



GUTS PROJECT - n° 2021-1-NO01-KA220-ADU-000026560



PR1 - BENCHMARK REPORT

AUTHOR: STEPS

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INTRODUCTION

This phase aims to carry out a comparative research in the partner countries on the existing methodologies for working with storytelling, music, and above all the indicators that can define the quality of the interventions. The main objective is to identify success factors of projects carried out in partner countries, which can be replicated and improved in the methodology that will be developed in PR2.

To achieve this, we created a **data collection template** on intervention models and best practices identified within the education and integration programs for young offenders.

The partners used it to analyze the situation in each country. In identifying projects and policies, particular attention was paid to the recidivism rate, the tendency to commit other crimes at the end of one's path in the criminal circuit.

Through storytelling, art, and music education the recidivism rate can be significantly lowered, because these methodologies allow young offenders to reintegrate into society through the acquisition of new skills and the construction of a positive image of themselves.

We identified **25 best practices** from Norway, Portugal, The Netherlands, Belgium and Italy.

For a higher quality of research, **in-depth interviews** were also carried out with associations, institutions and prisons that have developed good methodologies in the field of education and social reintegration of young offenders (**3 interviews per country**).

Finally, the collected data were compared with each other and summarized in this **final report**, translated into each partner's language to make the results accessible and functional in all the participating countries. In this way, we believe we can contribute to the transferability of the research methodology by research centers and subjects of interest in the social reintegration processes of ex-prisoners (especially professionals, institutions, and voluntary associations).

1. ANALYSIS OF THE GOOD PRACTICES

1.1 TARGET GROUPS

Many initiatives in the partner countries address **young inmates**, who are more interested in and attracted by music, especially rap music. Sometimes, there is a nice collaboration between young prisoners and **outside youngsters** in the same age: this cooperation creates synergies and ways to know each other, and in particular it is a valid method to bring the prison world "outside the walls." In some cases, **women** prisoners are involved. More often, the people involved are inmates awaiting trial or sentenced to sentences of less than five years (or with a residual sentence of less than five years).

1.2 MAIN OBJECTIVES

The identified practices have different but also consistent objectives, such as:

- Fighting **racism**.
- **Integration** of immigrants.
- Reduce the boundary between the inside and the outside.
- Strengthening the links and exchanges between the associations with a view to enhancing resources and developing co-design processes.



- Starting a **network** for the creation of videos that can be used when it is not possible to be physically close.
- Making the inmates feel protagonists and close to the outside world.
- Creating a **neutral space**, in which inmates can feel free to express themselves in disciplines that improve the psychophysical well-being of the person.
- Fighting against sexual **biases** and discrimination.
- Promoting the **democratization** of opera using technology as a means to reach new audiences, providing new tools for participatory art.

1.3 TYPE OF PROVIDERS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prisons (including juvenile prisons); • Prison operators, social workers, educators; • Associations and NGOs; • Social Cooperatives; • Cultural and art associations; • Theatres; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance academies; • Ministry of Cultural Heritage; • Regions and other public authorities; • Guarantor of the rights of persons subjected to restrictive measures; • Rappers; • Artists.
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1.4 PRACTICES ABOUT RAP MUSIC AND ART PERFORMANCES

“**Potere alle Parole Lab**” is a Hip-Hop project against discrimination and approaching reading with minors detained at IPM Cesare Beccaria and students of the Enaip Giacinti Institute in Milan, created by the association “Racism is a nasty business”, at the ENAIP Lombardia Foundation. The project involved a rap laboratory, two concerts, meetings with authors and activities aimed at the construction of the new library of the Milanese juvenile prison.

Barre aperte – Open bars is a web series, eight episodes in total, whose duration is less than 10 minutes each. It focuses on the life, dreams and stories of young inmates subjected to criminal proceedings, but also on professionals and volunteers involved in the human and professional training of those who live in prison. The web series represents the cultural activities performed in two juvenile prisons, in the North and South of Italy. Two rappers tell about these activities and interview the inmates, who highlight the importance of having art performances in prison, such as theatre, music, writing.

Storie d’amore e libertà is about street art, music and a writing and creativity course to go beyond the prison bars. After a series of meetings with the inmates inside the Lecce prison, two classes of fifteen inmates were created to deal with art, music, writing and creativity. Thanks to the Street Art course, participants were able to deal with all the modern artistic techniques of street art. Graffiti, stencils, drawings and collages, thanks to the guidance of expert teachers, became tools of freedom and participation. Thanks to the music and creative writing course, the thoughts of those who live inside a cell became the text of a rap song to be written, recorded and shared.

GiraVolta is a theater-dance performance that talks about identity, the one often affected by prejudices as often happens also for inmates. Just as the Drag Queen is a victim of prejudice, so a prisoner is, for the most part, convicted by society, for different reasons, he is the victim of



discrimination. The aim is to try to break down prejudices through knowledge. The inmate takes off his character's costumes until they remain the essence, the soul.

INTANGOUT is a socio-educational activity to break down the walls caused by prejudice through the expression of art with people who are not free to demonstrate. Tango is a hybrid dance of hybrid people, and was born as an introverted dance danced between lonely men and then danced in the slums of Buenos Aires.

