



GUITS

M A N U A L



INTRODUCTION

Arts programs, music in particular, have a long history in justice systems as tools for rehabilitation.

“The arts can play an important part in changing individual, institutional and social circumstances which sponsor criminal behaviour” (Doing the arts Justice, p. 9. Hughes 2005) as Hughes elaborates:

The arts have the capacity and potential to offer a range of innovative, theory-informed and practical approaches that can enhance and extend provision of educational, developmental and therapeutic programs across the criminal justice sector.

Those in favour of art programs in prisons have strong allies. The United Nations declaration on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of

Prisoners asserts that “recreational and cultural activities shall be provided in all institutions for the benefit of the mental and physical health of prisoners” (United Nations, 1977). Likewise, the recommendations of the Council of Europe declare: “Creative and cultural activities should be given a significant role because these activities have particular potential to enable prisoners to develop and express themselves”.

GUTS is a project supported by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union.

The project aims to develop a method that will help to reduce reoffending under young offenders. We want to help them to set targets for their future and hand them tools to become better and more active citizens.

The basic idea of the project is simple, rap music and storytelling is used as a tool to communicate with the target group and used as a language for to formulate their ideas and goals.

The partners are:

- Jessheim Prison, Norway
- Changes & Changes, The Netherlands
- Steps, Italy
- Il Faro, Italy
- Form 2 You, Portugal
- De Rode Antraciet, Belgium

www.gutsproject.eu



WHY ARTS MATTER IN A PRISON SETTING

Many positive things can be said about the arts in a prison setting:

- The arts create spaces for inmates to see each other differently.
- The arts provide the opportunity to affect others for good.
- For prisoners, the arts open doors into all aspects of life and unlock potential and ability to enter these; in relationships, self-confidence, education, training, creativity, employment, etc.
- The arts can build relationships and communities; on the wing and in prison as a whole; with families...and with the outside community.
- The arts enable recognition of hidden skills and talents and enable healing.

An American inmate in Sing Sing prison once reflected:

“As useful as the tangible objects made available to myself through this workshop have been, they are just a small fraction of the equation that has made such a profound impact on not only my musical journey, but on my life as a whole. Music has played no small part in helping me turn a dark period in my life into an opportunity to recognize my identity and my dreams”.



- Involve the staff in what you are doing.
- Guards are crucial, try to inform and involve them.
- Be flexible, adapt, you cannot prepare everything.
- Talk with your colleagues, find solutions together, evaluate yourself and with colleagues and inmates (this is important). Remember our basic approach is “If it is about them, not without them”.
- You need to be motivated for a successful project.
- Inmates need to be informed about the workshop they will follow.
- Be curious about them as learners.
- Try to create a project that makes a connection between the inside and the outside world.
- Ask questions when they don't come.
- Look for content that is applicable to their lives.



In an art project the inmates have to take control again and make their own decisions, which is unusual in a system where everything is arranged for you all day and where you have to follow strict rules most of the time. Through invitations to participate and engage, the arts offer offenders a range of interactions that are different from the routine of prison life. Creative engagement also provides the opportunity to acquire new skills in an art discipline. Making creative efforts can also require reflective thinking from those in a corrections environment, a critical capacity for individuals who might be in prison because of their impulsive actions.

The power of the arts in correctional settings may also be, that successful creative endeavor requires not only craft but also creative thinking, reflective thinking and even structure. Observers and evaluators of prison-based arts programs describe the potential of arts experiences to liberate individuals from the negative role of offender, allowing them to discover another 'creative self' which can improve their self-esteem. Thus, in a world where the idioms of crime and punishment, sentence and constraint, dominate, the arts are often a rare experience of respite and even a feeling of freedom.

