of the continued technological development of robotic hardware, industrial robots have already taken on the routine tasks of most operatives in manufacturing. More advanced robots – with enhanced sensors and manipulators - can perform more and more non-routine manual tasks, too, like maintaining wind turbines, doing household services, carrying out simple surgical procedures.

## **2.b Soft skills relevant to the labour market**

The importance of soft skills will increase in the labour market, as we have just discussed, but they are already appreciated. We can recognise this by, for example, contemporary job descriptions. They often mention motivation to perform, good communication skills,

flexibility as required skills. A 2017 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicated that 'the ability to work in a team' was the most desirable characteristic of recent graduates. With the exception of jobs requiring a high level of specific technical knowledge, employers often focus more on the presence of positive attitudes and soft skills, as these skills are less trainable. Employers also have less capacity to develop these skills among their employees.

Based on the US Department of Education's definition, employability refers to "general skills needed for success in the labour market, at all levels of employment and in all sectors". In the language of the European Commission, these general skills that are valued in different occupations are referred to as transferable (or transversal) skills (see for example the "New Skills Agenda for Europe", 2016). Which soft skills are particularly appreciated by employers?

### The concept of 21st century skills

The concept of 21st century skills encompasses a range of skills and attitudes that workers need to have in order to succeed in a rapidly changing digital society. These skills have been identified by teachers, business leaders, academics and government agencies. Different definitions have been established, but we present here one developed by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21). P21 is a U.S.-based organization founded by, among others, the U.S. Department of Education, AOL Time Warner Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., Cisco Systems, Inc., Dell Computer Corporation, Microsoft Corporation and SAP. According to their framework for 21st Century Learning, employers consider the following skills important:

- content knowledge (such as language, mathematics, but also global awareness, financial literacy)
- learning and innovation skills
- information, media and technology skills
- life and career skills.

Out of these four areas, Learning and innovation skills and Life and career skills cover most of the soft skills that are important for employers.

#### *Learning and innovation skills include:*

- creativity and innovation
- critical thinking and problem solving,
- communication and collaboration

#### *Life and career skills include:*

- flexibility and adaptability

flexibility: incorporate feedback effectively; deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism; understand, negotiate and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments

adaptability: adapt to varied roles, job responsibilities, schedules and context; work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities

- initiative and self-direction
  - manage goals and time
  - work independently
  - be self-directed learners
- social and cross-cultural skills
  - interact effectively with others: know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak; conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner
  - work effectively in diverse teams: respect cultural differences and work effectively with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds

### PRACTICE skills

Researchers at the World Bank (Guerra, Modecki and Cunningham 2014) also collected the most valued SEL skills by employers. They grouped them into eight categories and called them “PRACTICE” skills:

**Problem-solving:** social-information processing skills, decision-making skills, and planning skills

**Resilience:** stress resistance, perseverance, optimism, and adaptability

**Achievement/Motivation:** mastery orientation, sense of purpose, and motivation to learn

**Control:** delay of gratification, impulse control, attentional focus, and self-management

**Teamwork:** empathy/prosocial behaviour, low aggression, communication skills, and relationship skills

**Initiative:** agency, internal locus of control, and leadership

**Confidence:** self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positive identity

**Ethics:** honesty, fairness orientation, and moral reasoning

PRACTICE skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills differ from each other:

- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills cover not only soft skills, but also technology and content skills, thus address a broader category of skills
- PRACTICE skills explicitly cover a range of skills that are linked to self-awareness and self-management (e.g. self-efficacy, internal locus of control, impulse control, stress resistance, perseverance), which are largely absent from the 21st century framework.

## **2.c Multiple intelligence**

In addition to what is described above we would like to add that there are multiple opinions about talent development amongst youth. One of our favourites in the theory of multiple intelligence. This starts from the assumption that everybody acquires skills and knowledge in another way. One person learns by doing, another by first observing and the third must read all information before full understanding. If we want to train young people and give them the tools to acquire skills, we have to take into account that different participants learn and understand in different ways.