Cativ'Art project's objectives were to create a 30-minute performance (written by the inmates) which includes: Music, Dance and Theatre; After the performance, a video was presented with a retrospective of the process and the artists' testimonies (15 minutes). The following practices were conducted with the Group: Sharing of thoughts, ideas, in an open way with the group and/or only on paper; Understanding movement, space, and how body expression can transmit thoughts, ideas and messages; View videos which deepen the emotions of each one; Creating lyrics for RAP songs, as well as ideas for the accompaniment, etc.

Nas Teias Contigo was focused on the importance of reading in prison and to provide inmates with conditions that encourage them to read and acquire the habit of reading and discover a new world of knowledge and information. The fact is that through reading, the doors of a new world are opened to the inmate, a world consisting of many opportunities, a condition of dignity and even a life transforming instrument. Every month, the inmate librarian and the Educational Coordinator register the books, authors or themes of interest to the inmates and request them from the Library.

LIBERT'ARTE began in March 2021 at the Aveiro Prison. The sessions are weekly and count with the participation of the project's inherent partner groups (Barrica, Red Cloud, Theatre Group, Aveiro School Group and Santa Joana de Aveiro Choir). The project had some public presentations open to the whole prison community as well as to local entities which support and express their presence in the community. Sessions are held to acquire musical skills, an instrument, as well as the use of the voice and body as a means of learning and experiencing music. In a form of shared work, personal development and self-confidence is promoted and stimulated; The work of crafts and the cult of local heritage will be an added value for the setting and characterization of the space in all activities.

Ópera na Prisão produced an opera, performing several concerts inside and outside the prison establishment. But, with the course of its first edition, in 2014, a need was identified and a dream was sown: the need was to have a rehearsal room with conditions to receive singing lessons and where artistic creation workshops in the area of musical theatre could be held. In a dramatic moment of their lives, these youngsters will be able to experience collective artistic creation, add sounds and images to their words, and then present this work to their colleagues from the prison, but also to the community in which it is located.

Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion is supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, under the PARTIS program - Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion, and will enter every week in the prison, starting next week, for three years. The objective is to "provide a space of security" to the inmates, so that "they can find other dimensions of themselves, and imagine another reality, more positive". The dancer and dance teacher stressed that the team that will work with the 12 inmates - aged between 18 and 30 - wants to start "with small ambitions".



Spiritchild is a freedom singer/artist from the South Bronx by way of Staten Island, spiritchild uses the arts to cultivate a cultural revolution throughout the world, from the United States to Europe, from Africa to South East Asia. This artist's eclectic and experimental fusion of true school Hip Hop, Funk, Electronica and Jazz continues to break the boundaries of the music scene. Currently spiritchild is working with Urban Art Beat and the maroon party for liberation on Rikers Island providing 'critical revolutionary hip hop pedagogy' with young men and women from the ages of 16-21.

Dialog is looking for three years to find out how we can deal with conflict and restoration. With lectures, debates, films, stories, citizen panels, the aim is to get that dialogue going and builds bridges between people inside and outside prison walls.

JES wants to strengthen young people in the city. We explicitly choose not to only create the context in which young people strengthen themselves and their environment. We also support and inspire other organisations and sectors through JES Academy. This way, we increase our impact in strengthening (the urban policy with regard to) children and young people. We are convinced that our expertise within, but certainly also outside of youth work, can contribute to a strong city for and especially by strong young people. By coming into contact with new partners and sectors, we also want to learn, experience and get inspired ourselves!

De Stroate is a youth culture center based on the Hip Hop culture. The Stroate's offer consists of workshops and events that cover the entire spectrum of Hip Hop, with the Hip Hop Café as well. Young artists who have a taste for it and entrepreneurs who want to take further steps will find the breeding ground and coaching for their dreams: Graffiti & street art (Stencils, graffiti,...); Dance (Break, Hip Hop, Popping, Locking, Ragga & Dancehall, Girly); Text & Vocals (Beatbox, Rap, Freestyle Rap, Slam Poetry); DJ & music production (DJ'ing (mixing), Turntablism (scratching e.d.), Beats & beatmaking, Opnames & Productie).

From Prison to music studio, creating a new future through rap music in Rotterdam offers ex-offenders the possibility to record their own song, so music can be a way to prevent reoffending.

Dreamschool is a program on Dutch National TV, the program shows how different creative and educational approaches can be used to reach a group of young people who have serious problems.

RAP MEe gave young people a voice. From previous projects they learned how well young people can express themselves through music and creative videos. Garage 2020 gave shape to this by using an old police bus, equipped with recording equipment. During the second lockdown in the corona crisis, alarming reports flooded in about the crisis situation in which many children and young people found themselves. Many had more emotional problems than in the first lockdown.

Rap Therapy's core focus is to improve communication between young people and influence positive ways of expression, in turn improving their mental health. The workshops equip students with transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, and listening skills, which they can use in and out of their classrooms. They meet and hear from relatable and inspiring guest speakers who have come from similar environments and experienced similar issues, yet still excelled in their careers.



