

PARTICIPATION, COLLABORATION AND CO-CREATION IN MULTIMODAL AND ARTS-BASED RESEARCH WITH REFUGEE BACKGROUND YOUNG ADULTS

Wed 10.1.2024

Parallel session 2N, 15:30–17:00 Room

U3017, Main building

Chair: Peter Holley

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This paper reports on a collaborative arts-based pilot action study focusing on the experiences of forced migration and resettlement, within the larger context of the Horizon 2020 'NEW ABC consortium' (Networking Educational Across Boundaries for Community-building). The study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of refugee youth, aged 17-23, during the winter of 2023, through a 6-week workshop conducted in Aurinkopaja, Jyväskylä. Aurinkopaja, part of the city's youth art workshop initiatives, serves all youth with refugee backgrounds in the Jyväskylä region. The workshop employed diverse artistic methods, including writing, drawing, sculpting, music, photography, and videos. Approximately 6-10 Ukrainian youth participated, engaging in discussions about learning, belonging, identities, and change. These activities were co-created in collaboration with the young participants, Aurinkopaja coaches, and creative practitioners. The project's culmination resulted in a series of co-produced videos with the participants, fostering a dialogue about potential collaborations within Jyväskylä's multicultural initiatives.

This paper reflects on three central conference questions: (1) the nature of participation in research, (2) the interplay between participation, voice, and agency, and (3) the innocence and equality of participation. The study's objective was to provide a platform for young participants to share their experiences of forced migration and adapting to a new country. Participation in these collaborative pilot activities was deemed rewarding and engaging by both participants and collaborating institutions, despite the time commitment. Participants appreciated the opportunity to influence the content and approach of the activities. Motivation to participate varied, often tied to the unpredictability of planning. Building trust and effective communication with collaborators, including participants, emerged as critical factors in sustaining motivation over an extended duration. Some collaborators desired a more substantial role in the activities. Additionally, disparities in participants' awareness of activities arose due to language barriers and reliance on participant translations.