Youth, Mental Health and Culture

BRAINSTORMING REPORT

VOICES OF CULTURE

Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector

GOETHE INSTITUT

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SELECTED ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	REPRESENTATIVE
Africans and African-Europeans Association	FI	
Aksion Plus	AL	
AMAT-AH Publishing	BG	
ARTS for HEALTH AUSTRIA	AT	
Arts in Health Groningen	NL	
ASOCIACIÓN CULTURAL BERDE	ES	
Associació Sociocultural l'Altre Festival	ES	
Association Européenne des Conservatoires	BE	
Athens Comics Library	EL	
Aventura Social, Association	PT	
Bozar	BE	
Cavan Monaghan Arts and Health Forum	IE	
Centro Asistencial San Juan de Dios	ES	
Circus of Knowledge at Johannes Kepler University, Linz	AT	
Cluj Cultural Centre	RO	
Copenhagen Bombay / OXY Magazine	DK	
Culture Action Europe	BE	
Cultuurcoach Leiden	NL	
DEAR Onlus	IT	
Department of Mental Health - Local Health Authority Roma 2	IT	
Erasmus Mundus Association	BE	
European Choral Association	DE	
European Music Council	DE	
Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)	FI	
Fondazione Fitzcarraldo	IT	
International Play Association, IPA Sweden & ECP - European Cultural Parliament	SE	
Koklētāju kopa "Austras Koks"	LV	
LSU (The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations)	SE	
MinD Mad in Design	IT	
Mirsal ry	FI	
MTÜ Peaasjad	EE	
National Institute of Health Dr Ricardo Jorge	PT	
One Resilient Earth	DE	
Other Ways to Care	EL	
Pražský inovační institut	CZ	
Pro Progressione	HU	
Public Health Action Hub (PHAH)	BE	

ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	REPRESENTATIVE
RED NOSES International	AT	
Reims 2028	FR	
Rhythmic Music Conservatory	DK	
Salzburg Global Seminar	AT	
Sosped Foundation	FI	
Stadt Mülheim an der Ruhr / Department of Health, Social, Work and Culture	DE	
Szegedi Orvostanhallgatók Eyesülete	HU	
The Starving Artist	NL	
Theatre of Yes	ES	
UNIMA Germany	DE	
Università Parthenope	IT	
University of Gdańsk	PL	
Workshop Foundation	HU	
Youth Support Centre	PL	
Zikkurat Projekt Kulturális Egyesület	HU	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edith Wolf Perez

Since the beginning of this century, scientific investigations on the impact of culture and the arts on health and well-being have resulted in a huge body of knowledge and a buzzing scene of activities. At the same time, the essential and systemic role that culture and the arts play in our society has not yet achieved the recognition it deserves from policymakers and the health and social sector.

Culture and Health, as it is represented in the WHO Health Evidence Synthesis Report No. 67 "What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being?", is a global movement. In practice, however, it is a fragmented carpet of numerous approaches, lacking concerted efforts and effective communication. While there is a plethora of data from small-scale projects there is a very limited amount of academic research providing robust data.

In order to collect insights, experiences, and recommendations on this topic from civil society from the relevant sectors across Europe the European Commission Structured Dialogue platform Voices of Culture invited participants from 53 selected organisations (from an Open Call) and 23 countries from the fields of culture, health, education, and social services to brainstorm over two days - 4th & 5th October 2022 - in Brussels.

The focus was on one of the most pressing issues of our time: Youth Mental Health. How can arts and culture address the multiple expressions of troubled young minds when facing the crises of our time? The objective was to gather and discuss the evidence and come up with recommendations for stronger participation of the arts and culture sector in public health in Europe.

In five thematic groups, the participants looked at the evidence and practice of the cultural and creative sectors on the mental health of young people from different angles. The key takeaways, the recommendations, and the conclusions are informed by their practical fieldwork which provides evidence of the potential for the prevention and the promotion of (mental) health, as well as for the management and treatment of ill health.

The findings are represented in the five chapters of the report. They lay out an extensive overview of successful projects that have been carried out by the group members or associated organisations for, with, and through young people and which proved to contribute to stabilising their mental health.

Cultural economist and senior researcher Annalisa Cicerchia prepared a discussion paper around which the brainstorming sessions were structured.

Annalisa Cicerchia also provides the introduction and conclusion to the findings in the Report.

The general tenor of the brainstorming session was that strategies and interventions aiming at promoting the mental health and well-being of young people need to adopt an integrated, multidimensional, and cross-sectoral approach. As an immanent ingredient of human endeavor, that can be traced throughout the history of mankind, the creative arts and culture are biopsychosocial ingredients. The impact is multifactorial and affects the physical, psychological, emotional, and social dimensions. They bring joy and relief and can be transformational. Its effects depend on the nature of the intervention, the subjective experience of the individual, and the group situation. Therefore, the impacts and effects on (mental) health are not measurable according to a specific design. One size does not fit all. A mixed and cross-cutting methodological approach will be most appropriate to evaluate culture for health interventions.

CHAPTER 1.

Evidence on the contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to improving the mental health and well-being of young people, at the local and the national level.

The group discussed how arts and culture can boost resilience in young people by enabling critical thinking and creating spaces where it is possible to open conversations and overcome stigma. Peer communities should be accessible to young people all over Europe, especially to those from minorities and from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds who are at greater risk. The peers should be directly included in the further development of the field according to their needs. Youth-led projects should have the opportunity to apply for smaller grants with less paperwork.

The group advocates for investing in non-formal, inclusive education, investigating the creation of therapeutic tools in a digital environment, and acknowledging the potential of art and culture by supporting research projects, organisations, and events promoting mental well-being.

CHAPTER 2.

International evidence on the function of art and culture in the mental health of the youth population: What prospects?

The recent unfavorable global scenarios left young people's mental health and well-being deeply affected, bringing to the surface already existing, pre-crisis, problems, and issues, and poising new, unexpected challenges to them. They highlighted the role of cultural agents, both locally and internationally, being essential in terms of leading by example and motivating and inspiring young people to be creative and to undertake changes in their lifestyles. Although we can refer to a sound body of knowledge through empirical evidence, academic research about the role of creative arts and culture on youth is scarce. The group advocates for ramping up clinical research as well as studies with large cohorts. The evidence gained would also support the work done by small-scale projects and organisations. The role of international sharing of knowledge is a key function towards the need of accessing tools, partners, and evidence to gain credibility and know-how based on the local and regional experiences. Mental health and well-being are not a single campaign. This is a long, ongoing process and young people's involvement as well as that of their parents is crucial for its positive outcome.

CHAPTER 3.

Inter-sectoral collaboration to support Youth Mental Health: synergies and innovations.

Research on Sustainable Development Goals suggests that complex social problems call for integrated multi-sectoral solutions. Strategies and plans aiming at promoting the mental health and well-being of young people need to adopt an integrated, multidimensional, cross-sectoral approach between the cultural, creative, and health sectors, as well as other relevant stakeholders. Social prescribing is a health-promoting primary-care model that enables a sustainable cross-sectoral framework and could be used to promote young people's mental health and well-being, by fostering direct collaboration between the cultural, creative, and health sectors. The integration of youth in the development of cultural, creative, and health-related policies and interventions is crucial to ensure the improvement of their mental health, well-being, and social inclusion. This will provide them with opportunities and resources necessary to have greater participation in the decision-making process that affects their lives and empower them to recognize and assert their fundamental rights.

The group investigated the complex factors and relationships to define the role of culture and creativity in influencing and supporting youth mental health. The goal was to understand the grades of influence among stakeholders, based on their institutional proximity to one another, and their different types of support for youth. This analysis provides insight into the difficulty of intersectoral collaboration and suggests how structural relationships could be reimagined.

CHAPTER 4.

Examples of interventions with robust evidence of successful outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged young people. Impact assessment strategies and tools.

Culture and art activities can help overcome the stigma around mental health and can be tools for social transformation. A holistic and systemic approach towards creating connections between social, educational, cultural, and health worlds is paramount to overcome the idea of art as an ornament and avoid the reduction of its role exclusively in art therapy practices.

Culture-based projects addressing the specific mental health issue for young people should be co-designed by experts from different fields (sociology, health, anthropology, culture, art) and tested and validated in different contexts, art forms and ways of participation. They should then be implemented by mixing different approaches.

In the design of these pilot actions, evaluation needs to be seen as a process fully integrated into the project, from inception to conclusion, and requires a multidisciplinary approach integrating a variety of perspectives (health, psychology, sociology, anthropology, culture, social).

In this report, the group provides an analysis of the conditions to deploy a successful intervention by synthesising the needs, the success factors, and the challenges to consider before, during, and after the project. The group advocates for setting a shared and common frame for evaluation by working toward the identification of quantitative and qualitative Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that are specific, adaptable, and scalable to different contexts. They also suggest to set-up a 'platform' or 'web space' storing and describing KPIs, case studies, data, and stats for comparative analysis and tools for different artistic/cultural interventions.

CHAPTER 5.

Conditions for success.

The basis for success for creative and cultural Youth Mental Health interventions is an understanding of the underlying factors that determine the "ecosystem" of young people. Their circle of influence includes their caregivers, families, supporters, friends, schools, communities, and the world they live in. In an ecosystem, the key to the health of the system is how each element relates to the other. Regarding the appropriate creative intervention for the promotion of mental health, cross-sectoral cooperation, and an evidence-informed approach is required.

This chapter focuses on the importance of co-developing methods to ensure that youth voices are included in the design of youth interventions from the beginning. Investments in education, interdisciplinary, cross-sector collaboration, the development of ethical safeguarding measures and quality standards with a focus on cultural practitioners will provide positive long-term benefits. Substantial long-term funding is needed to achieve sustainability, including bringing the relevance of artistic cultural practices further into the community and to recognise them for what they are: vehicles of democratic, inclusive, participatory, resilient, sustainable, healthy, and inspiring societies.

CONCLUSION

Among the many suggestions and policy recommendations the five groups formulated, the following topics came up frequently:

- A concerted effort of the cultural, health, and social sectors is needed to raise awareness of the role of the arts on the (mental) health of (young) people.
- Access to culture and creative participation must be easy and inclusive by reaching out to young people from minority groups.
- Social Prescribing as a primary care intervention could help integrate the arts into public health provisions.
- Arts interventions for young people as beneficiaries should be youth-led or co-designed with them.
- Arts interventions should be crosscutting and multidisciplinary, from planning to implementation to evaluation.
- International exchanges of experiences and knowledge are paramount in establishing a sound basis for promoting the role of culture and the arts on the mental health of young people locally, regionally, and nationally.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Recent unfavourable global scenarios left young people's mental health and well-being deeply affected, bringing to surface already existing, pre-crisis, problems, and issues, and poising new, unexpected challenges to them. They highlighted the role of cultural agents, both locally and internationally, being essential in terms of leading by example, motivating and inspiring young people to get involved in the process.

Assuming that culture and art activities can help in overcoming the stigma around mental health and can be tools of social transformation, a holistic and systemic approach capable of creating connections between social, educational, cultural and health worlds is paramount to overcome the idea of 'art for art's sake' and avoid the reduction of its role exclusively to art therapy practices.

Factors that support success for Youth Mental Health Projects are:

- Youth Participation, co-production and co-creation
- Cross Sectoral, interdisciplinary stakeholder collaborations
- Strategies and plans with an integrated, multidimensional, cross-sectoral approach
- Significant long-term funding to support stakeholders and communities
- Evidence-based approaches and methodologies with continuous evaluation and shared learning
- International sharing of knowledge
- Education and Capacity Building; shared learning between creative cultural and clinical and community health professionals
- Cultural interventions and social prescriptions appropriate to the contexts of youth mental health promotion, prevention, management and treatment
- Ethical and quality standards that create safe and courageous (brave) spaces that balance clinical safety with creative risk

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS
TO CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

- Raise awareness of the arts as a relevant and essential societal area.

- Ensure access to culture to young people especially through creative participation.

- Ensure barrier-free access and reach out to young people from minority groups (people of colour, LGBTQIA+, ethnic minorities, with disabilities, etc.).

- Include young people and health professionals in the design of participative activities. Establish the needs of the young in dialogue with them.

- Investigate how to create tools in a digital environment that can have a positive impact on mental health.

- Develop a conceptual framework for planning cross-sectoral collaborations, including a common vocabulary.

- Work towards the identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) with an interdisciplinary approach.

- Establish a support structure to involve parents and carers.

- Develop training modules to build capacity for intersectoral collaboration.

- Deploy culture and creativity programmes to promote the inclusion and empowerment of youth in policy making regarding its mental health.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE POLICY LEVEL

- Address the cross-sectoral nature of Arts for Health programs and involve institutions in the field of health and social services to formulate policy guidelines and models for providing financial support.

- Encourage the integration of the cultural & creative with health and other relevant sectors.

- Work with the health and social sector to include arts and culture in "Social Prescribing".

- Develop policies and interventions that improve youth health and well-being at the international, regional, and local levels.

- Support the design of co-funded programmes addressing the need of inter-sectoral collaboration.

- Encourage offers of creative participative activities to be part of the school curricula to make sure all young people are reached regardless of their background.

- Support projects offering free creative activities outside school.

- Support projects beyond the pilot phase. Substantial long-term funding is needed to achieve sustainability.

- Establish programs for youth-led projects to apply for smaller grants with less paperwork.

- Support the cultural sector to conduct academic studies in collaboration with social and/or health professionals.

- Invest in non-formal, inclusive education to build identity and community.

- Encourage the inclusion of culture and creativity in the education of professionals in health, social welfare, education and other relevant fields.

INTRODUCTION
Annalisa Cicerchia

Young people need support for their mental health and well-being from an early age, and throughout all stages of education and in the transition from school to work. In 2022, the OECD called for coordinated and timely access to support for children and young people delivered through schools.

The rise of acute and burning problems affecting young people, even at a very early age, such as coping with bullying and cyber-bullying, PTSD (among young refugees fleeing from war), rising concerns over the environmental crisis, the alarming increase in suicides, suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts, and self-harm, calls for immediate coordinated and intense action.

Worldwide and in the EU, there are numerous cultural and creative projects that address at different levels the mental health and well-being of young people, in terms of promotion, prevention, treatment, and management.

Research on how the arts and culture sectors have the potential to contribute to the mental health of young people, particularly for young people in marginalised situations, like low-income families, young people with mental disorders, or young refugees and migrants, is growing worldwide.

From theatres to museums, from music to visual arts, from video making to photography, from reading and writing to dancing, all the arts have proved to be able to contribute:

- to promote mental health and well-being,

- to prevent mental disorders and illness,

- to the management of pathologic conditions,

- to the treatment of mental disorders and illness.

Experiences, practices, and projects have been multiplying in the arts and cultural sectors over the last two decades, and several scholarly efforts have been devoted to collecting data and producing robust evidence.

The picture is rich and lively but also characterized by fragmentation, a tendency of the initiatives to remain small-scale and local, fragile in the continuity of resources, and still insufficiently capable of defining, acquiring, and sharing the necessary skills and competencies. The cross-sectoral nature of this emerging field, which involves, along with the Arts and Culture sectors, also those of Education,

Health, and Social Services, is still far from having reached the ideal level of practical integration.

At the core of this 2022 Voices of Culture call, there is the awareness that it is time to move from a fragmented approach to young people's mental health to a system-wide approach that can tap into artistic and cultural resources to help address this complex issue. The purpose of the call was to engage with civil society on the topic of understanding the potential contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to young people's mental health.

Discussions have involved lessons learned, practices, and projects implemented since 2020 to help support the mental health and well-being of young people. This report condenses that intense activity and the subsequent process of giving it a systematic written form.

Before introducing the reader to this report, three observations that stood out from this 2022 VoC edition are worth highlighting.

- The call on Youth, Mental Health, and Culture received 86 valid applications, from 21 countries. Most applications (61) have been submitted by organizations in the cultural sector. Some of them are multidisciplinary, and many work on individual disciplines, like Music, the Performing arts (Theatre, Dance, etc.), the Visual arts, Museums, Video and Media, Circus, etc. 13 applications have been submitted by Healthcare organizations, and 12 come from the Education sector. They have been selected based on 10 criteria, like Relevance, Thematic expertise, Multiplying effects, Geographical balance, Sectoral balance, and Gender balance, plus others. The resulting list is remarkably long, as it counts 53 organisations, including those belonging to the Healthcare and Education sectors. This wide participation in the 2-day in-person Brainstorming sessions in Brussels, followed by an intense report-writing activity, gives a measure of how committed the sector is to the selected topic.

- Despite significant differences among the participant organizations' status, size, and mission, with, on the one hand, the larger ones involved in representation, advocacy, and research activities, and, on the other hand, the smaller ones mostly engaged in field operators, they all have shown a remarkable maturity vis-à-vis the proposed topic. The differences in disciplines, human, financial, and logistical resources within the CCS contribute to creating a rich and varied picture. Thanks to this, this report offers valuable and complementary insights from many sector representatives.

