

Artistic Exploration Lab: Call for Experts

1. Looking for Experts, Teachers, and Guides!

We, RED NOSES International¹, are looking for experts to co-create the design and delivery of an interdisciplinary artistic exploration lab. The lab will be open to performing artists (such as musicians, dancers, actors, clowns and others) who have recently begun working in the field of arts for health².

The experts will join a design meeting in Vienna in 2024 and help lead three five-day labs in Vienna in 2025. In addition, the expert will co-facilitate online meetings and individual check-ins.

The Artistic Exploration Lab will be implemented in the frame of the CultureAndHealth Platform and co-funded by EU.

2. Focus of the Lab

During the lab, participants will work at the intersection of their art forms to develop a research question related to arts for health. They will then explore that question in their own artistic

¹ RED NOSES is an artistic organisation that was founded back in 1994. While our organisation has witnessed a great deal of change and growth since then, our core mission has always remained the same: to share the power of humour and laughter with people in need of joy. We are, and always have been, firm believers in the positive impact of art and humour on mental health. It's our mission to provide psychosocial support through the art of clowning and share laughter and hope with people facing challenging circumstances. Learn more about RED NOSES on [RED NOSES International](#) | [Red Noses](#).

² Arts for health practices involve the use of creative activities such as music, dance, and drama to promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being. These practices are designed to enhance health, care and social environments, support prevention, treatment, promotion and management of health related challenges, and improve overall quality of life through artistic expression and engagement. For more information see: [What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review \(who.int\)](#) and [cultureforhealth.eu](#).

practices, using the method of participatory action research³. They will receive support in documenting their learnings and then sharing them with each other and their communities.

The experts will work together to clarify the focus of the lab, which will provide a helpful constraint to the questions and themes participants address with their research. The current proposal is for artistic research questions to connect to the concept of *Creative Courage: Exploring boundaries in a diverse world*.

The artistic research should engage with burning questions that participants have on the implementation of artistic practices in health, care, and community settings. Participants will be encouraged to explore the questions that scare them most, which confront different kinds of boundaries that relate to their work – such as boundaries between countries, artistic disciplines, and genders; boundaries between artists and audiences; and boundaries between artistic organisations, hospitals, and other institutions in the arts for health space.

3. Objectives of the Lab

The lab should bring benefits to the individual participants, RED NOSES International, and the communities within which we work.

Objectives for Participants (including the experts)

- Explore and deepen artistic practice
- Develop new learning and reflection skills
- Create connections with an international, interdisciplinary group of artists working in the field of arts for health

Objectives for RED NOSES International

- Promote artistic exploration and reflection within the organisation
- Raise organisational profile in artistic communities
- Gain learnings and tools to integrate into programming artistic work in health and care settings

Objectives of CultureAndHealth Platform⁴:

- Build the capacities of emerging artists working in the field of arts and health
- Learn about key challenges of emerging artists working in the field of arts and health
- Build in learnings into capacity building trainings eg on ‘how to help the helper’

Objectives for Communities

- Support the wellbeing of vulnerable groups
- Increase knowledge about benefits of arts for health
- Create opportunities for social and cultural connection

³ See section 5 for more information on Participatory Action Research

⁴ The CultureAndHealth Platform, co-funded by the European Union, will start on 1 November 2024

4. Background

In 2022, RED NOSES International hosted “[Clowning, Music, and Movement: An Artistic Research Lab](#)”. The lab brought together 14 healthcare clowns, dancers, and musicians (11 participants and 3 experts) from 11 countries to explore the intersections of their respective art forms.

During the first four-day meeting, each participating artist designed their own research question, which could be about anything, as long it drew on two or more artistic disciplines and related to wellbeing.

The participants then explored their question within their own artistic practice and documented their discoveries. In a final workshop, the participants shared their experiences and learnings as a “gift” to the rest of the group.



