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Partners

Migdal, Solidarus, Young Folks LT

Artists and Youth Workers from Latvia, Germany and Lithuania contributed to the completion of methods.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

“Art of Identity: Partnerships for the Quality of Youth Work and Youth Exchanges” - the project has been designed to strengthen the capacities of partner organizations, enhance the quality of youth work, and promote meaningful collaboration in addressing the challenges young people face in identity formation and social inclusion. The initiative focused on supporting the development of inclusive, solidarity-based communities that embrace diversity and promote shared European values.

The primary goal of the project was to equip youth workers and partner organizations with innovative methods and practical tools for integrating art practices into youth work and non-formal education. Through collaborative activities, training sessions, and creative learning approaches, participants have been exploring how artistic expression can support self-awareness, intercultural dialogue, social participation, and mutual understanding among young people.



By encouraging creativity, inclusion, and active engagement, we had an opportunity to learn how to create safer and more supportive space where young people can reflect on their identities, connect with others across cultural differences, and contribute to building more open, democratic, and cohesive societies.

METHOD 4 The Social Mosaic

1. Title: The Social Mosaic: Mirrors & Echoes

2. Art Form / Medium: Mosaic / Visual Arts & Collaborative Design

3. Objectives / Outcomes: *

- To explore the concept of "Relational Identity"—how we are shaped by our environment and peers.
- To help youth physically see how their "personal space" is changed and improved by the input of others.
- To encourage letting go of a "perfect plan" when unexpected elements (the traded tiles) are introduced.
- To compare how a participant sees their own work versus how it is interpreted by peers through "Echo Cards."
- To foster a culture of respect where youth observe and acknowledge each other's creative choices without judgment.



4. Target Group: Youth (15–25); 12–15 participants. Context: Community building or social inclusion programs.

5. Duration: 150 minutes (2.5 hours) *15 min: The Foundation (Selection).

15 min: The Trade (Exchange Ritual).90 min: The Assembly (Making).30 min: The Echo Walk (Silent Debrief).

6. Materials Needed:

- Substrates (wooden boards or plexiglass).
- Professional nippers
- High-quality glue/silicone.
- A wide variety of mosaic tiles (glass, ceramic, stone).
- Cement grout



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- Dry napkins
- Sponges
- Blank "Echo Cards" and pens, pencils

Facilitator's Technical Brief

Internal guide for the facilitator to ensure the workshop runs smoothly.

The process begins by choosing a design and a base to build it on. The artist decides on the "flow" of the lines and picks materials—like shiny glass or matte ceramic—based on how they want the light to hit the surface. Using handheld cutting tools called nippers, they break large sheets of material into small, custom shapes. This step is all about learning how to break the material correctly to get the exact shapes needed for the project.

Each small piece is then glued onto the base, a task that requires looking at both the individual fragment and the overall picture at the same time. The artist must leave small, even gaps of about 2–3mm between the pieces. These spaces are very important because they provide room for the filler that will eventually hold the entire artwork together.

Next, the artwork is covered in a thick, sandy paste called grout. This step transforms a collection of loose, separate pieces into one solid, waterproof, and strong slab. The grout acts like a type of cement, filling in all the empty spaces and locking every part of the story firmly into place.

In the final stage, the artist cleans and polishes the surface. By using a damp sponge to wipe away the thin layer of leftover grout, the original colors and textures of the materials shine through again. Now that the pieces are unified, the mosaic just needs a few days to fully dry and harden into a permanent bond.

Please refer to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmKhBr4bDqY&t=179s>

Facilitator's "Red Flag" Checklist

- Too much water: If you see a participant using a soaking wet sponge, stop them immediately. It ruins the grout's chemistry.
- Touching tiles: Walk around during the glueing phase. If you see tiles touching, gently remind them about "Breathing Room."



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- The "Glue Lake": If glue is rising above the tiles, have them scrape it out before it dries, otherwise, they'll have "ghost spots" where the grout couldn't reach.

7. Method Steps:

#	Title	Description	Time
1	The Foundation	Participants choose tiles that represent their "Internal Self" (traits they chose or value). No gluing yet.	15 min
2	The Trade	The Hook: Participants must trade 3 of their favorite pieces with 3 different people. These "foreign" pieces <i>must</i> be included. If a participant is very protective of their tiles and refuses to share, do not force them. Use this alternative: • The "Messenger Piece": Tell them, "If these specific tiles are essential to your identity, keep them. However, you must choose 3 'Messenger' pieces—different tiles that represent something you <i>are</i> willing to share with the group—to trade instead." • The Shared Identity: Suggest they trade with a close friend so they can see where their "piece" lives in someone else's story. <i>"Alright everyone, we're about to move from the 'thinking' phase to the 'making' phase. Mosaic is a bit different from painting—it's louder, messier, and you have to break things to make them work. Here are the three golden rules:</i> • <i>Rule 1: The Snap. When you use these nippers, don't be shy. Give them a quick, sharp squeeze. If you're nervous, the tile will just crumble. If you're decisive, it'll snap</i>	15 min



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		<i>exactly where you want it. Always cut inside your box—nobody wants a flying shard in their eye.</i> • <i>Rule 2: The Breathing Room. When you glue your pieces down, do not let them touch. Leave a small gap—about the width of a matchstick—between every single piece. We need that space for the grout later. No gaps means no grout, and no grout means your mosaic won't survive the trip home.</i> • <i>Rule 3: Less is More. Use just a tiny dot of glue. If your tile is 'swimming' in a lake of glue, it's going to slide around and ruin the design."</i>	
3	The Assembly	Participants build their piece, navigating how to integrate these unexpected "influences" into their original vision. <i>(Say this once everyone has finished gluing and the pieces are dry)</i> <i>"Now for the messy part. We're going to cover your beautiful work in what looks like grey mud (the grout).</i> <i>Don't panic when your design disappears. This grout is the 'social glue'—it fills the gaps and holds everything together. I've mixed it to feel like peanut butter. Smear it on, push it into the cracks with your fingers, and make sure every hole is filled."</i> <i>"The last step is the most satisfying. Grab a sponge, but make sure it's barely damp—if it's dripping, you're just washing your hard work away.</i> <i>Wipe the surface gently to find your tiles again. Once you see them, stop with the sponge and switch to these dry napkins. Give it a good polish. You're buffing away the 'fog' to let the identity you</i>	90 min

		<i>built shine through. Scrub until the glass is bright and the grout lines are smooth."</i>	
4	The Echo Walk	Silent Gallery. Participants place a blank card next to their work. Peers walk around and write a one-word "Echo" (a vibe or feeling) they get from the piece.	30 min

8. Reflection / Debrief Questions:



To keep the debrief from being "too much," choose the most relevant questions for your group's energy.

1. How did it feel when you had to give away a piece you really liked?
2. How did your original plan change once you had to find a home for the tiles you received from others?
3. "Looking at the whole table, how do the 'traded' pieces make our individual works look like they belong to the same group?"
4. "If it was hard to give a piece away, what does that tell you about how you protect your personal space in real life?"
5. Look at the "Echo" card someone left you. Does their word match how you feel about yourself? Why or why not?

9. Facilitator Tip: Remind participants that "Identity is a Dialogue." We don't exist in a vacuum; the "trades" represent the friends, family, and strangers who leave a mark on us.

10. Credits / Origin:

Method description by Daria Bielinska. based on work by Jelena Markune



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