Empowering Voices
Rebuilding Futures

NEWSPACE

Nurturing **E**xpression, **W**orldbuilding, and **S**elf-discovery through **P**articipatory **A**rt for Diasporic **C**ommunities in **E**urope

D4.3: Model for Participatory Arts with Diasporic Communities

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction 3

Purpose and approach 3

Understanding the intervention model 3

2. What defines the model? 5

2.1 The setting and the people involved 5

2.2 Principles of participatory practice 5

2.3 Conditions for participation 7

2.4 Understanding change 7

3. How does the model work? 9

3.1 Understanding mechanisms of change 9

Relational trust and freedom from judgement 9

Gradual participation 10

Symbolic and multimodal expression 11

Recognition of individual contributions 12

Creative agency and shared responsibility 13

Collective creation and belonging 14

3.2 How the mechanisms interact 15

3.3 Common features across different contexts 16

3.4 Different artistic practices, shared methodological purposes 17

3.5 Evidence and interpretation 18

4. How can the model be implemented and adapted? 20

4.1 Developing a participatory artistic pathway 20

4.2 Adapting artistic practices to participants and contexts 21

4.3 Preserving the core of the approach 21

4.4 Reflection and learning throughout the process 22

5. Conclusion 23

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1. Introduction

Participatory arts create opportunities for people to explore ideas, express experiences and make something together. Yet the value of these activities cannot be understood simply by looking at the finished artwork. Much of what matters takes place along the way: in the relationships that develop, in the choices participants make, and in the ways they begin to see their own contributions as meaningful. This deliverable draws on the NEWSPACE experience to describe these processes and identify the features of participatory arts practice that may be useful in other settings.

NEWSPACE brought together artistic organisations working with young people in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv. The three programmes used different artistic languages and took place in different social circumstances. Rather than presenting one method to reproduce, this document identifies what connects these experiences and what needs to remain open to local adaptation. It is intended for cultural organisations, artists, facilitators and others interested in developing participatory arts initiatives with diasporic communities.

The discussion follows three questions. What defines the model? This concerns the principles and conditions that shape participation. How does the model work? This examines the processes through which artistic practice may contribute to personal and social change. How can the model be implemented and adapted? This explores how the model can guide the development of participatory arts programmes in different contexts.

Purpose and approach

The purpose of this deliverable is to provide artists, cultural organisations and facilitators with a methodological reference for developing participatory arts programmes with diasporic communities. It offers a framework for understanding the choices involved in designing and facilitating these programmes, while recognising the need to respond to different participants, groups and local circumstances.

The intervention model presented in this deliverable draws on the experience of the NEWSPACE project, which developed participatory artistic programmes in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv. Although the three programmes differed in their artistic approaches, activities and local circumstances, they shared a commitment to creating opportunities for young people to express themselves, take part in collective creative processes and build relationships through art.

The model brings together the **main methodological elements** emerging from these experiences. It considers how the artistic activities were organised, how participants became involved, which changes were observed and which conditions appeared to facilitate or limit these changes. By comparing the three programmes, it was possible to **identify common features and processes** that extended beyond the specific artistic techniques used in each setting.

The mechanisms of change described in the following sections should be understood as interpretations informed by the evidence collected during the project. They offer an explanation of how participatory artistic experiences may contribute to personal and social change, rather than establishing universal relationships between particular activities and outcomes. Their relevance and effectiveness depend on the participants, the relationships established within the group and the wider context in which the activities take place.

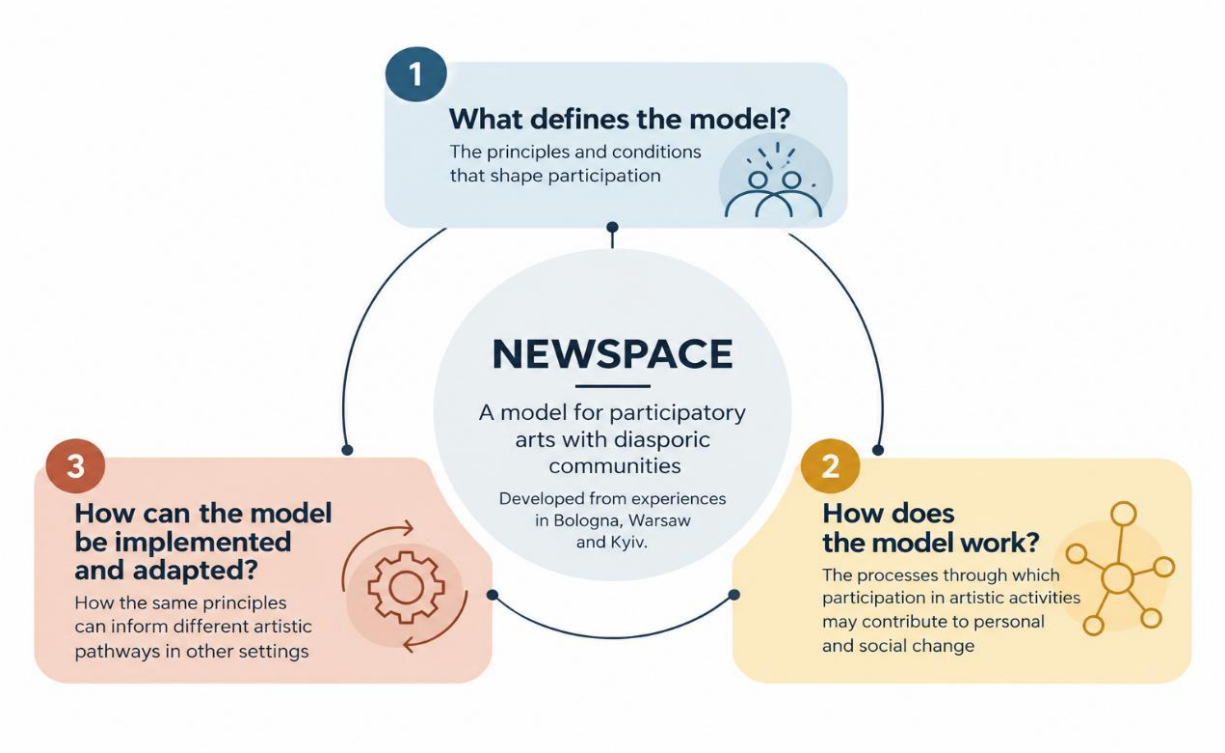
Understanding the intervention model

The NEWSPACE intervention model is organised around **three closely connected questions**:

- what defines the approach
- how it works and
- how it can be adapted to different settings.

The first concerns the methodological principles and conditions that characterise the artistic programmes developed within NEWSPACE. The second examines the processes through which participation in artistic activities may contribute to change. The third considers how these principles and processes can inform the design of participatory artistic programmes in other contexts.

Figure 1. Three questions guide the NEWSPACE model.



These dimensions are presented separately to make the model easier to understand. In practice, however, they are interconnected and influence one another throughout the artistic process. The model therefore provides a common methodological reference while leaving room for different artistic languages, forms of participation and local circumstances.

2. What defines the model?

2.1 The setting and the people involved

NEWSPACE worked with adolescents aged approximately 12–17, with particular attention to young people affected by displacement, conflict, migration and other forms of social vulnerability. Participatory artistic programmes were developed in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv, bringing together different artistic approaches and responding to the characteristics of the participants and their local environments.