- This VoC edition, in many respects, represents a "first", an exploratory endeavor, aimed at facilitating the emersion and encounter of organisations active all-around Europe and beyond, with their background of artistic and cultural practices and research for the mental well-being of young people. Each chapter of the Report is devoted to a key aspect that requires a further collective effort, which could produce, in time, proper Guidelines. These aspects are the need for sound evidence, at the local, national, and international levels; inter-sectoral collaboration; impact assessment strategies and tools to identify successful projects, approaches, and methods; and conditions for success, involving organisations, resources, skills, and competencies, cultural contents and settings, etc. The reader will appreciate the rich accompanying documentation of case studies, bibliographic references, and useful web resources.

A few other aspects that have been transversally covered during this VoC process should be highlighted shortly.

- Respondents to the call and participants in the brainstorming, although mostly from the cultural sectors, also included representatives from healthcare and education sectors who regularly resort to the arts and culture to promote the mental health and well-being of young people and help prevent, manage, and treat those who need support for their issues. Because of this, the process itself represents a good practice of intersectoral dialogue and cooperation, from the very framing of the starting questions to the methodologies and approaches adopted and to the drafting of the final outputs.

- Insufficient data coverage is a widely shared concern. While the participants were all aware of the specific, often unique, characteristics of the individual projects, experiments, and programs, with their specific, often unique, beneficiaries, socio-cultural contexts, cultural and artistic disciplines, and languages, which makes it very difficult to generate harmonised quantitative information, they, on the other hand, are also aware that at the EU level statistics on cultural access, participation, and practice – which are indispensable for analysing needs and trends - are insufficient, very generic, non-targeted and outdated (the last ad hoc module on this topic in the EU-SILC sample survey was carried out in 2015), unable to account for gender, age, income, geographic, and settlement differences.

- At the same time, awareness, and political attention to the potential contribution of the arts and culture to health and well-being, including mental health and well-being, with a special focus on young people, is rapidly growing. The EC often refers to this contribution as one of the strategies which must char-

acterize and orient cultural policies in the next future, including reinforcing inter-sectoral cooperation. Hopefully, such awareness and political attention will lead to mainstreaming, integrating, and thus optimizing various strands of EU funding, which, in recent years, have covered directly or indirectly the field. If properly brought together, these resources could give sustained support to organisations, projects, and products (Creative Europe), research (Horizon 2020), and encourage the development of targeted curricula (Erasmus+).

- One significant and qualifying trait of the experiences that have been shared during the brainstorming and the resulting report is the unquestioned centrality of what elsewhere is called "the audiences". All the projects where culture and the arts are oriented to supporting the [mental] health and well-being of [young] people are built on intense, purposeful, interactive, and often frequently repeated interactions with their beneficiaries. They are rarely managed top-down, one-way, or following standardized procedures: on the opposite, they are engaging, participatory, and tailored to the needs of the recipients. Because of those qualities, the organisations in the cultural sectors that are active in this field may be considered as an advanced evolution of the relationship of the sectors with the public, a refreshing way of defining or redefining their mission, and renewing their intrinsic value.

The brainstorming meetings and the subsequent report-writing process have expressed the heartening and inspirational vibrancy of a generous, competent, hard-working, and enthusiastic world made of small and large organisations, individual artists, and professionals, who operate under different conditions, and territorial, social, economic, and cultural contexts, with different access to key resources, and are committed to offering to young people, especially those in marginal and critical conditions, all the support that they can derive from the arts and culture.

The present report is composed of five chapters, each prepared by one thematic group, which recaps the main outputs from the VoC discussion.

The conclusions summarise those salient themes of the report that had the greatest impact on the recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

Evidence on the contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to improving the mental health and well-being of young people, at the local and the national level

Chapter written by:
Agnes Fogh Schmidt and Emese Kincső Páli.
With contributions of all working group members:
Shareef Askar, Sigge Eriksson, Ana Fernández Osorio,
Catarina Noronha, Dina Ntziora, Saija Salonen, Ally Zlatar.

Key Takeaways

- Creative projects can boost resilience in young people by enabling critical thinking and opening conversations, and is especially valuable when it comes to empowering cultural minorities

- Peer communities, and hobbies should be accessible in the lives of young people from all over Europe

- Investing in non-formal, inclusive education

- Asking the young people what they need and including them is important for the future development of the field. It should be accessible for youth-led projects to apply for smaller grants with less paperwork.

- Investigating how to create therapeutic tools in a digital environment

Introduction

We are in a global mental health crisis. With interdisciplinary approaches, we present this paper to highlight the contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to promoting, preventing, managing, and treating the mental health issues of young people. We share examples of research and best practices from all over Europe.

The young generations face constant flattening personal interactions in the digital area, accelerated during the pandemic. Other pressures include (cyber-)bullying, awareness of war, and the climate crisis. Complex problems need complex solutions. A scoping review published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe (Fancourt and Finn 2019) confirms that one of the most promising areas of cooperation for culture is that of health and well-being. As a group of artists, healthcare, and cultural professionals, some of whom have lived through experiences of mental health problems or have supported and worked in partnership with young people, we have collected our experiences and vision for the future.

We call on the European Commission to listen to the following *recommendations for action*, based on the cases we have studied, and we emphasize the value of empathy and connection when it comes to designing policy for mental health and young people.

We have organised the evidence into the categories of *promotion, prevention, management, and treatment*, to give an overview of how artistic and cultural approaches can be helpfully incorporated in all stages of dealing with mental illness.

We divide the cases into the following sections:

1. **Peer-to-peer sharing - a promotion and prevention tool**
2. **Promoting identity and empowering cultural minorities**
3. **Art-based work - how the arts and culture can contribute**
4. **Cultural and Social Youth Work**
5. **New prescriptions - ways of building motivation and self-treatment**

1. Peer-to-peer sharing - a promotion and prevention tool

The main purpose of **preventive healthcare** is to reduce one's risk of diseases or limit the effects by giving to risk groups timely information. In Portugal, *The Dream Teens Project* creates platforms where young people share their experiences to motivate and inspire others. This creates a national network of consultants and collaborators in research to transform the results into efficient practices, supporting preventive healthcare workers. One of the organisations working on this field is the *International Federation of Medical Students' Association*. Represented in 129 countries with national and local sub-associations, lectures promoting mental health and prevention are in their repertoire for young people.

Gaining **first-person** information is the purpose of the workshop of *"Fighting Against Stigma"*. Patients of Centro Asistencial San Juan de Dios Malaga share their stories and the social impact that involves them daily with local students.

Through questionnaires, the project evaluates the level of the stigma the patients feel about themselves and the beneficiaries, before and after. Sosped Foundation (Finland) provides sessions for intense gamers, called *Limitless Gaming Program*. Based on peer-group support and psychoeducation, these are instructed by a professional paired with an ex-problematic gamer as a volunteer. The aims are to raise awareness of links between excessive gaming and mental well-being.

2. Promoting identity and empowering cultural minorities

We are all part of cultures that have been passed down by the generations before us but navigating in this multitude is something we must learn. Everyone should have the right to learn to recognize cultural phenomena, deal with them in their own way and create new ideas. This requires cultural knowledge, skills, and socio-cultural understanding.

Empowerment is about social acceptance and talking about the problems surrounding young people. The *#GenerationsWithAVoice* campaign in Portugal is based on **intergenerational sharing**. Groups of young people discuss their needs (environment, family and housing, education, health, work, economy, community and society, government and politics, and culture). Intergenerational dialogue is promoted, to recognise inequalities and examine their influence on the decision-making process.

All best practices to **empower cultural minorities** begin with space given for talking.

Turning Tables Denmark is one of the non-profit organisations that work through music and film production to empower socially, economically, and politically marginalised youth by providing them with the means to express their hopes, dreams, and challenges.

Another practice is *Refugee Week Greece*, organised with the initiative of *Athens Comics Library*. It is a healing festival, celebrating the contribution, creativity, and authenticity of people who have experienced forced migration, emphasising the ability to start again.

For helping for integration, the *A Better Life for Our Youth* by Mirsal project works by adapting the Finnish hobby model to fit the needs of immigrant and asylum-seeking youth, achieving similar structural opportunities in trying out leisure activities such as the local young people have. This is a great practice of community building and working together for equality.

The University of Southern California created a *Diversity Toolkit*, with icebreakers and activities that can provide context, help in building self-awareness, and in respecting the diverse identities of the group. *IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility* is a project which helps to define social identities and positions. Age, gender, race, or religion, all influence how you move through the world, dictate how much access you have and the biases you experience. Everything you say, think, and do, is filtered, intentionally or otherwise.
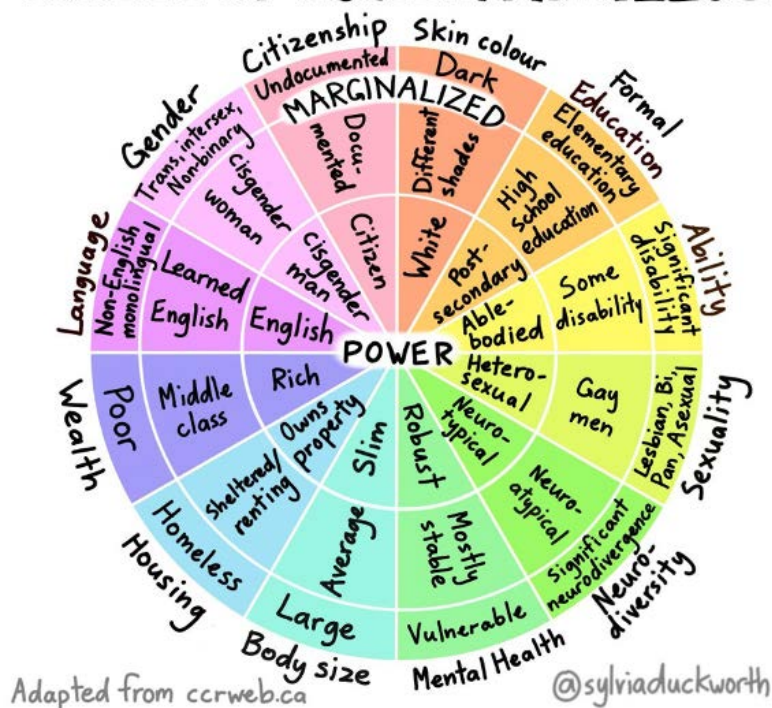
*PICTURE Nº 1 Sylvia Duckworth on **intersectionality**.*

Language shapes the way of apprehending the world, affects how you think and talk, and your capacity to support yourself and others. Different language speakers connect adjectives to items suggested by their mother tongue. *Inclusive Language Guidelines* help avoid phrases that perpetuate harm or offence toward members of marginalised communities. The aims are to raise awareness of problems.

Also influencing the way young people see and hear about the world are the media, where we usually have quite a narrow variety of representations (age, gender, cultural backgrounds). One great example for **culturally sensitive media education** is the Finnish project *"From their media to our media"*, that produces materials to widen the awareness of different cultures in the media context and on how to create respectful representations in media activities.

3. Art-based work - how the arts and culture can contribute

Art is one of the best ways for young people to share these experiences. It can help empower people, enable critical thinking and create the possibility to break out of the stigma, self-stigmatization, and isolation. It can **communicate and open conversations** when we are too afraid or unable to effectively express our feelings and experiences.

Evidence for advocacy through art is *The Starving Artist* from Scotland. This project explores the lived-in experiences of mental illness such as eating disorders and body dysmorphia. The Starving Artist seeks to redefine the current narratives and treatment surrounding these illnesses and help foster systemic reform through the power of creative voices. Ally Zlatar behind the project reflects: "I think for myself, and others, recovery treatment was not how I found my voice, it was through my art that I gained strength and we need to foster diverse outlets to recovery to help people to recover by drawing upon their own inner strength and changing their perception of themselves."

The project called *RecuperArte* is a museum-based art therapy group session at the local level in Malaga. Several health institutions interested in the investigation and evaluation of its clinical- and social impact collaborated with museums. It reached the clinical trial.

REWRITALIZE is a successful Danish **writing** program for young people with mental health issues. Amager Psychiatric Hospital works with creative writing groups led by six professional authors with mental healthcare professionals and use creativity as a recovery tool.

"El Teatro de la Vida" is a **theatre play** project of young people (with/without mental illness) to raise awareness about mental health in San Juan de Dios, Spain. Through creative sessions, participants write scripts and create characters. The aims are fighting against stigma and supporting recovery by improving social inclusion.

Art teaching institutions, like Rythmic Music Conservatory of Copenhagen, are developing the concept of **artistic citizenship** that encourages art education and artists to take social responsibility for the community that they're a part of.

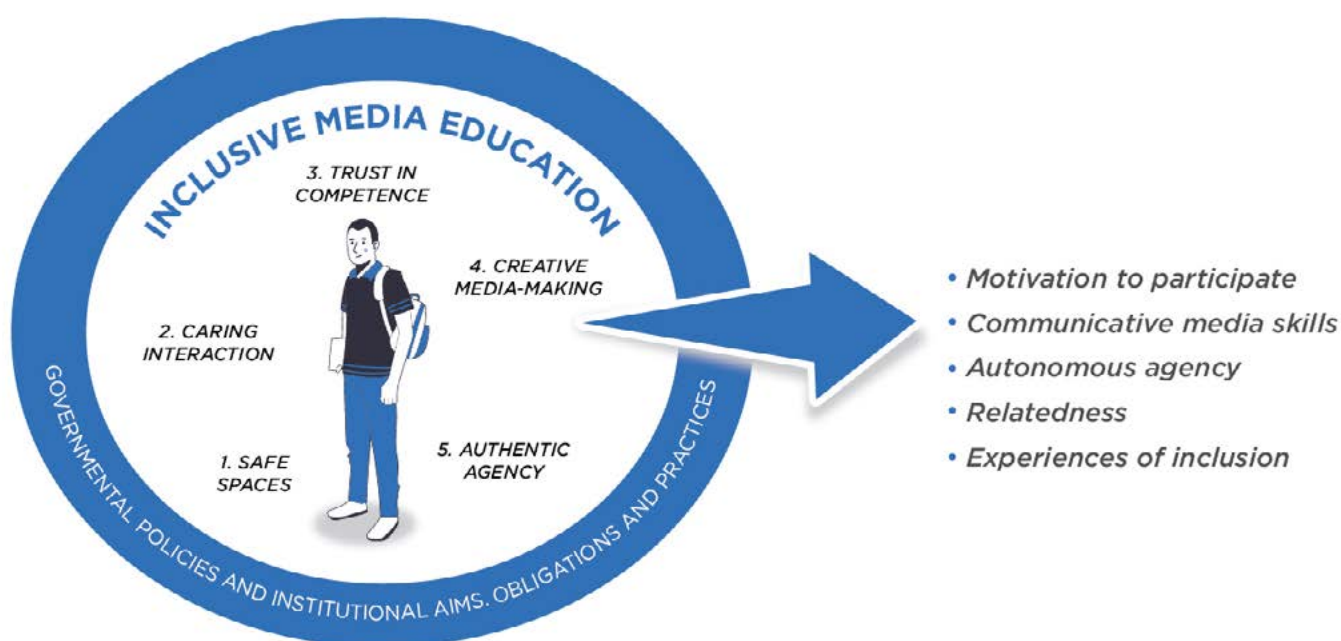## 4. Cultural and Social Youth Work

Both cultural and social youth work aims to promote a better life for young people, give tools for handling difficulties, and support identity growing process or healing. They work mainly in peer groups, strengthening social skills, and using art

and other cultural activities as tools for empowerment. Cultural work is proposed to those who are interested in promotion/prevention, and social-based work is rather for those who need support in management/treatment.

To support young people's own agency for identity growth and developing a sense of belonging in Finland, many municipalities are offering possibilities to enjoy cultural youth work. Activities are free and offered in youth houses, clubs and other youth spaces. The Finnish education system initiated a hobby model in schools. The objective is to enable students to choose a fruitful activity in clubs, with the sole limitation that they take place in after-school times. The development can be seen in the children's artistic expression and how they use creative tools in promoting their aspirations and thus having a positive impact on their well-being.

As part of social youth work, Sosped Foundation runs five Culture Houses across Finland. A Culture House is a day centre for young adults with mental health problems and offers a safe place to explore a wide array of art and culture-related activities. The focus is on group sessions through which the participants develop social skills, led by a peer leader, a former participant. This enables young people to get empowered and discover new strengths.

The term "Inclusive Media Education" is an academic model for creating a safe space for young people where their needs and opinions are placed at the centre, while working on projects. Caring interaction and empathy are highly important as much as trusting in their competence. Mari Pienimäki applied the self-determination theory and gained evidence about participants' improved well-being.

Model by Mari Pienimäki & Sirkku Kotilainen (2021). Media Education for the Inclusion of At-Risk Youth: Shades of Democracy 2.0 from Finland https://trepo.tuni.fi/handle/10024/130780

The program of *Epic Light* media activities by Sosped Foundation publishes media content that is created by challenged young adults in peer groups. With the help of staff members, participants build media skills and find channels to express themselves in a powerful way. The program publishes a magazine (Valoa!), produces radio shows, videos, blogs, and social media posts, and organises cultural events, empowering both the creators and the audience.

