

Sewing workshop



Brief description of the activity

It often happens that the young immigrants who come from various and different places of the world have a specific knowledge but cannot step on the job market with it since it may be outdated, not enough professional or they may simply not have enough knowledge.

Sewing workshop is a great opportunity for fulfilling their wish for working experience they can also practice at home. By being in a group with locals, they may create contacts and friendships, while also being inter-culturally educated.

Sewing workshop

Topics, objectives and methodology:

The aim of the workshop is to teach participants how to create modern clothes that reflect the culture they grew up in, by combining pieces of used clothes. By doing this, we wish to encourage their individuality, creativity, recognition of personal style while researching different styles, pieces of clothes and other people's culture. At the same time, the method of teaching sewing is a great way to learn the local language (like in a typical language class) in a very relaxing way. Participants may challenge themselves in all ways, sewing skills, learning skills, language skills and discovering their competences and potential that they have but may have never found out before.

Duration:

A full workshop can last up to 100 hours, divided into: the basics of sewing (8 hours), adjustment of clothing (20 hours), creative sewing (20 hours), clothing processing into new

pieces of clothing (20 hours), Ethno-dimension of clothing in a new style (32 hours).

Costs:

The cost of this activity depends on how much the described material costs in your country and how much you can get as a donation or through sponsorship.

Location:

In a specific room or other indoor place where there is electricity available and enough place for 10 people at the same time to practice sewing. Remember that the material for this workshop might take a lot of space and that it is better if the sewing machines stay in the same space for the whole duration of this workshop as it is difficult to constantly move things in and out of the room.

Materials:

Sewing machines, thread of different colors, needle of vari-

ous dimensions and sizes, few scissors, chalk, iron and ironing desk, electricity, a lot of different pieces of clothes that you wish to throw away (the users may bring their own from home, you can buy it in second hand shop. Remember using those that are really broken or non-usable anymore).

Staff needed and eventual specific skills required:

Teacher: Person who has the skills of sewing will be needed to teach them basic skills because most of the people may not have even have basic knowledge about it. That same person will continuously be leading them throughout the development of the workshop.

Social mediator: It might happen that there will be people with different backgrounds and cultures that not understand or accept each other.

The coordinator: this person will assist the teacher and the process and development of the workshop as well as having control of the performance of the workshop.

It is better if the three of them are always present. In case there are not a lot of difficulties of understanding between the workshop's participants, the coordinator may do not only his role but also that of the social mediator. All the staff should have the necessary skills to be able to handle the situation

Participants involved:

The target group should be a mixed group composed by both migrant and local people, males or females. By mixing both migrants and locals, the latter may help migrants with the need of assistance with documentation procedures, sharing knowledge of local traditions and food, of local dangers and beauties, etc...

In the group there can be young or middle-aged people. In general, unemployed and/or newly arrived people who wish to extend their knowledge, build friendships and be social.

Steps:

Before - Inviting possible participants

First things first, without participants the workshop is senseless, so it is extremely important invitation. Check in the local community for people with the hobby of sewing, retired tailors... as well as migrant with any passion, experience, expertise on the topic. Start with- in your language classes participants, if you organize any.

- Setting the place. While finding participants and defining when the workshop will begin, it is also time to set the place. This means choosing where the workshop will take place and equip it with all the sewing material in order for it to be ready for the start of the activity. During this step, it is useful if, besides the coordinator, the teacher is also present so he/she can check if something else is needed, if the place is suitable for the implementation of

the sewing activity, etc. Hence, the best is to have a professional on hand at all times.

During - Conversation

It is extremely important before the implementation of the sewing, that the teacher and coordinator who is leading the whole process have a talk to participants to get the idea of how much knowledge of sewing they already have and what they wish to create. Following that, the teacher's explanation and rules are given accordingly to the pre-existing knowledge. The different steps are:

- Providing information about the sewing machine. Most likely there will be participants who have not any knowledge about sewing and it is extremely important to teach them about the machine itself. For this step 8 hours are scheduled. The hours are adjustable depending on participants speed of learning.

- Making groups. 10 people per group. The idea is to make 3 groups but it depends on the number of people participating. Everyone gets their own sewing machine.
- Start from the basics using the learning by doing method. Most of the participants will learn them very quickly because it is a non-demanding type of work.
- The implementation of the workshop by sewing new things out of used materials it is important that the coordinator encourages the participants to bring as much material as they can get from their own house or friends' houses. It can be women's tights, shirts, jeans, dresses, underwear, swimsuit etc.)

By implementation we mean a few steps: tailoring (cut of tailoring, tailoring, stitching, sewing, finishing clothes), creative sewing (learning the characteristics

of individual types of materials, the possibility of combining different types of material, adding applications, improving with manual and machine seams, combining with other hand parts (binding, crocheting knitting), use of patchwork technic), processing clothes into new clothing pieces (use of old clothing pieces in new ways, learning about different techniques and creative approaches), ethnical dimension of clothing in a modern way (an overview of stylistic and other characteristics of the clothing and fashion culture of individual countries of the participants, the choice of special symbols, how to transfer ethnical clothes to modern pieces of clothing? How to adapt the way of production, taking into account cultural heritage?)

After

Gifting friends and family with the final products. Organize with participants an event to sell the products created during the workshops.

Do's and don'ts

Even though sewing is in many parts of Europe considered a “woman or housewife activity”, keep in mind that this is just a partial view of what is actually a job, practiced both by men and women. Highlight this aspect with your participants, in order to deter gender-based stereotypes on this activity. The creation of a mixed group of participants can then be helpful for this purpose.

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There is not anything specific that the participants or staff need to be careful about. The work with the sewing machine is not demanding. The participants need to be precise if they wish to make the final product nice. There is however one thing that the coordinator and the organisation need to be careful about the relations between the participants.

One should not forget that when there is a group of mixed nationalities and traditions there is a bigger

possibility of misunderstandings and consequently unwanted situations. For this reason, a mediator is welcomed. There may also be the problem of language understanding, so if you find a volunteer translator is great.

Innovative aspects to promote inter-culture

This activity helps you in promoting interculture by making participants discover new cultures, adjusting to different habits, in a very relaxing atmosphere. You can use this workshop mainly to ease the creation of new contacts and friendships while gaining new skills. Generally speaking, the participants will spend time sharing their own culture, teaching others about their own habits and, for the newly arrived, exchanging tips with the other participants about how to transfer their traditional habits into their new reality. Sewing new things out of recycled materials is a great method to

present this association of bringing traditional to a new and more modern world by not forgetting their home and tradition but engaging them into the new sphere.

Possible follow up

Once the group is confident with the basics of sewing, and you triggered positive dynamics of knowledge exchange within it, you may think about replicating the activity, having the participants of the first edition as teachers of the new ones, in a logic of peer education.

Video, links and external resources

<https://anietnomacija.org/za-zenske/>



