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Project: “Establishment of a transnational network of
adult education providers for the promotion of social
inclusion of vulnerable groups” – STEP UP

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Good practices - Greece

Consortium partner: Equal Society



1. “Preson: Participatory workshops at the Chios penitentiary”

The Caravan Project is non - profit organisation which consists of an interdisciplinary team of filmmakers, architects, anthropologists, designers, economists and strategy planners that support and promote participatory arts practices through culture; informal education; and social and solidarity-based economy methods based on citizen participation. Using storytelling and documentary filmmaking as tool for empowerment, the organization aims at the promotion of social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and active citizenship and its activities target various vulnerable groups and communities. The methodology applied is based on a co-creative, collaborative process, which implies a shared vision and implementation process, rather than focus on the ability of the most empowered people to implement their own agenda. Its practice focuses deeply not only on the process for the implementation of the activities, but also on ensuring a high quality of the final product/output.

Although the organization started its activity by producing videos which promoted the personal stories of individuals, in 2017 it focused its activities on communities, producing thus stories in a participatory and co-creative way at the community level instead the individual level. One of the community projects implemented was titled: “**Preson: Participatory workshops at the Chios penitentiary**”.

The project, which was funded by the General Secretariat for Youth, implemented in the fall of 2018 in the penitentiary of Chios. For a period of 4 months, the staff of the organization had the opportunity to work with 40 male prisoners from almost 18 ethnicities. However, the staff continued the implementation of the project for another 4 months, using own financial resources.

The project aimed at giving the chance to the target group to discuss and identify topics of their concern and to provide them with the tools to create their own audiovisual narratives. The project is thus co-created equally by the participants while the project staff undertook the role of moderator and co-creator of this process.

Process of implementing the project activities in the prison:

Step 1: Communication and collaboration with the administration of the prison for implementing the project activities (following the approval of the project proposal)

Step 2: Announcement/invitation of the prison administration so as to identify inmates who were interested to participate in the project activities

STEP 3: Presentation of the project to the interested inmates, of the workshops, the methodology to be applied and the expected results;

STEP 4: Implementation of the workshops

STEP 5: Production of the final output/product of the project.

The workshops were held 3 times per week and it included sessions/trainings related to photography, drawing, creative writing and editing, storytelling, while the staff also played some movies during the workshops. In each workshop, a work was produced which later included in the final project product, i.e. the album titled "PrEson". Through these participatory workshops (which promoted the notion of co-creation and active participation) of visual art and storytelling, the project composed a dynamic content consisting of sketches, paintings, photographs, testimonies and texts which outline on the one hand the experience of confinement and its extensions and on the other hand the feeling of a 'place' outside the prison walls.

The innovation of the project was that people from 18 different nationalities, of different ages, with little or no experience or in the field of artistic expression came together, co-created on topics-stories about their previous life and their experience in the prison. The inmates-participants in the workshops articulated their own voice and transformed into narrative speech, images and sounds, reinterpreting their relationships with space and themselves and building bridges of communication with the outside. The self-expression of the participants in this experiential workshop was particularly enhanced, as they were creatively exposed to the reality that surrounds them, formed groups and explored new fields of artistic expression.

In the photo album "PrEson" the prison is seen not as a rigid, defined space with a closed, exclusively institutional identity but as a dynamic, evolving place inhabited by living human beings, who turn objects into processes, as well as forms of spatial planning into dynamic life forms and vessels of relationships with oneself and the other.

The main staff involved was: 1 trainer in photography and arts, 1 trainer in creative writing, 1 graphic designer and 1 translator.

The impact was positive both for the participants, as well as for the General Secretariat for Youth. In particular, the participants improved their skills and acquired new ones, while the album was presented in various festival and events such as the Onassis Stegi and the Berlin festival. It is noted that the impact of this project will be long term as the album will continue to be presented in festivals, etc.

