Podcast Methodological Guide

INDIRE ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DOCUMENTAZIONE INNOVAZIONE RICERCA EDUCATIVA

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this must be the PLACE

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1. Introduction and Ethical Storytelling

1.1 Introduction to the Project and Its Goal

The Podcast-Making Methodology Guide is part of the broader Erasmus+ KA220-ADU project titled "This Must Be The Place". This project falls under the Cooperation Partnerships in Adult Education call and aims to enhance civic engagement and promote social inclusion through innovative non-formal educational methods. Specifically, the project focuses on amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, particularly women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, by addressing their experiences of exclusion, oppression and resistance and promoting their active participation in public and digital spaces.

The central goal of this guide is to provide a replicable methodology for creating educational podcasts that foster discussions on gender equality, inclusivity, and civic activism. Through this process, the project seeks to equip adult educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to engage learners in critical discussions, promote active citizenship, and inspire community-driven change.

Key Objectives:

• **Promoting Inclusivity in Public Spaces**: By documenting and sharing the experiences of women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, the project highlights systemic issues of exclusion and presents community-driven solutions for making public spaces more inclusive.

• **Strengthening Non-Formal Adult Education**: The podcast serves as a pedagogical tool to engage adult learners, encouraging critical thinking, storytelling, and media literacy as part of non-formal educational practices.

• Fostering Civic Engagement: By involving participants in the co-creation of podcast content, the project empowers them to take an active role in societal change.

• Developing Replicable Resources: The guide ensures that the podcast methodology can be adapted and implemented by educators, community leaders, and organizations across different European contexts.

Partner Organizations:

• **Associazione di Promozione Sociale Maghweb (Italy)**: Leading the project coordination, Maghweb is responsible for developing the overall communication and production strategy of the podcast.

• **Cinergies (Greece)**: With expertise in media production and social communication, Cinergies contributes to the design of podcast modules and technical aspects.

• **L'Associació de Drets Sexuals i Reproductius (Spain)**: As a key partner focusing on gender and human rights, the organization ensures the incorporation of gender-sensitive and inclusive content in the podcast.

1.2 Purpose and Connection to Project Goals

The primary purpose of this guide is to equip organizations, educators, and community leaders with a practical methodology to document and disseminate the voices of marginalized individuals. Women and LGBTQIA+ people, who often face exclusion and discrimination in public and digital spaces, are central to this effort. By capturing their stories and perspectives, the project aims to highlight their experiences of oppression, resistance, and

empowerment, transforming these narratives into a catalyst for broader societal change and critical, intersectional interrogation of the public space.

The act of documenting marginalized voices serves a dual purpose:

• **Empowerment**: Providing a platform for self-narration ensures that participants can control their own narratives, which is a crucial step in reclaiming agency and fostering self-determination.

• **Social Awareness and Education**: Disseminating these stories encourages public reflection on systemic issues such as gender inequality and discrimination, while promoting empathy and community-based solutions.

This guide aligns with the core objectives of the "This Must Be The Place" project by using podcasts as a creative and accessible medium for non-formal education. Podcasts offer the unique ability to bridge geographical and social divides, allowing communities across Europe to engage with diverse perspectives. By fostering inclusive storytelling, this guide helps achieve key project outcomes, including:

• **Raising Awareness**: Making visible the lived experiences of marginalized groups and the systemic factors affecting them.

• **Stimulating Active Citizenship**: Encouraging adult learners to critically engage with societal issues and participate in civic life.

• **Developing Replicable Educational Tools**: Ensuring that the podcast methodology can be adapted and reused in different contexts to promote inclusivity.

Overview of What the Guide Will Cover

This guide is structured to provide step-by-step instructions for every stage of the podcast production process, with a focus on inclusivity, ethical storytelling, and technical excellence. Key sections include:

1. Introduction and Ethical Storytelling: Establishing the importance of inclusive narratives and ensuring that participants are respected and protected throughout the process.

2. Pre-Production: Covering topic selection, research, and collaborative engagement with participants to develop meaningful content.

3. Production: Offering technical guidance on recording, conducting interviews, and capturing audio in a way that preserves authenticity.

4. Post-Production: Detailing editing, transcription, and review processes to ensure high-quality content that reflects participants' intended messages.

5. Dissemination and Sustainability: Outlining strategies for sharing the

podcast across multiple platforms and ensuring long-term impact through replication and adaptation.

By following this guide, organizations and educators will be able to produce impactful podcasts that contribute to the development of inclusive public narratives and foster greater understanding and engagement within their communities. In doing so, they play a crucial role in amplifying voices that are often silenced, fostering a more equitable and inclusive society

1.3 Overview of the Podcast Format and Its Replicability

In a world where marginalized voices are often silenced or overlooked, podcasts offer a platform to amplify personal stories and create meaningful change. They are more than just digital recordings—they are tools of empowerment, allowing individuals to share their experiences with dignity and authenticity. By giving voice to those who have been excluded from mainstream narratives, podcasts serve as powerful instruments for social awareness and transformation.

