

Report

# MOVEmental

Training course

*1-8 November 2022*



**The purpose of this report about the MOVEmental training course is to motivate other non-governmental organisations and youth workers to develop similar projects and initiatives to connect and engage youth workers and artists in the cultural and creative processes of their communities and to contribute to the integration and promotion of the European way of life.**

**Host organisation:**

Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education, Bulgaria

**Partners:**

Entrepreneurship and Social Economy Group, Greece

European Youth Centre Břeclav, Czech Republic

Multi Kulti, Romania

Youth for Equality, Slovakia

Organization of Creative Grouping, Republic of Serbia

TAVO Europa, Lithuania



**Co-funded by  
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The times we live in are characterised by a fast-paced, constantly and unpredictably changing environment, which restricts the free flow of cultural activities and makes it difficult for freelance and emerging artists to find their place in the cultural realm. Imagination, free artistic expression and creative processes enable solutions and turn limitations into opportunities, which is why the MOVEmental training course supports young creatives by introducing them to the idea-generation process, mixing disciplines from art, design, street art, and movement.

The training course MOVEmental took place in Sofia, Bulgaria. The chosen accommodation was the Light Hotel, which matched the creative theme of the project as it is located in an art district known as KvARTal, full of craft ateliers, graffiti murals, and a clash of architectural styles could be witnessed. It is also located a few minutes away from the city centre, thus allowing participants to easily explore the sights of Sofia and immerse themselves in the city's atmosphere.

22 youth workers and artists aged 18 and above from seven European countries attended the training course. The participants arrived at the hotel on 1 November in the late afternoon and evening and left on 8 November in the morning.

**The topics covered in the training course were:**

- Learning styles
- Creative thinking
- Visual literacy - The Art of Seeing Art
- FLOW state of mind
- Techniques for generating ideas
- Creativity stages
- IQ, EQ, CQ Integration Connectivity

## **The aims of the MOVEMENTal project were:**

- To develop the process of enabling cultural activities, including the arts, and cultural and creative industries, towards the realisation of a culturally rich, cohesive, and vibrant community and society
- To raise skills and competences, such as adaptability, creative thinking, interpersonal and leadership skills
- To bring a deeper understanding of the role of culture and the arts in creating sustainable social and economic development, job creation and social cohesion
- To get acquainted with the different cultural forms of expression and NFIL methods supporting cultural-based creativity
- To foster youth creativity through enhanced international cooperation in the development of culture and innovation
- To promote cooperation between cultural and creative sectors toward the creation of culturally vibrant communities

## **The used methods of non-formal learning included:**

- Intercultural and experiential learning
- Embodied learning approach
- Arts and design-based learning
- Collaborative activities – individual and teamwork
- Discussions, brainstorming and reflection
- Role-play and simulations
- Methods of social and emotional learning

## The reached results of the project are:

- Participants gained a deeper understanding and new knowledge about the design and visual literacy principles, a form of critical thinking, through the artworks of Bulgarian and world-famous artists.
- Empowered young people to become active European citizens and participate in cultural and artistic life at a European level.
- Participants gained and further developed valuable soft skills including adaptability, creative thinking, constructive participation in discussions, leadership and interpersonal skills highly appreciated in the cultural and creative sectors.
- Participants increased their understanding of the learning styles and the empathetic creative process.
- Introduced participants to an intercultural environment and NFIL methods supporting cultural-based creativity
- Learned how to transform creative ideas into projects through Erasmus+ and Creative Europe Programme.



There are two good reasons why taking a closer look at the lives of creative individuals and their achievements is useful. The first and most obvious one is that the fruits of their effort enrich the culture and thus, even indirectly, improve the quality of life for everyone else. The direct benefit of this knowledge is learning how to make our lives more fascinating and productive.