- **More information**

<http://www.caravanproject.org/>

2. Art Club

The Spastic Protection Company / Open Door is a Charitable Association, founded in 1972 with the aim of developing care for people with cerebral palsy in Greece. The Organisation's Center "Open Door" offers a wide range of services, training and rehabilitation programs on a daily basis to children, adolescents and adults with cerebral palsy.



Art Club is a programme which is being implemented with the participation of people with and without disabilities, encouraging the coexistence, cooperation, mutual respect, mutual understanding and acceptance and participation of persons with disabilities in social life.

In particular, the Art Club aims to:

- bring persons with disabilities in contact with art;
- Encourage individual and collective creativity by developing high quality artistic activities;
- The development of social skills, self-confidence, self-disposition and responsibility;
- Improve the image of the persons with disabilities in the eyes of themselves and of their social environment;
- Raise awareness on disability issues and the realization that people with disabilities have significant opportunities for socializing, expression and creativity, on an equal basis with their non-disabled fellow human beings

The Art Club has five artistic groups, which include members according to their interests.

- Theater group "The Troupe of Tuesday"
- Painting group "Imagination and color"
- Music group "The upper note"
- Dance-movement group "Pomegranate / Wheel"
- Literature and general knowledge group "Letters and miracles"

Each group meets once a week. The team includes a person in charge of each team, who is specialized in the special artistic or intellectual field and has experience in managing mixed groups of people with and without disabilities. The groups are supported by specialized assistants and the whole program of the Club is coordinated by the Head of the Art Club.

In addition to the specific daily programs, the Art Club:

- develops cultural and recreational activities for all its members, organizing visits to exhibitions and museums and participation in seminars and festivals. There are also walks and short excursions.
- organizes educational and cultural programs and seminars for people with and without disabilities.

As regards the materials and tools used for the implementation of the artistic activities, the following have been used:

- Musical instruments,
- costumes, stage objects,
- projectors,
- watercolors, painting blocks, brushes, markers, wood paints, watercolors, tempera,

- cardboard, glues, scissors.
- Videos and presentations,
- instructor notes and articles,
- experiential workshops and exercises.

The staff that participates in the artistic activities has various specialties: physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers, administrators, guides, assistants, etc.

The activity was integrated in 2014 in the ARTABILITY Program which was funded by the Greek EEA Grants Programme. Till 2014 and following the end of the project (2016) the activity is funded by the organization's own resources.

The ARTABILITY Programme addressed without distinction to any person who was interested in dancing, singing, painting, writing and performing in theatrical plays, and confirmed the belief of the organization that when people with and without disabilities collaborate in the artistic process, art is transformed into a powerful tool for removing any form of social exclusion. The Programme was based on the common interest of the participants for the artistic creation and the culture and the removal of the obstacles that stand between the people.

The main activities were:

- Operation of an Art Club with workshops in theater, dance, music, painting and literature, with over 100 members with and without disabilities.
- Two 2-Day Seminars and Two Fortnight Trainings in artistic activities for people with and without disabilities, with over 150 participants.
- Nine art courses for people of all ages, in collaboration with Municipal Cultural Centers in Athens and the SOS Children's Villages of Greece, with over 130 participants.
- 3-day Art / Experiential Seminar for people with and without disabilities, in Argostoli, Kefalonia, with over 60 participants.
- Art Festival with theater, dance, music and visual arts' activities, with over 300 participants.

Regarding the impact of the above mentioned activities, it is noted that these provide opportunities for the persons with disabilities to find and develop their own hidden talents and possibilities. They develop their creativity, expression and imagination; create meaningful relationships with others; and significantly improve their quality of life. At the same time, the activities provide the space where persons with disabilities meet other people, with and without a disability, and facilitates the process of acquiring social skills and self-confidence and increase their participation in the social environment, while at the same time raising public awareness about people with disabilities.

- **More information**

<https://www.eps-ath.gr/>

3. Fine Art Atelier

MARGARITA is a special education provider targeting people with mental disabilities (moderate and high functionality). The organization is operating for more than 42 years and participates in European and national programmes with the aim to learn from the experience of other organisations and apply this knowledge to its programmes.