In Bologna, activities included storytelling, puppetry, stop-motion and video production. In Warsaw, the programme combined drawing, theatre, movement and performance. In Kyiv, participants explored music, somatic movement, audiovisual production and interdisciplinary artistic practices, including embroidery. Despite these differences, the three programmes shared an emphasis on creative expression, active participation and the development of social connections through collective artistic experiences.

Alongside the implementation of these programmes, NEWSPACE developed a research and evaluation framework to explore how participation in artistic activities could contribute to changes in young people's personal and social experiences. This work was guided by a Theory of Change, developed within the project to identify the main areas in which change might occur and to provide a common reference for observing and interpreting the experiences of participants across the three settings.

The Theory of Change identified five interconnected dimensions: Inner and emotional wellbeing; Personal development and skills; Social connections and sense of belonging; Cultural integration and heritage; and Creative expression and artistic growth. These dimensions informed the project's assessment activities, which combined participants' perspectives with observations by artists and facilitators and feedback collected during the artistic programmes and their final presentations.

The findings showed that changes could emerge in different ways and often involved more than one dimension at the same time. Greater confidence, for example, could be associated with increased participation in artistic activities, while collaborative creation could provide opportunities for both creative development and stronger social relationships. At the same time, the experiences of individual participants and groups were not uniform, and some changes were more clearly documented than others.

These findings provide an important foundation for the NEWSPACE intervention model. While the Theory of Change identifies the areas in which the project sought to observe change, the model examines the methodological principles and processes that may help explain how such changes develop through participatory artistic experiences. The five dimensions therefore remain a reference for understanding the outcomes of participation, rather than representing separate or predetermined pathways of change.

The diversity of the three settings is equally important. NEWSPACE does not represent a single or uniform diasporic experience: the programmes differed in participant composition, local circumstances and artistic methods. Kyiv, in particular, must be understood within the conditions of an ongoing conflict, rather than simply equated with the experiences of diasporic communities in host countries. The model builds on this diversity, identifying elements that can inform practice across contexts while recognising the importance of local adaptation.

2.2 Principles of participatory practice

The artistic programmes developed within NEWSPACE were characterised by different creative approaches but shared a number of methodological features that shaped how young people were invited to participate and contribute. These features provide the foundation of the intervention model.

Figure 2. Core principles shaping participatory arts practice in the NEWSPACE model.



A central element was the understanding of participation as a gradual and flexible process. Young people were encouraged to become involved without being expected to contribute in the same way or at the same pace. Participation could take different forms, from observing and experimenting individually to working with others and taking a more active role in collective creation. This flexibility was particularly important in groups where participants brought different experiences, levels of confidence and familiarity with artistic activities.

Another defining feature was the use of different artistic languages to create opportunities for expression. Storytelling, visual arts, theatre, movement, music and audiovisual production offered different ways of communicating ideas and experiences, including forms that did not depend primarily on verbal expression. The value of these practices lay not in any particular artistic technique, but in their capacity to make participation accessible and meaningful for different individuals.

The role of artists and facilitators was equally important. Across the three programmes, attention was given to creating an environment in which participants could experiment without fear of judgement, develop relationships of trust and feel that their contributions were recognised. This required sensitivity to individual responses and group dynamics, as well as a willingness to adapt activities as the process developed.

Participation also involved opportunities to influence the creative work. Young people were not simply invited to carry out predefined tasks, but could contribute ideas, make artistic choices and take part in shaping the collective outcome. In this sense, the creative process was understood as a space for both individual expression and shared decision-making.

Finally, collective creation provided opportunities for participants to encounter different perspectives, respond to one another and develop relationships through a shared activity. These experiences did not automatically produce cohesion or a sense of belonging, but created situations in which cooperation, mutual recognition and new forms of interaction could emerge.

Taken together, these characteristics define the methodological orientation of the NEWSPACE intervention model. They also help distinguish its essential features from the specific artistic activities through which they were expressed. The model does not depend on reproducing the same workshops or artistic techniques. Its transferability rests on preserving the underlying approach to participation while allowing artistic methods, activities and forms of collaboration to respond to the characteristics of each context.

2.3 Conditions for participation

The experience of NEWSPACE also highlighted the importance of the conditions in which artistic activities take place. The same practice may offer opportunities for expression and involvement in one setting while proving less accessible or appropriate in another. Understanding these differences is essential when considering how the intervention model can be adapted.

The development of trust, for example, requires time and continuity. Participants may need opportunities to become familiar with the artistic environment, the facilitators and one another before feeling comfortable taking a more visible role. An attentive and responsive approach to facilitation can support this process by recognising hesitation, allowing different levels of involvement and avoiding unnecessary pressure to share personal experiences.

Group relationships also influence participation. Collaborative activities can encourage interaction and mutual support, but existing friendships, differences in confidence or tensions between participants may affect who takes part and whose contributions are heard. Facilitators therefore need to remain attentive to how participation develops within the group, rather than assuming that collective artistic work will necessarily lead to stronger relationships.

The organisation of activities matters as well. The time available, the accessibility of artistic materials and spaces, the balance between individual and collective work, and the possibility of adjusting activities all influence how participants experience the process. These considerations become particularly relevant when working with groups whose members have different linguistic, social and personal experiences.

Such conditions should not be confused with the mechanisms of change discussed in the following section. Rather, they shape the circumstances in which those mechanisms may emerge. They also explain why the same artistic activity cannot be expected to have identical effects across different groups or settings.

2.4 Understanding change

The methodological principles described above help explain how the NEWSPACE artistic programmes created opportunities for participation. The next question concerns what may happen through these experiences and how they may contribute to the changes documented during the project.

As outlined in the previous section, NEWSPACE examined participants' experiences through five interconnected dimensions of change. The findings suggest that developments in these areas were often related: becoming more confident in an artistic activity could encourage greater participation, while contributing to a collective creation could support both individual expression and new forms of interaction with others.

To understand these relationships, the intervention model identifies a number of mechanisms of change emerging from the comparison of the three programmes. These mechanisms refer to the processes through which particular experiences may become meaningful for participants and contribute to changes in how they express themselves, engage with others or perceive their own capacities.

For example, increased confidence may develop when a participant's contribution is recognised by others, when gradual involvement makes an unfamiliar activity more approachable, or when the participant has an opportunity to make an independent artistic choice. These experiences are different, but they may contribute to related developments. They can also reinforce one another within the same artistic process.

The mechanisms identified through NEWSPACE are therefore not understood as fixed sequences leading to predetermined outcomes. They provide a way of interpreting the relationships between artistic practices, participants' experiences and the changes observed during the project. Their relevance depends on the circumstances in which they emerge, and their effects may differ between individuals and groups.

This perspective provides the basis for examining how the NEWSPACE intervention model works, moving from the methodological features of the programmes to the processes of change that their implementation helped bring into focus.

3. How does the model work?

The experience of NEWSPACE suggests that the contribution of participatory arts cannot be explained by the artistic activities alone. What matters is also how these activities are introduced, how young people engage with them and how relationships develop throughout the creative process. A theatre exercise, a drawing activity or the collective production of a film may offer different opportunities depending on the participants, the group dynamics and the way the process is facilitated.

