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Arbuz Mobilny Uniwersalny



Culture, art and care that look for beneficiaries and reach them



Arbuz Mobilny Uniwersalny is a workshop for young people from groups that are excluded or at risk of exclusion. During the workshop they will be able to create their own professional artistic productions under the supervision of renowned artists in a mobile music and film studio. The workshop output, in the form of music tunes, movies, etc., is then presented to a wide audience which is given an opportunity to get to know people experiencing different types of exclusions and acknowledge their extraordinary potential. Young workshop participants can boost the sense of agency and strengthen their position in the peer group via shared fun activities and creative work.



Who is the innovation is targeted at?

The innovation is targeted at young people at risk of social exclusion due to various reasons, such as ethnic origin, citizenship status, religion, disability or disease, social orientation, and also social origin and poverty related to it – a group that is probably most frequently exposed to the risk of social exclusion.

The innovation was tested in communities in which individuals experience exile and migration (due to the relatively homogeneous character of the host society and the model of accepting refugees and immigrants that does not focus on integration, this group is particularly exposed to social exclusion due to cultural and language differences, poverty and physical isolation in their environment), as well as by children from children's homes (experiencing social stigmatisation due to their origin and poverty), but it can be employed for any group facing problems with social integration.

Who can implement the innovation?

The innovation can be implemented by any entity operating in an environment in which there are individuals at risk of exclusion, such as:

- public institutions such as community centres, children's homes, refugee centres, schools and kindergartens, theatres, museums,
- NGOs supporting individuals at risk of social exclusion or supporting a given community, as well as NGOs active in a given area, e.g., culture,
- informal groups or even single individuals active in a given community, such as parochial or other non-institutionalised groups.

The key to innovation success is to engage individuals with a unique pastime that they are willing and able to share with young people.

It has to be something that can be engaging for a larger group of people, regardless of their talents, skills, education or family affluence. What is more, the entry threshold cannot be too high.

What problems does the innovation address?

The innovation addresses the problem of discrimination and social exclusion among older children and teenagers. The testing of the innovation is focused on the social exclusion of individuals experiencing exile and migration, as well as children from children's homes, but it can be applied to any group in which the existing differences do or can cause disintegration and exclusion. The innovation can be useful in working with the following groups:

- children from migrant families, especially those whose integration with their peers is hindered due to cultural and language differences,
- children from dysfunctional families, experiencing violence, care and educational neglect,
- children from poor families, especially when helplessness is learned, and poverty is inherited,
- children from minority families, traditionally treated as alien and consequently isolated from the community, e.g., Roma children,
- children from children's homes, training and education centres, detention centres,
- children with disabilities, including beneficiaries of institutional care facilities, such as welfare centres,
- children and youths experiencing mental health crisis, including addicted individuals or ones recovering from an addiction.

How to implement the innovation at your end, step by step?

Our work was based on a close, emotional interaction with the participants, on finding the right proportion between a certain dose of anarchy - allowing the participants to behave freely - and the authority of artists running the workshop. We managed to create a mobile studio in such a way that all the participants were willing to be in it and to work.

Oskar Piotr Martin



Step 1. Organising the team

Elements necessary to organise a workshop:

1. Workshop facilitator

A workshop facilitator plays an essential role in the innovation not only because they are responsible for the content of the session and must have the right expertise and methodological competence to share knowledge and skills. Proper preparation to work with a specific and demanding group is equally important. Such a person should be open, flexible, patient, and aware of possible cultural differences. Unless they have previous experience in working with a given type of participants, they should be prepared at least theoretically by talking to those who have already interacted with similar groups.

Apart from the main facilitator, it might be necessary to look for co-hosts who can help individual participants. During the pilot workshops, one host was responsible for supporting five participants.

2. Activity coordinators

Coordinators do not have to be directly involved in the workshop. But they must manage the entire project on the logistic and organisational level.

3. Interpreter (optionally)

If a workshop is held for a group of people who do not speak Polish and if no facilitator speaking their native language is found, the presence of an interpreter will be necessary.

4. Psychologist (optionally)

When working with a group at risk of social exclusion, it is particularly important to ensure proper preparation of a facilitator to this task, especially if we have to do with major cultural (for instance, when the participants are refugees from a different cultural circle) or social differences (e.g., groups that a host has not had any contact with earlier). The role of a psychologist is to prepare facilitators to possible challenges and to offer necessary support to them, to the group, or to individual participants during the session. Such support can also be available remotely. A psychologist can also prepare and facilitate selected elements of classes that are essential from the point of view of group integration, together with the host. Consulting the planned scenario with a psychologist will also help avoid any awkwardness resulting from insufficient understanding of the group specificity by the facilitator. If it is a group that is highly distinct culturally, the scenario can be also consulted with a person who has experience in cross-cultural education.

Step 2. Participant recruitment

Participant recruitment should ideally be conducted in cooperation with an institution or an organisation that works with the individuals at risk of exclusion who are to take part in the workshop. The final group of attendees can be selected in several ways:

1. Closed recruitment – the organiser gives freedom in selecting the group to an organisation or an institution that participants will come from, only defining who the session is targeted at and what it will look like. On the one hand, such a form of recruitment requires less work, but on the other hand, it deprives the organiser of impact on the final composition of the group.