Art is a horizontal element in the operation of the organization, which has been incorporated in the activities of the organization, including the educational activities, the activities for improving expression, as well as for the facilitation of the professional rehabilitation. In particular, the art department organises workshops of theater, weaving, screen printing and since September 2020, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the organization has established the fine arts atelier. The atelier is essentially a space in which the beneficiaries have the opportunity and the means to discover their artistic identity through their participation in the studio's artistic groups and activities.

The Fine Art Atelier is operating in accordance with the methodologies and good practices that have been applied by various European organizations. The overall aim is to educate, to offer the creative framework and the means, so that the beneficiaries with intellectual disabilities can form their artistic identity and claim artistic rights in the field of art.

The Atelier offers:

- Theoretical training in Theory and History of Art in easy-to-read format.
- Practical training in the basic principles of visual arts and techniques.
- Familiarity with a range of materials and their use.
- Artistic atmosphere, stimuli and time for exercises, tests and creativity to enhance expression and artistic inclination.
- Free choice and enhancement of decision making.

Some of the indicative artistic techniques that have been used are presented below:

- Painting
- Engraving
- Clay
- Collage
- Kinesiology
- Creation of canvas / painting
- Photography
- Learning self-promotion and presentation of their work

The above techniques have been or are being implemented by art instructors and therapists, as well as artistic animation specialists.

One of the most important aspects of the atelier is the provision of freedom to the participants and the strengthening of autonomy. Despite the fact that a certain programme is in place, everyone has the opportunity to make their own decisions as to what kind of artistic work to do, how to do it, what kind of materials to use and what technique to apply for completing the artistic work.

As to the results and impact of the Fine Art Atelier it is noted that since its establishment in 2020, more than 40 beneficiaries of MARGARITA have participated in the Atelier's activities resulting in the enhancement of autonomy; transcendence of personal sensory boundaries; expression and creation of artistic identity; expression of emotions; enhancement of skills; maturation; claiming adulthood and personal rights; artistic education (learning of artists, techniques and collaboration); enhancement of career prospects.

- **More information**

<http://www.eeamargarita.gr/>

4. Education through art

The KETHEA - DIAVASI (Centre for Dependent Individuals – Diavasi) education department has been operating since 1997 offering a wide range of educational activities to its beneficiaries. The main goal through these activities is to develop the self-esteem and confidence of its beneficiaries. Moreover, through these activities, the beneficiaries can discover what abilities they have and how capable they are to make the change to a new life (after drug addiction) and acquire skills that will help them in their everyday life once they complete the therapeutic programme.

Since September 2017, it is noted that KETHEA – DIAVASI has been implementing the project "Education through art" with the participation of members of the therapeutic community. Through this project, members of the therapeutic community have the opportunity to participate in teams focused, among others, on graphic design, ceramics, photography, dance, music and theater.

The work of these teams is fully connected to the members' therapeutic process and aims to empower the participants through the development of their personality, improvement of self-esteem, and enhancement of cooperation and communication. The staff, through the application of various methods (e.g. transformative learning, orientation groups, and experiential activities) is trying to activate any knowledge that pre-existed in the participants and to help them understand that they can achieve their goals. It is noted however that the educational content of these teams is not a standard one but it is adapted to the needs of the participants. A very important part of the exercises is to teach the participants how to manage their time as well as how to set goals. This is imperative for their life after the end of the therapeutic programme and for the success of their efforts to re-integrate into society.

5. International Eressos Women's Festival

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Sappho Women is a non-profit organisation based in Skala Eressos, Lesvos Island - Greece and official producer of the International Eressos Women's Festival which is held every year in September. The organization aims, among others, to:

- Support and promote the unity, solidarity, independence and wellbeing of women in general and local women on the island of Lesvos in particular;
- Promote the material and spiritual empowerment of women and create funds to invest in local and regional women's groups and organizations;
- Promote recreational, social and economic activities among women and stimulate activities aimed at the development of skills and talents of local and international women;
- Organize the annual women's festival in September in the village of Skala Eressos, which from 31st May 2011 onwards will be called "International Eressos Women's Festival".