TRAPS AND DANGERS

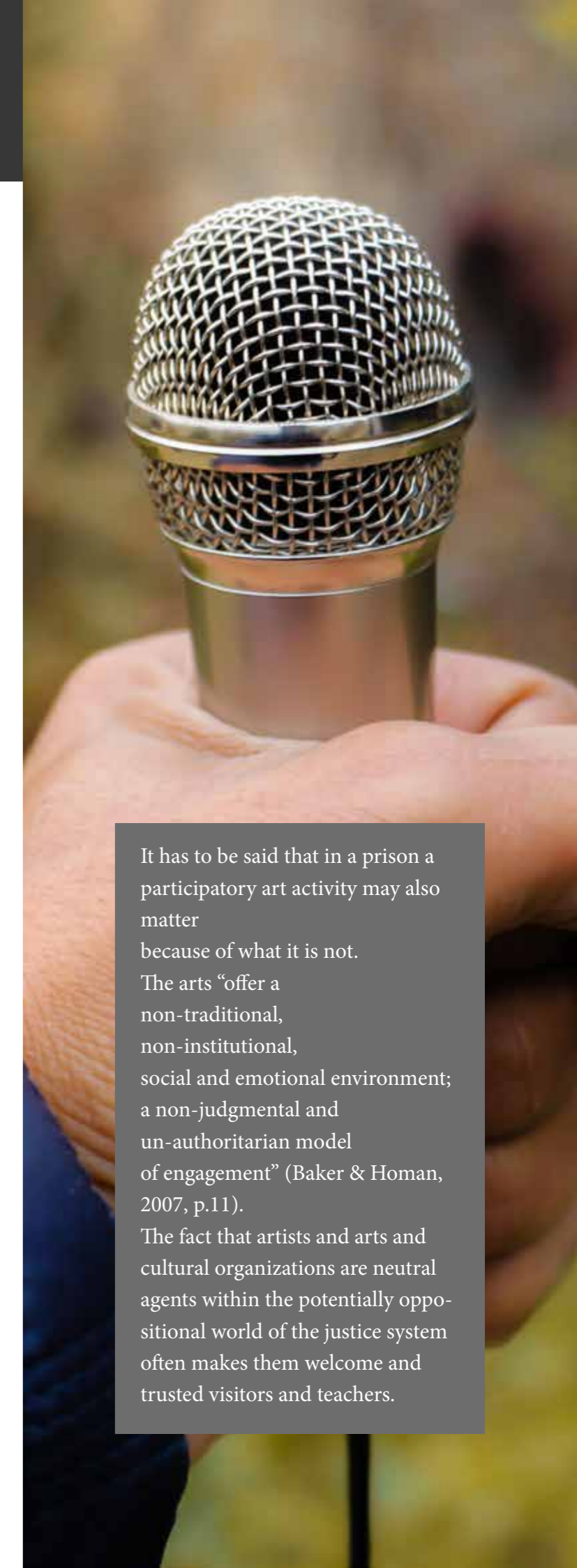
- Never make promises you can't keep.
- Always be authentic.
- Don't put yourself above the inmates.
- If you know the story of a present prisoner it can change your approach.
- You need training to deal with prisoners with mental issues.

THE POWER OF THE ARTS

If juvenile justice systems are developing their programs with youth development and rehabilitation in mind, one of their major responsibilities will be helping young people to learn and change — emotionally, socially, academically, and interpersonally. Hence, it is vital to know if arts programs could have such effects on young people in correctional settings. Arts experiences may be very helpful to the needs of adolescents. Arts experiences can offer incarcerated youth valuable opportunities to exercise important tools like decision-making and reflective thinking. The arts can also create a feeling of ownership in an environment that is most of the time focused on the removal of choice and responsibility. These programs could offer important learning opportunities where risks are positive, life-affirming, and safe, and provide the feeling of success linked with purposeful activity (Hughes, 2005). Since, in the context of arts programs, young people's limited educational histories, as well as their mental health needs, do not preclude participation, these programs are an opportunity to escape from prior experiences with failure and exclusion. Trainers and musicians who teach these programs possibly can also become role models for the inmates they are working with. They can provide a connection to the real world offering them positive attention and recognition.

Be aware of the context in which you are teaching, and be sensitive to the unique challenges and constraints that come with working in a prison setting.