2. Open recruitment – the organiser runs open recruitment for the workshop, allowing everyone who is interested to apply (via application forms or in person). Such a form of recruitment requires more effort and well-thought-out promotional activities, but the organiser keeps control over final participants of the session. Should this form of recruitment be selected, it is necessary to ensure a diversified form of reaching potential attendees and to remember that some



popular channels of communication can be exclusive on their own (e.g., recruitment only via the organiser's FB site). Hence, it is a good idea to consider reaching potential participants in a more direct manner, e.g., via open meetings, slap tags, leaflets, posters at a given organisation or institution. If the criteria of admission to the workshop are other than 'first come, first served', they should be open, transparent, and known from the beginning.

Step 3. Planning activities

Innovators recommend that the workshop should last at least two weeks, including a weekend break. The general scenario for each day should be prepared in advance so that the group knows what the session will look like, but the schedule should be adjusted to participants and their needs which can be revealed only when working with the group. Therefore, when planning the intensity of activities, it is necessary to take account of the capabilities of a given age group, and to remember about breaks for refreshments and rest.

The workshop venue can be selected together with employees of a given institution or organisation that will participate in its preparation. It is also necessary to ensure comfortable space around the car, allowing for setting up a canopy, arranging a table for snacks and several chairs. It is obviously necessary to obtain consent from the owner of the land to park the car and to plug in. Also, participants should be provided with access to toilets.

What is particularly noteworthy?

- The main objective of the workshop is to ensure integration via fun activities and creative work; the ultimate artistic' output of the workshop is also important, but it is not the main focus.
- The success of the venture is determined chiefly by the right choice of the facilitator. Ideally, it should be a person known to participants and enjoying respect among them, but their personality and approach matter even more. It should be a person that is open, empathetic, and ideally should have experience in working with sensitive groups.
- The workshop schedule must be adjusted to the needs, expectations and specificity of a given group, and possible to be modified during the event, if need be.
- Support from a psychologist or a cross-cultural assistant would be valuable, and so would be interpreting services in the event of language differences.

Does it work? How does the innovation help its beneficiaries?

Participation in the music and film workshops allowed attendees to (individuals from excluded groups and groups at the risk of exclusion):

- prepare their own tracks and videoclips that could be shared in social media and among communities to build their artistic brand and standing within the group.
- gain knowledge and skills – new competencies related to creating music or video content with the use of widely available, free tools, software, and social media.



- pursue their artistic passions under the supervision of professional artists representing the music and film industry.

Another crucial outcome of the innovation was the participant empowerment via:

- motivating them to continue developing their own talents and utilising them for self-development, also on the professional level – as a future work tool;
- boosting their self-esteem;
- integrating with one another and with the local community, and improving the quality of cross-cultural relations;
- acknowledgment and appreciation from peers not experiencing exclusion on a daily basis, and from the local community.

How much does it cost?

Innovators spent ca. PLN 15 000 on the organisation of a mobile studio in 2019. It is a low-budget version – the studio equipment was collected from friends, while a used and rather old car was bought with the funds collected via a crowdfunding initiative.

Costs that must be considered when organising a workshop include:

- fees for workshop facilitators,
- fees for the coordinator and vehicle driver (it can be one person),
- fees for the supporting staff, such as a psychologist, interpreter, etc.,
- daily allowances for volunteers who do not receive any fees,
- book-keeping,
- accommodation for workshop facilitators,
- fuel, vehicle maintenance, paid highways, parking fees,
- refreshments for participants during the workshop, and on the last day during a meeting summarising the project.

Adding all the above items, the cost of the workshop amounted to ca. PLN 45 000.



Who are the authors of the innovation?

Introducing authors of the innovation:



Oskar Piotr Martin – filmmaker, cameraman, editor. Working with immigrants, he spent several months in Calabria, Italy, coordinating the work of musicians coming there from Poland. President of the Arbuz Association, originator of the mobile audiovisual studio.



Aurora Lubos – dancer, actress, creator of proprietary solo performances, installations and audiovisual shows presented in many locations in Poland and abroad. Her art is devoted to such topics as exile, migration, and cross-cultural integration.



Anna Domańska – photographer and journalist. Her work combines art, documentary formats, journalism, research and educational projects. In winter 2015, she went to the Balkans to help people coming to Europe. In Greece, she video documented the migration process.



Honorata Martin – visual artist, specialising in painting, photography, video animations and performance. Lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. He took part in numerous exhibitions in Poland and abroad. Vice President of the Arbuz Association.



Piotr Pawlak – guitar player and producer.

Member of numerous bands. He composes music for the theatre, movies, ballet and multimedia performances. He is a producer of several dozen records from various artists, and runs music workshops for people with disabilities.



Iwona Skwarek – singer, song writer, music producer and DJ. With Rebeka and Shyness! Bands she gives concerts and releases albums. She is a cultural studies graduate, violin player, and a keen fan of analogue synthesisers.



Emilia Orzechowska – curator, producer and cultural animator, cooperating with theatres, galleries and other contemporary art institutions. She writes texts, interviews artists, releases radio dramas.



Zofia Martin – artist. In her activities she utilises various media: video content, objects, sound, often combining all those languages into one installation, VJ and DJ, organiser of cultural and entertainment events.

Contact details and more information



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<https://inkubatorpomyslow.org.pl/innowacja/arbuz-mobilny-uniwersalny/>.



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