



VOLPOWER Experience

Creativity, Culture and Social Inclusion

Co-design and transdisciplinary art as a tool for social inclusion and empowerment within youth volunteering – a research perspective

Eleonora Psenner

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What does it feel like if...

Nobody looks at you?

Everybody stares at you?

Nobody talks to you?

Nobody listens to you?

ISOLATION



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We talk about volunteering.
We learn about community.

How to overcome borders and make borders disappear.



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VOLunteer and emPOWER:

- Aim: to enhance COMMUNITY BUILDING & SOCIAL INTEGRATION through dialogue and collaboration
- Target: young European and Third Country Nationals (age 18-27)
- Duration and objective: a 2-year research project IMPACT of volunteering in SPORTS and ARTS activities
- Team: Institutes of Regional Development and Minority Rights
7 countries involved
- Added value: Universal language
New connections
Knowledge of the place you live in



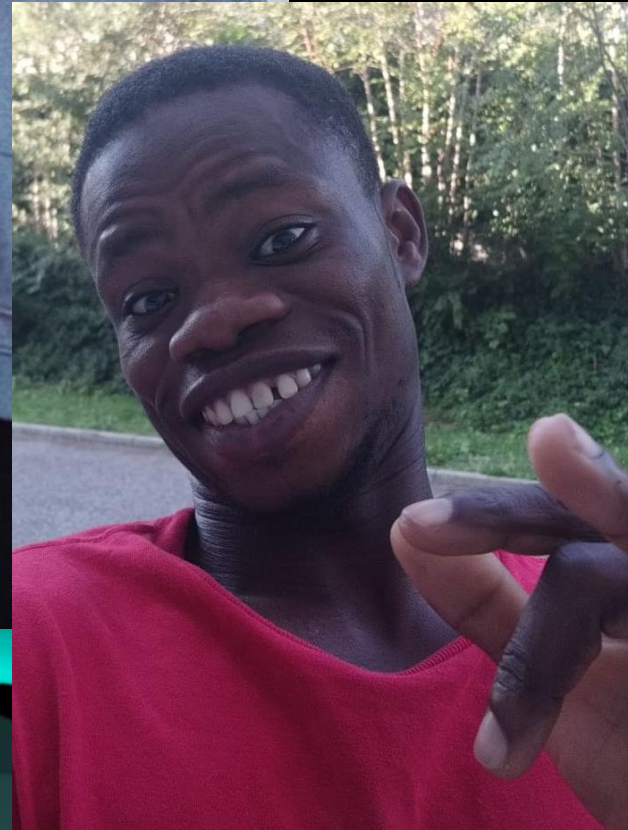
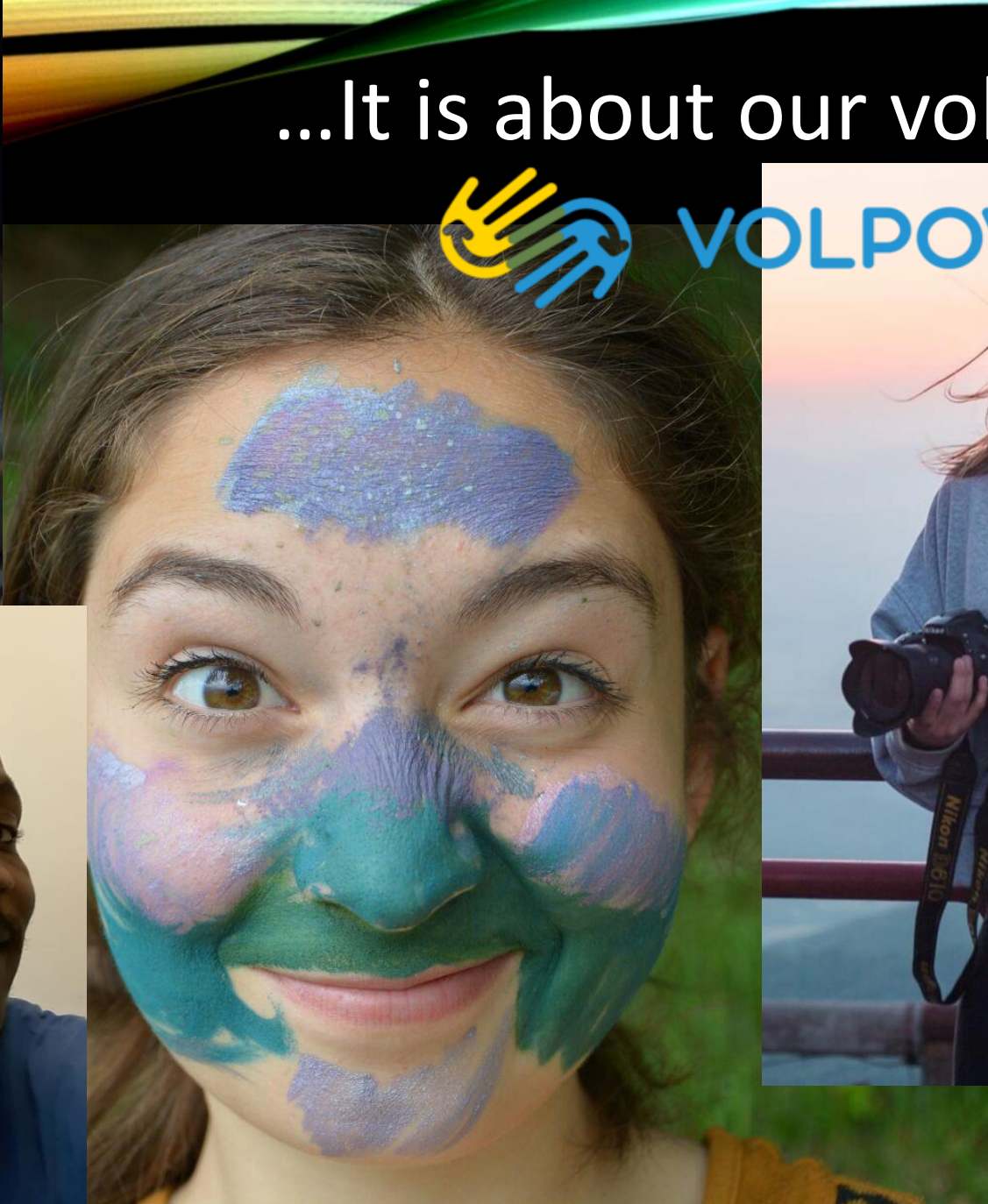
...It is about our volunteers!!



