digitale
the booklet

introduction

"[Digitale]" was a workshop exploring the Berkley method of digital storytelling that took place in Grotniki, Poland over 12 days from 13th to 24th of February 2019. There were 27 storytellers from various backgrounds who created their video stories, shared some of their greatest challenges and struggles with the rest of the group and the world and learnt how to pass on the usage of this inspiring storytelling method.

About the workshop: digital storytelling for youth workers

Digital storytelling is based on the assumption that every person has a unique story to be told and shared with the others. It is a modern extension of the art of storytelling that has been an important part of social interactions since the very birth of humanity.

However, in the modern world where we people are constantly exposed to the flood of information, we tend to forget how reflecting on personal experiences and sharing them with others can be beneficial for one's personal development. This way of personal narrative has a potential to be noticed and appreciated, to get through with its message and inspire others. Digital storytelling is a concept that combines two crucial aspects – the power of creating personal narratives and our modern need to "go digital", giving people a chance to tell their stories in creative ways that involve using their digital skills.

During this training course participants had the opportunity to go through the intensive process of creating their own digital story.

Then, they dived into the theory and ethics behind the process, so they will be able to facilitate and pass on the knowledge. They were also invited to facilitate a workshop on their own and worked with lovely children in a local youth centre in Lodz, Poland.

About this booklet

In this e-book we have described the steps to go through the digital story creation process and gathered for you some really useful and creative activities that could be in handy when you try the method with your group.

Tell us if you have applied some of them - write to us or share your story using the hashtag #digitale.

finding the story

The process begins with creative activities designed to help the participants to find what story to tell. It could be a very deep and personal tale or something that is not too hard to tell but still life-changing experience.

It is important for the person to be able to tell the story without being hurt. Traumatic experiences that are still hurting may not be the best choice, so the facilitators should support the storyteller in the process of story discovery.

the story of my name

Introduction to each other can start with a storytelling from the very beginning. In this activity the facilitator invites each participant to share the story behind their names one by one. During the activity some of them already start to discover a story they can tell later on or some curious connections between them.

20 min - whole group activity

speed dating

On a flipchart facilitator draws a clock with 6 different hours marked. Participants are asked to copy it and find one person to date at each hour indicated. After everyone has a dating schedule, facilitator reads out a question for each time and participants are invited to discuss the given topics in pairs for 3 minutes. The aim of this exercise is to try to see everything as a potential story that is worth sharing.The questions we used for this exercise were as follows:

-A story behind one of your tattoos or scars;

-One of the smells you like;

-One of the furniture you like;

-An animal you would like to be and why;

-One of your favorite people (a friend, a family member etc.);

-A travel or a trip that had an impact on your life.