Teachers often already take this into account by offering different tools and working methods. We should also do this in our case studies which will form the basis of the method. The use of creative means offers many opportunities to work with young people with different abilities to acquire knowledge and skills.

The American professor Howard Gardner describes eight intelligences, also called talents. Every human being has these eight intelligences, although often only a few are well developed. These highly developed intelligences determine the way in which one acquires knowledge and the preference for certain activities.

Intelligence tests such as the IQ test often only measure one type of intelligence. If a person scores low on an IQ test, this does not necessarily mean that he or she has a low level of intelligence. Maybe it only shows that someone has fewer verbal talents, or has less talent to think logically. However, this does not mean that someone also scores low on other talents, such as creative talents.

We will take this theory of multiple intelligence into account to prevent us from becoming blind to certain talents and intelligences, as happens when you stick too much to the results of an IQ test, for example. In this way we try to appeal to all the qualities of the participants in order to guarantee the best result for them in finding a job / activity that meets their expectations, passion and - most importantly - talents as fully as possible.

### **3. CREATIVITY AS A TOOL FOR SOFT SKILL LEARNING**

Our project aims to explore and examine the arts and cultural sectors as a tool for innovation, employment and growth within diverse and disadvantaged community contexts. Within all stages of the project we will see a number of innovative cultural activities realised between artists and young people, neighbourhoods and communities with the final results visible within large-scale cultural festivals, carnival or events. The arts have always been used as a means of developing capacity, celebrating diversity and supporting innovation. Our proposed project sees the participant's involved in all of the above, delivering and supporting the development of intercultural arts work that builds their professional capacity.

Our project identifies actions and initiatives within the creative and cultural sectors that increase young people's employment related skills, with specific reference to the project management and other employment related competences within the cultural sector including working as a freelancer and opportunities within intangible heritage. The partners also recognize arts practice has potentially global opportunities for young people's development, as it is practiced across the world representing a source of identity, innovation and creativity and an important factor in social inclusion, poverty eradication and providing for sustainable economic growth.

All project partners have considerable experience in the successful development, implementation and evaluation of arts and cultural sector initiatives that focus on young people with less opportunities. All partners have created innovative pathways for participants development within cultural sector, moving people from project participants to volunteers into training and leadership opportunities and finally into employment.

In this project the different partners focus on different creative disciplines, namely:

- a. Photography
- b. Dance
- c. Storytelling
- d. Music

The partners want to explore the possibilities of these different disciplines in supporting personal growth and the acquisition/development of (new) competences, in order to develop a method that allows youth workers all over the EU to use creativity in an effective and responsible way in non-formal, soft skill learning projects.

In this chapter we will discuss the four creative disciplines mentioned above. But before we do so, we want to emphasize that there is inequality in the extent to which the different disciplines are applicable. Using dance to support the competence development of young people requires more professional training than giving a workshop storytelling for the same purpose. And dealing with photography requires technical knowledge. This can be learned

from books, but it is advisable to follow a course first. This ultimately applies to all disciplines, but there is a difference in intensity of those courses; photography and storytelling courses will probably be less intensive than dance and music courses.

### **3.a Photography**

Photography is embedded in most people's everyday lives. Capturing moments with mobile devices ... who is not familiar with this phenomenon?

Photography is a form of non-verbal communication. At its best, a photograph conveys a thought of one person, the photographer, to another, the viewer. A photo is a great tool for a photographer to tell his own story and / or the story of what has been photographed. Photography is so much more than just taking a picture. It has everything to do with you as a person, whether you are the photographer or the viewer. Photography is a great tool to expand our vision and thoughts. Photographs can evoke awe, wonder, amusement, compassion, horror or any other reaction. Photography helps you to focus, to become aware of your surroundings, to create ideas for images in your head. We believe that photography is a great way to help people develop in different areas.

We are convinced that by using photography as a tool the participants will understand themselves better and get to know themselves as individuals in a whole new way.

In the Power of Art project we focus on photographing people: portraits, documentary and street photography.

