

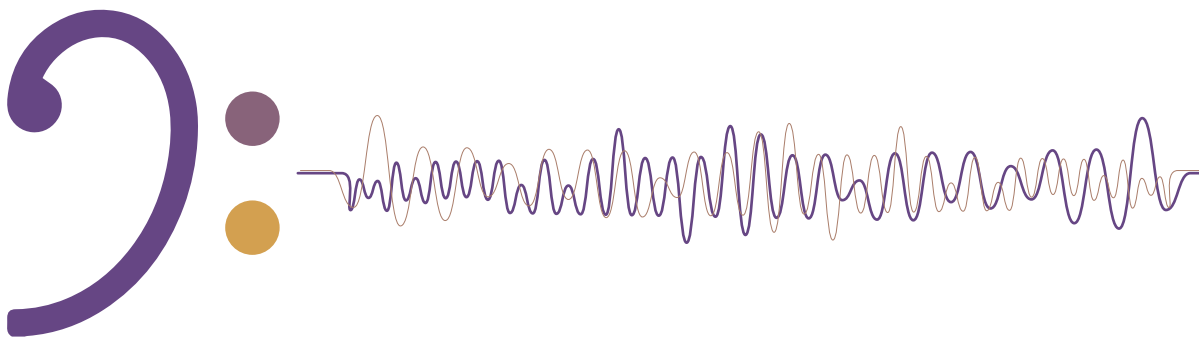


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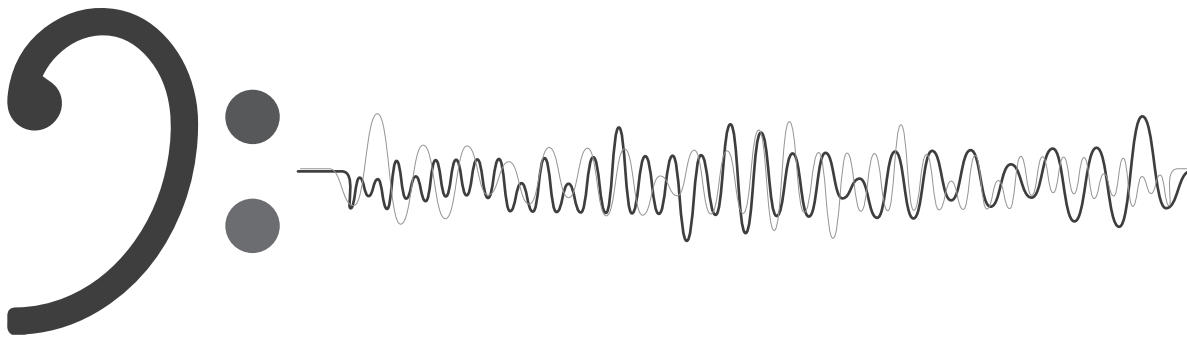
INTRODUCTION TO SOUNDSCAPE COMPOSITION

A Manual for Practitioners



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Authors:

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With thanks to Arnold Kapinova and Idila Ibrahimi
for facilitating participatory action and case study
research on soundscape composition in Albania
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MEET THE TEAM

● DR. PANOS AMELIDIS

I am a composer, sound artist and academic. My work and research falls in the area of sensory ethnography with sound and the role of recorded speech, and soundscapes in the way new artistic musical works and narratives can be created. Also, to the role of artistic work in raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage. Special importance is placed on the synergy of soundscape recordings, verbal narration, technology and the opportunities provided by the electroacoustic studio.

I read Music and Music Informatics at the Ionian University (Greece), and I completed the MusM in Electroacoustic Composition & Interactive Media programme from The University of Manchester. In 2015, I completed a PhD in Music Technology from De Montfort University. I am a Senior Lecturer in Music and Audio Technology in the department of Creative Technology Department and a board member of EMERGE Experimental Media Research Centre at Bournemouth University.

