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BIRTH STORIES

A toolkit for secondary schools

BIRTH CULTURES:

A journey through European history and traditions around birth and maternity

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BIRTH CULTURES:
A JOURNEY THROUGH EUROPEAN HISTORY AND TRADITIONS AROUND BIRTH AND
MATERNITY

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A toolkit for secondary schools

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INTRODUCTION

BIRTH CULTURES: a journey through European history and traditions around birth and maternity, is a project co-funded by the European Union under the Creative Europe Culture Programme (2014-2020) that contributes to **preserve and transmit, through arts and culture, birth and maternity traditional knowledge and practices as part of European intangible cultural heritage.**

The project is implemented by Interarts (Spain) in cooperation with Frauenmuseum Hittisau (Austria), Frauenmuseum Merano (Italy), Gender Museum (Ukraine) and in association with IAWM (Italy), ECCOM (Italy) and Birth Café Campaign (Germany), as associated partners. The project will run from November 2019 to April 2022.

According to the German associations' Birth Café Campaign and Hebammen für Deutschland (Midwives for Germany), when it comes to pregnancy and birth, the lack of instruments - such as historical research, exhibitions and specific information for different target groups- does not enable for these topics to become accessible to different publics and audiences.

Against this background, BIRTH CULTURES has the following specific **objectives**:

- To **strengthen capacities of and collaboration between women's museums in Europe** to raise awareness on women's health and sexual and reproductive rights.
- To **enhance intercultural dialogue and artistic co-creation** around values and practices related to culture, birth and maternity.
- To **improve access**, including young people and migrants, to **European cultural and creative works and intangible cultural heritage.**

The project is based on the acknowledgment that socially engaged art represents an effective way of processing, explaining and promoting topics of particular social value but also of engaging audiences through a participative approach. By sharing and providing information or topics of discussion, it will foster a deeper understanding of the issues tackled and of the necessary emotional intelligence to process them.

The traveling exhibition “**Birth Culture**” implemented within the project gives visibility to the historical and cultural knowledge about giving birth and raises awareness on the most current developments in this field. These will be seriously and critically questioned (eg. caesarean section on demand, IVF, designer babies, etc.), for, particularly in the area of pregnancy and birth, traditional (midwifery) knowledge is just as valuable as today's medicine. A healthy birth culture ideally combines both aspects and the exhibition will offer a holistic approach to childbirth and maternity. Historical exhibits are to be combined with contemporary narratives. Critical developments will be discussed, and artists will be invited to broaden the subject by means of artistic statements.

The purpose of this **toolkit** is to provide thematic and methodological guidelines for teachers to approach these themes in secondary schools. It is conceived mainly – but not exclusively – as a tool to be used in the partners' countries during the lifetime of the project and in relationship with the travelling exhibition: in fact, it is a versatile tool which could be used in the future beyond the *Birth Cultures* project, by schools in other countries. In this way, the tool itself guarantees its own sustainability beyond the project itself, ensuring at the same time a wide dissemination of the project's topic and objectives. In the next section, digital storytelling is introduced, as an adequate methodology to approach these topics with a teenage audience. Later, resources such as contextual data about gender roles, birth and maternity; potential topics to address during these storytelling workshops and other sources of information are also suggested. In the following section, methodological tools to evaluate the development of the workshops are provided. Finally, ethical considerations for the participation in the DS workshops are provided.

BIRTH CULTURES contributes to preserve and transmit, through arts and culture, birth and maternity traditional knowledge and practices as part of European intangible cultural heritage.

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

IN THIS SECTION...

- What is storytelling and why it is important
- Digital storytelling: developing personal stories in a digital format
- DS 5 phases: briefing, writing, recording, editing and sharing
- Why DS? Narrative control, feminist methodology, ICT skills building, enabling access and alternative research tool
- Main steps and conceptual framework of the workshops

THE VALUE OF STORYTELLING

"In this infinite variety of forms, (narrative) is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories, and very often

those stories are enjoyed by men of different and even opposite cultural backgrounds: narrative remains largely unconcerned with good or bad literature. Like life itself, it is there, international, trans-historical, transcultural" (Barthes 1975:237).

Storytelling is a widespread communication practice, which origins, motivations and uses are rooted in the mental-cultural complexity of human beings. It is therefore of great interest for a variety of disciplines, both at a theoretical and at a practical level, aiming to understand how and why it became so pervasive, what are its mechanisms, what is its educational, social or even therapeutic role. Storytelling usually consists in reporting on facts, events or actions carried out in a given time and space by human and non-human beings in the shape of conversations, written texts, literary works, multi- media communication, movies, music, etc. All human languages and cultural-communication codes include storytelling: fairy tales, for example, comprise narratives from all over the world.

Storytelling is typical of both oral/informal and formal cultures, artistic expressions included. It therefore unfolds as a common expressive feature of all human beings, whose minds gather and interpret sensory information, events and emotions, and organise them in the shape of a story. Today, the structure of the human mind is described with a systemic and complex approach. In his fundamental essay *Frames of mind* (1985), Howard Gardner describes human beings as endowed with at least nine relatively distinct faculties: logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, naturalistic and existential intelligence. These are present, albeit in different

combinations, in all human beings, and interact with each other through complex mechanisms. For other scholars, human thought is based on three fundamental types of intelligence: analytical (the ability to break up, compare, examine, evaluate, question, research and explain causes), practical (the ability to use tools and create something concrete) and creative (based on intuition, imagination, discovery, the ability to produce something new, speculating, inventing). Among the different mental abilities, all human beings are endowed with narrative competencies and forms of thinking; other abilities arise in abstract or symbolic form (e.g. formal disciplines and languages). The different reasoning forms and competencies and the different languages are used in different ways and contexts. Narrative and symbolic thinking can support and enrich each other (Bruner, 1997; 2003).

Abstract thinking is ideal to interpret what is regular, expected, normal, ordinary, not surprising, mundane, in sum, the things we give for granted. By contrast, the narrative thinking encapsulated in stories and storytelling is ideal to talk about the exceptional, the extraordinary, the unexpected, the unusual; all this gives rise to curiosity and the excitement we all feel when we listen to a good story. Stories, therefore, are valued by the mind and heart alike. They have the power to ascend from the universal to the particular, as opposed to the power of science to rise from the particular to the general.

The value of storytelling is also re-iterated in the development of knowledge. Logical-scientific and narrative thinking are the fundamental ways in which all human beings organise their understanding of the world (Bruner, 1997). They take different forms in different cultures, but no culture exists without them. However, most schools consider narrative arts – songs, drama, novels, theatre etc. – as something which is more “decorative” than necessary, something to make our leisure time pleasant. But this doesn’t mean that we don’t construct our cultural roots and the beliefs we hold as the most important in the shape of a story; and what is so fascinating for us is not only the content of these stories, but the ability with which they are told. Even our immediate experience, what happened to us yesterday or the day before, is expressed in the shape of a story. Yet more significantly, we represent our lives (to ourselves as well as to others) in the form of a tale: most probably, storytelling has the same importance for cultural cohesion as it has in structuring an individual’s life.

All human beings, everywhere and in every time, have used storytelling. Informally, we tell stories virtually every moment of our daily lives. Even children soon learn the rhythm and structure of storytelling. Our mind is organised to perform this function. Individuals learn/gather information by observing the actions, behaviours and emotions of their fellow human beings through the “mirror neurons” system, which allows us to understand and anticipate the actions, movements and intentions of others. Narrative thinking is able to perceive and create connections between sequences of actions and feelings.

Narrative thinking and storytelling may be understood as adjustments connected with the social needs of our species. Through these competencies, we are able to communicate actions, events, dangers, the need for remedial actions; we nurture social relationships; we share emotions; we teach; we exchange knowledge and information. From a social point of view, the narrative form is particularly appropriate because of its practical, immediate and direct quality: it provides information on an acting subject or on the sequence of his/her actions, the times and places. Moreover, the narrative structure is easily accessible also for those individuals who don't have a sound formal culture, while other expressive, explanatory and communication structures require practice and teaching. The ability to formulate and create stories also has an adaptive value in its potential to explain what is mysterious or inexplicable through the available knowledge, thereby responding effectively to the human need for mysticism.

Cultures in every place and time produced explicative models of reality in the shape of cosmogonies, legends, myths and fantastic stories with universal symbols. This also explains why human beings value storytelling more than description or other expressive forms: description may support, integrate narration, but does not have the same cognitive and emotional role. At a more basic level, storytelling is cherished because it involves individuals, whether storytellers or listeners, in an empathic, rather than simply intellectual, relationship; because it refers to individual or social human experience, to aspects of life which all human beings can recognise and share almost “innately”. Likewise, storytelling doesn't coerce individuals into a given language, and is open to multiple meanings and interpretations. Finally, storytelling encourages inspiration and creativity, thereby nurturing new ideas, stories, meanings and cultural forms.