The festival provides the opportunity to women belonging to the LGBTI community, who are facing racism at various levels, to meet and participate in various events, such as speeches, workshops, trainings, concerts, painting exhibitions, etc. Those events do not target however only members of the LGBTI community but also members from other vulnerable groups (such as persons with disabilities for example) and of the local community.

Overall, the organization attempts every year to develop a set of activities, in the context of the festival, which can have a positive impact to the participants. Thus, the festival is not only a place of having fun, but also a place where the participants can be informed about their rights, about various social and medical issues (e.g. domestic violence).

Since its establishment 20 years ago, the festival aims at promoting the acceptance of being "different".

- **More information**

<https://www.womensfestival.eu/>

6. Music groups

The Panhellenic Association of Parents, Guardians and Friends of Multiply Disabled Visually Impaired People – "Amimoni" was founded in 1993 in Athens and it operates, among others, a Day Care Centre and a Guesthouse, offering services to children and adults with visual impairment (either blind or partially sighted) and multiple disabilities, such as Intellectual Disability, Autism, Syndromes, Neurological Disorders, Mobility Impairments, Epilepsy and Psychiatric Disorders.

"Amimoni" has put arts as a core activity in their daily operation and the services provided to their beneficiaries. Taking into account the healing effect of art in the therapeutic process, the well-being of the beneficiaries, the development of their skills and the facilitation of the



social inclusion process, “Amimoni” has given particular emphasis on the establishment of music groups, composed of the organization’s beneficiaries.

On the basis of music therapy, the activity aims and contributes to providing opportunities, either at individual or group level, for self-expression. Through this activity, various music groups have been established over the last decades. Depending on the decision of the participants these music groups have been characterized as either “introvert” or “extrovert”. In the first case, the participants decided that they did not want to participate in public events for example, but wanted to express themselves through music in a non-open environment.

On the other hand, one of the most successful examples of “extrovert” music group was “Oneiremata”. In 2009, as part of group music therapy sessions at the "Iris" Day Center of Amymoni, and with the collaboration of the music therapist Pelina Evangelou, the idea was born for the participation of some beneficiaries in various social events organized in the local community. Thus, the musical group of Amymoni was formed, consisting of Maria Pothou, Marialena Theofanidou and Kallio Martyridou.

With the cooperation of the music therapist and the professionals of the organization, the target group started expressing themselves on a safe environment/context and gradually they transformed into a music group which participated in various social events. Throughout this process, the participants built strong relationships not only among the members of the group but also with the professionals involved in the rehearsals and meetings, as well as with the local community. The group members realized that they have a talent which not only facilitated their therapeutic process, but also provided them with an employment opportunity.

It is interesting that the whole process is co-created by the target group themselves who participate in all decisions related to the rehearsals, the repertoire, and the events. Taking into account that a “one-size-fits-all” approach cannot be applied in art therapy, the process is evaluated in every session.

In 2015 the band was named “Oneiremata” (“Dreams”) and since 2009 has made over 40 appearances, with Greek and foreign repertoire, inside and outside Attica, as in the opening ceremony of the 5th European Conference of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, at the 1st European Art Festival for Mental Health, at the 1st Festival of Special Education Institutions in the Technopolis of the Municipality of Athens, in schools, hospitals, theatrical scenes, etc.

- **More information**

<https://amimoni.gr/>

7. Theatrical group

The Association of People with Disabilities and friends of Rodopi Prefecture, “Perpato” was founded on September 2002 from a group of friends of People with Disabilities (PWD), their



families and other friends. The Association has designed and implemented various artistic activities targeting persons with disabilities. One of these activities is the Theatrical group.

The organization considers that art is an excellent mean for learning to collaborate and allows you to see things in yourself that you have not seen before. The Association has established a theatrical group which is composed of members/beneficiaries of the organization's activities, friends as well as supporters of the Association. The theatrical group is supported by a psychologist, director, personal assistants, social workers, musicians and a project manager.