To better understand these relationships, the NEWSPACE intervention model identifies a number of mechanisms of change emerging from the experiences of Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv. These mechanisms help explain how participation in artistic activities may contribute to changes in self-expression, confidence, autonomy and social relationships.

For example, creating a fictional character may allow a participant to communicate personal experiences indirectly, without having to describe them explicitly. Similarly, contributing an idea that becomes part of a collective artwork may strengthen the participant's confidence in their own creative abilities. Working with others on a shared artistic task may create opportunities for cooperation, mutual support and the development of new relationships.

These examples illustrate how artistic practices can become meaningful through the experiences and interactions they make possible. The mechanisms identified through NEWSPACE are interpretations informed by the evidence collected during the project, rather than fixed relationships between particular activities and outcomes. They may operate simultaneously, reinforce one another or become more relevant at different moments of the artistic process.

3.1 Understanding mechanisms of change

The comparison of the three NEWSPACE programmes made it possible to examine how particular artistic practices and facilitation choices created opportunities for participants to engage, express themselves and interact with others. The analysis considered not only the activities undertaken, but also the processes they appeared to enable and the developments subsequently observed among participants. For example, working through fictional characters could make personal expression less exposing, while seeing one's ideas incorporated into a collective artwork could strengthen the sense that one's contribution was valued. Across the different programmes, such relationships between practice, experience and observed change pointed to six recurring mechanisms. These mechanisms provide the basis for understanding how the NEWSPACE approach may contribute to personal and social change, while recognising that their significance and outcomes vary according to participants and contexts.

Relational trust and freedom from judgement

The development of trust emerged as an important part of the artistic experiences in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv. For young people entering unfamiliar activities or groups, the possibility of being listened to, expressing uncertainty and participating without fear of judgement could make involvement more approachable. Trust was not simply a condition established before the workshops began, but something that could develop through the ways participants and facilitators interacted over time.

In Bologna, informal conversations during breaks, individual listening and facilitators' willingness to share personal experiences helped establish relationships that were less defined by conventional adult–young person roles. One-to-one conversations outside the group also gave less outspoken participants opportunities to reflect and express themselves without the pressure of their peers. The observations suggest that these interactions encouraged greater openness, dialogue and mutual listening.

In Warsaw, facilitators paid particular attention to accepting different needs and emotional states without expecting everyone to participate with the same level of confidence or enthusiasm. Open-ended activities, constructive feedback and the possibility of remaining involved without constant pressure to perform helped reduce the perceived risk of making mistakes or being judged. This approach was associated with greater willingness among some participants to remain in the group, share their work and engage with others.

In Kyiv, individual attention was combined with shared movement, body-awareness exercises and artistic experimentation. These activities created opportunities for participants to become familiar with one another through experiences that did not always require verbal communication. The observations describe instances in which greater attentiveness to oneself and others accompanied increasing relaxation, trust and willingness to collaborate.

Across the three programmes, the underlying process was similar: when participants could engage without having to demonstrate competence, disclose personal experiences or conform to a single way of participating, expressing ideas and interacting with others could become less exposing. Trust developed through repeated experiences of being heard, respected and given room to participate on one's own terms.

The changes documented included greater openness to dialogue, increased willingness to contribute and, in some cases, stronger engagement with peers and facilitators. These developments were not uniform, and the presence of supportive facilitation did not eliminate all tensions or differences within the groups. The findings nevertheless suggest that reducing exposure to judgement can help create the relational conditions through which other mechanisms, including gradual participation, creative expression and collaboration, become possible.

Gradual participation

One of the recurring features of the NEWSPACE programmes was the recognition that participation develops at different rhythms. Young people did not necessarily enter the activities with the same confidence, motivation or readiness to work with others. For some, becoming actively involved required time and opportunities to become familiar with the artistic environment. The possibility of choosing how to participate, including when to observe or step back, was therefore an important part of making artistic activities accessible.

The Warsaw experience illustrates this process particularly clearly. Some participants initially preferred to observe, work individually or remain less visible within the group. Individual tasks, non-verbal exercises and work in small groups allowed them to engage without having to speak, perform or collaborate immediately. As participants became more familiar with the activities and one another, opportunities for interaction and shared artistic work gradually expanded. The observations associated this progression with continued involvement, greater confidence in communication and, for some participants, a willingness to contribute to collective performances.

In Bologna, informal interactions and collaborative activities that allowed different levels of involvement helped participants contribute without having to assume equally visible roles. These arrangements created opportunities for mutual listening and more balanced interaction, although greater individual engagement did not always overcome existing divisions within the group.

In Kyiv, differences in age, confidence and readiness influenced the way activities were organised, with complex creative tasks sometimes divided into smaller steps to make participation more accessible. Breaking down unfamiliar tasks gave participants opportunities to develop their involvement progressively, rather than being expected to master an artistic process or take responsibility for a collective outcome from the outset.

Across the three programmes, the mechanism lay in reducing the demands associated with entering an unfamiliar activity while leaving room for participants to take on different roles as their confidence

and interest developed. Moving between observation, individual experimentation and collective work could make participation more approachable without requiring everyone to follow the same progression.

The changes observed included more frequent contributions, greater willingness to communicate and, in some cases, increased involvement in collective artistic work. However, these developments varied among participants and did not necessarily follow a continuous movement towards more visible roles. Observing, working individually or temporarily reducing one's involvement could remain meaningful forms of participation rather than stages that had to be overcome.

Within the NEWSPACE intervention model, gradual participation describes how flexible and progressively accessible opportunities for involvement may support confidence and engagement, while allowing young people to retain control over the pace and form of their contribution.

Symbolic and multimodal expression

A distinctive feature of the NEWSPACE experience was the use of artistic languages that allowed participants to communicate through images, movement, sounds, stories and other creative forms. These practices offered possibilities for expression that did not depend exclusively on verbal communication or direct discussion of personal experiences. By providing different ways to represent ideas, emotions and perspectives, they could make expression more accessible while allowing participants to decide how much of themselves they wished to reveal.

In Bologna, the creation of fictional characters, including guide animals and hybrid figures with particular qualities or superpowers, provided a way for participants to explore personal strengths, emotions and relationships indirectly. Rather than being asked to describe themselves explicitly, young people could recognise aspects of their experiences in invented characters and develop them through shared storytelling. Individual conversations also offered opportunities to connect these symbolic representations with personal experiences in a less exposed setting. The observations associated these practices with greater precision in self-expression, recognition of personal qualities and increased willingness to share ideas.

In Warsaw, drawing, theatre and movement created opportunities to communicate without relying immediately on spoken language. Non-verbal exercises and improvisation helped reduce the demands associated with linguistic differences, while activities involving personal objects and memories allowed participants to introduce aspects of their experiences and cultural backgrounds on a voluntary basis. Participants could choose what to share and how to represent it, rather than being expected to disclose personal stories or speak on behalf of a particular culture. These approaches created opportunities for greater confidence in communication and for individual perspectives to become visible within the artistic work.

In Kyiv, artistic expression frequently involved bodily, sensory and interdisciplinary experiences. Participants explored the relationship between movement, emotions and visual representation, translating bodily sensations into drawings and performative gestures. Sound walks, field recordings and musical experimentation encouraged attention to the surrounding environment, while the transformation of sounds into drawings, embroidery and installations allowed participants to move between different artistic languages. These practices offered opportunities to explore personal perceptions and develop new forms of expression without depending primarily on verbal explanation.