The complexity of contemporary environmental, social, cultural and technological issues requires complex mental forms, new paradigms of thought and new approaches to education. The educational

needs and the competencies needed to deal with complexity are identified in forms of systemic, complex, critical and relational thinking. Complex and systemic thinking require narrative, rather than abstract and symbolic styles. Storytelling has a potential of and for understanding, dealing with complexity: it allows to connect information and knowledge, perceptions and emotions, experiences, symbolic data and visions of the world. As a fundamental human and social experience, storytelling is at the heart of birth, maternity and psychosocial health as well. Through narratives, we share our experiences, hopes and fears, making it crucial to integrate stories about birth and maternity in school environments, where they might be absent from the discussion.

The different steps through which the storytelling experience leads storytellers and listeners can be summarised as such:

- Contact
- Familiarity
- Diving
- Identification
- Emersion
- Distance
- Transformation

Through storytelling, we exercise and reinforce mental abilities which are relational, unifying, transversal and related to a context; through storytelling, it is possible to offer to the narrator and listeners an experience of high co-communication and educational value: values, knowledge, experiences can be transmitted by putting in place the analytical thinking of a logical and rational type.

FROM STORYTELLING TO DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Digital storytelling (DS) is a creative process combining the art of telling stories and technology with the aim to develop a personal story in a digital format: a computer with a video-editing software and a recorder thus become versatile tools in the hands and mind of the storyteller, who employs them to share their story. Born in the US between the 1970s and 1980s, DS was the product of an artistic movement aimed at ensuring a more inclusive participation in the arts for all through the use and dissemination of new technologies. The Centre for DS was established in Berkeley, California in 1994,

and became a landmark for this methodology. In the international context, a variety of methods are used and re-elaborated to respond to specific needs, to the software employed or to the chosen devices, such as tablets and smart-phones.

In 2003, thanks to a project funded from the BBC called Capture WALES, many digital storytellers were trained. They gathered hundreds of stories through several workshops in Wales, Great Britain, thereby creating an online archive of digital stories. Compared to the American version, some changes have been introduced in the methodology, simplifying it and setting the theoretical framework for what is still known as the BBC's "short form". This term describes a story no longer than 3 minutes, with a text of about 320 words and a selection of no more than 15-20 images provided by the storyteller him/herself. Video-clips are generally avoided, as far as they are not central for the story, and so is music, except when it has a significant connection with the story or storyteller. Thanks to its descriptive potential, its versatility and its applicability in any context – artistic, educational, social, health – this methodology started to flourish and to be widely tested.

BBC's "short form" structure implies five steps for a 24/30-hour training (four to six days at least) in 5 steps:

Fig.1. The 5 phases of Digital Storytelling



Source: own elaboration based BBC's "short form"

In this specific context, although we warmly recommend to adhere to the BBC model in terms of structure and duration of the workshop, we wish to underline that it is possible for schools to shorten the workshop according to their needs and to change the way the final stories will be presented (only in oral or written forms, for example, without using digital tools): it is however important to allow participants to go in depth into the topic and explore their own feelings and thoughts about it as well as to leave them space for some creativity in the process of creation of the final product.

1. Informati ve session. Briefing

A DS workshop usually begins with a briefing session; its aim is to inform participants in more detail about the activities in which they will be involved, in order to reassure them on the work scheduled for the following days.

Different typologies of digital stories should be illustrated in order to show to participants the final results of the process and the diverse range of stories it was possible to develop. Participants must be informed on the legal consequences of an improper use of material under copyright, which must never be given for granted. Participants are encouraged to use their own material; it is important to safeguard the storyteller (people and/or organisations). For example, it is always necessary to have a release note for photographic material. In fact, the lack of images can inspire individuals to be more creative, and results are often amusing.

The second step of this phase is the direct contact with the object of the future story (this might happen through an exhibition, a performance, a talk with friends/parents/others, etc.); this step should be followed by a third step of sharing of the impressions/emotions/thoughts generated by the second step.

2. Writing

The choice of which story to tell starts with the “story-circle”. Through a number of games, the facilitator helps the storyteller to identify the topic for the story which will then be produced in digital format. Stories are about a change which took place inside the storyteller, the resolution of a conflict, a particular memory or a decision that changed the storyteller’s professional or personal life. The storytelling session starts by reassuring everyone that this was a safe environment, in which all participants could express themselves without fear of making a mistake. The rule is that what is told within the circle remains inside the circle. Through writing games, storytellers are encouraged, first, to try and identify stories in a creative way, drawing inspiration from their daily lives, secondly, to convey the experience behind the objects they had brought with them by sharing it with the group and, finally, to choose the story to tell. Once the story is identified, participants are allowed a short time to write their texts in line with the main features of the “short form”. In this phase, participants are encouraged to share their stories between them, so as to make sure that they are meaningful or that the message they want to convey is clear. When the script is completed, it is the turn of the storyboard. This means

that, on a Word file or on paper, every sentence is associated with an image following the chosen sequence, which will then be synchronised with the storyteller's voice with the help of an editing software.

3. Audio recording

When the writing of the text is completed, story-tellers must record their own voice, to be synchronised with images at a later stage. Portable recorders - cheap but good quality ones – can be used. Recording is an important phase: the more accurate it is, the less it will need to be "cleaned up" with an audio editing programme. Moreover, in a digital story it is the storyteller's voice to guide the listener through the images; this is why participants are asked to rehearse their narratives over and over again before recording took place. They must be guided and advised to speak slowly, with a natural voice, following punctuation and choosing the right intonation.

4. Editing

This phase implies synchronising images with sound through a video-editing software.

There are several software options available, varying in quality and price; the choice depends on the specific circumstances in which the editing work is being carried out. Free software has the advantage of being very intuitive and simple, as well as cost-effective for organisations. On the other hand, professional software allows for a more accurate editing, but clearly implies higher costs and is more difficult to use for those who are not accustomed to this medium. It is advisable to adopt the same software for all participants and to have the support of a technician to help solve specific problems. This phase may also be entrusted to an external subject, but it is important that the storytellers feel they are in control and that the final product reflects their idea, i.e. they have a sense of ownership of the final story.

5. Sharing

Viewing and sharing stories with the other participants is a moment of strong empathy, as well as an occasion to go over the significance of the whole process and to clear up possible doubts.

The observations of participants can be also gathered through questionnaires at the beginning, during the workshops and at the end of the training course.

The use of storytelling is today widely recognised for promoting cognitive and learning processes. DS allows the development and combination of several skills: writing and speaking, technological skills and

artistic sensitivity, but also transversal and soft skills. No less important, the liberating act of giving voice to one's own experience has a therapeutic value, as it allows to develop and maintain a sense of identity, to give meaning to what happens, to recognise one's own ability to overcome occurrences in life, and to discover one holds something noteworthy in the eyes of an audience. The social and transformative power of DS is everywhere recognized. DS is an accessible, democratic and participative tool that emphasizes different kinds of knowledge, values, social meanings, cultures, personal and community-group expressions. Moreover, DS reveals its inclusive power with marginalized or vulnerable people, by giving them visibility and representing their individual and social identities. The role of DS in upholding human rights in today acknowledged.

It is precisely because of the fundamental role played by the intimate and emotional part of personal stories, that the planning of a range of icebreaker activities at the beginning of the workshops is so important for team building and the creation of an environment perceived as open and safe enough for individuals to open themselves to others.

In this context, the role of the facilitator is crucial in order to create such an environment and to guide storytellers in identifying and developing a personal story which is particularly meaningful. A delicate task for the facilitator is to help storytellers sum up “the history of the moment” in a few words. Although it may seem inconsiderate to advise someone to omit parts of the story, being asked to use a limited number of words helps the creative process and urges the storyteller to focus on a single moment and to examine it in depth. The same goes with the time limit characterising each one of the five phases: participants are invited to concentrate and to carry out whatever is required in that particular phase within a given time, often drawing from skills they didn't expect to have. Organising the workshop while respecting all phases and the related schedule allows to understand and appreciate its dynamics with a view to adapting it to one's own professional context.