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+Fatema
+Miriam



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Communication skills:

- identify the topic, prepare the content and setting: interview, audio, distribution
- the power of images and words
- manage sensitive topics, speak up, share your opinion

Artistic skills:

- on stage and behind, in front of camera and behind
- develop, organise, promote (cultural) projects and events
- Experiment with artistic expression

Social skills:

- team work, responsibility, respect
- planning, distribution of tasks, coordination
- dialogue and collaboration



SOCIAL HUBS

- Training Camp in Zagreb and Malta
- Hiking together
- “Törggelen”/Dinner
- Bike Tours
- Attending cultural events together
- Reflecting and discussing on daily topics, personal paths, cultural activities, volunteering experiences





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CREATIVE HUBS

1-sec-a day videos (<https://1se.co>)

Thematic photography

How to become a poet

Social Theater lab

Circus art lab

Podcast workshop

Documentary project





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CO-DESIGN

Co-designing stems from participatory customer design techniques. It departs from the idea that you create something *together* with a range of stakeholders, as smart solutions require a creative interdisciplinary team, combining first-hand experience from different settings. In the co-designing principle an equal collaboration with the users, as partners rather than subjects in the design, is central (Sanders and Stappers 2014; Rodgers 2018).

Co-Design application in the work package ‘Volunteering in Creative Arts and Culture’ of the VOLPOWER project:

Goal: explore how creative arts volunteering can contribute to DIALOGUE, COLLABORATION and RESOURCE BUILDING between EU national- (EUN) and third country national- (TCN) youth.

Objective: examine existing practices in the social and cultural sector and develop new co-designed volunteering practices in Croatia, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia and South-Tirol: researchers closely collaborate with selected volunteers and partner organisations in these five countries, at the same time, exchanging experiences.

Evidence: great potential of mutually reinforcing **empowerment** among the volunteers and increasing **awareness around diversity and inclusion**.

Partners of Co-Design South Tyrol

Think together, act together, be together

A co-design approach consists of different steps in which a solution is designed, tested and refined, together with the users or experts (Sanders and Stappers 2008; Steen et al 2011; Weiler et al 2016). In this case referring to the volunteers brought together from different organisations to exchange experiences and good practices.

1. Focus Groups -> establish a bottom-up definition of 'diversity', 'inclusion' and 'youth empowerment'
2. Compare Practices -> identify which elements of diversity, inclusion and youth empowerment are addressed and which remain underrepresented in the organisation's existing activities.