#### Portrait photography

Portraiture is the art of capturing the face, facial features as well as facial expressions of a person or a group of people. The photographer can choose - before taking the picture - to create his own image by instructing his subject(s), or to simply take a picture of what is in front of him. Portraiture is about people and offers an excellent tool to infuse the viewer of the photo with stories.

#### Documentary photography

Documentary photography concentrates on a single subject or an in-depth story over a longer period, as opposed to photojournalism, which deals with isolated events to attract the attention of the newsreader. Through documentary photography, a viewer can follow the lives of people who live in certain cultures. The aim of the documentary photographer is to understand and portray his or her subject(s) in a respectable way, not only to teach the viewer more about this subject, but also to arouse his/her interest in it and to make a connection with it.

## Street photography

Street photography is known as the photography that records non-organized encounters and random incidents. At best, it is a kind of documentary that reveals the subject pure and unedited, activating the viewer's emotions and thoughts.

In the next section, we will focus on the competencies trained in using photography as a tool for 'self-fulfilment', regardless of the type of photography a participant chooses.

## Intuition

Photography is all about intuition, about capturing that moment that the photographer in a split second thinks is worth remembering or sharing .

## Communication

Successfully communicating your message is essential for creative photography. The photographer is the one who creates the image, regardless of whether the scene is his/her creation, to let the viewer know something or see what he wants to share with the viewer. To be successful in getting his/her message across, s-he has to give the viewer a context.

## Practical training

Before you take a picture, create a scene or take an intuitive photo, it's important to know how the camera works. Nowadays, mainly due to the availability of instructional videos on YouTube, it is easy to learn something about the practical use of a camera. With this in mind, we will not pay too much attention to technical matters, but will encourage participants to acquire technical knowledge in their own time by using the available tutorials. This gives the participants the opportunity to gain experience in finding the right information themselves (research skills) and gives us more time to spend with the group acquiring skills that you cannot learn through tutorial videos.

## Creativity

One of the most beautiful and challenging aspects of photography is being creative. Although some people want us to believe that we were born with creative talents (or not), we believe that creativity is something that anyone can develop if they have the will and good support.

## Individuality

As a photographer, you are always in your own process. You have to be able to trust that your own competencies and skills will help you take a picture that will make other people understand the story you want to communicate.

### **3.b Dance**

Dance, which can also be referred to as movement, is discovered more and more as a very

useful tool for personal development. Searching the web, using the key words 'dance' and 'personal growth' leads to many reports and studies describing the power of movement as a tool to find yourself. Often, these studies are really connected to spirituality and sometimes – more often than you would expect - even related to finding God. Dancing makes you happy and brings you in another world, closer to the invisible powers, is the conclusion (by the way, the famous Sufi Darwish dance is based on the same principle).

Although this is not the path we want to take in this project - our approach is more down-to-earth - the basic elements mentioned in all these studies do apply to our way of working.

Other studies on the use of dance as a tool for personal development, such as the research Niina Lisma did for the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences on Hip Hop as a tool for youth empowerment in disadvantaged communities (in her case in Uganda), make clear that movement in its different forms can contribute a lot to the development of youth. As she states:

*The result was to be able to identify Common factors supporting empowerment, like inclusion, self-discovery, confidence, responsibility, leadership, creativity, initiative and social capital.*

*Members connect the positive transformation and process of empowerment to their involvement in BPU (Breakdance Project Uganda) activities.*

It is important to explore the different elements of personal development through dance, as it is not only the movement itself that contributes to that. First, we will do that in general terms, before focusing on the specific characteristics of our project within the framework of The Power of Art.

### Self-expression

Being involved in dance enables people to work on self-expression. Everybody moves and, in the end, almost everybody likes to dance. But everyone has another body and another way of moving and using body language. For self-expression it is good to explore your own way of moving and to get to know your own style and (im)possibilities.

But dancing is also telling a story. Instead of words, you use your body to tell your story, or - in the case of group work - the story of the group. Ultimately, people also have to master the technical part of the dance, but the story they express using these techniques is more important. This is related to the following aspect.