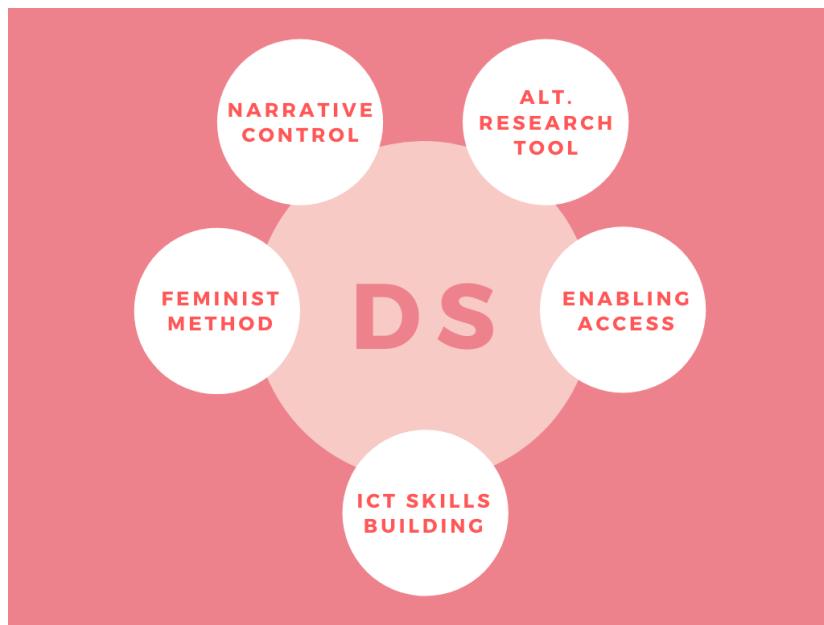
Stories (imagined, told) have a great individual and social value. They play a fundamental role in language learning, in constructing and exchanging knowledge, in shaping education processes, in sharing moral and ethical rules, values and traditions. They make a contribution to shaping or reinforcing personal identity and self-esteem; all individuals, in fact, define and recognise themselves in a process of “narrative creation of the self” (Bruner, 2003), through both personal stories and stories about their families, communities and cultures of origin. The shaping of an individual identity

also makes it possible to understand others and helps creating or consolidating social identities and shared cultures. In turn, these shared, community cultures enrich narrative thinking with their stories, traditions, languages, educational practices, thus building the symbolic, cognitive and expressive features of the different peoples in different times and places.

DIGITAL STORYTELLING WITHIN BIRTH CULTURES

WHY DIGITAL STORYTELLING?

Fig.2. DS methodology



Source: own elaboration based on Women Win

Unlike either traditional storytelling or modern media production, DS presents a variety of unique aspects (Women Win, 2020)¹ that explain the selection of this methodology for Birth Cultures:

1. Narrative Control

The DS methodology differs from other media -such as documentaries, film or radio- in that the storyteller is in complete power of the process: the participant chooses exactly what to say and

¹ Available at: <https://www.womenwin.org/stories/digital-storytelling-project/about-dst>

how to say it. As a process, the act of telling one's story can have a profoundly empowering impact on the storyteller and on the listeners. Participants actively construct and reconstruct themselves and their stories through the process of narration.

2. Feminist Methodology

The goal of empowerment is to enable women to participate in society, influence their own situations and have equal opportunities as men. The Association of Progressive Communication's Chat Garcia Ramilo describes the digital storytelling itself as a feminist method, as women get the chance to speak their minds. The separation between a female private sphere and a male public sphere can be destabilized as marginalized women become visible through their digital stories. Simply put, the process disrupts hierarchies by putting storytelling power in the hands of women and girls, and empowers them to 'speak up'. From a different perspective, DS can also be conceived as a feminist methodology by encouraging shared discussions, where men and women can exchange and discuss together their perspectives, thoughts, and feelings around starting a family, as a shared experience in itself.

3. ICT Skills Building

Through the process of participating in a DS workshop and producing a story, young women are introduced to a variety of storytelling and tech skills, such as narrative arc, creating a 'hook', recording and editing audio, selecting, creating and editing imagery and finally, video creation. Beyond the personal empowerment of the experience, the intention of this training is that young leaders will share these skills with others and integrate DS into their activist work.

4. Enabling Access

Compared to traditional media, the digital medium is a relatively affordable and approachable form of technology for non-experts. No previous technical experience is necessary to participate in a workshop and create a digital story. Non-professional equipment and free software applications are used to craft and edit stories. Anybody can be a participant young and old; villagers and city dwellers; literate and illiterate. Ideally, stories will be available in an open access archive.

5. Alternative Research Tool

Digital stories are rich, layered accounts of human experiences. Unlike traditional research methods such as surveys, they can capture the complexity of aspects such as growth, challenge and tradition, which can be linked to a variety of monitoring and evaluation frameworks and objectives. Here, DS allows the integration of personal experiences and feelings around birth and maternity as equally valid sources of knowledge as medical facts.

THE DS WORKSHOPS



In this way, DS workshops will be implemented in secondary schools in the four countries participating in BIRTH CULTURES. During these, teenagers will be motivated to produce DS material inspired by the topic of birth and maternity, based on their own personal experiences, beliefs, emotions and memories; and share it and discuss it with others.

C nahdran 2020/ Birthcafé Campaign ©²

Main steps and conceptual framework of the workshop

- *The facilitator/trainer/mediator attitudes and competences.* In the previous chapter, “What about digital storytelling”, the DS workshop model “BBC’s short form” is briefly explained. As a rule, the five phases of a DS workshop take place during four/five days of six hours each as minimum, adapting the duration and sequence to the participants profiles, motivations and needs. The duration can be extended, considering extra time for external visits, making photos or recordings. In general, it is ideal to work with groups of 8 to 12 participants. For larger

² Unauthorized use of this picture is not allowed.

groups, more workshop sessions may be necessary. It is very important to previously decide in which language the workshops will be held and the stories told.

- DS is an open, evolving and creative process. Stories evolve during the workshops: a participant may have a particular idea for a story at the start of the workshop and end up creating something entirely different. The audience may require special procedures and great flexibility in the management of the established phases. Someone could have hesitation to open his/her internal world, due to shyness or diffidence or scarce inclination to tell about her/his emotions, stories and experiences. Also, a scarce familiarity with digital tools could influence the planning and execution of a digital narration. Special caution in dealing with trauma is required in this topic. Sexual abuse, psychological problems, experiences of violence can be addressed in this topic. Therefore it has proven to be a good idea to have an adult who is trained in this area accompany the process of finding the stories. An openness in dealing with trauma is important, for example by addressing this at the beginning. Therefore, the mediator/facilitator/trainer must approach this task with the right expertise, ability, attention, sensitivity, awareness and patience.
- Considering the audience of these workshops and the topics to be discussed, it may be helpful to include other adult participants such as people with potentially interesting insights or experts as contemporary witnesses or mediators, to share contents and resources (such as readings or audio-visual material) that may inspire and/or encourage the teenagers' stories during the brainstorming phase. During this phase, it is suggested that boys and girls work separately, and then exchange ideas and thoughts with the other gender. However, this decision should be taken according to the cultural context and what facilitators believe to be the better approach.
- Questioning the parents or grandparents should be brought in as an impulse, an invitation of parents on the other hand has a rather inhibiting effect. One of the many advantages of DS is that you do not need to be an expert in the topic: it reflects a deeply personal process and experience. However, for this topic it can be useful to invite experts such as midwives and obstetricians to answer questions and clear up misunderstandings. Depending on the subject area and school class, this very broad and complex topic can be prepared differently: To choose some of the diverse perspectives - economic, psychological, social, health and cultural dimensions, to name a few- may help the students explore the topic according to their abilities and with respect for emotional boundaries, but also motivate the reflection and construction of

their own stories. It is the task of the accompanying teacher or trainer to facilitate openness to the topic and at the same time to enable a safe, not overburdening occupation with it.

Briefing

- *Creation of a welcoming and familiar physical and social environment.* A DS workshop is a group-social experience, based on equality and dialogue among the participants, and should be the product of a participative and collective process. Therefore, a DS workshop requires that facilitators have listening and telling abilities. The setting for the workshop should be welcoming, comfortable and encouraging and should ensure the possibility of organizing story-circles and defining places for phases of individual work.
- Some icebreaking activities (e.g. offering something to eat or drink; listening to music, etc.) may be helpful in creating a familiar atmosphere.
- *“Present/Speak up for yourself”.* Participants should be encouraged to present themselves, their works, interests, hobbies and “qualities”, and enough time for this should be provided. They may use photographs to help them say something about themselves.
- *Our objectives.* The objectives and the role of the participants in their achievement should be clearly explained and agreed. it is very important to stimulate participation and interaction within the group, and to empower and encourage self-confidence in order to achieve the objective. Examples of DS can be provided and debated together to inspire the process.
- *Collective exploration of elements related to the main theme.* Elements such as objects (toys, photos, etc.), stories, knowledge, memories and emotions linked to birth (either their own or asked to their parents) – with specific but not exclusive reference to those exhibited in the travelling exhibition “Birth Culture” – will be explored and discussed, as described above. During this activity, free interpretation by the participants should be encouraged, helping them focus on their emotions, interests, memories, mind associations, and other elements that could be the core of their stories. It is important to encourage the group to use all senses in their exploration/knowledge process.