● DR. STEPHANIE SCHWANDNER-SIEVERS

I am Associate Professor in Applied Anthropology at Bournemouth University, and once led the Albanian Studies Programme at School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London (1997 – 2003) after double-majoring in Balkanology and Social Anthropology, specialising on Albanian cultures and societies. I am currently looking back at over three decades of both ethnographic engagement and research collaborations in Albania, across the wider region, and transnationally; in recent years working increasingly through participatory arts methods also, both, at home and worldwide (e.g., see <https://changingthetory.leeds.ac.uk/> and <https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/centres-institutes/centre-seldom-heard-voices>)

Music has always been one of my passions. This project has allowed me to take young people, students, and colleagues, both in Albania and the UK, on a co-creative journey of discovery, based on rigorous methodological and theoretical developments inspired by anthropology and previous participatory action research (PAR), encapsulated in the FAM-Strategy – always asking how the arts, specifically music, can help us imagine, creating, and demanding, better futures for all, across societal divisions and against prejudice anywhere.

● EMILY FISHER

I am currently studying sociology and social anthropology at Bournemouth University and am working as a research assistant for RAYS, assisting Dr. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers in development of the FAM-strategy that is described in further detail within this manual.

I worked alongside Idila Ibrahimimi and Arnold Kapinova to deliver the pilot workshop in Shkoder, co-creating soundscape compositions with young people, during September 2022. I witnessed how this arts medium had the potential to encourage young people to alter their perspectives and to engage with their surroundings in a different manner.

As someone who was new to soundscape composition as a method it was amazing to listen to the final pieces, and to understand the power that sound can have on young people.

● IDILA IBRAHIMI

I am currently working as a research assistant in the RAYS Albania project as well as on my bachelor's thesis at the University of Prishtina in Kosovo, department of Cultural Anthropology. During my studies I got to be part of the ERASMUS+ student exchange programme and study a semester in Social Anthropology at Bournemouth University, where I had the amazing, life-changing opportunity to meet Dr. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and get involved in the project.

In July 2022 I assisted two pilot workshops in Albania that had a focus on music and arts-based interventions with young people in Kukës and Shkodër, with a special focus on hip-hop music alongside Dr. Mark Berry and Arnold Kapinova with the ongoing collaboration, guidance and support of Dr. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Emily Fisher.

Later, in September, we delivered our second arts-based pilot workshop with young people in Shkodër, focusing on storytelling through audio and sound production alongside Arnold Kapinova and Emily Fisher, with the ongoing collaboration, guidance and support of Dr. Panos Amelidis and Dr. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers.

My contribution in both projects comes from my interest and love for music and arts, ethnography, and working with projects that understand the profound importance of analysing matters from an anthropological point of view.

● ARNOLD KAPINOVA

Because of my interest in phenomenology during my student years, I had heard of the concept of soundscape before. However, I knew little or close to nothing about it. When I first attended Panos' creating soundscapes workshop, I realized how amazing it is to play with sound and its magic.

At the time, I was working in a community centre with children from a marginalized community. I immediately thought to apply the newly gained skills in my curricula; the children would love it.

Thus, my journey in the world of soundscapes started. I was so happy when Palladium later contacted me to assist Dr Panos Amelidis in delivering the soundscape creation training for professionals in Shkodra and, later in Elbasan. In early September 2022, I finally got to collaborate in developing and implementing a workshop co-creating soundscapes with young people from Shkodra.

Through the soundscape workshops, I have accessed a new world, the world of sound. Using sound as an alternative tool to tell a story is needed in our visually-driven culture. It can help us be more critical and focus on our surroundings. It can help us connect with our environment and develop a heightened sense of place.

In this regard, I am so happy to have been part of this project; it means I gave my little contribution to all of this, which I consider of great importance. It has also been an enriching experience in terms of personal growth. In the end, I express my gratitude to all the people who have supported me throughout this journey, Dr. Panos Amelidis, Dr. Stephanie Schwander-Sievers, Idila Ibrahim, and Emily Fisher.