60 min - whole group activity
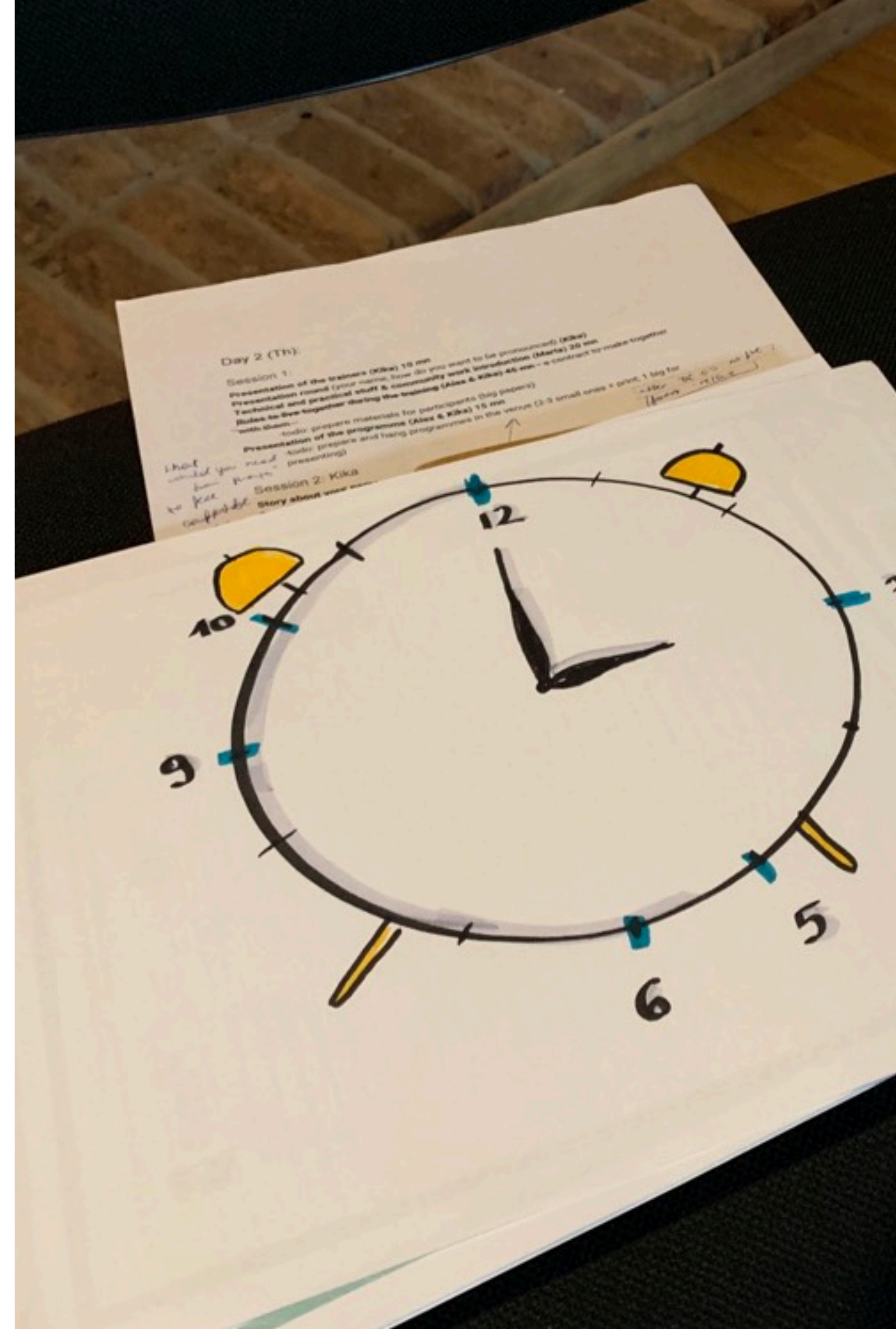
the story behind my last picture

Participants are asked to pair up and open the last picture they took with their mobile phones and think about the story behind it, asking each other questions such as *Where was it taken? Why did I take a picture like this? How did I feel? Was it something important?*

They are invited to use the very last images they have taken, even though it might seem boring or irrelevant (such as a picture of the notes they used to study for an exam or a phone number they wanted to remember). The facilitator should encourage them to see interesting stories in seemingly boring situations. After thinking of the story participants share in pairs, asking each other questions to discover more details connected to the story behind the picture.

15 min - work in pairs

the moment when everything changed

Participants are given time for identifying and reflecting upon a moment in the past that caused a major change in their lives. The focus of this exercise is on identifying and recreating important life events, trying to remember not only what happened but also feelings, smells, and colors that were present in the situation. After a short individual reflection participants are invited to write down the stories freely, without focusing on a form or the length. Once everyone is finished we ask volunteers to share their stories with the group.