Toekomstmuziek traject offers ex-offenders the possibility to record their own song, so music can be a way to prevent reoffending for them. The participants work towards a concrete end result, namely to record at least three songs on an album and a video clip. Young people recorded twenty-five songs. Twelve of these ended up on an album. During the Future Music trajectory, each participant makes an action plan that includes goals in the musical and social-emotional field.

“Bots” Thematic Instruction in the Recording Studio of Oslo Prison focuses on developing the basic skills required for performing in a group, in conjunction with individual performance skills and a strong musical foundation. Learning outcomes state that students will contribute actively to a musical community, and take part in the practical performance. Methodically, the course was set up as follows: 1. Select instrumentation to the text; 2. Select sound image, mix and master of the product; 3. Present finished product to the public.

Jessheim videregående skole – “A” is imprisoned in Halden prison. He has been in and out of prison for several years. In an interview, he tells how he uses lyric writing and rap to process old traumas. In music technical work, he tells how he builds up frustrations in the verse while the choir takes the message a step higher. He also explains how he also works with video to substantiate the message. He adds in the interview how much he likes to work with this, but he adds humor - "unfortunately there will be no ladies and stuff in the video" he says. "It should have been."

KROK is an inmate belonging to the music group at Romerike prison has worked over time with storytelling, singing and interaction. The text is about the inmate's war with himself about coming to terms with the past and searching for a better life ahead. The teacher takes the student into a group of inmates and starts by making him feel safe in the group. Thereafter, the inmate is given tasks up to the inmate's wishes regarding development. Many are given tasks around rap, singing, instrumentation, playing in bands and writing lyrics.

"Hold on" is imprisoned in Oslo prison. He uses lyric writing and rap to process traumas. In music technical work, he tells how he builds up frustrations in the verse while the choir takes the message a step higher. The philosophical approach to the project was to make inmates safe in the music situation. Then encourage them to write text about their own life and situation and then support with instrumentation and chorus where needed. It was a criterion not to stop production until the inmates themselves were satisfied and could feel mastered

“N” has been a music student in Oslo prison for several years. He was very young when he came in and wanted no activity other than music while he was there. He started by learning the music program in the studio first, before he received training in production order in music production. He started writing his own rap lyrics early on and found that this was a way he could work on his own emotional life. The teacher followed him for several years and he wrote and recorded lots of rap lyrics and many self-produced CDs. When he was released, he said he had written through all his traumas and was ready for a new life. The teacher investigated how he was doing a couple of years later and he had had a law-abiding life outside the walls. This is a good example of how lyric writing and rap can work in a rehabilitative perspective from Oslo Prison, Norway.



1.5 EDUCATIONAL METHODS

- Use of **videos**;
- Storytelling with songs and **lyrics**;
- Telling about own experience and reflecting about racism and integration;
- Uploading videos and songs on platforms such as **SoundCloud**;
- The creation of rap lyrics and the **theatre** performances, based on the expression of the inmates. For example, they do not have to learn by heart the texts, but they can improvise, maintaining the main concept;
- **Graffiti**, stencils, drawings, collages, rap, music, songs writing with the help of artists;
- Experiential **dance** training;
- **Non-formal games** with the group of getting to know the group and oneself;
- Understanding **movement**, space, and how body expression can transmit thoughts, ideas and messages;
- **Body expression** techniques: posture, movement in space;
- Critical Revolutionary **Hip Hop Pedagogy**;
- Focus on **competences** - environment in which people can experiment and discover and develop their talents and competences;
- Strengthening the **voice** of young people so that they are heard by policy makers, city actors, the general public, etc.;
- Going to the places where young people are and meet;
- **Mentoring** program, where students can talk with us about situations they may not feel comfortable telling teachers or parents;
- Inmates write quick lyrics about their own rehabilitation process and then make music.

1.6 SUCCESS FACTORS

- **Integration** of young people coming from other countries;
- Room for **discussions** among youngsters;
- Integration and **exchanges** between inmates and students;
- **Storytelling** has an important role, because all the activities performed are aimed at making inmates expressing their emotions, through writing lyrics for rap music, singing and performing;
- Participation of famous **artists** (Sud Sound System);
- Organisation of an **exhibition**;
- Production of a Music **CD**;
- Live **performance** of artistic depth;
- Emotional intensity praised by the press and the public;
- To be proud of the finished product;
- To write a good flow;
- The opportunity to perform with a dance group from outside the establishment;
- Sing a RAP song and be recorded in video;
- An increase in the amount of readers in the prison population;
- An increase in the number of **books** requested by inmates at libraries;
- A widespread interest in the history of writers and the great works of the past;



- Making sure it is a moment of **fun**. An escape from the day-to-day reality in prison for a while.

1.7 CRITICAL ISSUES

- Some initiatives are only “**one spot**” and not replicated anymore.
- **Dispersion** in terms of participation: in some cases, initially there was a good number of participants, but only 3 prisoners went on stage due to social pressure in prison.
- The work to be done needs **teachers experienced** not only in music, music making, theatre and dance, but also trained in emotion techniques.
- **Sustainability** of the project.
- The work requires support from the teacher to ensure that the end product maintains a **quality** that gives a feeling of mastery and that inmates can show other inmates with pride.