Another Scandinavian example is the *"Efterskole"=Afterschool:* a unique Danish independent residential school. Presently more than 30 thousand students are attending one of the approximately 240 schools. A research project shows that the young people who have gone to "efterskole" in the 10th grade have a 15 % better chance of completing their later education. Research also shows that former Efterskole-students become comparatively more active participants in society. Thoughts from a former student: "When I was 14 years old, I was diagnosed with clinical depression. In Denmark a lot of these "efterskole" have a hobby focus, so the students have something in common when they start. I went to a school with a focus on music, songwriting and creative practices and it gave me a huge sense of purpose and belonging and completely turned my life around. I know many young people who share similar experiences."

5. New prescriptions - ways of building motivation and self-treatment

The tools of **gamification** can be helpful during the mental healing process. Engaging youngsters in the digital area requires constant therapeutic innovation to wake up their interest. There are already videogames in the market created with therapeutic tools found after studies. For example, the game "EndeavorRX by Akili Interactive" was created to treat ADHD, and made history in June 2020 as the first-ever prescription-strength videogame approved by the Federal Drug Administration.

Since 2001, Sweden has been using a method in the medical service to provide for free physical activity to citizens who need it for prevention or treatment. The activities are on a wide range scale, it is the individual's needs that decide which one is most suitable.

Similarly, from the early 1990s, Reykjavik has offered 6 to 18-year-old residents a **hobby voucher** worth 350 euros per year. This has been quantified as associated with reduced numbers of substance-abuse cases. Today the city boosts the most alcohol-abstinent youth in Europe.

In the end, we would like to emphasise the importance of **motivation and self-treatment**. In Sweden, medical staff can via information flow through trusted web pag-

es inform citizens of first step treatments that do not require professional help to implement in everyday life. The aim with self-treatment is to reduce the load and amount of help seekers in the psychiatry sector. It is also a movement to remind the citizens to take care of themselves related to well-being on mental health.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is important to recognise how creative projects can boost resilience in young people by enabling critical thinking and creating spaces where it is possible to break out stigma, and open conversations. Peer communities, and hobbies should be accessible in the lives of young people from all over Europe, especially minorities who are at greater risk.

All the examples above and many more are a testament to the potential of this field. To spread out and share with less economically resourceful parts of the union, for all young people to have a fair chance to find their voice and their mental well-being, we need the European Commission to help gain further evidence and provide project and training funding.

The next steps should include investing in non-formal, inclusive education, investigating how to create therapeutic tools in a digital environment, and acknowledging the potential of art and culture. We recommend supporting research projects, organisations, and events promoting mental wellbeing, and it should be accessible for youth-led projects to apply for smaller grants with less paperwork. But most importantly **asking the young people what they need** and including them is important for the future development of the field.

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Useful web pages:

- Adapting the Finnish hobby model: https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/16585-finland-looks-to-iceland-to-encourage-youth-to-swap-booze-for-hobbies.html

- Art for recovery in mental health: https://lanochedelosinvestigadores.fundaciondescubre.es/actividades/uma-directo-recuperarte-arte-para-la-recuperacion-en-salud-mental/

- Danish afterschool effektanalization, January 2022: https://www.efterskolerne.dk/da/Aktuelt/Nyheder/Maj2022/Efterskolen-ruster-unge-bedre-til-ungdomsuddannelse

- Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power and Privilege: https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/

- Epic Light: https://mieletontavaloa.fi/english/

- Health of Pregnant Migrant Women and their Newborns in Finland: ohttps://trepo.tuni.fi/handle/10024/130780

- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA): https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/universaldesign/chapter/positionality-intersectionality/

- Inclusive Language Guidelines: https://www.apa.org › apa › equity-diversity-inclusion

- Limitless Gaming: https://digipelirajaton.fi/info/in-english/

- Mirsal: https://www.mirsal.fi/

- The Public Health Agency of Sweden: https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/

CHAPTER 2

International evidence on the function of art and culture in the mental health of the youth population: What prospects?

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Key Takeaways

1. Recent unfavourable global scenarios left young people's mental health and well-being deeply affected, bringing to surface already existing, pre-crisis, problems, and issues, and poising new, unexpected challenges to them. They highlighted the role of cultural agents, both locally and internationally, being essential in terms of leading by example and motivating and inspiring young people to get involved in the process.

2. Academic and empirical data have indicated that culture and the arts should not be prescribed. Given their specific function in individual and collective psychic development, artistic and cultural activities must be offered to the youth population as accessible and emphasised as a product of value and self-expression that can be shared by the whole community.

3. The role of international sharing of knowledge is a key function towards the need of accessing tools, partners, and evidence to gain credibility and know-how based on the local and regional levels.

4. Without a cohesive support structure, arts in the mental health arena won't succeed in the long run. Lifestyle changes must accompany the gift that art can bring to the recipient. Trust issues, lack of family support are some of the barriers to enjoy the true experience that art can bring to one's life.

Introduction

There is strong evidence, both nationally and internationally, that the recent unfavourable global scenarios the pandemic, the deepening concerns over the environmental crisis, the war in Ukraine, and the looming economic crisis, etc.) left young people's mental health and well-being deeply affected, bringing to surface already existing, pre-crisis, problems, and issues, and poising new, unexpected challenges to them.

To address these issues, we identify the role of international sharing of knowledge as a key function towards the need of accessing tools, partners, and evidence to gain credibility and know-how based on the local and regional levels.

How can policymaking and funding provide the necessary framework to enable this and make it all easily accessible? A European online platform would pave the way and cultureforhealth.eu is one good pilot example.

The EU can also shape recommendations that influence national/regional policy and funding. National centers are being created and there are growing networks with academic and/or empirical focus on gathering evidence on culture in something seemingly turning into a movement. This should be acknowledged in future policymaking.

Optimistically and reassuringly, the 'cultural sectors and their actors' response has been in terms of the reading of the "crisis" – seeing an opportunity in it, too, - regrouping and relocating their resources and looking for new effective ways of contributing to the better mental health of young people. As in the etymology of the word, the difficult moment that the individual and the community go through represents the potential of the moment of decision that leads to change. (From Ancient Greek κρίσις krísis, "a separating power of distinguishing, decision, choice, election, judgment, dispute").

Empirical Evidence

Internationally, there exists a plethora of empirical evidence in support of the conclusion that culture and arts proved successful where other state and institutional policies failed:

PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT PLACE	BENEFICIARY	CONTENTS	IMPACT
#BenefitsOfSinging campaign *with curated research list* *www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org/BenefitsOfSinging -> curated research* *European Choral Association as part of the EU-funded project "Upgrade - Connect - Reach Out: Raising Awareness for Collective Singing in Europe"* *GERMANY with input from different European Countries*	*Anybody wishing to use collective singing for a specific purpose and needing scientific proof about its benefits, which includes people working with children and young people*	*The campaign aims to raise awareness for the different benefits collective singing has on the individual and society (physical, psychological, social and educational). A PHD student made a curated research list with the most relevant studies supporting these benefits. The psychological benefits are the most relevant ones for prevention and healing when dealing with mental health and youth.*	*In the field of youth with (potential) mental health issues this can be a preventive contribution to stabilising their mental health through the effects group singing has on the mood of the individual, as well as the enhanced feeling of social inclusion (since social exclusion can be a risk factor for mental health issues)*
Singing Sofa *research programme on the singing voice of young people in Belgium* *www.thevoiceproject.eu -> final report, page 8* *Research carried out by the Centre of Excellence for Voice - KU Leuven / Expertisecentrum Stem (Belgium), www.med.kuleuven.be as part of the EU-funded project VOICE, co-funded by the EU Creative Europe programme* *BELGIUM (singers came from 12 countries and the survey was published in 5 languages)*	*CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (aged 4 to 21)*	*The project covered three topics: a survey for young singers and their conductors, an online information platform, and the development of a game for youth choirs. The part most relevant for youth and mental health is the analysis of the survey.*	*"In general, the choir singers feel more relaxed, experience more self-esteem than before entering the choir. They emphasise that they experience lots of positive feelings such as joy, happiness and self-confidence. The singers also handle feelings more consciously"*
Sing Me In *www.SingMeIn.eu* *European Choral Association as coordinator of a project co-funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme, together with 10 partner organisations* *GERMANY and 10 other countries*	*CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE*	*The output of this project consisted in 3 manuals/handbooks in 11 different languages developed after evaluating 100 projects in different EU countries, Turkey and Lebanon as to the effectiveness of the use of collective singing as a tool for the inclusion of young migrants*	*Young migrants are often in special danger of experiencing mental health issues. Collective singing can be an easy and cheap method of helping them gain more self-confidence, improve their social skills and feel better.*
Aufatmen / AufatmenYOUTH *www.artsforhealthaustria.eu* *ARTS for HEALTH AUSTRIA* *AUSTRIA*	*ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE*	*breathing and singing program for people affected by Long Covid*	*prevent further stress on the mental health of the participants as a consequence of Long Covid*
Youth Dance / Youth Dance Company *www.tanzdietoleranz.at* *Tanz die Toleranz* *AUSTRIA*	*YOUTH*	*Dance program working towards public performances*	*Social cohesion and well-being for young people from diverse*

PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT PLACE	BENEFICIARY	CONTENTS	IMPACT
African Cooking Classes For Children *www.Afaes.fi* *Africans and African-Europeans Association ry* *Finland*			
The European Literature Night Нощ			

PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT PLACE	BENEFICIARY	CONTENTS	IMPACT
ELN – The European Literacy Network *https://www.eln.eu/en/* *EU Member States ("Detski knigi" Foundation"* Детски книги – Откриваме точните книги за твоето дете*! (detskiknigi.com) in Bulgaria) and worldwide*	*Young People*	*Through a number of initiatives to build a bridge between literacy, education and social welfare.*	*Expand personal horizons through literacy and education.*
Un pēkšņi gulbji/And Suddenly The Swans *Contemporary/Social dance projects* *Latvia, France, UK, Finland*	*All kinds of people no matter of avails, disabilities or social status*	*Un pēkšņi gulbji! Laikmetīgās dejas dzīvais arhīvs* *https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100075907007435&sk=mentions*	*Building togetherness, inclusion, avoiding destructiveness or social isolation , and promoting well-being instead*
Music Talks *https://sites.google.com/view/music-talks-erasmus-project/about-us?authuser=2&pli=1* *Latvia, North Macedonia and Norway*	*Everyone, with a YA focus*	*Introducing more that 10 methods to tear down social and economic barriers and create a common language for everyone through an international team of researchers, youth workers and mentors*	*Through the universal language of music to encourage inclusiveness and creativity.*
Sound communication while using kokles *https://nordic-harp-meeting.eu* *Social initiatives* *Baltis, Finland, Scandinavia* *Pasaules koklētāju nometne/ World kokle players camp*	*Everyone, with a YA focus*	*As the name reads, via Kokles - a plucked string instrument, very common in Norther-Baltic region also known as kantele in Finland - to enable and foster communication, togetherness or one-self playing.* *Some research:* *https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1088859/1088860* *https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1089971*	*Communication and expressing emotions is vital for well-being and mental health.*
Superar *www.superar.eu* *Austria, Hungary, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Liechtenstein Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland*	*Children and young people*	*Superar was founded in 2009 by the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Vienna Boys' Choir and Caritas with the aim of providing musical support to children and young people who have little or no access to cultural support. It is inspired by Venezuela's El Sistema and is part of the Sistema Europe Network. Superar works with professional musicians who work with over 3,000 children and young people in seven European countries and on 26 Superar locations. Established structures and cooperation with schools and other institutions are used for this purpose.*	*The exchange between the musicians and children, as well as between the 26 Superar locations, is an essential part of overcoming all kinds of borders and building bridges for the future.*

Academic Research

However, academically, the role of the arts on mental health is still under-researched as there are very few studies with large cohorts of participants. There are even fewer papers investigating the psychological effects of the arts on young people. The literature review of Hilary Bungay and Leyre Zarobe (2017) found only eight eligible studies to give evidence on the "role of arts activities in developing resilience and mental well-being in children and young people". The WHO report identified some studies that provide evidence including children with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Another example is the study of Hei Wan Mak & Daisy Fancourt: "Longitudinal associations between ability in arts activities, behavioural difficulties and self-esteem: analyses from the 1970 British Cohort Study" (2019) with an overall sample size of 7700. In all studies, the tendency for improving the mental health of young people through art activities was recognized.

At the same time, there are countless case studies of small groups that record the experience of the young participants through empirical, qualitative research gained anecdotally through questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups and that overwhelmingly confirm the positive impact of the arts on young people. In addition, there are studies not specifically focused on children and young people which can still be useful in this context (see list above). Collectively, they constitute a huge body of evidence of the changes in well-being.

They also show that, while the arts cannot fix all the problems that affect the mental health of the young, there is a strong case to be made that giving more importance to the arts in children's lives can have a positive effect on their mental health also later on in their life (compare Mak/Fancourt 2019).

If academic research would be ramped up it would not only provide the cultural, health, and social (and economic) sector with robust evidence of the impact of the arts on mental health in general, and in young people in particular but "may also in the longer term take the pressure off arts organisations to constantly evaluate small-scale projects." (Baring Foundation 2020: 60)

Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the specific needs of the young population. These can be different depending on the context of life: level of education, social indicators, marginalised condition, need to prevent or treat mental illness.

The transversal needs, which all these social and cultural differences have in common, can be found in the specificity of the competences of psychic development.

Setting the Scene

Studies indicate that active participation brings greater benefits than cultural visits, e.g., to theatres, concerts, or museums. Contrary to (art) therapy, experimental art interventions do not address symptoms but call upon the resources of the participants. They are mostly led by professional artists who do not address patients or people with a specific health issue but work with co-artists, dancers, actors, singers, etc. (in the making).
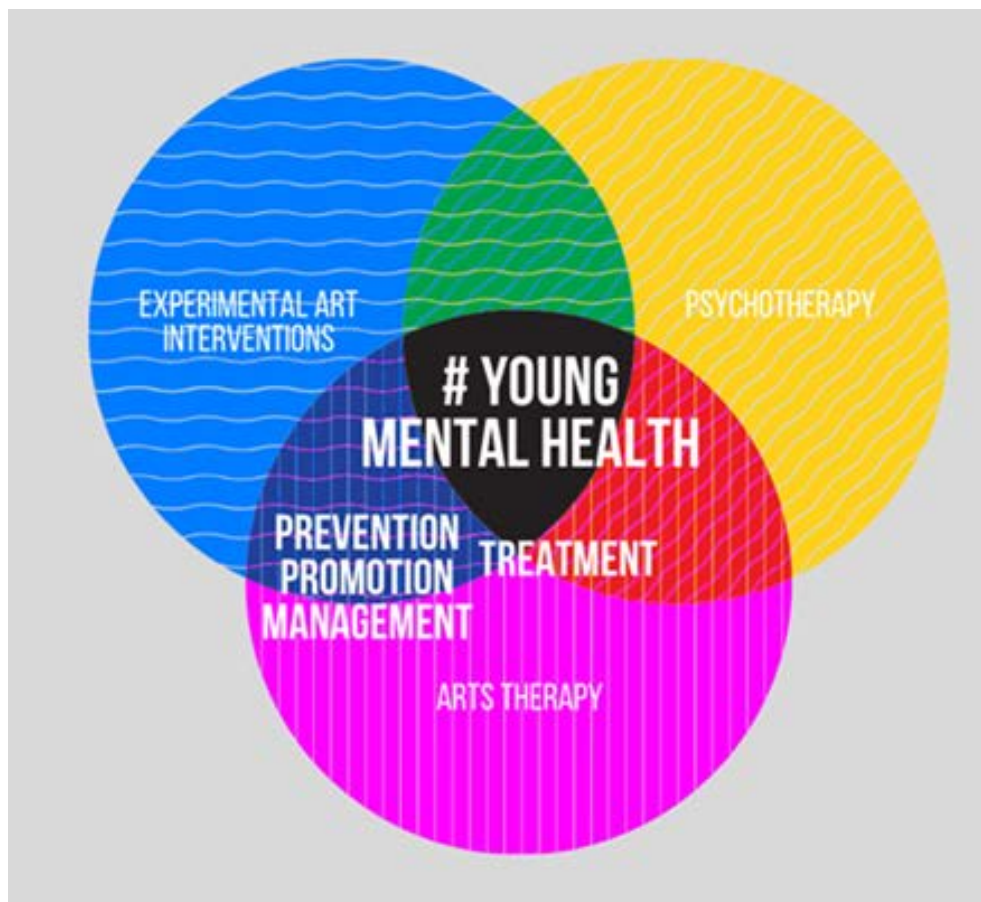
Art interventions in relation to therapy and fields of application ©ewp

Art programs for young people should be especially considered in the areas of health promotion and prevention where they can help to build resilience, gain empowerment, find a sense of purpose and achievement, or make new friends. The arts can contribute to preventing a crisis from becoming pathogenic. Thus, offering arts activities as an act-early intervention can also avert the stigma attached to mental health conditions. Culture can also help raise awareness for mental health issues, contribute to their acceptance, and de-stigmatize them.