20 min - work in pairs and then whole group discussion
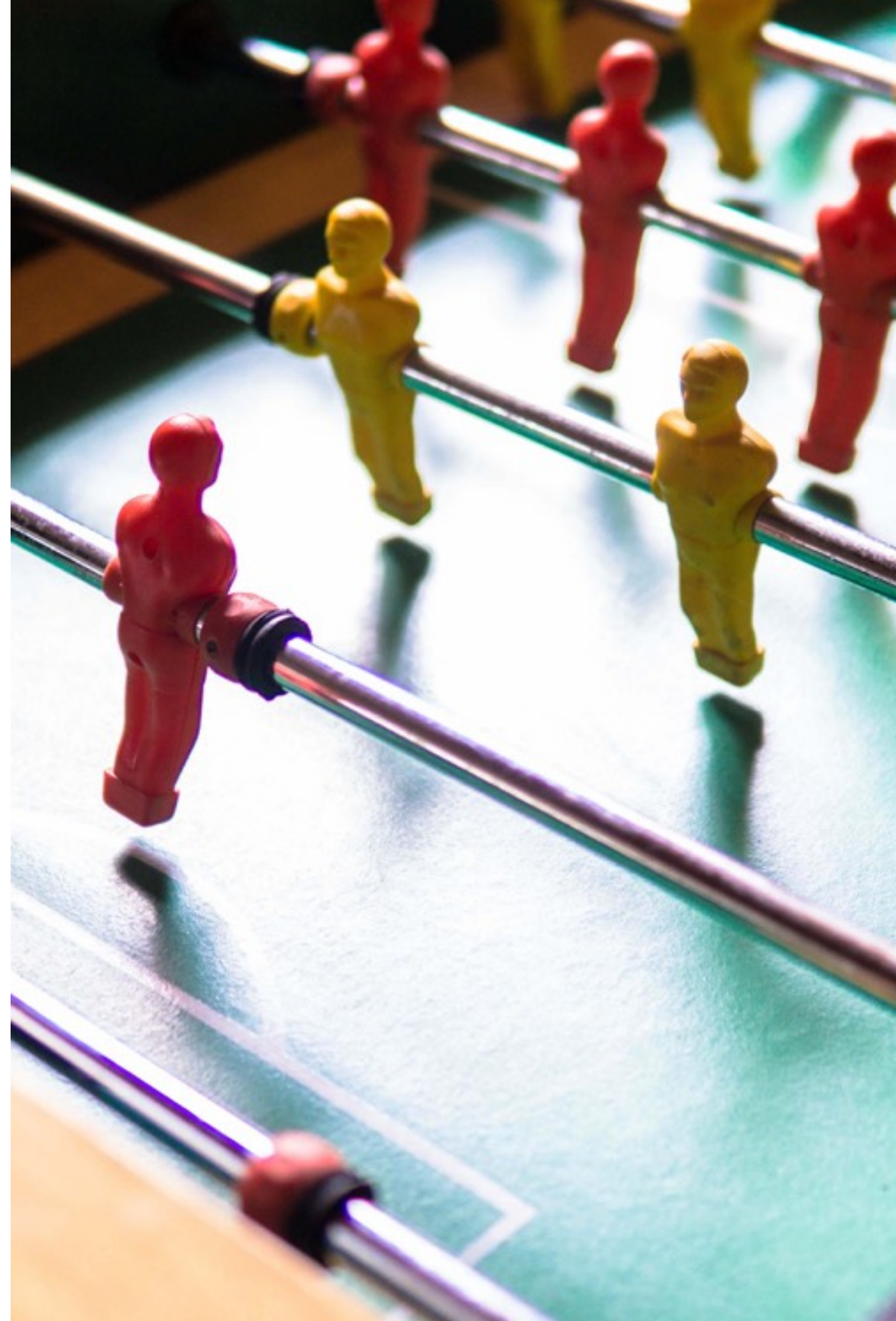
my life story in a minute

Participants are divided into pairs. In the first round of this exercise they are invited to tell the other person their life story in one minute. No additional instructions are given so that participants can talk freely and choose on what they would like to focus in their stories. After the first round all of them are invited to share the impressions in the big group, reflecting on how their narratives were created with questions such as *What kind of chronology did you choose? Where did you start your story from? How many small stories or plots were there?* In the second round participants are asked to retell the same stories but focusing on something more specific and experiment with the narrative and the chronology, not necessarily starting with *I was born in....; I am ..... years old; I study....*

15 min - whole group activity

giving non-violent feedback

With this activity, the participants are invited to consider they way they give feedback to other people, so later on in the Story Circles, they will be able to help their mates discovering and creating their stories.

Participants write on two papers how do they feel and what do they need. Then a volunteer picks one paper and makes a fixed pose to illustrate it. Whoever feels they found out what the word is, can join the picture by adding their part. Then the group discusses what people observed and then interpreted from the picture.The activity is followed by a group discussion what is the actual difference between observation and interpretation. The facilitator also introduces some key elements how to give NVC feedback such as asking questions rather than imposing statements.

Finally, in pairs they give feedback to each other's short story based on a random object, following the model: What do I hear in your story? How does it make me feel? What do I imagine?