The podcast format was chosen for this project because of its unique ability to blend flexibility, accessibility, and impact. By focusing solely on audio, podcasts provide a safe and intimate space for participants. Unlike video documentaries, which can make individuals feel more exposed, audio-only storytelling allows participants to share deeply personal experiences without the additional pressure of being on camera. This aspect is especially important when discussing sensitive topics related to gender-based discrimination and exclusion, as it fosters an environment of comfort and openness.

Examples of Podcasts Tackling Social Issues

Many successful podcasts have demonstrated the power of audio to bring societal challenges to light. For example, BBC's investigative podcasts, such as the "World of Secrets" has gained attention for its investigative series uncovering sexual predators, human trafficking, and abuses of power in hidden networks. This podcast highlights the power of audio storytelling to expose critical social issues while protecting the identities of vulnerable individuals through voice-only narration. Similarly, Cuore Scoperto by Storielibere.fm is an Italian podcast that explores themes of love, identity, and acceptance within the LGBTQIA+ community. Its sensitive storytelling and commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices make it an inspiring example of how podcasts can foster empathy, challenge societal norms, and provide a platform

for marginalized stories. Another example is Ciberlocutorio by Radio Primavera Sound, it is a Spanish podcast that focuses on contemporary and personal issues, combining reflection, current affairs, and a personal perspective.

These examples highlight how podcasts can be effective tools for exploring social issues, building empathy, and raising awareness in ways that traditional media often cannot.

1.4 Cost-Effectiveness of Production

Compared to video documentaries, podcasts are significantly more cost-effective to produce. They require minimal equipment—a good microphone, audio editing software, and a quiet recording space can often suffice. This lower barrier to entry makes podcasts an accessible medium for small organizations and community groups with limited budgets. Additionally, the editing process for audio is less time-consuming and resource-intensive than video editing, further reducing costs.

Ease of Dissemination and Accessibility

Podcasts have the advantage of being easily accessible through multiple platforms such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform. Unlike video content, which typically requires visual attention, podcasts can be consumed while multitasking—whether listeners are driving, jogging, cooking, or commuting. This flexibility allows podcasts to reach audiences in moments when they might not otherwise engage with educational content.

Additionally, the conversational nature of podcasts makes complex topics easier to understand. When listeners follow a dialogue, they are guided through the subject matter in a natural and relatable way, enhancing comprehension and retention. Conversations can present multiple perspectives, offer clarifications, and create emotional connections that help listeners grasp nuanced issues.

Replicability and Adaptation

The replicability of the podcast format lies in its clear and adaptable production methodology. Organizations and educators can easily tailor the structure to suit different contexts and audiences. Whether focusing on gender-based discrimination in Southern Europe or other marginalized communities elsewhere, the steps outlined in this guide provide a flexible framework that can be modified to meet diverse needs.

By following this approach, organizations can ensure that their podcasts are not only effective in promoting awareness and social change but also sustainable and adaptable for future educational projects.

Pros and Cons of the Podcast Format for Social Issues

Advantages:

• **Global Reach**: Podcasts can be accessed by a worldwide audience, allowing for the dissemination of ideas across diverse populations.

• **Community Building**: Podcasts can foster a sense of community among listeners, encouraging discussions and connections around shared interests.

Challenges:

• **Saturated Competition**: The growing number of podcasts can make it difficult for new ones to gain visibility, particularly when competing within established platforms and high-profile productions.

• **Language Barriers**: Unlike video content where subtitles can be added, translating and adapting podcasts into multiple languages requires dubbing and therefore extensive effort to ensure that the meaning, cultural nuances, and emotional tone are preserved. Without effective translation, key messages may be lost or misunderstood by diverse audiences.

Inclusive and Diverse Collaboration in Storytelling

Effective collaboration requires bringing together people from different backgrounds, identities, and experiences to contribute to the narrative development. This diversity enriches the storytelling process by:

• **Incorporating Multiple Viewpoints**: Diverse collaboration ensures that the stories reflect a range of perspectives, making them more relatable and impactful for broader audiences.

• **Challenging Dominant Narratives**: By including voices that are often excluded, the collaborative process challenges traditional power structures and offers alternative ways of understanding the world.

• **Enhancing Creativity**: Collaboration fosters creativity by combining different storytelling techniques, cultural insights, and narrative frameworks.

In this project, collaborative storytelling is facilitated through preparatory discussions, shared decision-making, and iterative feedback loops ensuring that the final podcast episodes are inclusive, authentic, and reflective of their collective experiences. This approach not only produces richer content but also serves as a model for creating inclusive educational resources.