Health experts as well as peer groups of people with mental health issues are increasingly advocating for interventions removed from therapy. If developing an initiative for managing a diagnosed mental health condition for young people,

parents and carers should be offered an opportunity to follow the interventions to gain a deeper understanding of the process. "Adults too need to have an opportunity to learn, change and heal alongside children for mental health outcomes to improve, for the cycles of trauma to be broken, and for children and future generations to thrive and flourish." (The Baring Foundation 2020: 61)

The method and management of the interventions need to be context-related. In devising programs for youth, young artists should also be involved in the design. The leading team should represent the participant's group, i.e. in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Supervision and counselling of leading artists are advisable, especially in clinical settings (care for the carers). Arts and health organisations should also provide regular CPD (continuous professional development) for Arts and Health as well as Community Arts interventions.

And finally, information about the role cultural activities can have on mental health needs to be included in the curricula of all those who work with children and young people.

Focus: Mental Health of the Young

As already stated, there is ample evidence that the last two years of the pandemic have severely affected the mental health and well-being needs of young people. An indication prioritise young people's (mental) health is the initiative of WHO: #youth4health.

Also, the cultural sector has been hit hard by closures and financial losses and seems to be responding only gradually to the new challenges young people are facing. At the same time, arts programs for young people that have been running pre-pandemic are resumed and should now be recognized as interventions for mental health. As mentioned before, they may not address specific issues. However, through evaluations of the well-being of the participants, we know about the positive effects on mental health.

The legacy of the crises should be that the arts have the power to improve our well-being and to be a valid tool for prevention as well as for crisis intervention. With the experience of the last few years, arts programs should be devised flexibly to be accessible to a range of target groups.

To overcome the limitations of scientific evidence on the role of art and culture in the mental health of the youth population and to best apply the knowledge available to us on the subject, as described in these pages, projects are needed that can provide for an integration of different disciplines. We could build projects in which the goal is commissioned by the municipalities of the cities (street artworks, concerts, etc.), or, alternatively, different cultural and art agents motivate and inspire young people to get involved in the process. Realisation of cultural and artistic events that give meaning to the study and practice of these disciplines, under the supervision of professionals with specific training, and achieve various benefits: cultural diffusion in the living environment and restitution of a positive and competent social role to the youth population that carries it out. The benefits should be evaluated through research protocols to reinforce the development and dissemination of good practices in this sector.

Consolidation of the self (subjectivation) / of the social self

To achieve a role and a social function, it is necessary to develop the ability to relate and that the ability to relate with others is put at the service of a common and shared goal. If the lens has a positive function in the living environment, the whole population benefits from it. This benefit of the community reflects gratitude and restores experiences of competence and possibility, consolidating the social self of the young person.

This starting point makes it possible to realise the different levels of goals in this population:

- Promoting mental health and well-being

- Preventing mental disorders and illness

- Management of pathologic conditions

- Treatment of mental disorders and illness

- Raising awareness for the recognition of mental disorders and illnesses

Arts and Culture on prescription?

An increasing number of countries are making provisions in their health policy for "Social Prescribing" which includes the arts and cultural activities. This practice acknowledges that health is more than the mere absence of illness, according to the definition of the WHO of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being". This definition roots health firmly within society and culture.

"It emphasises the importance of illness prevention and, consequently, the determinants of health: how health is shaped by the cultural constructs within which it is situated and how it can be promoted at both an individual and a society level … In the decades since 1948 when this definition of health was published, the concept of health has expanded further: Complete health and well-being may not be everyone's goal. For example, the presence of a chronic mental or physical illness is not necessarily a sign of being ill but may be something that can be managed … Management is shaped in part by resilience and whether individuals can adapt with their health… Health is, therefore, a dynamic process that, at its core, is about having the capacity to self-manage." (Fancourt / Finn 2019: 2)

Mental health and well-being are not a single campaign. This is a long, ongoing process and young people's involvement as well as that of their parents is crucial for the positive outcome of it.

When offering arts and cultural activities in the framework of Social Prescribing we should be aware that the term "prescribing" might be counterproductive and look for different wording to appeal to young people.

Policy Recommendations

Cultural / health policy

- Should address the cross-sectoral nature of Arts for Health programs and involve institutions in the field of health and social services to formulate policy guidelines and models for providing financial support.

- Should ensure an offer of creative participative activities are included in school curricula to make sure all young people are reached regardless of their background.

- Should support projects offering free creative activities outside school to make sure that children and youth from families with economic difficulties can also profit from them (see example of the "Kulturrucksack" in Germany).

- Should work with the health and social sector to include arts and culture in "Social Prescribing".

- Should support the cultural sector to conduct academic studies in collaboration with social and/or health professionals.

Cultural organisations

- Should raise awareness of the arts as an essential area not only for improving life quality but also for improving well-being and dealing with crises;

- Should initiate programmes that include and inform parents and carers to ensure that they will understand the need for action and support it.

- Should ensure access to culture to young people especially through creative participation.

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Useful Websites:

- Sport & Cultuur Mix: www.zimihc.nl/specials/sport-en-cultuurmix

- https://www.preventionweb.net/news/engaging-youth-pacific-young-artists-paint-way-covid-19-safety

- Kulturrucksack NRW: www.kulturrucksack.nrw.de/

- https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/events/item/2022/10/25/default-calendar/youth4health---tirana-2022-health-and-well-being-forum-for-youth. Also watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJdb2yYi3-M

- StreetGames on Youth Social Prescribing https://network.streetgames.org/our-work-changing-lives-health/youth-social-prescribing

PS: The following study was published shortly before the editorial deadline of this report. Grasso, Maria, et al (2022): A Treatment Model for Young Adults with Severe Mental Disorders in a Community Mental Health Center: The Crisalide Project and the Potential Space. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192215252.

The article reinforces the evidence that a multidisciplinary approach is indispensable for the treatment of young adults with mental health problems and in conditions of severe social discomfort. Paragraph 2.3 describes a service of Argolab2 Potential Space in Rome in which the treatment is centered on the arts and culture. https://www.argolab2.it/laboratori-argolab2/

CHAPTER 3

Inter-sectoral collaboration to support Youth Mental Health: synergies and innovations

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Key Takeaways

1. Strategies and plans aiming at promoting the mental health and wellbeing of young people need to adopt an integrated, multidimensional, cross-sectoral approach between cultural & creative and health sectors, in addition to all other relevant stakeholders.

2. Integration of youth into the development of all cultural & creative and health-related policies and interventions is crucial to ensure the improvement of their mental health, well-being and social inclusion to assure that they gain the opportunities and resources necessary to have greater participation in the decision making process that affects their lives and access their fundamental rights.

3. Social prescribing is a health promotion primary-care model that encorauges a sustainable cross-sectoral framework and could be used in order to promote young people' mental health and well-being, by fostering the direct collaboration between cultural & creative and health sectors, among others.

4. The institutionalisation of tools like Health Impact Assessment (or more specifically Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment) should be encouraged in the implemention of multisectorial cooperation while promoting inclusion of vulnerable populations (like young people) and focusing on health gains of cultural & creative interventions.

Introduction

Research on the Sustainable Development Goals suggests that complex social problems call for integrated *multi-sectoral* solutions. Following this idea, the EU's youth mental health crisis is considered a complex problem involving multiple sectors and calling for solutions that can operate across those sectors[1]. It is argued that health-focused arts programs have an established record of success in that regard. The analysis of the problem of intersectoral collaboration raised two main recommendations and a set of implementation strategies. The two appendixes offer examples of current EU cultural & creative programs that operate across multiple sectors.

How might cultural collaboration across sectors support youth mental health?

The World Health Organisation has argued that mental health should be seen as a complex continuum, integrated into a broader definition of health.[2] An ecology of factors simultaneously determines mental health, including "...not only individual attributes (...) but also social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors such as national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions, and community social supports'.[3] Given this complex of factors, interventions to support mental health must rely upon collaboration across sectors such as health, social protection, and education among others. It is suggested that culture and creativity should be considered for their strategic ability to operate across such sectors in support of health. The need for interdisciplinary, intersectoral collaboration is further supported by the theories that are redefining healthcare, education, and social support for youth in the 21st century: value-based healthcare, hybrid- and blended learning, and broad prosperity, for example – all suggest the need for intersectoral solutions.

The effectiveness of cultural & creative programmes in promoting health and well-being, prevention and treatments of mental disorders and illness as well as management of related-pathologic conditions is well-documented.[4] Creative arts activities have been used to address youth issues such as trauma, bullying, depression, alienation, and lack of self-esteem. To do this, innovative health-focused arts and culture programmes had to move outside of their traditional theatres and museums, into collaboration with other sectors.[5]

1 European Commission (2022): Stormy Times. Nature and humans: Cultural courage for change. https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-experts-publish-proposals-to-harness-the-power-of-culture-for-sustainable-development
2 WHO (2022): World mental health report: transforming mental health for all. https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/world-mental-health-report.
3 WHO (2021): Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030. Geneva: World Health Organization.https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240031029
4 Fancourt, Daisy & Finn, Saoirse. (2019). What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329834.
5 Appendix B for examples of current EU programmes.

Despite the documented success of such efforts, however, these programmes are frequently experimental, lacking reliable support at the national and local levels. Predominantly, it has been argued that culture and creativity are threaded through the environmental, social, and economic pillars of sustainable development.[6] Yet, the social institutions confine creativity to its traditional ways of operating, and opportunities are lost for reimagining how culture and creativity might contribute to health. Furthermore, the ability of the arts to adapt to other sectors is overlooked.

The following section offers an analysis of the obstacles and opportunities for cultural collaboration across other policy fields to support youth mental health.

Analysis

The complex factors and relationships were investigated in order to define the role of culture and creativity in regard to the influence and support on youth mental health. The goal is to understand the *grades of influence* among the stakeholders, based on their institutional proximity to one another, and their different types of support for youth. This analysis provides insight into the difficulty of intersectoral collaboration and suggests how structural relationships could be reimagined.
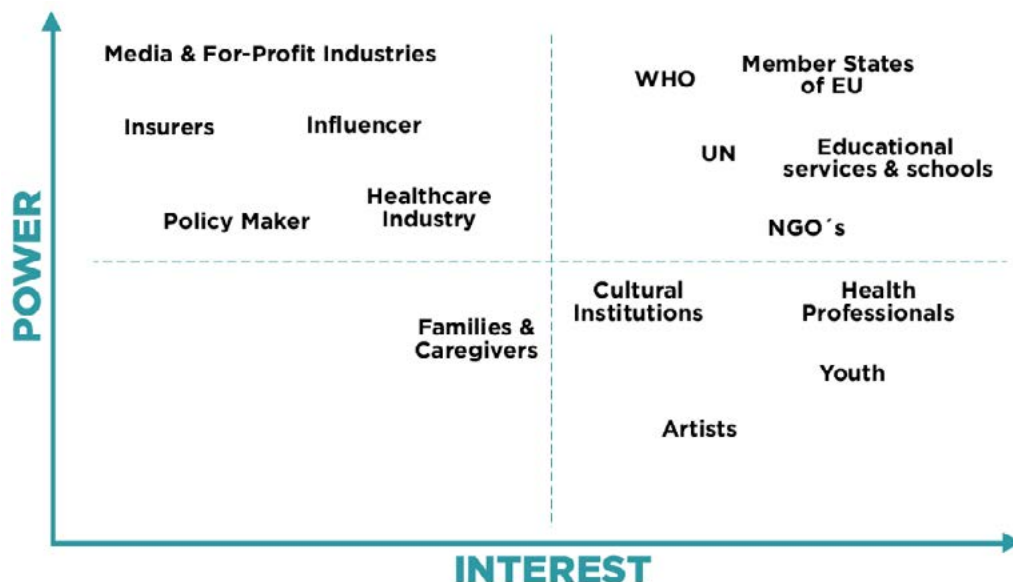
Fig. 1- Dynamics of interest and power among stakeholders

The diagram helps to clarify how stakeholders are distributed according to their grades of power and interest. For example, actors working in the international sphere have high power and interest to improve the mental health of youth, but

6 Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. New York: United Nations; 2015 (General Assembly resolution 70/1; http://www.un.org/ga/search/ view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E).

at the same time, they have to compete with other high-powered actors, such as corporate media or the healthcare industry (e.g. big pharma), who have contrasting interests regarding youth mental health.[7] The youth themselves have less power but high interest, which is also the case for cultural institutions, artists, and health professionals. Families and caregivers can have different interests depending on the situation.

Also, in Figure 1 one can observe how the responsibilities and influence of the various sectors and institutions keep culture and creativity in an isolated sector. Yet, artists have found ways to apply their unique skills in other sectors: engaging audiences; stimulating imagination and reflection; identity- and community-building; making safe spaces to consider difficult subjects; and others. The analysis is followed by an overview of how the institutional relationships could be viewed for their impacts across sectors, in support of youth mental health.
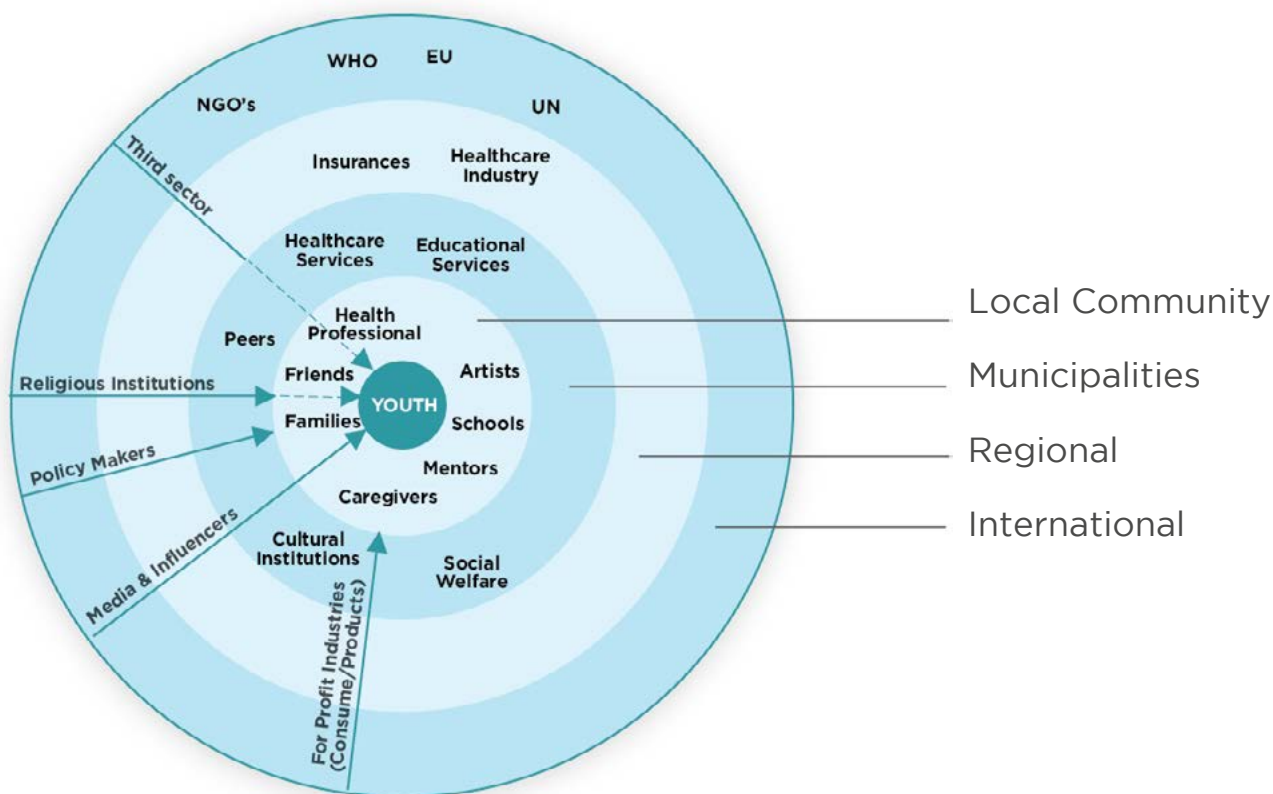
Fig 2. An ecology of sectors and stakeholders

A schematic representation of mental health integration in all policies and for multi-sectoral cooperation is presented in Figure 2.[8] The diagram is an attempt to show such an approach, deploying culture and creativity across multiple levels

7 See, Work Plan for Culture 2019-22, and WHO Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013-2030, and EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027

8 For an international perspective, see Singh OP. Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030: We must rise to the challenge. Indian J Psychiatry. 2021 Sep-Oct;63(5):415-417. doi: 10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry_811_21. Epub 2021 Oct 12. PMID: 34789927; PMCID: PMC8522612. For an EU perspective, see European Commission (2016), EU Framework for Action on Mental Health and Well-being.

of institutions, in support of youth mental health. The need for multi-sectoral collaboration has been further underlined by recent developments at the policy level that set the stage for arts-based interventions in support of youth mental health.[9]

Any innovative framework for integrating culture and creativity across sectors and dimensions of well-being will need to organise stakeholders according to their spheres of influence – local, regional, global. *Local* stakeholders include those who have direct contact with the target group, including caregivers, friends, health professionals, teachers, others. Meanwhile, organisations influencing policy making and resource distribution operate at the *regional* level, and it is here that alliances between cultural and health sectors can be fostered, for instance. Finally, in the outermost ring of the ecology are the *global* networks of institutions that act to promote deeper, more expansive, and consistent change. This diagram shows how certain actors cut across the spheres of influence, for example communication and social media, commercial industries, and others. Those influences across the spheres suggest barriers to collaboration as well as opportunities for collaborative partnerships.