Writing

- *What is for me a good story.* Brainstorming. The mediators invite the participants to share a story that they love (tales, film, theatre, literature, etc.) and to explain why they love it. This phase could stimulate reflection and awareness on the appealing and involving characteristics

of a story (characters, plot, points of view, messages, pace, emotions raised, etc.). Key words could be collected in a word cloud and written in a large sheet of paper.

- *Storytelling Exercise:* making stories about objects. Participants should be invited to create stories about common objects provided by the facilitators. Creativity, imagination and the use of senses should be encouraged in the creation of their stories.
- *Finding your story. What do you want to talk about?* In this phase, students will explore their first ideas for their personal birth stories. Facilitators may help them imagine and define their stories by employing mind-maps, a graphical way of taking notes of developing ideas around a central theme. Participants can place the main idea for their story in the middle of a large sheet of paper and use different coloured pens, words, shapes branching off the central idea to capture the elements of the story. In this way, participants can create a picture of the main features on their stories.

Participants may start with their own personal stories, telling their stories to each other and preparing a text. Later, they may look for images to accompany their stories; or start with the images and construct a story from there. In every case, it is fundamental that participants share their personal stories with the group, explaining to the other participants the plot, characters, and messages. Facilitators may aid the process by posing the following questions: Who (characters), What (themes and messages), Where (places, venue, environments), Why (the problem, strong story questions), When (time) and To Whom? (who do they want to tell the story to; language).

- *Story structure:* stories should have a beginning (introduction, information, call to adventure, etc.), a middle (the storyline or stating your position, challenges, conflicts, values, etc.) and ending (conclusion, change, transformation, solution).
- *Reflection time:* Participants should be given enough time to reflect on and write the first draft of their personal stories.
- *Storytelling circle:* “Stories move in circles”. It can be useful to explain to the group that the circle has symbolic meaning and allows the participants to see one another and participate equally. This is the fundamental moment during which stories and personal feelings are shared within the group and the story questions are defined. It is from the upmost importance to install trust in the group. Participants’ physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being should be the centre of all phases of this process. It is necessary to create safe environments: safety means feeling at ease and able to express themselves at all times without any judgement.

Later, everyone should be able to tell where they are so far with their stories, and mediators and other participants should give some feedback. It is a good exercise to tell their stories out loud, as they will need to do so later on, during the recording process. For this purpose, facilitators should provide constructive feedback both on the contents and on the way the story is told. Language plays an important part in this process, especially when sitting in a group and doing a story-circle.

- *Refining your story.* After the story-circle, the participants can refine their stories and prepare the second draft script. A quiet environment and an acceptable time to complete the script is fundamental. Generally, the text should include 250-300 words. It is likely that it will be necessary to re-write the texts more than once to respect these limits.
- *Analysis of pictures.* During the story-circle or a specific “photo-circle”, participants will discuss the adequacy, meanings and emotional impact of the pictures/photos that they have selected to illustrate their stories. All the participants must give and receive a feedback about the expressiveness and communicative value of the pictures for their stories.
- *Sound and music.* Participants may employ sound and music to enrich their stories (only from copyright-free resources).
- *Making the storyboard.* This step consists on helping participants in planning how to use the images and sounds that they have and developing the narrative alongside the images. It can also help them identify gaps and decide how to fill them, for example, by taking additional photos, using drawings, texts and symbols. They may write the sequences, balancing them with the planned time of the DS (generally 2-3 minutes).

Recording

- *Telling the story.* After a number of exercises, storytellers will be able to record their voices and tell their stories. This is another delicate moment: recording can prove daunting for people with little experience of media practice. Many people are not used to hearing their own voices; moreover, negative emotions can influence quality and expressivity of the voice. Make sure participants are relaxed and confident.

Editing

- This phase will be implemented by ICT professionals in collaboration with the workshop participants.

Sharing stories and diffusion

- Each participant's story will be shared with the rest of the group at the end of the workshops.
- Sharing participants' stories outside of the group is crucial, to the extent it gives voice to young generations about topics in which they are not usually heard, and it provides a relevant source for policy design. Dissemination of stories outside of the group should be done with the participants' consent and following specific ethical considerations (see Ethical considerations section).

RESOURCES FOR DIGITAL STORYTELLING

IN THIS SECTION...

- Topic suggestions for DS workshops
- Digital resources: content and methodology
- Data on gender, birth and maternity

In this section, both content and methodological resources to feed the DS workshops are suggested.

TOPIC GUIDE FOR STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS

In this section, a guide with potentially relevant concepts and topics around gender, birth and maternity is provided. This guide only intends to encourage the brainstorming part of the DS workshops by providing starting points to feed the discussion and construction of the participant's stories. To this end, it is not necessary to present or discuss all the topics, and other dimensions not included here may be included, according to each context. The data included in the other sections may also be helpful in feeding the discussion.

Obviously, all the topics here presented are embedded in the concept of the travelling exhibition "Birth Culture", which is one of the main output of the Birth Cultures project. The toolkit is meant to be used first of all in strict relationship with the exhibition, using the visit to it as a trigger, a starting point for the discussions which will follow.

I. Gender representations

- Basic gender concepts
 - Distinction sex/gender
 - Sexual identity
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender & health/gender medicine
- Gender roles and representations
 - Gender representations/expectations and stereotypes (physical appearance, behaviour/skills, language, etc.; representation of women in media and publicity, etc.)

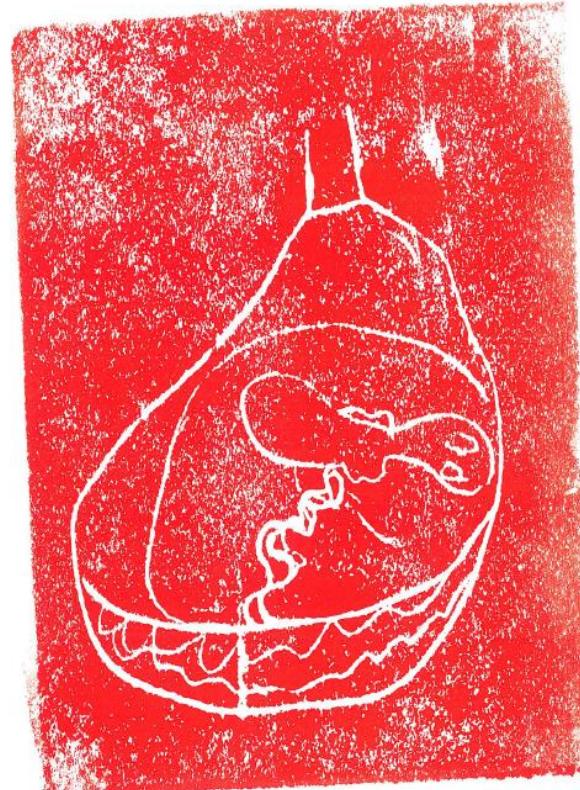
- Roles and spaces/configurations associated to gender (related to family/parenting, work/career, household and caring activities, etc.)
- Effects/consequences of these gender roles and representations (at an individual, interpersonal and social level; perpetuate other disparities).

- Gender (in)equalities at work
 - Income disparities associated to job stratification (gender pay gap)
 - Glass-ceiling
 - Access to professional careers

- Sexism and gender-based violence
 - Forms of explicit and implicit sexism and gender violence (discrimination, sexual abuse, domestic violence, reproductive coercion, denial of medical care, violence in healthcare, etc.)

II. Birth and maternity

- Memories and stories around own birth experience, family members' or close friends
- Meanings and emotions attached to birth and maternity
- Women and maternity (maternity as inherently associated to being a woman/self-fulfilment, stigma around women who do not want to be mothers, etc.)
- Beliefs, attitudes, fears and expectations around birth and maternity
- Portrayal of birth and maternity in media and publicity



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³ Unauthorized use of this picture is not allowed.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Firstly, resources that provide different perspectives to address gender, birth and maternity are provided. Secondly, technical/methodological resources for the development of the DS workshops are suggested. It is encouraged that more resources are included according to the country and languages.