1.5 Respecting Participants' Privacy and Consent

Participants' comfort, safety, and empowerment should be a priority throughout the entire storytelling process. Ensuring that participants feel safe sharing their experiences is essential to creating authentic and impactful narratives. To this end, the project implements a participant-centered data protection strategy that respects their rights and agency.

Key Elements of the Data Protection and Consent Strategy:

• **Informed Consent**: Participants receive detailed information on the purpose of the podcast, how their contributions will be used, and their rights to withdraw or modify content at any stage. The consent form clearly explains what data will be collected, how it will be stored, and how it will be shared.

• **Consent is obtained in writing**: with participants giventime to review and ask questions before signing.

• **Choice of Anonymity**: Participants have the option to be identified by their first name, a pseudonym/alias. This flexibility ensures that those discussing sensitive or personal topics can feel comfortable and protected.

Why This Approach Matters

Protecting participants' privacy is not just a legal requirement—it is a core ethical principle that aligns with the project's mission of promoting inclusive and respectful storytelling. Marginalized communities often face risks when sharing personal experiences, and providing them with control over their narratives helps mitigate these risks while fostering trust.

Moreover, this approach promotes empowerment, self-determination and participation. By ensuring that participants have control over how their stories are told, the project creates an environment where individuals can speak openly without fear of exploitation or harm.

2. Pre-Production

Pre-production, as defined in the context of audiovisual works, is the preparatory phase where all creative, technical, and logistical decisions are made to set the foundation for a successful production. This phase involves concept development, scripting, planning, and resource allocation. For podcasts, pre-production takes on specific characteristics, such as designing the narrative structure, collaborating with participants, and ensuring inclusive storytelling.

For this project, the entire pre-production framework was established at the start of the project during its Transnational Project Meeting (TPM), where partners discussed the core themes, production processes, and collaborative storytelling approaches. These initial decisions were further refined and formalized during the CBA in Palermo. At this event, partners collectively determined the production process, selected the key topics, developed the interview questionnaires, and agreed on the inclusive storytelling formats to be employed. This structured and collaborative planning phase ensures that all voices are represented with respect and authenticity.

2.1 Topic Selection and Focus

Topic selection is one of the most crucial decisions in the podcast pre-production process, as it sets the foundation for meaningful discussions and impactful storytelling. For this project, the selection of topics was driven by the core objective of uncovering systemic issues affecting marginalized communities, specifically women and LGBTQIA+ individuals. This step involved both structured brainstorming and collaborative decision-making among partner organizations, ensuring that the topics selected were relevant, underrepre-

sented, and aligned with the project's goals of promoting inclusivity and active citizenship.

Core Themes Selected:

1. **Gender-Based Violence in Public Spaces**: Exploring how women and LGBTQIA+ individuals experience harassment, exclusion, or lack of representation in streets, public transport, and recreational areas.
2. **Access to Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare**: Examining barriers to healthcare access, particularly in relation to abortion rights and how these obstacles disproportionately affect marginalized individuals across the countries involved.
3. **Workplace Gender based Violence and Resistance**: Highlighting experiences of discrimination and violence in the workplace based on gender identity or sexual orientation and showcasing stories of resilience and advocacy.

These themes were chosen based on their relevance to the communities involved and their potential for social impact. Discussions during the CBA emphasized the importance of selecting topics that not only address immediate community concerns but also have the capacity to engage broader audiences and inspire societal change.

Key Considerations During Topic Selection:

- **Relevance to Marginalized Communities**: Ensuring that the chosen topics reflect real and pressing challenges faced by the target groups. Participants were consulted to verify that the topics resonated with their lived experiences.
- **Potential for Social Impact**: Selecting issues with the potential to drive conversations beyond the project's immediate scope and contribute to larger discussions on inclusion and equality.

• **Participant-Driven Focus**: Giving participants agency in shaping the topics by incorporating their suggestions and personal experiences. This participatory approach not only enriches the storytelling but also fosters ownership and engagement.

Additionally, Maghweb and L'Associació contributed by providing insights from their extensive networks of community organizations and activists. Through discussions with partners such as Disability Pride Palermo and Arcigay, the project was able to pinpoint underexplored topics that had significant local relevance.

Participant Involvement in Topic Refinement:

Participants were actively involved in refining the selected topics to ensure that the final content would be reflective of their unique perspectives. During preparatory conversations, they had the opportunity to highlight specific issues within the broader themes that were most relevant to their experiences. For instance, within the topic of workplace discrimination, some participants chose to focus on the intersection of gender and economic precarity, while others emphasized the lack of legal protections for LGBTQIA+ employees.