90 min - whole group activity

the postcard

Each participant is given a postcard and is invited to write a short postcard to someone important to them (can be a friend, a family member, a teacher, or even participant him/herself from past or future). There are no clear instructions what should be there except that the message should actually fit the limited space on the postcard (the aim of this exercise is to practice shorter written forms of expression). Once this is finished everyone has a chance to read it out loud to the group.

10 min for writing + 10 min for sharing - small groups activity
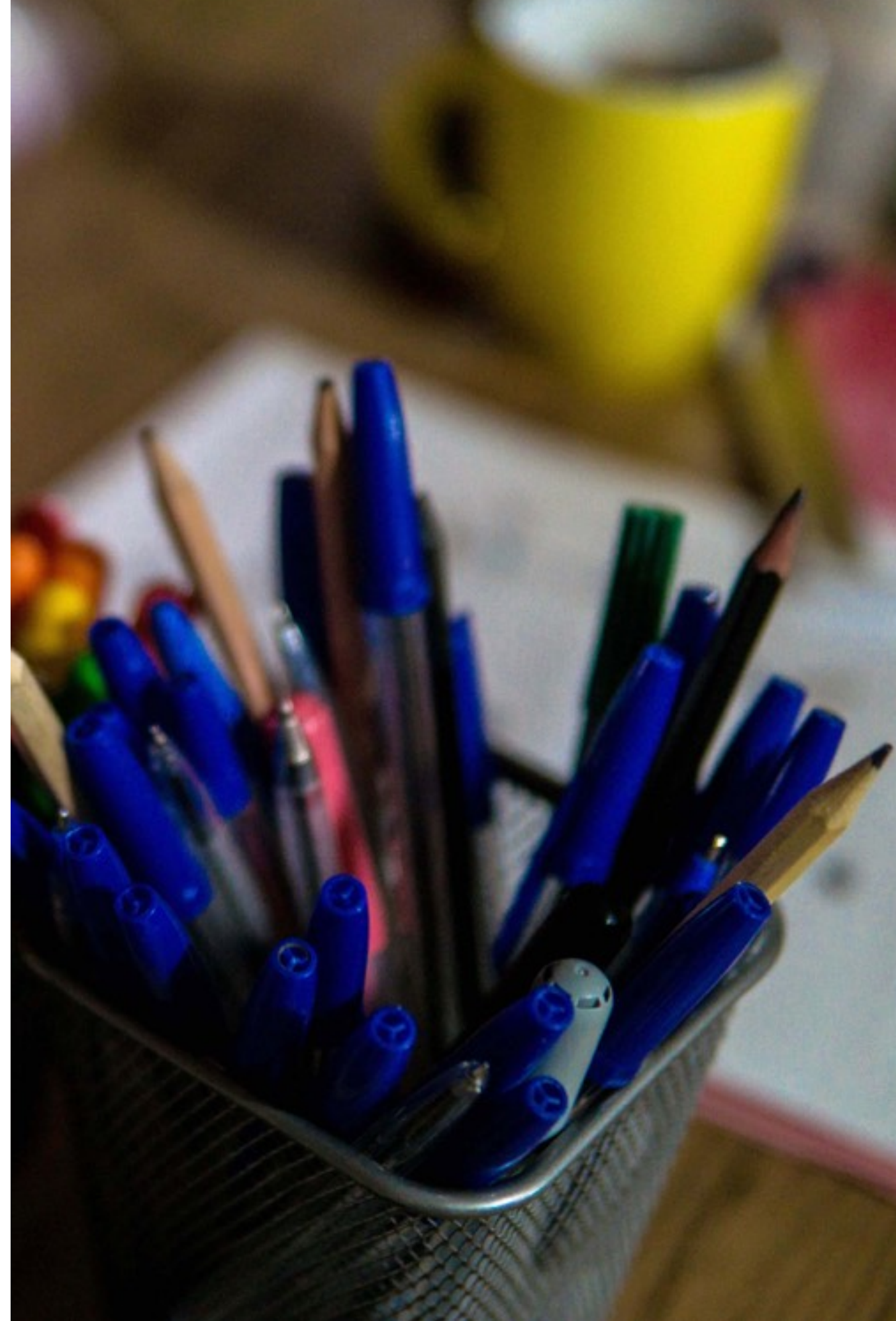
the neighborhood map

Participants are asked to draw a simple map of the neighborhood they grew up in, marking landmarks and locations that were important for them back in the past. The aim of this exercise is to activate the visual memory and thinking in symbols, not drawing a perfect map, therefore it is enough to provide participants with very simple materials such as white papers and pencils/pens. After all the drawings are done participants are invited to explain what they put in their maps and share stories connected to the places they grew up in.