Resources on gender equality, birth and maternity

- **A Guide for Gender Equality in Teacher Education Policy and Practices.** UNESCO. 2015 (English). This guide provides clear definitions related to the topic of gender and provides suggestions for the design of gender-responsive policies and curriculums.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231646>
- **She Culture.** One of the products of this project -coordinated by ECCOM and funded by the Culture Programme 2007-2013 of the European Union- was an awareness-raising campaign on the influence of toys on gender construction, where contemporary female artists from five countries made videos on the subject. <http://www.she-culture.com/it/>
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8dWU5rK0c3uq-yU_bMOwhQ
- **Birth Café Campaign.** Is an international, non-profit movement for a healthy birth culture. One goal is to better inform and educate young people in Europe through intergenerational, personal and encouraging birth stories from contemporary witnesses and experts and to integrate their needs as the future generation of parents. The Birth Café Campaign offers a free guideline for schools (inclusive concept with art-project and preparation, moderation assistance and press release), information on different variations (mini cafés, theme cafés, junior science cafés, girls' or boys' cafés, etc.) and free guidelines for open intergenerational, intercultural birth cafés. <https://erzaehlcafe.net/the-birthcafe-campaign>
- **Science Video with Blogger BYTEthinks: Pregnancy and Birth (Birth Café Campaign)** (German)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQDSVHwi6PQ>
- Publicity spots including gender stereotypes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xifSHMbGSKI&list=PLwEkIP-2zCbD5K0lNRusplExOnx9zSZM3>

- **Women Win.** The organisation provides different services and expertise aimed at achieving gender equity, from technical to operational services, including storytelling processes
<https://www.womenwin.org/stories/digital-storytelling-project>

Methodological resources

- We video – English tutorial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZHhOKmGD-E>
- We video – Spanish tutorial https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvzkJSa_Lak

DATA ON GENDER, BIRTH AND MATERNITY

IN THIS SECTION, DATA ABOUT...

- Gender equality at work
- General gender stereotypes
- Share of household/caring activities
- Women representation in media
- Importance of parity of rights
- Preference for types of marriages
- Number of births
- Mean age of women at birth of 1st child
- Teenage pregnancy

In this section, quantitative data on gender roles, birth and maternity in the four participating countries is presented, with the purpose of providing contextual data to feed the discussion during the storytelling workshops.

Gender equality refers to ‘the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women

and men and girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not only a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well. Gender equality is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development’ (UN Women, 2014)⁴.

During the last 14 years, the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum⁵ has been measuring gender-based gaps among four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment and, at the same time, tracking progress towards closing these gaps over time. The 2020 edition of the report benchmarks 153 countries, including country rankings that allow the comparison of the realities across our four countries of interest.

The country’s overall Gender Gap Index is a 0-to-1 scale, where 1 represents full gender parity. While this index is multidimensional and complex, it can provide a broad image of the reality of each of these countries. In this sense, Spain is the most gender-equal country, with an overall score of 0,795, meaning 79,5% of this gap is currently covered (9,3% more than in 2006) ranking 8th out of the 153

⁴ UN Women Training Centre (2014). “Glossary.” Available at:

<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=&hook=ALL&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=0&page=-1>

⁵ Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>

countries examined. It is followed by Austria (34°), with a score of 0,744 (practically the same as in 2006); Ukraine (59°) with 0,721 (0,680 in 2006) and Italy (76°) with 0,707 (0,646 in 2006).

Taking a closer look at the indicators, the most evident aspect is that all countries have a perfect score in terms of the Educational attainment index, which means they have completely covered the gap in terms of their literacy rate and enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

The second most equal index is Health and survival -which includes sex ratio at birth and years of healthy life expectancy- where all these countries have closed at least 97% of the gap. Ukraine has the highest score (0,978; 0,980 in 2006); closely followed by Austria (0,974; 0,980 in 2006), Spain (0,972; without any changes in the last 14 years); and Italy 0,969 (0,972 in 2006).

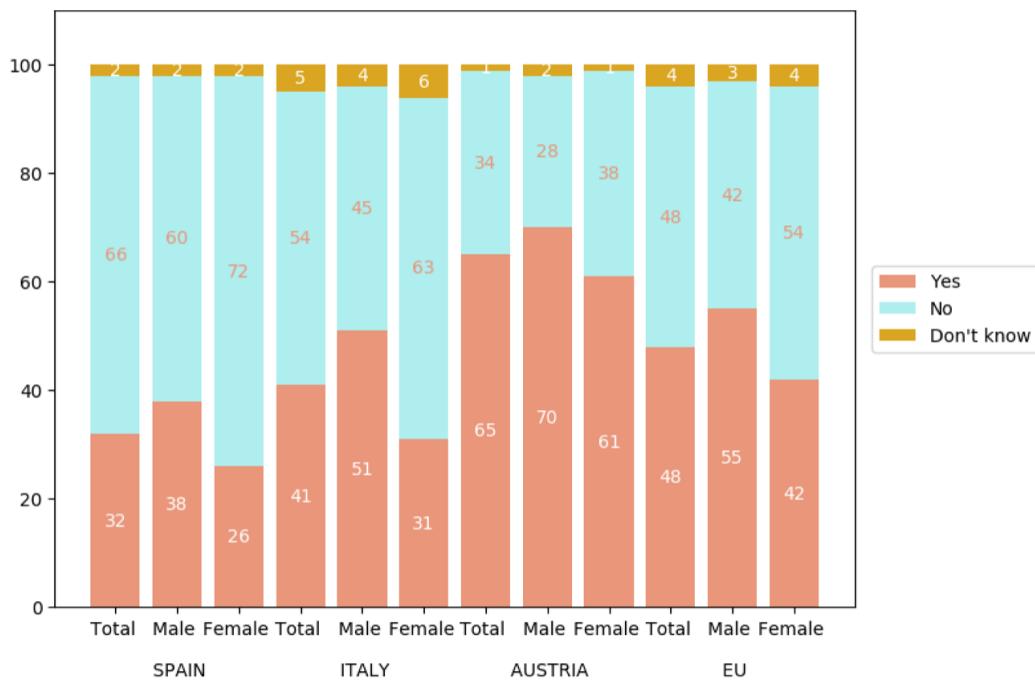
In the Economic participation and opportunity index -which considers different labour participation and income indicators- Ukraine scores a 73,7% (69,1% in 2006), followed by Spain with 68,1% (53,9% in 2006); Austria with 65,9% (55,3% in 2006), and finally Italy with 59,5% (52,7% in 2006). While these gaps are significantly lower than the first two indexes, the improvement is also much more significant, especially in the case of Spain and Austria (14,2% and 10,6% respectively).

Finally, across the four sub-indexes, the Political empowerment gap -measuring women's presence in different political institutions- is the largest gender disparity within these societies, but also where more advances can be highlighted: Spain scores the highest: 52,7% (increasing in a 10,6% since 2006), one of the only 10 governments in the world with a female share of 50% or more; followed by Austria with 34,4% (28,2% in 2006); Italy with 26,7% (8,7% in 2006) and Ukraine with only 17,1% (5% in 2006).

While it does not include data on Ukraine, the Special Eurobarometer 465⁶ is another interesting source of data, which explores EU citizens' opinions regarding gender equality, with a particular focus on the spheres of work and politics.

⁶ Available at: http://ibdigital.uib.es/greenstone/collect/portal_social/index/assoc/coeuro01/47.dir/coeuro0147.pdf