1. INTRODUCTION

This manual provides a step-by-step guide of how, and in what context, to implement soundscape composition as a youth engagement activity. Soundscape composition is a creative and pedagogic tool fostering young people's sensory, transformative, critical, and creative engagement with their social and natural environment. Soundscape composition can be applied in both formal and non-formal education; it can be used with vulnerable and marginalised youth; and it lends itself to exploring sensitive topics in challenging environments. Soundscape composition promotes the development of deep listening skills. It enables young people to connect with their place, culture, and society while supporting non-verbal ways of telling their story. In addition, it both appeals to, and advances, young people's transferrable digital literacy skills.

"Listening deeply to familiar spaces (i.e., school, classroom, busy street, neighbourhood etc.) can shift and expand our conscious awareness of our surroundings." Panos Amelidis

Depending on intervention aims and sensitivity of context, its applications range across a wide field of pedagogic and artistic engagement. For example, for vulnerable young participants with low attention span, a sensory application alone might be appropriate; or serve as a required first activity if repeated applications are possible over a sufficient span of time; for pedagogies dealing with already engaged students, more pre-structured and task-guided applications might pose an appropriately tailored challenge. This will also depend on project objectives, e.g. whether the intervention is supposed to have personally therapeutic benefits for participants only or aspire to generate critical and creative voice of young participants within a wider socio-political environment. This manual describes both possibilities, named 'option A' and 'option B', although they sit on a continuum and any combinations between the two ends of this spectrum are possible.

- ▶▶ **Option A:** soundscape composition as a **sensory and creative engagement** with the environment to build a new awareness and relationship with it. Aims may be creative, therapeutic, as well as personally, pedagogically, and cognitively transformative for individual participants. Tasks are open, sensory, and explorative (without predefining or setting any specific theme).
- ▶▶ **Option B:** soundscape composition, for example as a pedagogic application in class-rooms, guided by structured, pre-set (or agreed) tasks, aimed at strengthening **critical and creative thinking**. Aims may be creative, socially-explorative, and cognitively transformative in relation specifically to issues of social justice. Tasks are structured and purposeful (e.g. including task sheets for the explorative phase), sensory and explorative (specific themes are either pre-set or chosen by participants).

Both options use technological devices to listen, record and edit sounds while encouraging young people to experience and explore their environments in mindful, alternative ways. Either option can deepen young people's engagement with everyday environments by asking them to notice and creatively investigate the sounds that represent their daily experiences.

This artistic and educational approach is grounded in a basic theoretical understanding of, firstly, soundscape studies and soundscape composition as a unity that integrates listening, thoughts, feelings, and memories to experience the world. Secondly, it relies on theories of participatory arts-based development aimed at providing young people with space and opportunities to voice their stories and concerns, be heard and respected, and become agents of change in their own society.

This manual provides guidance for both **Options A & B**. It is an outcome of the UK-government funded RAYS project, Palladium Albania, 2021-23 and the first participatory action research case study conducted with young people in Shkodër in September 2022.

This manual is based on Dr Panos Amelidis' experience as music technologist, composer, sound practitioner, and researcher. Panos is Senior lecturer in Music and Audio Technology at Bournemouth University. Dr Stephanie Schwandner Sievers, Associate Professor in applied anthropology, with support of researcher Emily Fisher, has contributed participatory arts-based intervention theory aimed at designing, documenting, implementing, and describing the cognitive transformations evoked through sensory engagement and subsumed under the FAM concept, which will be described further below.

Soundscape compositions involves three steps:

- Exploration: going into the field, doing a soundwalk and recording soundscapes;
- Creation: editing the recorded sounds; and, finally
- Exhibition: presenting the final recording at a concert, as an installation, a sound file, or in conjunction with visual material. .