15 min for drawing + 10 min for sharing - small groups activity

the story behind the object

Prior to the training participants were asked to find a small object that is meaningful for them and bring it along. There were no specific instructions as for what this should be other than it should be something important or related to a story.

Each participant is asked now to show the object they chose and explain why they choose it, what does it mean to them, how they obtained it, what are the memories connected to it etc.

20 min - small groups activity

finding the story: buddy exercise

Participants are divided into pairs in which they will be working throughout the whole process. The division is done by the trainers, taking into consideration participants' traits of character but also their level of skills that can be used while creating digital stories, in a way that people "buddied" together could support each other in the process both on a personal and emotional levels.

For the buddy exercise, each couple is invited to find a quiet space and talk about the first ideas as for what would they like to talk about in their videos. This aims at bringing the stories out and giving each participant a chance to structure their thoughts into a form of a spoken narrative that will later on serve as a basis for their scripts.

60 min - pair activity

script writing

In this part of the training participants are invited to work on their scripts individually. Personal work with stories is preceded by a short introduction on script writing. We prefer not to do it in a too detailed form and to give participants rather general instructions instead of introducing complex theories of narrative not to put too much pressure on them but rather to encourage their creativity.

15 min - introduction

*3 hours - individual script writing*

the story circle

This is one of the crucial parts of the process of creating individual digital stories since the process itself is both about individual creation and group interaction and sharing. Participants meet in smaller groups (5-6 people) and are invited one by one to read the draft scripts they created. Since it is a very personal moment for many of them, it is important that they all together agree on some ground rules (for example not to use mobile phones during sharing, not to interrupt, to always focus on the storyteller etc.).

After setting the rules participants are also instructed on ways of giving constructive feedback to each other, such as always commenting on the story itself and not to relate it to one's personal experiences too much, asking questions rather than giving direct advice, commenting on specific aspects of the story such as emotions they evoke in a listener, tone of the voice, pace etc.