It has to be said that in a prison a participatory art activity may also matter because of what it is not. The arts "offer a non-traditional, non-institutional, social and emotional environment; a non-judgmental and un-authoritarian model of engagement" (Baker & Homan, 2007, p.11). The fact that artists and arts and cultural organizations are neutral agents within the potentially oppositional world of the justice system often makes them welcome and trusted visitors and teachers.





Rap music can provide a number of benefits for individuals in prison.

WHY?

- Emotional expression: Rap music can be a powerful tool for expressing emotions and experiences, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals in prison who may be dealing with trauma or difficult emotions.
- Creativity and self-expression: Rap music can also provide an outlet for creativity and self-expression, which can be important for individuals in prison who may be dealing with feelings of isolation or disconnection.
- Therapeutic value: Some studies have suggested that listening to or creating rap music can have therapeutic benefits, such as reducing stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Rehabilitation and reintegration: Participating in rap music programs can also help individuals in prison develop skills that can be useful in rehabilitation and reintegration into society, such as communication, teamwork, and time management.
- Cultural connection: Rap music can also provide a connection to one's culture and community, which can be important for individuals in prison who may be disconnected from their families and communities.

WHERE TO START

In an art project the inmates have to take control again and make their own decisions, which is unusual in a system where everything is arranged for you all day and where you have to follow strict rules most of the time. Through invitations to participate and engage, the arts offer offenders a range of interactions that are different from the routine of prison life. Creative engagement also provides the opportunity to acquire new skills in an art discipline. Making creative efforts can also require reflective thinking from those in a corrections environment, a critical capacity for individuals who might be in prison because of their impulsive actions. The power of the arts in correctional settings may also be, that successful creative endeavor requires not only craft but also creative thinking, reflective thinking and even structure. Observers and evaluators of prison-based arts programs describe the potential of arts experiences to liberate individuals from the negative role of offender,

allowing them to discover another 'creative self' which can improve their self-esteem. Thus, in a world where the idioms of crime and punishment, sentence and constraint, dominate, the arts are often a rare experience of respite and even a feeling of freedom.

BENEFITS

Working with rap music in prisons can be a valuable tool for promoting emotional expression, creativity, and rehabilitation, as well as helping individuals to connect with their culture and communities.



WORKING WITH INMATES

When teaching inmates, it's important to keep several things in mind:

- Respect the individual: Each person has their own unique background, experiences, and challenges. It's important to respect their individuality and to avoid making assumptions about them.

- Create a safe and supportive environment: It's important to create a safe and supportive environment where the inmates feel comfortable to participate, express themselves, and learn. This can be achieved by establishing clear rules and boundaries, and by creating a culture of mutual respect.

- Be aware of trauma: Many inmates have experienced trauma in their lives, and it's important to be aware of this and to create an environment that is sensitive to their needs. This may include providing a space where they can talk about their experiences, or providing resources for coping with trauma.

REMEMBER...

A well-structured rap music course in prison should be comprehensive, include experienced instructors, provide necessary equipment, create a safe and supportive environment, have opportunities for performance and incorporate rehabilitation and reintegration goals, while also being evaluated.



SOMETIMES A DIFFICULT SETTING TO WORK

- Encourage and motivate the inmates to participate and to take an active role in their own learning. This can be achieved by giving them positive feedback and recognition for their efforts, and by providing them with opportunities to take on leadership roles.

- Be flexible: Be flexible and adaptable in your teaching style, and be willing to adjust your approach if something isn't working. Be open to feedback and willing to make changes as needed.

- Incorporate rehabilitation and reintegration goals: Incorporate goals related to rehabilitation and reintegration into society, such as developing communication, teamwork, and time management skills.

- Be aware of the context in which you are teaching, and be sensitive to the unique challenges and constraints that come with working in a prison setting.

- Be aware of the rules and regulations: Be aware of the rules and regulations of the prison, and ensure that you are following them at all.

A well-structured rap music course in prison should be comprehensive, include experienced instructors, provide necessary equipment, create a safe and supportive environment.

Try to incorporate opportunities for a performance.



SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WRITING A RAP TEXT

- Start with a concept or theme: Before you start writing, think about what you want to say and what you want your rap to be about. This can be a personal experience, a social issue, or anything else that inspires you.
- Use strong imagery: Rap lyrics often rely on strong imagery to create vivid pictures in the listener's mind. Use descriptive language and metaphors to paint a picture with your words.
- Use a strong rhythm and flow: Rap is a musical form, so it's important to pay attention to the rhythm and flow of your words. Practice saying your lyrics out loud and experiment with different cadences and rhythms to find the one that feels right.
- Use repetition: Repetition is a key element in rap music, it can help to drive your message home and give your rap a catchy, memorable quality. Incorporate wordplay: Rap is known for its clever wordplay and puns. Try to be creative with your word choice and find ways to play with language.
- Be authentic: Raps that come from the heart tend to be the most powerful. Be true to yourself and don't be afraid to be vulnerable and share your personal experiences and emotions.
- Revise, and revise again: Like any other form of writing, raps benefit from revision. Once you've written your lyrics, take the time to read them over and make any necessary changes.
- Practice, practice, practice: The more you write and perform your rap, the better it will become. Keep writing and experimenting with different styles and techniques until you find your own unique voice.



Keep in mind that, rap is a form of poetry, so use literary devices and techniques to add depth and interest to your lyrics. And most importantly, practice and be authentic to yourself, it will make your raps more powerful and relatable.

ELEMENTS THAT HAVE PROVEN TO BE SUCCESSFUL

- Verse-Chorus-Verse structure: Many rap songs follow a verse-chorus-verse structure, where the verses include the main content of the song and the choruses usually contain the hook or main melody of the song.
- 16-bar verses: A common format for verses in rap music is the 16-bar verse, which is divided into four 4-bar phrases. This structure allows for a steady flow and rhythm to the song.
- Flow: Rap lyrics are characterized by the flow, which refers to the way the words are delivered in relation to the beat of the music. A good flow is one that is smooth, consistent, and matches the rhythm of the beat.
- Metaphors and similes: Rap lyrics often make use of metaphors and similes to add depth and meaning to the lyrics.
- Punchlines: Punchlines are the clever or witty lines in a rap that usually come at the end of a verse, they are used to make a point or to be memorable.

STRUCTURE OF A TEXT

It's worth noting that, while these are common elements in rap music, they are not strict rules and many successful rap songs have deviated from these conventions. Rap is a form of artistic expression, so it's important to find your own unique style and voice.



It's important to approach the process of writing lyrics with an open and curious mindset, with the goal of self-exploration and self-improvement. When writing lyrics, it's important to be honest and authentic, and to avoid trying to be someone you're not.

WRITING LYRICS AS A TOOL TO REFLECT

Writing lyrics can be used as a tool to reflect upon one's own life. Writing lyrics can be a therapeutic and cathartic process, allowing you to process your thoughts and feelings in a creative and constructive way. By putting your thoughts and feelings into words, you can gain a deeper understanding of yourself, your experiences, and your emotions.

When writing lyrics, you can draw inspiration from your personal experiences, and use them as a way to explore your thoughts and feelings. This can help you to process difficult experiences, and to gain a sense of closure and perspective.

Additionally, writing lyrics can also be a way to explore your identity and to define yourself. By putting your thoughts and feelings into words, you can better understand your values, beliefs, and priorities, and you can use this understanding to make positive changes in your life.

It's also worth noting that, lyrics can be a powerful tool for self-expression and communication, it can help you to connect with others and to find common ground with them. It can also be used as a tool for self-discovery, and to gain insight into one's own life experiences.

SOME EXERCISES TO WRITE A RAP TEXT

Don't know where to begin? these exercises might help.

1. Free-writing: Start by simply writing down anything that comes to mind, without worrying about structure or rhyme. This can help to get your creative juices flowing and can be a great way to come up with new ideas and themes for your rap text.
2. Word association: Write down a word or phrase that inspires you, then write down as many related words and phrases as you can think of. Use these words and phrases to help generate ideas for your rap text.
3. Personal reflection: Reflect on your own experiences and emotions, and consider how you can use them as inspiration for your rap text. Think about the challenges you've faced, the victories you've achieved, and the things that make you who you are.
4. Rhyming brainstorming: Write down a list of words that rhyme with a word or phrase that you want to use in your rap text. Then, try to come up with new phrases or sentences that use those words in a way that makes sense.
5. List writing: Write down a list of themes or topics that you want to cover in your rap text. Then, try to write a line or two about each of those themes or topics.
6. Mind mapping: Create a mind map of your rap text, starting with a central idea or theme and branching out to include related ideas, themes, and details.