1.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Integration** and exchanges between inmates and students;
- Final live **concert** with the participants;
- Creating **videos**;
- **Theatre** approach;
- Music and storytelling;
- Making materials available on **YouTube** and on demand within the prisons;
- Production of **CD**;
- Realisation of **videoclip**;
- Use the **provocation** / culture shock to stimulate interest and attention;
- Possessing **reading** habits is key to then moving on to storytelling.
- It should be nice if Graffiti vzw could be part of GUTS. They have their own music label and work together with Sony Music, when it comes to recording and distributing music.
- Also working with Fatih Devos is an asset for this project.

1.9 QUOTES

- *"Nothing like rap tells about our years - says the Italian rapper Kento - and nothing like rap can help us understand and shape the future that is waiting for us".*
- *"The bars that divide the prison from the world of freedom work in both directions, they keep the prisoners out of the world, but they also keep the world out of that reality, so all the physical and cultural tools that manage to overcome these bars are fundamental".*

1.10 MUSIC, SONGS, VIDEOS LIBRARY

Potere alla parole

- <https://soundcloud.com/razzismobruttastoria/sets/potere-alle-parole-lab-beccaria>
- <https://youtu.be/Zd6YBoEpqIE>

Barre aperte (Open Bars)

- <https://video.repubblica.it/dossier/barre-aperte>



Storie d'amore e libertà

- <https://youtu.be/kp39c-gRZWY>
- <https://youtu.be/7ZOPC0enrcU>

Giravolta

- Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/385661255>
- Video: <https://vimeo.com/385659759>

Intangout

- Teaser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIVknv5z5o0>
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxDjgp4TMCA>

Libert'arte

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2c6NcRiSLU>

Dreamschool

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtHgHH3K17c>

Jessheim videregående skole

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSAg9iSUcq8>

Hold On

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM6cyo-fzkQz>



2. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

2.1 ROLE AND TASKS IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS OF INMATES

Roles and tasks of interviewed people are mainly related to:

- **music education**, to stimulate inmates through music and the use of musical instruments,
- to organize rap **workshops** for people at the edge of society.
- creative **writing**, about rapping;
- **recording** and distributing music.
- **beatboxing and hip-hop**
- **social-cultural** work especially with young people.
- **dancer** and choreographer
- Providing **technical assistance** to courts by means of personal educational projects and assessment reports on young people who are serving custodial educational measures;
- **Tutor** technique of young people in the quality of case manager
- identification of the criminogenic and educative needs of the young people,
- accompaniment and orientation in the preparation of their social reinsertion.

2.2 EXPERIENCE OF SELF EXPRESSION THROUGH MUSIC AND STORYTELLING

The experiences described in the interviews are extremely varied. Artists, educators, rappers have different interesting experiences, and all of them can be taken as good inspirations.

One artist teaches **how to use metaphors** and try to encourage them to start reading books, to gain knowledge about a variety of topics and to learn words to expand their word play.

Inmates at Norwegian female prison have received a wide range of music with guitar groups, band groups and composition groups using music programs. In many cases music is a valid medicine against addiction and intoxication.

Some teachers teach the students through informal and non-formal learning skills that they lack or need to develop further.

An interesting example is given by a **Dutch group** who produced and recorded some of the most successful Dutch and even international artists. Developing programs for inmates started when during the COVID pandemic they suddenly ran out of work.

The Belgian artist **Fatih Devos** tells his own story to inmates, is honest about who he is and where he comes from. And that has a good impact on people: *“If you're very candid in that way, without too many details, that makes you give people confidence. If you say my father was on heroin, I had a difficult childhood, then you give those people the feeling, hey that guy trusts us, he dares to say that to us. If you are very open-minded, you start by giving a lot of confidence and then you can gradually gain confidence”*.

He makes his own beats with the guys, bringing a little mobile studio, and let them rap on beats, or on instrumentals from others. For beatbox you don't need anything, just your mouth / voice. *“It doesn't work if you say sit down and write a story. You have to know in what context or atmosphere it has to be set. Starting from a group feeling, creating the image that we are one team. And that it's not just about being individual, creating a kind of family feeling. This is very much alive in the*



beatbox world. You have to be able to learn from each other, you're not competing against each other".

Hip-hop started in the 70's in the South Bronx in NY. One of the poorest neighbourhoods and districts in the States, where young people through music, art, graffiti, tried to create unity and address their circumstances. **Hip-hop** can inspire young people and give them the idea that a text can tell something. What we do is give them that we want to encourage them as much as possible, if they have certain frustrations (personal or social) to put that in their texts, but also from their frustrations also the visions and their dreams.

In general, the interviewed people work **through the emotions**. It is very important that the group knows itself, respects itself, knows how to share ideas, thoughts, without this being a problem and not seen badly by the others.

Several activities were performed with music, and storytelling:

- creation of stories through loose, anonymous sentences written by the inmates;
- creative writing about feelings, with a maximum number of words to be written;
- creation by the inmates of hip hop lyrics revealing their daily life, their concerns, their fears.