### Communication

Being aware of your body language is important for the way you communicate. There are many more aspects to communication than just words.



Much of what is communicated is expressed in our body language and other non-verbal forms of communication. Although the use of body language is universal, the meanings of signals can vary greatly and this can lead to many misunderstandings.

- **Kinesics:** all forms of body movement excluding physical contact with another (Burgoon et al 1996)
- **Haptics:** physical contact, touch
- **Proxemics:** fine-tuning physical distance in accordance with social relationship and type of situation (Hall)
- **Physical appearance:** presenting the self
- **Chronemics:** use of time and rhythm (Hall, Condon)
- **Artefacts:** use of objects to communicate

If you are aware of these physical aspects of communication, it is way easier to influence your own way of communicating. Working with dance enables you to explore these physical characteristics in a thorough but playful way.

### Collaboration and self-reflection

Making a dance piece is almost always a matter of collaboration. When you dance in a group, this is clear. But even in a solo piece it is often the collaboration between the dancer and the choreographer that is important.

Cooperation means listening to each other, but also observing and being able to react to what is going on. This includes leadership skills, negotiation skills and listening skills. All these skills can be trained in dance projects. An important aspect of this is also exploring one's own strengths and weaknesses, in other words, working on self-reflection. Am I a leader, or am I the one who brings people together? Are my technical skills leading or do I excel in communication skills? It is useful to make people who participate in a group aware of the different positions in that group. Different qualities and talents are needed to be a good team. By creating a dance piece together, the participants can discover this while working. It is the responsibility of the coach to emphasize this and to support the participants in this form of self-reflection.

### Creativity

Of course, participation in a dance project will lead to the development of creative talents. Dance is not just movement. Music and other theatrical means also play a role. The creation of a dance project challenges the participants to think about all these elements and to make decisions. These decisions must be based on rational thoughts and emotional feelings. A person involved in a dance project must be able to explain how he/she came to a certain decision and must also be able to convince others that this decision is the right one.

## Identity

Dance can also contribute to the development of identity. Dance has a long history and different forms of dance have developed in different cultures. Because of the many diasporas, these dance forms are known and practiced all over the world. In Europe today people dance all kinds of dances, from Salsa to Dubke, from Russian folk dance to APD (African People Dance forms). Dance can be used as an instrument to introduce young people to their roots and their own cultural heritage, or to give them the opportunity to learn about other cultures and traditions.

### Specific characteristics of the Power of Art workshops

The workshop that will be developed for the Power of Art project will be based on dance that is rooted in African People Dance forms (APD). The will learn about dance that is rooted in these forms, other dance forms.

The participants will go through a process that will leave them with positive impressions dance from African Diaspora. This will contribute to the development of the identity of the participants, both the ones with African roots, who will learn more about their history, as the ones with other roots, who will get the opportunity to broaden their horizons, and to reflect on their own roots (as coping with a different culture/identity encourages people to reflect on their own).

There will be a collaborative experience, where participants are encouraged to input into the creative process throughout the project. By doing this we train several skills, like collaboration skills (listening skills, leadership skills) and communication skills.

Participants will share their skills with the group and use skills in the creation and development of the project. In this process, peer teaching will be strongly encouraged, giving the participants the opportunity to train their coaching and communication skills

This project will not be limited to just dancing. In the creative process, we encourage a verbal dialogue. We will propose a wide range of topics for discussion.

In addition, participants will be introduced to the importance of storytelling in creating dance. Other creative forms will also be introduced and used, such as photography.

To encourage self-reflection and evaluation of the learning process, participants are encouraged to keep a diary. This can be done in written form or in images (e.g. photographs or film).