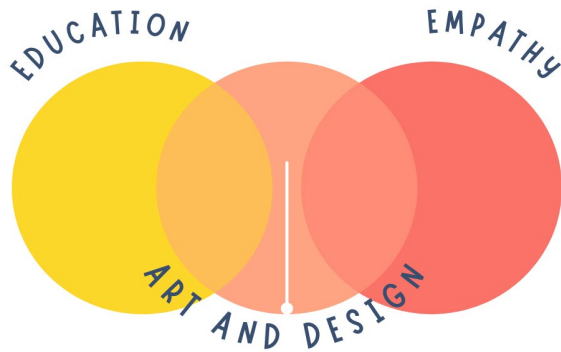
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How to creatively enrich our everyday life?

How to connect with the creativity in oneself  
and  
be inspired by others?

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Let's start an artistic, visual, and conceptual exploration and learn how to generate and implement ideas.



## Panels of activities

The training included three overlapping panels whose intersection lead to creativity.

**Positive psychology** is strongly incorporated into the design of the entire programme, with the development of soft skills embedded into the implementation of each activity. The FLOW state concept, as well as the creative approach, is inspired by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

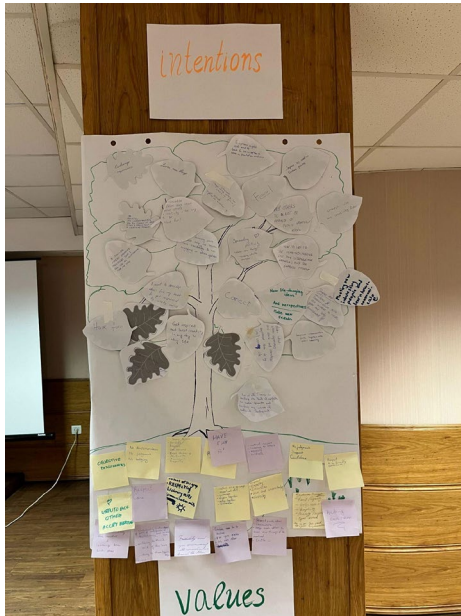
A deeper understanding of our learning and communication styles can lead us to the nature of creativity. Here, **educational psychology** intersects with the subject, allowing social and emotional learning to be applied to non-formal educational practices.

In terms of **design**, the basic principles and elements of **art** were covered through group work activities and a specially designed colour game, used as a tool during the whole course. The game allowed the participants to search, identify and play with colour harmonies.

By observing, describing, analysing and interpreting a work of art, participants develop their visual literacy. Various activities during the sessions emphasised the creative stages. It was easy to balance the indoor and outdoor activities taking into account that the neighbourhood is a 24-hour open gallery with graffiti murals.

## Integration of humanistic values into the design

*“Before design, there is empathy. Without it, there is no good design.”*  
*Ilse Crawford*



The connection between interrogation and empathy was part of the training throughout the whole training process. To get to the theme of creativity, art and design, the first day was dedicated to human values and getting to know each other since the design is created by people for people.

The course started with the individual values related to the implementation of the project through an educational game and discussion. Each participant proposed a value by rooting it in the depicted soil of a tree and sticking a note on the drawing. Then during a discussion, we formed the group values necessary to create a friendly learning atmosphere, free to explore and create. Through the trunk, the group reached the crown of the tree, filled with set goals/realistic expectations that participants laid out. On the last day, the participants reviewed the goals and self-evaluated their performance in the project.

**Who are I:** Buzz group activity aimed at exploring issues of identity and self-awareness through mind mapping and group discussions. The game focuses on developing communication skills while promoting shared identity and mutual respect.

## **METHODS:**

**Learning styles (VARK model) and communication languages** examine embodied practices of receiving and sending information, explored through different senses. Youth workers could predict their preferred style and check it through an online questionnaire.

**Learning out of the box card game** is a tool addressing the topic of 'learning' in a fun, engaging, and inspiring way.

