



MANUAL: Youth Empowerment through Creative Expression & Human Rights Education

A Practical Guide for Youth Workers, Educators & Cultural Organization's

Social Inclusion Association ,Best Seller , Youth Opportunities Club

Youth empowerment through creative expression



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□ INTRODUCTION

The *Youth Empowerment Through Creative Expression* project was created to support young migrant women and youth with fewer opportunities by providing a safe space for self-expression, dialogue, and artistic exploration. Across Europe, many young people face social exclusion, discrimination, cultural barriers, and identity challenges. Creative expression — through theatre, storytelling, movement, and visual arts — offers a powerful medium to process experiences, reclaim identity, and build confidence.

This manual documents the methodology, experiences, and outcomes of a cross-country collaboration between Greece, Serbia, and Armenia. It serves as a practical guide for youth workers, educators, NGOs, cultural practitioners, and community leaders who wish to replicate or adapt this model.

By combining human rights education with performing arts, the manual offers a unique and holistic approach to empowerment. It demonstrates how artistic creation can inspire dialogue, promote critical thinking, and give young people the confidence to advocate for their rights and become active participants in social change. The ultimate goal is to establish *State of Art*, a long-term community where young people and artists can continuously create, collaborate, and advocate for human rights through the arts.

■ METHODOLOGY (Completed Text)

The project uses a non-formal, participatory, and arts-based methodology that integrates human rights education with creative practices. The approach is grounded in:

1. Non-formal Education Principles

- Learning by doing
- Voluntary participation
- Inclusion & accessibility
- Participant-led creation
- Continuous reflection



1. Non-Formal Education Principles (Analytical Narrative)

Non-formal education (NFE) forms the backbone of this project’s methodology. Unlike formal education, which is structured, curriculum-driven, and traditionally teacher-led, NFE offers a flexible, participant-centred approach grounded in experiential learning, creativity, and active participation. This approach is particularly effective when working with young people with fewer opportunities—including migrant youth, young women, and those facing social exclusion—because it allows each person to learn at their own pace, in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Below is an analysis of how the core principles of NFE shape the learning process in this project.

1.1 Learning by Doing

Learning in this project is rooted in experience rather than theory. Through theatre exercises, movement workshops, storytelling, and collective creation, participants actively engage in the process of exploring human rights, identity, and self-expression.

This approach promotes:

- **deep understanding**, because participants internalise concepts through action rather than passive listening
- **confidence building**, as participants see immediate results of their creative choices
- **skill development**, such as communication, emotional awareness, and cooperation

For participants with fewer opportunities—especially those who have struggled in formal education settings—learning by doing removes pressure and creates a space where learning becomes personal, meaningful, and empowering.

1.2 Voluntary Participation

A core principle of NFE is that participation is always voluntary. Young people choose how much they share, how they express themselves, and which artistic methods they wish to engage with.



In the context of human rights and personal storytelling, this principle is essential because:

- many participants carry sensitive experiences such as discrimination, migration trauma, or identity conflict
- pressured participation can lead to emotional discomfort or re-traumatisation
- voluntary learning strengthens intrinsic motivation and ownership of the creative process

By allowing participants to set their own boundaries, the project builds trust and ensures that personal expression remains empowering, not overwhelming.

1.3 Inclusion & Accessibility

The project is designed to ensure that every participant can engage fully, regardless of background, cultural identity, language level, or ability.

This includes:

- using simple, clear language
- adapting exercises for participants who are shy, anxious, or unfamiliar with artistic activities
- providing physical and emotional accessibility
- ensuring that activities are culturally sensitive and free from judgement

For young migrant women and those with fewer opportunities, accessible learning environments break down barriers, strengthen belonging, and enable active participation. Inclusion is not treated as an add-on—it is embedded throughout the methodology, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

1.4 Participant-Led Creation

Participants are not passive recipients of information; they are co-creators of the learning process. This means:

- they contribute to workshop themes
- they shape the artistic performances
- they select the stories or issues that matter most to them
- they influence group dynamics and decisions



This approach shifts power from the facilitator to the participants, reinforcing agency, ownership, and empowerment. For young people who often feel unheard—especially migrant women and youth facing discrimination—this principle is transformative. It validates their experiences and centres their perspectives as the foundation of artistic creation.

1.5 Continuous Reflection

Reflection is integrated into every stage of the project, from warm-up activities and group discussions to final performances and debriefing sessions.

Reflection serves several purposes:

- **emotional processing:** Participants articulate feelings, frustrations, and insights.
- **learning consolidation:** They identify what skills they developed or strengthened.
- **group cohesion:** Shared reflection deepens trust and understanding.
- **personal empowerment:** Participants gain awareness of their own journey, strengths, and future aspirations.

Reflection also strengthens the advocacy dimension of the project: by understanding their experiences and the social issues they confront, participants become more capable of expressing these through art and engaging in dialogue with audiences.

These non-formal learning principles ensure that the project is not simply about artistic creation but about **empowerment, self-discovery, collective learning, and human rights awareness**. For young people with fewer opportunities, NFE provides an alternative learning space where they can develop confidence, creativity, and agency in ways that traditional education rarely allows.

2. Arts-Based Pedagogy

Creative arts form a core element of the project's educational approach, serving both as a learning tool and as a powerful means of personal and collective expression. Through artistic practice, participants are able to explore identity, communicate emotions, and give voice to experiences that may be difficult to articulate through words alone.

The project integrates a variety of artistic methods, including applied theatre, improvisation, movement and embodiment, storytelling and autobiographical writing,



collective creation, and visual and sound expression. These approaches enable participants to externalise emotions, reflect on their personal journeys, and engage with themes such as migration, discrimination, belonging, and resilience. By working creatively, young people connect individual experiences with broader human rights issues, transforming art into a vehicle for dialogue and empowerment.

2. Arts-Based Pedagogy (Analytical Narrative)

Arts-based pedagogy is a central pillar of the project's methodology. It functions simultaneously as a learning approach and as a creative medium through which participants explore identity, express emotions, and engage with social and human rights themes. Unlike traditional educational methods, which often prioritize verbal instruction and cognitive learning, arts-based pedagogy is experiential, participatory, and deeply personal. It invites participants to learn through doing, sensing, imagining, and creating.

This approach is particularly meaningful for young people with migrant backgrounds or experiences of exclusion. Many participants carry complex emotional histories, identity questions, or experiences of marginalization that are difficult to process through conventional discussion-based learning. Artistic methods provide alternative channels of expression that are intuitive and embodied, allowing participants to explore social realities in ways that feel safer and more accessible.

Through artistic exploration, learning becomes a lived experience rather than an abstract concept. Participants do not simply talk about human rights, identity, or discrimination; they express, enact, and reflect on these themes through creative processes. This embodied and imaginative engagement fosters empathy, critical thinking, and emotional awareness, while strengthening confidence and self-expression.

The following sections provide an in-depth analysis of each artistic method used in the project and explain how each contributes to empowerment, learning, and human rights education.



2.1 Applied Theatre

Applied theatre refers to the use of theatrical practices outside traditional performance spaces, often for educational, social, or community-focused purposes. In this project, applied theatre functions as a powerful tool for exploring human rights, identity, and lived experiences through embodied and collective processes.

Rather than focusing on producing a polished theatrical product, applied theatre prioritizes participation, dialogue, and reflection. It creates a safe environment where participants can step into different roles, reenact real-life situations, and examine social dynamics from multiple perspectives. This approach allows young people to explore complex themes such as discrimination, migration, belonging, and power relations in a way that is both experiential and reflective.

Through role-play, scene creation, and group improvisation, participants experiment with alternative ways of responding to challenging situations. For example, they may reenact moments of exclusion or injustice and then collectively explore different choices and outcomes. This process transforms theatre into a “rehearsal for reality,” where participants can test new behaviors, practice communication strategies, and build confidence in navigating difficult social contexts.

Applied theatre also encourages empathy. By embodying characters whose experiences differ from their own, participants gain insight into the perspectives and emotions of others. This is particularly important in multicultural groups, where theatre becomes a bridge between diverse cultural backgrounds and personal histories.

For young people with fewer opportunities, applied theatre offers a space where their voices and experiences are valued. It validates personal narratives as sources of knowledge and transforms artistic expression into a form of social participation. In this project, applied theatre does not only support creativity—it strengthens agency, critical awareness, and the capacity to engage with human rights issues in everyday life.

2.2 Improvisation

Improvisation plays a key role in the project’s arts-based methodology. It encourages spontaneity, creativity, and presence in the moment, allowing participants to explore ideas and emotions without the pressure of fixed scripts or predetermined outcomes.



Through improvisational exercises, young people learn to trust their instincts, respond to others, and engage more freely with both the group and the creative process.

For participants with migrant backgrounds or experiences of exclusion, improvisation can be particularly empowering. Many may feel uncertain about their language skills or worry about “saying the wrong thing.” Improvisation shifts the focus away from correctness and toward expression, helping participants gain confidence in communicating through voice, body, and imagination. Mistakes become part of the creative journey rather than something to avoid, which reduces anxiety and fosters a sense of playfulness and safety.

Improvisation also strengthens key social and emotional skills. Participants practice active listening, adaptability, and cooperation as they build scenes together in real time. They learn to accept and build on each other’s ideas, developing trust and mutual support within the group. This collaborative responsiveness mirrors real-life social interaction and helps participants feel more comfortable navigating unexpected situations outside the workshop space.

In addition, improvisation allows participants to explore human rights themes in a dynamic and accessible way. By spontaneously creating scenarios around topics such as discrimination, belonging, or identity, participants engage critically with social realities while maintaining a sense of creative freedom. This process encourages reflection without becoming overly heavy or didactic, balancing emotional depth with a sense of exploration.

Overall, improvisation supports both personal and collective empowerment. It nurtures confidence, flexibility, and creative risk-taking, while also building the group cohesion necessary for deeper artistic and human rights exploration.

2.3 Movement and Embodiment

Movement and embodiment are central to the project’s arts-based approach, recognizing the body as a carrier of memory, emotion, and identity. Many experiences related to migration, discrimination, or trauma are not easily expressed through words alone. Movement-based methods provide alternative pathways for expression, allowing participants to communicate feelings and stories through gesture, posture, rhythm, and spatial relationships.



Embodied practices help participants reconnect with their physical presence and become more aware of how emotions are stored and expressed in the body. Through guided exercises such as movement improvisation, mirroring, group formations, and symbolic gestures, participants explore themes like belonging, displacement, strength, and vulnerability. These practices create opportunities to express complex emotional states in a safe and non-verbal way, which can be particularly important for those who find verbal sharing challenging.

Movement work also fosters group cohesion. When participants move together—sharing rhythm, pace, and space—they develop a sense of collective awareness and trust. Exercises involving synchronized movement or shared physical compositions strengthen non-verbal communication and empathy, helping participants feel more connected to one another. This sense of physical togetherness often supports emotional safety and openness in later verbal activities.

In the context of human rights education, embodiment allows participants to experience social dynamics physically rather than only intellectually. Power, exclusion, support, and solidarity can be explored through distance, touch, levels, and direction. For example, a simple shift in body position can represent hierarchy, while collective movement can symbolize resistance or mutual support. These embodied metaphors make abstract concepts more tangible and memorable.

For young people with fewer opportunities, movement-based work can be especially liberating. It validates forms of expression that do not depend on language proficiency or formal education, giving equal value to all participants' contributions. By engaging the body as a source of knowledge and creativity, movement and embodiment practices deepen self-awareness, confidence, and a sense of agency.

2.4 Storytelling & Autobiographical Writing

Storytelling and autobiographical writing are essential components of the project's arts-based pedagogy, offering participants a structured yet personal way to explore identity, memory, and lived experience. These methods provide space for reflection and meaning-making, allowing young people to connect their individual stories with broader social and human rights themes.

For many participants, especially those with migrant or minority backgrounds, personal experiences are often shaped by displacement, cultural transitions, discrimination, or family expectations. Writing and storytelling create opportunities to articulate these



experiences in their own words, at their own pace. Participants are encouraged to choose what and how much they wish to share, ensuring that the process remains voluntary and respectful of personal boundaries.

Autobiographical writing exercises may include guided prompts, memory mapping, letters to the past or future, or poetic fragments. These activities help participants externalize thoughts and emotions that may otherwise remain internalized. Writing provides a sense of control over one's narrative, transforming fragmented or overwhelming experiences into structured stories that can be reflected upon and, if desired, shared with others.

Storytelling circles complement writing by creating a supportive group environment where participants can listen and be heard. Through active listening and mutual respect, participants develop empathy and recognize shared experiences, even when their backgrounds differ. This collective exchange helps reduce feelings of isolation and fosters a sense of belonging within the group.

From a human rights perspective, storytelling enables participants to link personal narratives to social structures. Experiences of exclusion, gender roles, migration, or cultural identity are not treated as isolated personal problems, but as realities connected to rights, dignity, and social participation. In this way, storytelling becomes both a creative and political act, giving voice to perspectives that are often marginalized.

Ultimately, storytelling and autobiographical writing support empowerment by validating participants' experiences as meaningful and worthy of attention. They strengthen self-awareness, communication skills, and confidence, while also building bridges between personal reflection and collective dialogue.

2.5 Collective Creation

Collective creation is a fundamental principle of the project's methodology, emphasizing collaboration, shared authorship, and group ownership of the artistic process. Rather than working individually toward separate outcomes, participants co-create scenes, texts, images, and performances together. This approach mirrors the values of participation, equality, and solidarity that underpin human rights education.

In collective creation, ideas emerge through dialogue, improvisation, and experimentation. Participants contribute personal stories, images, movements, and



reflections, which are gradually shaped into shared artistic material. The facilitator’s role is not to direct the content, but to support the group in organizing ideas, ensuring that all voices are heard, and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment.

This method is particularly meaningful for young people who may feel marginalized or unheard in other areas of their lives. By participating in a collaborative creative process, they experience their perspectives being taken seriously and integrated into a larger narrative. Collective creation transforms individual expression into a shared artistic language, reinforcing the idea that social issues are interconnected and that solutions can be imagined together.

Working collectively also strengthens communication and interpersonal skills. Participants practice negotiation, active listening, and compromise as they shape scenes and performances. Differences of opinion become opportunities for dialogue rather than conflict, fostering respect and mutual understanding. This process reflects democratic principles in practice, where diverse perspectives contribute to a common outcome.