Each participant is given personal time to share as much as they want and to receive feedback from others if they wish to do so.
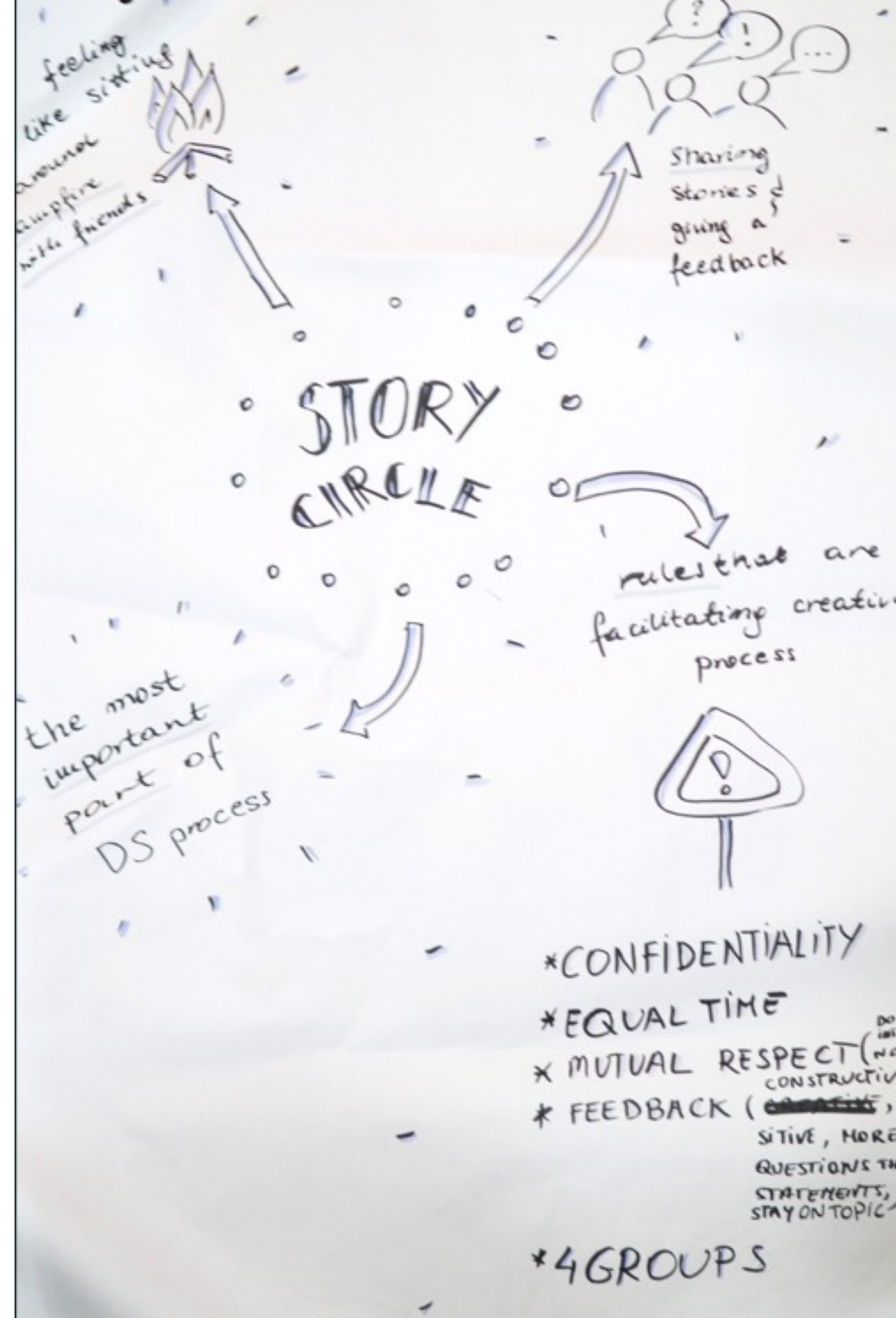
hearing the story

Once the storytellers create their scripts they are ready to make their voice recordings and hear their story. In this method, the voice and narrative have the leading role - only after we record our story, we think of images, music, effects and transitions. Some tales can have even only black screen, but a strong voice telling the story.

introduction to voice recording

The facilitator is giving a short intro focused on how to create participants own voice recordings. We usually ask the storytellers to do it on their own using their mobile phones as it gives them more comfort and freedom. The important part of this introduction is to underline that the recording does not have to be perfect and small imperfections such as accents, sounds of breathing etc. are great since they make the voice-over more personal and emotional.

Participants work with their buddies (the same pairs as in the story finding buddy exercise). They are invited to meet and practice reading their scripts and give feedback to each other, focusing on how clear the voice is, the pace, the pauses etc.

15 min - introduction to voice recording

40 min - pair activity

individual voice recording

As it was the case with the scripts, participants are asked to work individually and record their voice-overs. After a storyteller has their recording, it is important that one of the facilitators (ideally, their Story circle facilitator) listens to it to make sure the quality is sufficient.

60 min - individual activity

seeing the story

Participants are invited to work individually on the visual part of their stories. With the help of facilitators and fellow storytellers, everyone is invited to create their own visuals (these can be pictures, short videos, drawings etc.) or to choose something from their personal archive (such as childhood photographs or drawings).

3 hours - individual work

assembling the story

In the last part of digital story development participants are invited to put together all the elements they created before (voice-over, music or sound effects, visuals). Prior to the individual work on the stories they are given a short introduction on basic features of the editing software (for this purpose all participants should use the same programme; if they work on different software, they should have tested them in advance and checked some easy tutorials to get used to the tool).

4.5 hours - individual activity

the progress chart

During the whole process of digital story creation, participants are invited to put their progress update on a chart put on the wall.