The FAM-strategy adds co-creative and evaluative steps before and after:

- A 'pre-pulse' (literally, from 'taking the pulse') of participants everyday attitudes and perceptions before starting the soundscape Exploration phase to identify, or according to, set relevant themes.
- A 'post-pulse' of participants cognitive-transformative experience, e.g. changed perspectives or understanding of Self, environment, and/or Other, depending on themes explored, and usually conducted in conjunction with the Exhibition stage.

Definitions:

The FAM-strategy is a technique by which projects aimed at facilitating socially-transformative experiences and cognitive developments through the arts can be designed, described, implemented, and evaluated. It takes its name from 'familiarisation' and 'defamiliarisation' processes, which occur when arts of any genre trigger critically-reflective, alternative, and new understandings and perspectives of Self, others, and social and cultural realities.¹ This potential of the arts has long been used, for example, in critical pedagogy aimed at empowering those at the margins of society,² and critical theatre pedagogy.³ 'Familiarisation' occurs when participants learn to understand and empathise with previously unfamiliar features or perspectives in their social and natural environment, here presented through 'sounds' that were previously never noticed, ignored, or just taken for granted. 'Defamiliarisation' occurs when participants learn new ways of seeing⁴ or listening and thereby perceiving previously familiar features or perspectives in their environment, including sounds in new ways. Although aligned in the idea that only a prior recognition of circumstances instigates individual agency for changing these,⁵ the FAM-strategy differs from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in that its outlook is socio-cultural and anthropological (ethnographic-exploratory), rather than individually-therapeutic (although therapeutic benefits are not excluded). Its focus is on recognising, bridging, and overcoming or challenging wider internal structures of exclusion within a specific society, and offering communities, through the arts, the techniques to reimagining their futures in more inclusive and critically-expressive ways.

"Turning our ears' attention to these sounds and using recording technology can transform our awareness of everyday life." (Panos Amelidis)

Panos Amelidis

Soundscape composition is a new way to examine how we experience the world because the ear receives far more auditory information than we are aware of. By manipulating, compiling, composing, and presenting these sounds, we can develop soundscape compositions that allow us to listen to the familiar world in fresh and non-familiar ways. Engaging in this process requires the listener to reflect on how they experience the world around them and their relationship to it. In a school, for example, we can start reflecting on the sounds that guide our behaviour. Our relationship to everyday soundscapes is crucial to our connection with our culture and people. Turning our attention to this relation can have a transformative effect by

- 1 Myers, R., 2011. The Familiar Strange and the Strange Familiar in Anthropology and Beyond. *General Anthropology* [online], 18(2): 2, 7-9.
- 2 Freire, P., 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- 3 Boal, A., 1974. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.
- 4 Berger, J., 2008. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin.
- 5 Garber, J., Frankel, S. A., & Herrington, C. G. 2016. Developmental Demands of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression in Children and Adolescents: Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Processes. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 12, 181-216.

allowing us to experience the everyday world differently. We recognize that we are not simply observing the world but actively bringing forth new worlds through our consciousness.⁶ Soundscape composition (and artistic practice in general) enables us to reveal new worlds by allowing us to sense differently and imagine other possibilities. According to Elliot Eisner,⁷ this is the true value of art education: it can transform consciousness.

6 Akbari, E., 2016. Soundscape compositions for art classrooms. *Art Education*, 69(4), 17-22.

7 Eisner, E., 1997. *Educating artistic vision*. Reston, V.A.: National Art Education Association.

2. SOUNDSCAPE STUDIES AND TERMINOLOGY

The field of soundscape studies provides valuable strategies for deepening aural awareness and enhancing our relationship with the environments we inhabit. Soundscape studies is a discipline that explores the sonic environment and the ubiquitous array of sounds that define our daily lives. In the 1970s, R. Murray Schafer (together with H. Westerkamp and Barry Truax) established a research and educational group called the World Soundscape Project (WSP), which documented and analysed the sonic environments of various locations. The WSP intended above all to educate and archive, but it also helped to develop 'soundscape composition'.⁸ More about the WSP can be found following the link.