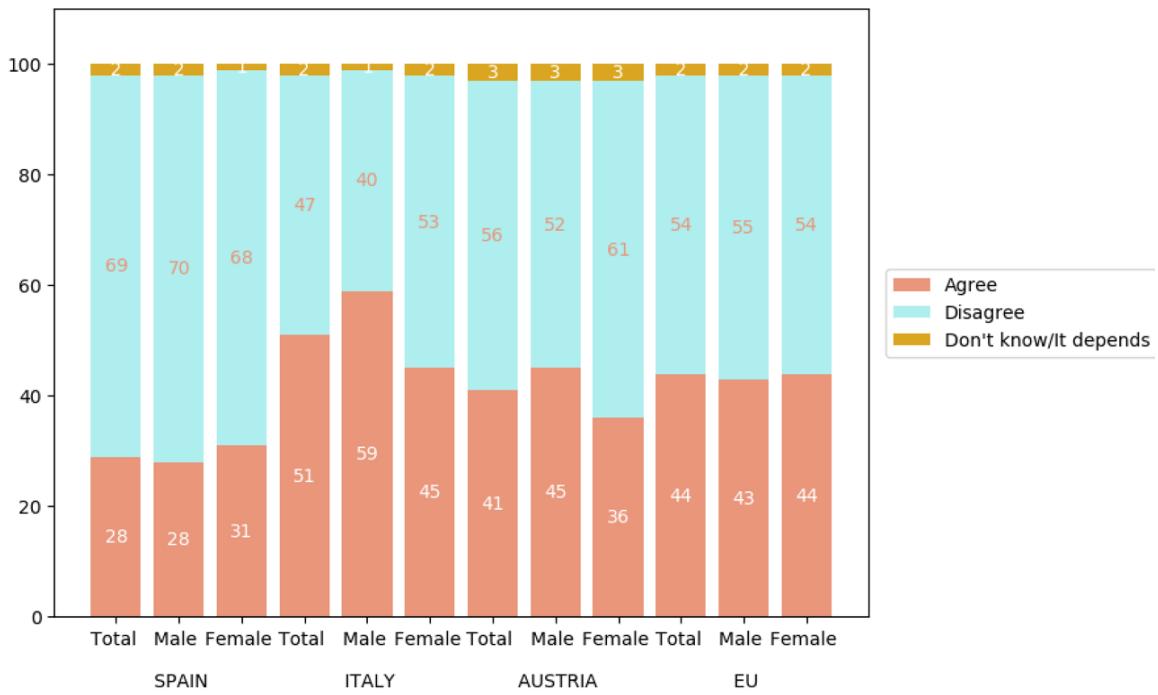
Perception of gender equality at work



Source: own elaboration based on Special Eurobarometer 465 data

When asked 'Do you think that gender equality has been achieved in (our country) at work?', differences between countries are immediately apparent. In Spain, two thirds of the population (66%) believe gender parity has not been achieved in the work sphere. In Italy, this is also the most popular perception, but by a less marked proportion: 54% think there is no gender parity in the labour field. In Austria, in turn, the tendency is inverted with respect to Spain: here, 65% think the work sphere is gender equal. It is important to note that, in every country, these proportions significantly change according to the gender of the respondent: in all cases, men think work spaces in their countries are equal in a higher proportion than women. The difference in the perceptions is especially pronounced in the case of Italy (20%).

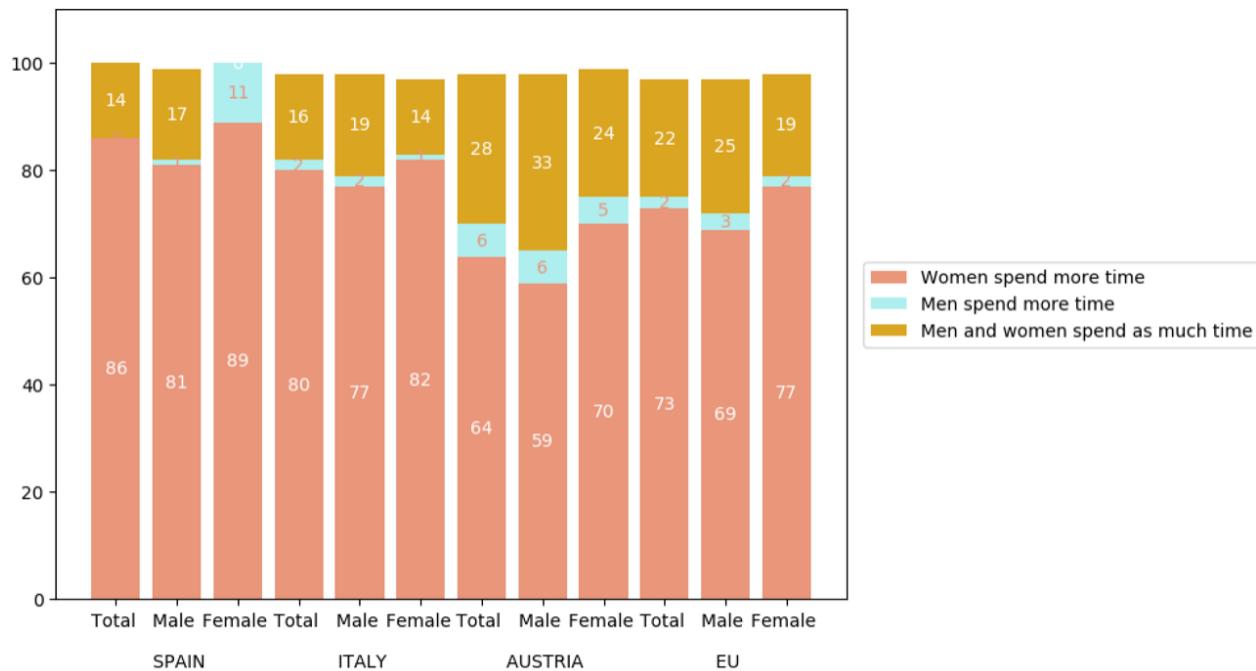
The most important role of a woman is to take care of her home and family



Source: own elaboration based on Special Eurobarometer 465 data

Regarding the perception on general gender stereotypes, respondents were asked whether they agreed or not with the following statement: 'The most important role of a woman is to take care of her home and family'. While in these countries most people disagree with this idea, the proportion that do agree with it is still remarkably high: 29% in Spain, 41% in Austria and 51% in Italy, showing statistically relevant differences between genders in the last two cases, where men are more likely to agree with this statement.

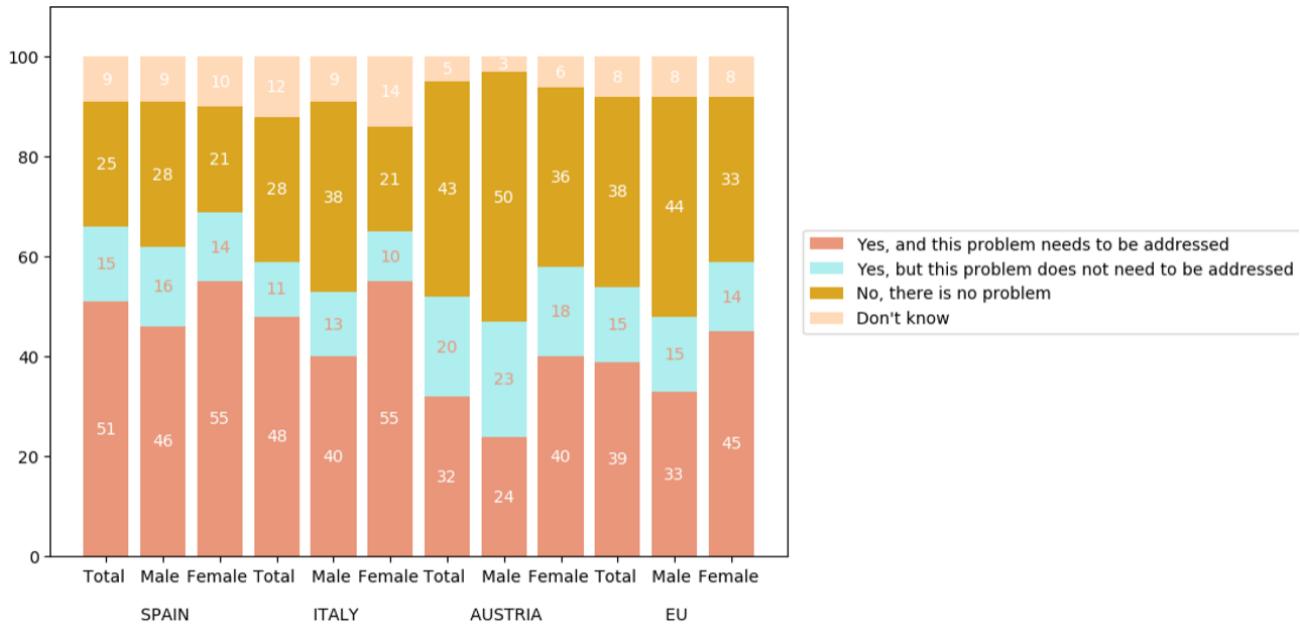
Share of household and caring activities



Source: own elaboration based on Special Eurobarometer 465 data

When asked about their perception on the share of housework and caring activities in their countries nowadays, most respondents in all three countries said women spend more time than men on these activities. In Spain and Italy, at least 8 in 10 people think this, while the proportion drops to 6 in 10 in the case of Austria. Looking at the opinions of men and women, although most respondents of each gender think this way, women are more likely to sustain this.

Perception about the way women are presented in media and advertising



Source: own elaboration based on Special Eurobarometer 465 data

Regarding the perception of the way women are presented in media and advertising in their own countries, half (52%) of the respondents in Austria believe there is a problem in the way they are portrayed. This percentage increases to 59% in the case of Italy and to 66% in Spain. However, only about half of the respondents in Spain and Italy and a third in Austria believe this is a problem that needs to be addressed. Once again, there are significant differences between the responses of men and women: in all cases, females see the way they are represented in media and advertising in their own countries as more problematic than men, and as something that needs to be addressed.

The Pew 2019 Global Attitudes Survey⁷ provides further data on perceptions on these topics for Italy, Spain and Ukraine.