In this project we want to work with the participants on the following competencies, which are linked to the five main competency fields mentioned above:

- Confidence
- Self esteem

- Performance skills
- New ways of working
- New dance styles
- Storytelling
- Cultural awareness
- Musical skills
- Shared learning
- Tolerance
- Diversity

### **3.c Storytelling**

In the curriculum of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, which offer courses in Storytelling, Traditional Storytelling is described as:

“... an art and a form of communication that creates internal images in the listener’s imagination rather than showing or dramatizing visible images. Traditional Storytelling takes place as an open and direct two-way communication between the Storyteller and the audience and allows for interaction between those present.”

Although this definition can exclude a number of styles and techniques in Traditional Storytelling, it does emphasize something that is essential: the listener's ability to create his or her own images based on the story and thus the active role of the listener.

Storytelling is increasingly being discovered as a powerful tool to set social processes in motion. Storytelling connects the narrator and the listener. Because of this aspect, storytelling projects are valuable in situations in which people want to be brought closer together.

Storytelling has proven its worth in many areas. To give some examples: seniors use stories to keep their past and history 'alive'; migrants use stories to strengthen their identity. Storytelling has also been discovered by business managers as a method to guide organizations through reorganization / transition processes or to develop good leadership.

In this chapter we will give a brief overview of the Art of Storytelling and its numerous applications.

Roughly speaking, we can divide Storytelling into two main types:

- Theatrical Storytelling
- Applied Storytelling

Within Applied Storytelling we can distinguish four sub-categories:

1. Social Storytelling
2. Organisational Storytelling (or in-company Storytelling)

3. Healing Storytelling
4. Corporate Storytelling

### Theatrical Storytelling

Theatrical Storytelling is an interactive performance art. The performer is using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story whilst encouraging the listener's imagination. The message, subtext or meaning is conveyed through the story told. In this particular project the nature of the stories we will be working on will be autobiographical. An important element of storytelling is the absence of 'The Fourth Wall'; the imaginary wall at the front of the stage that stands between the performer/actor/dancer and the audience. Unlike the actor who will usually focus his attention on what is happening on stage (thus creating an imaginary fourth wall between himself and the audience) the Storyteller will speak directly to the audience and will continuously receive his inspiration from it.

### Applied Storytelling

Applied Storytelling is storytelling within every other context than a theatrical one. Applied Storytelling shares many techniques with Theatrical Storytelling. Using narrative structures and stimulating the imagination of the listener are as important within the field of Applied Storytelling as is appreciative listening!

The four categories of Applied Storytelling as distinguished above can be explained as follows:

Social Storytelling and Organizational/In-company Storytelling both focus on change and development of 'a group of people'. The difference between the two is the target group. Whilst Organizational Storytelling deals with processes within companies and organizations, the Social Storytelling usually refers to storytelling in a social and community context. Education through storytelling (or Educational Storytelling) forms part of the broad range of Social and/or Organizational Storytelling. We will focus on this particular type of storytelling below.

There are many similarities between Social Storytelling and Healing Storytelling, though the latter focuses more on the personal development (healing process) whilst the first deals with change in communities. Healing Storytelling is often just one of the tools within a therapeutic process, guided by a certified therapist.

Corporate Storytelling refers to the creation of stories about brands, companies and organizations. It is part of the company's marketing and aims to increase its sales. Though narrative structures are used, Corporate Storytelling usually does not include the listener and there is no or little interaction. The companies only tell their stories, i.e. they only 'send' information. This is why many storytellers do not consider Corporate Storytelling to be 'real' storytelling; it does not comply with the definition of Traditional Storytelling as given in the introduction above.

## The value of applied storytelling

Anyone can tell a story! It is a talent with which all people are endowed, but not everyone is aware of it.

Storytelling is the oldest form of communication and has always been a means of communicating ideas, thoughts and shared values, creating and developing dialogue between people whatever their background. Storytelling helps us to define who we are.

Storytelling is a tool that can be used to encourage respect, mutual understanding and acceptance in a responsible manner, using the personal and authentic experiences on which the stories are based.

In storytelling listening is as important as telling. We will therefore also coach the participants in listening and responding to stories. The actual process of listening to someone's story encourages the listener to vocalize his or her own story, beliefs and experiences. Also, to be able to listen to 'the other' is a competence from which participants will benefit in various situations they might face in their lives. In p.e. Conflict situations it is often the beginning of a solution.