The approach adopted in this manual focuses on deep (or "heightened") listening, going on soundwalks to record, and editing and presenting soundscape compositions. It is important to establish an understanding of the basic terminology as developed by scholars such as R. Murray Schafer and H. Westerkamp.

SOUND, LISTENING AND HEARING

Sound is a concept, an interpretation of variations of atmospheric pressure levels perceived by the human brain. It is essential to understand how we listen to different kinds of sounds; one distinction is that there is a difference between listening and hearing. Hearing occurs involuntarily, a subconscious process, while listening focuses attention on specific sound(s). This distinction was made in the past, but some of the most well-established definitions are the 'listening modes' by Pierre Schaeffer, Michel Chion and Pauline Oliveros. To listen is an endeavour to be cultivated; it needs the practice to develop hearing sensitivities and awareness of the surrounding sounds. Sound scholars have introduced various techniques to sharpen our ears to the surrounding sounds, e.g. stop making sounds for a while, soundwalking, and others.⁹

WHAT IS A SOUNDSCAPE?

According to Murray Schafer, a soundscape is defined as any sonic environment, which can be actual or an "abstract construction such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an environment".¹⁰ Hildegard Westerkamp,

8 Truax, B., 2002. 'Genres and Techniques of soundscape composition as developed at Simon Fraser University'. *Organised Sound*, 7(1), 5-14.

9 Schafer, R. M., 1977. *The soundscape: our sonic environment and the tuning of the world*. Rochester, V.T.: Destiny Books.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

a collaborator of Schafer and a critical contributor to the field of soundscape studies, further elucidates by describing soundscapes as “the study of the interrelationship between sound, nature and society”.¹¹ Soundscapes involve methodical studies of a given environment to understand the intersection of social behaviours and natural phenomena through the study of sounds. For example, Schafer proposed soundwalking as a helpful way of introducing “ear cleaning” in schools.¹² The idea of the soundscape refers to both the natural acoustic environment consisting of natural sounds, including animal vocalisations, the sounds of weather and other natural elements; and environmental sounds created by humans through musical composition, sound design, and other human activities, including conversation, work, and sounds of mechanical origin. One can think of soundscapes in terms of how the listener’s surroundings present themselves through sound, much like landscapes present themselves visually.

A soundwalk can be defined as “any excursion whose primary purpose is listening to the environment” (Westerkamp, 2007, p. 1)

WHAT IS A SOUNDWALK?

Hildegard Westerkamp defines the soundwalk as “any excursion whose primary purpose is listening to the environment”.¹³ This term was first used by members of Murray Schafer’s World Soundscape Project and has since been developed by Westerkamp, Andra McCartney and Janet Cardiff, among others. This act of going for a walk and attentively listening to every sound in the environment is a useful method for engaging with soundscapes. In addition, soundwalking is a vital aspect of the recording stage of soundscape composition. Soundwalks focus on walking and listening, creating the potential for opening our ears and minds to the sounds within us, around us, and the world’s soundscape. Soundwalks are a mobile listening experience and provide a shift in attention that can change how we attend to the world. Westerkamp’s practice incorporates soundwalks with audio recording and an “exploration of our ear/environment relationship, unmediated by microphones, headphones and recording equipment”.