Across the three programmes, the underlying mechanism involved creating a degree of mediation between personal experience and its expression. Fictional characters, movements, sounds and visual forms could make ideas or emotions communicable without requiring direct personal disclosure. At the same time, working through different artistic media allowed participants to approach experiences from multiple perspectives and choose forms of expression that suited their interests, abilities and readiness to participate.

The changes associated with these practices included greater willingness to express ideas, increased confidence in using artistic languages and opportunities to recognise and communicate personal perspectives. In Kyiv, some activities involving bodily awareness, movement and sustained artistic attention were also associated with reported calm, concentration or temporary emotional relief. These observations highlight the particular significance of sensory engagement in that programme, but do not establish emotional regulation or therapeutic benefits as uniform effects of artistic participation.

Within the NEWSPACE intervention model, symbolic and multimodal expression describes how artistic forms can make personal experiences, ideas and perspectives more accessible to exploration and communication. Its significance lies not simply in offering a variety of techniques, but in enabling participants to express themselves through different degrees of symbolic distance, sensory engagement and personal visibility.

Recognition of individual contributions

Another important process identified through NEWSPACE concerns the recognition of participants' ideas, abilities and contributions. In participatory artistic work, young people are not simply invited to take part in activities; their perspectives can influence the development of the creative process and become visible in the resulting work. Recognition therefore involves more than encouragement or positive feedback. It emerges when participants experience their contributions as meaningful and see that their ideas are taken seriously by facilitators and peers.

In Bologna, participants' interests, knowledge and suggestions were incorporated into the development of collective stories and characters. Open dramaturgical prompts and shared problem-solving created opportunities for young people to demonstrate analytical and creative abilities that might otherwise remain less visible. The involvement of a professional illustrator, who transformed participants' ideas into drawings in real time, was particularly significant. Giving their suggestions an immediate and tangible artistic form helped make those contributions recognisable and credible, reducing hesitation and encouraging further participation. The observations associated these practices with greater willingness to propose ideas, increased attention and a stronger perception of personal abilities.

In Warsaw, recognition developed through opportunities to contribute individual artistic material, experiment with different creative approaches and receive constructive responses from others. Collaborative tasks and peer feedback allowed participants to encounter different perspectives and recognise one another's strengths. When contrasting ideas or artistic preferences were treated as resources for experimentation rather than obstacles, participants could see that their individual viewpoints had a place within the collective process. These experiences were associated with greater confidence in sharing creative work, willingness to experiment and opportunities for mutual recognition.

In Kyiv, individual contributions became visible through their integration into collective songs, films, installations and performances. Participants could recognise their own roles in a shared artistic outcome, whether through a musical recording, a visual composition or a particular creative decision. Facilitators' attention to different abilities and forms of contribution also helped make involvement possible without requiring prior artistic expertise. The observations describe instances in which participants who had initially remained less involved began contributing more actively, while the completion and presentation of collective works offered opportunities to acknowledge the diversity of individual contributions.

Across the three programmes, the underlying mechanism involved making participants' ideas and abilities visible and consequential within the artistic process. Seeing a suggestion developed into a character, receiving a meaningful response to an artistic experiment or recognising one's contribution in a collective production could strengthen the perception that one's perspective mattered.

Recognition was therefore connected not only to the appreciation of individual work, but also to the possibility of influencing what the group created.

The changes associated with these experiences included greater willingness to share ideas, increased confidence in creative abilities and more active involvement in artistic work. However, recognition depended on the opportunities available to participants and on how their contributions were received. Positive feedback alone did not necessarily provide the same experience as seeing an idea taken forward or incorporated into the creative process. Differences in confidence, visibility and group relationships could also influence whose contributions were acknowledged.

Within the NEWSPACE intervention model, recognition of individual contributions describes the process through which participants may come to perceive their ideas, abilities and perspectives as valuable through their tangible influence on artistic work. This experience can support confidence and engagement while creating opportunities for greater creative agency and shared responsibility.

Creative agency and shared responsibility

The NEWSPACE programmes offered opportunities for young people to move beyond carrying out activities proposed by facilitators and become more actively involved in shaping the creative process. This included making artistic choices, developing ideas, solving problems and assuming responsibility for particular aspects of collective work. Creative agency was therefore connected not simply to having freedom of expression, but to experiencing one's decisions as meaningful within the development of an artistic project.

In Bologna, open dramaturgical prompts and collective problem-solving invited participants to consider different narrative possibilities, analyse situations and contribute to decisions about the direction of shared stories and performances. By drawing on participants' interests and knowledge, facilitators created opportunities for young people to use their own judgement rather than follow predefined solutions. These experiences made analytical and strategic abilities more visible and encouraged greater involvement in developing the collective narrative.

In Warsaw, participants were invited to influence creative directions, propose activities and take responsibility for shared tasks. Collaborative work also created opportunities to negotiate differences, including contrasting artistic preferences, and explore possible solutions together. Discussions about attendance, punctuality and the consequences of individual choices for the group helped connect autonomy with responsibility towards others. The observations associated these practices with greater initiative, ownership of artistic work, willingness to contribute and increased awareness of how individual decisions affected the collective process.

In Kyiv, creative agency developed through opportunities for independent experimentation, artistic decision-making and the progressive assumption of responsibility for complex projects. In music and audiovisual production, participants were involved in defining concepts, organising roles, developing material and refining their contributions. Some demonstrated increasing independence by identifying improvements themselves, recording vocal parts again or adding missing instrumental elements without waiting for detailed instructions. These experiences illustrated how artistic autonomy could emerge through the practical work of evaluating, revising and completing a creative contribution.

Across the three programmes, the underlying mechanism involved creating opportunities for participants to make decisions, observe their consequences and adjust their work. Open-ended tasks, shared problem-solving and progressively less directive facilitation could help young people move from responding to instructions towards exercising their own judgement. At the same time, artistic choices often needed to be discussed and coordinated with others, making negotiation and responsibility part of the experience of creative agency.

The changes documented included greater initiative, persistence, confidence in artistic decisions and, in some cases, increased self-organisation and responsibility towards the group. These

developments were not uniform and depended on the opportunities participants had to influence the work. Facilitation played an important role in balancing guidance and autonomy: overly directive approaches could limit meaningful choices, while responsibilities that exceeded participants' experience or confidence could make involvement more difficult.

Within the NEWSPACE intervention model, creative agency and shared responsibility describe the process through which young people may develop confidence in their own judgement by making consequential artistic choices and taking responsibility for their contributions. Agency does not imply independence from the group, but the possibility of influencing a shared creative process while recognising and responding to the decisions and contributions of others.

Collective creation and belonging

Collective artistic work was central to the NEWSPACE programmes. In Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv, young people worked together on stories, performances, songs, films and other creative projects. These activities brought individual contributions into a shared process, giving participants practical reasons to interact, listen to one another and find ways of working together. The relationships that developed along the way were often as significant as the completed artistic work.