From an educational perspective, collective creation deepens learning by making it relational and experiential. Participants do not simply receive information about human rights or social issues; they actively construct meaning together. The final artistic outputs—whether performances, installations, or audiovisual materials—represent not only creative achievements but also collective reflections on identity, belonging, and justice.

Ultimately, collective creation nurtures a sense of shared responsibility and empowerment. Participants leave the process with the understanding that their voices matter, that collaboration can lead to meaningful expression, and that art can be a space where individual experiences connect to collective action.

2.6 Visual and Sound Expression

Visual and sound expression expand the range of creative communication within the project, offering participants additional non-verbal ways to explore identity, memory, and social realities. These methods include drawing, collage, symbolic objects, shadow play, soundscapes, rhythm work, and vocal exploration. By engaging the senses, participants are able to express emotions and experiences that may be difficult to articulate through speech alone.

Visual expression allows participants to externalize inner landscapes. Through drawing, mapping, or symbolic imagery, abstract feelings such as loss, hope, belonging, or



displacement can take tangible form. Visual work often serves as a bridge between internal reflection and collective sharing, enabling participants to communicate complex ideas in a way that feels safe and indirect. Symbols, colors, and shapes become tools for storytelling, particularly valuable in multilingual groups where verbal expression may be uneven.

Sound-based practices similarly open new dimensions of expression. Simple rhythms, vocal tones, breathing patterns, and collective soundscapes help participants connect emotionally and physically. Sound can evoke atmosphere, memory, and cultural identity, while group rhythm exercises foster unity and shared presence. In performance contexts, sound becomes a narrative layer, supporting movement, text, and imagery.

These methods are especially inclusive for young people with fewer opportunities. They do not require advanced language skills or formal artistic training, allowing all participants to contribute meaningfully. Visual and sound expression validate different forms of intelligence and creativity, reinforcing the idea that everyone has something valuable to share.

From a human rights education perspective, these artistic forms help participants explore themes such as identity, visibility, silence, and voice. A drawing can represent borders or belonging; a rhythm can express tension or resilience; a collective soundscape can embody shared struggle or solidarity. In this way, sensory expression deepens emotional engagement and supports holistic learning.

Ultimately, visual and sound expression enrich the creative process by making space for diverse modes of communication. They help participants move beyond words, access deeper emotional layers, and contribute to a shared artistic language that reflects both personal stories and collective experiences.

2.7 Why Arts-Based Pedagogy Works for Youth with Fewer Opportunities

Arts-based pedagogy is particularly effective when working with young people with fewer opportunities. Across the three partner countries, many participants faced discrimination, identity-related challenges, low self-confidence, and limited access to cultural or artistic environments. Some carried unprocessed emotional experiences connected to migration, exclusion, or family hardship, while others felt intimidated or disconnected from traditional learning environments that rely heavily on academic performance and verbal participation.



Creative methodologies respond directly to these realities. Arts-based pedagogy provides a non-judgmental and inclusive space where participants can engage without fear of being evaluated or compared. Because it relies on sensory, embodied, and experiential processes, it allows young people to participate regardless of their educational background, language proficiency, or academic skills. Movement, image, sound, and storytelling open multiple pathways for expression, respecting individual needs, comfort levels, and strengths.

This approach also supports emotional processing and identity exploration in a gentle and accessible way. Rather than forcing participants to explain their experiences analytically, creative practices allow feelings and memories to surface symbolically and at a manageable pace. Personal stories, when shared, are not isolated narratives but become part of a collective creative process, fostering solidarity and mutual recognition.

Through artistic collaboration, participants move from self-doubt toward self-expression and shared agency. They begin to see that their voices matter, that their experiences are meaningful, and that they have the capacity to contribute to dialogue and change. In this way, arts-based pedagogy does more than teach about human rights—it helps young people experience themselves as rights-holders: capable, expressive, and valuable members of their communities.

3. Human Rights Framework

Human rights education forms a foundational component of the project's methodology. Rather than being taught solely as abstract legal principles, human rights are explored through interactive and experiential learning processes that connect directly to participants' lived realities. This approach ensures that human rights are understood not only as concepts, but as practical and personal dimensions of everyday life.

A variety of methods are used to introduce and examine human rights topics, including group discussions, analysis of real-life examples, case studies, and personal storytelling. These methods allow participants to reflect on their own experiences while also developing a broader understanding of social structures and systemic issues. Through dialogue and reflection, young people begin to recognize how individual situations are connected to wider questions of dignity, equality, and justice.



The project particularly focuses on rights related to equality and non-discrimination, gender-based violence, freedom of expression, cultural identity, and participation in society. By exploring these themes in relation to their own lives, participants gain greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities. This process supports critical thinking, empathy, and active citizenship, encouraging young people to see themselves not only as individuals navigating challenges, but as rights-holders with the capacity to contribute to social change.

4. Safe Space and Trauma-Informed Practice

A Core Pillar for Working with Young Migrant Women, Youth with Fewer Opportunities, and Participants with Sensitive Life Experiences

Creating a safe and supportive environment is a fundamental requirement when working with young people who carry experiences of migration, discrimination, cultural dislocation, poverty, or gender-based challenges. Many participants come from backgrounds where emotional expression was discouraged, where their identity was questioned, or where they have faced instability, exclusion, or social pressure. These realities shape how they participate, communicate, and engage in group settings.

For this reason, the project integrates a trauma-informed and safety-centered approach throughout all activities. A safe space in this context does not mean the absence of challenge, but the presence of care, respect, and emotional awareness. It is an environment where participants feel seen, heard, and valued, and where they have control over how and when they choose to share personal experiences.

This chapter outlines the core principles and practical steps used in the project to ensure emotional safety, dignity, and meaningful participation. The approach combines clear group agreements, attentive facilitation, gradual trust-building, and creative methods that allow expression without forcing disclosure. By prioritizing well-being and consent, the project creates conditions where learning and artistic exploration can unfold in a supportive and empowering way.

Methodological Framework (Expanded and Fully Analysed)

How Non-Formal Education, Arts-Based Pedagogy, and Human Rights Learning Are Combined



The methodological framework of the project is built on three interconnected pillars: Non-Formal Education (NFE), Arts-Based Pedagogy, and Human Rights Education (HRE). Together, these approaches create a holistic learning environment where young women with migrant backgrounds and young people with fewer opportunities can explore identity, express personal stories, and understand social and political realities through artistic creation.

Rather than separating learning, emotional expression, and civic awareness, the project integrates them into one continuous process. Creative practice becomes a bridge between personal experience and social understanding, allowing participants to move from self-expression to critical reflection and collective empowerment.

4.1 Non-Formal Education as the Foundation of Learning

Non-Formal Education provides the structural backbone of the project. Unlike formal schooling, it is flexible, participatory, learner-centered, and grounded in real-life experience rather than academic instruction.

Learning by Doing

In NFE, learning takes place through active participation rather than passive listening. Participants explore human rights themes by engaging in creative exercises, improvisation, movement, and reflection. Through embodied and experiential activities, they internalize concepts such as discrimination, identity, resilience, and belonging in ways that are personal and meaningful.

Voluntary Participation

The project emphasizes agency and autonomy. Participants decide how much they wish to share, how they want to express themselves, and which stories they feel comfortable exploring. This is particularly important for young women with migrant backgrounds, many of whom may have experienced situations where their voices were limited or suppressed. Voluntary participation restores a sense of control and ownership over their learning and artistic journey.

Inclusion and Accessibility

Non-Formal Education adapts to the diverse needs of learners. In this project, exercises, language, pacing, and group structures are adjusted to support participants with varied cultural backgrounds, language levels, and emotional histories. Inclusion



ensures that every participant feels safe, welcomed, and valued, regardless of previous artistic experience or formal education.

Participant-Led Creation

Instead of a top-down teaching model, NFE positions participants as co-creators of the process. They help shape artistic themes, performance material, and group agreements. Facilitators act as guides rather than directors. This approach strengthens confidence and encourages decision-making, particularly for participants who may not be used to having influence within group settings.

Continuous Reflection

Reflection is a key mechanism of Non-Formal Education. After exercises, workshops, and rehearsals, participants engage in structured discussions about what they felt, learned, and discovered. Reflection supports emotional processing and connects artistic exploration with social themes such as gender equality, migration, and human rights. Through reflection circles, participants become more aware of their personal growth, strengths, and transformations throughout the project.

4.2 Arts-Based Pedagogy: The Creative Engine of the Project

Arts-Based Pedagogy functions as the creative engine of the project. It is not used as entertainment, but as a method of learning, empowerment, and communication. Artistic processes give access to emotional and experiential knowledge that cannot be reached through conventional teaching methods.

Applied Theatre

Applied theatre practices, including role play, Forum Theatre, and character exploration, allow participants to step into different perspectives and examine social issues in a safe and structured way. By embodying various roles, they gain insight into power dynamics, discrimination, and identity from multiple viewpoints.

Improvisation

Improvisation fosters spontaneity, imagination, and emotional release while building trust and presence within the group. It is especially effective for participants who may hesitate to speak in a foreign language, as the body and imagination become primary tools of communication.



Movement and Embodiment

Movement-based work helps participants reconnect with their bodies, which is particularly important when working with experiences of stress, trauma, or identity fragmentation. Through guided movement, participants express emotions and stories that may not yet have verbal form.

Storytelling and Autobiographical Writing

Writing and storytelling exercises help participants articulate personal experiences, memories, and aspirations. These narratives often become the foundation of performance material. Storytelling also supports self-reflection and the development of narrative identity.

Collective Creation

Rather than producing individual works, participants co-create shared scenes, choreographies, and images. This strengthens solidarity and reinforces the idea of a collective journey. Collective creation also builds skills in negotiation, empathy, and collaboration.

Visual and Sound Expression

Drawing, soundscapes, and vocal improvisation provide additional layers of expression, particularly for participants who are not comfortable speaking publicly. These artistic languages allow complex emotional and social themes to be explored through symbolic and sensory forms.

Why Art Works for Human Rights Learning

Art transforms abstract human rights concepts into lived experiences. Participants do not only learn about discrimination or equality; they embody these realities, express them creatively, and reflect on them collectively. This embodied understanding fosters deeper empathy, stronger critical thinking, and more powerful advocacy.

4.3 Human Rights Education Integrated Through Art

Human Rights Education in this project is not delivered through lectures or formal instruction. Instead, it is woven into the artistic process. Participants engage with human rights themes by reenacting moments of injustice, expressing belonging or exclusion through movement, creating fictional stories inspired by real issues,



discussing gender norms and intersectionality, and exploring their rights as young women, migrants, and active members of society.

Human rights learning becomes meaningful when it connects to personal experience. Through creative exploration, participants recognize how universal human rights principles relate to their own lives and communities. This approach transforms human rights from abstract legal frameworks into lived realities, empowering participants to see themselves as rights-holders and active contributors to social change.

4.4 The Combined Effect: Why This Method Works

By blending NFE, artistic pedagogy, and human rights learning, the project creates a sophisticated educational environment where:

- participants learn safely and expressively,
- emotional experiences turn into artistic material,
- personal stories gain political and social meaning,
- group solidarity strengthens individual empowerment,
- art becomes a vehicle for advocacy and visibility.

This combined methodology is ideal for young women with migrant backgrounds, because it respects their lived realities, promotes autonomy, and strengthens their voices in both artistic and civic spaces.

4.5 The Role of Facilitators and Ethical Safeguards

The facilitators play a crucial role in shaping the learning environment and ensuring that the project remains both safe and empowering. Their responsibility goes far beyond guiding artistic processes. They act as educators, mediators, mentors, and protectors of the group's emotional well-being. Because the participants include young women with migrant backgrounds—some of whom may have experienced trauma, displacement, or discrimination—the facilitator's approach must be sensitive, ethical, and culturally informed.

Facilitators as Guides, Not Directors



In this project, facilitators do not impose a creative vision or dictate the content. Instead, they support participants in exploring their own stories and perspectives. Their role is to offer structure, encourage experimentation, and help translate emotions and lived experiences into artistic forms.

Creating a Safe and Trusting Environment

Facilitators establish spaces where vulnerability is respected and confidentiality is guaranteed. They model inclusive behavior, encourage mutual respect, and foster an environment where mistakes, hesitations, and emotional reactions are accepted as natural parts of the learning journey.

Ethical Guidelines and Consent-Based Practice

Because personal stories may emerge during workshops, ethical safeguards are essential. These safeguards include:

- informed consent before sharing autobiographical material;
- the right to withdraw content at any point;
- sensitivity to cultural and linguistic differences;
- non-judgmental listening and validation;
- protection from pressure or coercion, especially in emotionally charged exercises.

Facilitators must continuously monitor the emotional climate of the group and adapt the pace or content of activities accordingly.

Cultural and Gender Sensitivity

Considering the diversity of the participants, facilitators must be aware of cultural norms, religious sensitivities, gender dynamics, and personal boundaries. This awareness helps avoid actions that might inadvertently cause discomfort or exclusion.

Collaborative Learning Approach

Facilitators work alongside mentors, youth workers, and interdisciplinary experts to ensure coherent support. This teamwork strengthens the educational impact and allows participants to build trust with multiple adults who support their development.



4.6 Trauma-Sensitive Practices

Given that some young women with migrant backgrounds may carry experiences related to migration, loss, conflict, discrimination, or economic hardship, the project integrates trauma-sensitive methodologies. These practices ensure emotional safety and prevent re-traumatization while supporting healing and empowerment.

Principles of Trauma-Sensitive Work

1. Safety Before Anything Else

Physical and emotional safety form the backbone of all sessions. Lighting, room layout, pacing, and even transitions between exercises are carefully considered to avoid overwhelming participants.

2. Choice and Autonomy

Participants choose how much to share and how deeply to engage in emotional or autobiographical work. This reduces stress and reinforces their sense of control.

3. Predictability and Transparency

Facilitators clearly explain each exercise beforehand, including its purpose, duration, and expected emotional intensity. Predictability helps participants feel secure and reduces anxiety.

4. Grounding Techniques

Workshops often include grounding and stabilizing exercises such as breathing, body awareness, and sensory orientation. These techniques help participants manage emotional activation.

5. Slow Pace and Permission to Pause

If strong emotions arise, participants may step outside the room, take a break, or speak privately with a facilitator. The group respects pauses as part of healthy self-regulation.