Through this activity, which involves a combination of movement, performance and theater elements, voice expression as well as psychotherapeutic techniques, the organization aimed to cultivate a space where everyone is free to express himself/herself and becomes visible to other people.

In this context, the activity, which includes kinetic improvisation, visual arts, theater conditions, body music, group feedback, narrative techniques, conscious breathing exercises, aims at achieving the following objectives:

- ensure an accessible space to all participants,
- team building (inclusion),
- division of responsibilities,
- finding a common goal (collective action, community extroversion),
- building trust / security,
- provide opportunities to get out of the safety zone (creating false barriers - generalization of process, ingenuity),
- empowerment of the participants.

At the beginning of this process, the involved persons discussed as to whether this activity could lead to the organization of a local festival. In this context, the staff of the organisation decided that it was possible and also agreed with another theatrical group to take part in the festival. They also decided that the theatrical group will perform Molière's "Imaginary Patient". Although the festival has not yet been organized, due to the restrictions imposed by the Government due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that all participants started discussing about this and how the theatrical group and its work could be presented in the local community.

The general approach which the Association has applied in this activity is to remove firstly all barriers hindering the participation of the target group so that everyone participates equally. Afterwards you discuss and agree on the content of the activity, its objective and the personal goals of the team, as well as on the outcomes of the activity.

Once the Association decided that the theatrical group will perform Molière's "Imaginary Patient", they started discussing about the steps that need to be taken in order to organize



the local festival and the theatrical performance. In this respect the steps taken were as follows:

- Identify and book an accessible space in the city;
- Identify the members of the target group who would participate in the theatrical group.
- Started working on the roles within the team.
- Since the beginning of the activity and according to the needs they identified throughout the process, they selected the supporting staff that is necessary to be present during the rehearsals (based on the type of disabilities of the participants for example, or the content of the rehearsals).

Overall, throughout the process, the organization and the involved staff, tried to bridge various gaps, such as the participation of both younger and older people, people without and with comorbid conditions (for example persons with mental disorders and physical ankylosis). Every Thursday they rehearsed and discovered new things about their relationship, how they can cooperate and show. In this way the dynamic of the group was slowly being developed, which could be presented to the wider public, However, during the activity implementation, the staff realized that the participants did not want to present directly a theatrical play but they decided firstly to make a presentation of the theatrical group (who we are and what we can do) and then proceed with an open theatrical performance for the local community.

Regarding the methodology in particular, it is noted that the organization worked with kinetic improvisation in theater conditions. They tried to create false obstacles during the rehearsals (by putting participants in a condition where they had to overcome many real obstacles such as chairs) which would play a dual role in terms and you see how it works in this condition and how it can externalize this treaty.

In addition, they used meditation at the beginning and at the end of each rehearsal. The whole process of the rehearsal resulted in a continuous discussion about the interaction, the difficulties and the wishes of the participants.

There is no hard evidence as to the impact of these good practices in the target group. In particular, the organisations have not applied any research method to measure the impact of their activities but have conducted informal evaluations on the basis of discussions with the participants as well as the observations of their staff.

As stated by the representatives of the Perpató Association, what they realized was that although at the beginning of the activity there were significant differences among the participants, they collaborated effectively, and this applies particularly for those who were introvert. Throughout the process and the rehearsals, the staff experienced various moments, which cannot be recorded through formal evaluations and which are related to the changes in the way participants performed and expressed themselves and their feelings (getting excited for example) during the rehearsals.



The evaluation of the activity was conducted mainly at the end of each rehearsal where they had a discussion with the participants in order to share their experiences.

Overall, the impact that the participants in the focus groups highlighted are as follows:

- Body contact;
- Improved communication and expression;
- Empowerment and sense of liberation;
- Enhancement of self-esteem and enthusiasm;
- Improvement of their “visibility” and “presence” in society.

- **More information**

<https://perpato.gr/>