## Competences

Applied Storytelling can be used in many different situations and processes, contributing to different competences. The main competences can be divided into four categories:-

- Communication Competences, including acquiring language skills
- Social Competences
- Self awareness and development and self reflective competences
- Intercultural competences

### *Communication competences*

Storytelling is a very strong tool to develop communication skills. Also learning a language can be supported by storytelling. Many organizations use Storytelling techniques in language projects for refugees and migrants.

Storytelling can also be used to improve presentations. A keynote speech for instance in which one uses storytelling techniques is often more interesting and attractive.

### *Social Competences*

We have already referred to some of the social benefits of storytelling. Creating understanding, increasing self confidence and raising awareness are amongst the most important ones. The cathartic effect storytelling can have is also of great importance. Storytelling helps many people to find a way to deal with their emotions and their feelings.

### *Self awareness and development and self reflective competences*

Connected to the more external social competences, storytelling can contribute to the development of one's self-awareness and self-development competences. Creating and

presenting a story and experiencing the attention of those listening to it contributes to the storyteller's self esteem. This we can enhance by training people to tell a story in an attractive way (using the pillars of storytelling that we will highlight below). Everybody likes to listen to a good story.

Creating your own story implies structuring your thoughts and arranging them in a logical order, so that the listener will be able to follow them. This requires self reflection, another competence that will be developed by creating and telling a story.

### *(Inter)Cultural Competences*

Storytelling is an important tool in intercultural and identity work. Dealing with identities, whether they are one's own or the identity of others, is one of the main topics in today's society.

Storytelling is a very strong tool in fighting prejudices. One's impression of 'the other' is often based on 'first sight', on prejudice. When taking the time to listen to that person's story, this impression might, and very often does change completely. This principle is used in, for example, the Human Library projects that are initiated in different countries (after its invention in Roskilde, Denmark, in 2001). In these Human Libraries individuals are invited to listen one to one to the story of someone they are not familiar with. By telling and listening the two connect. And whatever their first impression of each other might have been, it will have changed by the time they will leave the Human Library. As Gene Knudsen Hoffman said, "An Enemy Is One Whose Story We Have Not Heard".

### The 'dangers' of Storytelling

Before you start working with stories, it's important to consider the dangers. Like almost any other creative training, storytelling training 'in the wrong hands' can lead to a worsening of a situation. Take, for example, a fraudster. A 'good' fraudster is often a very good storyteller. A bigger problem, however, is that in storytelling projects aimed at conflict resolution, one participant sticks to his or her own story and forgets to listen to the story of the other. Forgetting or neglecting the importance of appreciative listening in these kinds of storytelling projects can lead to even greater distance between two (or more) conflicting individuals or groups. This was illustrated by a storytelling project in Northern Ireland - designed to bring Catholics and Protestants closer together in bordering areas of Belfast - which was therefore unsuccessful (Bush, 2011).

Storytelling projects, both applied and artistic, can evoke strong emotions. As a trainer you are sometimes confronted with participants who have to deal with profound problems. And they may feel so safe in the environment you have created that they dare to share these problems, directly or hidden in a story. Every trainer should be aware of the fact that s-he is not a therapist. It happens (too often) that storytelling trainers try to help the participant themselves. Be sensible and refer such a participant to an expert!

## Using storytelling for the development of competences

The design of the workshop will be based on our Share to Connect methodology which focuses on:

- Building trust
- The three pillars of storytelling
- Coaching and presentation

In this project, we will also focus on the competencies that are revealed in the stories and may be useful in finding work.

### *Step 1: Building trust*

Building trust is essential to run a fruitful storytelling workshop. Participants have to feel safe in order to open up and to have the feeling that they can share whatever they want. To build a team and to build trust we use a set of activities and exercises.

### *Step 2: The three pillars of storytelling*

In order to be able to tell and appreciate a good story, the participants have to be aware of the characteristics of such a good story. What makes a story a good story?

