

Abstract for a legal-artistic project
Working title: Un-silence your voice

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1. Topic

The planned project is an artistic-aesthetic process which expresses experiences of psychiatric institutionalization and relates those experiences to the rights stated by the UN CRPD by showing the violations of those rights through the psychiatric experiences.

2. Question

First step: What kind of experiences did I make in a psychiatric institutional context and how can I express those artistically? Second step: How can I show the violations of my rights according to the UN CRPD?

3. Background of the project

An individual member of the ENUSP from Germany writes poems to process her experiences and to express her emotions. When she received an invitation to the sixth congress of the Italian organization "Diritti alla Follia", which focused on the UN CRPD, she had the idea to relate her poem and her experiences to the convention. Parts of the poem show violations of her rights according to the convention. She asked the board for participation in the congress as a speaker. There, she presented the idea for this legal-artistic project for the first time with support of the Italian organization. The current state of the project is a networking-phase, where the initiators of the project look for people interested in participating in "Un-silence your voice". The next step will be a video-meeting of all people interested.

4. Scope of the project

- Up to ten participants
- Any kind of art-form is welcome
- Regular meetings should be scheduled
- Live-meeting, e.g. during the festival where the project can be presented as work in progress: first artistic works with legal associations can be presented, e.g. poem-reading, music, art, etc. with a connection to the UN CRPD
- One-year-project
- A form of publishment as a group with individual sections

5. Financial scope of the project / different kinds of costs

- Material
- Travel
- Publishing
- Events
- Marketing

➔ This part will be discussed when a steady group has been formed

6. Ideas and assumptions of the project-realization

- Most of the people who have been psychiatrically institutionalized have experienced severe violations of their rights as human beings (with a disability) according to the UN CRPD.
- Artistic forms of communication can help to apprehend and process those (difficult) experiences and memories.

- Artistic-aesthetic expressions of those emotional memories are one way to make other individuals understand better what those experiences mean to a person, whether the recipient has similar experiences or whether he:she is an outsider. Art can be a vital form of communication that reaches other individuals on an emotional, non-rational level that can transport the sometimes abstract emotions and memories of the person expressing the lived experiences. This artistic channel of communication is a form of abstraction of a strongly individual experience, which has the potential to reflect emotions and memories that also can be abstract.
- The legal dimension of the project (re-)rationalizes the form of rather abstract communication and it presents clear information about concrete violations of concrete human rights.
- The violations of rights can be a direct part of the artwork or not. They can also be written down in a second step as form of an art-interpretation or as a reference to the rights in written or recorded form.
- The form of the aesthetic-artistic dimension of the project can be chosen freely, e.g. in form of a painting, a song, a poem, a short story, etc.

7. Conditions for participation / Target group of participants

- The person must have lived experiences of psychiatric institutionalization/is a so-called “direct stakeholder”
- The person must have good English-skills (level of B1), because this will be the language of communication for the project. Although the artwork does not depend on a specific language, the person who created the artistic expression has to be able to talk and write about his:her individual project in English.
- The person has to have an artistic idea for the expression of his:her experiences although the artwork is to be understood rather as a medium of communication than as the object of the project per se. The artistic-aesthetic expression is not thought of as a perfectionate art-project, but as a way to communicate something as abstract as emotions and memories.
- The person has to relate his:her artwork to the rights of the CRPD and show the violations of rights, if there are any, e.g. the right of full freedom of choice, the right to information, the right to protection against abuse, the right of humane treatment, etc.

8. Goal of the project

The project “Un-silence your voice” aims at breaking a societal taboo to talk about psychiatric experiences, especially those experiences that violated the rights according to the UN CRPD. The group has the goal to publish their individual legal-artistic projects in a form that suits the artworks, e.g. in form of an anthology, a blog, a podcast, a booklet. The published form of the project has the function to raise awareness to persons with lived experiences on a public level, because voices of (ex-)users and survivors of psychiatry are mostly silent or non-existent. To break this silence is the main part of the goal of this project. It is important to raise awareness for this marginalized group of people with lived experiences, because many people who do not have these lived experiences have no idea what is actually happening behind locked ward-doors, even in highly industrialized and economically successful countries like Germany, France, **Italy** or the UK. The awareness of the conditions in psychiatric wards must be raised and the situations of people who must be

shown, because coercion and inhumane treatment must be stopped. This group project is a form of a qualitative empirical process that gives persons with lived experiences a chance to express themselves, to find their voice and to communicate their own journey through art and legal monitoring with the connection to the CRPD.

9. Tentative Time Schedule

January 2024-January 2025

January-March 2024

- Group formation, first meeting (online), associations, brainstorming
- Regular Meetings (e.g. every other week, every month) to discuss processes, ask questions, connect, find solutions to problems
- Forming groups with different responsibilities (event- and travel-group, funding-group, legal-group, marketing-group, publishing-group, finances-group, documentation-group, etc.)
- Research for funding; preparation for application for funding (e.g. Mental Health Organization) and send applications for funding of the project to different organizations

April-May 2024

- Continue with creative process
- Sessions for legal part (Human Rights, UN CRPD), also: comparing different situations in the different countries of the participants
- workshop via video-chat

May-June 2024

- Concentration on the artistic process and the presentation of this process
- Connection between art and legal part of the project
- Documentation of the first six months in form of a report (based on regular protocols)
- Intensive preparation for the festival in Pisa

July 2024

- Festival in Pisa (preparation, presentation, reflections)/1st live-meeting
- Form of publishing must be decided

August-October 2024

- Final artistic work and connection to legal part
- Preparation of publication (book, podcast, blog, etc.)
- 2nd documentation-report

October-December 2024

- All art-legal-projects must be finalized
- Concentration on publishing-format
- Final documentation and publication in December

January 2025

- Reflections on the project