Recommendations

Steps to build a stable and durable collaboration among relevant sectors

Addressing the current crises will require making positive, strategic impacts on the mental health of young people, through integrated multidimensional efforts across sectors such as health, social welfare, education, employment, and justice among others. Culture and creativity programmes are already exploring this way of working, and those efforts could be expanded. Below are two recommendations regarding the development of sustainable collaboration between the cultural & creative sector and other sectors, to foster strategic synergies.

Recommendation 1: Culture and creativity programmes should be deployed to promote *the inclusion and empowerment of youth in policy making regarding its mental health*. This intervention in the current crisis should also lay the groundwork for the future well-being of youth, including not only mental health but also economic, social and physical. Culture and creativity should be integrated into the other dimensions of well-being by which policies, communities and interventions are evaluated.

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9 Health 2020: a European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2013 (EUR/RC62/9; http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/199536/ Health2020-Short.pdf?ua=1). 61

Recommendation 2: Encourage the integration of cultural & creative with health and other relevant sectors, to develop policies and interventions that improve youth health and well-being at the international, regional, and local levels.

Strategies for implementation

This section focuses on two strategies that should be investigated for use in implementation of the recommendations: 1) Social prescribing and 2) Health Impact Assessment. Additionally, a set of eight 'strategic suggestions for further consideration' is provided.

Implementation Framework #1: Investigate social prescribing: Promoting effective and stable cross sectoral collaboration calls for innovative frameworks to promote the mental health of the EU's youth. One promising example of this is *social prescribing*, "an emergent and promising health-care intervention" which is already institutionalised in the UK[10]. Experimental as well as fully implemented programmes are also underway in some EU countries.[11] Social prescribing is consistent with such theories as whole-person healthcare and positive health, in which the healthcare provider considers a patient's illness, but also how they are *well*, and how that wellness might be improved. The provider may 'prescribe' a range of non-clinical services to support well-being, including activities that build social connection, support emotional well-being, and promote expression and creative imagination. If social prescribing would be implemented on a broad level, it means that it should be regulated into the health system. The social prescribing framework is new and programmes have only recently begun to be evaluated. However, if social prescribing initiatives are successful, it could open a new door for cross-sectoral support for culture and creativity to promote youth mental health.

Implementation Framework #2: Expand health impact assessments: *Health Impact Assessment* or other well-being assessment tools (as more specifically *Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment*) are currently used to assess and improve a policy, programme, service or project to ensure it has a maximum equitable impact on people's health and mental well-being.[12] These tools are practical approaches to effectively implement multi-sectoral cooperation, address health inequalities and

10 Costa, A., Sousa, C. J., Seabra, P. R. C., Virgolino, A., Santos, O., Lopes, J., ... & Alarcão, V. (2021). Effectiveness of social Prescribing programmes in the primary health-care context: a systematic literature review. Sustainability, 13(5), 2731. See also the UK government's official description at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-prescribing-applying-all-our-health/social-prescribing-applying-all-our-health.

11 Report on social prescribing https://eurohealthnet.eu/wp-content/uploads/220630_cev_finalreportcountryexchangevisitsocialprescribing.pdf

12 See a practical guide to health impact assessment: https://phwwhocc.co.uk/whiasu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/05/HIA_Tool_Kit_V2_WEB-1.pdf. and a tool kit to Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment: https://healthycampuses.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/MentalWellbeingImpactAssessmentAtoolkitforwellbe-1.pdf

inequities, and help decision-makers and stakeholders to judge the potential health effects of cultural & creative policies, programmes or projects concerning mental health of young people. Properly employed, these assessments take multiple dimensions of well-being into account (physical, social, emotional, practical reasoning, etc.) while ensuring engagement of all sectors involved and the community. The assessment method can be used to assess non-health policies *in terms of health*.

Strategic Suggestions for Further Consideration

- **Model intersectoral collaboration**: Develop a conceptual framework for planning cross-sectoral collaborations, including a common vocabulary.

- **Empower youth**: Use creative programmes to engage youth in developing mental health policy. This should mean real empowerment of youth, not token participation.

- **Expand education**: Encourage the inclusion of culture and creativity in the education of professionals in health, social welfare, education and other relevant fields.

- **Develop training modules** to build capacity for intersectoral collaboration.

- **Implement social prescribing** as a model, and if promising, initiate experimental programmes to build collaborations between health, culture and creativity sectors, among others.

- **Expand health impact indicators** to encourage multi-sectoral cooperation, and evaluate across dimensions of well-being.

- **Initiate and support an international learning community** for deploying culture and creativity in support of youth mental health.

- **Support the design of co-funded programmes** specifically addressing the need of inter-sectoral collaboration in cultural & creative interventions aiming the improvement of mental health in young people.

Appendix A and B offers tables of inter-sectoral cultural interventions in support of youth mental health. These tables also suggest the common inter-sectoral vocabulary that will be required among stakeholders, and the flexibility that will be required of all the partners involved.

Appendix A
Examples of collaboration between cultural & creative and health sectors

PROJECT WEBSITE COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION	SECTOR
The Kaikukortti card https://kaikukortti.fi/en/ Finland	The aim of Kaikukortti is to improve the possibilities that young people, adults and families in tight financial situations can participate in cultural life and engage with the arts. The Kaikukortti card is issued to clients of municipal social welfare and healthcare in more than 20 Finnish cities or regions. The card is for persons of 16 years or older who, due to financial constraints, can't afford entrance tickets or adult education courses. The cardholder can obtain free tickets and places in courses among all the cultural services in the national Kaikukortti network. Cardholders can also obtain free event tickets for their children.	Social welfare and Health Sectors
Puppet Portal Project https://helium.ie/learning-bank/healthcare-professionals/puppet-portal-project-independent-evaluation-by-spiralorchard/ Ireland	The Irish children's arts and health charity Helium Arts attempts to transform the healthcare experience of children and teenagers through art, imagination and play. Children in seven hospitals across Ireland, sharing their stories with professional artists, creating puppets, and performing their stories. The project is a response to the isolation that hospitalised children can feel, by connecting them to a wider community in a shared creative conversation.	Cultural & Creative and Health Sectors
Join in & Make a Change https://www.joininandmakeachange.com/copy-of-publikacije Slovenia, Czech Republic, Greece, Poland	This international project was a collaboration between partners from the arts and education sectors in four EU countries. Working in the community and in classrooms, the project used theatre techniques and dramatic forms to promote inclusion and mental health and build resilience among students.	Education, cultural & creative Sectors
Museums and well-being- Culture Prescribing https://museus.ulisboa.pt/pt-pt/museus-e-bem-estar-prescricao-cultural Portugal	This project is a collaboration between the National Museum of Natural History and Science, the University of Lisbon, and several institutions from the health and social services sectors. The project prepares the museum and botanical gardens as spaces for cultural prescribing, focusing particularly on the well-being of university students, seniors and the museum's neighbouring communities. Doctors, social workers and psychologists will be able to include interaction with the heritage and collections of museums and botanical gardens to support the health of their patients. Universities also offer cultural prescribing through their student support units.	Health, Social, Education and culture & creative sectors

PROJECT WEBSITE COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION	SECTOR
Orquestra Geração/ *El Sistema Portugal* *https://orquestra.geracao.aml.pt/project* *Portugal*	*In 1975, El Sistema Venezuela was a music education programme to promote social change and justice in support of the well-being of children living in poverty. Over 700.000 children have taken part from 420 local communities and the programme has spread globally including to 127 locations across Europe, including Portugal. El Sistema Venezuela, provides orchestral and vocal ensemble musical training for young people, emphasising those from low economic backgrounds.*	*Cultural & creative, Health, Education and Social Sectors*
Social Prescribing-Portugal *https://www.ensp.unl.pt/socialprescribingportugal/* *https://eurohealthnet-magazine.eu/changing-lives-through-social-prescribing-a-personal-reflection/* *Portugal*	*Social Prescribing is an intervention that connects users of primary health care with existing support resources in the community, including the cultural & creative sector. It seeks to maximise responses to the social, emotional and practical needs of users, helping them to find solutions that contribute to improving their health and well-being, but also optimising the use of the health services. In Portugal, Social Prescribing began in 2018, in Lisbon, with the implementation of a pilot project in two Health Family Units. Users of all age groups are more than half female (62%) while 42% are migrants, of more than 17 nationalities. The main reasons for referral are social isolation, access to social benefits, physical inactivity, social integration of migrants, mental health and functional dependence. Responses to users' needs were promoted through 24 partners, namely through several cultural & creative activities.*	*Cultural & creative, Health, and Social Sectors*
BERDE *https://berde.org/projects.html* *Spain*	*BERDE is an art and social transformation project created in Austria, Spain and formed by a team of professionals from different backgrounds, whose mission is to create a space where people with intellectual diversity or those battling with mental health disorders are encouraged and supported to explore their artistic expression. BERDE is a non-profit organisation that celebrates creativity and diversity. The methodology consists in organising workshops (in public spaces, such as the Botanical Garden, museums or a place in the city) providing the space, guidance and support for artistic expression. Each one is carefully designed to fit the specific needs of both the individual participants and the group.* *The aims or this project are:* *- Facilitate experimentation in an open, collaborative and generous working environment.* *- Offer people with intellectual diversity or mental health disorders the opportunity to participate in art activities.* *- Partner with key members of social, educational and health communities to share our methodology and learnings.* *- Collaborate and actively participate in promoting changes in public policies with regards to intellectual diversity and those suffering from mental health disorders.* *- Stimulate new languages and formats as a process of research and create enriched dialogue with other artists.* *- Create spaces and encourage relationships that will promote other visions.* *- Replicate and share the project by opening new networks and relationships to encourage innovative actions.* *- Enrich culture and creativity by showing diverse artistic languages to new audiences.*	*Cultural & Creative and Health Sectors*

PROJECT WEBSITE COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION	SECTOR
"Naticon la cultura": the Italian Cultural Passport for newborn and their families *http://www.naticonlacultura.it/passaporto-culturale/* *Italy*	*The Sant'Anna Obstetric Gynaecological Hospital, one of the larger and oldest gynaecological hospitals in Europe, launched "Nati con La cultura" (Born with culture) in 2014, in collaboration with museums and other cultural institutions. Since then for every new born, doctors deliver the families a Cultural Passport, recommending cultural participation as a resource for good bio-psycho-social growth. The passport allows the baby with two adults to freely visit museums and cultural institutions up to the age of 1 year.*	*Cultural & Creative and Health Sectors*
Culture Vitamins for Youth *https://www.kommunikation.aau.dk/forskning/forskningsklynger/ahh/forskning/kulturvitaminer-for-unge* *Denmark*	*This project uses cultural activities to support the mental health of young people who are at risk of not getting an education. The collaboration with Aalborg University is about qualitatively investigating the importance of the effort for the citizens' mental health, with a particular focus on participants being co-creators in most activities and identity building among the young people.*	*Cultural & creative, Health and Education Sectors*
Reflective citizens in Novi Sad - *an initiative for new bridges among us - Traces of Reflection* *https://grupnaanaliza.org.rs/en/reflective-citizens-in-novi-sad-traces-of-reflection* *Serbia*	*Since 2014 this project has brought together mental health and arts and cultural 'reflective' practices such as visual art, dance, walking, and health, to promote mental health resilience in 'reflective citizens', including children.*	*Health and Culture & Creative Sectors*
RED NOSES Clowndoctors International *RED NOSES International:* *www.rednoses.eu* *Creative Europe project:* *www.clownexus.eu* *European healthcare clown network: www.efhco.eu/* *Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Jordan, Palestine, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia*	*RED NOSES Clowndoctors is an international organisation bringing humour and laughter to people in need of joy through the art of clowning. RED NOSES International consists of local organisations in 11 countries.* *The professionally trained artists of RED NOSES interact through a range of tailored artistic formats with children in hospitals, senior citizens, children with disabilities as well as refugees. Specifically developed Humor Workshops for medical, care and humanitarian aid professionals contribute to bringing a sustainable change to care and crisis settings.* *RED NOSES Research Database showcases the vast scientific research on the impact of healthcare clowning: https://research.rednoses.eu/* *This recent study is examining the effect of clowning on young people in psychiatric care: https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0264012*	*Cultural & creative, Health and Humanitarian Aid sectors*
MinD Mad in Design workshops *www.madindesign.com*	*Since 2014, every year MinD has been holding its main workshop in Turin, welcoming for a week around 50 students from all over Italy, with a background in different fields of study: Architecture, Design, Psychology, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Techniques, Anthropology, and Educational Sciences. Alongside the students there are young adults supported by Mental Health Services - whose interests and resources lie in the creativity field and who have an attitude towards team work -, educators and public health professionals.* *Thanks to the collaboration between Universities, Creative and Health Sectors, MinD workshop experiments on collaborative and participatory approaches through co-design activities to fight prejudice and promote alternative and innovative rehabilitation strategies.*	*Education, Mental Health, Culture and Creativity*

Appendix B
Some examples of promising collaborations between sectors

(based on personal experience of Voices of Culture participants)

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	SECTORS
European Union https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/library/library-blog/posts/celebrating-30-years-of-the-erasmus-programmememe/ https://www.etnmagazine.eu/erasmus/why-is-it-called-erasmus-not-only-after-erasmus-of-rotterdam/	*The Erasmus programme was launched in 1987 and since then it has provided European students with the opportunity to experience student life in one of the 33 programme countries. The programme fosters learning and understanding of the host country, and the Erasmus experience is considered both a time for learning as well as a chance to socialise and experience a different culture. In fact, it became a custom for the youth to complete their education by completing the Grand Tour, a long journey in continental Europe during which they committed themselves to learning about politics, culture and art of the major cultural capitals of the enriched continent.*	*Education, Cultural, Sectors*
The Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/scholarships/erasmus-mundus-catalogue_en *European Union*	*Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters are delivered by multiple higher education institutions and run across various countries. They are distinguished by their academic excellence and by their high level of integration. Students at master's level from all over the world can apply.* *Therefore, it made the Erasmus into a grandeur experience for not only the European students but also for the rest of the world.*	*Education, Cultural & creative Sectors*
PRIME Minister School of Politics for young women https://www.primeminister.it/en/home-english/ *Italy*	*A project launched by FARM Cultural Park, with the aim that every young woman in Italy can become aware of their potential, and become an agent of change in their schools, communities, city and nation. The students live and experience of empowerment, which consists in the strengthening of their transversal skills and competences, and the creation of one community ready to support them.* *On 14 February 2019, the establishment of the School was publicly announced at the Italian Parliament in a press conference. This was followed by the launch of the first edition in Favara (AG), Sicily, at the headquarters of Farm Cultural Park.* *One year later, the School inaugurated its second edition in Naples, and then in Turin and other Italian cities (13 overall).*	*Education, Cultural & creative Sectors*

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	SECTORS
Puppetry Global https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeD7ar3Erxs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8fG8xEmad8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Amal https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3phm8LAuk1U https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9qArXnjgbw	**Olifantland - South Africa** *By Handspring Puppet Company, Barridale, Emotional, corporal and intellectual approach to communal themes through participating in puppet building, performing and viewing. People shall believe in their own creativity and healing.* **Mohawk Puppet Show - Canada** *Language learning and cultural identification* *Teaching kids the Mohawk language with puppets via a towns channel video.* **Little Amal in New York - South Africa/**Great Britain *A twelve-foot-tall puppet is making its way through the city to teach about child refugees.* *As a puppetry educator, Sterling has similarly worked over the past several decades to use puppets to help people understand social issues with storytelling.* **Sandmännchen auf Sorbisch - Germany** *Language learning and cultural identification for Sorbian minority. Popular German Children's TV programme* **Der Schwarze Hund (The black dog) - Germany** *A taming with masks, puppets, objects by Julia Raab and Anja Schwede, Halle/S., Germany.* *Puppet theatre offers special possibilities where words cannot be pursued. Animated material and objects create a lively imagination and spark emotions. A safe space of rich experiences enables empathy and understanding, fighting stigma of mental illness.*	*Education, Cultural & creative Sectors*

CHAPTER 4

Examples of interventions with robust evidence of successful outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged young people. Impact assessment strategies and tools

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Key Takeaways

1. Assuming that culture and art activities can help in overcoming the stigma around mental health and can be tools of social transformation, a holistic and systemic approach capable of creating connections between social, educational, cultural and health worlds is paramount to overcome the idea of art as an ornament and avoid the reduction of its role exclusively to art therapy practices.