7. Outlining: Create an outline for your rap text, starting with an introduction, then moving on to the body of your text, and finally, concluding with an ending.

SOME MORE TIPS

- After the final result make an individual action plan.
- Try to have a fixed group for the period.
- If the participants taste success it will increase their motivation.
- Create a safe environment.
- Try to involve famous artists.
- Start with a concert with an open stage.
- Invite the participants to make music for dear ones like wives, children, mothers or fathers.
- Big egos should not dominate.



EVALUATING A MUSIC PROJECT

Evaluating the success of a music project in a prison can be done through several different methods, including:

- Surveys and questionnaires: Surveys and questionnaires can be used to gather feedback from inmates, staff, and other stakeholders on their perceptions of the project. This can provide valuable information on how the project was perceived, and can help to identify any areas where improvements can be made.

- Interviews: Interviews with inmates, staff, and other stakeholders can provide a more in-depth understanding of the project and can provide valuable qualitative data. This can be useful for understanding the impact of the project on individuals and for identifying areas of success and challenges.

- Observation: Observing the project in action can provide valuable information on how the project is being implemented, and can help to identify any issues that need to be addressed.

- Data collection: Collecting data on participation rates, attendance, and completion rates can provide valuable information on the project's reach and impact.

- Outcome measures: Identifying specific outcome measures that align with the goals of the project, such as reduction in recidivism, improved communication skills, or better mental health outcomes, can provide a clear way to evaluate the success of the project.

- Long-term follow-up: Long-term follow-up can help to determine the sustainability of the project and its impact over time.

It's worth noting that success can be evaluated in different ways and can include factors such as personal growth, self-expression, and rehabilitation. It's important to establish clear goals and objectives for the project, and to use a variety of methods to evaluate the project's success. Additionally, involving the inmates, staff, and other stakeholders in the evaluation process can help to ensure that the project is meeting their needs and that it's having a positive impact on them.



The Dutch producer Mihai Poscoiu has developed a very special approach. He works over a long period with youngsters. With him he records four songs. Usually the first song is full of aggression and anger. In the next songs mainly because of peer pressure the lyrics become more friendly.

His method is more, in fact he does not learn them to become a rapper but to become an entrepreneur. In the workshop he works on the beats, the content and the lyrics, but it is more than that, he offers them structure.

