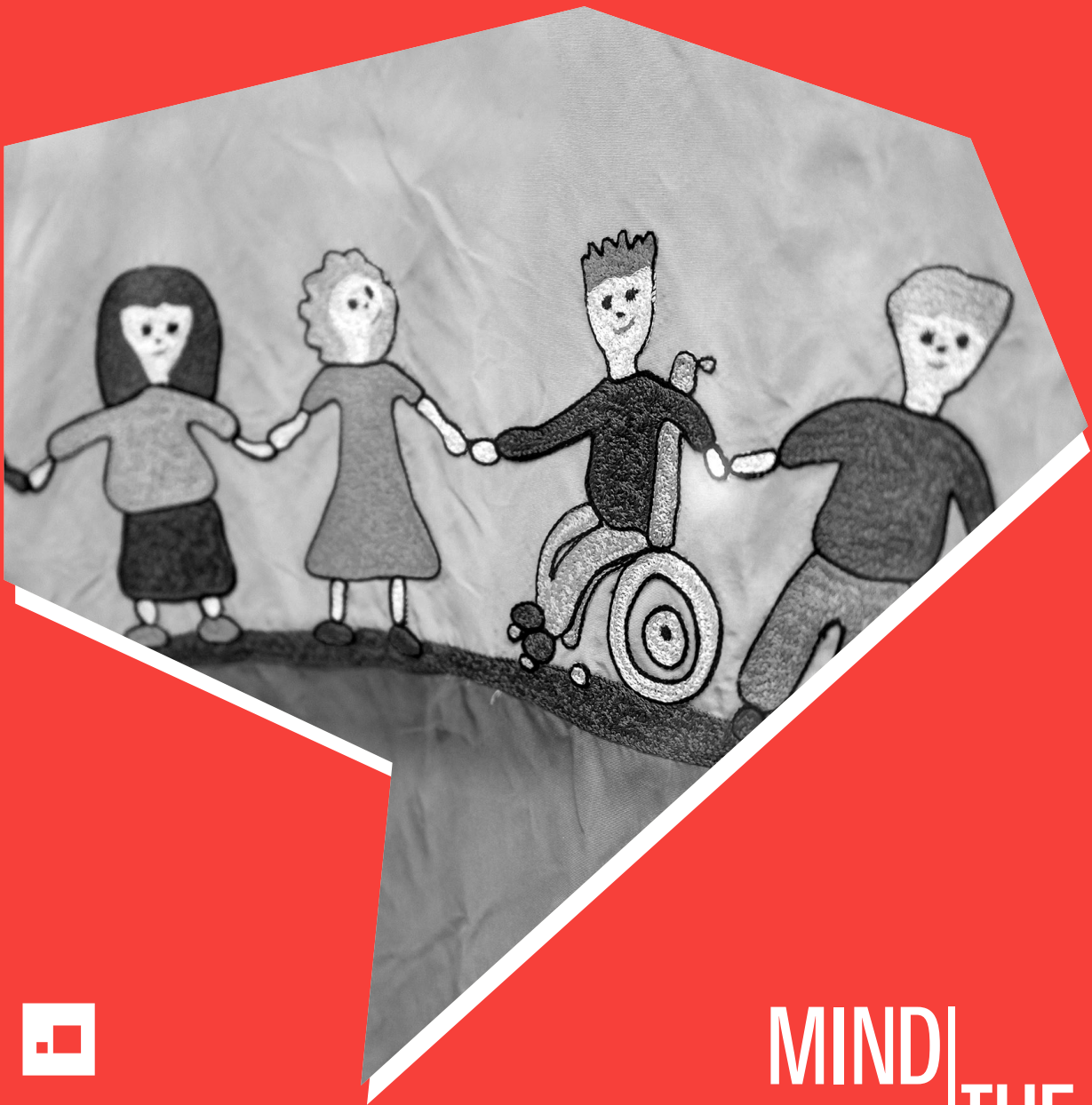


METHOD GUIDE

Accessibility Exercises for Artists | Norway
Kulturtanken – Arts for Young Audiences Norway



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METHOD GUIDE

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Authors: Tone Pernille Østern, Libe García Zarranz and Polina Golovátina-Mora
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Dear reader,

All children and young people have the right to art and culture according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This method guide is developed specifically for artists and art educators who want to develop their own practice from the perspective of inclusion and accessibility.

Working in a school context, you will meet pupils with various abilities and disabilities. The intention of the proposed accessibility exercises is to stimulate accessible art encounters between artists, teachers, children and young people in school.

Facilitating accessible arts encounters is an ongoing practice. The act of practicing entails repetition; that is working on something for a period of time. Here you will find a structure that will help you practice. We call this structure Exercises for Accessibility. The structure consists of a series of invitations.

The invitations may activate your curiosity and invite you to think about your artistic practices from the perspective of inclusion and accessibility.

You can work with the accessibility exercises in the way that suits you. You can work in abstract terms or grounded in your specific current project. You can also keep a reflection log or some other form of documentation through the process – from idea, to implementation and afterthought. You can work on the exercises alone, or perhaps together with artists and teachers.

Welcome in!

About Mind The Gap

Mind The Gap is an innovative Creative Europe project that strengthens artistic and cultural education while promoting wider participation among children and young people across Europe. It builds cross-sectoral cooperation between culture and education to address key challenges affecting young people's well-being.