In Bologna, the creation of shared narratives required participants to bring different ideas into a common story, discuss possible developments and respond to one another's suggestions. Recurring images, such as the rooftop where fictional characters met, provided a common imaginative setting around which individual perspectives could come together. Informal conversations and activities outside the usual workshop spaces also created opportunities for interaction. The observations suggest that these experiences encouraged mutual listening and, in some situations, greater confidence and connection among participants. However, existing friendships and divisions within the group did not always change, even when individuals became more willing to express themselves.

In Warsaw, relationships developed through collaborative artistic tasks, but also through ordinary moments of shared experience. Working in pairs, offering feedback and supporting participants who encountered practical or physical difficulties gave young people opportunities to notice and respond to one another's needs. Informal exchanges, jokes and small rituals created by participants themselves gradually became shared references within the group. Discussions about attendance and responsibility also helped make visible how individual choices affected others. These experiences contributed to mutual support and, for some participants, a stronger sense of being part of a group rather than simply attending the same activities.

In Kyiv, collective creation often involved bringing together different artistic contributions within a larger project. Producing songs, music videos, films and performances required participants to coordinate roles, negotiate decisions and understand how their work connected with that of others. Clearly defined responsibilities helped some young people who had previously remained on the margins of the group become more involved. Final presentations also offered opportunities to see individual works and contributions as part of a shared achievement. The artists reported new relationships, greater collaboration and moments of collective pride, although these experiences varied between groups and participants.

What connects these experiences is not simply the fact that participants produced something together. Collective artistic work created situations in which people depended on one another's contributions, encountered different perspectives and had to find ways of coordinating their efforts. A shared story, performance or recording could give these interactions a common purpose. At the same time, everyday gestures of encouragement, practical assistance and informal conversation helped relationships develop beyond the immediate demands of the artistic task.

The findings also point to an important limitation. Collaboration did not necessarily lead to a cohesive group, and greater individual confidence did not always translate into stronger relationships among

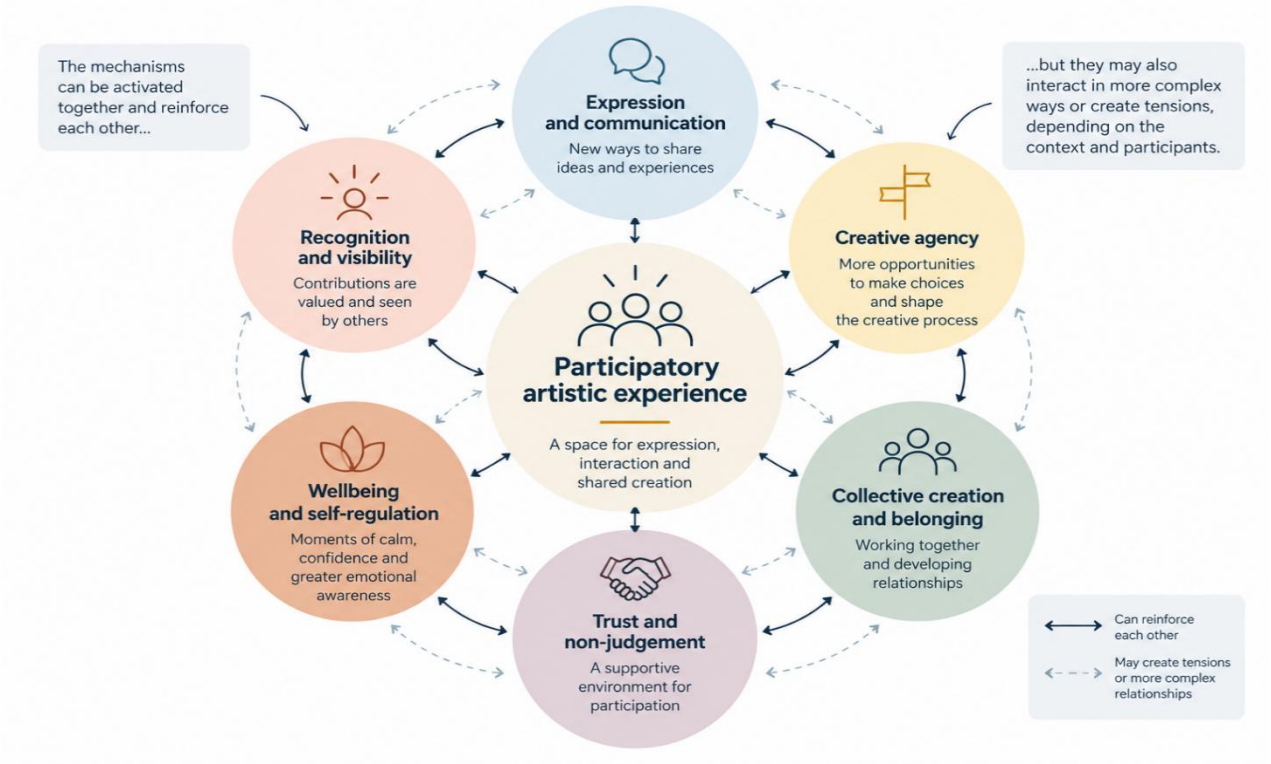
all participants. Existing subgroups, differences in participation and the way responsibilities were distributed continued to influence group dynamics. The possibility of developing a sense of belonging depended partly on whether participants could contribute meaningfully, feel acknowledged by others and experience the collective process as something in which they had a place.

In the NEWSPACE model, collective creation and belonging refers to the ways shared artistic work can provide opportunities for cooperation, mutual recognition and social connection. Belonging may grow through the experience of contributing to something together, but also through the relationships and forms of mutual care that emerge around that work. It remains a possible development of the participatory process, rather than an inevitable result of producing a collective artwork.

3.2 How the mechanisms interact

The mechanisms identified through NEWSPACE are closely connected and may operate together throughout the artistic process. Their contribution to change is therefore better understood through the relationships between them than as the result of separate activities or successive stages.

Figure 3. Interconnected mechanisms of change.



The development of trust, for example, may encourage participants to experiment with unfamiliar artistic languages or become more actively involved in group activities. As their contributions are acknowledged and incorporated into the creative work, they may gain confidence in expressing ideas and making artistic decisions. These experiences can, in turn, create further opportunities for collaboration and strengthen relationships with others.

The experiences of Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv illustrate how similar processes can emerge through different artistic practices. Creating a fictional character, contributing to a performance or taking part in a collective musical production may involve several mechanisms at once. Participants may find new ways to express themselves, experience recognition from others, make creative choices and develop relationships through the same activity. What connects these experiences is not the artistic technique itself, but the opportunities for participation and interaction that it creates.

These relationships are not necessarily linear or mutually reinforcing. A participant may become more confident in expressing ideas without developing stronger connections with the wider group. Similarly, collective activities may encourage cooperation among some participants while leaving existing divisions or differences in participation largely unchanged. The project documented such variations, showing that personal and relational developments do not always occur together.

The interaction between mechanisms also changes over time. Trust may initially make participation more approachable, while positive experiences of expression, recognition and collaboration may subsequently contribute to strengthening that trust. Other processes may become more relevant as participants gain familiarity with the activities or assume different roles within the group.

The NEWSPACE intervention model therefore understands change as a dynamic process shaped by the interplay between artistic practices, individual experiences, group relationships and the conditions in which participation takes place. The six mechanisms provide a way of interpreting this process, while recognising that their combination and significance may differ across participants and contexts.