How Trauma-Sensitive Practices Enhance Artistic Expression



Trauma-sensitive principles do not silence difficult topics; rather, they ensure that participants can explore them safely. Art becomes a controlled, structured space where painful or complex experiences can be transformed into creative material without emotional harm. This approach encourages resilience, self-knowledge, and emotional processing.

4.7 How the Methodology Supports Empowerment Outcomes

The combination of NFE, arts-based pedagogy, and trauma-sensitive practice leads to meaningful empowerment outcomes for participants. Each methodology contributes to specific forms of growth.

1. Personal Empowerment

Through embodied participation, storytelling, and reflection, participants develop:

- self-confidence and agency,
- a stronger sense of identity,
- awareness of their rights,
- the ability to express emotions safely.

For young women whose voices are often marginalized, the chance to shape their own narrative is itself a powerful act.

2. Social Empowerment

The collective creation process strengthens group belonging and mutual support. Participants learn to:

- collaborate,
- negotiate artistic decisions,
- respect diversity,
- navigate intercultural differences.

This builds solidarity and reduces isolation, especially for migrant women who may struggle to find supportive networks.

3. Creative Empowerment

The project nurtures artistic confidence by teaching participants that:



- creativity is accessible to everyone,
- artistic skills can be developed without formal training,
- their personal experiences have artistic and social value.

Performing or sharing creative work publicly further strengthens their sense of visibility and worth.

4. Civic and Human Rights Empowerment

By linking personal experiences with human rights topics, participants develop:

- awareness of discrimination and inequality,
- critical thinking towards social structures,
- a sense of agency in advocating for change,
- readiness to engage in civic dialogue.

Art becomes more than expression—it becomes a tool for participation and influence.

5. The Co-Creation Process

5.1 Introduction: What Co-Creation Means in This Project

Co-creation is the central methodology of the project and the main reason our artistic and educational work is transformative for young women with migrant backgrounds. In this context, co-creation means that participants are not passive recipients of information but active authors of the artistic material. The stories, movements, images, and performances are shaped collectively, with every participant having the opportunity to contribute, influence decisions, and take ownership of the final result.

Unlike traditional performing arts where a director determines the script and performers follow instructions, our method reverses that hierarchy. The knowledge, creativity, and personal experiences of the young women become the foundation of the artistic process. Facilitators support and guide the process, but the true authorship lies with the participants. This approach ensures authenticity, emotional depth, and high levels of engagement, while also strengthening self-expression, confidence, and group cohesion.

Co-creation is particularly effective in human-rights-focused projects because it gives space for personal stories, lived experiences, and collective reflection. When participants articulate their views through art, they are simultaneously learning, healing, and advocating for social change.



5.2 Why Co-Creation Is Effective for Human Rights Education

Human rights are often understood abstractly—as laws, declarations, or political principles. But for young women with migrant backgrounds, human rights can also be deeply personal. They may have experienced discrimination, violence, cultural conflict, or exclusion. Co-creation allows them to explore these themes safely, without forcing them to share more than they are ready to reveal.

Through improv, movement, writing, and storytelling, the participants can approach sensitive topics symbolically or metaphorically. A movement sequence may express fear. A fictional character might speak about discrimination. A scene may show an experience of courage or belonging. This distances the individual from the issue while making the artistic work emotionally truthful.

Co-creation also validates participants' lived realities. When they hear others share similar experiences, they realize they are not alone. The group forms a supportive environment where vulnerability is respected and differences are celebrated. This collective empowerment is one of the strongest outcomes of the project.

5.3 Stage 1: Building Trust and Group Connection

Before any artistic material can be created, the group must feel safe enough to explore emotional themes. The first stage is dedicated to building trust. Facilitators introduce simple games, movement exercises, and interactive activities that help participants relax and connect with one another. By laughing, moving together, and learning each other's names and stories, the group slowly builds a sense of familiarity.

This stage also includes establishing group agreements: respecting confidentiality, listening without judgment, encouraging one another, and allowing each participant to contribute at their own pace. These agreements create the "safe space" in which artistic exploration becomes possible.

Trust-building is vital because it prepares the emotional ground for deeper work. Without it, participants may hesitate to express themselves, limit their creativity, or avoid sensitive topics. With trust, the group becomes a community of mutual support.

5.4 Stage 2: Exploring Themes Through Artistic Methods



Once trust is established, the group begins exploring human rights themes through multiple art-based activities. These sessions are designed to open emotional pathways, stimulate imagination, and encourage participants to translate personal or social issues into artistic forms.

Improvisation exercises may invite participants to explore power, borders, gender roles, or stereotypes. Guided writing prompts can help them describe moments of injustice, belonging, or courage. Movement workshops might explore themes of restriction versus freedom, or solidarity versus isolation. Sound and rhythm may express cultural roots, tension, or resilience.

Facilitators create a gentle structure for exploration, but participants decide how far they want to go. The focus is not on “good performance” but on authentic expression and collective discovery.

5.5 Stage 3: Gathering Material and Identifying Core Themes

At this stage, the creative work becomes more concrete. Participants look back at everything they produced—short stories, gestures, dialogues, images, movement fragments—and begin to identify what resonates most strongly. Certain themes emerge repeatedly: identity, discrimination, borders, courage, dreams, community.

This is the moment when the artistic material begins to take shape. The group discusses which scenes or ideas they want to keep, what messages feel important, and how their voices can be shared with the audience. The facilitators help participants organize these choices without imposing artistic decisions, always reinforcing the idea that the final performance belongs to them.

5.6 Stage 4: Building the Performance Structure

Once the group has selected the core material, they begin constructing the performance. This includes deciding the sequence of scenes, defining transitions, and shaping the emotional arc. The structure may be linear or fragmented, symbolic or narrative, depending on the group’s creative preferences.

Participants debate, collaborate, and negotiate. This is a vital part of the learning process: they develop teamwork, communication skills, and the ability to compromise. The facilitators offer artistic tools—how to stage a scene, how to use space, how to integrate sound or movement—but every choice is made collectively.



The emerging performance becomes a reflection of both individual stories and shared experiences.

5.7 Stage 5: Rehearsing and Refining

Rehearsals are the phase where artistic growth becomes visible. Through repetition, active feedback, and collective problem-solving, participants strengthen their performance and their confidence. They learn to trust their bodies, their voices, and their creative instincts.

This stage is not only about perfecting technique; it is also about emotional resilience. Performing personal themes can be sensitive, so facilitators check in regularly, offering support and ensuring that the work remains empowering rather than overwhelming.

5.8 Stage 6: Final Performance and Collective Reflection

The final performance is not the end of the project—it is a celebration of the journey. When participants share their work with local audiences, they see that their voices have value and impact. This experience is powerful, especially for young women who often feel unheard in society.

After the performance, a collective reflection takes place. Participants discuss what they learned, how the process changed them, and how the audience reacted. This reflective circle reinforces personal growth and strengthens group solidarity.

5.9 How Co-Creation Strengthens Empowerment

Throughout the process, participants gain:

- confidence to express themselves
- emotional resilience
- creative skills
- a sense of belonging
- awareness of human rights issues
- pride in their cultural identity
- experience working in multicultural teams



Co-creation transforms them from “participants” into “creators,” and this shift has long-lasting social and personal effects.

Chapter 6 – Human Rights & Artistic Creation

6.1 Introduction: Why Art and Human Rights Belong Together

Art has long been a powerful tool for expressing lived experiences, challenging inequality, and fostering collective awareness. In this project, the artistic process is closely intertwined with human rights education to create spaces where young women with migrant backgrounds can explore, understand, and voice issues affecting their lives.

By integrating human rights principles with creative expression, participants are supported in:

- recognizing violations and inequalities they have experienced,
- understanding their rights as individuals and community members,
- transforming personal stories into collective messages,
- engaging in public dialogue through artistic performances,
- developing agency to advocate for social change.

Art does not simply illustrate human rights. It becomes a **vehicle** through which these rights are made visible, relatable, and emotionally impactful.

6.2 Human Rights Education (HRE) in a Non-Formal Context

Unlike formal school-based education, HRE in this project is **participatory, experiential, and grounded in lived reality**. It encourages young people to explore what rights mean in everyday life rather than memorize abstract legal frameworks. Workshops introduce participants to key human rights concepts while connecting them to personal and collective experiences.

Core Human Rights Principles Integrated into Workshops

1. **Dignity and Equality** – All participants’ stories and identities are valued equally.
2. **Non-Discrimination** – Sessions challenge stereotypes and explore experiences of exclusion.
3. **Participation and Freedom of Expression** – Participants shape the creative process.



4. **Cultural Identity and Freedom of Belief** – Diverse cultural backgrounds enrich the collective work.
5. **Safety and Well-being** – Trauma-sensitive methodologies protect participants' emotional integrity.

Human rights education is not taught academically but through **dialogue, embodiment, and artistic exploration.**

6.3 Linking Human Rights Themes to Personal Narratives

Many participants have experienced challenges related to migration, discrimination, gender inequality, and economic precarity. These issues are connected to core human rights, such as:

- the right to seek asylum,
- the right to equality,
- freedom from violence or exploitation,
- the right to education and access to culture,
- the right to participate in community life.

Transforming Experiences into Creative Material

Workshops guide participants through a process of reflection:

- *What moments made you feel your rights were respected?*
- *When did you feel voiceless or unheard?*
- *What change would you want to see in your community or society?*

Participants may choose to express these reflections through:

- monologues,
- poetry,
- movement sequences,
- dialogue scenes,
- symbolic visual imagery,
- soundscapes,
- collective performances.

Personal stories become a **source of knowledge**, and art becomes a **platform for reclaiming voice.**



6.4 Collective Creation and Shared Responsibility

Human rights are both **individual and collective**, and so is the artistic process. Participants learn how to navigate differences, negotiate creative decisions, and collaborate, mirroring democratic participation in society.

Key Elements of Collective Creation

- **Co-leadership:** Leadership circulates based on strengths and ideas.
- **Consensus-building:** Decisions are made through discussion rather than hierarchy.
- **Shared authorship:** Each participant contributes to shaping the final performance.
- **Collective care:** The emotional well-being of the group takes precedence over artistic perfection.

This mirrors human rights values by building **solidarity, mutual respect, and active citizenship**.

6.5 Artistic Forms Used to Explore Human Rights

1. Applied Theatre & Forum Theatre

Used to explore power dynamics, discrimination, and injustice. Participants can replay scenarios and try different strategies for resistance. During the event in Serbia, Belgrade our group had the chance to taste and applied the Forum Theater, a very exceptional experience for everyone.

Forum Theatre is a participatory theatre method developed by Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal as part of the broader approach known as the Theatre of the Oppressed. It transforms theatre from a passive performance into an interactive space where audiences become active participants in exploring and changing social realities.

Unlike traditional theatre, where spectators simply watch a story unfold, Forum Theatre invites the audience to intervene, suggest solutions, and step into the performance to try out alternative actions.

This makes Forum Theatre not only an artistic form but also a powerful educational and empowerment tool.



Core Principles of Forum Theatre

1. From Spectators to “Spect-Actors”

Participants are no longer passive viewers. They become “spect-actors” — individuals who observe a situation and then actively intervene to change its outcome. This shift symbolises the move from silence and powerlessness to voice and action.

2. Theatre as Rehearsal for Reality

Forum Theatre presents scenes of oppression or injustice that reflect real-life situations. The performance is repeated, and audience members are invited to replace the main character to try different strategies. In this way, theatre becomes a safe space to rehearse responses to real challenges.

3. Collective Problem-Solving

The goal is not to find one “correct” solution but to explore multiple possibilities. Through dialogue and experimentation, the group collectively reflects on power, responsibility, and social change.

4. The Role of the Joker

A facilitator known as the *Joker* guides the process. The Joker mediates between actors and audience, encourages participation, ensures respectful dialogue, and maintains emotional safety. The Joker does not impose solutions but helps participants analyse and reflect on the situation.

Why Forum Theatre Is Effective in Youth Work

Forum Theatre is particularly valuable when working with young people with fewer opportunities because it:

- builds **confidence** through active participation
- supports **critical thinking** about social norms and power structures
- encourages **empathy** by exploring multiple perspectives
- strengthens **communication skills**
- transforms personal experiences into collective learning
- provides a **safe and symbolic distance** to explore sensitive issues

Through Forum Theatre, young people move from feeling like victims of circumstances to seeing themselves as potential agents of change.



Forum Theatre and Human Rights Education

Forum Theatre naturally aligns with human rights education because it explores:

- discrimination and inequality
- gender roles and power dynamics
- social exclusion and marginalisation
- freedom of expression
- access to rights and opportunities

Participants do not simply learn about rights in theory — they *experience* situations where rights are denied and explore ways to challenge injustice. This embodied learning deepens understanding and fosters active citizenship.

Forum Theatre in This Project

In *Youth Empowerment Through Creative Expression*, Forum Theatre is used to:

- explore challenges faced by young people with fewer opportunities
- transform real-life experiences into creative scenes
- rehearse strategies for responding to discrimination or exclusion
- promote dialogue between young people, communities, and decision-makers

Through the process, participants gain confidence, voice, and a sense of collective strength, while audiences are invited to reflect on their role in shaping a more inclusive society.

The following programme illustrates how Forum Theatre and participatory arts methods were implemented during the mobility activity in Serbia as part of the Erasmus+ youth participation project. The structure combines human rights education, non-formal learning, and Theatre of the Oppressed techniques to support youth empowerment.