**Experiential Learning** incorporated in the training course is the process of learning by doing. By engaging the youth workers in hands-on experiences and reflection, they could better connect theories and knowledge learned during the training course to real-world situations.


Kolb's experiential learning cycle concept divides the learning process into a cycle of four fundamental theoretical components: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation.

### **When people participate in experiential education opportunities, they gain:**

- A better understanding of course material
- A broader view of the world and an appreciation of the community
- Insight into their skills, interests, passions, and values
- Opportunities to collaborate with diverse organisations and people
- Positive professional practices and skill sets
- Self-confidence and leadership skills

## **ACTIVITIES:**

The Art of Seeing Art™ - Visual literacy  
The Art of Seeing Art™ - visit to the National Gallery  
Creative process - in yourself, in your environment,  
Creative process - in the people for whom we design  
Techniques for generating ideas - Environment  
DIVI SLIVI - Personalisation in design  
Discussion - Six thinking hats model  
Exploring the city of Sofia  
Definition of Creativity  
From idea to project

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## **The Art of Seeing Art™ - a visit of Kvadrat 500, the National Gallery**

Participants were introduced to the following elements of art - shape, form, line, space, texture, colour, and the design principles - balance, emphasis (focal point), rhythm, unity, harmony, movement, variety and proportion. Youth workers and artists analysed every element following the principle of visual language.

The first session on generating ideas was aimed at connecting visual literacy and concepts. Participants wrote down a list of ideas they wanted to explore and had the task of going around the neighbourhood to find abstract representations of real life. With a clear focus of interest, the participants used the fundamentals of visual language and presented the others with their insights.

The preceding activity was the group visit to the National Gallery, the largest art museum in Bulgaria, with over 41,000 paintings, sculptures, graphics, and decorative and contemporary artworks. Divided into groups, participants learned about an artist, found and analysed a particular work and presented their group experience in the gallery to the others.



By following the guidance of the Magic Square guide developed by the National Gallery curators, the participants learned about the world of art. The guide cards consist of information about an artist, the story behind the creation of a particular work, where to find it, curious facts, and fun tasks about artists such as Vladimir Dimitrov-The Master, Nikola Petrov, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Ivan Mrkvicka, Mara Yosifova, Edgar Degas, Assen Peikov, Atanas Yaranov, Genko Genkov.

*"Creativity is when intelligence is having fun."*

*Albert Einstein*

## **Definition of Creativity**

Participants were encouraged to first come up with an individual definition of creativity. Then, each of them had to find a pair and come up with one agreed definition between them. Further, participants got in groups of four to discuss and create one final definition. The definitions of each group are as follows:

- ❖ Creativity is the spontaneous productivity of thoughts, ideas and feelings.
- ❖ Creativity is a multidimensional ability to generate new ideas, associations and concepts, apply or adapt them in different unique ways, think outside the box, and unthink existing ideas.
- ❖ Creativity is a part of creation. It is the initial process of brainstorming, gathering and accessing information and the ability to use them and express oneself. It is also the ability to adjust the process of creation to the environment and obstacles that come with it.





- ❖ Creativity is doing something you love with passion, developing the skills and expressing your inner self.
  - Doesn't have to be only arts
  - It comes from a safe environment
  - It is expressing the inner self
  - Innovation + stepping up

**Practical idea-generation techniques** appeared at different stages of the training programme. Three perspectives on creative processes were presented: ourselves, the environment, and the people we design for. They opened up a debate about creativity - whether it is a self-examining process, a social one or dependent on the environment and community.



## Creative processes



- starting from interviewing another person and designing a product specifically for them

- from mood (music) and self-expression with a doodle to creating an idea



- inspiration from the surroundings exploring the city of Sofia

In addition to enriching their visual lenses in search of details, starting from a concept, they were encouraged to associate objects with the emotions they evoke.



The message/purpose of the design was another theme incorporated into the programme as participants had the opportunity to put their creativity into practice and customise their tote bag designs with the help of DIVI SLIVI, a Sofia-based linocut artist.