One methodology is introduced by an Italian ex-prisoner: once outside, he proposed to those who were free to read his text and listen to the songs. They found themselves in what was being told, in the prison dynamics and how they were represented. They gave availability, free of charge, to be part of a **theatre company**. Thanks to the help of a rather well-known actor, they created a show, planned to be performed for two weeks, but then remained on stage for about fifty dates in one year. The sincerity of the writing helped the inmates to look at themselves, to share and to have some more awareness. The use of irony and comedy amplified several dynamics making them even more authentic and acceptable both for those who had experienced them and for those who, like the public, did not know them.

It was the first time that a "criminal" was speaking, performing and talking in front of an audience. Physically bringing the inmates closer to the "outside society" was fundamental.

2.3 PROPOSED PRACTICES

A common element for all the practices is to **build trust and security**. A good relationship must be established between teacher and student. Furthermore, it is important to start with something the student wants. It can be guitar, make beats, etc. Eventually this is expanded and the goal is for the student to become independent in their musical performance.

Participation in music groups in prison lays the foundation for a hobby, activity, contact with others and the opportunity for social life with others with the same interest during and after release. Participation inside the places of imprisonment becomes a connecting line to the world outside the walls. It can also lay the foundation for paid work in the form of paid gigs and music teaching assignments.

It is confirmed that this kind of training has strengthened the inmates' sense of recognition, context, meaning, hope, courage, mastery, competence and belonging.

One of the proposed practices is called "**Modules City School**". You follow this module for 6 weeks, 1 or 2 hours per week. If you choose the module, it means that you do not return to your department after a few lessons, you finish the module. You can choose from:



Music production. In this module you will deal with the various issues that a Music Producer has to deal with. You are going to get acquainted with a DAW, a computer program with which you can work independently with music.

The RAP club that takes place under the guidance of an artist is a popular course among young people. They write their own lyrics and make a Rap together with the artist. The best 8 Raps are chosen at the end of the year and these are put on a Stick/CD so they can be given as gifts to family, friends, co-workers and fellow inmates. This is where the story telling often plays an important role. Most Raps are about the past, relationships, etc. The content is often a sort of life song of sadness, shame hope and sometimes perspective.

In general, one important thing is to listen to them, to who they are, to their life story, don't talk about the reason they are there, but about who you are as a person. **Put yourself on the same level** as that person, but if necessary **clearly define the boundaries**. You are a friend up to a certain point. On the one hand you have the role as someone who wants to do something fun with them, on the other hand you have the role as a responsible person who also has to indicate boundaries.

Always look for the middle ground between empathising with their world and giving something of yourself.

You have to be solid, you have to have credibility and they have to accept things from you. Not too pedantic. They can't make it to lose face in prison. Some of them drop out because of this.

Another significant element is about the turnover in prison. That's why the **group spirit is important**. If someone from the group is not there, they will miss them, due to the strong group spirit that is created in the workshops. Usually you start with a fixed group, but this can always change, one cannot be there because he has visiting rights, or has to go to court.

Connection to music, a lot of guys listen to music inside the walls too. I always teach them the basics of beatboxing. They only need 3 sounds, it can also be done within the walls. I always ask what they like to listen to, and what they like to do themselves. It's a collaboration.

One activity that seems very easy to implement is the **placement of different music**, and different speeds. The inmates have to walk, with a correct posture, and always without touching each other, despite passing each other. This exercise also involves walking in sets of 2 steps, 3 and 4, i.e. at certain times they take 2 steps and wait for 1 and then continue again, etc. This creates an interaction of thought/movement and in turn a concentration in your body and mind.

An interesting practice is the one of the musical project called **Presi Per Caso**. The band was born in 1996 inside the Rebibbia prison in Rome. When the band was inside, they spent part of their time playing famous rock covers or traditional Italian ballads to entertain the other inmates. It was a way of bringing a bit of "outside" into the cells. When they rebuilt the band outside the walls, a precise rule was set: the songs had to contain the stories lived inside the prison.

It was necessary to use music as a form of direct, immediate communication to inform the "free society" of what the prison was and who the prisoner was. It was necessary to show the inmates how much "therapy", freedom, creativity, were important to become aware of themselves through music. They tried to make it clear that creativity through music was an instrument of emancipation from crime.



2.4 TARGET GROUPS

The target groups were quite varied, going from:

- inmates in a high-security prison,
- adult inmates,
- people with various behavioral problems,
- psychiatry patients
- youngsters at risk,
- young people in vulnerable neighbourhoods,
- Immigrants,

The use of home language is very important. You **speak the language they speak**. Participants can certainly write in their own language. We let them tell what is in their song/text or someone else translates.

From own goal, to give people in detention the opportunity to have their voices heard, to have their stories told. You notice that there is a lot of life wisdom there. Prisoners often get a label, but it is often the people who have the most to tell, both the young people and the adults. Because they have been through a lot, they talk about it quite naturally, especially if you as a counsellor are open and interested in them.

2.5 METHODOLOGIES/METHODS/APPROACHES/TECHNIQUES APPLIED

Many different examples of methodologies are presented in the interviews, also according to the kind of approach it is used: with music, with hip-hop, with theatre, dance, etc.

