Well-being in, with and by Culture:

Arts, Health and Well-Being – a proposal for cooperation

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Abstract

In our presentation we will introduce our Research group Arts, Health and Well-being and the theme Cultural Well-being as it is articulated in Turku area multiprofessional discussion among Arts, Health and Social sector. We will introduce some pathways of the theoretical backgrounds and the setting and the main agenda of our group. The main goal in this presentation, however, is to start a discussion about co-operation in CARPE network within this theme. What would be the current issue in Europe that we could work on together? What kind of development task could be found that would be relevant among the partners’ RDI interest and the current situation in each country, city and society as well as in different cultural settings.

The RDI group of Cultural Well-being and its references

The main goal for the Research group Arts, Health and Well-being in Turku University of Applied Sciences is to outline, develop and strengthen the idea of cultural well-being in Turku area and on national level. Within the theme we apply and refine art-based and multiprofessional approaches and working methods in cooperation with various fields of art, healthcare and well-being. Culture and Well-Being is currently one of the major profiles in Turku area and it was also strongly emphasized in the programme of the Turku Culture Capital year 2011: Culture does good! as it was articulated. Due to this there has now also emerged a coherent and dynamic network of the active developers of this field in Turku area. In this network there are representatives from i.a. City of
In Turku Arts academy, in co-operation with The Department of Health and Well-being in Turku University of Applied Sciences there have been several projects carried out within this context. For example under the theme Music in Health and Well-being, developing music work in hospital and elderly care settings, there has been going on in three EU-funded projects, where the skills for new professional prospects have been created for musicians and music pedagogues. Also the professional role in hospital and elderly care settings of being a hospital musician has been discussed as well as the resources needed (www.musicare.fi).

Another, even bigger branch in our work has been a large Central Baltic-funded project MIMO (Moving in, moving on). It provides new methods for multiprofessional teamwork in social and youth work. The methods are developed by using art-based methods and cross-disciplinary teaching in the fields of for example dance, theatre, puppetry, media, nursing, social work and occupational therapy (www.mimo.turkuamk.fi).

The aim for the research group is to work cross-disciplinary, to promote a continuum in the development themes chosen and to implement and implant art-based and multiprofessional working methods in working-life settings, and at the same time in the curricula at our university. Study models for continuing education for both the professionals of arts, health care and well-being are important outcome of the work.

The current main development tasks within the context of our RDI group are:

1) Developing art-based methods in different contexts, cross-disciplinary.
2) Developing multiprofessional teamwork in using art-based methods.
3) Promoting arts and art-based approaches in different surroundings and contexts: health care and social work, education, work welfare, work communities, leadership.
4) Promoting cultural accessibility and involvement, answering to human cultural needs that exist regardless of different living conditions.

5) Outlining of the competencies needed to apply arts in different contexts, to use art-based methods and to work in multiprofessional teams.

6) To work on defining the concepts ‘applied arts’ and ‘art-based methods’ in relationship for example to the role of arts as actual purpose or intermediating factor in well-being.

7) To promote and apply research about the efficacy of art and art work, i.e. the meaning and potential they are conveying into human life.

Thus, we aim to strengthen the substances and methods that upwell from the cooperation among different branches of art, health care and social sector, as the ways to promote health and well-being. We connect the communal and inclusive art work with developing health care and promoting health in preventive meaning as well as developing applications for social work settings and work communities. Cultural well-being is also one aspect in the approaches of audience education, audience development, outreach and community programmes. The goal of the group is also to work multidisciplinarily, to build a continuum of projects and to establish the contents of cultural well-being in the learning settings within the multidisciplinary university.

Multiprofessional approaches

Our approach to art and art work is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical aspects arise from the meanings and possibilities of art as a human phenomenon and the practical points of view illustrate and apply these qualities.

We use the word ‘art’ in a broad meaning consisting of the variety of creative arts. Turku Arts Academy represents the diversity of arts with its specialization lines:

- advertising, animation, circus, dance, digital arts, film art, fine arts, journalism, media management, music, music pedagogy, music therapy (until 2013), photography, puppet theatre and theatre.
Our concept of applied arts and art based methods is based on the very essential nature of creativity. Creativity is a way to communicate and interact within life. On the other hand, there is the creative excellence that communicates with its environments – and on the other hand, there is the individual creativity that could find ways to be expressed through the many possibilities of arts.