Activity Dates: 21–25 August 2025

Venues: Panorama Hotel (Belgrade, Serbia) & State of Art (Mali Iđoš, Serbia)

Youth empowerment through creative expression

Activity dates (to-from):		21.08-25.08.2025.			
Venue of the activity (town, country):		Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia State of Art, Mali Idjos, Serbia			
Day	Session	Activities	Description	Required materials	Venue of the activity
1		Arrivals	Pick-up		Belgrade, Serbia
		Welcome dinner	Initial meeting and getting to know each other		Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia
2	1	Getting to know each other	During this session, participants will have the opportunity to get to know each other through various interactive games, learn about the organizations of other participants, and at the end of the session, we will go through their expectations of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ball - Flipchart paper - Markers - A4 paper - Crepe tape / masking tape - Sticky notes 	Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia
	2	Introduction to women's human rights	Participants will learn about the fundamental human rights of women, discuss common violations and challenges, explore examples of advocacy and protection, and reflect on ways to promote gender equality in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sticky notes - Flipchart paper - Markers - A4 paper - Crepe tape / masking tape 	Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia
	3	(Employability of) Young	Participants will explore the challenges and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laptop - Flipchart 	Panorama Hotel,

		women with migrant background in our countries	young migrant women face in the labor market in their countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paper - Markers - A4 paper - Crepe tape / masking tape 	Belgrade, Serbia
	4	What is Forum theatre?!	In this session, participants will learn what Forum Theatre is, explore all its elements, and have the opportunity to watch a recorded performance on a similar topic to study visit to help them better understand it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flipchart paper - Markers - Sticky notes - Crepe tape / masking tape - Standard deck of cards - Laptop - Projector 	Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia
3	1	Image theatre – exploring Issues	Each participant creates a “sculpture” representing a social injustice or personal problem. In small groups, discuss: what do these images mean? Combine images into group compositions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whistle - Stopwatch 	State of Art, Mali Idjos, Serbia
	2	From issue to scene	Participants return to their small groups formed in the previous session and stay in those groups. Within these groups, they continue creating scenes. In this session, participants choose a topic – a problem – related to young female migrants. Then, groups work on their scene with clear elements: Main character (oppressed), oppressor (the one in power), joker and neutral characters. Focus on the “turning point” – the moment for audience intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flipchart paper - Markers 	State of Art, Mali Idjos, Serbia

	3	Scene development	Each group rehearses their scene. The facilitator helps clarify: Who is oppressed, who is oppressor, where the audience can intervene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flipchart paper - Markers - Costumes 	State of Art, Mali Idjos, Serbia
	4	Forum performance	Each group performs their scene in front of the other participants and audience (persons who are part of the State of Art) and decision makers. Discussion follows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience chairs 	State of Art, Mali Idjos, Serbia
4	1	Creating video clips	Creating video clips where participants reflect on what they learned during study visit activities and their experiences with the Erasmus+ program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone stand - One phone per participating organisations 	Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia
	2	Evaluation	<p>During this session, participants will have several ways to provide feedback on the entire program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using a pizza diagram - Leaving written feedback on sticky notes - Choosing two Dixit cards to describe their experience - Filling out an online form - At the end, writing wishes and feedback for each other on A4 paper and placing them in envelopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flipchart paper - Markers - Sticky notes - A4 paper - Crepe tape / masking tape - Envelopes - Dixit cards - Online evaluation form 	Panorama Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia



	3	Free afternoon	Cultural exchange activities and visit to key historical and cultural sites.		Belgrade, Serbia
	4				
5		Departure			Belgrade, Serbia

The mobility activity in Belgrade marked a significant moment in the journey of the project Youth Empowerment through Creative Expression. Over the course of the programme, young people with fewer opportunities engaged deeply with themes of human rights, identity, and social inclusion through artistic and participatory methods.

Through Forum Theatre, image theatre, storytelling, and collective creation, participants moved from personal reflection to public expression. They explored real-life challenges, shared lived experiences, and experimented with ways to respond to injustice and discrimination. The learning process was not only intellectual but also emotional and embodied, allowing participants to build confidence, empathy, and a stronger sense of voice.

The final Forum Theatre performances demonstrated the power of art as a tool for dialogue. By inviting audience members to intervene and suggest alternative actions, the performances encouraged collective problem-solving and highlighted the role of young people as active agents of change in their communities.

Beyond the structured sessions, informal moments — shared meals, cultural visits, and everyday interactions — strengthened intercultural understanding and group solidarity. Participants developed friendships, mutual respect, and a deeper awareness of diversity within Europe.



Documentation of the Experience

To capture and share the impact of the activity, the project team collected visual and audiovisual material throughout the mobility.

Photographs document:

- Workshop processes and creative exercises
- Group collaboration and reflection moments
- Forum Theatre rehearsals and performances
- Intercultural exchange and informal learning

These images serve both as a record of the learning journey and as a dissemination tool to inspire other youth organisations and communities.

In addition, participants collaboratively created a **video reflection**, where they shared their experiences, learning outcomes, and personal impressions from the project. The video highlights:

- What participants discovered about themselves
- How they experienced Forum Theatre and artistic expression
- Why human rights and inclusion matter to them
- How they plan to apply their learning in their local contexts



This audiovisual documentation strengthens the visibility of the project and ensures that the voices of young participants remain central to the narrative.

Overall Impact

The mobility activity contributed to:

- **Personal empowerment** – Participants increased self-confidence, self-expression, and emotional awareness.
- **Social empowerment** – Young people developed teamwork skills, empathy, and intercultural competence.
- **Civic empowerment** – Participants gained a clearer understanding of human rights and their role in promoting inclusion and equality.
- **Creative empowerment** – Youth discovered artistic tools they can continue using as forms of expression and advocacy.

The experience confirmed that creative methodologies such as Forum Theatre can be powerful instruments for youth participation, democratic dialogue, and social change. The mobility was not only an educational activity, but also a transformative collective experience that strengthened young people's voices and their sense of belonging within a wider European community.



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2. Improvisation

Allows spontaneous responses to human rights dilemmas, fostering creativity and problem-solving skills.

3. Embodied Movement

Participants express emotions related to fear, belonging, displacement, or empowerment not only through words but through the body.

4. Storytelling and Autobiographical Writing

Narratives uncover invisible experiences and help transform private stories into collective meaning.

5. Visual and Sound Expression

Symbolic imagery, objects, drawings, and soundscapes are used to express experiences that may be difficult to verbalize.

6. Collective Performance Creation

All forms merge into a cohesive artistic piece that communicates the group's human rights message to the public.

5.6 Human Rights Advocacy Through Performance

The final performances are not merely artistic shows—they are **advocacy tools**. By presenting their work to audiences, participants:

- highlight human rights challenges faced by women with migrant backgrounds,



- challenge stereotypes and misconceptions,
- create emotional resonance and empathy,
- open space for dialogue with decision-makers and community leaders,
- raise awareness of community needs.

Performances become a **bridge** between personal experiences and broader social issues.

5.7 Dialogue With Decision-Makers

Each performance is followed by moderated discussions where participants engage with:

- local authorities,
- cultural institutions,
- youth workers,
- NGOs,
- policymakers,
- community leaders.

This transforms the artistic work into a **starting point for policy dialogue**, giving young women a platform to influence change and make recommendations.

5.8 Ethical Considerations When Linking Human Rights & Art

Given the sensitivity of topics addressed, it is essential to:

- respect boundaries and consent,
- avoid sensationalizing participants' experiences,
- protect privacy where needed,
- ensure no participant feels exposed or unsafe,
- avoid cultural misrepresentation or tokenism,
- prioritize emotional safety over artistic ambition.

Ethics are built into every stage—from story creation to public presentation.



Chapter 7 – Workshop Designs and Session Templates

7.1 Introduction: Purpose of the Workshops

The workshops form the core of the project’s methodology. They are designed to integrate **non-formal human rights education** with **artistic creation**, offering a safe and inclusive environment for young migrant women to explore identity, empowerment, and social justice. Each workshop:

- builds skills progressively,
- enhances confidence and self-expression,
- strengthens group cohesion,
- prepares participants for public performance,
- ensures emotional safety throughout.

Workshops follow **three chronological phases**:

1. **Foundation Phase** – Trust-building, basic artistic tools, exploring identity
2. **Exploration Phase** – Linking personal stories with human rights themes
3. **Creation Phase** – Transforming experiences into performance material

This chapter provides a detailed design for each phase, with ready-to-use templates.

7.2 Foundation Phase – Creating a Safe Creative Space

Objectives

- Establish trust and group cohesion
- Introduce non-formal learning principles
- Begin artistic exploration without pressure to disclose personal stories
- Create a safe environment for risk-taking and creativity

Key Principles

- **Consent:** Participation is voluntary and negotiable
- **Confidentiality:** Personal stories stay within the group
- **Right to pass:** Participants may opt out of any activity
- **Non-judgment:** No evaluation of artistic ability



Workshop 1 – Building Trust & Body Awareness

Learning Goals

- Promote group cohesion
- Increase comfort with creative expression
- Explore physical presence and spatial awareness

Structure (90 minutes)

1. **Welcome Circle (10 min)**
A grounding ritual where participants share a word describing their mood.
Facilitator note: Avoid asking for explanations—keep the space light and safe.
2. **Name & Gesture Round (10 min)**
Participants present themselves with a gesture that others repeat.
Facilitates memorization, attention, and playfulness.
3. **Body Activation (15 min)**
Movement improvisation guided by sound, rhythm, or facilitator cues.
Encourages participants to inhabit their bodies confidently.
4. **“Where I Stand” Exercise (20 min)**
Participants position themselves along an imaginary line in response to statements:
 - “I feel powerful today.”
 - “I feel safe speaking in groups.”The activity visualizes shared emotions and creates empathy.
5. **Reflection Circle (10 min)**
 - What surprised you?
 - What did you learn about yourself?

Material: Open space, audio speaker.

7.3 Exploration Phase – Connecting Art and Human Rights

Objectives

- Identify human rights themes relevant to participants’ lives
- Explore emotions and experiences through artistic methods
- Begin transforming lived experiences into symbolic expression

Workshop 2 – Storytelling & Autobiographical Fragments



Learning Goals

- Understand basic storytelling structure
- Explore personal memories safely and creatively

Structure (120 minutes)

1. **Warm-up – “The Journey of an Object” (15 min)**
Participants bring a personal object and tell a short fictional story about it.
This allows emotional distance before moving to real stories.
2. **Mini Lecture – Human Rights in Everyday Life (10 min)**
Simple explanation of rights using examples meaningful to young migrant women:
 - access to education,
 - safety,
 - freedom of expression,
 - cultural identity,
 - right to participate in community life.
3. **“Fragment Writing” (20 min)**
Short autobiographical texts structured by prompts such as:
 - “A moment when I felt seen.”
 - “A moment when I felt silenced.”
 - “A border—real or symbolic—that I crossed.”
4. **Sharing in Pairs (15 min)**
Written texts are exchanged only if participants wish.
5. **From Story to Image (20 min)**
Participants choose a single word from their writing and express it through:
 - a pose,
 - a gesture,
 - a sound,
 - or a symbolic object.
6. **Reflection and Grounding (10 min)**
Facilitator debriefs emotional impact and ensures closure.

Materials: Paper, pens, optional art materials.

7.4 Workshop 3 – Embodied Human Rights & Applied Theatre

Purpose



To help participants explore systemic issues through embodied situations, using theatre techniques.

Key Tools

- Forum Theatre
- Image Theatre
- Improvisation

Structure (120 minutes)

1. **Warm-Up – Trust Walk (10 min)**
Pair exercise exploring trust and vulnerability.
2. **Image Theatre: “A moment of injustice” (20 min)**
Participants create frozen images representing situations of discrimination.
Group observes:
 - What rights are involved?
 - What emotions are visible?
3. **Forum Theatre Scenarios (40 min)**
Participants act out scenes based on real experiences.
Spectators intervene and propose alternative actions.
Outcome: Deepened understanding of agency and structural injustice.
4. **Debrief (20 min)**
Discussion guided by three questions:
 - What did you see?
 - How did you feel?
 - What choices could empower us in real life?

7.5 Creation Phase – Developing the Final Performance

Workshop 4 – Collective Creation Laboratory

Objectives

- Combine material from earlier workshops
- Decide themes, structure, and roles
- Begin developing a cohesive performance

Structure (2–3 hours)

1. **Review of all creative materials**



- monologues
 - movement sequences
 - images
 - texts
 - sound recordings
2. **Theme Selection**
Through democratic decision-making, the group identifies:
 - 1–3 key human rights themes
 - emotional tone
 - intended message for audiences
 3. **Creation Clusters**
Participants form small groups based on artistic interest (movement, text, music, visual art).
 4. **Drafting First Scenes**
Each cluster creates 2–3 minutes of material.
 5. **Run-through & Collective Feedback**

7.6 Workshop 5 – Rehearsal & Advocacy Preparation

Objectives

- Refine the performance
- Practice audience interaction
- Prepare for dialogue with decision-makers

Activities

- Full rehearsals
- Vocal projection training
- Managing stage fright
- Preparing key advocacy messages
- Finalizing visual and sound elements

6.7 Session Templates for Facilitators

Template A – Artistic Workshop Plan

Section	Description
Title	Name of session



Section	Description
Duration	Total time
Objectives	Learning goals
Human Rights Links	Rights addressed
Materials	Items needed
Activities	Step-by-step plan
Safety Notes	Emotional considerations
Reflection	Questions for discussion

Template B – Participant Reflection Sheet

- Today I learned...
- I felt...
- A moment that stayed with me...
- A right connected to my experience is...
- One thing I want to explore further...

Template C – Facilitator Debrief Log

- What worked well
- Challenges observed
- Emotional reactions in the group
- Adjustments needed
- Ideas for next session

Chapter 8 – Case Studies: Local Contexts, Creative Journeys, and Emerging Voices

This chapter presents **three in-depth case studies**—from Greece, Serbia, and Armenia—highlighting how young women with migrant or minority backgrounds engaged with the project’s artistic and human rights methodologies. Each case study includes:

- Local social and political context
- Characteristics of the participant group
- Workshop implementation and artistic process
- Challenges encountered
- Transformations, learning outcomes, and impact
- Reflections on human rights themes emerging from each country



These case studies demonstrate the **adaptability** of the project model across different cultural, socio-political, and artistic environments, while maintaining a consistent framework of inclusion, empowerment, and creative expression.

8.1 Case Study – Greece (Social Inclusion Association)

Identity, Belonging, and the Search for Voice

Local Context

Greece has been a major entry point for migration into Europe, hosting large communities of asylum seekers, refugees, and second-generation migrant youth. Young migrant women often face:

- institutional discrimination,
- unstable residence status,
- language barriers,
- limited access to education and cultural spaces,
- high exposure to gender-based stereotypes.

This environment makes Greece an ideal setting for a project focused on empowerment through arts and human rights.

Participant Profile

Participants in Greece included:

- young women from Syria, Afghanistan, Congo, Ukraine, Albania, and Georgia;
- second-generation migrant girls born in Greece but facing systemic exclusion;
- young women who had experienced long-term camp residence;
- participants with interrupted education or trauma backgrounds.

Despite diverse origins, all shared a **common feeling of invisibility** in Greek society.