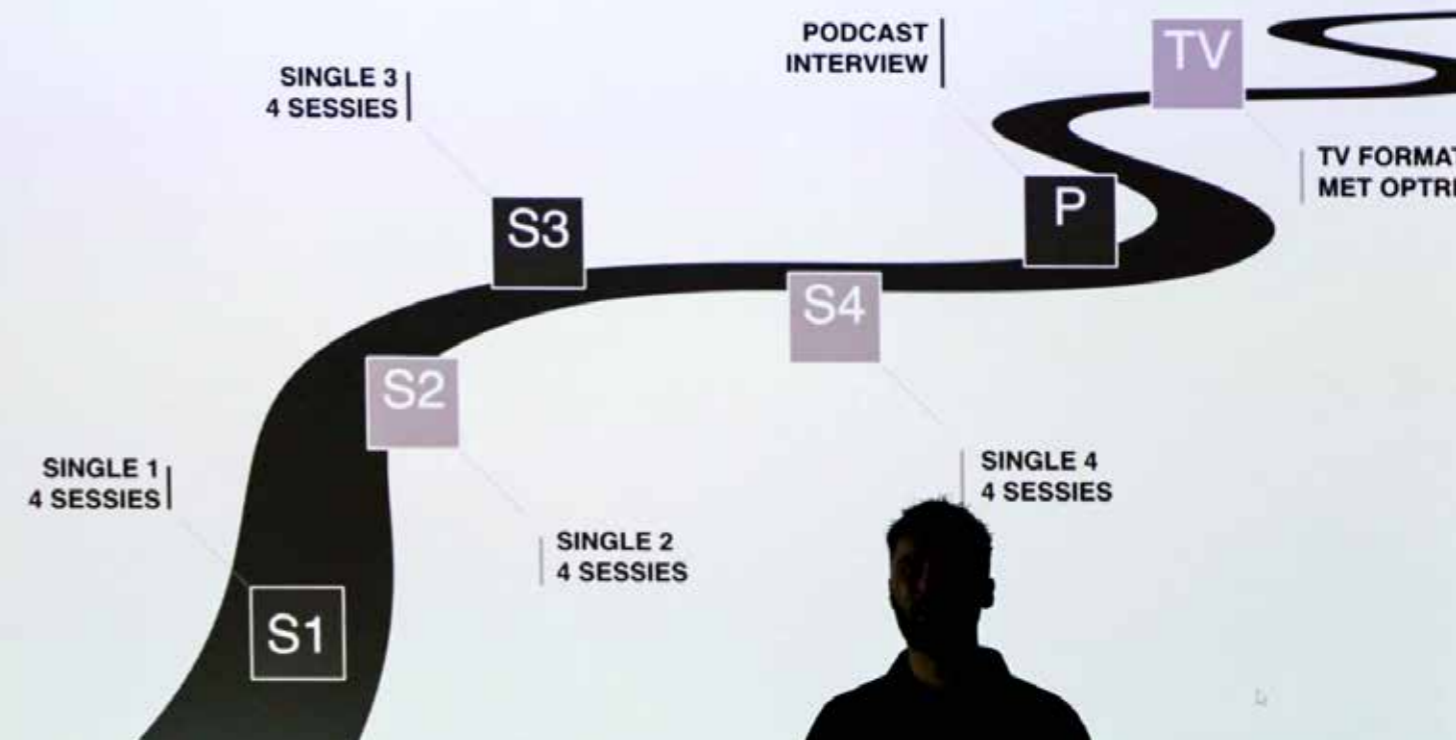
Apart from the design, he makes a podcast with them, there is a presentation in a TV format, where they perform. It is also about how to dress and present yourself.

Finally they make their own merchandise by printing their own t-shirts.

THE BEST, BEST PRACTICE

During the covid pandemic Mihai Poscoiu, a successful producer of some worldwide hits, developed a very special concept to work with young offenders and psychiatric patients. This successful example could serve as a blueprint for workshops elsewhere in Europe.

TRAJECT PROJECT JUMPSTART



PEER TO PEER EVALUATION

Peer-to-peer evaluation is a process in which individuals evaluate the work or performance of their colleagues or peers. To work with peer-to-peer evaluation, you can follow these steps:

- Clearly define the criteria for evaluation: Establish clear and objective criteria for the evaluation, such as quality of work, teamwork, communication, and meeting deadlines.
- Identify the evaluators: Determine who will be responsible for conducting the evaluations, such as team members, managers, or a combination of both.
- Provide training: Provide training or guidelines to the evaluators on how to conduct the evaluations, including how to provide constructive feedback.
- Collect feedback: Collect feedback from the evaluators through surveys, interviews, or other methods.
- Analyze and share the results: Analyze the results of the evaluations and share them with the individuals being evaluated, as well as with relevant stakeholders.
- Follow up: Follow up with the individuals to review the feedback and discuss any improvements or changes that need to be made.
- It's important to note that Peer to Peer evaluations should be done in a constructive and non-punitive manner, with the goal of improving performance and teamwork.

