

Lighthouse Network Arts&Culture 2022: A brief report

The Arts and Culture Lighthouse Network took place on 12th and 13th September 2022 in Brussels. This meeting was set up inviting representatives from many organisations across Europe who work with art and creativity and have a background in supporting migrants and refugees. The purpose of the meeting was to create a multi-disciplinary and informed set of recommendations on arts-based practices and interventions in a trauma-informed way. These artistic practices will contribute to the wellbeing of people with disabilities fleeing from and/or living in countries affected by war, especially in Ukraine or adjoining countries.

The participants have different backgrounds and great attention was paid to the exchange of knowledge among them: each expert presented his/her organisation, as well as their main activities.

Dr. Judith Butler and Dr. Annie Cummins (MTU) led a training about relationship-based approaches and supporting traumatised people fleeing war, with a focus on the topic of children and war. Serena Galante (Clowns without Borders) explained how their artistic and circus performances for and with children can transform fear into hope. Lina Malcoci and Doina Cutulab (Keystone Moldova) presented “AlternativTeatrue”, a project to teach children and parents how to recognise and fight bullying, through theatre performances. Claire Mackey and Elisa Babkina (NASC) explained the project “Ukraine Response”, created to offer emotional and practical support to women from Ukraine. Ger Canning (Cork ETB) gave an overview of the services offered by the Cork ETB Ukrainian Services Response Team.

Yuliia Vynnychenko (Tenenet) described the Blue Dots service, who supports refugees providing them information and practical aids. Galin Popov (NGO VT Events) organises cultural events to include marginalised people and to make them feel part of a community. Rose Demol (International Community Dynamics) presented the music project “Citadel”, a band composed of refugees from many countries who sing and play instruments to not forget their cultural roots.

Henriette Nelhübel, Oláh and Márk Szántai (Civic Advocacy Network of Service Providers for PwD) gave an overview of Ukrainian refugees’ situation as they enter Hungary, providing data on Ukrainian children and children with disabilities who are now in Hungary. Eric Bloemkolk (SOFT tulip) explained how they support Ukrainian refugees with disabilities, providing them a suitable accommodation and helping refugees to find a job in the Netherlands. Eva Dermitzaki (VC Margarita) showed through a footage how art and theatre are useful for persons with intellectual disabilities to express themselves, as well as be more independent. Olga Sviderska and Rhona Coughlan (Independent and Dance Cork Firkin Crane) illustrated the opportunities to include refugees and persons with disabilities in the community through dance. Tadhg Crowley (Glucksman Gallery) talked about the collaborations of GG with artists to welcome teenage refugees at their gallery, helping them to express their feelings through art.

During the meeting, how to implement sustainable projects involving art and culture was discussed, always taking into account what organisations are already doing in Ukraine and adjoining countries, and focusing on community based approaches.

The experts identified four necessary steps to implement a new service, and these are: review, identification and evaluation of practices and planning of the new service.

A review of what is already present on the ground is essential to be aware of what kind of services could be implemented or could work in a certain environment.

The identification of the practices that have been already implemented is the second step: it is useful also to find potential collaborators and coordinators of the project, who could operate at an administrative level. Next step is the evaluation of the identified practices, to single out the

promising ones. This step is essential to figure out if there is an existing knowledge, how to make a project sustainable, if training is needed, who are the groups needing help, and what kind of advantages they could get from the project.

The last step will be implementing a new project that is art-related: a space open to everybody, where people can feel safe and welcome.

Six steps of implementation were then established, to practically create a set of recommendations.

First step is **to decide the desired outcomes**: establishment of a network, delivery of artistic promising practices, creation and raise of awareness, more disabled and refugees led initiatives. The second step concerns the **ownership of the project**, that will belong to EASPD and Member Fora.

Third essential step is to identify the **actions required**: funding is essential, as well as communicating and exchanging knowledge; training is also important to emotionally support and inform users. The fourth step is about the **roles** necessary to implement this service: the MF will be the project leader; the core of the project will be represented by local coordinators, artists, communication teams, social workers and translators.

Last step is to **track and monitor** the project through quality standards, evaluation/review, data collection and data analysis.

Finally, experts identified which projects could be useful to implement this set of recommendations.

Erasmus+ project offers two possibilities: a common project of 2 or 3 years or the **KEY ACTION ONE**, that provides for the exchange of staff and expertise. SOFT tulip could be interested in leading this project.

The second project is **Creative Europe**: it is art focused and has cultural outcomes. The team will look for a cultural association that could be interested in leading the project.

Finally, all the experts agreed on going on the ground to study the situation, exchanging knowledge with other organisations.