3.3 Common features across different contexts

The comparison of the artistic programmes developed in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv highlights both common methodological features and differences in how participatory practices were implemented. These differences are an important part of the NEWSPACE experience, as they show how similar opportunities for participation and expression can be created through distinct artistic approaches.

Figure 4. Shared methodological features and context-specific expressions across the three NEWSPACE programmes.



In Bologna, storytelling and the creation of fictional characters played an important role in helping participants explore personal perspectives and contribute to shared narratives. The use of symbolic forms of expression made it possible to approach experiences and ideas indirectly, while the

development of collective stories created opportunities for participants to see their contributions recognised and incorporated into the artistic work.

In Warsaw, the progression from individual activities towards more collaborative forms of participation was particularly visible. Drawing, theatre, movement and performance offered different opportunities for involvement, while shared creative tasks encouraged participants to negotiate ideas, assume responsibilities and develop relationships with their peers.

In Kyiv, the combination of music, movement, visual arts and audiovisual production created opportunities for expression through bodily, sensory and interdisciplinary experiences. Activities involving sound, drawing, movement and embroidery allowed participants to explore different forms of communication and gradually take a more active role in the creative process.

These differences do not imply that particular mechanisms were exclusive to individual programmes. Trust, recognition, creative agency and collaboration were relevant across the three experiences, although they emerged through different practices and with varying degrees of visibility in the evidence collected.

Some processes were nevertheless more clearly documented in specific contexts. In Kyiv, for example, activities involving movement, bodily awareness and sensory exploration were associated, in some participants' accounts, with moments of calm, greater attention or temporary emotional relief. Similar attention to bodily experience was present in Warsaw, while Bologna included outdoor activities and forms of embodied engagement. However, the evidence does not support treating emotional regulation as an equally documented outcome across all three programmes.

The use of cultural and personal references also took different forms. In Bologna, artistic activities connected historical memory with contemporary experiences of displacement and conflict. In Warsaw, participants could draw on personal objects and memories as part of their creative work. In Kyiv, traditional Ukrainian embroidery was reinterpreted through contemporary artistic practices, including sound and visual expression.

These experiences suggest that participatory arts can provide opportunities to explore and reinterpret personal and cultural references. Their significance, however, depends on the individuals and contexts involved. The findings do not point to a single process of cultural integration or identity development shared by all participants.

The comparison therefore highlights an important characteristic of the NEWSPACE intervention model: its common methodological features can take different forms depending on the artistic practices, participants and circumstances involved. The diversity of the three programmes is not a limitation to be overcome, but a starting point for understanding how the approach can be adapted.

3.4 Different artistic practices, shared methodological purposes

One of the main insights emerging from NEWSPACE is that different artistic practices can serve similar methodological purposes. The use of fictional characters, drawing, movement, music or audiovisual production may create different experiences, but each can offer opportunities for expression, participation and interaction.

For example, creating a fictional character can allow a participant to communicate ideas indirectly, while movement or visual expression may offer alternative ways of exploring experiences that are difficult to articulate verbally. Similarly, developing a shared story, producing a film or composing a song can create opportunities for participants to contribute ideas, make decisions and work towards a common artistic outcome.

This does not mean that artistic practices are interchangeable. Each language offers particular possibilities and requires different skills, resources and forms of facilitation. An activity that

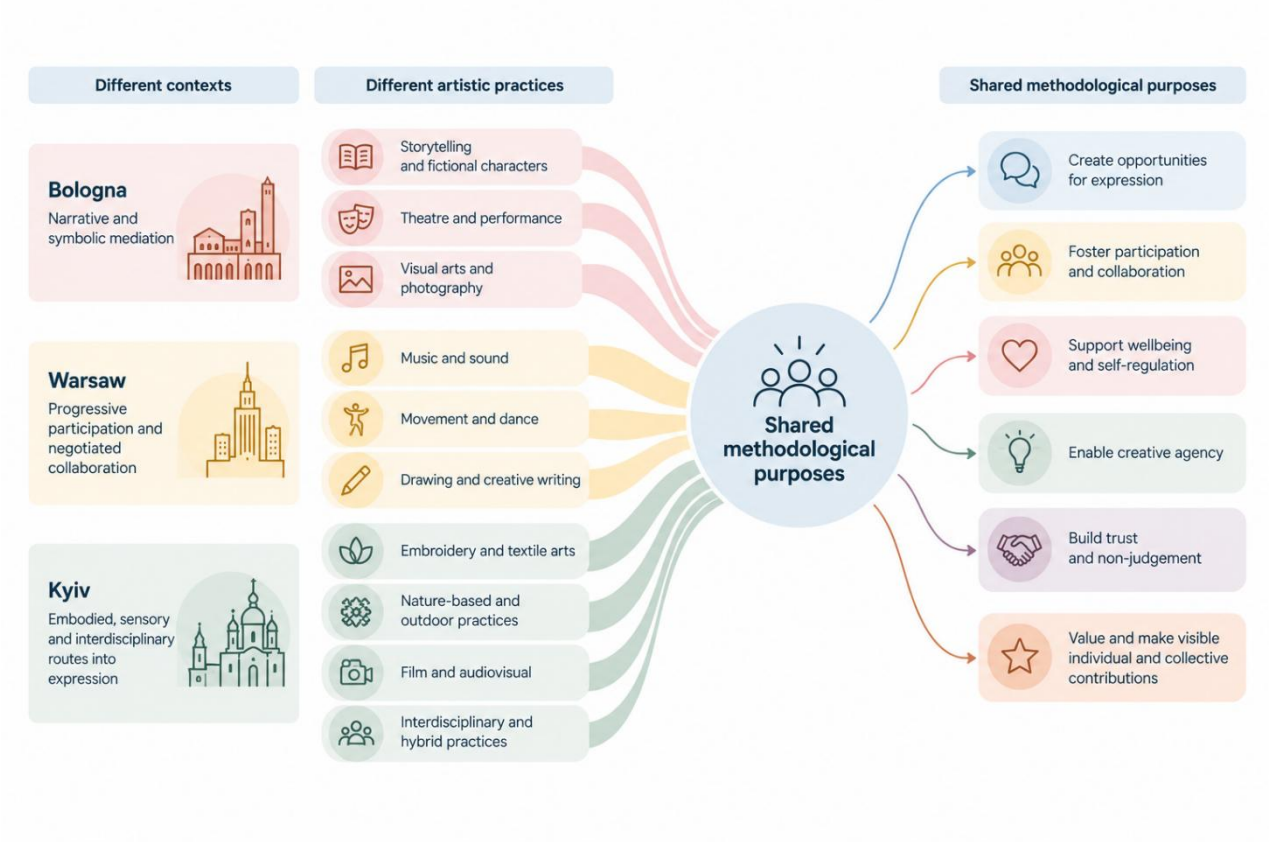
encourages participation in one group may be less appropriate in another, depending on participants' interests, previous experiences and relationships.

What can be transferred from the NEWSPACE experience is therefore not a predefined set of exercises, but an understanding of the opportunities that artistic practices can create. The choice of activities becomes meaningful in relation to their purpose: enabling participants to express themselves, supporting their involvement, recognising their contributions or creating opportunities for collaboration.

