

Booklet from the Training Course

# Poetry is Alive

*November 2023*

*St Lizier, France*



Addressed to Youth workers, facilitators, trainers, and anyone interested in to singing and writing

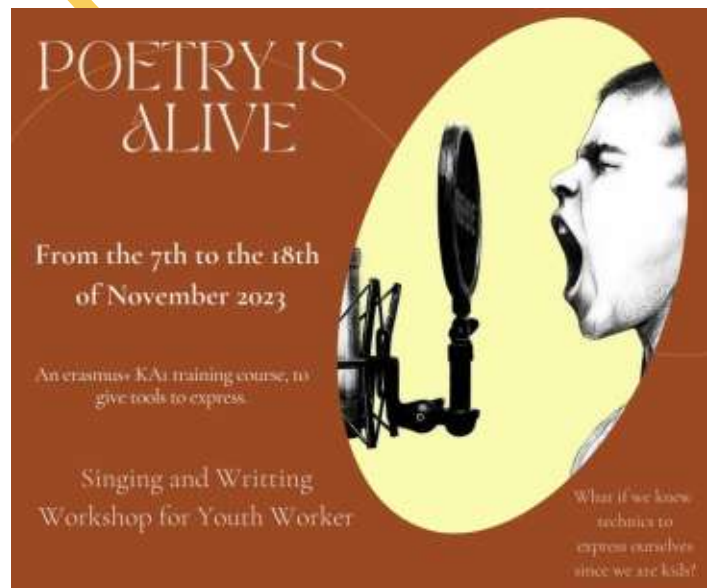


## The project and the booklet

In November 2023, 27 people from 5 countries gathered to learn tools how to express themselves through singing and writing.

This booklet is a summary of the activities that happen during this project. It has been written by the participants of the training course with some help of Solaf's team.

The idea is to be able to reproduce the activities with groups of youngsters or to give tips to youth workers who would like to do such activities with their groups.



## Our PARTNERS



*experimentáculo*

*From Portugal*



*From Czech Rep.*



SFERA  
SERBIA

*From Serbia*



EURÓPA IFJÚSÁGA EGYESÜLET

*From Hungary*

## Solaf' : the Hosting Organisation



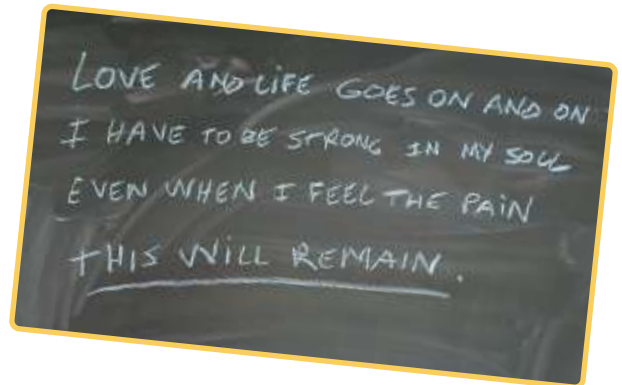
Solafrika is a non-profit organization based in Ariège (France) that works on Erasmus + project since 2010. With those stays, we create meetings between European youngsters and youth workers in order to share, understand better each other and create solidarity in an intercultural environment. We use different non-formal tools and broach different subjects such as art, ecology, discrimination, etc. We want those spaces to be places where we can talk about important nowadays and tomorrow topics of ours societies.



## The Aims of the project

The **main objectives** of this training course were :

- 1/ Bring personal development tools to youth workers
- 2/ Initiate the youth and the youth workers to expression methods
- 3/ Give them tools to develop their self confidence.



By this project we wanted to help people **cultivate an artistic practice**. Moving from the mental to the feeling. Take time to feel our body sensation, how we vibrate, how we resonate. Singing helps to stay grounded, and to have a routine to rest, take care of ourself, and enjoy.

Moreover, one of the most common fears is to talk in public, **to express ourselves**. So with the practice of Slam poetry, by writing our emotions, our feelings and our dreams, and then performing them on stage, we develop **self confidence**. And for sure, by singing in a group and freeing our voice as well.



This TC pursued **other goals** such as:

- \* Promoting a **more healthy** way of living by an healthy, **organic** diet.
- \* **Encourage critical thinking** and being active in a group dynamic.





## Singing session : Warming Up

We learned that it is important to spend time on waking up the body before singing since it helps to sing better. There are different type of warm up :

### Body warm up

- We started by warming up our face with a massage and then our mouth with some sound exercises.

- Participants are standing in a circle. They are grounded, their feet should be parallel and their legs should be in the same width as their pelvis. Participants body should be relaxed and they should breath slowly and steadily. Then they should put their hands wide open. As they breath their hands are moving from the right to the left.