One of the examples provided is about a presentation of **music studio software** and equipment, then going through the recording technique and order: 1. rhythm structure / beat - 2. chords and choice of chord instrument - 3. instrumentation - 4. text / song / rap - 5. mix and sound image - 6. completion of product - 7. presentation of product

Freestyle sessions, brainstorm sessions, conversations with sometimes more serious topics as well, anything the inmate feels comfortable with, sometimes little challenges to make the most of inmates' ability in expressing himself through music and spoken texts.

While students are busy with video clips, observe/research and try to motivate someone to do something e.g. with the drum kit.

Other artists work on a complete package. They **record four Rap songs** with the target group, one about the past, one about the present one about the future and one for somebody they love. They record a video clip, make a podcast, interview them in a talk show setting and register their own record company for them. With this portfolio they have a good start if they are serious about making music.

Other example is **working interactively**, not giving long speeches, to speak from their language, approachable, no too difficult words, not too abstract; be very concrete. To be disarming and honest, to create trust.

"If it is a group of e.g. 10 people, I often work one on one, says one of the artists. They are often in the same room, but I work individually, go around to everyone and give individual tips & tricks and motivate them. If it is a larger group of 20-30 people, then I work in small groups. There are 2 ways. Or I perform myself, a kind of lecture about my life story combined with songs that I have written,



which I bring live. Or a workshop where I let them write their own lyrics. Either for small groups where I go around one on one or divide into groups of 3, and per group we make a text”.

For some detainees it is liberating to share their story with the group, for others not, some may feel more inhibited, you don't want to show yourself weak to the other detainees/other people.

You have to create a **safe context, a safe space**. Never clear what happens when they leave the group. Often this is positive, but some do not want to share their text with others in the group. I respect that.

For some it is enough to just write a text, some are satisfied with a text of someone else, others really want to perform or record their own text, sing into a microphone, perform live.

Different forms are possible: Creating the music, some make a poem, slam poetry, but mostly they start from a musical rhythm on which they can make the text.

If you find that someone is totally lacking in language skills, you can always have them work in pairs with someone else. Or let them do something else, draw, or work with a text they already know from someone else, you have to be flexible to make it interesting for everyone. Some find it interesting to experience it, to be there and listen to what I have to say.

The methodology used by Spiritchild is called **Critical Revolutionary Hip-hop Pedagogy**. This pedagogy is mainly inspired by Paolo Frère, theory of the oppressed, freedom writers like Malcolm X, Bell Hooks, people who address the oppression from different angles. From the pedagogy point of view, they focus mainly on the elements of the pedagogy of the oppressed. As much methodology/approach as possible is placed with the young people. Starting as much as possible from the young people themselves. *“During the workshops, we introduce ourselves, we talk about hip hop culture, but we are especially interested in who these young people are, who do they listen to, who inspires them, what things can we do together, from writing lyrics, from making beats, recording, what do they want to do themselves? They can choose, we recommend as much as possible to work together, make beats together, but they can also write separately”.*

“The critical element comes back especially in the critical questioning of the circumstances in which you find yourself; what is going on in it all, also socially, then you bump into racism, discrimination, sexism, poverty; capitalism in itself. To question critically, both to yourself and to society”.

For example, discussion of a video or film is often done in group, in order to bring something thematic, at creation time, the participants should feel as comfortable as possible to be inspired, that can be alone or in small groups of 2 to 3 people.

The techniques used are often empirical in the exercises themselves. However, the most used are:

- **Motivation;**
- Creation of a **safe space**, a kind of bubble to which only they had access;
- Movement as a way of connecting body and soul;
- **Awareness** of oneself and of the other;
- **Respect** for each person's freedom;
- Always tell the truth then begins to deform it with elements of **humour**. Put them in music or make a rap. The rate of tragedy increases but also awareness and acceptance increase. It is an exorcism that makes you grow.
- Promoting the adequacy of the potentials of each participant, to the group and its characteristics, promoting positive **sociability contexts**, taking into account the



vulnerability in emotional, social and economic issues. In this context, in a form of shared work, personal development and self-confidence are promoted and stimulated;

2.6 COMPETENCIES INMATES CAN ACQUIRE THANKS TO THESE ACTIVITIES

In the Norwegian practices, students learn to use a professional music studio program **Protools**. This is used in sound studios in the community and you can get a job just by knowing this well. Furthermore, the students gain experience in standing on a stage and presenting something. They also gain experience in starting a process, completing a process, and completing a process. This is something many inmates lack experience with.

A creative mind keeps them off the streets because they will spend more time making their art (music) but also learn to review certain situations and adapt to the fact that expressing yourself is important and that there is no shame in doing so, another part is learning how to communicate.

Other artists don't really work on soft skills etc., but try to help a couple of people to make the step to the music industry. Some might succeed as a rapper, other as a producer or as a manager.