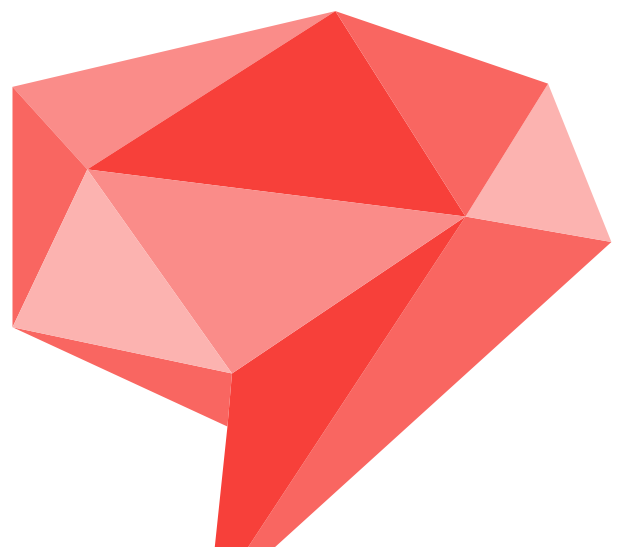
Throughout the project, each partner has designed a unique art education laboratory within an educational environment. Partners share methods, conduct peer reviews, and provide feedback. This collaborative approach equips art educators and organisations with tools to support children's and young people's well-being, creativity, and self-expression.

The learnings from the laboratories are collected into four method guides, which make the implementation of the methods easy. The method guides are available both in the partners' national languages and in English.

These method guides and the Mind The Gap project have been made possible through the co-funding of the European Union.

Mind The Gap project (11/2024–8/2026) is coordinated by the Association of Children's Culture in Finland. The project partners are Kulturtanken (Norway), the Małopolska Institute of Culture in Kraków (Poland), and Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih (Slovenia).

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EXERCISE 1

Warming up

To begin, we invite you to reflect on art and inclusion from your own personal perspective. Becoming aware of your own preconceptions is the first exercise.

Warm up by reflecting on these overarching questions:

- What is art for you?
- What does art mean to society?
- What does inclusion mean to you?
- Who is inclusion for?

EXERCISE 2

Reflections on your artwork and artistic practice

Here you can dwell on your own artistic practice and the elements you draw on when creating an accessible art encounter.

This exercise is based on your own artistic practice:

- Who is your intended audience?
- Which senses do you work with primarily?
- Which spaces, materials, and formats inspire you?
- What forms of co-creation do you want to invite through your art?



EXERCISE 3

Collaboration

Here you can reflect on what forms of knowledge you already possess, and what forms of knowledge you want to seek out.

What forms of knowledge do you need to realize an inclusive art encounter?

- Which bodies, lived experiences and knowledges do you want to bring into the process?
- What do you want to know about your audience?
- Did you forget someone?

EXERCISE 4

The artistic process

The pupils' attention, language, sensory and movement registers are diverse. Here you can explore what inclusion can look like through artistic exploration. In this exercise, you can reflect on how artistic strategies can create different opportunities for participation in the art encounter.

Experiment with different forms of communication. What happens if...

- verbal language takes on a secondary role?
- sensory forms of expression become of great importance?
- you give playfulness and humour more space?

Experiment with different sensory forms. What happens if...

- music and sound, including silence, become central?
- you experiment with different materialities and colors?
- movement is prioritized?

Experiment with format, structure, time, and attention. What happens if you...

- challenge linear time and understand time as immersive?
- let rest and breaks be integrated into the organization and timing of the entire artistic process?
- look for strategies to understand participants as co-creators through their presence and participation?
- build an atmosphere of care and support?



Photo: Erik Brandsborg/Kulturtanken

EXERCISE 5

In the artistic encounter

In this exercise, you are invited to bring an exploratory attitude into the art encounter. Each art encounter is unique, and it offers an opportunity to examine your artistic practice in light of an inclusive and accessible mindset.

In the art encounter itself, what happens if you...

- contact teachers beforehand?
- understand the art encounter and the diversity of the participants as opportunities?
- provide space for participants to take breaks during the art encounter?
- experiment with how to respond to the audience's feedback?

EXERCISE 6

Reflection, learning and unlearning

Here you can reflect on what you have learned and gained from new insights and examine whether something can be a source of inspiration in your artistic practice. The art encounter is rich in learning, perhaps unlearning as well, after it is over.

Here are some questions to reflect on:

- What implicit and explicit feedback have you received from students and teachers?
- Has any feedback challenged you?
- How can experiencing unplanned things be used for the development of new ideas?
- What new knowledge have you gained about the complex meaning of various abilities and disabilities?
- What practices and conventions do you want to challenge through your artistic practice?

EXERCISE 7

Your art practice as a larger event in the field of education and society

Your school visit does not happen in a vacuum. In this exercise, you can reflect on the importance of your artistic practice in a larger context.

What happens if you consider the art encounter as...

- a right to art and culture for children and young people, regardless of their differences?
- a unique opportunity to create a lifelong desire for more art and culture?
- a chance to create dialogue with teachers and position art and aesthetic methods as a central part of the school?

You have now finished our accessibility exercises, and we hope that they have been both inspiring and thought-provoking to work with. We know that it is hard because accessibility as quality criteria challenges other existing quality criteria that prevail in art and art making. But that hard work is necessary and will lead to more inclusive art formats and encounters for a diversity of children and young people meeting art – maybe for the first time – in school.

The Accessibility Exercises have been developed by Tone Pernille Østern, Libe García Zarranz and Polina Golovátina-Mora in collaboration with Kulturtanken – Arts for Young Audiences Norway for the Mind the Gap project.



Photo: Trine Ruud Grønningen/Kulturtanken

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