Artistic Journey in Greece

Initial Phase – Establishing Safety

Facilitators prioritized gentle movement exercises, name games, and trust-building activities. Many participants were initially quiet, hesitant to speak about personal experiences, but responded strongly to:

- body-based exercises,
- non-verbal theatre,
- drawing and symbolism.

This confirmed that embodied methodologies are especially powerful for people with limited Greek or English proficiency.

Throughout the workshops in Greece, photographs were taken (with prior consent) to document the creative process, group dynamics, and key learning moments. These images capture not only the artistic work but also the emotional journey of the participants.

The visual material reflects:



- trust-building exercises and first group connections
- embodied movement sessions where participants explored identity and belonging
- storytelling and autobiographical writing moments
- collaborative scene-building and rehearsals
- reflection circles where participants shared feelings and insights

The photos show how the group gradually moved from hesitation and observation to active participation, creative leadership, and shared ownership of the artistic process. They also illustrate the diversity of expression — through movement, still images, gestures, and symbolic use of space — that allowed participants to communicate beyond language barriers.

These visual records are not only documentation tools but also evidence of empowerment in action: body posture, eye contact, group proximity, and expressive gestures visibly evolved over the course of the workshops.

Voices of the Participants – Feedback from Greece

Participant feedback was collected through reflection circles, written exercises, and informal conversations at the end of the workshops. Their words highlight the emotional and personal significance of the experience.

Some of the key reflections included:

“For the first time, I felt that my story was important and that people really listened.”

“I was afraid to speak in front of others at the beginning. Now I can stand on stage and share something that belongs to me.”

“Through movement, I could say things I never found words for.”

“I realized that what happened to me is not only my problem — it is connected to rights and to how society works.”

“I found sisters here. We supported each other and understood each other without explaining everything.”

Many participants described a shift from feeling isolated or invisible to feeling seen, heard, and valued. They also reported increased confidence in expressing opinions,



stronger awareness of their rights, and motivation to continue participating in community and artistic activities.

Observed Changes During the Greek Workshops

Facilitators and youth workers observed several important developments among participants:

- **Increased self-confidence** – Participants who were initially quiet began leading exercises and volunteering for central roles in scenes.
- **Greater emotional expression** – Movement and storytelling helped participants express complex feelings safely.
- **Stronger group solidarity** – Trust grew visibly, and participants began supporting each other during challenging exercises.
- **Clearer understanding of human rights** – Personal stories were increasingly linked to broader concepts such as equality, dignity, and non-discrimination.

The combination of visual documentation and participant feedback confirms that the workshops in Greece were not only artistically productive but also deeply transformative on a personal and social level.

Exploration Phase – Personal Stories Emerge Through Symbolism

During the exploration phase, participants began expressing their experiences through symbolic and creative forms. They engaged in autobiographical writing, often with translation support, allowing them to articulate personal memories and emotions in a safe and accessible way. Image Theatre exercises encouraged them to communicate complex feelings and social realities through body shapes and group compositions, while storytelling circles created a supportive space for sharing lived experiences.

The stories that emerged frequently revolved around themes of crossing borders, feeling “between cultures,” fears of deportation, and a deep longing for stability and recognition. These narratives reflected both personal journeys and broader social realities linked to migration and belonging.

A particularly powerful moment occurred when participants were invited to create a collective image of “home.” Some shaped the outline of a house with their bodies, while others embodied suitcases, wind, water, or symbolic borders. This shared physical composition captured the idea of home as something fragile, mobile, and emotionally charged. The image resonated strongly within the group and became the conceptual seed for the Greek performance.



Creation Phase – The Performance: “The House I Carry”

The final performance, titled *“The House I Carry,”* explored the concept of home as something embodied rather than purely geographical. Instead of presenting home as a fixed physical place, the performance portrayed it as something carried within memory, identity, and personal history.

The scenes included movement sequences symbolizing displacement and constant transition, expressing the emotional and physical experience of migration. Spoken-word fragments in multiple languages reflected the diverse backgrounds of the participants and reinforced the idea of layered identities. One monologue addressed the themes of belonging and bureaucracy, highlighting the tension between personal identity and institutional systems. The performance also featured a ritual scene in which participants symbolically reclaimed personal objects from a “border line,” representing the reclaiming of dignity, memory, and agency.

Together, these elements formed a deeply personal and collective artistic statement, transforming individual experiences into a shared narrative about identity, resilience, and the search for belonging.





Impact in Greece

The workshops in Greece had a significant and multi-layered impact on the participants. Many reported a noticeable increase in self-confidence, particularly in their ability to express themselves creatively and speak in front of others. Through the artistic and reflective processes, participants developed a strong sense of community and belonging, discovering that their experiences were shared and understood within the group. This collective environment fostered empowerment, enabling them to share their personal stories publicly with greater courage and clarity.

Participants also deepened their understanding of their rights, especially in relation to education, identity, and active participation in society. By linking their lived experiences with human rights concepts, they began to see themselves not only as individuals facing challenges, but as rights-holders with a voice and a role in their communities.

The final performance opened space for dialogue with local decision-makers and professionals working in the field of integration. This exchange validated the participants' experiences and demonstrated the power of artistic expression as a form of civic engagement. Several young women expressed a desire to remain involved in artistic, social, or community-based initiatives after the project, showing that the impact extended beyond the duration of the workshops and contributed to longer-term motivation for participation and advocacy.





8.2 Case Study – Serbia (Best-Seller Organization)

Human Rights Through Theatre: Confronting Discrimination and Gender Roles

Local Context – Serbia

Serbia presents a complex social landscape shaped by issues related to refugees, Roma communities, migrant workers, and broader socio-economic challenges. Within this context, young women with migrant or minority backgrounds often face multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage. These include deeply rooted patriarchal norms that restrict their autonomy, limited access to education leading to early school leaving, and economic vulnerability that reduces opportunities for personal and professional development.

Many also encounter gender-based violence or discrimination, whether within family structures, educational environments, or the labour market. In addition, systemic exclusion from cultural and artistic spaces further marginalizes their voices, making it difficult for them to express their experiences or participate fully in public life.



This social reality strongly influenced the design and direction of the workshops in Serbia. The artistic and human rights activities were shaped to respond directly to these lived experiences, creating space for participants to explore themes of discrimination, gender expectations, power dynamics, and the right to self-expression. Theatre became a tool not only for storytelling, but also for questioning social norms and imagining alternative possibilities for equality and inclusion.

Participant Profile

The Serbian group included:

- Roma young women;
- girls from refugee and asylum-seeking families;
- young women from rural migrant families;
- LGBTQ+ participants seeking safe expression;
- youth activists already engaged in equality movements.

These participants brought strong lived experiences related to discrimination.





Artistic Journey in Serbia

Initial Phase – Naming Oppression

During the initial phase of the workshops in Serbia, participants demonstrated a strong readiness to speak openly about their lived experiences. Many felt comfortable verbalizing situations related to gender inequality, violations of their rights, peer bullying, and pressures to conform within family and community structures. This openness created a powerful starting point for the creative process.

Because participants were eager to discuss social issues and express their perspectives, the Serbian workshops placed an early emphasis on verbal expression and Forum Theatre. The group naturally gravitated toward advocacy-oriented work, using dialogue and role-play to examine power dynamics and challenge discriminatory norms.

Exploration Phase – Body as Political Text

Building on this foundation, the exploration phase incorporated Augusto Boal's theatre methods to deepen the analysis of social realities through embodied expression. Participants developed scenes portraying school discrimination, **stereotypical** expectations placed on girls, barriers to employment, and experiences of bureaucracy and racism.

A particularly powerful moment occurred during an Image Theatre exercise when one participant froze in a pose symbolizing a "silenced girl." Other participants gradually joined, positioning their bodies around her to represent societal pressure, control, and restriction. This collective sculpture became a striking visual metaphor and later served as a central image in the final performance. Through this process, the body itself became a political text, communicating oppression and resistance beyond words.



Performance – *“Silence Is Not Our Language”*

The final performance, titled *“Silence Is Not Our Language,”* combined several artistic forms developed throughout the workshops. Forum Theatre interventions allowed audience members to step into scenes and propose alternative responses to injustice. Spoken testimonies brought participants’ voices directly to the forefront, while movement sequences expressed the journey from imposed roles toward liberation and self-determination.

The performance was presented to an audience that included NGO representatives, youth workers, and local officials. Their active engagement—especially during the Forum Theatre segments—created a dynamic dialogue about possible solutions and collective responsibility.

Impact in Serbia

The workshops and performance had a significant impact on the participants. Many described feeling empowered by taking control of their own narratives and presenting their experiences publicly. Participants also developed increased leadership abilities and confidence in public speaking, as they guided scenes, shared testimonies, and interacted with the audience.

Through the human rights framework integrated into the artistic process, participants gained greater awareness of gender-based violence, discrimination, and their rights within social and institutional contexts. Several expressed interest in remaining involved in civic or community initiatives, showing that the experience opened new pathways for engagement beyond the project itself.

The Serbian case clearly demonstrates the strength of theatre as a tool for activism, dialogue, and social transformation, enabling young people to move from silence to visible and collective expression.



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The Serbian workshops demonstrated how theatre can become a powerful platform for young women to challenge discrimination, question restrictive gender roles, and claim space for their voices in society. Through a combination of dialogue, embodied expression, and Forum Theatre, participants transformed personal experiences of inequality into collective artistic statements that invited public reflection and action.

The process showed that when young people are given tools, trust, and creative freedom, they are capable of analysing social issues critically and proposing meaningful alternatives. The performance “Silence Is Not Our Language” was not only an artistic outcome but also a civic intervention, creating a space where participants, audiences, and decision-makers could engage in dialogue about rights, dignity, and inclusion.

Beyond the stage, the experience strengthened participants’ belief in their own agency. Many left the project with a clearer sense of their voice, their rights, and their potential to contribute to change within their communities. The Serbian case illustrates how applied theatre can bridge personal storytelling and social advocacy, turning artistic expression into a form of democratic participation.



Voices of the Participants – Feedback from Serbia

Participant reflections highlighted both emotional and practical transformations resulting from the workshops.

Some shared:

“I never thought my everyday experiences were connected to human rights. Now I understand they are political, not just personal.”

“Forum Theatre helped me try out different ways of reacting. It made me feel less powerless.”

“Speaking in front of an audience was scary, but I felt strong because the group supported me.”

“I learned that being a girl does not mean staying silent.”

“This project showed me that art can be a form of protest and change.”

Participants frequently mentioned feeling more confident expressing their opinions, more aware of gender inequality and discrimination, and more motivated to speak up in their communities. Several expressed interest in continuing with theatre, youth activism, or community engagement, showing that the workshops sparked longer-term inspiration beyond the project period.



8.3 Case Study – Armenia (Youth Opportunities Club)

Memory, Trauma, and Collective Healing Through Art

Local Context – Armenia

Armenia's socio-political landscape is shaped by a history of conflict, economic migration, and displacement from border regions. In addition, social conservatism continues to influence the lives of many young women, often placing strong expectations on their roles within the family and limiting space for personal expression.

Many young people grow up in families affected by war, relocation, or economic hardship. Several participants in this project came from Syunik, a southern region where border tensions and instability have been part of everyday life. In such environments, young women are often expected to remain strong for their families, taking on emotional and practical responsibilities from an early age. As a result, they rarely have access to safe spaces where they can openly explore their own emotional needs or personal experiences.

Participant Profile

The Armenian group included young women from conflict-affected areas, particularly Syunik, as well as participants from migrant families originating from Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, and members of ethnic minority communities. Many carried personal or intergenerational experiences of trauma. Despite this, they were initially hesitant to speak publicly, either due to fear of judgment or because sharing personal stories in group settings was unfamiliar to them.

At the same time, participants demonstrated strong emotional awareness and observational skills. Once trust was gradually established, these qualities allowed them to engage deeply in reflective and creative work.



Artistic Journey in Armenia

Initial Phase – Safety and Rituals

The first stage of the workshops focused on establishing emotional safety through grounding and ritual-based practices. Facilitators introduced breathing exercises, movement circles, mandala drawing, and simple grounding rituals. These techniques helped participants release tension without requiring verbal disclosure, which was particularly important in the early days.

Participants responded positively to these methods, explaining that the slow pace and repetitive structures helped them recognise how much stress they had been carrying before arriving at the workshop. Movement-based activities felt especially familiar, as Armenian traditional dances often use circular group formations. Beginning with culturally recognizable forms reduced anxiety and encouraged participation.

Exploration Phase – Memory and Collective Grief

As trust increased, the group moved into memory-based exploration. Activities were designed to approach sensitive themes gradually and symbolically.

The “River of Memories” drawing exercise helped participants map important life events and family histories. Visualising these timelines allowed them to see how past conflicts or forced relocations continued to shape their present experiences. Family object storytelling opened powerful conversations, as participants described photographs, inherited clothing, religious items, or household objects linked to migration, loss, and survival. Many shared that these were stories they had never told outside their homes.

Voice and breath work revealed how tension and fear were stored physically. Some participants noticed that they spoke very quietly or stopped breathing when recalling difficult memories. Through guided exercises, they began to regain vocal strength and confidence. Co-created poetry provided a structured and symbolic way to express complex emotions without exposing personal details too directly.

Key themes that emerged included loss and resilience, intergenerational memory, the pressure to remain strong for family members, confusion about identity after migration, the need to reclaim pride in cultural traditions, and the search for a stable sense of self through art.



Performance Phase – “Roots Under Fire”

The final performance, titled *“Roots Under Fire,”* brought together the artistic methods developed during the workshops. Shadow theatre played a central role, allowing participants to portray difficult scenes with emotional distance by using silhouettes instead of full visibility. Poetic monologues, developed from earlier reflections, explored themes of family history, insecurity, and hope. Soundscapes built from simple rhythms and vocal work echoed the atmosphere of regional musical traditions. Movement sequences symbolised home, separation, conflict, and rebuilding.

Participants explained that performing as a group made it easier to address topics they would normally avoid. Shared authorship transformed individual pain into collective storytelling, creating a sense of solidarity and mutual support.

Impact in Armenia

The workshops had a profound emotional impact on the participants. Within the first two days, many reported a noticeable reduction in anxiety. Engaging in activities that allowed them to reflect on family stories without fear of judgment increased their self-awareness. They began to understand why certain behaviors—such as remaining silent in discussions or avoiding public speaking—had become automatic protective responses.