Schafer differentiated between two types:

1. Listening walk is a walk where the participants focus on listening in silence.
2. Soundwalk would explore the soundscape of a particular area and might also include ear cleaning exercises and sound-making by the participants to explore the sounds of the environment and be aware of one’s own sounds. The participant becomes a ‘composer-performer’.¹⁴

11 Westerkamp, H., 2002. Linking soundscape composition and acoustic ecology. *Organised Sound*, 7, 51–56, p. 52.

12 Schafer, R. M., 1977. *The soundscape...*, p. 213.

13 Westerkamp, H., 2002. *Linking soundscape ...*, p. 1.

14 Schafer, R. M., 1977. *The soundscape...*, p. 213.

Soundwalk can be considered a primitive soundscape composition. In a soundwalk, the composer moves through their chosen environment, listening and recording the sounds they hear along the way. The composer might invite participants to participate in the experience of the soundwalk and may or may not incorporate their vocal observations and reflections into the recording. Organised throughout the world, today's soundwalks often take shape as public events emphasising awareness and engagement with the environment, usually in an urban environment. The soundwalk highlights the embodied nature of listening on the human scale. In a soundwalk, compositional techniques become the physical movements of the recordist's body. As they walk, stop, turn around, or change their pace, the perspective of the soundscape shifts.¹⁵

WHAT IS SOUNDSCAPE COMPOSITION?

Soundscape composition is a specific creative process of listening, recording, editing, and presenting soundscapes in multifaceted contexts. This term borrows many of the key components identified by Schafer and his contemporaries; these compositions are a careful study of the sonic environments of our culture. In addition, there is an added emphasis on creative intervention in these aural spaces through the acts of recording and collecting sounds, editing and composing the audio files, and presenting the finished projects as audio recordings, art installations or video art. Truax explains that soundscape pieces can motivate listeners to concentrate on and explore sounds more profoundly, hearing them in a non-familiar way than in everyday life.¹⁶ Westerkamp believes that listening itself is integral to soundscape composition and that regular listening practice will benefit the composer by deepening the relationship with the acoustic environment.¹⁷

A soundscape composition is a musical piece intended for playback that incorporates actual recorded sound from natural or urban environments. The composer most often makes these recordings. The composer can later process the recorded sounds in the studio (using dedicated software for audio editing and mixing), fragment elements from the recording, combine recordings from different locations, manipulate the recorded sounds, and so on. In soundscape composition, the microphone becomes a type of musical instrument in itself. Like a camera lens or microscope, a microphone can "enhance or distort one's perception of specific parts of our sensory environment".¹⁸

"In soundscape composition, the microphone becomes a type of musical instrument in itself." (Derrick, 2014)

Sound recording takes various forms, from podcasts to soundscape compositions, sonic documentaries, verbal narrations, and recorded soundwalks. Those forms are acts of

15 Paquette, D. and McCartney, A., 2012. Soundwalking and the bodily exploration of places, p. 135.

16 Truax, 2002. 'Genres and Techniques...', p. 219.

17 Westerkamp, H., 2002. Linking soundscape ..., p. 53.

18 Derrick, R. G., 2014. Acoustic illuminations: recorded space as soundscape composition [online] Music Dissertation, University of Canterbury. Available from: Acoustic illuminations: recorded space as soundscape composition (canterbury.ac.nz)

representation and interpretation. It involves careful selection (and editing) of specific sound clips and the process of constructing a narrative. It generates new forms of knowing and sensing the world. The creative use of sound recording provides an ideal opportunity to apply the FAM-strategy: making the ordinary and familiar-looking (or -sounding) things in an unfamiliar way, an extraordinary, way. Soundscape composition transforms the ordinary world into an extraordinary world. The composer makes use of the devices of sound recording, editing, sonic representation and metaphors, de-familiarising the everyday aspects of reality and representing them from a different angle.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE THROUGH LISTENING

As Zećo describes, the act of listening “plays a role in knowledge production about the place”.¹⁹ She continues:

*what places are listened to and how the listening is experienced underpins the socio-political notions of place. The interactions between social factors in the context of class, race, gender, ethnic identities, and so on shaping material cultural forms such as architecture, public monuments, and street names. Such factors can be voiced differently in neighbourhoods or community spaces.*²⁰