- Today we tried something new. We were divided into groups of three people. One of us was standing in the middle and the two others were doing massages according to the instructions of our teacher. It included massaging our bodies from head to toes, shoulder massage, gentle "wrapping up" as a gift. At the end we created a wind so that the person in the middle could feel like being at the beach.

### Diaphragms breathing :

- participants should take a really deep breath and than exhale really fast and fully. Then participants can use a toy in witch you need to exhale with using your diaphragms to make the ball fly.



### Voice warm up :

- The participants are slowly opening a mouth like yawning, and slowly close it. Breathing... listening the breathing while making noises with different S sounds. Then participants are supposed to humm the melody that the teacher is playing. Then the participants are doing the humm thing with their mouth open.

### Trust games :

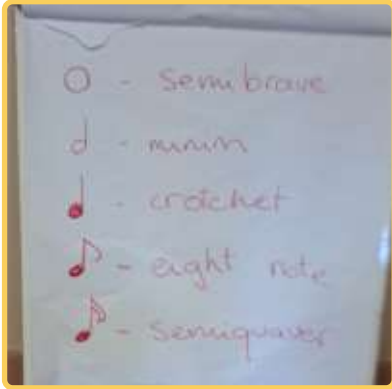
- participants should split to the smaller groups and make the circle with one of them inside the circle. The one inside of the circle fall to the others in the circle and they should catch them.

- Participants are standing in the line at one side of the space and should run one by one to the other side with their eyes closed.



## Singing session : Melody and Rythm

The session was taking place in St Lizier in a very beautiful and old building. We had an introduction to some music learning the day before and this session was dedicated to rhythm and melody.



We learned about notes and metrics. So we got taught the different types of notes and started singing it with a rhythm by clapping and marking the different subdivisions of time.

It was a very interesting exercise since many of us didn't really learn about music theory in the past so it opened a all new world to us. It was difficult at the start but we achieve with time going on to be better at it and to understand music even more than before.

After that we had an interesting game of trying to have melodic conversation in gibberish language. The exercise was to have one on one conversation with another person, but on made up language that does not have a meaning. The goal was to just have a similar melody and create a conversation with intention. It was really funny and everybody had a great time :).



## Singing session : Improvisation

• At the end of the first part of the lesson we had a half an hour long improvisation on a melody that we learned the day before. We were all in a circle singing the melody while people stood in the center one by one singing the improvisation connected to that melody.

• The participants are standing in the circle and singing chords that teacher choose and two people are supposed to step in the circle and harmonize with each other.



## Singing session : Specific songs

As usual we started our morning singing lesson by warming up our body and our vocals. Afterwards we started to work on improving songs that we knew from the previous lessons.

### • Learning and practising the song "Je mene les loups" :

The teacher showed us the three voices that are in the song and then we were learning then and we were also learning how to pronounce the French lyrics. We did that by switching voices to learn all of them.

### • Learning and practising the song Abuela :

Firstly, we individually practised each voice, therefore everybody knew exactly what they are supposed to sing. Secondly, Sophie picked one person from each voice, so we could all focus on the final sound and not only our melody. Lastly, we put it all together and repeated it until it sounded lovely.



### Lyrics Abuela :

S'il m'arrive encore de croire le soir,  
l'entends tu ?

Que tout n'est qu'une illusion d'espoir,  
l'entends tu ?

J'en appelle encore à sa mémoire,  
l'entends tu ?

Car toi ma jolie jolie abuela,  
la vois tu ?

De tout ton être tu étais la Foi,  
la sens tu ?

Et aujourd'hui quand je vois tout en noir,  
l'entends tu ?

La douceur de ton souvenir m'enjoue  
la sens tu ?

Ce regard de femme qui a tant donné pour qu'autour  
D'elle la vie soit la plus douce avec les êtres qui l'entourent mais eux qui oublient  
comme elle belle  
cette femme-là j'en suis tellement fière !

## Singing session : Chords

We were divided in 2 groups (which was creating a more intimate atmosphere). Both of the groups had one hour with Sophie and one hour with Mélissa.



With Sophie :

We practiced to make chords with our voices. We were divided in four groups of two, each one of them with one note of the chord. The first chord was a Major 7, the other was a Major 6.

We took the time to practice and listen our own note and at the end, we sang the chord together as a beautiful background for our song !

We ended the session with a nice improvisation!



## Singing session : Orchidée

With Mélissa :

We learned "Oumbala" with different voices and practiced "canon" through it. Furthermore, we learned the song "Orchidée" she wrote and everybody got the chance to practice each voice, the background as well as the lead.

PS: we were outside, what a nice environment to sing!