Pride in cultural heritage also grew. Through the use of traditional symbols, familiar rhythms, and personal objects, participants reconnected with their identities in a more positive way. Instead of viewing their cultural backgrounds solely through the lens of conflict or hardship, they began to see them as sources of strength and continuity.

As personal barriers lowered, group cohesion strengthened. Communication improved, and participants supported one another during emotionally demanding exercises. Trust developed naturally, and several participants expressed interest in continuing art-based practices in their communities. Many said they planned to use simple rituals, storytelling exercises, or small creative gatherings as tools for connection and healing.



The Armenian workshops revealed how art can become a space for collective healing, quiet strength, and rediscovery of identity. In a context shaped by intergenerational trauma, displacement, and social expectations placed on young women, the creative process offered something many participants had never experienced before: a safe environment where emotions could be explored without pressure and stories could be shared without fear of judgment.

Through ritual, movement, storytelling, and symbolic performance, participants gradually moved from silence and internalized tension toward expression and connection. The project did not push them to relive painful experiences directly; instead, it provided artistic tools that allowed them to approach memory and loss at a pace that felt safe and respectful. This gentle methodology proved essential in supporting emotional safety while still enabling meaningful reflection.

The performance *“Roots Under Fire”* stood as a powerful testament to resilience. By transforming themes of memory, separation, and cultural heritage into collective artistic expression, participants reclaimed narratives that had often been associated only with hardship. The process helped them see their histories not solely as sources of pain, but also as foundations of strength, continuity, and identity.

Beyond the artistic outcome, the workshops strengthened participants’ sense of belonging and mutual support. The group evolved into a small community of trust,



where shared vulnerability became a source of empowerment rather than isolation. Many participants left with a renewed sense of pride in their cultural background and a deeper understanding of how creative practices can support emotional well-being.

The Armenian case demonstrates that when art is combined with trauma-sensitive and culturally grounded methods, it can become a powerful pathway toward healing, self-awareness, and collective empowerment. The experience confirmed that even in contexts marked by silence and restraint, creative expression can gently open doors to dialogue, resilience, and hope.

Conclusion –Armenia

The Armenian workshops revealed how art can become a space for collective healing, quiet strength, and rediscovery of identity. In a context shaped by intergenerational trauma, displacement, and social expectations placed on young women, the creative process offered something many participants had never experienced before: a safe environment where emotions could be explored without pressure and stories could be shared without fear of judgment.

Through ritual, movement, storytelling, and symbolic performance, participants gradually moved from silence and internalized tension toward expression and connection. The project did not push them to relive painful experiences directly; instead, it provided artistic tools that allowed them to approach memory and loss at a pace that felt safe and respectful. This gentle methodology proved essential in supporting emotional safety while still enabling meaningful reflection.

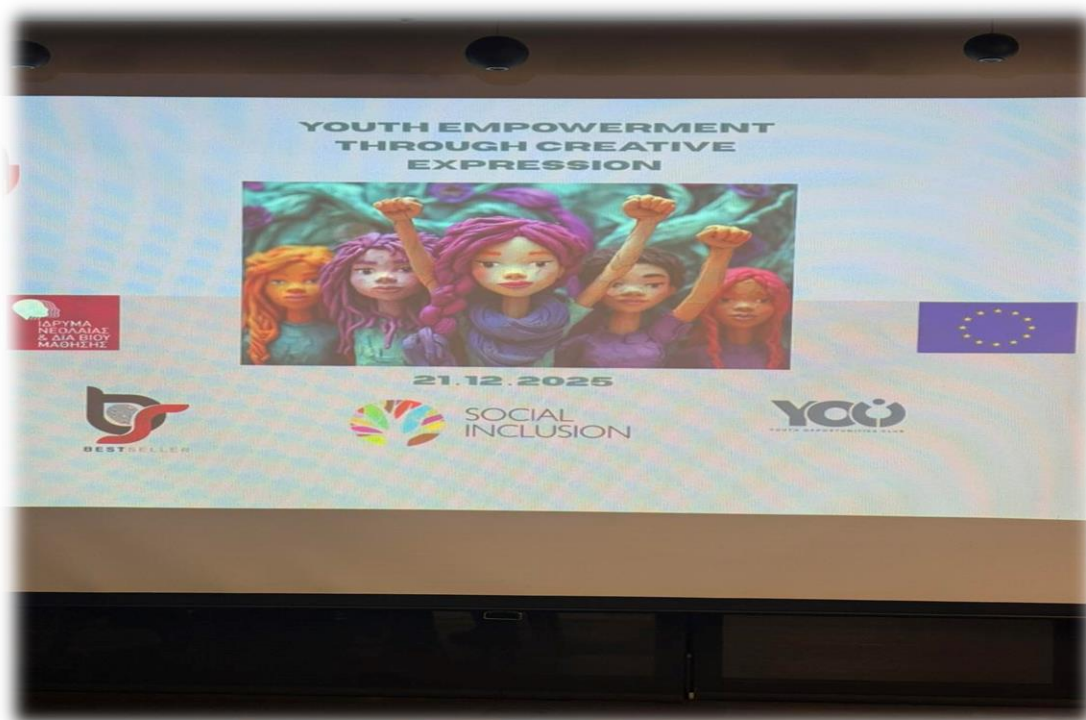
The performance “Roots Under Fire” stood as a powerful testament to resilience. By transforming themes of memory, separation, and cultural heritage into collective artistic expression, participants reclaimed narratives that had often been associated only with hardship. The process helped them see their histories not solely as sources of pain, but also as foundations of strength, continuity, and identity.

Beyond the artistic outcome, the workshops strengthened participants’ sense of belonging and mutual support. The group evolved into a small community of trust, where shared vulnerability became a source of empowerment rather than isolation. Many participants left with a renewed sense of pride in their cultural background and a deeper understanding of how creative practices can support emotional well-being.

The Armenian case demonstrates that when art is combined with trauma-sensitive and culturally grounded methods, it can become a powerful pathway toward healing, self-awareness, and collective empowerment. The experience confirmed that even in



contexts marked by silence and restraint, creative expression can gently open doors to dialogue, resilience, and hope.







YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH CREATIVE
EXPRESSION

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8.4 Cross-Country Analysis: Patterns & Lessons Learned

Across the three countries, common themes emerged:

Shared Challenges

- low confidence at the start
- fear of public speaking



- social stigma around migration and womanhood
- emotional vulnerability during personal storytelling

Across all three countries, low confidence was one of the first barriers participants faced. Speaking in front of others felt difficult for many, and sharing personal stories was even harder. In some cases, cultural norms that discourage open emotional expression added another layer of hesitation. When the discussions shifted toward migration and gender roles, emotional vulnerability increased and facilitators had to guide the process carefully.

For Armenian participants, the first challenge was low confidence in public expression. Many of them were not used to speaking in front of peers, especially about personal histories tied to conflict, migration, or family pressure. Several participants shared that they usually stay quiet in group discussions because they worry about being judged or misunderstood.

Another difficulty appeared when the activities touched on migration stories. Some Armenian youth saw elements of their own family histories reflected in the narratives from Iran, Syria, or Lebanon, which created emotional tension. A few also needed time to adjust to unfamiliar group dynamics, new communication styles, and the intensity of reflection tasks. Even small things like adapting to different humor or understanding others' body language occasionally made them feel uncertain during the first days.

Shared Transformations

- increased empowerment
- strengthened group identity
- improved artistic and communication skills
- deeper understanding of human rights
- participants reclaiming their stories publicly

As trust developed, the group's behaviour changed noticeably. Participants who were initially reserved began speaking more freely, especially during scene creation and reflection exercises, because the creative process made their thoughts easier to organise. Instead of feeling pressured to talk about difficult experiences directly, they were able to express them through movement, sound, writing, or group decisions, which lowered the emotional risk. This shift also strengthened teamwork. Creating performances required negotiation, patience, and attention to each other's ideas, and these skills gradually replaced the early hesitation. Human rights topics became clearer once linked to real stories and not only to definitions; participants reported that they finally understood how discrimination or stigma appears in daily life. By the time the final performance approached, even those who avoided the stage were willing to



participate in shadow or movement sequences, because the shared format made the experience feel safer and more supported. For many, this felt like a significant personal achievement.

What Worked in All Contexts

A combination of practical and symbolic methods proved most effective.

- Grounding exercises, including breathing and simple movement, reduced stress and made the group feel more prepared for emotionally heavy tasks.
- Ritual-like activities, such as mandala drawing or circle movement, helped create a calm, predictable structure. Participants said these methods gave them a sense of safety because they did not require immediate verbal disclosure.
- Object-based storytelling worked particularly well. Armenian participants often brought meaningful family items or described objects connected to displacement or tradition. These objects allowed them to talk about sensitive topics without going into overwhelming detail.
- Structured writing and poetry tasks helped them express emotions more clearly. Several participants commented that writing gave them enough distance to speak about personal experiences in a controlled and manageable way.

Cultural Elements Influencing Engagement

The cultural background of Armenian participants strongly shaped how they engaged with the workshop. Many come from families that have lived through conflict, displacement, or high levels of responsibility placed on girls and young women. This often results in a high degree of emotional awareness but a low tendency to express feelings in group settings. Because of this, very direct approaches would likely have created resistance, especially at the beginning. Methods that allowed gradual entry into personal topics were far more successful. Once participants realized that others in the group carried similar experiences, the sense of community strengthened quickly. This shared recognition helped them support one another during difficult exercises and made group decisions smoother. By the end, the workshop not only improved individual confidence but also demonstrated how culturally sensitive methods can create space for both personal reflection and collective understanding.

What Varied by Country

Country	Strongest Methods	Dominant Themes
Greece	movement & symbolism	belonging, borders, hybrid identity
Serbia	forum & verbal theatre	gender equality, discrimination
Armenia	ritual & poetry	memory, trauma, renewal

These case studies demonstrate that the project model is **adaptable, culturally sensitive, and scalable**.



📁 CASE STUDIES (Completed Text)

Case Study 1: Greece — “Threads of Identity”

Young women with migrant backgrounds explored the concept of “home” through textile art and theatre. They created monologues based on childhood memories, cultural symbols, and their experiences navigating Greek society. The performance combined spoken word with fabric manipulation, representing how identity is woven from multiple cultural threads.

Impact:

Participants reported increased self-confidence and a stronger connection to their cultural roots. The audience expressed deep emotional engagement and interest in continuing the dialogue on migrant women’s experiences.

Case Study 2: Serbia — “Unheard Voices”

Youth participants used forum theatre to address discrimination and micro-aggressions faced in daily life. Scenarios were developed based on real stories: stereotypes, access to education, and gender-based comments. The audience was invited to intervene, change the narrative, and propose solutions.

Impact:

Participants gained a sense of agency and power, while local community members learned how everyday actions can perpetuate exclusion. It sparked a city-level discussion on improving support for young migrants.

Case Study 3: Armenia – “Crossroads of Silence”

The Armenian group developed a performance that focused on silence, identity, and resilience, drawing heavily on their experiences with hesitation, fear of judgment, and cultural expectations around emotional restraint. Instead of relying on dialogue, the group chose movement as their main language. Some gestures were sharp and closed, showing moments when young people feel pressure to stay quiet, while others opened outward to represent the desire to speak but not knowing how or when it is safe to do so. Through slow, repetitive sequences, they illustrated how silence can become a habit passed through families that have lived with conflict or migration. Their choreography



gradually shifted toward more collective movements, showing how shared action can break patterns of isolation.

Participants shaped the performance using real insights from the workshop. Several Armenian youth mentioned that they rarely talk about emotionally heavy topics in front of others, so non-verbal expression felt more natural and less exposing. They used elements from the grounding exercises, the theatre improvisations, and the symbolic rituals to design transitions between “suppressed voice” and “emerging voice.” Feedback from participants showed that creating the piece required teamwork, negotiation, and trust, which also became a part of the story they wanted to tell on stage.

Impact:

The process was what helped participants confront internalised fears and experiment with expression in a way that felt safe. Working non-verbally allowed them to communicate experiences they normally avoid putting into words. Some noticed they were able to participate more actively when they did not have to rely on public speaking. Others said the group choreography helped them understand how their hesitation is often shared by their peers.

Because the performance clearly demonstrated how embodied activities reveal hidden challenges around communication, several educators who observed the piece expressed interest in using similar methods in human rights education. They noted that the non-verbal format made complex topics more accessible, especially for young people who struggle with confidence or emotional openness.

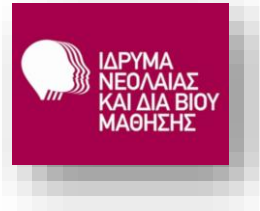
Chapter 9 – Practical Templates, Tools & Facilitator Resources

This chapter provides practical tools that trainers and youth workers can use when implementing workshops that connect **human rights education** with **creative arts**. All templates and scripts can be adapted to different cultures, languages, and group sizes.

The aim is to give facilitators **ready-made structures** that support smooth, safe, and inclusive implementation across all phases of the project:

preparation → workshop delivery → performance creation → reflection → evaluation.

9.1 Participant Registration Form (Template)



Name:

Age:

Country of origin:

Languages spoken:

Contact details:

Emergency contact (optional):

Access needs (mobility, sensory, emotional, etc.):

Previous experience (arts or human rights):

Why do you want to join the project?

Is there anything you want us to know to support your participation?

Note: This form must be available in simple language and multiple languages where needed.

9.2 Consent Form (Template)

Participating in Workshops

I agree to participate in the workshop activities.

I understand I can stop at any time without explanation.

Use of Photos & Videos

I consent to the use of photos/videos of myself for project documentation.

I do NOT consent.

Use of Creative Material

I understand that the artistic material I create may be used in performances, publications, or educational materials.

My personal identity will be protected unless I give written permission.

Participant name:

Signature:

Date:

Guardian signature (if under 18):



9.3 Workshop Structure Template

This flexible model can be used for any session.

1. Arrival & Opening (10–15 minutes)

- Warm greeting
- Grounding or breathing exercise
- Short group check-in (“one word for how I feel entering the space”)

2. Energizer & Group Connection (10 minutes)

Examples:

- Name and gesture
- Mirror movement
- Circle passing game

3. Main Creative Activity (25–40 minutes)

This could be:

- movement sequence creation
- storytelling
- Image Theatre
- autobiographical writing
- shadow theatre creation
- object stories
- improvisation scene

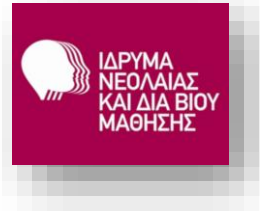
Clear instructions should be given with options to opt out.