2. Culture-based projects addressing the specific issue of mental health for young people should be co-designed by experts from different fields (sociology, health, anthropology, culture, art); tested and validated in relation to different contexts and different typologies of art forms and ways of participation; and implemented mixing different approaches.

3. In the design of these pilot actions, evaluation needs to be seen as a process fully integrated into the project, from inception to conclusion, and requires a multidisciplinary approach integrating different perspectives (health, psychology, sociology, anthropology, culture, social).

4. It is paramount the need to enable spaces for further research to experiment new approaches and methodologies and validate mixed tools.

Introduction

Regardless of their different backgrounds and experiences, the participants in the Voices of Culture brainstorming session share the following assumptions:

- Culture can be a tool or an entry door to fighting taboos and stigmatisation.

- Assuming the positive correlation between arts-related cultural activities and well-being (Fancourt & Finn, 2019), it would be interesting to extract and identify the specificities related to the different formats of cultural activities (music, circus, dance, visual arts...) and the typology of involvement (both receptive and active).

- Culture can be a tool of social transformation to address the issue of health, but it is essential to create a common ground for encounter and equal comparison between those who act in different professional contexts, laying the foundations for sharing a language and a common narrative

- A holistic and systemic approach capable of creating connections between the social, educational, cultural and health worlds is paramount to overcome the idea of art as an ornament and avoid the reduction of its role exclusively to art therapy practices

- It is fundamental to nourish and share a culture of evaluation because it endows to understand the actual impact of cultural activities

- Detecting, describing, and communicating the effects generated by cultural involvement is functional to sensitise policymakers and to find pathways for joint work

- Embracing a holistic approach capable of creating authentic debate also means enabling, in a democratic approach, the necessary co-presence of different professionals who can all jointly contribute to the success of projects and activities, overcoming hierarchies and legitimising different roles and competencies as value-adding contributors. Assuming the need for an integrated approach doesn't imply a de-empowerment of the artists as a greater assumption of responsibility with reference to their specific skills and possibilities.

Starting from this common ground new questions were raised:

What are the best practices in our domain of intervention? 2. What defines them as best practices? 3. What makes a project sustainable? 4. What are the challenges that organisations operating in this sector must face? 5. What are their success

criteria? 6. How to measure the impact of such interventions? 7. Why is this important?

The following sections summarise the outcomes of the discussion around these topics.

This report is divided into 3 distinct but strongly connected sections:

i. Evidence of successful outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged young people;
ii. Needs, challenges, and success factors;
iii. Impact assessment strategies and tools

Evidence of successful outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged young people

To answer the first three questions, we referred to some culture-based projects addressing the specific issue of mental health for young people. The projects were selected based on what emerged as a key success criterion, namely the project's ability to combine significant impact with sustainable effort - as described in the "means of sustainability" and "scale of outreach" sections of each project's record.

The mechanisms enabling this virtuous combination include:

- Replicability (Academy for Actors of Social/Civil Change)

- Adaptability to different targets and contexts (Academy for Actors of Social/Civil Change, Robo&Bobo)

- Reuse of outcomes, materials, methods of previous editions (Cantania, El sistema)

- Participatory approach to engage participants and turn them into advocates (Cantania, Quacky)

- Ability to spread and propagate the effects/benefits of the intervention beyond its initial outreach, e.g., through materials like toolkits (EMPOWERmental) that can be used after the end of the intervention, by creating communities of practice (EMPOWERmental) or even "social movements" (El Sistema), or by transmitting skills and abilities to teachers, trainers and educators (Cantania, Academy for Actors of Social/Civil Change)

- Visibility of the project beyond its specific context (Cantania, Quacky, Robo&-Bobo, CSÁO)

The description of the 7 projects is presented in the Appendix.

Needs, challenges, and success factors

In this section, we analyse the conditions to deploy a successful intervention. In the following table we synthesised the needs, the success factors, and the challenges to take into account in the before-during and after of the project, thus addressing questions 4 and 5.

	NEEDS	SUCCESS FACTORS	CHALLENGES
BEFORE	*Recognition of the role of art and creativity - Legitimisation*	*Moving from STEM to STEAM (Putting the focus on arts in schools)*	*Engagement of Educational System + making cultural participation a requirement of Educational System*
	Funding opportunities for: *i) local and easy-to-access community-based youth projects* *ii) large scale interdisciplinary multi-stakeholders cooperation projects*		*Finding opportunities for co-designing with youth* *Availability for small scale/local projects*
	Creation of official network based on reciprocal understanding and cross-sectoral sharing of knowledge	*Setting an agenda in existing structures and organisations*	*Availability and visibility of knowledge and networks*
	Dedicated training for professionals		*Engagement of Social System and Health System*
	Longitudinal panel for every country with items related to cultural/creative participation activities and subjective well-being		*Fostering dialogue with civil society organisations*
	Listening to and including stakeholders' point of view identifying and answering their real needs		*Outreach*

DURING

NEEDS	SUCCESS FACTORS	CHALLENGES
	Regular long-term activities and fundings	Lack of knowledge and experience in impact evaluation
Value experimentally and bottom-up practices	Allowing medium term evaluation to assess success and allow failures	Develop a common approach for engaging youth
Ongoing sharing of evidence and insights	Sharing the challenges and solutions (peer learning)	Develop new professionality combing arts and social competencies
Implement Randomised Controlled Trial	Truly interdisciplinary approach	Train health professionals in arts
	Mixed pool of experts	
	Inclusive approach (ability to involve different typologies of participants)	
	Resources for self-development	
	Resources for safeguard practitioners mental balance	
	Good communication and PR	
	Capacity for organising and moderating the stakeholders	

AFTER

NEEDS	SUCCESS FACTORS	CHALLENGES
User friendly report process	Replicability + Scalability	Platform to show artistic work
	Endorsement of EU Networks	Shared feedbacks approach
	Supporting dissemination	

Impact assessment strategies and tools

We focused on the last 2 questions, by outlining an impact evaluation framework that addresses the needs and challenges that emerged in the previous section.

Bordering the playing field: what is an impact?

The term *impact* has many different uses; it can be applied to different disciplinary fields (environmental, economic, social, and cultural). Moreover, it is possible to distinguish between negative and positive, direct, and indirect, voluntary, and involuntary impacts. Other factors can influence the choice of one impact assessment approach over another, namely: available time, economic resources at disposal and evaluation-related goals, values and priorities, competencies, and internal sustainability.

Regarding the impact as *the portion of the total outcome that has occurred as a direct result of the intervention, as opposed to the portion that would have anyway occurred also without the intervention* implies the necessity to adopt counterfactual methods to effectively assess the impact and be able to recognise the *deadweight* (the portion of the impact that would have occurred anyway, without the intervention), ensure the *attribution* (the portion of impact actually caused by the intervention considered and not by other factors) and the *measurability.*

However, counterfactual methods are often out of reach for most of the organisations and projects within which they are involved, for several reasons but mainly: economic - the budget allocated to the evaluation generally is insufficient to support the expenses related to impact analysis and the costs for engaging experts with appropriate skills - and also temporal, because the impact is generally more visible longer term (10 years or more) and this extends beyond the timeframe of most partnership projects, including EU projects.

Many people continue to require or talk about impact evaluation when this is not possible if understood in a scientific way. Evaluating and measuring the short and medium-term outcomes is more common and this is the meaning we are assuming here.

Methodological ground

Impact evaluation:

1. cannot be seen as an activity separate from the project activities or temporally detached from it (generally coming at the end). Rather, it is a process fully integrated into the project, from inception to conclusion. Although this approach expresses its full potential when applied from the earliest conceptual and design stage of the project, it can be also applied for end-of-project evaluation purposes;

2. if adopted as early as possible, it can support a more effective and clear setup of the internal logic of the project activities. It naturally prompts a checking of assumptions and beliefs that motivate the activities, and that sometimes might inadvertently contribute to failure. Therefore, this approach enriches the traditional planning tools;

3. requires adopting a multidisciplinary approach and tools;

4. needs TIME, which means it requires to adopt a longitudinal approach;

5. needs to be SUSTAINABLE and related to the dimension of the project and its scope;

6. needs a proper time to disseminate the evidence collected.

Strategies and tools

It is imperative to keep in mind that cultural and art interventions and projects in this area involve multiple beneficiaries - there is mutual learning and reciprocity between the teacher and the student, the professional and the young person, between the organisation and the employees, between organisers and participants, as well as the local, national, and international level. Starting from these premises, the group worked to identify strategies and tools, i.e., to set those enabling conditions functional to explain the complexity of the value that cultural and arts interventions can generate with reference to the theme of young people's psychological well-being.

Enabling Conditions

1. Advocate around the fact that art and culture are creative endeavours, rather than therapy in and of itself. This means: i) avoid instrumental approach; ii) avoid demanding and pressure on the artists iii) leave space for the unpredictable and unexpected; iv) be aware there is a specific attribution of role and task in the development of artistic practices; v) trust the artist and the process; vi) be aware the project takes into account the proper condition in which the artists can operate. This means creating awareness of the role of culture and arts in improving mental health and well-being on individual and community level.

2. Setting a shared and common frame for the evaluation. That means:

A. working towards the identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that are not only quantitative but also qualitative. That implies clearing restitution modes that are not only numerical, but that legitimise streamlined and comprehensible narrative modalities

B. enabling a multidisciplinary approach integrating different perspectives (health, psychology, sociology, anthropology, culture, social)

C. KPIs should be specific but also adaptable to different contexts, that means they should be Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bounded (SMART)

D. KPIs should be i) scalable, ii) applicable in relation to the dimension of the project/program/activities and according with the iii) nature of the subject (principle of the sustainability of the evaluation).

3. Setting-up a 'platform' or 'web space' storing:

A. KPIs with an explanatory description and tools required to i) collect and ii) give value to the effects generated by these activities

B. Case studies (best and worst practices can be useful) able to give a clear picture of the different 'impact' generated by i) different practices (from receptive to active); ii) different mode of participating (individually or in group or mixed modes); iii) different locations and settings (health spaces, open air spaces, heritage,…) iv) type of artistic and cultural interventions (music, theatre, dance, circus, museums visits, video art,…)

C. Tools applicable according with the nature of the indicator and the type of artistic/cultural intervention

D. Data and stats allowing comparative analysis.

3. **One size does not fit all:** i) Different methodologies can coexist; ii) there is not the right tool for all; iii) the right tools are set according with the BENEFICIARIES and the ARTIST; iv) be aware the process can be based on the principles of TOGETHERNESS and RECIPROCITY.

The above underlines the need to enable **spaces for further research** to i) experiment new approaches and methodologies and ii) validate the tools proposed.

Starting from the recognition that cultural, health and social interventions are complementary activities to address mental health and well-being, these spaces should be based on ii) trust, reciprocal understanding (sharing a common language); ii) recognition and legitimisation of competences of the role that culture and arts can have in supporting mental health for youth; iii) constant exchange and proximity which require TIME.

How to move to achieve a common operative frame

Evidence from the research could help in creating awareness and advocating for legitimisation of art practices in the same footstep as medicine and psychology Research and pilot projects should start from the statements that i) culture and art activities can help in overcoming the stigma around mental health as a specific illness to achieve a broader understanding of mental health; ii) cultural activities can be complementary to traditional health treatments.

These pilot projects/activities should be: i) co-designed with experts from different fields (sociology, health, anthropology, culture, art) ii) tested and validated in relation to different contexts and different typologies of art form and way of participation iii) implemented mixing different approaches. It is also important to acknowledge that there is a need to equip the project staff with specific competencies and knowledge to relate in different contexts and with people coming from different fields.

In the design of these pilot actions, one should bear in mind that evaluation: i) needs to be embedded at the very beginning of the process and cannot come at the end, it is an integral part of the project design; ii) can be helpful in defining the common ambitions and in 'making them comprehensible' to different stakeholders; iii) can be helpful during the design of the process in creating a connection and

a ground of negotiation between beneficiaries and stakeholders; iv) can help in shifting perspective from what they do to the change aim for.

This approach can enable a ground to critically navigate the main evaluation approaches, being able to choose (and hack) the most appropriate, according to the ambitions, the context, and the stakeholders involved.

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Appendix: Description of Projects

Academy for Actors of Social/Civil Change

Short description of the project	*A training for trainers targeting social and youth workers working with vulnerable communities in 8 different countries, already using or open to use artistic methodologies of social theatre and such*
Length or frequency	*2 weeks every summer for 6 years (2017-2022) - still going on*
Means of sustainability	*1: a programme that happens every year with largely the same facilitator experts but different participants* *2: same structure but evolving from year to year based on the needs of participants (all experts are working with the target group of the project (social and youth workers, pedagogues, people working with vulnerable communities) and with similar target groups as those of the participants (underprivileged young people, vulnerable communities), so they have an overview on the current needs to be addressed* *3: practical knowledge and space for mentoring and practice in a safe environment, empowering participants to understand they can use the tools they learn* *4: creating a network for peers to be able to support each other after the project* *5: targeting experts working in the field in favour of a wider outreach*
People or roles included	*project manager, artistic director, expert facilitators*
Target group	*social and youth workers, socially engaged artists, pedagogues > people working with vulnerable, underprivileged communities and youth*
Scale of outreach	*participants of the project (social and youth workers from 8 different countries), but also their various and diverse target groups they work with on a regular basis in their respective countries (orphans, children of segregated neighbourhoods, minorities)*
The possible way of impact evaluation	*quality assessment, perception of participants, measuring impact with their target groups before and after the project, long-term evaluation (how?), quantitative assessment: how many people working with how many (and how many kinds of) target groups*

CATANIA

Short description of the project	*Cantania is a participatory vocal project for children from the 4th to the 6th grade of primary school in Brussels education. The objective is to anchor singing in the classroom for a long time and to encourage children to sing beyond the project. Singing stimulates self-esteem, respect for others and improves the feeling of cohesion among the children.*
	Four days of workshops throughout the year gives the teacher the tools to sing with their class. They then teach the students a cantata written especially for children, both in terms of themes and textual and musical content. The songs that make up the cantata are in French and Dutch, which gives the project an extra richness.
	At the end of the school year, a big performance takes place in Bozar. Parents, family and friends come to hear the young choristers accompanied by the Belgian National Orchestra.
Length or frecuency	*The Cantania project has been organised for more than 25 years by the Spanish Music Institute l'Auditori. In Belgium it's repeated every school year since 2014.*
Means of sustainability	*The project is implemented in the school system. The teachers are asked to commit for an entire school year before they inscribe. The formations and workshops are given only to the teachers and not to the students. Original compositions are created but previous creations are recycled as well. This reduces costs and allows the teachers and students to see what has been done in the past. They try to work with the same people: the pianist, the conductor, the mise en scène, the pedagogic responsible to ensure the artistic quality and to provide the training to new collaborators. The same teachers are allowed to participate again and are encouraged to include their colleagues and school boards*
People or roles included	*Engie Foundation-the sponsor*
	Bozar - The management of the project - 2 project managers and a production officer
	Belgian National Orchestra - Co-production
	Teachers who inscribe to the project with their classes
	A pedagogic responsible - the organisation and the content of the workshops
Target group	*Students from 4th to 6th grade selected mostly from schools with a lower socio-economic background*
Scale of outreach	*400 kids per project / The teachers who get involved / The parents / Artists and collaborators / Stakeholders / Associations working with youth*
The possible way of impact evaluation	*The number of people present in the hall during the day of the performance / Evaluation meeting with the teachers / A research paper to assess the impact of the project on the kids / Social media interactions*

EMPOWERmental

Short description of the project	EMPOWERmental aims to improve the mental well-being of teams and individuals working together by integrating tools from art-based methods. In our workshop we discover and learn creative practices from the fields of movement, theatre and yoga. These tools are bringing powerful new routines and rituals and can be easily integrated into daily life, and their regular practice on a longer term can have impelling positive effects on your mental and physical health
Length or frecuency	a workshop of 2-3 hours (in presence/online)
Means of sustainability	1: provide practical knowledge of the practices and routines developed to show people the bodily sensations and correct use / 2: include a part in the workshop when participants are planning where to include the practices they like into their daily routines / 3: provide a toolkit with pictures, facts and descriptions for that they can use what they have learned even if they forget / 4: online version
People or roles included	2 facilitators
Target group	secondary school classes (14-18), employees of smaller and larger workplaces, teacher work groups of young people (individuals and groups and both welcome)
Scale of outreach	participants of the workshop, in case of employees also the people they live and work with daily (if they include the practices in their daily routine)
The possible way of impact evaluation	qualitative: stress level and level of mental balance measured with well-being map used at the beginning and end of the workshop, effectivity and satisfaction level of a class or group of employees, quantitative: how many people use the tools, frequency etc.