Other **competences and skills** that are developed are:

- **structuring** their thoughts on paper; organising your thoughts, language skills;
- working around **emotions** and putting them on paper;
- strengthening **self-esteem**;
- Making them feel that there is a life after detention;
- Giving them a sense of **self-worth**;
- Many of these guys have never written a text before. If you write a text step by step with them and they see the result, they are often very proud that they did it themselves.
- **Respect** towards each other.
- Strengthening what is already there, starting from their passions and talents,
- Concrete competences are mainly **reflection**, reflection about the world, things around them, about the social situation.
- To be able to develop/enhance their **artistic talents** (writing, recording, making beats) or give them the opportunity to try it out.
- To discover and taste new things in the field of **creation**. Collaboration, by working in small groups
- Critical and **solution-oriented thinking**; being able to point out the frustrations of everything that goes wrong, but also being able to point out how we can tackle it.
- Competences such as **creativity**, conditioning change and behaviours in the face of new situations. Creativity and its relations with creative and artistic making, supported with the social role, cultivates the development and self-realisation of the individual in society.
- Skills of **improvisation**, allied to the creative function of dialogue, of a new practice and of reflection, seeking harmony and the meeting of systems.
- **Planning** and reflection argue idealising positions for the magical cure of reinsertion, and adaptability as the preponderant factor of the subject in a plural whole.
- Competences of availability and reaction, makes individuals available to transcend in their own way, assimilate content and build solid knowledge.
- Developing personal and social skills in terms of creativity and **expressing feelings** and emotions in an assertive manner, learning to control aggressive impulses. To occupy their



time by practising structured leisure activities. Interact with others and develop the ability to work in a team, accept and share ideas with others in a structured environment.

It was noticeable throughout the process that inmates have a very great need to express themselves. But they are very afraid of their colleagues' reactions. The prison environment can be very hostile, and **revealing emotions to peers is a sign of weakness**. That weakness can be very dangerous in prison. First it is important to **create a space of trust** in each of the sessions. The competencies are based on an attitude of collaboration, determination and integrity. It is important that the individual is interested in intercultural communication, appreciates the diversity of values and respects others, and is prepared to overcome prejudices and accept compromises.

The inmates, thanks to music or writing a text, acquire a **lateral view** of their condition. They become active and non-passive subjects. Protagonists and not victims. Their life, rewritten, becomes more plastic and modifiable. All this leads to a higher level of awareness and to the passive non-acceptance of their condition as prisoners, which is a necessary step in order not to fall into recidivism.

2.7 EFFECTIVENESS OF WORKING WITH MUSIC AND STORYTELLING TO FAVOUR INMATES' REINTEGRATION

Interviewed people agree that working with music will help inmates a lot, it's not only a way to express themselves but also a **live changing** influence. It gives them something to do and hold on to. Some say it gave their lives meaning again in difficult times. When writing down a lyric or text about a certain subject it can be seen as a healing process while writing the words on the paper you reflect on the situation it challenges your mind and expand your view.

Art works very therapeutically. Hip-hop is a very approachable medium; it's a social cultural tool. People have an affinity with it very quickly; it is an important outlet. Several young people, who have also been involved for a longer time often say: I get up and I write, that's what keeps my head healthy.

If you can link up with organisations that also stay involved after detention, things can go better in terms of **reintegration**, then they have something to draw on. It offers the young people a community they can go to, offering them a creative home is important for reintegration.

External support is needed, hence it is important to link them to artists or organisations during detention that are specifically working on this. There are guys who stay busy on their own, or were previously involved with hip hop; some already have a YouTube channel. It gives them the opportunity to live their passion or hobby. Others get into it from their own interest, energy and motivation. But I think it definitely increases their opportunities by giving them a network.

Young people really enjoyed the workshops, but once they left, they didn't really know where to go. The Studio **Oneroom** is actually the hip hop network for and by young people in and after detention. During the workshops they bring in other partner organisations; e.g. Spiritchild guide the workshops but then bring the local organisations or artists where the youth can link up so they can also go after their detention or stay.

Music being an inclusive art, its whole practice and the plural dimension it can achieve is enormous. Music is a social art mode, constructed by and with people, for their qualities and archetypes, their memories and emotional bonds. The action is one of reflection, the action of thought. To make



music is, in a way, to focus the conscious on moral principles, and through consciousness, to find a **common space, of sharing, of humanity, of solidarity and charity**. This space is common, interactive, timeless, and unity is built in plurality. Reintegration is an organism of memories, and its configuration capacity is projection of realities that inmates have experienced.

In order to be reintegrated into society you need decent work and perhaps the presence of a family that can support you. Nonetheless, music can play a significant role because as an abstract language, of high aesthetic value, of **energy and positivity**, it creates a world other than crime. It shows you other possible and alternative scenarios. It strengthens you and makes you more creative.

2.8 HOW RECIDIVISM RATE CAN BE IMPROVED

The recidivism rate is always a delicate issue. It is very difficult to accurately measure if and how certain practices and approaches can really help reduce the risk of recidivism. However, most of the interviewed are confident that all these practices are extremely helpful.

Recidivism is essentially based on the passive acceptance of feeling "criminal", the acceptance of the dynamics and languages of the prison's subculture, not knowing alternative languages or not seeing worlds other than that of crime.