### Lyrics :

La nuit s'écarte, l'aube se lève  
Je goûte la rosée  
Orchidée née en Amazonie

Je m'accroche à la liane  
En quête de lumière  
Dans la jungle chargé de vie

Je suis fleur de foret  
Je suis belle de jour  
J'offre ma robe aux papillons

Je suis fleur des prairies  
Je suis belle de nuit  
La lune éclaire mes couleurs



## Slam session : Intro

Slam poetry aims to bring poetry closer to everyone. Poetry is in everything around us, even in us. Slam poetry is free of prejudice. It can awaken writing skills, boost freedom of expression and confidence in public speaking.

For this activity a paper, pen, microphone and amplification are needed.

Duration is divided in two parts :

- One for the writing
- Second for performing – in the slam tradition, every participant has 3 minutes max.



It is nice to have a microphone during the workshop, to become comfortable with it.

## Slam session : rules and tips

### The three rules of slam:

1. It should be under three minutes
2. Perform a capella
3. Original writing, don't copy others, put yourself in your line

An example of guide line can be writing a text with 4 paragraphs :

I am... ;  
I have... ;  
I love... ;  
I hate... ;

The aim is to help with the fear of the blank page and release writing.

### 10 TIPS for writing SLAM :

1. You do not choose the moment of inspiration.
2. Write 90% in one shot.
3. Read it 3 times loud. If you fail in pronunciation, change the lyrics.
4. Now work on the remaining 10% - do rhymes, assonance (repeated consonants) and alliterations (repeated vowels). Careful with the traps!
5. Be yourself. Do not imitate lyrics heard.
6. Print your text.
7. Don't apologize to be here.
8. Speak / sing clearly.
9. Be creative!
10. Enjoy!

### Tips for performing:

Breath, Be grounded, be kind, both to yourself and to others, take time and behave to the microphone as it is our best friend (don't eat it !)

- Participants should greet the person who is approaching the microphone with applause
- When one person finishes, applause last until next (random) person approaches the microphone
- When everyone as finished, no need to give feedback on the songs, just make them feel comfortable so they can leave the room with hope and wanting to try again !





## The retirement home concert

To close our slam and singing training course, we had the opportunity to go perform the song and slam we rehearse and/or create during those 10 days in a retirement home in St Giron. It was a special moment of this project ! Here is some feedback and pictures of it :



"For me, the moment when we were in the old people home will always stay with me, I won't forget it. The way how they looked at us, the joy on the faces, the old man who get up to dance. It was amazing feeling for me."

"People in the retirement home loved it, they talked about the diversity of culture, the good energy, they enjoyed that we include them with their name and dance !"



"One of the most rewarding aspects of this project was the creation and performance of original songs. At the end of the project, we organized a concert at a retirement home. Witnessing the joy our music brought to the elderly residents was fulfilling, we could see how happy they are about the fact that we came to give them our time and to sing for them."

## One day of the project : the tale !

After a fulfilling and tasty lunch on a rainy day, we headed to the nearby wooden cabin where we continued with our singing lessons. As usual, the warm ups warmed our vocals and we were ready to begin and learn more.



The warmth of the fire Melissa made kept us warm and cosy, so we could lean back and concentrate on the lesson. The heart-warming song Sophie made was on the schedule, and we added one final part to make the song complete. The French pronunciation sometimes posed as a challenge but we had the lovely support of Susanna and each other, and helped one another to make it sound correctly, while adding our own voice and emotion to it. We connected with it and this way made it our own tune.

Then, we practised another song in English, which was thus easier to sing. We enjoyed it very much as it was about family and music. After the short improvisation, we went back to our place, where we had dinner and got ready to go to a local concert.

The journey was an hour, and we were having fun, harmonizing in the car, which made it feel like a few minutes. The concert lasted an hour and 50 minutes. The band, called snapping sisters, was very skilled and breathtaking, as they didn't miss a beat and were always in harmony with each other. Beside the singing, they made it feel like little a theatre, they were very energetic as well, which we really admired and motivated us to put even more effort into our singing sessions. They sang in French first, and after in English, combining jazz with a modern touch.



After the concert ended, we had the chance to have a little jam with the band, improvising and enjoying ourselves. When the clock stroked one, we arrived at our place, and full of emotions and memories to cherish forever, we lay down in our beds and flew away to dreamworld.

***The end !***

# Thanks to

## The participants



Anthony Bourgoïn



Mélissa Marceline



Sophie le Morzadec

## The trainers

## Our Partners

- The Erasmus + program
- EYCB
- EIE
- Experimentaculo
- Sfera Serbia
- the retirement house of St Girons



**Cheers from the Solaf team :**  
Yann, Susanna and Adèl