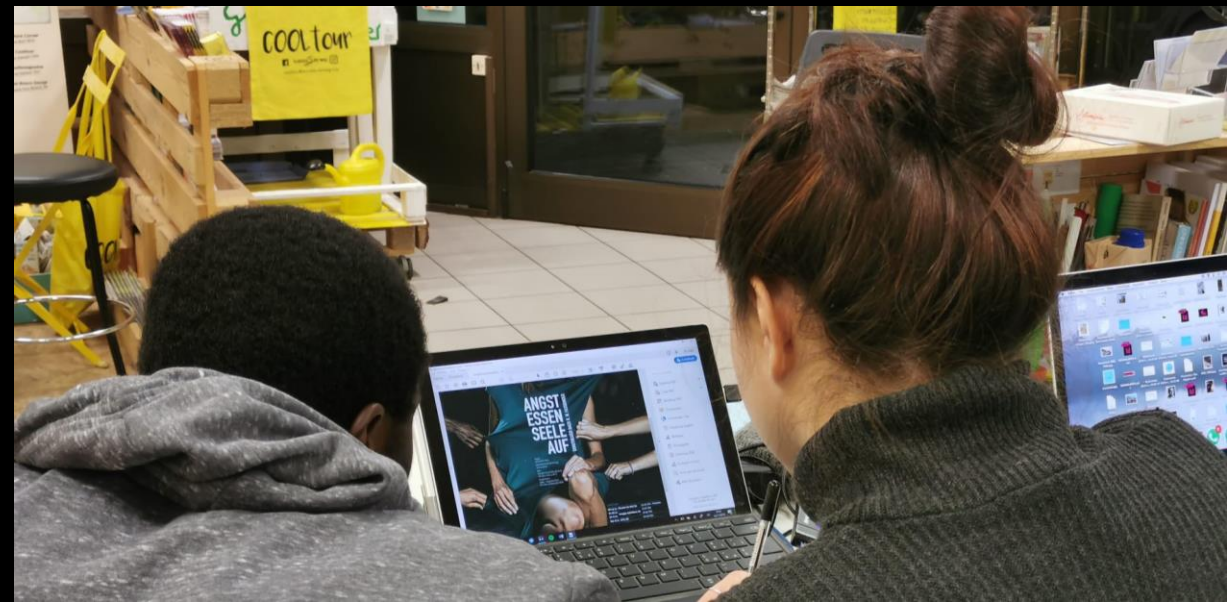
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THE THEATRE PLAY "FEAR EATS THE SOUL" (ORIGINAL TITLE, ANGST ESSEN SEELE AUF) IS BASED ON RAYNER WERNER FASSBINDER MOVIE FROM 1974 AND TELLS THE STORY OF EMMI AND ALI, WHOSE LOVE AFFAIR IS PUT TO A HARD TEST BY RACISM AND ENVY FROM THEIR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT.



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IMPACT OF CO-DESIGN

AT VOLUNTEERS' LEVEL:

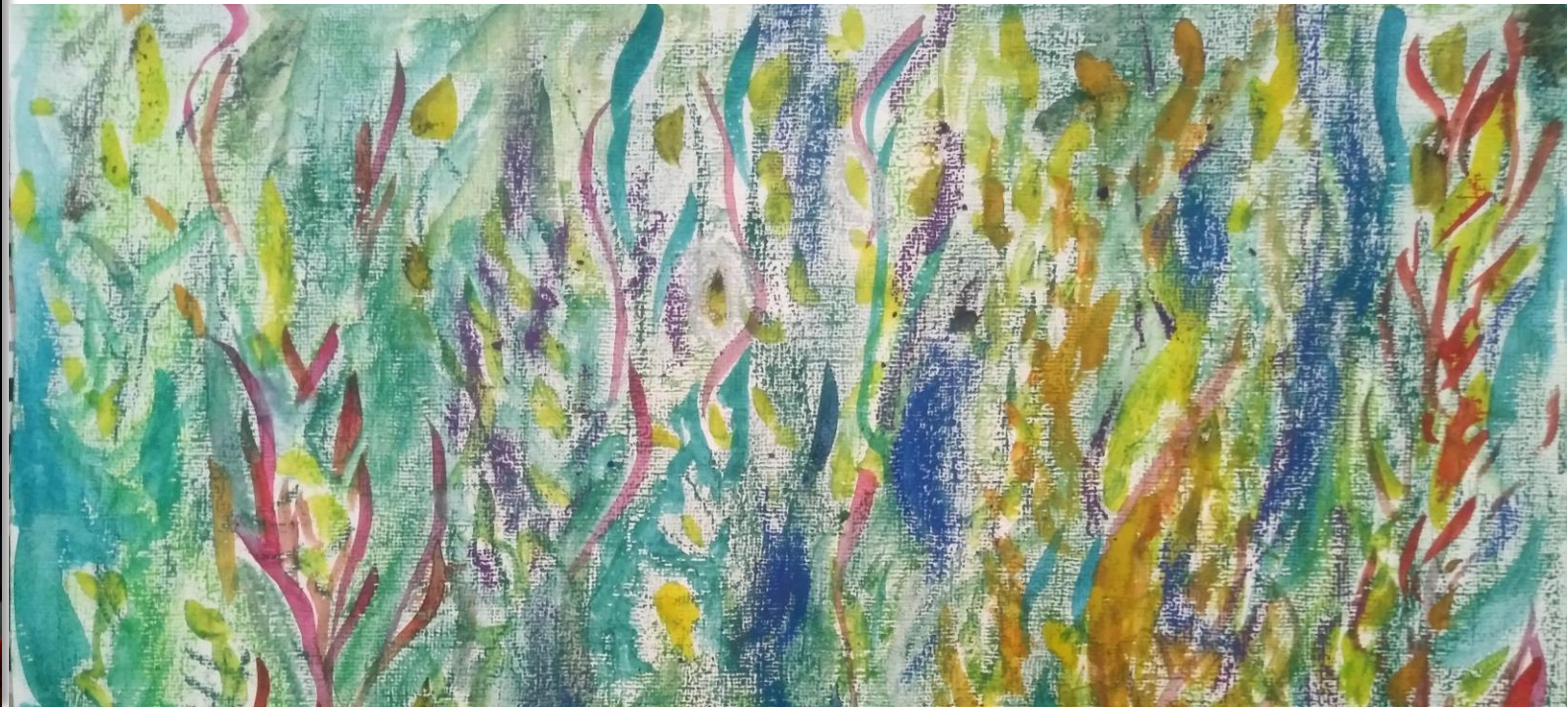
"... all of us were linked to the cultural and artistic ambit in some way, creating a common ground of understanding and interacting. Since arts and culture are our passion, it is something that bound us together from beforehand"