⁷ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/dataset/ds00139_en

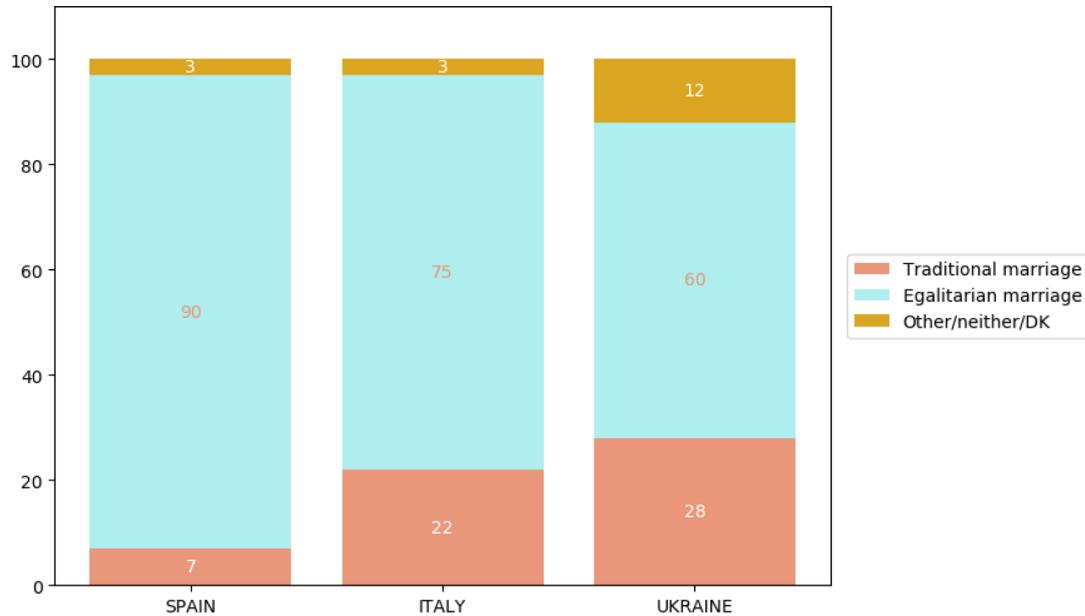
Importance of women having the same rights as men in the country



Source: own elaboration based on Pew 2019 Global Attitudes Survey

While there is near unanimity -about nine-in-ten people- in each of these countries that it is important for women to have the same rights as men in their nations, the strength of this sentiment varies across them. While 84% of Spanish and 74% of Italians think this is very important, roughly 6-in-ten believe this is in Ukraine.

Preference for traditional vs. egalitarian marriages



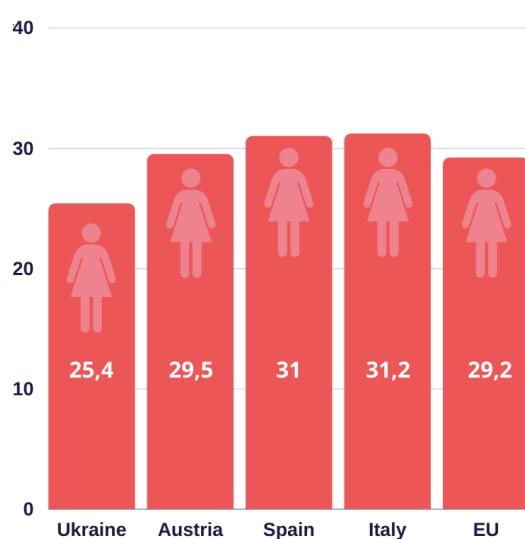
Source: own elaboration based on Pew 2019 Global Attitudes Survey

Finally, when asked what kind of marriage they think is the more satisfying way of life, one where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children; or, one where the husband and wife both have jobs and together take care of the house and children; while in all three countries the preference is for an egalitarian marriage, the strength of these opinions is very different.

Publics in Spain are the most likely to believe in an egalitarian marriage (90%), followed by Italy (75%) and finally Ukraine (60%), meaning at least three-in-ten people in this country believe a traditional marriage would be more satisfying. However, this pattern is dropping substantially since 1991: 30% of Spanish preferred a traditional marriage in this year, dropping in 23 points. In Italy, 35% used to agree with this statement, meaning there has been a 13-point drop. This pattern has significantly dropped in Ukraine, where the majority (53%) expressed a preference for traditional marriages in 1991, thus showing a 25- point drop in the expression of this opinion.

According to the provisional information of the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE), 391.930 children were born in Spain in the year 2017, with a decrease of 4.5% with respect to the previous year. The births belonging to a foreign mother where 19.3% in 2017 and 18.5% in 2016. Since 2008, the number of births has diminished of 24.6%. In Austria, 87,258 children were born in 2017, with a decrease of 0.5% with respect to the previous year. The same year, 364,000 infants were born in Ukraine, with a decrease of 1% with respect to the previous year. According to the Italian National Institute for Statistics (Istat), in 2017, 458,151 births were registered in the Resident Population Register (15 thousand births less with respect to the previous year). The figures confirm the downward trend that began in recent years: 120 thousand births less compared with 2008.

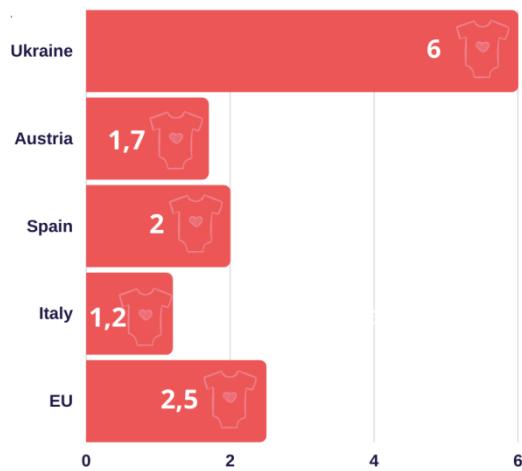
Mean age of women at birth of first child



Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat 2017

While in Spain and Italy women become mothers, on average, at the age of 31, the mean age is slightly lower in the case of Austria (29,5) and significantly lower in Ukraine, where women are, on average, 25 years old at the birth of their first child.

Proportion of first births to mothers aged under 20 years old (% of all first births)



Source: own elaboration based on data of WHO 2015-2018

Regarding teenage pregnancy⁸, while in Italy, Austria and Spain between 1 and 2% of new mothers are under the age of 20 (lower than the average of the EU), this proportion rises in the case of Ukraine, where 6% of new mothers are teens.

⁸ Numbers are reported by the World Health Organization and correspond to the latest year where data was available for each country, between 2015 and 2018. Available at https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/indicators/hfa_592-7040-of-all-live-births-to-mothers-aged-under-20-years/visualizations/#id=19687&tab=table

EVALUATION

IN THIS SECTION...

- Evaluating DS workshops
 - Focus groups
 - Analysis of the stories

The storytelling workshops should be evaluated using a phenomenographic approach, aimed at assessing potential changes in participants views, attitudes and perceptions related to the topic.

To do so, we suggest the use of 2 tools: focus groups and analysis of the stories. Guides for both tools are suggested in the appendices.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are group interviews, where a small number of people discuss a topic guided by a moderator. This qualitative tool allows to collect different opinions at the same time in a flexible way, providing a safe space to exchange opinions and experiences at a deeper level. Focus groups should be organized and moderated in a way that participants feel comfortable to be sharing their experiences and feelings.

In this case, focus groups will allow to assess the storytelling workshops both in terms of the contents discussed and raised during the construction of the students' stories; and in terms of the experience of participating in a storytelling workshop and engaging with these methodologies and tools (See Appendix 1: Focus group interview guide)

The focus group should be implemented at the end of the storytelling workshops. All participants should take part in this activity: students, teachers and other potential mediators that participated in the process. Focus groups should include six to ten people, a group large enough to generate rich discussion, but not too large, so that some of the participants do not get the chance to talk. The group participating in the workshops should be divided accordingly: 2 or 3 focus groups may be implemented. One or two moderators should have the task of guiding the discussion without suggesting answers and making sure participants stay in topic and everyone gets to express their opinions. The environment should be comfortable, with the participants sitting in a circle.

For the data analysis and reporting of the results, the audio recordings and notes taken during the focus groups should be revised. Starting from these, the data should be systematized and analysed following the same structure and order of the questions in the topic guide, which considers two main topics: DS methodology and tools; and contents of the stories. A re-elaboration of each category of the topic guide, including aspects where participants agree and disagree, and general conclusions, should be presented in a final report.

ANALYSIS OF THE STORIES

The second evaluation tool is the systematic analysis of the participants' stories, which are based on the free and creative expression of personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Analysing the stories developed during the storytelling workshops will complement the previous evaluation tool. The analysis of the stories should contain the following dimensions (see Appendix 2: Analysis of the stories): content, creativity, and technical abilities. Each participant's final story should be systematically analysed following these topics and included in the final evaluation report.