When someone is finished with one of the steps, they put their sign on it. The steps are the following:

1. Script

2. Voice recording

3. Visuals and imagery

4. Music and sounds

5. Import

6. Rough edit

7. Effects and transitions

8. Title and credits

9. Export

PROGRESS CHART

PROGRESS CHART	SCRIPT	VOICE OVER	VISUALS	MUSIC/SOUNDS	IMPORT	ROUGH EDIT	EFFECTS TRANSITION	TITLE CREDITS	EXPORT
HANIA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	~
LOLA	✓								
DANIEL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ILIYANA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VERDJI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MARTA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SARA	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
TIAGO	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

celebrating the story

When all the stories are finished participants are invited to attend a "cinema style" screening to celebrate what they created. Each storyteller who wishes to show their video is given a chance to screen it in front of the whole group and receive feedback from others (it is important to underline that since the stories are already finalised at this point the feedback should be only appreciative).

After the screening participants should be given some free time to celebrate and get some distance since in many cases creating a story is a very emotional process. What could be a great way to celebrate is to make a group picnic somewhere nice or organise a party for everyone to celebrate.

3-4 hours - screening (depending on the number of stories)

rest of the day - celebrating/personal time

train the trainer

Finally, since everyone went through the process of digital story creation, we focus on the facilitation of the method. Looking behind the curtains, it is not that easy to lead the participants through the whole journey, so some tips and important things are good to present and mention.

what makes a good facilitator?

After going through the process of creating their own digital stories, participants are asked to reflect upon what they did with a special focus on what is the role of a facilitator and what were the ways in which their own facilitators tried to support them during different stages of the process. After personal reflection participants are divided into smaller groups and asked to discuss the features and characteristics of a good facilitator who is able to lead digital storytelling workshops and create the profile of the "good facilitator". Each group has a chance to present the outcomes of their work and discuss it with all the other participants and trainers.

90 min - whole group activity

case work

To prepare to real life situations in which participants might lead projects based on digital storytelling, they are divided into groups and asked to go through several case studies with the main task to think of ways to approach and solve the challenge they are facing in the case.

The case studies presented are based on real experiences, situations from their own process and let the future facilitators analyse many aspects of the process, such as logistics and technicalities (how to choose a venue, what equipment to bring, how to adjust the duration of the sessions etc.), educational content, and possible challenges they might face (what to do if participants do not respect the rules of the story circle, if they are in an emotional crisis, if they do not want to share etc.).

90 min - small groups activity

ethical considerations

Since for many people creating a personal digital story is a very emotional and challenging experience, it is important to make sure that we as facilitators are able to provide people attending our workshops with a safe space for sharing and opening up being put at risk. To understand it better we show the future facilitators several examples of stories and situations that are very challenging from the ethical perspective. The issues we discuss are very connected to sharing (should we have a right to say "no" to sharing a story?), the topics of the stories (to what extend should we intervene in the process of selecting participants stories? what kind of messages should we accept or not?), emotional safety (how to understand if the person is "ready" to share the story? when to encourage a person to seek more professional psychological support?), copy right issues and using other people's images (should we allow to use images of family members without their consent?) and more.

90 min - whole group activity

filmmaker in three hours

The technical understanding of making a movie is also an important aspect of one facilitator's skills. Therefore, we did a movie-making activity to give some insights to the participants about the filmmaking process - a three hours workshop (two sessions of 90 min each) that aims to give the participants the most useful tools in creating video content.

The first part is dedicated to story structure and main composition rules in photography. The practical exercise is to tell a story that follows the dramatic structure using 6 photos.

The second part is about video and audio tools in creating audiovisual content. The practical exercise is to create a one minute movie using all acquired knowledge. For both exercises, the participants divide themselves into teams of 4-5 people. Each team films on a smartphone or a camera if they have one. For each assignment they have 20 min. At the end of the workshop, each team presents their work and participates in the group discussion.

180 min - whole group activity

as a conclusion

Digital storytelling is a powerful method for people to express, to tell their stories and the way they overcome their greatest challenges. Surely, many of us will relate to most of those stories; and many of us will find them empowering and inspiring.

Are you curious about the stories of this "Digitale" amazing gang of storytellers? Many of them decided to share their creations, so thanks to that you can now see them [here](#)!

Remember to use this method carefully and feel free to share with us the results from your group. However, we always would recommend to facilitate and apply this method after you have experienced it on your own - therefore, we now have a group of brand new digital storytelling future facilitators!

Photos by Anna Kępa, Alexandra Nikolova and Dhe Haivan

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