This collaborative, inclusive, and flexible approach to topic selection ensured that the podcast would present authentic, diverse, and impactful narratives. By addressing these themes, the project not only aims to raise awareness but also to foster critical discussions and inspire positive change across Europe. For this project, the focus is on uncovering systemic issues affecting women and LGBTQIA+ individuals in public and digital spaces. The process begins with brainstorming sessions involving team members, educators, and community representatives to identify themes that are both relevant and underrepresented in mainstream media.

2.2 Storytelling Angles and Narrative Development:

An essential part of research is determining the most effective storytelling angles. This involves balancing personal narratives with broader systemic analyses to create compelling and multidimensional stories. Key considerations include:

• **Personal vs. Systemic Focus**: Weaving participants' personal stories with discussions on structural inequalities.

• **Intersections of Identity**: Highlighting the overlapping aspects of identity, such as gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic background.

• **Resistance and Resilience**: Emphasizing stories of community resistance and individual resilience to inspire positive action.

Collaborative Development of Storylines

Collaborative storytelling lies at the heart of this project, embracing a participatory and inclusive approach where narratives are shaped by participants, project partners, and experts collectively. Unlike traditional storytelling methods, which can be top-down and producer-driven, the collaborative approach empowers participants to take control of their narratives, ensuring authenticity and diversity.

Collaboration Among Partners, Experts, and Activists:

The development of storylines involved contributions from multiple stakeholders, including:

• **Partner Organizations**: Partners such as Maghweb, Cinergies, and L'Associació brought insights from their community-based work and previous experiences with marginalized groups.

• **Invited Experts and Journalists**: Journalists and media professionals provided guidance on structuring compelling narratives while maintaining accuracy and sensitivity. Their input helped refine interview questions and improve narrative flow, ensuring the podcasts would be relatable and informative.

• **Activists and Community Leaders**: Activists contributed critical context, particularly regarding systemic issues like gender-based exclusion and workplace discrimination. Their feedback enriched the storytelling process by embedding lived experiences into the narratives.

Co-Creation of Questionnaires:

The final part of collaborative development involved working closely with participants in the CBA designed collectively the interview questions that reflected their personal experiences and the issues they wanted to highlight. This participatory process helped ensure the interviews remained authentic and relevant.

2.3 Participant Identification and Engagement through Research:

Once research identifies potential storytelling angles, teams can begin shortlisting participants. Effective strategies include:

• **Preliminary Outreach and Conversations**: Conducting informal discussions to gauge participants' comfort level and interest in contributing.

During previous project iterations, this approach led to identifying diverse participants who could provide firsthand accounts on topics like exclusion from public spaces and barriers to healthcare access. Their contributions not only enriched the narrative but also ensured that the stories were grounded in lived experiences.

Engagement and Building Trust:

The engagement process goes beyond simply inviting participants. Establishing a strong relationship with participants is key to creating a safe and supportive environment where they feel empowered to share their stories.

1. **Initial Conversations**: Initial meetings or informal discussions were held with participants to explain the project's goals, what participation would involve, and their rights. This helped clarify expectations and ensure that participants were comfortable.

2. **Preliminary Content Sharing**: Participants were given the opportunity to review key details, including proposed interview questions and potential topics of discussion. This allowed them to provide feedback or suggest changes, fostering a collaborative relationship.

Creating a Safe Space:

Participants were assured of a safe and respectful environment through several key measures:

- **Consent and Flexibility**: Participants were fully informed of their rights, including the ability to withdraw or modify their contributions at any point during or after the interview.
- **Anonymity and Privacy Options**: For participants discussing sensitive topics, options were provided to remain anonymous or use pseudonyms.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental to the integrity of this project, particularly given its focus on sensitive topics related to gender, discrimination, and marginalization. This section outlines a comprehensive ethical framework designed to protect participants, ensure respectful storytelling, and maintain the credibility of the project. The project adhered to international ethical standards while incorporating context-specific guidelines based on participants' needs and local realities.

1. **Dynamic and Informed Consent Process**:

Informed consent was established as an ongoing process, not a one-time formality. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the goals of the project, how their contributions would be used, and their right to modify or withdraw their input at any time. The consent form detailed how their data would be collected, stored, and shared, aligning with GDPR regulations.

• **Pre-Interview Discussions**: Before any interviews, participants were given time to ask questions and clarify doubts.

• **Consent Revisited**: Consent was revisited during key milestones, including after the initial recording and before the final production, ensuring participants retained control over their involvement.

2. **Minimizing Emotional Distress and Harm**:

Given the sensitive nature of the topics, such as exclusion from public spaces or workplace discrimination, minimizing harm was a top priority. Several strategies were implemented to protect participants from emotional distress:

• **Supportive Interviewing Environment**: Interviews were conducted in safe, comfortable spaces with breaks allowed if participants felt overwhelmed.