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For example, one healthcare clown focused on the question, “How to overcome stage fright?” She explored the question by introducing new exercises in two different contexts: with a group of hospitalized children putting on a circus performance, and with children in a drama class. She documented her observations in a journal, where she wrote and drew illustrations to keep track of what she was learning about the effects of the exercises in the two groups.

A dancer conducted research on the question, “What happens when you embrace failure?” Inspired by how clowns feed on mistakes rather than being discouraged by them, she introduced a “failure inventory” to her dance practice. At the beginning of rehearsals, she invited the other dancers to share what failure looked like for them and whether it was connected to other general fears. The other dancers then shared ideas about how to welcome failure and make it less scary. She collected data to answer her question by experimenting with different methods of inventory (written vs verbal) and leading discussions in which the artists reflected on how the inventory changed their experience of the rehearsal.

The participants were enthusiastic about their experience. In the [final evaluation](#), they shared that, through the lab, they learned research skills, gained new ideas and exercises, and developed artistic skills. The lab also benefitted RED NOSES International as a whole, as the participants made connections with one another and strengthened their network.

Due to the success of the first lab, the Artistic Exploration Lab was developed in the scope of the Culture and Health platform, building on the learnings of the first lab.

5. Method

The lab is based on the principles of **participatory action research**. Participatory action research is a process led by people who don't usually see themselves as "researchers". Historically, it is a movement that grew out of the need to democratize learning. With participatory action research, it isn't only elite academics who get to decide what's important and how to research it. Communities are therefore more likely to benefit from the results.

While the process is very flexible, it is helpful to break it down into a few key steps – although of course they do not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion! There can be a lot of back and forth between steps too.

STEP ONE: What's the problem or issue? What is something where I see a need or opportunity for CHANGE? This problem could be a practical issue I'm facing in my work, a question I'm curious about, or a goal I want to achieve.

STEP TWO: What strategy or solution do I want to try out? The strategy could be, for example, a new artistic approach, a new exercise, or a new form of collaboration.

STEP THREE: Try it out! Put the strategy into practice and document what happens.

STEP FOUR: Reflect. What worked? What didn't work? What can I take into my practice, my community, the world? What would I like to try differently?

STEP FIVE: Share. Find the right way to share the results, learnings, and outcomes with my community.

The experts will support participants with each step, from choosing a question to documenting and sharing the results.

6. Structure

The structure of this lab can be flexible to the needs of the participants, but the initial plan is that it will look something like this:

December 2024	Call for participants
April/May 2025	Kick-off (online) FOCUS: Form a community, introduce the activities, begin process of choosing learning question
May/June 2025	Lab 1 (in person) FOCUS: Play, explore, develop learning questions, learn research skills
Summer 2025	Refine learning question and implementation plan

FOCUS: Regular check-ins, group and one-on-one mentoring, virtual and in-person.

September/October 2025

Lab 2 (online)

FOCUS: Prepare for implementation

October – December 2025

Implement artistic exploration project

FOCUS: Regular check-ins, group and one-on-one mentoring, virtual and in-person.

December 2025/January 2026

Lab 3 (in person)

FOCUS: Sharing of experiences, tools, and techniques

7. Requirements

The expert is expected to meet the following requirements.

- 5+ years of experience as an artist in the field of arts for health
- 5+ years of experience as a teacher
- Collaborative working style
- High motivation to co-create something new and contribute artistic expertise to an innovative, interdisciplinary project
- Willingness to travel
- Good/excellent English language skills
- Availability to complete the whole Lab

8. Compensation

Payment: EUR 525 per workday for expert meetings and labs, plus additional benefits (travel expenses, accommodation), we are willing to overpay for experts with exceptional experience.

9. Is this a good fit for you?

If you would like to join RED NOSES International on this adventure, please send us a brief introduction of yourself and your relevant experience by August 31. If it seems like a good fit, we may ask for additional information such as a CV and a letter of motivation. You can reach us at art.lab@rednoses.org