



MÉTHOD'ARTS

PREVENTING VIOLENCE THROUGH ART



TRADITIONAL EMBROIDERY



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Embroidery is the art of creating designs on a fabric or canvas with thread and a needle. Practiced since time immemorial on all continents, it bears witness to the context in which it is produced and has a strong identity dimension. Its artistic dimension is often diminished or even obscured by being described as a simple "occupation", in the same way as other activities carried out almost exclusively by women. Embroidery has proven to be a real tool for the emancipation of women who are victims of oppressive patriarchal economic systems, and thus has a history that is deeply linked to gender-based violence.

For traditional embroiderers, beyond its ornamental character, embroidery is an art that allows stories to be told. It offers another way of bearing witness in silence and allows the transmission of a heritage that tells of the violence that women suffer. Embroidery is therefore also part of a cultural lineage in which women are the witnesses and messengers. Talking about embroidery, its history and its evolution, in its form and in its role, means talking about a women's heritage and the gender-related issues surrounding this art.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION THROUGH EMBROIDERY WORKSHOP

The aim of this workshop is to teach a new mode of artistic expression to talk about violence and to raise awareness about this issue.



Human resources

An artist animator

- Artist from the community
- Mastery of the theme of violence
- In line with the organisation's values
- Caring and empathy
- Basic knowledge of the history of embroidery
- Experience in workshop facilitation and reliability.



A co-facilitator

- Member of the organizing association
- In charge of violence awareness and logistics
- Excellent knowledge of the subject of violence
- Able to welcome victims' voices and moderate discussions.



If the workshop takes place in a school setting, it is not always advisable to include teaching staff during the workshop sessions. Some children may have held back from sharing experiences or opinions because of their past proximity to the teacher.

Details of the workshop



Participants: About 15 people of all ages and genders.



Duration: 8 to 10 sessions of 1h30 each, once a week.



Inclusivity: Depending on the audience, the workshop will be delivered in simple and accessible language. Written materials should be considered if participants are hearing impaired.



The preparation

1

Identification of an artist for the workshop

- Identify opportunities either in local cultural associations or by responding to a call for tender.
- Invite the artist to a presentation and discussion of the project to share their views on the activity and gender-based violence.
- Select the artist via a panel from the organization following this meeting.



This stage can sometimes take several months.

2

Organization of an awareness-raising session

Organize basic training for the artist around three key concepts: violence, equality and power, if the artist is not already trained in these issues.

3

Planning the workshop

- Discuss the workshop schedule and plan the activities in detail (location, duration, materials, task allocation, etc.).
- Choose collectively the modalities for closing the workshop: place, date, guests, and method of restitution (exhibition, thematic café, round table...)

🕒 3 to 4 sessions

4

Identifying a location for the workshop

- An outdoor or indoor location
- A safe place for the expression of experiences, opinions and emotions
- Accessible to all people with reduced mobility



The room and equipment must be identified and acquired by the association organizing the workshop, on the advice of the artist, in order to ensure the quality of the equipment. If the workshop takes place with pupils, a space can be envisaged within the school.

5

Organization of a violence awareness workshop for teachers

If the workshop takes place in a school setting

Raise awareness of the process among teachers and provide them with information on how to refer victims.

6

Recruitment of participants

Via local associations, WhatsApp groups, posters, or the school system depending on the target group pre-identified by the project. Note if the workshop is to take place in schools, consider enough time to get the agreement of the headmaster, then of the staff in charge (guidance counsellor, education counsellor, teachers...).

7

Organisation of an information session for parents

If the workshop is held with children and young people

Gather the parents' agreement and make them aware of the process in order to ensure the presence of the children/adolescents at the sessions.



Course of the workshop

1

Introduction

- Introduction of the artist and the participants.
- Sharing the rules of the workshop: respect, trust, empathy, non-disclosure of confidences made by the participants.
- Share modalities (schedule, location, contact person in case of absence, final feedback).
- Formulation of expectations and concerns.



Participants should leave this first meeting with the feeling that they have found a safe place with caring people.

2

Presentation of key concepts

Introduction to concepts of equality, power and violence to give impetus to sharing personal stories.

🕒 1 session

3

The following sessions may simultaneously teach

- Embroidery techniques: different styles and symbols typical of certain indigenous communities, the meanings of the colors and the emotions transmitted by them.
- The history of embroidery and embroiderers: the evolution of the symbolism of embroidery through time, its representation and function, from spiritual to commercial, the empowerment of women through this practice and gender dynamics.

🕒 2 to 4 sessions

4

Telling stories and bearing witness to violence through embroidery

The participants appropriate the codes of embroidery and learn to transmit a story through this medium

🕒 2 to 4 sessions



The participants found it very satisfying to be able to take home the results of their work to show their friends and family. This also extends the impact of the workshop.

5

Production of a final work

A piece of embroidery, related to the theme of violence or equality, is produced by the participants. A work in which everyone is free to express themselves, illustrates the strength of individuality within the collective.

🕒 1 session of 2 hours



After the workshop

Organization of a closing event

The closing event is an opportunity to present the final work(s), the project, the workshop and its objectives to a large audience. An exhibition may be organized where participants are invited to share their experience.



This step has proved to be fundamental for the valorization of the work of the workshop members and also for widening the impact of the project. It is also an opportunity to pass on information about gender-based violence and the telephone numbers for victims.



In order to reach a maximum number of people, good communication of the event should be considered by the organization.

All details of the closing event will be shared with the workshop participants at the first session.



Evaluation

A quick test during the first session of the workshop and during the last session is carried out on the themes related to violence to check that the participants have acquired the right knowledge. The last session is also an opportunity to collect the participants' opinions on the workshop as a whole.



Materials needed



An outdoor or indoor space that can be a safe and accessible place for the expression of experiences, opinions and emotions.



Needles



A canvas / fabric



Embroidery thread



Embroidery scissors





Resources for further information

- Parker, R. (2019). The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine (Reprint). Bloomsbury Visual Arts.
- Tones, J. (2018, 8 mars). Embroidery helps Palestinian women achieve independence. DW.

*For more resources,
scan this QR code.*



Founded in 1993, Médecins du Monde Switzerland is a medical association of solidarity active in several countries around the world, including Switzerland. In 2022, MdM Switzerland undertook experience capitalization work on violence prevention workshops through art implemented since 2016 in Benin, Cameroon and Mexico. Similar Method'art sheets on photography, theatre, puppetry, writing/slam, and painting are available at:

<https://medecinsdumonde.ch/news/atelier-prevenir-la-violence-a-travers-art>

For more information on Médecins du Monde.
www.medecinsdumonde.ch

**FEDERATION
VAUDOISE
COOPERATION**



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Thanks to :

- Rocío Lopez, artist-animator of the workshop
- Alejandra Valdés, former project manager for **Médecins du Monde** Switzerland in Mexico
- Conchi, workshop participant who shared her experience with us
- The team of **Médecins du Monde** Switzerland in Mexico, especially Irene Ragazzini and Oscar Bautista

To share your experience with us,
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