To explain that we developed 'the three pillars of storytelling':

1. The narrative structure
2. Imaginative telling
3. Contact

To explain each pillar we will make use of fairy tales, folktales, Hollywood movies and television formats. We have developed a set of exercises for the participants to experiment with and to experience the nature and effect of (well told) stories.

### *Step 3: Coaching and presentation*

Once the participants have acquired the knowledge offered in step 2 they start creating their own stories. Making use of various exercises the trainers will help them to 'find' their story (e.g. speed dating, word web).

The creation, crafting and the presentation of the stories will be (coached) teamwork in order to encourage the participants to develop their ability to be critical and to express critical thoughts in a positive manner.

The stories told will be analyzed by the listening peers. They will be asked to formulate the competences they get out of each story. Each participant will then use these competences in his or her new story that is more focused on presenting oneself in e.g. a job application or interview.

The participants will be asked to produce the final event in which they will present their stories to an audience. This will help them to develop their project management and

promotional skills and, by working as a team, their collaboration and communication competences.

#### Rough setup of the training sessions

1. Warming up/team building using one or two exercises from the Share to Connect toolkit ([Sharetoconnect.org](http://Sharetoconnect.org))
2. Short introduction into storytelling, introducing the three pillars
3. Creating a story based on the theme *Brilliant failures*
4. Sharing the stories in duo's and analysing the stories (which competences can you derive from the story?)
5. Discussion about competences in duo's
6. Presentation of the analysis in the group
7. Creating new stories based on the outcomes of the competences analysis (involve strengths and weaknesses)
8. Sharing the stories in duo's and analysing the stories
9. Presenting the stories to the entire group
10. Discussion about the stories, giving feedback
11. Working towards a public presentation

The training lasts 6 sessions of 3 or 4 hours each. We will ask the participants to keep a diary during the sessions in order to record their personal development. For this they can use different media, such as video, writing, audio recordings, etc.

### **3.d Music**

As a performing singer/songwriter, you'll come across so many questions about your (artistic) identity, almost all of which are difficult to answer - especially for young artists who may not

Part of what makes this so tricky is that as a singer/songwriter, you actually have several different voices you're dealing with—your songwriting voice, which is made up of your style, unique perspective, vocabulary preferences, melodic and rhythmic tendencies, etc; and your singing voice, which is likely influenced mainly by the artists you like to listen to, the natural qualities of your voice, and the way you speak in everyday life. These two types of voices are distinct, but strongly related to each other. And what's more, these are also connected to what someone wants to say with her/his arts. What is the message s-he wants to convey?

Although this seems to complicate the question of 'who you are' as an artist, it can be useful to be aware of these different voices. You can use both voices in relation to each other to build up your (artistic) identity. A good understanding of yourself as an artist can even inspire your writing.

When someone is of when someone wants to become a singer-songwriter of any genre, there are about a million places (s)he could draw inspiration from—her/his life, other



people's lives, history, works of art, or even what kind of coffee (s)he would like to order today..... The main thing someone who wants to sing has to remember is that the process of making and presenting a song is mostly reflective and self-discovery is always a big part of that.

For that reason, we connect the discipline on songwriting and live performance to the acquisition of skills and competences. These will be both artistic and soft skill competences.

Initially, the workshops focus on the development of the following skills:

1. Creative writing /lyrical content /spoken word
2. Examples of international production
3. Live performance/ performance skills
4. The history of music and where we are today
5. Presentation
6. What is forward movement / forward thinking
7. Self-development

These are all connected to a set of competences. We will describe them for every category.

#### ad 1. Creative writing /lyrical content /spoken word

Being involved in creative writing /lyrical content /spoken word, allows the participants to develop their self-expression skills. They have to think about what they want to say. What is your voice? This is also connected to their context: their backgrounds and community. By expressing themselves they might take responsibility for their community, making visible what goes wrong and what should change.