4. Sharing & Reflection (15–20 minutes)

- What did you discover?
- How did your body/mind feel during the activity?
- Does this connect to a human rights theme?

5. Closing Ritual (5 minutes)

- Breath work
- Circle gesture
- “One sentence to close the session today”



9.4 Safety Check-In Tool (Before Each Workshop)

Facilitators ask participants to choose one:

Green: “I feel ready and open.”

Yellow: “I’m okay but need space or patience.”

Red: “I’m not comfortable today; I prefer light activities.”

Participants can show:

- colored paper
- a sticker
- a hand sign
- or simply tell the facilitator privately.

This helps facilitators adapt activities safely.

9.5 Emotional First Aid Guidance (For Facilitators)

If someone becomes overwhelmed:

1. **Pause the activity** calmly if necessary.
2. **Acknowledge:** “Thank you for letting us know. You are safe here.”
3. **Offer choice:**
 - Sit outside the room
 - Take a walk
 - Have a glass of water
 - Stay with a support person
4. **No pressure to explain** anything.
5. **Grounding exercise** (if they agree):
“*Feel your feet on the floor... breathe slowly in and out...*”
6. **Check-in privately** after the workshop.

Never ask about traumatic details.

8.6 Human Rights Reflection Template



Participants reflect after selected sessions:

1. What human rights issue did we explore today?
2. How does this issue show up in your community?
3. How did the art activity help you express it?
4. What emotions came up for you?
5. What message would you want the public to understand?

This links artistic expression with human rights education.

9.7 Storytelling Template (For Personal or Fictional Narratives)

Participants may write, draw, or speak:

START:

Who is the main character?

Where are they?

MIDDLE:

What challenge do they face?

How do they feel?

END:

What helps them?

How do they change or grow?

Note: Stories can be fictional to protect privacy.

9.8 Performance Creation Template

Step 1 – Collect Material

- images
- scenes
- poems
- movements
- objects
- recorded sounds



Step 2 – Choose Themes

Examples:

- discrimination
- belonging
- home
- gender roles
- memory
- identity

Step 3 – Structure the Piece

- Opening image
- Main scenes
- Transitions
- Ending image

Step 4 – Add Artistic Layers

- sound & music
- lighting ideas
- costumes or symbolic objects
- multilingual fragments

Step 5 – Rehearse With Feedback

Use the “feedback circle”:

- “What worked well?”
- “What touched me?”
- “What could be clearer?”

9.9 Facilitator Scripts

Opening Script (Start of First Workshop)

“Welcome. This is your space.
Here we create together, learn from each other, and support each other.



Nothing you do here has to be perfect.
You are free to express, to participate at your own pace, and to take breaks whenever needed.”

Safe Space Rules Script

“Let’s build our rules together.
What do you need to feel safe?
Some examples are confidentiality, respect, and the right to pass.
But please tell us what matters to you.”

Before Sensitive Exercises

“In this activity, you may feel emotions or memories coming up.
You can always pause, step out, or choose a lighter version.
Your safety is more important than completing the exercise.”

Closing Script

“Thank you for your courage today.
Please take a moment to notice how you are feeling now.
If you need support, we are here.”

9.10 Evaluation Tools

A. Quick Reflection Cards

Participants pick:

- “Today I felt...”
- “One thing I learned...”
- “One thing I want to explore next...”

B. Non-verbal Evaluation



Show with your hands:

- High = positive
- Middle = neutral
- Low = uncomfortable or unclear

C. Written Feedback

1. What did you enjoy?
2. What was challenging?
3. How did you feel in the group?
4. What would you change?

9.11 Templates for Trainers' Internal Use

Daily Session Log

- Date
- Activity
- Participant engagement
- Difficult moments
- Successful moments
- Adjustments for next time

Incident Report (If needed)

- Date/time
- What happened
- Who was involved
- How it was addressed
- What follow-up is required

9.12 Checklist Before Each Workshop

Space Ready?

- chairs, open area, water, ventilation

Materials Ready?



- paper, pens, props, music, projector

Emotional Safety Ready?

- grounding, check-in tools, break space

Facilitator Alignment?

- clear plan
- roles divided
- backup plan prepared

Chapter 10 – Performance Documentation Guidelines

This chapter provides a structured approach for documenting the artistic process and final performances created in Greece, Serbia, and Armenia. Documentation is a key part of the project because it:

- captures the evolution of the creative process,
- evidences learning and empowerment,
- preserves artistic material for future use,
- supports evaluation, impact assessment, and dissemination,
- and ensures that the voices and perspectives of the young women remain visible.

The guidelines below can be adapted to different cultural and organizational contexts.

10.1 Why Documentation Matters

Documenting the artistic journey is essential for:

1. Reflecting the transformative process

Participants grow personally, artistically, and emotionally throughout the project. Documentation helps make this visible.

2. Protecting participants' voices



Creative material is a form of testimony—of identity, memory, migration stories, and empowerment.

3. Sharing and replicating the methodology

Documentation allows other organizations to reproduce the model while respecting local specificities.

4. Supporting advocacy

Performances often challenge stereotypes, discrimination, and human rights violations. Documentation amplifies these messages.

5. Accountability and reporting

It provides evidence for funders, stakeholders, and communities.

10.2 What Should Be Documented?

Documentation should cover the **entire creative journey**, including:

A. Workshop Process

- warm-ups and exercises
- group dynamics
- emerging themes
- participants' reflections
- artistic experiments
- key breakthroughs or challenges

B. Creative Materials

- stories
- drawings
- poems
- movement sequences
- symbolic objects
- scene improvisations

C. Rehearsal Process



- structure and changes
- script development
- choreography
- scene transitions
- sound and lighting choices

D. Final Performance

- full video capture
- photographs
- audience reactions
- post-performance discussions

E. Participant Perspectives

- interviews
- quotes
- anonymous reflections
- diaries or journals

F. Facilitator Observations

- methodology adaptations
- safety considerations
- emotional responses
- group energy

Everything should be collected respectfully and ethically.

10.3 Documentation Methods

A mix of methods provides a richer picture of the artistic and human rights process.

1. Written Documentation

Tools:

- workshop journals
- facilitator logs



- participant reflection sheets
- scene development notes
- human rights thematic summaries

Purpose:

- captures qualitative insight
- records growth and challenges
- documents decisions in the creative process

2. Audio-Visual Documentation

Tools:

- short video clips of exercises
- audio recordings of stories
- photographs of scenes, objects, group work
- final performance full recording

Purpose:

- preserves artistic elements that cannot be described in words
- helps the team evaluate progress
- supports dissemination

3. Visual Documentation

Tools:

- photos of objects used
- sketches
- drawings
- mind maps
- visual metaphors

Purpose:

- externalizes imagination
- helps conceptualize thematic elements



- supports non-verbal participants

4. Testimonial Documentation

Tools:

- interviews (audio/video/text)
- anonymous comments
- post-it wall reflections
- quote collection

Purpose:

- centers participant voices
- provides emotional depth
- shows impact for evaluation

10.4 Ethical Considerations in Documentation

Because participants may come from vulnerable backgrounds, documentation must follow strict ethical guidelines.

1. Consent

- Always use consent forms with clear options.
- Participants can change their consent at any time.

2. Privacy & Anonymity

- Allow participants to choose anonymity.
- Never publish sensitive personal details.
- Avoid identifying minors without guardian permission.

3. Emotional Safety

- Do not record moments of distress.
- Stop documentation immediately if someone is uncomfortable.



- Never pressure participants to share personal stories.

4. Cultural Sensitivity

- Respect differences in norms about visibility, gender, and public expression.

5. Ownership

- The creative work belongs to the participants.
- They must approve how it is shared.

10.5 Tools & Templates for Documentation

Below are ready-to-use templates for your manual.

A. Facilitator Daily Documentation Template

Date:

Workshop Location:

Facilitators Present:

1. Activities Conducted

(Short description)

2. Group Energy & Participation

High Medium Low

Notes:

3. Key Themes Emerging

4. Artistic Materials Created

5. Emotional Responses & Safety Notes

6. Adjustments Needed for Next Session



B. Participant Reflection Template

Today I discovered...

A moment that stayed with me was...

I felt safe/unsafe when...

One thing I want to explore more is...

C. Photo/Video Log Template

File Name:

Date:

Location:

Content Description:

Participants Included (consent checked):

Notes (context, emotion, important detail):

10.6 Guidelines for Documenting the Final Performance

A. Before the Performance

- Prepare a clear filming plan (camera angles, lighting).
- Test sound and ensure microphones are working.
- Brief participants about what will be documented.

B. During the Performance

- Capture at least one full unedited video.
- Take close-ups of symbolic objects or scenes.
- Record audience reactions discreetly.

C. After the Performance

- Conduct short interviews (voluntary).
- Photograph installations, props, and visual materials.
- Document audience comments and questions.

10.7 Writing a Performance Case Study (Template)



Use this template for the final manual.

1. Title of Performance

2. Country / Organisation

3. Themes Explored

(migration, belonging, discrimination, gender, etc.)

4. Summary of the Creative Journey

5. Key Methods Used

(Image Theatre, movement, storytelling etc.)

6. Description of the Performance

(scene-by-scene)

7. Participant Reflections

8. Audience Reactions

9. Human Rights Issues Highlighted

10. Lessons for Future Practice

This ensures consistent documentation across countries.

10.8 Archiving and Storage of Documentation

To keep documentation organized and accessible:

Create Digital Folders

- Country → Activity → Date
- Photos / Videos / Journals / Scripts

Use Cloud Storage

(Google Drive, Dropbox, Nextcloud)



Use Shared Naming Rules

Example:

GR_Workshop3_Storytelling_Ana.mov

Protect Sensitive Material

- Password-protect folders containing personal data.
- Limit access to authorized team members only.

9.9 How Documentation Supports the Manual

The material collected will directly feed:

- the methodology sections,
- case studies,
- best practices,
- recommendations,
- future workshops,
- advocacy campaigns.

Documentation is not just “record-keeping”—it is **part of the creative and human rights work itself.**

Chapter 11 – Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ensures that the project remains aligned with its objectives and that its activities truly support young women with migrant backgrounds. Because this project combines **human rights education, artistic creation, and youth empowerment**, the M&E approach must be flexible, sensitive, and adapted to creative, emotional, and non-formal learning processes.

This chapter presents a full M&E framework that can be used by all partner organizations (Greece, Serbia, Armenia) throughout the project.

11.1 Purpose of Monitoring & Evaluation



The main aims of M&E in this project are to:

1. Assess Learning and Empowerment

Understand how participants develop skills in expression, confidence, and knowledge of human rights.

2. Track Artistic and Educational Progress

Monitor how performances evolve, how workshops function, and how methodologies are implemented.

3. Ensure Emotional and Physical Safety

Identify moments where participants need additional support or adjustments.

4. Strengthen Project Quality

Evaluate the effectiveness of the non-formal education methods and arts-based pedagogical approaches.

5. Inform Future Practice

Generate insights that will feed into:

- the final manual,
- recommendations,
- replication models,
- future EU-funded or local initiatives.

11.2 What Will Be Monitored?

Monitoring covers both **process** and **results**.

A. Process Monitoring

Tracks what happens during the project.

Key Elements:



- workshop attendance and participation
- group dynamics
- emotional climate and safety
- progression of artistic material
- facilitator practices and methodology
- use of non-formal learning tools
- collaboration among partners
- logistical and organizational effectiveness

B. Results Monitoring

Tracks what participants achieve.

Key Elements:

- increased confidence and empowerment
- improved communication and creative expression
- greater awareness of human rights
- strengthened sense of identity and belonging
- development of performing arts skills
- improved intercultural understanding
- creation of final performances
- engagement with audiences and communities

11.3 Evaluation Principles

The project follows **ethical, inclusive, and participatory** evaluation practices:

1. Participant-Centered

Young women with migrant backgrounds are active contributors to evaluation—not just subjects.

2. Sensitive to Vulnerability

Methods avoid pressure, emotional risk, or exposure.

3. Culturally Responsive



Tools and language consider cultural norms and different ways of expressing emotion or feedback.

4. Mixed-Methods

Uses both qualitative and quantitative tools for depth and clarity.

5. Continuous and Adaptive

Evaluation is not only at the end—it runs throughout and informs improvements.

11.4 Evaluation Tools

Below is a detailed set of tools that can be used in all partner countries.

1. Facilitator Observation Sheets

Used after every workshop.

Tracks:

- engagement levels
- emotional safety
- participant breakthroughs
- group cohesion
- challenges and risks
- emerging themes

(Template included in Annex)

2. Participant Reflection Tools

Because some participants may prefer non-verbal communication, tools include:

- journals
- drawing reflection sheets
- mood meters
- audio diaries



- short questionnaires
- one-word check-outs

3. Mid-Project Interviews

Halfway through the project, trainers conduct supportive interviews focusing on:

- personal growth
- artistic confidence
- sense of belonging
- human rights understanding
- expectations for final performance

Interviews may be audio-recorded only with consent.

4. Pre- and Post-Project Surveys

Surveys analyze measurable changes in:

- self-confidence
- communication skills
- emotional expression
- human rights knowledge
- teamwork and problem solving
- feelings of empowerment and agency

Data is aggregated for reporting, keeping anonymity.

5. Artistic Output Review

Evaluation of:

- scene development
- clarity of message
- creativity
- coherence
- technical skills



- group collaboration

This evaluation is supportive, not judgmental.

6. Audience Feedback Tools

After performances:

- short questionnaires
- interviews
- “reaction wall” (post-it notes)
- interactive discussions

Audience feedback is essential for demonstrating community impact.

7. Partner Evaluation Logs

Each organisation documents:

- internal coordination
- resource management
- partnership dynamics
- local challenges
- suggestions for improvement

This strengthens international collaboration.