• **Trauma-Informed Approach**: Interviewers were trained to handle difficult topics with empathy and to recognize signs of emotional distress.

• **Follow-Up Support**: In cases where participants experienced emotional difficulty, follow-up resources, such as local counseling services, were made available.

3. **Cultural Sensitivity and Diverse Representation**:

Recognizing the diverse cultural contexts of participants from Italy, Spain, and Greece, the project emphasized culturally sensitive storytelling. Teams worked closely with local community leaders, activists, and cultural experts to ensure that narratives were respectful and reflective of each participant's background.

2.5 Technical Preparations

While content development is the primary focus of pre-production, technical preparations are equally important to ensure a smooth and efficient production phase. Proper technical planning can significantly enhance the quality of the final product and minimize potential disruptions during recording. This section outlines key considerations, ranging from equipment choices to production schedules and collaborative platforms.

1. **Selecting Recording Equipment**:

Choosing the right equipment is crucial for producing high-quality audio. Organizations working with varying budgets can explore options tailored to their financial resources:

• **Budget-Friendly Options**: For organizations on a limited budget, affordable yet reliable options like the Rode Pod-Mic and a USB audio interface provide excellent sound quality without a large financial investment.

2. **Recording Locations**:

The environment in which recordings take place can dramatically affect sound quality. Selecting the right location ensures that background noise and disruptions are minimized:

• **Home and Office Setups**: Carefully selected or with proper soundproofing (e.g., foam panels or portable acoustic shields), small spaces can be converted into effective recording locations.

• **Community Centers**: Partnering with local organizations to use their facilities can provide quiet and comfortable spaces for participants.

• **Renting Professional Studios**: For high-stakes or complex recordings, renting a professional studio is an option. Studios often come with soundproofing, professional-grade equipment, and on-site technical support, minimizing the risk of audio issues.

3. **Backup and Redundancy Systems**:

Data loss during production can be catastrophic, making backup systems essential:

• **Primary and Backup Recordings**: Always use multiple recording devices simultaneously (e.g., a primary microphone and a backup recorder) to safeguard against equipment failure.

• **Cloud Storage Solutions**: Save recorded files in real-time or immediately after sessions using secure cloud platforms, such as Google Drive or Dropbox, to ensure access even in case of hardware malfunctions.

4. **Clear Production Schedule**:

A well-structured production schedule keeps the project on track and ensures that team members across different regions work efficiently:

• **Milestone Planning**: Break the production process into clear milestones, such as content finalization, recording dates, editing deadlines, and review sessions.

• **Time Buffers**: Allow for time buffers to address unforeseen delays, especially in international collaborations.

5. **Collaborative Platforms for International Teams**:

Since this project involves partners across Italy, Spain, and Greece, leveraging collaborative digital tools is critical for efficient coordination and real-time collaboration:

• **Shared Cloud Drives**: Centralized file-sharing platforms such as Google Drive or Dropbox allow team members to access scripts, recordings, and edits from anywhere.

• **Communication Platforms**: Tools like Slack or Microsoft Teams facilitate instant communication, enabling quick problem resolution and collaboration during critical production stages.

6. **Technical Training for Team Members**:

Before production begins, providing basic training to team members ensures that common technical issues can be addressed without major disruptions:

• **Audio Equipment Training**: Teach team members how to properly set up microphones, check sound levels, and troubleshoot common problems.

• **Editing and Post-Production Basics**: Familiarize the team with basic editing software, such as Audacity (free) or Adobe Audition (professional), to handle minor post-production tasks.

By the end of the pre-production phase, teams should have a clear understanding of the podcast's narrative structure, a list of confirmed participants, and all necessary technical preparations in place. This comprehensive planning sets the stage for a successful production phase, ensuring that the final product is both impactful and inclusive.

Technical preparations include:

• **Selecting Recording Equipment**: Choose reliable microphones and audio recorders to capture high-quality sound.

• **Securing Recording Locations**: Find quiet, comfortable spaces that put participants at ease.

• **Backup Systems**: Ensure that backups are available to prevent data loss

3. Recording Session: Preparing for Success

Recording sessions are the heart of the production process, where raw audio is captured for future editing and refinement. Successful sessions require meticulous planning and coordination to minimize technical issues and ensure high-quality sound. For this project, the professional expertise of the production teams from Maghweb and Cinergies played a crucial role in achieving smooth and efficient recordings. Their extensive experience in media production allowed for optimal technical setups and seamless troubleshooting during sessions.

Key Steps in Preparing for Recording:

• **Reviewing Pre-Production Notes**: Ensure that all scripts, questions, and story outlines prepared during pre-production are readily available.