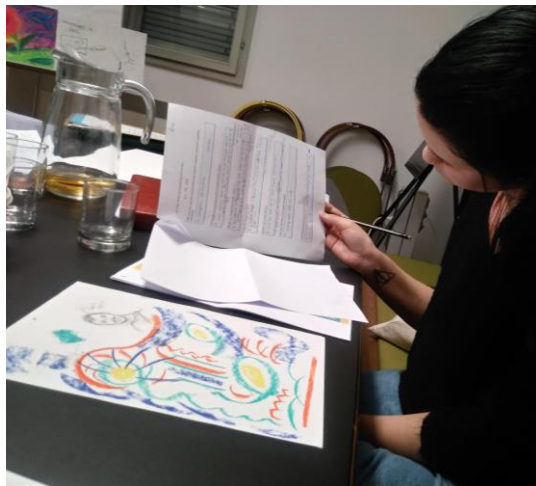
"...the special thing about volunteering in the arts and culture field is the connection. You get to meet new people, talk to them, make innovative things like poems. I see the others do and discover new things."

(Quotes of two volunteers of the Volpower South Tyrol team)

AT ORGANISATIONS' LEVEL:

- The co-designing of new practices happened decentralized in each of the countries. The process led to a range of activities in which diversity, inclusion and empowerment were addressed through theatre, dance, language classes and job clubs, creating different shared spaces between the volunteers (and participants).
- The co-designing process itself was perceived as empowering by the volunteers. While many of the organisations engage with diversity, inclusion and youth empowerment directly or indirectly, the opportunity to actively reflect on these themes in a team, exchanging between volunteers from the different organisations, complementing and reinforcing each other's ideas was perceived as stimulating. The volunteers furthermore commented on being an active member of the process, feeling as a sort of "co-designer" of the whole activity.





COLLECTIVE POETRY WRITING

CREATIVE HUBS

CREATIVE WORK SETTING



1. Chit chat and warm up
2. Create the poem
3. Share the poem
4. Reflect and complete
5. Finalize and celebrate

Ongoing Feedback - LOOPS

(Psenner E 2021, own elaboration)

BiBLiO

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Sanders, E. B. N., & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. Co-design, 4(1), 5-18.

Sanders, E. B.-N., and P. J. Stappers (2014). Probes, Toolkits and Prototypes: Three Approaches to Making in Codesigning. CoDesign 10 (1): 5–14.10.1080/15710882.2014.888183

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Steen, M., Manschot, M., & De Koning, N. (2011). Benefits of co-design in service design projects. International Journal of Design, 5(2).

Van Breugel, Scholten P, Psenner E, Bona M, Hili A, Lori F, Kolar N, Šelo Šabić S (2020). Summary report on innovative approaches to creative arts volunteering in relation to integration, VOLPOWER 821619.

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Contact

Eleonora Psenner

Eleonora.psenner@eurac.edu

Drususallee/Viale Druso 1
39100 Bozen/Bolzano
T +39 0471 055 421
www.eurac.edu