C nahdran 2020/ Birthcafé Campaign ©⁹

⁹ Unauthorized use of this picture is not allowed.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

IN THIS SECTION...

- Ethical considerations
 - Selection of participants
 - Informed consent
 - Sharing stories and diffusion

In this section, important ethical considerations regarding participants, copyright and ownership are provided. This represents a basic draft and should be adapted to every country's current legislation.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

BIRTH CULTURES has potential ethical implications in relation to the involvement of human participants and the consequent processing of personal data. Strategies and protocols should be implemented in order to comply with ethical regulations and for the safeguard of the participants and minors involved.

Students participating in the DS workshops and evaluation should meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Volunteers
- Ability to give informed consent
- Functional intermediary literacy to ensure proper understanding of the informed consent form.
- Parents' consent

Before starting the workshops, facilitators should check these criteria and explain orally to the potential participants all relevant information about the project and about the processing of personal data along it, so that they can take an informed decision about their possible involvement.

The potential participants will be informed that the decision to take part of the project is free and that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time, without any negative effects. The potential participants will be asked if they have any question or doubt regarding the project or about the personal data processing. They will be given enough time to ask any question and to decide freely whether they wish to take part or not. If they show an effective comprehension of the procedures and confirm their participation, they will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form (as detailed in the next section) in two copies: one will be kept by the staff and one will be given to the participant.

INFORMED CONSENT

The information sheet and the Informed Consent Form will be written in the language used locally, using terms understandable by the participants. They will be signed in two copies both by the participant and a member of the staff before starting the workshops (one kept by the staff and one by the participant).

The information sheet includes:

- A clear description of the aims, methods/assessment procedures, duration and implication of the participation of the subject in the project;
- The nature of the participation (why the participant has been selected) and any effects (benefits, risks or discomfort) that might be involved;
- Confidentiality issues and how data will be deal with;
- A statement that participation is voluntary and they have the option of not participating at all, or withdraw their participation at any time. This includes the specification of the right to have the data of the person permanently deleted from the files in case of withdrawal;
- A statement that the property belongs to the creator of the content;
- Aspects related to the reproduction of the content;
- Information about the Institution that is in charge of the project; funders, project website, the contact details (name, address, phone number, e-mail) of the person to be approached for any question of concern on the project and the person in charge of the use of data.

The Informed consent form template (see Appendix 3) contains all these aspects and is suitable to be adapted to both the participation in the DS workshops and their evaluation. It should be signed by both the student and one parent.

Sharing stories and diffusion

- The DS will be shared by the participants at the end of the workshop.
- Regarding dissemination outside of the group (through exhibitions, websites, etc.), this should be done with the participants' consent and follow ethical considerations (see Ethical considerations section).

THE AUTHORS

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Archaeologist and museologist, she is president of ECCOM (European Centre for Cultural Organisation and Management), an organisation founded in 1995 which carries out research and training projects at a national and international level on the issue of the social role of culture and of the impact of lifelong learning processes within the cultural sector. She has been involved in several EU funded projects and studies with specific reference to cultural access and participation, audience development and the social role of culture in contemporary society. She is an expert in European cultural policy and programmes. She lectures in many post-graduate courses and Masters. She is member of the board of directors and vice-president of Culture Action Europe; member of the board of directors of Teatro di Roma; member of the Commission for the National Museum System of the Italian Ministry for Culture.

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communication with her company nahdran - health and science communication¹⁰, e.g. EU-projects ComScience and SPARKS, but also a creative school project with midwives 'Learning about birth'. She is the founder of the Birth Cafe Campaign. Currently she published a book for women 'Gendermedicine – why women need another medicine" with the leading Institut of Gendermedicine in Germany (Charite Berlin).

¹⁰ <http://www.nahdran-kommunikation.de/>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview application materials

1. Printed interview guide
2. Interview protocol
3. Pens and notepads as needed
4. Recorder
5. Consent form

Welcome and guidelines

- Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.
- The purpose of this group interview is to collectively discuss the topics raised during the construction of your personal stories, and to learn about your experiences with the DS methodology and the tools employed.
- The focus group should last about 60 minutes.
- Did you have a chance to read the consent form that was handed to you when you agreed to participate in this group interview? Do you have any questions? [Collect participants' and parents' consent forms]
- Everything you tell me will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we will not connect your name with anything you say during this conversation.
- There are no right or wrong answers, only different points of view. You do not need to agree with others and to develop a discussion is the purpose of the interview, but you should listen respectfully as they share their views. It is important that only one person speaks at the time, saying their first name at the beginning of each intervention.
- I would kindly ask you to silence your phones
- For practical reasons, I would like to audio-record this conversation. Is it okay if I record today's interview? [Let participants know you are turning on the recorder] [If participants do not agree to recording the conversation, a note-taker should take detailed notes]
- Do you have any questions before we begin? [With verbal permission, begin to audio-record the interview].

Discussion

- Presentations

Before we begin the discussion, I would ask you to briefly introduce yourselves.

- DS methodology and tools

1. How would you describe your experience participating in the storytelling workshops? How did you feel?
2. What did you like and dislike about the process? What did you learn?
3. How was your experience with the technical tools employed? To what extent were they useful to tell your stories?
4. How could these workshops be improved?

- Contents of the stories

5. What are the main ideas/feelings/reflections you wanted to transmit in your story? Try to summarize them in a few words.
6. To what extent did other participants' stories inspire you?
7. To what extent do you feel/think any differently about birth and maternity after this experience?

Closing and thanks

Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and opinions.

Before we end the conversation, is there anything I did not ask that you would like to share about your opinions and experiences?

Do you have any questions for me?

Again, thank you very much for participating in this conversation today!

APPENDIX 2: ANALYSIS OF THE STORIES

Each participants' final story should be systematically analysed according to the following dimensions:

- Content

Analysis of the themes, experiences and reflections portrayed in the students' stories and ways of approaching birth and maternity, including cultural, social and emotional/personal references in the analysis.

- Creativity

Analysis of the creative aspect of the students' stories, both in terms of the originality of the ideas and topics raised and the languages and resources employed.

- Technical abilities

Analysis of the use and learning of technical tools/software in the students' stories.

APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

You have been invited to participate in activities related to the BIRTH CULTURES project, aimed at preserving and transmitting, through arts and culture, birth and maternity traditional knowledge and practices as part of European intangible cultural heritage.

Description and confidentiality

The purpose of this [name of activity] is to [general objectives of activity]. You have been selected to participate in this activity because [specification of characteristics that justify it].

We will [specific description of the activity: DS workshops, focus group]

Because of the characteristics of the DS workshops, its results and evaluation tools, you will be identifiable by the other participants of the workshops. Stories will be disseminated out of this group, but you are free to decide whether any information that identifies you should be included. Data from the focus groups and the analysis of the stories will be aggregated with the rest of the participants and later analysed. This means that individual subjects will not be identifiable in the results.

Risks and benefits

There are no known risks for participating in this activity. By participating, you will be helping our team to better understand the topics previously described. As previously mentioned, your responses will be anonymous and confidential.

For practical reasons, we would like to [audio/video] record [activity]. Your identity will not be associated with anything you say and the recordings will be deleted as soon as the project ends.

Participants' rights

Participation in this activity is voluntary, and you can decide to discontinue your participation and/or withdraw your consent at any time of the process, without stating a reason and without any negative consequence or penalty. You have the right to abstain from participating in any specific phase or responding to any particular item; to have your data permanently deleted from the project files; and to know any unexpected incidental finding of the study.

The property of the results of the DS workshops belongs to you as a creator of the content. Stories will be disseminated out of this group, but you are free to decide whether any information that identifies you should be included.

Institutions and contact

The BIRTH CULTURES project is co-funded by the European Union under the Creative Europe Culture Programme (2014-2020). It is implemented by Interarts (Spain) in cooperation with Frauenmuseum Hittisau (Austria), Frauenmuseum Merano (Italy), Gender Museum (Ukraine) and in association with IAWM (Italy), ECCOM (Italy) and Birth Café Campaign (Germany), as associated partners. The project will run from November 2019 to April 2022. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, your participation and rights, please contact _____

I hereby give my consent to participate in [name activity].

Name:

Signature:

Date:

I hereby give my consent to be audio/video recorded during [name activity].

Name:

Signature:

Date:

I hereby give my consent for my child or ward to participate in [name activity].

Name:

Signature:

Date:

I hereby give my consent for my child or ward to be audio/video recorded during [name activity].

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Name of staff member:

Signature:

Date:

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