11.5 Evaluation Timeline

A suggested timeline for monitoring activities:

Phase 1 – Preparation (Month 1–2)

- Baseline survey
- Initial interviews
- Facilitator planning meeting



- Risk & needs assessment

Phase 2 – Workshops & Creative Development (Month 3–6)

- Ongoing facilitator logs
- Participant weekly reflections
- Mid-term evaluation
- Artistic development review

Phase 3 – Rehearsals & Performances (Month 7–9)

- Scene evaluation
- Emotional safety monitoring
- Audience feedback collection
- Final performance documentation

Phase 4 – Follow-Up & Impact Assessment (Month 10–12)

- Post-survey
- Final interviews
- Partner evaluation
- Compilation of lessons learned
- Contribution to the final manual

11.6 Emotional Safety Evaluation

Human rights and migrant identity topics can be sensitive. A dedicated safety evaluation approach includes:

Well-Being Check-ins

Before and after each workshop.

Red Flag Protocol



If a participant shows distress, facilitators pause documentation and offer support.

Referral System

Connecting participants (when possible) to appropriate psychological or social services.

Confidentiality Measures

Ensuring private reflections stay private.

This ensures the project does **no harm** and promotes healing rather than re-traumatization.

11.7 Evaluation Questions

Sample questions for participants:

Before the project

- What does creative expression mean to you?
- How confident do you feel sharing your story?
- What are your expectations?

After the project

- What did you learn about yourself through the workshops?
- How has your confidence changed?
- Do you feel your voice was heard?
- What skills did you develop?
- What message did your performance communicate?

11.8 Evaluation Outputs

Evaluation will produce:

- a summary of participant development
- analysis of artistic processes
- human rights impact observations



- recommendations for future projects
- contributions to the final manual
- case studies and best practices
- data for reporting to donors and stakeholders

11.9 Using Evaluation to Improve Future Projects

Evaluation findings will help:

- improve workshop design
- strengthen safety protocols
- adapt artistic methodologies
- enhance inclusion strategies
- build better support systems for migrant women
- refine future performance-based human rights education projects

Thus, M&E becomes a tool for **sustainability**, ensuring the model can be expanded and replicated.

Chapter 12 – Ethical Guidelines & Safeguarding

Working with young women with migrant backgrounds—many of whom may have experienced discrimination, trauma, instability, or social exclusion—requires a strong ethical and safeguarding framework. Because this project uses artistic and autobiographical expression, it touches deeply personal and emotional areas of participants' lives. Therefore, all partners must uphold the highest standards of ethics, protection, and psychological safety throughout the entire project cycle.

Safeguarding in this context is not only about preventing harm; it is also about creating an environment where participants feel secure, respected, empowered, and in control of their narratives. Ethical guidelines are woven into every stage—from recruitment and workshop design to performances, evaluation, and dissemination.

This chapter provides a comprehensive approach to ensuring that all activities are conducted with integrity, sensitivity, and a strong commitment to participants' dignity and rights.

12.1 Ethical Foundation of the Project



The project is grounded in core principles of human rights, youth empowerment, and non-formal education. These principles inform the ethical framework:

Respect for Human Dignity:

Every participant has equal value and deserves to be treated with kindness, privacy, and respect.

Do No Harm:

Activities must be structured to avoid emotional distress, re-traumatization, or exposure of sensitive information.

Informed Participation:

Young people must clearly understand the purpose of each activity and voluntarily decide whether to participate.

Empowerment:

Participants should maintain control over their creative and personal contributions. No one is pressured to share stories they are not comfortable with.

Confidentiality:

Personal stories shared in workshops remain within the group unless explicit permission is given.

Cultural Sensitivity:

Practices must reflect diverse cultural backgrounds, communication styles, and comfort levels.

These principles guide both artistic creation and human rights education, ensuring that ethical considerations are integrated into every workshop and performance.

12.2 Creating an Emotionally Safe Environment

An emotionally safe environment is essential for creative expression and personal storytelling. Many participants may carry experiences of displacement, discrimination, war, family separation, or cultural dislocation. For some, this may be their first time expressing these feelings publicly or artistically. Facilitators must therefore prioritize emotional safety at all times.

Workshops begin with trust-building exercises and clearly defined group agreements. These agreements are co-created with participants and typically include mutual respect, non-judgment, confidentiality, and the right to pass. Establishing these



boundaries ensures that participants understand the group is a supportive and non-competitive space.

Facilitators maintain emotional safety by observing participants' reactions, allowing breaks when needed, and avoiding sudden exposure to triggering topics. Movement-based or embodied exercises are conducted gently and always with consent. If a participant becomes overwhelmed, facilitators shift the activity, offer grounding exercises, or provide one-on-one support.

Emotional safety is also enhanced by routine check-ins and check-outs, which allow participants to express how they feel entering and leaving the workshop. This helps facilitators track emotional wellbeing and respond proactively.

12.3 Informed Consent and Protection of Personal Stories

Given the nature of autobiographical theatre and storytelling, it is crucial that participants retain full ownership of their narratives. Informed consent is required at multiple stages:

- participation in the project
- sharing personal stories in workshops
- using artistic material in final performances
- video/audio/photo documentation
- inclusion of stories, reflections, or quotes in the final manual

Consent must be voluntary, clearly explained, and revocable at any time. Participants should feel free to withdraw their story from a scene or performance without pressure or guilt. This ensures that artistic expression remains empowering, not exploitative.

Facilitators should emphasize that *no participant is obligated to disclose painful experiences*. Stories may be fictionalized, symbolic, or collective to protect privacy while still expressing important themes.

12.4 Boundaries, Roles, and Responsibilities



A clear distinction must be maintained between facilitators, mentors, youth workers, and participants. Facilitators are responsible for guiding exercises, ensuring emotional and physical safety, and maintaining professional boundaries.

They do not act as therapists.

They do not attempt to solve personal problems.

They do not push participants to disclose trauma.

When deeper emotional issues emerge, facilitators can gently recommend access to external support services available in each country (psychologists, social workers, NGOs), but only with sensitivity and respect.

Professional boundaries also prevent favoritism, personal entanglement, or problematic power dynamics. Youth workers must be aware that many participants may come from environments where authority figures hold significant influence, making it especially important to avoid coercive or suggestive behavior.

12.5 Culturally Responsive Practice

Project partners must be attuned to cultural differences, particularly when working with migrant communities. Some participants may come from societies where artistic expression is discouraged, mental health topics are taboo, or open discussion of personal experiences is uncomfortable.

Culturally responsive practice includes:

- adapting exercises for modesty or religious considerations
- avoiding assumptions about participants' backgrounds
- respecting different communication styles
- acknowledging power dynamics that may exist between host-country facilitators and migrant youth
- using interpreters or simplified language when needed

This approach ensures that the creative process honors diverse identities and values.

12.6 Physical Safety and Practical Safeguarding

Physical safety is equally important. Workshop spaces must be secure, accessible, and equipped appropriately. Facilitators are responsible for:



- conducting risk assessments
- ensuring safe movement during physical activities
- preventing overcrowding
- keeping clear evacuation routes
- offering alternatives for participants with physical limitations

During travel or cross-border activities (such as the Serbia study visit), protocols must cover transportation safety, emergency contacts, accommodation standards, and supervision ratios.

12.7 Safeguarding During Performances and Public Events

Final performances introduce unique ethical considerations. Participants may feel increased vulnerability when sharing creative work in front of audiences.

Safeguards include:

- allowing participants to choose whether they perform
- offering options to participate in backstage or technical roles instead
- avoiding identifying personal stories publicly
- preparing participants emotionally before and after performances
- ensuring audiences respect the performers
- preventing filming unless permission is granted

Performances should highlight collective messages rather than expose individual trauma.

12.8 Reporting Concerns and Responding to Incidents

All partners should establish a simple, confidential mechanism for reporting safeguarding concerns. Participants must know:

- who they can talk to
- how concerns are handled
- what actions will be taken
- that their privacy will be protected

When concerns arise, the response must be calm, non-judgmental, and guided by established procedures. Serious incidents (violence, exploitation, discrimination)



require immediate action and may involve external authorities. Minor conflicts or emotional difficulties are managed internally through dialogue and support.

12.9 Ethical Use of Documentation and Creative Outputs

Photos, videos, and artistic materials must be handled ethically. Consent forms specify:

- what will be documented
- how it will be used
- where it will be published
- the right to withdraw at any time

When using participant contributions in the final manual, personal information should be anonymised unless the participant explicitly chooses to be identified.

Documentation should highlight empowerment, creativity, and positive development—not vulnerability or hardship.

12.10 Building a Safeguarding Culture

Safeguarding is not a single activity; it is a culture shared by all partners. To maintain this culture:

- facilitators receive training in trauma-informed practice
- youth workers debrief after workshops
- partners share safeguarding challenges openly during coordination meetings
- evaluation tools monitor emotional wellbeing
- all decisions prioritize participant safety

A strong safeguarding culture ensures that the project remains a space of empowerment, creativity, and personal growth for every young woman who participates.



Chapter 13 – Annexes & Templates

This chapter provides practical tools that organisations, facilitators, and youth workers can use when implementing the methodologies described in this manual. The annexes are intended to support planning, documentation, evaluation, and ethical practice, ensuring that the project can be replicated safely and effectively in different countries and contexts.

The templates below can be adapted to the needs of each partner organisation and translated into local languages when necessary. They form an essential operational framework for delivering high-quality, inclusive, and ethically grounded arts-based human rights education.

13.1 Template: Participant Consent & Release Form

Project Title: Youth Empowerment through Creative Expression

Partner Organisation: _____

Participant Name: _____

Age: _____

Country: _____

Purpose of this Form

This form ensures informed consent for participation in workshops, performances, and documentation activities within the project.

1. Participation Consent

I agree to participate voluntarily in the workshops, rehearsals, and related project activities.

I understand that:

- participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without consequences
- I am free to choose my level of involvement in sharing personal stories
- I can decline any activity that feels unsafe or uncomfortable

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



2. Consent for Creative Material

I agree / do not agree (circle one)
to have my creative contributions (writing, movement, ideas, collective creations)
included in performances or project materials.

Signature: _____

3. Image, Audio & Video Consent

I agree / do not agree (circle one)
to be photographed, filmed, or recorded for the purposes of documentation,
dissemination, and reporting.

This material may be used for:

- project manuals and reports
- social media posts and websites
- educational presentations
- non-commercial dissemination

Signature: _____

4. Privacy Protection

I understand that any personal information I share will remain confidential unless I
explicitly authorize its public use.

Emergency Contact

Name: _____ Phone: _____

12.2 Template: Workshop Safety & Accessibility Checklist

To be completed before each workshop.



1. Space & Environment

- Room is clean, accessible, and safe
- Adequate lighting and ventilation
- Clear exit routes
- Chairs available for participants who cannot sit on the floor
- No hazards (slippery floor, exposed wires)

2. Emotional Safety

- Group agreements discussed and visible
- Safe space rules established
- Participants reminded of their right to “pass”
- Facilitator prepared grounding exercises

3. Inclusion & Accessibility

- Materials available in simple language
- Interpretation support if needed
- Physically accessible entrance and toilets
- Quiet space available for breaks

4. Emergency Preparedness

- Emergency contact list available
- First-aid kit accessible
- Facilitator knows evacuation procedure

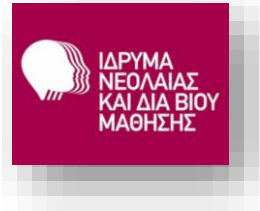
Facilitator Name & Date: _____

12.3 Template: Daily Reflection Sheet for Participants

Participant Name: _____

Workshop Date: _____

1. How am I feeling right now?



2. What did I learn about myself today?

3. What activity or moment impacted me the most? Why?

4. Did anything feel uncomfortable or overwhelming?

5. What would I like to explore more next time?

12.4 Template: Facilitator Reflection & Evaluation Form

Workshop Date: _____

Facilitator: _____

1. Group Dynamics

What went well in terms of trust, communication, participation?

2. Emotional Climate

Were there signs of distress? Did anyone need extra support?

3. Methodological Observations

Which exercises worked well? Which need adjustments?

4. Ethical Considerations



Were confidentiality, consent, and safety upheld?

5. Proposed Adjustments for Next Session

12.5 Template: Performance Development Worksheet

Used during the creative process.

Performance Title (Working): _____

1. Core Message or Theme

2. Human Rights Issue Addressed

3. Artistic Methods Used

- Movement
- Improvisation
- Storytelling
- Visual elements
- Sound/music
- Other: _____

4. Structure of the Piece

Beginning: _____

Middle: _____

Ending: _____

5. Roles & Responsibilities

List performer roles, technical roles, backstage roles, etc.



12.6 Template: Participant Safety Plan (For At-Risk Participants)

Used when participants disclose vulnerability, trauma, or high emotional sensitivity.

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

Identified Needs

Support Plan

- One-on-one check-ins before/after workshops
- Option to step out or take breaks
- Alternative non-performative roles
- Referral to external support (NGOs, psychologists)

Emergency Contact / Guardian: _____

12.7 Annex: Case Study Template for the Manual

Each partner uses this template to document a performance or workshop series.

Project Country: Armenia / Greece / Serbia

Case Study Title: _____

1. Context & Background

2. Participants Involved

3. Human Rights Theme Explored



4. Methods Used

5. Description of the Performance / Creative Output

6. Challenges Encountered

7. Impact on Participants

8. Lessons Learned

12.8 Annex: Trainer & Facilitator Code of Conduct

A clear code ensures accountability and professionalism.

Facilitators commit to:

- treating participants with dignity, respect, and cultural sensitivity
- avoiding coercion, pressure, or exploitation
- maintaining confidentiality at all times
- creating a safe physical and emotional environment
- practicing trauma-informed facilitation
- respecting participants' boundaries and consent
- addressing discrimination, bullying, or conflict immediately
- seeking support when ethical dilemmas arise

Each facilitator signs this code at the start of the project.



12.9 Annex: Terminology Guide

A short glossary to support clarity and consistency.

Examples:

Applied Theatre: A participatory form of theatre used for education and social change.

Embodiment: Using the body to express emotions, identities, or narratives.

Trauma-Informed Practice: An approach that prioritizes safety, choice, and empowerment for individuals who may have experienced trauma.

Collective Creation: A collaborative artistic process where ideas come from the group rather than a single author.

12.10 Annex: Recommended Resources

Books

- Augusto Boal – *Theatre of the Oppressed*
- Paulo Freire – *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- Julie Salverson – *Human Rights and the Arts*

Toolkits

- COMPASS – Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity Resources

Websites

- SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centre
- UNESCO Arts Education Platform



- European Youth Portal