When we record sounds, we can detect the invisible aspects of cultural life and human, non-human life, and inanimate objects, essential components in constructing a socio-political understanding of place, as experienced by the sensitised listener. Soundwalks are an act of attentive listening, and field recordings are established methods employed by composers in listening to places and are often deployed as a means of gathering recordings and subsequently displacing them in the creation of pieces of sonic fiction, called soundscape compositions. It is important to train our ears to appreciate the range of sonic experiences that soundscape can offer. Schafer suggests several ‘ear training’ exercises to be practised while soundwalking (e.g. compare the pitches of drainpipes on a city street). While soundwalking, people are encouraged to recognise different aesthetic properties of experienced sound, such as high and low sounds, gestures, and textures.²¹

19 Zećo, M., 2021. Listening and Recording In Situ: Entanglement in the sociopolitical context of place. *Organised Sound*, 26(2), 284-290, p. 284

20 Ibid., p. 284

21 Schafer, R. M., 1977. *The soundscape...*

4. RECORDING AS TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The creative process of composing soundscapes requires one to go out for a soundwalk and record the sounds of traffic, birds, cars, metro stations, children playing, and a river flowing in their city. To do so, one only needs to use the microphone of their mobile phone. Listening to familiar spaces with headphones differs from the usual perception of environments. As a result, your sense of hearing is heightened, and it is possible to hear multiple sounds that blend into the background. For example, one can point the microphone toward the ground while walking and hear their shoes on the pavement. This experience heightens one's appreciation and sensitivity to the sounds around them even when not using these devices. One can change their habits, like, listening to music with headphones while being in an exciting environment sonically. Moreover, using recording technology to direct one's perception of sound can be a means of reflecting on their awareness of the external world. Listening and recording have a transformative effect on our conscious awareness of ordinary surroundings. By editing the recorded sounds, one can create artworks in the form of soundscape compositions. These compositions exist as digital audio files and provide snippets of one's experiences of living in their city. As artistic work, they have personal resonance and meaning; yet, they remain open to the interpretation of the listeners who understand them through their experiences. In the workshop plan included in this document, we propose how the creative process of listening, recording, editing and presenting soundscape compositions can be applied in classrooms for young people.

5. EDITING - WEB RESOURCES

Further resources regarding the field of soundscape studies, as well as how to use freeware for editing sounds, can be found in the following links. Practitioners interested in implementing soundscape composition in the classroom are encouraged to navigate through the proposed web pages.

<http://sounds.bl.uk/sound-maps/>

<https://www.sfu.ca/~truax/wsp.html>

<http://www.acousticecology.org/>

<http://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzJ2VyYkmaA> (Audacity tutorial)

6. EDUCATIONAL APPLICATION - THE FAM-STRATEGY

Soundscape composition can be used as an educational tool in the classroom environment. When implemented in this context, educators can either co-identify, together with participants, or stipulate, specific themes of pedagogic relevance, using the transformative creative process of the soundscape composition process. As this potential lends itself to foster empathy and tolerance across societal division, examples of themes that may be relevant and beneficial for young people to explore may relate to gender, age, class, ethnic, or other divisions in society. These could be explored in relation to the sounds found in spaces demarcating such societal divisions (e.g. marginalised groups might live in spaces of greater sound pollution than privileged groups).

For practitioners, their knowledge of participants' abilities and vulnerabilities is of great importance. Different group of young people might require variation and adaptation of the FAM-strategy in order to avoid alienation or disengagement. Also, practical considerations about time and space will play a role. One advantage of soundscape composition as an intervention practice with vulnerable young people is its non-verbal nature of exploration and story-telling. Accordingly, a pre-pulse exercise based on non-verbal and non-written techniques (e.g. music elicitation) might be better suited than a survey-type of questionnaire to elicit existing attitudes and perspectives, if time permits. Also, design choices need to be made regarding the degree of pre-structuring the activity, depending on objectives such as theme-bound outcomes. These would need to choose between one of the following, or a staggering of the following, above-introduced two options:

- ▶▶ **Option A:** Is immersive and sensory: centred around sensory engagement and personal storytelling. Unstructured with predominant focus on technical skills and practical creative processes. Fast-paced, shorter sessions over a longer period of time, ideally with paperless evaluations.
- ▶▶ **Option B:** is based on critical and creative thinking: Structured around guiding theme, emphasis on changing perspective and crossing societal boundaries to familiarise with the perspective of others, evaluating attitudinal shifts in participants. This option acts as useful tool for addressing internal structures of exclusion.