"Some inmates discover, despite not having any prior experience with music, that they can be great at something and that feeling contributes to the motivation to do better", says one of the interviewed.

The songs are often very personal, often emotional. It certainly will have an impact afterwards. The disadvantage is that there is so little aftercare for these guys. *"That also weighs on me. You have built up something with them, there is trust, and then that bond is cut again. I often think about it myself. It continues to haunt me. Why isn't there a transition home, where things that happened in prison also happen, with the same people? Those men should be given responsibilities again. You could create a kind of house with a crew, a kind of clan where you can continue to experiment with music and work towards something permanent, a collection plate, or a performance. Something sustainable that gives them perspective".*

In youth aid and youth work, there is a focus on **networking**, but often very much locally. It is important to involve organisations from all over the country because detainees often move away or are transferred afterwards. In this way, they also come into contact with other organisations.

2.9 STRONG AND WEAK POINTS IN THE DESCRIBED PRACTICES

Strong and positive points:

- With detainees, your advantage is that you **build trust pretty quickly**. Because you do something they already know, quickly and they can take their mind off it. They are often very grateful to be doing something else. But you can work better shorter individually than longer with a big group. You can bring them together, but individually it works better.
- You get a lot of **different people together**, e.g. from the eastern Europe or North Africa. Then beatbox is a very universal language. It's sound, it's not a spoken language, it's a musical language. Sometimes it becomes a collage.
- What works enormously is to really **start from the participants themselves**, from their passions, their frustrations, their visions. You have to create a clear framework. A framework of look we are here to let you do and create things artistically but also personally, socially.



- Above all, you have to put the **power** with them, tell your story, communicate what you see or how you feel. Work from inspiration, broader social themes, broader disciplines so that people can choose what is close to them.
- Make the links; not just one facilitator who supervises all the workshops, but you can continue to **work with this in the future** in collaboration with other organisations. Not even just as an artist, because not everyone can become the next Toupac. But there are many opportunities to be involved with music, or rather as a youth worker involved with music. Offer them a clear framework and enough space.
- The **creation of themes** for the construction of the show, the desire for an emotional bond with the narrative as memory, *poiesis* as a source of humanitarian and artistic qualities, proactivity, instrumental practice, improvisation on stage and the development of language and vocabulary (discourses of theatrical practice, the sung voice, the body and time).
- From a therapeutic point of view, the young people learn to **deal with certain fears**, namely of exposing themselves, through music they express feelings and emotions, work on their writing, develop a taste for reading and culture, learn to dedicate themselves to non-violent activities and to develop positive feelings.
- Positive **motivation**, a space for free creativity and the young people also have the opportunity to do something different and to socialise in a positive environment. If this happens in the natural environment of life, it can prevent young people from being willing to engage in not so good practices in association with their peers.

Critical aspects:

- **Storytelling is not for everyone**, some inmates just like to brag and boast, some like slanging or rapping with metaphors
- Classroom teaching with music as a compulsory subject with students with various **behavioral problems** and very different IQs does not always work.
- We need to be very careful what one does with storytelling. Sometimes, if the group is not yet on the same wavelength, it is difficult to control some **lack of respect** or of the other's freedom, i.e. some prisoners with their peers.
- The **time is short** for all their expressions to be inserted in the project, the rules for the availability of use of the instruments is not much because the inmates have several daily activities.
- Managing the **Ego** of the participants. The success of the initiatives, the radio performances of the songs, the concerts, the audience, the acting have amplified everyone's ego. This has involved a series of conflicts, a couple of withdraws and sometimes a "severe loss of amazement".
- The main difficulty lies in the **lack of educational continuity** between inside and outside the prison. In Italy there are few realities that offer this possibility.

2.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE GUTS PROJECT

- **Connect** with the inmates when rapping something for them, but always let them do their own thing after that.
- Be **patient**, never judge, every verse is part of someone's inner thoughts.
- Be **open** so the inmates feel safe and not ashamed to talk to you about their experiences and subjects of their choice.



- The **process** should be more important than the final product. The end product, the songs or the online festival should actually not be more important than the process of writing, discovering, learning, performing.
- **Read the inmates**, when choosing a beat, the choice already says a lot about the mood of the inmate, you adjust to this and may want to discuss this
- Don't try to censor, but do point out that if you use the F-word, it can be offensive. Find alternatives, give them the freedom to let it all hang out but also point out that there are other ways to get your message across. It can also have a healing effect to shout out all your frustrations.
- In a group of prisoners, there are always one or two **alpha males**, informal leaders, if you have those along, you have the whole group along.
- Treat them like people, **give them perspective**. Someone's life story, often things have happened that were not acceptable, but he has probably also done a lot of good things, so focus on that as well. Everyone makes mistakes, some go to jail, others don't.
- Look at where they come from, their background. Start from their living environment, adapt your methodology from their frame of reference.
- Be **tolerant**, but also indicate your limits. You also have to show my skills now and then. They can learn from that.
- The **language** of communication can be English, but other languages are also rapped about.
- It would be interesting to promote a **network** at a European level that can support musical and artistic activities beyond the walls of the prison, as a real training for the person complementing the social and work reintegration of former prisoners.