It also trains their communication skills. The participants have to think about the audience they want to address and the way they can reach that audience. They should also be aware of how they can lose their audience, for example by using a language that an audience does not understand (can also be street language) or by bringing a message in such an aggressive way that the audience will close itself and stops listening.

Last but certainly not least: creative writing /lyrical content /spoken word also develops language skills. The participants will be invited to play with language and to listen to each other's creations, which contributes to the development of their language skills and the ability to think about language in a creative way.

#### ad 2. Examples of international production

By providing examples of international productions, we will inspire the participants and broaden their horizon. We train their listening skills and meanwhile also their intercultural communication skills, as we will confront them with examples of music/spoken word etc

that are rooted in other cultures and traditions. We will encourage the participants to think 'out of the box', as we consider that very important for their artistic development.

#### ad 3. Live performance/ performance skills

Here again, we work on the self-expression skills of the participants. They have to be aware of their presence on stage. How do I move? What message do my movements convey? It is very important to be self-reflective, also to guarantee a proper communication with the audience.

However, often an artist is not alone on stage. A singer mostly has a band of musicians. And many spoken word artists work with a DJ. So, performing means collaborating with others, creating a team. These collaboration skills will be developed in this step of the workshop.

A third competence that will be trained is the competence of production management. Big music stars have people to arrange everything for them, but most other artists have to take care of everything themselves. Is there a microphone? Does it work? What time do I have to be backstage to assure a proper preparation? All those questions have to be thought of to guarantee a good performance and the participants will learn how to produce at least their part of a proper performance.

Of course all these competences are connected to the practical artistic skills we described above, considering the voice and the ways to use that voice.

#### ad 4. The history of music and where we are today

Just as dance and storytelling, music has a long and rich tradition. Again, in different cultures different forms of music developed and also in different decades, different styles were born (and sometimes disappeared again). With the many diaspora's these music forms become known and played all over the world.

This makes making music a very good tool to explore the roots of oneself and the other. Music reinforces identities but also enables people to build bridges between cultures, often because different musical cultures did and do influence each other. Dealing with music enables youth to explore and form their own identity, either based on their roots or on their current day life and context (for example, being part of a certain street culture). Again, this step is closely connected to finding your voice.

#### ad 5. Presentation

The competences of this step correspond with the ones mentioned ad 3

#### ad 6. What is forward movement / forward thinking

Being a good artist (both professional and amateur) is more than being a good musician. It involves a lot of self-structuring skills (such as the aforementioned production qualities). We would especially like to pay attention to the so-called planning skills. A good artist has to

make a plan for how s-he can develop her/his art and how s-he can succeed. In the best case s-he also makes a plan B, in case plan A doesn't deliver the desired result. For many young people (and perhaps especially for those who are creative) a feasible plan requires training and examples. This is what we will offer in this step.

#### ad 7. Self-development

Ultimately, the whole training is about self-development and the development of skills and competences that contribute to this self-fulfilment. This is also the link between artistic development and the social development that we encourage in this project. Some participants would like to continue in the music business, but others consider their musical ambitions as a hobby and look for other ways to create a (good) life. The skills and competences they acquire in this workshop will enable them to find a job more easily and to know better what kind of work they want to do.

## CONCLUSION

In these Foundation Bricks of the Power of Art project we have explored different aspects of using creativity and creative tools for the development of soft skills, and specifically the soft skills of young people who are looking for work or are not happy with the work they are doing. We identified the target group and its characteristics. We also carried out an environmental analysis by looking at demographic data and other figures available about the neighborhoods in which we are going to work: Amsterdam Nieuw-West and Liverpool Toxteth. We then focused on the various creative disciplines with which we want to work - photography, dance, storytelling and music - and competences that can be developed with them.

With these Foundation Bricks we have laid the foundation for the case studies that will be carried out in the course of the project. These case studies will provide new insights and knowledge, which, in combination with the Foundation Bricks, will provide a method for the use of creative instruments in the learning of soft skills, and thus in the competence development of young people. This method will be accessible and transferable, so that youth workers throughout Europe can use the results of the Power of Art project.