Art is a way to express and influence. As an artistic expression a picture, music, dance, drama etc. could have very explicit meanings without them being able to be verbalized explicitly. Experiences of art and artistic interaction can be very comprehensive and socially shareable, yet non-discursive. Art could be seen as a means to see and experience the world. Through it we reflect our perceptions, thoughts, emotions and give forms to our experiences. Art conveys information that could be most significant to the one who expresses or experiences it, yet this information is a sort of “empty schema” that anyone could fill with his own contents. These aspects and attitudes an artist can provide and share when working in various environments and with professionals from the other fields of working life.

Getting into a dialogue with each other, professionals of health care and social work such as nurses, social workers and occupational therapists can provide artists important information and knowledge about essential issues concerning the work with different groups. What should we know about the target group, their abilities and restrictions concerning age, health conditions, the ethics of the work, legal restriction etc., in order to focus and to set realistic frames to ones’ work? Is there something more to learn about the interaction with the client or of group dynamics? How can we combine the professional knowledge we already have and what kinds of things and skills do we share? There have been many interesting and inspiring moments of finding and creating a common understanding of how to structure and try out multiprofessional work with different target groups. How to go on with this?

Current questions

One of the most relevant questions now in the knowledge formation and expertise of the theme cultural well-being is the question of competencies.

What kind of skills are needed for the future works in the field of cultural well-being?
How could we raise the knowledge and accessibility of art-based methods in the fields of health-care and social care? What are the professional competencies artists need in their future jobs concerning the use of art-based methods?

As an example, in our plan about modeling multiprofessional competencies (MOMU) there are three key concepts:

1) multiprofessional cooperation

2) definition of transversal and job-specific skills and

3) use of art-based activities.

Within this frame art represents a source of creative thinking, and the project is meant to create innovations on the borderlines of art and social work. The project is planned to be carried out in five milestones:

1) Defining preconditions and existing promising practices for multiprofessional teamwork between professionals of art and social work.

2) Training the MOMU lecturers.

3) Planning and piloting the MOMU study module in partner countries.

4) Designing a European study module based on the results from the pilot.

5) Finalising the Process Chart and Description of Competencies and Work Distribution.

6) Disseminating the outcomes.

Projects in our RDI group

At this moment we are closing many projects that have created bases for understanding and formulating art-based work in different environments and contexts. We have gained important experience, significant results and fine networks in applied arts in Finland. As many other developers and researchers we are now in the situation of seeking for new prospects. On the other hand, the frames for art-based work and applied arts methods in multiprofessional contexts need
implanting and validating. So, we need resources for more practice, more experiences and cases of real life and real environments, and on the other hand we need refining and contributing the results so far. There is also a strong need for more research evidence about “the efficacy of arts”, though it’s not a phenomenon that can be quantitatively measured. What kind of research design is needed and possible now and how to organize it?

Here is listed our most recent and ongoing projects:

**Projects finished**, with developing work continuing within these themes:

- Musicare-network/Music and Well-being – ESF [www.musicare.fi](http://www.musicare.fi)
- A Good Everyday Life for the Elderly - ESF

**Ongoing projects:**

- Care Music – music work in hospital as a profession [www.musicare.fi](http://www.musicare.fi) - ERDF
- EldMo –Elderly Move
- MIMO [www.mimo.turkuamk.fi](http://www.mimo.turkuamk.fi) - CB
- Cultural Access – Turku 2011-funding
- TAIKA [Well-being at Work /Using Art based methods in Developing Work communities and Leadership] - ESF

**Under preparation:**

- SAIRAALA SOI! [ Hospital sings]
- MoMu: Modelling Multiprofessional Competencies [www.projektori.turkuamk.fi](http://www.projektori.turkuamk.fi)
- Well-being at Work /Using Art based methods in Organisations
- Puppetry as a Method in Working with Children and Adolescents

**Conclusion**

This is a proposal for co-operation. Are there similar questions or settings in your organizations? Are you working on project ideas or applications concerning our themes? What kind of synergy could be found? Have you developed study models in applied arts, art-based methods or multiprofessional teamwork? If you have, what kind of needs there have occurred considering RDI-work?
We would like to invite you to come along to seek answers also to the questions about the future professions within arts or applying arts: What is the work of an artist, art educator or professional in arts pedagogy like today and in future in Europe? We are also interested in how the concept of cultural well-being is considered and discussed in Europe in working life, social and health sector and educational organizations.

As for our setting in Finland there is also a strong need to integrate academic research with the practical work on culture, health and well-being – what kind of European research there is or should be about the actual art-based work and multiprofessional teamwork and its impact?

There are also other questions to be answered and found – could art-based methods and multiprofessional teamwork in cultural well-being be the answer?