Robo&Bobo

Short description of the project	*Robo&Bobo is an innovative workshop education programme designed to turn the negative experience of illness into an opportunity to bring young people (11-18 years old) undergoing cancer and neuropsychiatric treatment closer to creative disciplines and new technologies*
Length or frecuency	6 years
Means of sustainability	*Replicability (workshops can be replicated in different contexts); inclusiveness (they are designed to be adapted to different targets*
People of roles included	*Artist/designer, curator, workshop designer, workshop facilitator/s, researcher (user experience & participatory design expert) + collaboration with hospital stakeholders*
Target group	*(Pre) adolescent: 11-18 years old*
Scale of outreach	*Kids (main beneficiaries), care givers, hospital staff & ecosystem, wider public (Through exhibitions, publications, etc.)*
The possible way of impact evaluation	*number of participants, percentage of participation, percentage of completion. Hard to evaluate the impact on the ecosystem*

Quacky (Queer Arts Group)

Short description of the project	*Kite Trust (LGBTQ+ organisation) and Acting Now (theatre company) created three different plays ("Why it's me,""Just a little longer", "what you do not see") using personal stories from LGBTQ+ young people.* *Strength. Courage. Truth. Wondrous things happen when we learn to love what makes us different.* *Through a collection of stories, young people learned how to keep strong as a community and to smile even when we cry. We're done with waiting. It's our moment; it's our escape, it's our hope. All we want is just a little longer.*
Length or frecuency	*18 months 2 hours a week*
Means of sustainability	*By performing a quality performance, young people improved their well-being by feeling proud of themselves and giving meaning to their life. Some feedback from the audience: "It was very inspiring. The project gives this platform to the kids to understand themselves and help the audience understand their stories and even their own past experiences. Very relatable. I wished that more people had seen it!" / "Moving, uplifting and just a little saddening that I never had this kind of opportunity growing up." / "Moving, thought-provoking, funny and sad! Keep on doing it!" / "Impressive. Very real and respectful performance!" / "I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the play and the style of the actors. The rainbow flag was amazing!" / "Thought provoking, honoured to glimpse inside the lives of these young people."*
People of roles included	*Artistic roles (artistic director, assistant, light and music designer) project manager from LGBTQ+ organisation*
Target group	*LGBTQ+ young people from 12 to 18 years old*
Scale of outreach	*30 participants, 3 different performances, played 6 times, reaching 300 people in the audience.*
The possible way of impact evaluation	*Feedback from the audience*

CSÁO!

Short description of the project	CSÁO! is a drama in education association working with vulnerable youth living in temporary homes with or without their families with limited opportunities and a tormented background. We provide them drama and theatre-based workshops co-creating an alternative reality in which they can play, experiment and try themselves out in different roles and responsibilities in a safe and supportive environment.
Length or frecuency	Generally a 6-12 month process with regular (weekly) activities of 1,5-3 hours, but usually working with the same group of youngsters for several years
Means of sustainability	Regularity, a project lasting for a longer term, consistent methodology, working closely with the social workers supporting the youngsters
People of roles included	3 facilitators, 1 project manager maintaining contact with the social worker, 1 mental health expert supporting the process
Target group	vulnerable young people (10-18) living in temporary homes
Scale of outreach	Participants of the project, their families and smaller environment, audience of the institution supporting the project (in the end of each cycle we create some sort of an output, a short movie, video, rap, created by the children, that is shared on social media platforms and movie festivals) wider visibility in the community raising awareness
The possible way of impact evaluation	qualitative, quantitative (how many participants, how many people reached)

EL SISTEMA

Short description of the project	El Sistema is a social action music programme that was founded in Venezuela in 1975 by Maestro José Antonio Abreu. The programme in Venezuela offers musical ensemble participation from an early age according to a set of clear principles, which focus on intensive and joyful music making as a vehicle for social development. El Sistema particularly looks to offer opportunities for the disadvantaged and is based in local nucleo centres, and is thus a manifestation of, and rooted in, each local community.
Length or frecuency	Since 1975. The project is ongoing
Means of sustainability	It's a project that is ongoing for 47 years now. Teaching sessions in Venezuela take place in the community nucleon three to four hours a day, six days a week. The students and teachers commit for the entire program. It's a program run by Venezuela's ministry of culture. El Sistema is based in local nucleon centres and rooted in each local community. The implication of every nucleo makes it a social movement, thus creating a long term sustainable project.
People of roles included	The students / The teachers / The Ministry of Culture of Venezuela and sponsors / People who donate music instruments / Nucleon (community centres) / The administrators
Target group	Students from an early age to young adulthood especially from impoverished communities.
Scale of outreach	By 2015, according to official figures, El Sistema included more than 400 music centres and 700,000 young musicians / The parents / The community centres / Youth organisations / The Venezuela government / Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra touring internationally and making the project visible all over the world.
The possible way of impact evaluation	Impact analysis studies / The project became international and "El Sistema" is recognized as a method.

Youth, Mental Health and Culture
BRAINSTORMING REPORT

CHAPTER 5
Conditions for success

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Key Takeaways

Factors that support success for Youth Mental Health Projects are:

• **Youth Participation, Co-production and co-creation method that ensures youth participation, equal access and inclusion of all.**

• **Cross Sectoral, Interdisciplinary stakeholder collaborations which include Cultural and Creative Professionals with long term visions.**

Introduction

Cultural and creative engagement provides an additional means of communication and a viable safe space for young people to explore their own mental health. The Creative and Cultural sectors have the capacity to *promote* positive mental health and explore ways to *prevent* mental health conditions. Creativity and culture have their place in the management and treatment methods of mental health challenges in the appropriate circumstances.

An organic **ecosystem** of creativity and culture exists across Europe. However, it **needs structural support and evidence-informed organization** to harness its potential to benefit youth mental health.

Factors that contribute to success must be considered so that any interventions or recommendations are both **scalable and transferable across Europe**. More importantly, they **must be co-created, co-designed, and informed by the voice of the young persons**.

Figure 1. The New Economic Foundation participation ladder 1998[13]

Creativity, Culture, and cooperation across sectors can support improved mental health outcomes and can be integrated with European Policy in relation to Youth Mental Health.

The **European Youth Goals 2021-2027** "*reflect the views of European Youth and represent the vision of those active in the EU youth dialogue*" (European Commission, 2022). The EU Youth **strategy** centres on three areas of action: **Engage, Connect, Empower,** which works on "*joined-up implementation across sectors*" (European Commission, 2022)[14].

13 McMillan (2019) citing New Economics foundation {https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/participation-its-impact-services-and-people-who-use-them}
14 https://youthforeurope.eu/european-youth-goals-2019-2027/

Youth Participation

Youth engagement begins at the consultation level in relation to policy and strategy as quoted above and in the production of 11 European Youth Goals including number five, *Youth Mental Health, and well-being* (European Commission, 2022). This must continue throughout the development of any role the creative and cultural sector has in helping improve the mental health of young people at the policy level.

We emphasize the need for **Youth participation throughout the process and joined-up implementation must take place**. The Lundy model of participation[15] focuses on the concepts of Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence to describe the child or young person's right to participation informed by article 12 on the UN Convention rights of the Child.[16]
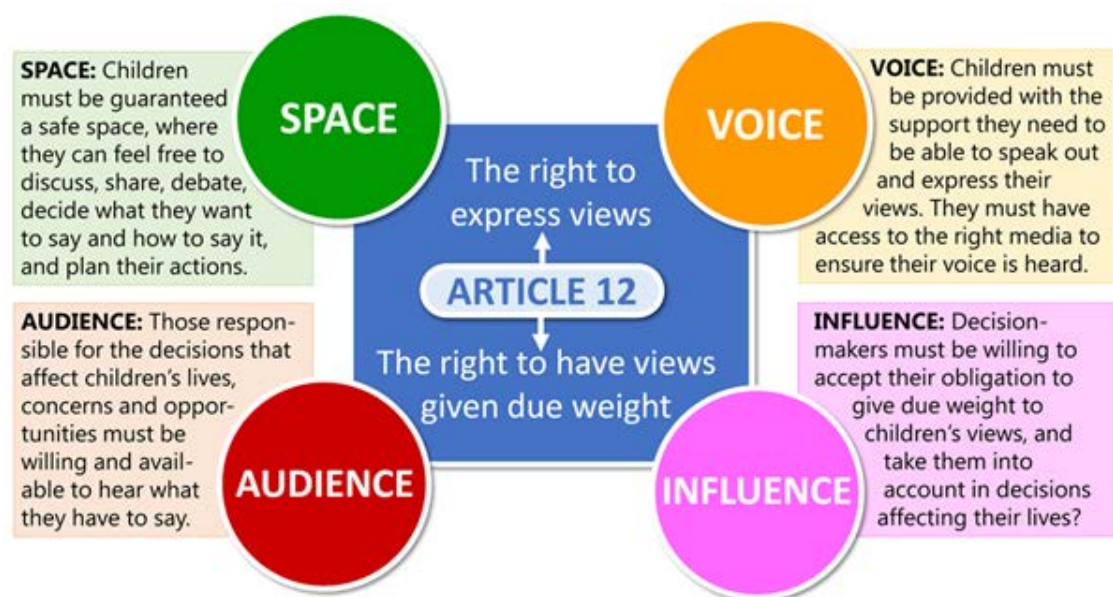

Figure 2 The Lundy model of child participation, Lundy, 2013

This model could easily apply to Cultural and arts-based activities. We recommend establishing or continuing **Youth Advisory Boards at the national member state level and local levels** with continued participation and necessary relevant action to **Engage, connect and empower** through the arts in the context of Mental Health. These boards have a place in **cross-sectoral collaboration** networks.

Young people must be involved in the **Co-design of programs at all levels.** For this approach to be embedded and *joined up implementation* to be achieved it requires political buy-in and structural support, organization, management, and sufficient capacity building at the grassroots level for meaningful sustainability.

15 https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01411920701657033 (accessed 18/10/2022)
16 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

Structural Support

1. Eco-system

Young people exist within an ecosystem. Their circle of influence includes their caregivers, families, supporters, friends, schools, communities, and the world they live in. Supporting the balance and best use of this environment using creative and cultural participation contributes to growth. In an ecosystem, the key to the health of the system is how each element of the system relates to the other. This is also true for the appropriate creative intervention for the promotion of mental health, prevention, management, and treatment of mental illness in these contexts.

Creative and Cultural participation and interventions to *Engage, Connect, and Empower the* ecosystem of the young person require **Cross-Sectoral Cooperation** and an **evidence-informed approach**. Cooperation happens within the context of trust relationships; therefore, a process of *creative capacity building* is necessary within the ecosystem for these relationships to thrive. Creativity must be at the heart of any approach and identifying the needs within the ecosystem.

Creativity, cooperation and collaboration of multiple actors with a common vision based on the needs of the ecosystem. In exchange, professionals with the appropriate skills work in co-creation and co-production with young people and local stakeholders to implement the vision.

Similar models are in place at the international scale. The **Planet Youth** project from Iceland describes society as the patient and states that **"***Youth outcomes are a direct reflection of the environments they live and grow in***"[17].** The project explored social factors that impact youth outcomes in relation to drug and alcohol use. Over twenty years since the start of the project, drug use has declined year after year. **A similar model could apply to youth mental health using the Creative and Cultural sector to impact Youth mental health outcomes.**
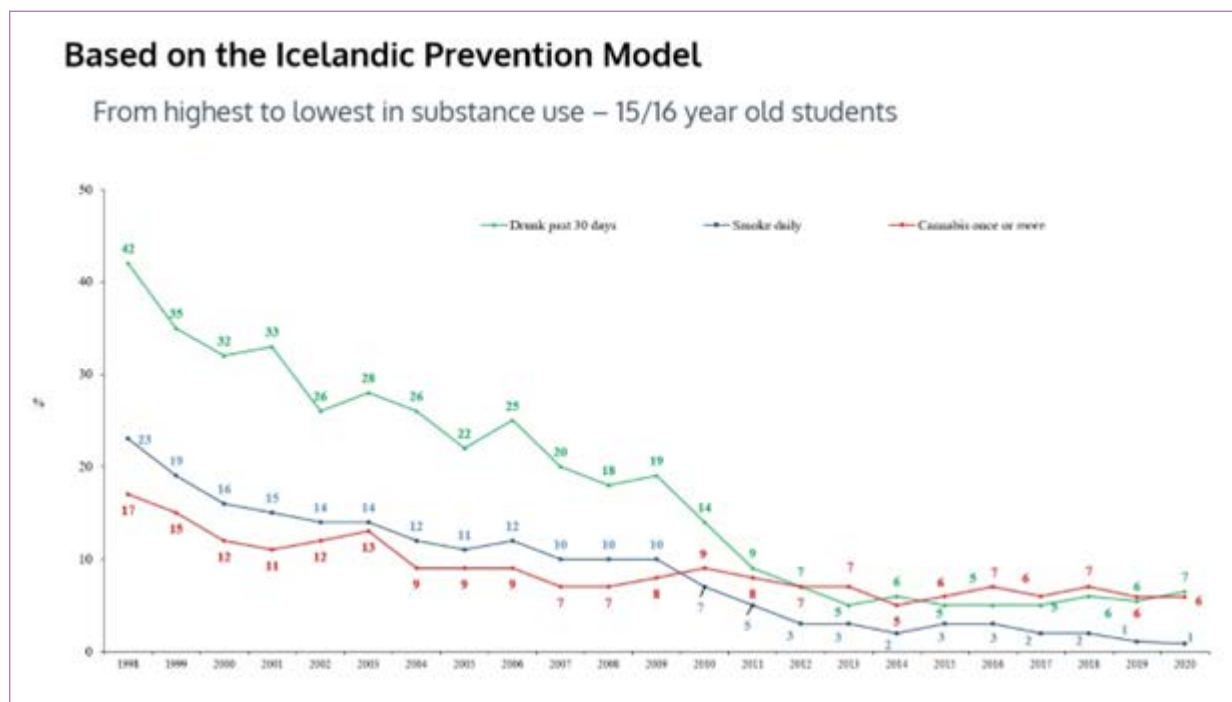
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17 The 5 Guiding Principles – PlanetYouth

Fig 3. Planet Youth 20 Year Graph (Planet Youth 2022[18])

Collaborative approaches make the best use of synergies that take place across sectors. Citing Planet Youth and considering our proposal, the Creative, Cultural, and Health Collaborative needs to **define its common mission and vision, as well as its values and expected outcomes**. It could be guided by the EU Youth Strategy "Engage, Connect, Empower".

2. Sustainability

This approach is designed for long-term impact and sustainment. Within each sector and discipline, **implementation plans can be co-created based on the mission and vision and in a common language**, with the creative arts at the centre of a collaborative approach to specific mental health contexts (contexts are discussed below).

This will require the commitment of arts organizations as well as health, care, and education partners to collaborate and commit to long-term sustainability.

18 https://planetyouth.org/the-method/qa/

3. Funding

Funding is required for any ambitious long-term focused approach. Stakeholders in the cross-sectoral collaboration may allocate funding to the approach and embed the work in their services following pilot phase; however initial investment and a plan for investment over several years are necessary to ensure **continuity in services and consistency in offer.**

Currently, both the Cultural and the Youth sectors are **scarcely funded**. The solution is not to use the existing funds for cultural and youth initiatives for Cultural Interventions for Mental Health, but rather to allocate these interventions with supplementary, dedicated funding. Furthermore, these sectors are funded primarily on a project basis, which is a major cause for instability and precariousness among cultural and youth workers and for discontinued support to target audiences. Given the vulnerability of young people in relation to mental health, a project-based funding paradigm, without the conditions for continuity of service, should be avoided. **Funding should not only come from Cultural budgets, but also from the Health and Education sectors.**

4. Learning and Evaluation of the community they serve (adolescent psychiatry)

Collaboratively designed community projects must be evidence-based, and data must be collected from stakeholders at the national and local levels. Projects must be contextually appropriate. Existing research studies on appropriate interventions inform approaches, questionnaires, and qualitative methods that are also needed for specific and ongoing program evaluation. Methods must also consider the value of artistic quality and freedom of expression. **The interdisciplinary team may set its own goals, such as increasing positive emotions or addressing isolation and loneliness**.

This methodology means Integration in **structures that remain open and flexible responding to local needs**. This also embeds a circular approach and ensures that cross sectoral alliances continue as parties see the value of their commitment.

5. Context

Fancourt and Finn (2019) divide interventions in support of mental health in four categories[19]:

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19 Fancourt, D. & Finn, S. (2019) (https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329834/9789289054553-eng.pdf)

- **promotion** of mental health and well-being,

- **prevention** of mental health challenges as well as disorders and illnesses,

- **management** of mental health conditions, and

- **treatment** of mental health disorders and illness

Promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health difficulties fits very well into a great majority of Cultural and Creative activity.

The contexts of the management and treatment of mental health challenges require more specific interventions and a greater variety of specialists involved therefore the cocktail of skills and education of the professionals and collaborators is important.