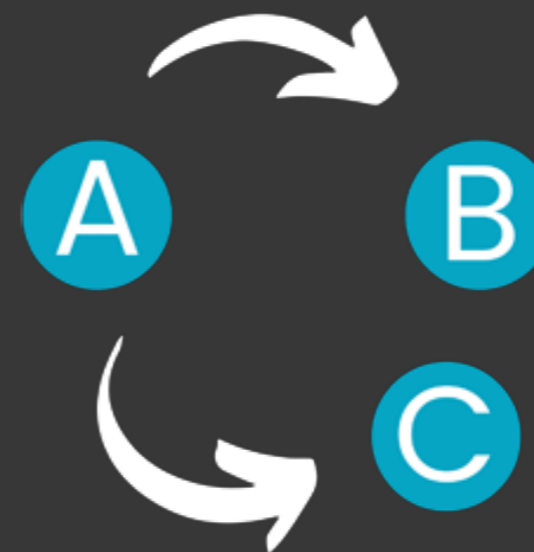


APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciative questioning and witnessing, can be used as a technique to evaluate a positive experience, it can help to develop self-esteem. The stories that are being told can possibly also be used as the base for a rap.

The purpose of appreciative inquiry is to get inspired by success stories. We do this through two coaching techniques: appreciative questioning and witnessing. The appreciative questions will help you dig deeper through the layers of a successful experience ('dig for the gold'). The witnessing can help provide new insights and internalise some of the lessons learned.

Time: ca. 30 minutes for the interview and witnessing.



1. Divide roles: A is interviewer, B is interviewee, C is witness. Read the instructions together, only the interviewer and witness read the (sample) questions on the back!
2. Person A interviews person B about a success story – a project, event or activity that she is most proud of. It is important that person B thinks of a concrete situation in which she was personally involved (keep it small). After this B helps A explore the resources, competences and other factors that made this experience successful. It is important that you formulate your questions appreciatively. Use the (sample) questions on the back page and add your own if needed. Person A can take a time-out with person C to discuss the best questions to ask from B; please do not ping-pong questions, there is only 1 interviewer per round! Person C, the witness, listens to the story of A and notes down the aspects that catch her attention.
3. Person A interviews person C (the witness) using the (sample) questions from the back page.
4. Back to the interviewee (person B): how was it for you? What do you take from this?

Sample questions.

Person A interviews person B about a success story:

- What is your story about?
- Who was involved and what did they do? What happened next? What else?
- What was particular exciting about this situation? What makes you proud of it?
- Which challenges did you overcome?
- How did you manage to overcome these difficulties?
- How did you know what to do?
- What would you call the resources or competences that you were able to draw upon?
- What was the role of your team or other people around you?
- What did you learn from this story? How would you call this experience?
- What effect did this experience have on your work?
- How can you use these resources and competences in other situations?

Person A interviews person C (the witness) using the following (sample) questions:

- What has caught your attention?
- What does it tell you about B's strengths, resources and competences (how did they show in the story)?
- What does it tell you about what's valuable or important for B (how did these values show in the story)?



NOTE!

It is important to ask appreciative questions. This means, no judgement, no associations, no advice and no ping-pong.

Wrap-up with the whole group: share and list some of the main resources and competences that surfaced in the stories. What we can take from this, how can we use this for the future?