• **Equipment Checks**: Test microphones, audio interfaces, and backup devices to confirm they are working properly. The teams prioritized using reliable equipment and backups to avoid disruptions.

• **Environment Setup**: Ensure the recording location is quiet and acoustically treated, whether it's a rented studio or a home setup with soundproofing measures. The project's flexible approach included home setups for smaller recordings and professional studio rentals for high-stakes sessions.

During the First CBA in Palermo, members of partner organizations participated in workshops to practice setting up recording equipment and simulating real interview scenarios. This training enabled team members to prepare and handle logistics benefiting from the hands-on guidance of experienced team members from Maghweb and Cinergies. This collaborative setup ensured that technical issues were swiftly resolved, contributing to high-quality audio production and participant satisfaction.

3.1 Creating a Comfortable Environment for Participants

Encouraging participants to feel comfortable and at ease during recording is essential for capturing authentic and compelling stories. Establishing trust and creating a safe space ensures that participants can share personal experiences without hesitation, leading to richer and more impactful narratives.

A key aspect of building this comfort is conducting a pre-interview briefing between the interviewer and the participant. This briefing allows both parties to align expectations, clarify the topics to be discussed, and establish a level of trust before the formal recording begins. The interviewer can explain the structure of the session, outline the participant's rights, and address any initial concerns or questions they may have.

Strategies for Creating a Safe Space:

• **Pre-Session Briefings**: These briefings provide an opportunity for participants to understand what will be covered, clarify their role, and feel reassured about the flexibility of the process. This is particularly important when discussing sensitive topics, as participants need to know they can pause, skip, or return to topics at their discretion.

• **Providing Breaks**: Offering breaks during long or emotionally intense sessions helps participants remain engaged and reduces fatigue. Breaks also allow interviewers to reassess the participant's comfort and make any necessary adjustments to the session.

• **Active Listening**: Engaging with participants through active listening ensures that they feel heard and valued. Interviewers should show empa-

thy, maintain eye contact (if in person), and provide verbal affirmations to encourage open dialogue.

• **Collaborative Session** Adjustments: During the recording, participants are encouraged to provide immediate feedback. If they feel uncomfortable with a particular line of questioning or wish to emphasize certain aspects of their story, the session can be adjusted accordingly.

• **Post-Session Follow-Up**: After recording, participants are contacted to check on their overall experience and given the opportunity to review their contributions. For those who may have discussed sensitive topics, additional follow-ups are conducted to provide support or referrals if necessary.

These strategies collectively contribute to creating an environment of mutual trust and respect, ensuring that participants feel empowered to share their stories authentically. The collaborative and supportive atmosphere established during the production phase directly impacts the quality and depth of the final content, reflecting the project's emphasis on inclusive and ethical storytelling.

3.2 Best Recording Practices

Collaboration during production extended beyond the project team to include participants, journalists, activists, and technical staff, ensuring that the final product was enriched with multiple perspectives. By involving individuals from diverse backgrounds, the project guaranteed that sensitive topics were approached with accuracy, empathy, and inclusivity. Collaborative recording helped balance the artistic and factual dimensions of storytelling while preserving the integrity of participants' experiences.

Incorporating Journalists and Activists:

Journalists and activists played significant roles as co-interviewers and advisors, contributing their expertise on complex social issues. Their participation ensured that the questions remained relevant, thought-provoking, and respectful of the subjects discussed. Activists, in particular, provided context rooted in community advocacy, which helped connect individual stories to systemic challenges. This collaboration allowed the interviews to remain sensitive yet impactful.

Pre-recording sessions held during the First CBA in Palermo further enhanced this collaboration, as team members and advisors reviewed interview formats, adjusted topics, and coordinated on narrative flow. This preparatory work ensured smooth on-the-spot collaboration during recordings.

3.3 Capturing Ambient Audio and Background Sounds

Ambient sounds and environmental audio can enhance storytelling by immersing the listener in the context of the narrative. Although not a primary feature of this project, the integration of background sounds in future podcasts or segments could significantly enhance the listener's experience, especially when depicting public spaces or events tied to the subject matter.

Techniques for Capturing High-Quality Ambient Audio:

• **Location Scouting**: Conduct thorough visits to potential locations to assess the sound quality and identify potential disturbances, such as traffic or construction noise.

• **Dedicated Ambient Microphones**: Use omnidirectional microphones to capture ambient noise naturally, or directional microphones to isolate specific sounds such as voices or environmental cues.

• **Story Integration**: Collaborate with the editing team to strategically embed background sounds within the narrative, such as using the sounds of bustling streets to highlight stories of exclusion in public spaces.

These techniques offer opportunities to create richer soundscapes and provide listeners with a deeper understanding of the participants' environments.