This perspective also helps clarify the relationship between the intervention model and the artistic approaches developed by the project partners. The model does not replace the distinctive methods and expertise of the organisations involved. Rather, it identifies the methodological features that connect their experiences and can inform the development of participatory artistic programmes in other settings.

The possibility of adapting the approach depends on maintaining these features while allowing sufficient flexibility in the choice of artistic languages, the organisation of activities and the forms of participation offered.

Figure 5. Different artistic practices, shared methodological purposes.



3.5 Evidence and interpretation

The NEWSPACE intervention model draws on the findings of the project's impact assessment, which examined participants' experiences through different forms of observation and feedback. These included questionnaires completed by participants, observations collected by artists and facilitators, and feedback from audiences and people close to the young people involved in the programmes.

Taken together, these sources provide insight into the changes associated with participation in the artistic activities. They also show that changes did not develop in the same way for every participant or across all three programmes.

The most consistent findings concern increasing involvement in artistic activities, greater confidence in expressing ideas and making creative choices, and opportunities for developing social relationships. Across the different settings, the assessment documented participants becoming more willing to contribute, taking on new roles within the creative process and, in some cases, establishing new connections with others.

These developments provide a particularly relevant foundation for the mechanisms identified in the intervention model. The experiences of gradual participation, recognition of individual contributions, creative agency and collective creation offer plausible explanations for some of the changes observed. At the same time, the evidence does not allow these changes to be attributed to individual practices or mechanisms in isolation.

The findings relating to emotional wellbeing were more varied. Some participants described positive emotional experiences, including moments of calm, enjoyment or relief during artistic activities. These accounts are relevant for understanding the significance of participation, but they do not establish that such experiences necessarily produce lasting improvements in emotional wellbeing.

Changes relating to cultural integration and heritage were also closely connected to the characteristics of each programme. The artistic activities created opportunities to explore personal memories, cultural references and different perspectives, but these experiences cannot be interpreted as evidence of a uniform process of cultural integration across the three settings.

The assessment also highlighted the importance of distinguishing individual developments from changes at group level. Greater confidence or participation among individual young people did not always correspond to stronger relationships across the entire group. Similarly, the positive reception of final performances and artistic installations provides information about how the work was received by audiences, but should not be considered direct evidence of changes in participants' wellbeing.

These distinctions are important for the interpretation of the NEWSPACE experience. The mechanisms described in this deliverable are supported by observations of how participants engaged with artistic activities and how their experiences developed over time. They offer a way of understanding the processes through which participatory arts may contribute to personal and social change, while recognising that the outcomes depend on the interaction between artistic practices, individual circumstances and group relationships.

The evidence therefore supports a model that is flexible in its application and attentive to context. Rather than identifying artistic activities that can be expected to produce predetermined outcomes, NEWSPACE provides an understanding of the methodological conditions and processes that may help create meaningful opportunities for participation, expression and social connection.

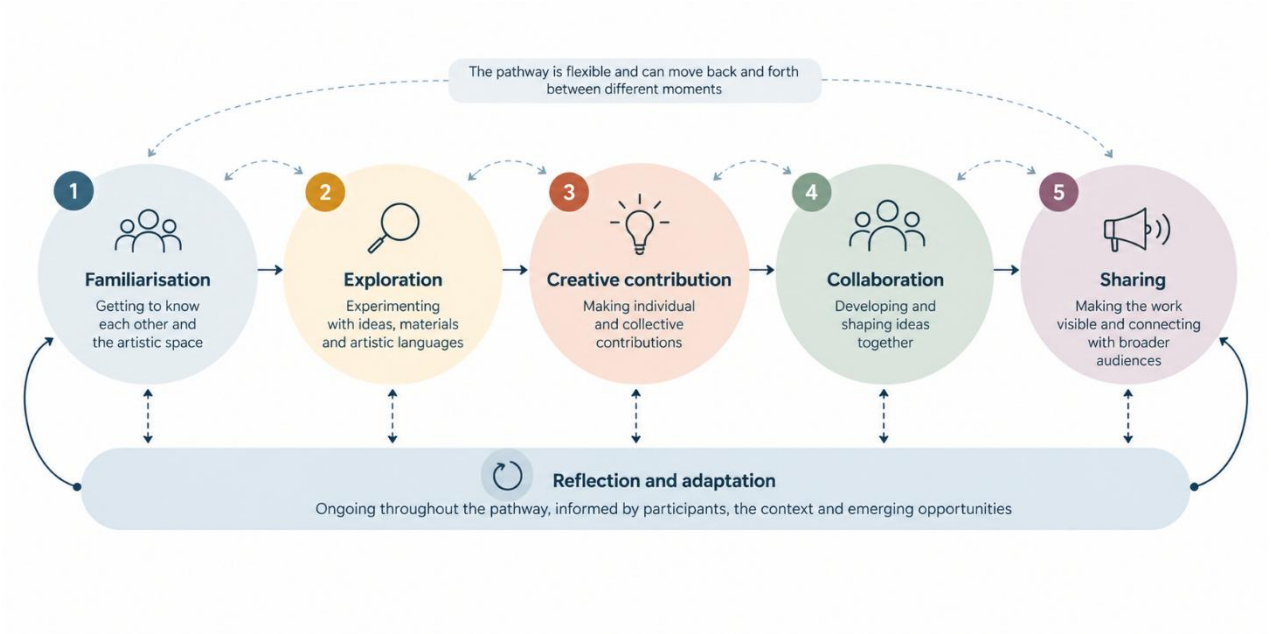
4. How can the model be implemented and adapted?

4.1 Developing a participatory artistic pathway

The experience of NEWSPACE shows that participatory artistic programmes can take different forms while sharing a common methodological approach. The activities developed in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv followed distinct artistic directions, reflecting the expertise of the organisations involved and the characteristics of the participants. What connected these experiences was not a predefined sequence of workshops, but an approach that placed participation, creative expression and relationships at the centre of the artistic process.

The NEWSPACE intervention model can therefore inform the development of new artistic programmes without prescribing a fixed set of activities. Its principles and mechanisms provide a reference for considering how participants can become involved, what opportunities for expression and collaboration can be created, and how the artistic process can respond to the experiences of the group.

Figure 6. An illustrative participatory artistic pathway.



An artistic pathway may begin by creating opportunities for participants to become familiar with the environment, the facilitators and one another. Initial activities can allow young people to explore artistic materials and languages without requiring immediate collaboration or personal disclosure. As the process develops, participants may become more actively involved in shaping the creative work, contributing ideas, making decisions and taking part in shared artistic activities.

These developments do not necessarily follow a linear progression. Individual and collective activities may alternate throughout the programme, while opportunities for experimentation, reflection and creative decision-making can emerge at different moments. Participants may also move between more active and less visible forms of involvement according to their interests, confidence and circumstances.

The experience of NEWSPACE suggests that the development of an artistic pathway depends on the interaction between the activities proposed and the responses they generate. Artistic choices can evolve as facilitators become more familiar with participants, relationships develop within the group and new interests or possibilities emerge.

For this reason, the intervention model is best understood as a reference for guiding the artistic process rather than as a sequence of steps to be reproduced. It offers a way of maintaining a coherent methodological approach while allowing the programme to develop in response to the people involved.