Different levels of artistic engagement and co-creation should **be adapted to the needs of the audiences and the different mental health interventions** cited above.

6. Capacity building: Engage, Connect, Empower

For the Cross Sectoral Alliance to flourish, **time must be spent building trusting relationships and finding a common language**. Variety in the Cross-Sector Membership is to be encouraged. We expect the fields of Arts, Health, Social, Education, and local authority to be represented, as well as young people and community leaders.

We propose that **specific mediators** are charged with the coordination of the network and the role of programming continuous professional development through **education and skills sharing** that help the stakeholders understand each other better.

It is envisaged that health professionals have the benefit of experiencing the creative arts. And in turn, artists and cultural sector workers also become informed on health practices and critical theory pertinent to the arts and health field.

We also expect knowledge sharing and **peer-to-peer exchange**. Projects like this already exist at the local level in some member states. Create to Connect (cavanarts.ie), Red Noses (https://www.rednoses.eu/what-we-do/capacity-building-training/)

7. Co-Creation and Co-Production

Stakeholders in the network must also **meet regularly to review and discuss progress** on a broader scale and at the relevant project level. Consistent review and the bringing of knowledge back to institutions among the stakeholder membership means the project has the power to become systemic and transformative. The network will be built on the spirit of co-creation and co-production between young people and all the stakeholders.

a) **Skill sets and competencies.** Each Stakeholder within the collaboration **must ensure the appropriate skill sets** and competency of professionals who participate. Stakeholders send individuals with appropriate competencies, knowledge, skills, attributes and attitudes. We discuss skills and competencies further in relation to ethics and quality standards. For the purposes of this paper, we will focus primarily on those in arts, health, social/community, and education.

b) **Openness to learning and collaboration is a must at all levels. People from diverse sectors and skill sets work together at a regional, national and european level.** Professionals must be **open to learning** and open to working with others. Stakeholders in the interagency membership are responsible for providing the best expertise possible. In the spirit of Co-production and co-creation, **Young people are experts by experience**.[20]

c) **Artists must be socially engaged and involved in self-reflective practice as well as have the necessary artist credentials.** These artists are competent paid professionals. The Artists who work in this area must have high quality standards and have creative expertise but also empathy, compassion, emotional intelligence and facilitation skills.

8. Ethics and Quality Standards

Professionals must maintain high-quality standards and be adequate for the context in which they practice. The promotion and prevention of mental health challenges can be easily partnered with creative sectors with excellent results through focused messages and well-executed creative projects.

In contexts where the management and treatment of mental health issues are central, the multidisciplinary team needs an art therapist to provide an appropriate safe space. Teams of artists may collaborate with the art therapist. Art therapists are competent in a clinical setting and negotiate both the creative and

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20Hall, D. & Dowdell, E. (2018). Youth and Climate Change: International Youth Participation in the IPCC Cities and Climate Change Conference (D. Davidson & C. Karsgaard, Eds.). Edmonton, Canada.

clinical worlds by communicating across disciplines. Socially engaged artists participate in supervision and reflective practice. Just as the therapist participates in supervision. This serves to maintain the highest standards of quality and ensure a safe space.

Organisations and projects working with vulnerable groups such as children and young people must ensure Safeguarding for the individuals they work with. Public institutions and networks should support the efforts of NGOs and projects to develop appropriate Safeguarding policies. *(F.e. Organisation supporting the development of Safeguarding: https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/)*

Programming at the prevention and promotion level, for example, maintains the usual high-quality creative expertise required but the theme is youth mental health focused and led by the voice of the young person. **All of these professionals will be engaging with the stakeholder network and reporting back on their work.**

9. Establishing Safe Spaces and Brave Spaces

For health to flourish using creativity, **safe spaces or brave spaces must be created**. Artists and professionals will engage in their usual safeguarding, using codes of conduct and adhering to in-house policies in their setting.

The Artist must have the ability to hold space for the young people for their well-being alongside their creativity.

Exploring and defining roles, mapping the process and expected outcomes are necessary from the beginning, as is learning from unexpected outcomes. Mapping the right capabilities to the right environment, as suggested above, is a necessary consideration for safety and quality standards. As part of the cross-sector collaboration, the team, with the support of the coordinator, can explore and define roles, discuss key parts of the process to inform programming, and ensure quality standards and best practices.

In their search for a common language, stakeholders can identify principles, themes, or processes that promote understanding or support the process within the collaboration but are also applicable when programs are co-produced. We propose to create easily accessible safe spaces for open sharing and deep listening to support young people to open about their own experiences.

For example, the **CHIME recovery principles**[21] first conceptualized by Dr. Mary

21 https://www.therecoveryplace.co.uk/chime-framework/

Leamy in 2011 *Connection, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment* could prove a helpful framework to stakeholders and artists for their work.
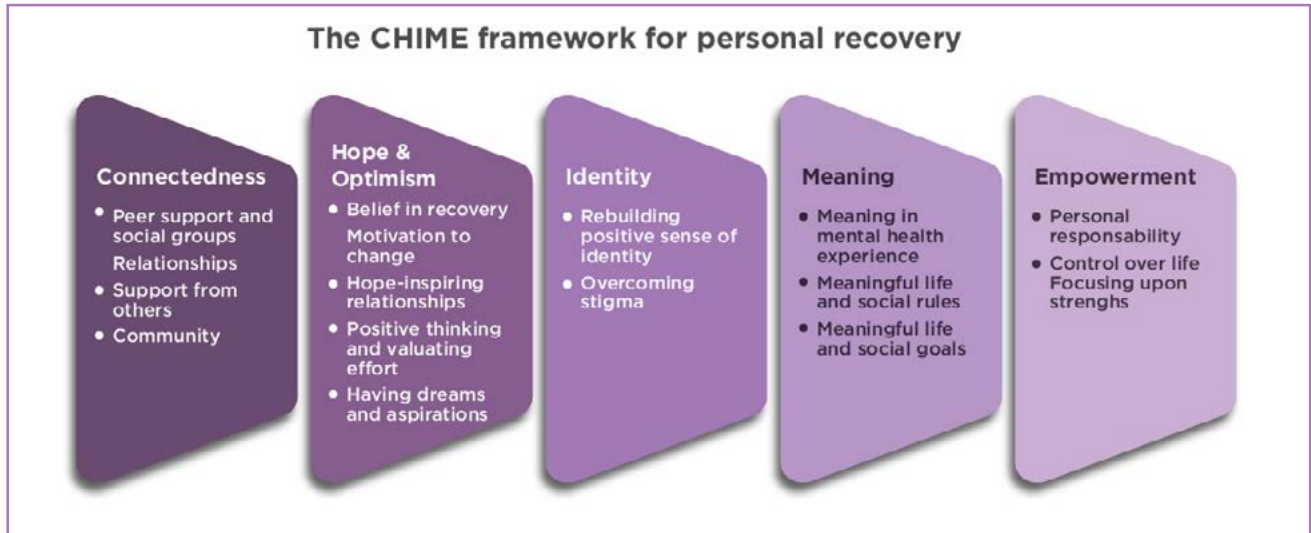

Figure 4. CHIME framework Leamy et al 2011

Once a safe space is established, we envisage **"Brave Spaces" using the creative arts and new ways of communicating** and relating can support how young people, identify, manage, and process their emotions. We expect young people to find ways in the arts to explore their identity and promote self-awareness and understanding of their relationship with themselves and others. We expect the arts to be a powerful tool of connection that can **Engage, Connect and Empower**.

This requires time, relationship building, all the expertise outlined above, ongoing review in the spirit of co-production, flexibility, and commitment to the process.
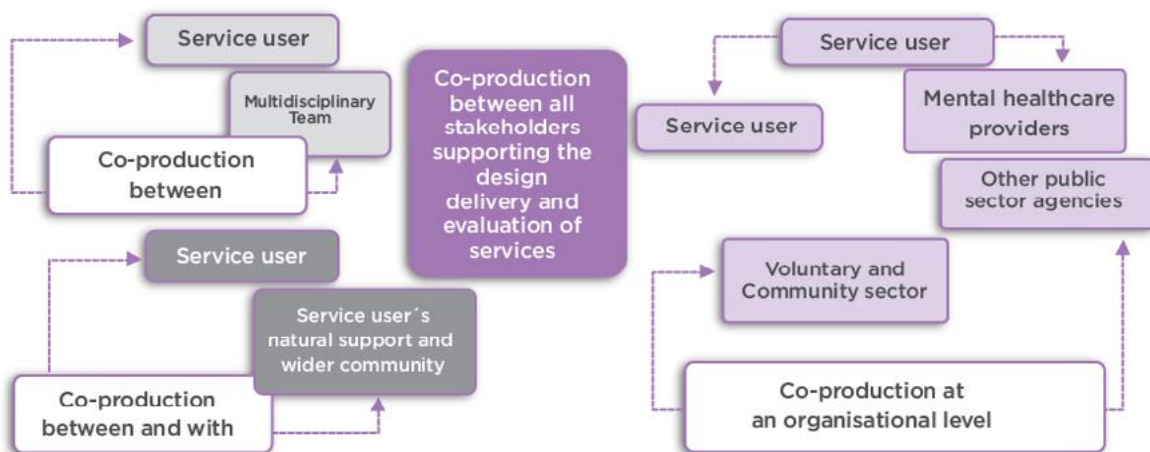
Co-Creation and Co-Production

Figure 5. Methods of Coproduction.[22]

22 https://journals.rcni.com/mental-health-practice/evidence-and-practice/implementing-coproduction-in-traditional-statutory-mental-health-services-mhp.2019.e1304/abs

10. Social Prescribing

The arts have a **significant place** in relation to social prescribing. Social prescribing is the process of linking people to sources of social support and social activities within the community for the benefit of their health. The National Health Services in Britain and member state Ireland offer social prescribing to the community. This means that either the doctor or a social prescriber can recommend an activity for the purposes of health. It can vary from physical activity, community gardening, to taking a class, to going to a cultural event. Arts on prescription within the social prescribing model is gaining traction in Britain as more and more evidence support it's ability as a prevention tool. The art forms provide wonderful possibilities for strengths based approaches as it fits into a community based non clinical model viewing health in a holistic way whereby the arts support health[23].

The appropriate creative intervention can be prescribed in each of the contexts: promotion, prevention, management, and treatment for mental health[24].

11. Education

We propose that education be a key aspect and systemic part of this model from the education of the stakeholders (in their continuous professional development or peer exchange program) through to introducing the policy to the education system in each member state.

We request a well-being curriculum delivery through the arts in the pre-school, schools through to college and professional settings who deliver the programmes.

We propose a wellness programme based on the Youth Strategy Engage, Connect, Empower, or one adapted at local level based on the scoping questionnaires. Teachers and educators will have an equal role within the cross sectoral alliance and the programmes will be co-produced with young people and the other members of the collaboration. Youth workers, parents and community workers will also access programmes for themselves in the network through the continuous professional development and skills sharing offered there. As previously discussed, a wide variety of stakeholders will be a part of the collaboration.

We expect doctors, social workers, youth workers, health professionals to participate as well as young people, their families and communities. We expect learning on critical theory alongside creative participation.

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23 https://engage.org/resources/social-prescribing-and-the-arts-films/
24 https://ae-sop.org/the-marriage-of-social-prescribing-and-the-arts/

In the context of medical education, we propose that future physicians encounter artists as part of their pre-clerkship and on-the-job training. This approach will be cross-sectoral/transdisciplinary, systemic, and transformative.

a) Arts education

Across the stakeholder group, each agency could enter into project partnerships at the community level. At the systemic level, it is proposed that student teachers have access to creative arts and cultural applications of the curriculum. In turn, artists learn about participation and inclusion and how best to promote access through the proposed ecosystem and model. Working in sensitive contexts with sensitive audiences and issues requires special training for artists, not only in artistic skills, but also to train their understanding of the context in which they work. This may be through informal or formal education models.[25]

b) Teacher education

Teachers and artists learn about participation and inclusion by creating together. A teacher-artist partnership project offers teachers and artists the opportunity to explore well-being in the classroom together. Trained staff in all relevant areas and improved collaboration directly contribute to well-being.

12. Access, inclusion, and equality for all

In addition to establishing the Brave Safe Space, stakeholders must ensure that all aspects of access, inclusion, and equality are maintained throughout the collaboration. In terms of co-production, the same applies here as well: equal status for all.

Barriers to access inclusion and equality must also be considered and assessed at the outset of forming the cross-sector collaboration and mitigate against these barriers. Adequate organisation and funding of the stakeholder network's activities must be ensured as all young people regardless of socio-economic background or any other specific profile avail of the programme. This requires universal access across the statutory settings for example programmes take place during/after school, at targeted youth settings. Grounding the stakeholder collaborations in the co-production method should support this process. Particular attention must be paid to providing access to marginalized groups, such as unaccompanied minors in refugee camps or young people with disabilities (see list above), as part of the calls for funding proposals and among implementing organizations.[26]

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25 (Example: https://www.rednoses.eu/fileadmin/international/4_What_we_do/2_Capacity_Building_and_trainings/3_Internal_Artistic_Trainings/Curriculum-revisted_05-05-2022_SinglePages.pdf)
26https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/librariesprovider2/country-sites/who_arts-and-health---forcibly-displaced-people-(final).pdf?sfvrsn=2800af42_1&download=true

Key Recommendations

This section focused on the importance of co-developing methods to ensure that youth voices are included in the design of youth interventions from the beginning. Investments in education, interdisciplinary, and cross-sector collaboration with a focus on cultural practitioners will provide positive long-term benefits. Substantial long-term funding is needed to achieve sustainability, including to bring the relevance of artistic cultural practices further into the community and to recognize them for what they are:

Vehicles of democratic, inclusive, participatory, resilient, sustainable, healthy, and inspiring societies.

CONCLUSIONS

Annalisa Cicerchia

Protecting and improving the mental health and well-being of young people is a compelling duty for Member States and for the European Union. An urgent duty, but one that cannot be accomplished by emergency measures alone, but rather by a constant, long-term commitment and the mobilisation of all the valid forces. Together with the Education, Health, and Social Welfare sectors, the Cultural and Creative sectors are among these forces. They represent effective resources for improving quality of life and well-being and dealing with crises, as the recent pandemic has shown.

Strategies and plans aiming at promoting the mental health and well-being of young people, therefore, need to adopt an integrated, multidimensional, and cross-sectoral approach.

For the cultural and creative sectors, addressing the mental health and well-being of young people means in a way re-thinking their own intrinsic value. It also means addressing inequalities in access and opportunities and cultural, social, economic, and digital gaps, which have worsened since the pandemic. Cultural and artistic participative activities should be included in school curricula to make sure all young people are reached regardless of their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Free cultural and creative activities outside school should also be promoted and funded publicly, to make sure that children and youth from families with economic difficulties can also profit from them. Creative and Cultural participation and interventions should seek to engage, connect, and empower the ecosystem of the young person. They should also include, support, and educate parents, families, friends, colleagues, teachers, etc.

Today, youth mental health and well-being pose a complex, multidimensional problem. An adequate response can only come from a plurality of policy sectors and calls for solutions that can operate across those sectors. It is argued that art and cultural programs have an established record of success in that regard, but the evidence is still insufficient. Data are scattered or limited to hardly generalizable case studies. Experiences, no matter how numerous and on the rise, are still too varied, diverse, or still too recent, to represent a solid and mature basis for establishing and sharing prerequisites, methods, and procedures.

To overcome the limitations of scientific evidence on the role of art and culture in the mental health of young people and to best apply the knowledge available on the subject, new, more intense, and systematic efforts are needed from an integration of different disciplines. Tapping all the high-quality information and data sources already available and mainstreaming them is, therefore, a priority, as well as encouraging and funding new targeted academic interdisciplinary research involving the medical, psychological, and social sciences, as well as social action research. Other advisable lines of intervention include specific cross-sectoral training and development and dissemination of techniques, methods, and tools, both for orientating and sustaining practice and for assessing impacts and sharing the evaluation outcomes. This means initiating and supporting an international learning community for deploying culture and creativity as protective, promoting, and recovery factors of youth mental health.

The specific skills and competencies of the operators, organization- and project-management models, assessment and evaluation plans, and funding schemes also require dedicated, supplementary efforts of research, experimentation, and debate. Improvisation, which sometimes accompanies some experiences born of goodwill, generosity, and enthusiasm for the cause, should be reduced to a minimum. Given the vulnerability of young people in relation to mental health, the conditions for continuity of service should be granted.

Empowerment of young people, not just their token or end-of-pipe participation, is a strategic choice that can no longer be postponed. It is essential that young people are actively and fully involved in the development of health-related and cultural and creative policies and interventions and engaged in their co-creation and management. Improving young people's mental health, well-being, and social inclusion requires that they are given the necessary opportunities, access, and resources to have their say in the decisions that affect their lives and their fundamental rights.

VOICES OF CULTURE
Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector

Youth, Mental Health and Culture

BRAINSTORMING REPORT

The European Commission Voices of Culture Structured Dialogue is implemented by Goethe-Institut, Brussels

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