3.4 Dubbing for Accessibility and Multilingual Inclusion

As part of the project's commitment to accessibility, a comprehensive dubbing process was implemented to ensure that the podcast was available in five different languages. Dubbing made the podcast more inclusive and allowed it to reach audiences across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

3.4.1 Collaborative Transcription and Translation

The process began with transcribing the recorded interviews, followed by collaborative translations involving project participants and local language experts. Leveraging the involvement of participants in the educational activities ensured that translations maintained the intended meaning and emotional tone of the original recordings.

• **Collaborative Transcription**: Audio recordings were transcribed by team members and reviewed for accuracy.

• **Translation Review**: The translations were reviewed and refined by participants and language specialists to ensure accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and contextual relevance.

3.4.2 Recording Dubbed Versions During CBA 2 - Athens

A parallel activity during the Second Collaborative Brainstorming Activity (CBA 2) in Athens involved participants from each language group recording the dubbed versions of the interviews. This hands-on approach allowed participants to take ownership of the multilingual versions, contributing their voices and perspectives.

Key Steps:

1. Recording Setup: Participants were provided with a dedicated space to record high-quality dubbed segments.

2. Real-Time Feedback: Trainers provided real-time feedback to ensure that the tone and delivery matched the original recordings.

3. Cross-Review: Dubbed segments were reviewed by multilingual teams to maintain consistency and quality across languages.

By involving participants in every stage of the dubbing process, the project ensured that the translated versions maintained authenticity while broadening accessibility to new audiences. This collaborative dubbing effort exemplified the project's dedication to inclusion, multilingual education, and cross-border collaboration.

4. Post-Production

Post-production is where the recorded content is transformed into a polished and engaging podcast. This stage involves editing, sound design, and participant reviews to ensure that the final product is coherent, high-quality, and reflective of the participants intentions. For this project, the post-production process was designed to prioritize participant agency and uphold ethical storytelling principles.

4.1 Editing and Cleaning Audio

The first step of post-production is editing the raw audio recordings to create a coherent and compelling narrative. This phase focuses on removing errors, pauses, and background noise while ensuring the core message remains intact.

Steps Involved:

• **Audio Cleaning and Editing**: The main editing was done using tools like Adobe Audition, but other options include Audacity (open-source), or mobile-friendly options like BandCamp. Recently AI-powered solutions can also automatically clean up audio, removing background noise and enhancing clarity.

• **Segment Organization**: The recording is divided into logical segments to create a clear structure, which was one of the most demanding aspects of the entire post-production process. Given the scope of this project—which required content to be dubbed into five different languages—meticulous organization of materials was essential. Each segment was carefully categorized and labeled, ensuring that transitions, contextual meaning, and pa-

cing were preserved across languages. Collaborative organization tools like Shared Google Sheets and Google Drive were employed to manage and track each version, with team members from different countries continuously coordinating to avoid overlaps or redundancies.

• **Maintaining Participant Authenticity**: TThe editing process should be careful of not altering the meaning or emotional tone of the participant's narrative while keeping the duration of the recording in the pre-defined limits.

During this phase, feedback from team members including activists and journalists helped identify key sections that required edits or refinements.

4.2 Additional Recording for better Storytelling

Once the audio was cleaned and organised, the next step is arranging the content into a cohesive narrative that aligns with the podcast's objectives. For this project, participant voices take center stage, supported by narration and context.

Key Storytelling Practices:

• Introduction and Context Setting: Each of the episodes begins with introductions that provide context on the topic being discussed and why it matters.

• **Transitions and Flow**: Between different interviews narrated transitions between segments ensure a seamless listening experience.

• **Closing Statement**s: Episodes conclude with reflective summaries, leaving listeners with thought-provoking takeaways and urging the audience to share their own stories.

Collaborative feedback sessions during post-production allowed participants to provide input on how their stories were presented.

4.3 Sound Design and Integration of Ambient Audio

Sound design adds depth and immersion to the podcast. For episodes that included ambient audio, this step involved carefully integrating background sounds to enhance the listener's experience.

Key Elements of Sound Design:

1. **Background Music**: Subtle, non-intrusive music was added to enhance emotional resonance without overshadowing participant voices.
2. **Ambient Sounds**: While not relevant for this project, sounds from public spaces or community environments can be integrated to provide context.
3. **Volume Balancing**: Finally all audio components (voices, music, sound effects) were balanced to maintain clarity and cohesion.

4.4 Quality Control and Final Review

Before publishing, the podcast underwent multiple rounds of quality control to ensure high production standards.