## **DIVI SLIVI Linocut Workshop**

self-expression, personalisation in design

Participants visited the DIVI SLIVI studio, located in the KvARTal district. They were introduced to the linocut technique and had the task of creating a composition from the prepared shapes and realising their project, personalising their bags with the logo of the European Union made for the training course. DIVI SLIVI presented the tools they could use and supported them throughout the creative process.

### **Creative stages – Preparation, Incubation, Illumination, Evaluation, Implementation**



The activity combines visual, kinesthetic and auditory learning styles, as well as art and design-based learning and spatial awareness. Their canvas was the bags they had from the first day of the course, which challenged them to think outside the box.



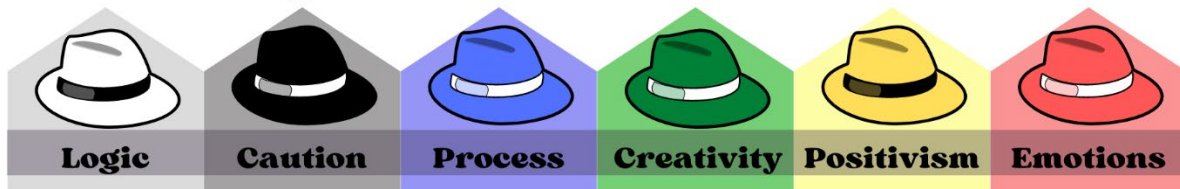
Some of the effects of art are reducing stress, thus lowering cortisol levels, improving focus, processing emotions (improving self-knowledge), and improving communication skills as it encourages self-expression. It also helps with anticipation and decision-making.

## Six Thinking Hats model

One of the many obstacles creatives face is the chaos of thinking of different approaches, so here's a solution. Edward De Bono's "Six Thinking Hats" model is a tool for increasing productivity by separating different thinking styles into six "hats": logic, emotion, caution, optimism, creativity, and process. Each participant in a six-person team takes the role of a hat. Hence, every team ensures that all viewpoints considering the realisation of the idea are covered.

### 6 Thinking Hats

Brainstorm ideas on a chosen topic for discussion following De Bono's Six Thinking Hats model.



In work environments, creativity is primarily about generating ideas and solving problems. **Creative problem solving (CPS)** approaches a problem as a question and identifies opportunities when conventional thinking has failed. It encourages finding new perspectives and proposing innovative solutions to formulate a plan to overcome obstacles and achieve set goals. Another example is the use of science fiction and fantasy (SFF) to shape organisational futures. Creativity can be applied in numerous situations. It seeks out context-sensitive concepts, thereby making clearer connections and engaging people guided by a common purpose, mission and values, which is essential for the cultural sector and the development of human potential in general.

## From ideas to project

Following the six thinking hats discussion, participants could continue with the same topic or choose a new one. In groups of 5, they explored pathways of funding culture provided by Creative Europe and Erasmus+ Programmes, creating a project reflecting the chosen topic.




## Intercultural Dialogue

The intercultural environment was another aspect of interest in the training course and a tool for generating ideas.

After breakfast, the participants engaged in collective activities to wake up their bodies and minds. The exercises varied every day and combined basic elements of the creative embodiment laboratory, short games that included dance, theatre practices, and role-play. Each activity was introduced in a fun and exciting way to start the day in a good mood. One of the morning activities to wake the body up used traditional favourite moves that we all did (body language).



Non-formal learning and sharing of national cultural traditions helped youth workers to engage in intercultural dialogue. By participating in a creative evening, youth workers and artists got the chance to proudly represent their country while learning about other groups' cultures, music and dance. The evening included videos about different countries, filled with practical and fascinating information, traditional foods, drinks, music, and dances.



The project MOVEmental was realised with  
the financial support of the Erasmus+ Programme  
Project No. 2021-1-BG01-KA151-YOU-000006304

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