

House of Europe International Songwriting Project

Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme Initiative 2020–

INFORMATION

Since year 2015, immigration has exploded in Europe and has become an even more important political and practical issue to deal with. Conflicts in the Middle East have forced hundreds of thousands of people to emigrate. Europe has to face a new kind of challenge: how to welcome all immigrants and refugees and support immigration ensuring that the human rights would be fulfilled in any circumstances?

The House of Europe international songwriting project opens borders and introduces a human and artistic point of view through music, to the multicultural society. Cooperation between people from different cultures and backgrounds increases the acceptance of multiculturalism and mutual understanding.

The House of Europe project has already been realized between 2018 and 2020 in the form of four week-long intensive songwriting workshops across Europe, organized at four partner institutions: HKU Utrechts Conservatorium (The Netherlands), Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Helsinki, Finland), Leeds College of Music (UK), and Conservatorio di Musica "Luisa D'Annunzio" (Pescara, Italy).

This project supports interaction between Conservatoire students from different European countries and non-western musicians, who are immigrants living in the country of the host Conservatoire in turn. Participatory workshops intend to bring the worlds of them together on an equal basis, by songwriting in teams and creating new music in live situations. House of Europe is as well an international mobility program for students and teachers from the participating higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the ongoing coronavirus challenge has affected greatly both the educational and the creative world in terms of international travel restrictions, limited social interaction, cancelled live events, and health safety issues. The House of Europe project will answer these concerns in the future by blending distance learning and remote teamwork, utilizing the latest digital music production and communication tools, with participatory songwriting workshops and live event production.

Objectives of the Project

1. The project offers a model to support interaction between local people and immigrants by songwriting and creating new music in live situations. We create participatory workshops for immigrants and music students, where through facilitation they tell their stories and share their own musical traditions, and together turn them into music.
2. The physical workshops are preceded by an introductory online course on the basic tools and methods of songwriting, music business practices, pitching one's songs and copyright.

3. House of Europe is also an international mobility program for students and teachers in the form of week-long intensive courses. The project includes songwriting (music and lyrics) in teams, improvising, producing, recording, performance and eventually interviews on the radio/TV. Every project culminates in a final public event where the produce of the course is presented, and where the immigrants who have taken part in the course as sources of stories and experiences, and the participating students and teachers meet. Possibly, local/national politicians, decision-makers and media will be invited to the final events for disseminating the results and enhancing mutual awareness.
4. The intensive workshops are followed by a remote post-production period, where the participants produce their songs further using musical and communication applications suitable for online working, aiming for digital release and distribution of the songs.

Outcomes of the Project

Content Outcomes

Old and new songs will be (re-)created telling the stories of all different cultures gathered in the intensive project. The participants, whether they come from a country outside or inside Europe, will be asked: What is the culture you bring? How can we find each other artistically, musically, humanly? What is this Our House of Europe?

Although the working language of the project is English, the students and musicians are encouraged to write some lyrics in their own native languages as well. The songs will be publicly performed at the end of the project, and produced further by the songwriting

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the project the students are expected to have improved their skills to:

- Demonstrate ability to realize, create, recreate, manipulate and/or produce songs individually and as a team.
- Recognize and reflect on diverse social, cultural and ethical issues and apply international perspectives to practical and theoretical knowledge.
- Understand the principles of music copyright and the operating methods of the music industry and be able to communicate their musical competences and visions in a productive manner.
- Engage with individuals and groups, demonstrating sensitivity to diverse views and perspectives and evidencing skills in teamwork, (leadership), project development and organization as required.

Participants

The project is in co-operation between 4–6 higher education institutions in music holding Erasmus charters. Each school will bring 2–3 students, and preferably a teacher to each workshop. The hosting school will provide rhythm section if needed, and may provide some more music students to participate, if desired. The introductory online course may be open for more or all music students of each institution, if applicable.

Concerning the level of participation: this might be different for each school. Students are open to use instruments, or computers. The group may be a mix of musicians, songwriters, music technologists. It will challenge them to work together in the project.

The hosting school takes care of the connection with and participation of local immigrants. Regarding the creative role and impact for the members of the immigrant communities: this might be different for each school as well, since the schools all have their own modules/courses, and their own way to realize the physical workshop.

Contents of the Project, Methods of Working

- New songs will be written during the project, telling the musical stories from students coming from different places in Europe, and local immigrants, coming from different places outside Europe.
- Each intensive workshop week is preceded by an introductory online course on the basic tools and methods of songwriting, music business practices, pitching one's songs and copyright. The course can be studied asynchronously and fit to each institution's learning schedule.
- Following an introductory meeting at the beginning of the intensive week, there will be a common workshop for all focusing on getting to know each other, creating a community, and launching of the songwriting process.
- All further days during the week the participants will be working in smaller teams, the members of which will be rotated every day. Every team should write one new song each day. The teachers will coach the teams as needed and ensure that the work is progressing.
- It is the responsibility of the teams themselves to set goals for each team and for each day and agree on the objectives and division of assignments within the team. It is advised that the students try different songwriter roles (melody writer or topliner, lyricist, tracker/arranger etc.) within the teams during the project.
- At the end of each day there will be a feedback session, where all the teams will present their daily outcomes by performing or playing back the new songs. Everybody is supposed to give constructive feedback to all teams and suggestions on how to develop the songs further. The teachers will guide the discussion.
- All the participants of the intensive week participate in planning, rehearsing for, and performing in the final concert.
- There will be a final wrap-up session for the project before the concert.
- The host institution (Conservatory) will provide the songwriting teams with rooms, with necessary equipment (drums, keyboards, amplifiers, mics, monitors, speakers).
- It is advised that the participants bring any personal instruments they can carry.
- Each intensive workshop week is followed by a remote post-production period, where the participants produce their songs further using musical and communication applications suitable for online working, aiming for digital release and distribution of the songs.

Schedule

The partner institutions will host intensive courses reciprocally. The duration of the project is 2–3 years, starting either during the late autumn semester of 2020, or spring semester of 2021, depending of the partner institutions and the regulations of the funding programme.

Assessment, Feedback, Reflection

The students will receive peer and faculty feedback during the project. The students are asked to write a reflective report on their personal learning outcomes to their home institution, and coach the students participating in the next House of Europe Songwriting project on their behalf. All participating students are credited by their home institutions. A tentative scope for the project is 5

pts. ECTS, including the introductory course, the intensive workshop week, and the post-production period, but is subject to be decided by the home institution.

Facilities, accommodation, meals etc.

Each school sends 2–3 students and 1 teacher to the intensive workshop. Travel reservations and expenses and further costs for teachers (hotel / other living expenses), are taken care of by the sending schools, and included in the project funding. Teachers can also participate the project within the Erasmus teacher exchange program if required.

Each organizing school takes care of the student housing and gives recommendations for the teacher accommodation. The international students get a breakfast at their housing (a daily lunch, too, if possible), and take care of further food and drinks for themselves during the week.

Each organizing school takes further financial responsibility for their own project week, if not included in the project funding.

Contact

Jere Laukkanen, MMus

Chair, Music Writing and Production

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Department of Music, Helsinki

jere.laukkanen@metropolia.fi

tel. +358 50 401 3465