Steps for Final Review:

- **Audio Checks**: Verified that sound quality, volume levels, and clarity met professional standards. Tools like Auphonic were used for automated final mastering.
- **Consistency Checks**: Ensured that episodes followed a consistent format, including introductions, transitions and closing segments.
- **Cross-Team Review**: Different team members reviewed the final product to identify any areas for improvement.
- **Participant Final Approval**: In some cases some participants with very sensitive cases were given the opportunity for one last review to confirm that their contributions were accurately represented.

4.5 Preparing for Publication and Dissemination

Once the final product was approved, the episodes were prepared for publication on various platforms.

Key Steps:

- **Metadata and Descriptions**: Created detailed episode descriptions, titles, and tags to improve discoverability were created in each language.

• **Platform Uploads**: Uploaded episodes to platforms such as Spotify for creators, which is able using the RSS feed format to disseminate the podcast also to Apple Podcasts, Youtube, and finally the results will be also uploaded to each partner's website and Erasmus+ Project Results Platform.

• **Promotional Materials**: Created social media content and visuals to promote the episodes.

By following this comprehensive post-production process, the project ensured that the final podcast episodes were polished, impactful, and true to the participants' voices. This collaborative approach maintained high production standards while prioritizing participant empowerment and ethical storytelling.

5. Impact and Dissemination

To maximize reach and engagement, the podcasts will be disseminated through a variety of digital and traditional channels. Dissemination efforts will be supported by a dedicated communications strategy that involves all partner organizations. Templates for promoting the podcasts on social media were created to maintain consistent branding and messaging across all platforms. A detailed campaign calendar was developed to guide dissemination efforts, with target groups clearly defined and key stakeholders engaged to amplify the project's message and ensure its impact reaches beyond immediate networks.

Key Dissemination Channels:

- **Social Media Platforms**: The project will leverage the official social media pages of partner organizations on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky and YouTube to reach diverse audiences. Engaging visuals, teaser clips, and participant quotes will be used to promote episodes.
- **Erasmus+ Project Results Platform**: The podcasts will be made available on the Erasmus+ portal to ensure access by educators, researchers, and the general public across Europe.
- **Organization Websites and Newsletters**: Partner organizations will embed podcasts on their official websites and share them through regular newsletters to reach their established networks.
- **Community Events and Collaborations**: Podcasts will be featured during community events, educational workshops, and partner collaborations, promoting dialogue and audience interaction.

Dissemination efforts will also involve targeted outreach to networks related to women's rights, LGBTQIA+ communities, and other advocacy groups, ensuring that the stories resonate with those most affected by the topics discussed.

5.1 Data Collection for Impact Assessment

Evaluating the effectiveness and reach of the podcasts requires structured data collection. This process will ensure that key metrics related to audience engagement and learning outcomes are captured and analyzed.

Primary Data Collection Methods:

• **Social Media Metrics**: Metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and impressions on promotional content will be tracked using analytics tools.

• **Download and Streaming Data**: The number of downloads and streams on platforms like Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube will be analyzed to assess overall reach.

Secondary Data Collection:

• **Workshop and Event Feedback**: Feedback during community events and educational workshops will provide qualitative data on how the podcasts contribute to discussions and learning.

5.2 Future Plans and Expanding Coverage

Building on the project's success, future plans focus on expanding the coverage of topics and deepening engagement with participants and new audiences.

Phase 1: Gathering Stories via Dedicated Voice Message Line

The first step will involve creating a dedicated voice message line where participants and community members can submit their own stories directly. This approach will democratize participation, allowing individuals to contribute in their own time and in their own words.

Phase 2 : Expanding Topics and Perspectives

Future podcast seasons will explore additional topics, which will be determined based on the podcast's overall reach, the availability of funding sources to support continued production, and listener feedback on what issues are most important to them. This approach will ensure that the content remains relevant, impactful, and adaptable to evolving societal needs.

Phase 3: Collaborative International Productions

New partnerships with international organizations will enable cross-border collaborations that address globally relevant issues while incorporating localized perspectives.

These future developments will ensure that the project remains dynamic, responsive to evolving social challenges, and impactful in its advocacy for marginalized voices.

Conclusion and Final Reflections

The creation of this podcast has been an eye-opening journey, providing participants with a platform to share their stories while teaching the project team invaluable lessons. By giving voices to individuals who are often unheard, we have shed light on systemic issues of exclusion and created a resource that promotes empathy, awareness, and change.

Throughout the project, we gained insight into the realities faced by marginalized communities, built meaningful connections with local activists and organizations, and mastered technical and production processes, especially within a multilingual and cross-country context. The collaborative nature of this project, with its emphasis on co-creation and participant ownership, has strengthened our understanding of ethical storytelling and non-formal education.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to amplifying diverse voices and continuing to develop creative, inclusive resources that drive societal change. This project has shown us that storytelling, when done ethically and collaboratively, can be a powerful tool for advocacy and education and interior and exterior change and critical interrogation.

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