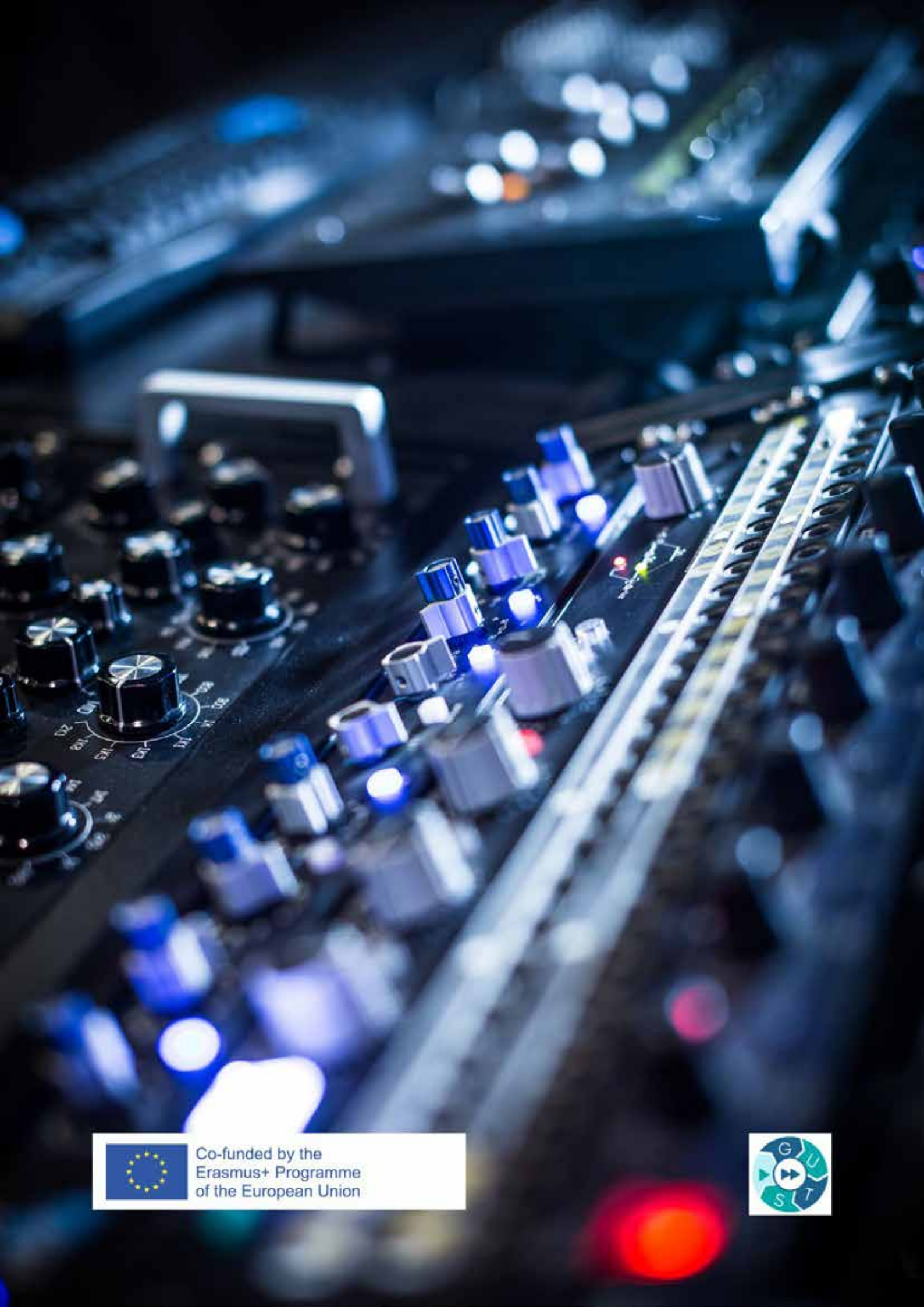
SIMPLE TOOLS FOR RECORDING

There are several free and simple tools or apps that can be used to record and produce music. All the apps and tools on this page are easy to use and can provide a great starting point for anyone who is interested in producing and recording music. However, keep in mind that the features and capabilities of the free version may be limited compared to the paid version.

- Audacity: Audacity is a free, open-source digital audio editor and recording software. It is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux and can be used to record, edit, and export audio files.
- GarageBand: GarageBand is a digital audio workstation and music production app that is available for iOS and macOS devices. It includes a variety of virtual instruments, drum kits, and other features that can be used to create and edit music.
- LMMS: LMMS (Linux MultiMedia Studio) is a free and open-source digital audio workstation that is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. It includes a variety of features such as synthesizers, drum machines, and effects, and can be used to create and edit music.
- Soundtrap: Soundtrap is a free, cloud-based music production platform that can be used to create and edit music online. It is available for Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android devices.
- Music Maker JAM: Music Maker JAM is a free music production app that is available for iOS, Android and Windows devices. It includes a variety of virtual instruments, drum kits, and other features that can be used to create and edit music.

- BandLab: BandLab is a free, cloud-based music production platform that can be used to create, record, edit, and share music. Available for Windows, Mac, iOS and Android, it includes a variety of features such as virtual instruments, effects, and collaboration tools.





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