

# Art of Inclusion



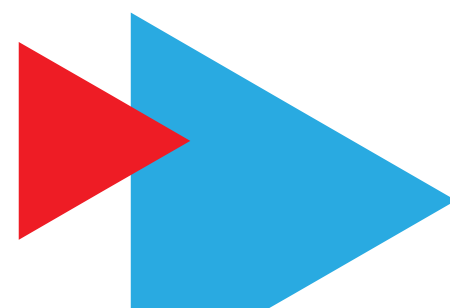
From 28–29th November, in Sofia – Bulgaria, the host of a two-day event was the organisation Vox Populi which had the aim to implement a creative approach for covering the popular theme of life after involuntary banished as a Syrian citizen.

## 28.11.2019

At the start of the day, the partners for this project were divided in two different groups, and through various types of art they got to know each other much better. The used techniques were: creating pictures/profiles with cutouts of newspapers and magazines (creating collages), as well as listening to music along emotional visualizing.



What preceded this and how did the whole process continued?



## Using the collage technique

At first, the participants had a task to write down any basic and essential information for themselves: name, surname, interests, hobbies, the happiest as well as the saddest moment of their lives, and similar. Then, each of them had his/her own short introduction of this biography, describing the previously written and sharing parts of the personal life stories.



Along the participation of the partners present, there were also participants there not by their own will, but present there because of the war in Syria, so they found their salvation and new home in the territory of Bulgaria. Every life story is a unique one and with itself it brings wins and losses, however, it seems that exactly their story caused the most emotional reactions, and even tears among some people there.

**It is true that people empathize more with others in moments of sorrow, and this was confirmed. "When we share joy, we double it. When we share sadness, we reduce it by half" - a Swedish saying.**

After this, the group participants bonded mutually and approached the other part of the workshop. By method of random picking, the participants took some of the filled out papers (with the personal info/bio) and the next task was to “create” the profile/character, using various motives of the newspapers. With the right tools for cutting and glueing, the pictures of the magazines were glued to white sheets of paper, and those collages were randomly placed on the table. Then, each participant chose a collage (randomly) and made assumptions for whom this collage might be created.



### Connection through music



From the created collages of newspapers, the participants needed to choose one of those and accordingly to it, to choose a song that would be connected somehow to the chosen collage, but at the same time, connected to a certain situation or a period in their lives. The music brought back memories for everyone, and woke certain feelings.



 Theater show

The theater show “Peace with you” depicts the complex life events of the people, the refugees of Syria. What is their identity, what made them leave their homes and closest ones, and go toward an unknown destination with only clothes on their backs, and a courageous heart - that was captured in the theater show held in Sofija, directed by Neda Sokolovska.



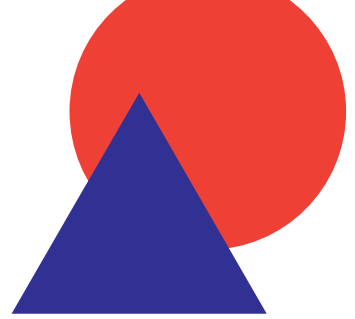
On the scene, there were two young actors, one of which was from Syria and with great emotions depicted what he acted, also, in certain moments the audience also empathized with his pain as well. Being a refugee in the midst of a war, searching for safety and peace on the road in some of the European countries, their stopping along the way to look back toward a home that no longer exists - all of that is told also in an interview of citizens that were a part of this, so the theater scene got a whole new dimension, as if on the other side they address you and share with you directly.



Feeling of having no way out, fear of losing a family member, powerlessness, but also wondering how to move on in life - all of these were topics presented on the unique theater scene. There is also the thought that there are no bad people, only bad politics that ruin many lives.

29.11.2019

The premise where this was held was move.bg. The introduction was held by the director, Mrs. Sasha Bezuhanova who presented the work and acting focus of this organisation. Additionally, move.bg presents a platform for creating values and innovative solutions through ensuring of data for research, educational content, and transfer of knowledge by leading international organizations. On the other hand, through seeking ideas for social transformation, they create new paths and directions for enabling a culture for a constructive dialogue and participating leadership.



After the presentation by Mrs. Bezuhanova, the results of the completed evaluation were presented, covering the decrease of the risk for the project “Art of inclusion”, by the students from Germany, where the coordinator was prof. Birgit Behrensen, PhD.



The following comments should be taken into consideration, especially when the main topic is marginalized groups.

- The preparation is particularly important, but also the flexibility and adaptation are just as important skills.
- Also, the needs and requirements of the participants must be taken into consideration as well.
- Everyone should be treated equally, trust each other, show interest for the project itself, but for the event as well. The event should provide professional growth, but on the other hand, the individual benefit should not be accentuated more or before the focus of the marginalized group.
- Motivating factors were the atmosphere, current situation, and way of perception. The space where this was held should be relaxed and safe, and the participants should be given enough time for exchange of mutual experiences, and to not be bound to critical evaluation.

# Conclusion

On media, traditional, as well as social, we constantly hear about stories of people that escaped because of the war, whether Syria or in another country. We call those people "refugees". But, do we ever put ourselves in their shoes? We accept them or judge them? Whatever the answer is, they proudly wear that social label. How should we understand them? The event in Sofia confirmed that art is an amazing event that allows for getting closer to each other, closer to the problems, and closer to life of others in general, and allows for accepting others as a part of our surroundings. Through art of a simpler, and closer way, all interests are shown, ways of thinking, and of course, the most important...emotions.

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