4.2 Adapting artistic practices to participants and contexts

The possibility of adapting the NEWSPACE intervention model rests on recognising that different artistic practices can create similar opportunities for participation and expression. The choice of a particular artistic language should therefore be considered in relation to the experiences it can offer, rather than as an essential component of the model itself.

Storytelling and fictional characters, for example, may allow participants to explore ideas and experiences indirectly. Drawing, movement or music may offer other possibilities for expression, particularly when verbal communication is difficult or when participants prefer not to discuss personal experiences explicitly. The suitability of these approaches depends on the interests of the group, the artistic expertise available and the circumstances in which activities take place.

The organisation of participation can also vary. In groups where participants are unfamiliar with one another or have different levels of confidence, individual or small-group activities may provide opportunities to become involved gradually. In other circumstances, participants may be ready to engage more directly in collective creation, assuming responsibilities and contributing to shared artistic decisions.

Adaptation also concerns the balance between guidance and autonomy. Artistic activities require a degree of structure, particularly when participants encounter unfamiliar materials or techniques. At the same time, the possibility of contributing ideas and influencing the creative work is an important feature of the NEWSPACE approach. The role of facilitation is therefore to support participation without determining every aspect of the artistic outcome in advance.

The ways in which artistic work is shared with others should likewise respond to the participants and the context. In NEWSPACE, final performances and installations provided opportunities to present collective creations to wider audiences and make participants' perspectives visible beyond the workshops. Public presentation can be a meaningful part of a participatory artistic experience, but it is not necessarily appropriate or desirable in every setting.

Decisions about whether and how to share artistic work should take account of participants' preferences, their involvement in the creative process and the potential implications of making personal or collective expressions public. The possibility of presenting an artwork should not become an obligation that determines participation from the outset.

Adapting the model therefore involves more than selecting different artistic techniques. It requires attention to how activities are experienced, how opportunities for participation are distributed and how artistic choices can support meaningful involvement in a particular setting.

4.3 Preserving the core of the approach

The diversity of the NEWSPACE programmes demonstrates that the intervention model does not depend on a particular artistic language, workshop format or final artistic product. Its defining characteristics lie in the way participation is understood and supported throughout the creative process.

These characteristics include the possibility of becoming involved at different levels, the availability of varied forms of expression, the development of relationships based on trust and recognition, and opportunities for participants to influence the artistic work. Collective creation is approached not

simply as the production of a shared outcome, but as an experience in which individuals can contribute, interact and respond to one another.

These features provide a common methodological foundation that can inform artistic programmes in different contexts. Their practical expression, however, may vary considerably. Activities can involve theatre, music, visual arts, storytelling, movement or other creative languages. Groups may differ in size, composition and familiarity with artistic practices. The duration, location and organisation of programmes may also respond to different resources and circumstances.

Preserving the approach does not mean reproducing the same experiences. It means ensuring that the choices made in designing and facilitating activities remain consistent with the opportunities for participation that the model seeks to create.

This distinction is particularly important when considering the transferability of NEWSPACE beyond the three settings in which it was developed. The project involved specific groups of young people and took place within distinct social and cultural circumstances. Other contexts may present different interests, relationships, expectations and barriers to participation.

The model should therefore be adapted through an understanding of the people involved and the environment in which the artistic process takes place. Its value lies in offering a coherent approach to participatory artistic work while recognising that meaningful participation may require different practices in different circumstances.

4.4 Reflection and learning throughout the process

The experience of NEWSPACE highlights the importance of observing how participation develops over time. Artistic programmes are shaped not only by their initial design, but also by the responses of participants, the relationships that emerge and the changes that become visible throughout the process. Reflection can take different forms. Participants may express their experiences through conversations, artistic choices or their willingness to become involved in particular activities. Artists and facilitators may observe changes in participation, confidence, collaboration or the ways individuals relate to one another. These perspectives can complement one another, although they do not necessarily lead to the same interpretation. Attention to these developments can help facilitators understand whether the activities are creating the intended opportunities for expression and involvement. It can also reveal situations in which participation remains difficult, certain voices are less visible or relationships within the group limit the possibilities for collaboration.

Such experiences are important for understanding the intervention model. The absence of an expected change does not necessarily indicate that an artistic activity has failed. It may reveal differences in participants' interests or circumstances, limitations in the opportunities offered, or aspects of the group experience that require further attention. The NEWSPACE assessment showed that personal and social changes could develop in different ways and did not always occur together. Greater individual confidence, for example, did not necessarily correspond to stronger relationships across the whole group. Similarly, moments of positive emotional experience during artistic activities could not automatically be interpreted as lasting changes in wellbeing. Recognising these differences allows the artistic process to remain responsive to participants rather than being guided by assumptions about how they should develop. It also provides opportunities to refine the understanding of which practices are meaningful, for whom and under which circumstances.

Reflection and adaptation are therefore integral to the NEWSPACE intervention model. They connect the principles guiding the artistic activities with the experiences that emerge through participation, allowing the approach to remain attentive to the diversity of individuals and contexts in which it may be applied.

5. Conclusion

The NEWSPACE experience provides a basis for understanding participatory arts as a practice whose value cannot be separated from the conditions in which it takes place. The programmes developed in Bologna, Warsaw and Kyiv produced different artistic outcomes and involved young people with different experiences and circumstances. Their comparison nevertheless made it possible to identify a common methodological approach and to examine how artistic work can create opportunities for participation, expression and interaction.

The main contribution of this deliverable is **to bring these observations together into an intervention model**. Rather than treating artistic activities as interventions with predictable effects, the model draws attention to what happens between the activity proposed and the experience of the person taking part. It considers the opportunities participants are given, the choices they can make, the relationships they encounter and the ways their contributions are received. This provides a more useful basis for understanding participatory artistic practice than a description of techniques or final productions alone.

The model also offers **a way of approaching transferability** without assuming that successful experiences can simply be reproduced elsewhere. The three programmes show how much depends on the people involved, the expertise of the artists, the composition of the group and the wider circumstances in which the work is carried out. These differences are not secondary details to be eliminated in the search for a common method. They are part of what determines whether an artistic process becomes accessible and meaningful to its participants. For organisations interested in applying the NEWSPACE approach, the model can therefore serve as a reference for designing and examining their own practice. Its purpose is to help practitioners consider whether the conditions they create allow young people to participate in ways that are meaningful to them, whether their choices have a genuine place in the creative process and whether the organisation of the work remains responsive to the group. Such questions remain relevant even when the artistic languages, settings and participants differ substantially from those involved in NEWSPACE.

A further contribution concerns **how change is understood and assessed**. The project brought together different forms of evidence, including participants' accounts, observations of artistic processes and findings concerning personal and social outcomes. Read together, these materials offer insights into developments that might be overlooked if attention were limited to the completion of an artwork or to a single measure of impact. They also reveal differences between participants and between areas of change. An experience that is meaningful in one respect may have limited or uncertain implications in another. The model should be understood as a synthesis grounded in the project experience, open to further examination.

NEWSPACE project offered a shared language for discussing how participatory arts programmes are designed, facilitated and understood, while leaving space for the differences that characterise each group and setting. Its longer-term value will depend less on reproducing the activities developed during the project than on using the knowledge gained from them to inform new practices, examine their effects with care and continue learning from the people who take part.