Definitions:

Critical thinking – selected quotes:

- 'Critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do.'²²
- It is the 'deliberate use of skills and strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome.'²³
- 'Critical thinking consists of seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth.'²⁴

Creative thinking – selected quotes:

- The forming of atypical ideas that vary from current individual perceptions.²⁵
- Conversely, creativity relies on 'divergent thinking, referring to the capacity to generate multiple alternative solutions to questions with no single answer.'²⁶

PRE-PULSE, POST-PULSE & TASK-SHEETS::

A FAM-informed implementation requires evaluation practices that act as evidence of the art-based intervention practice chosen, here soundscape composition, to affect a transformation of perspectives and fostering inclusion with the participant group. These evaluation stages are known as the pre-pulse and post-pulse (see above). They should occur at either end of the soundscaping intervention. Ideally, the pre-pulse should have minimal input from the facilitators, aiming to uncover current, unbridled perspectives of participants prior to taking part in the intervention. An appropriate, engaging method to utilise within the pre-pulse is that of music elicitation. Dependent on pedagogic objectives, participants can either be informed of the theme prior to deciding the music to represent their opinions, or (having been informed that the workshop aims to address societal divisions), the theme can arise from a discussion and consensus surrounding the songs that are expressed in the pre-pulse. Each participant should be encouraged to discuss their song choice with the group and how, and why, it represents their perspective. If the intervention must be shortened, paper questionnaires can be

22 Ennis, R. H. 1985. A logical basis for measuring critical thinking skills. *Educational Leadership*, 43(2), 44–48, p. 45.

23 Halpern, D. F. 1998. Teaching critical thinking for transfer across domains: Dispositions, skills, structure training, and metacognitive monitoring. *American Psychologist*, 53(4), 449–455, p. 449.

24 Willingham, D. T. 2007. Critical thinking: Why is it so hard to teach? *American Educator*, 8–19, p. 8.

25 Finke, R. A., 2014. *Creative Imagery: Discoveries and Inventions in Visualization* [online]. 1st Edition. New York: Psychology Press.

26 Groyecka-Bernard, A., Karwowski, M., and Sorokowski, P., 2021. Creative thinking components as tools for reducing prejudice. Evidence from experimental studies on adolescents. *Thinking Skills and Creativity* [online], 39, p. 3.

effective (see example pre-pulse questionnaire, appendix 1). For evaluation, this can then be compared with material produced once the workshop has finished, the post-pulse. These pulses can be formatted in different ways but will provide better evidence when pre-existing and changing attitudes and thinking are captured, either through notes, questionnaires, informal interviews and voice recording (with participants permission), or similar (see FAM-concept paper).

“It [the task-sheet] was very useful, and it allowed me to gain new ideas and to express them more easily” Feedback post-pulse, female participant, Shkoder.

No intervention and evaluation should be conducted without appropriate ethics considerations and, in the case of research, research ethics approval, to ensure participants’ right to informed consent, to withdraw at any time, anonymisation and data protection in accordance with the laws of the country.

The preceding pages assisted in establishing a basic understanding of soundscape composition as a practice, its history and conceptualisation, as well as its application – original in combination with the FAM-strategical application – as tool of cognitive and societal transformation in youth work and educational practice.

The remainder of the manual consists of an adaptable step-by-step workshop plan to guide practitioners in implementing soundscape composition when working with young people.

7. WORKSHOP PLAN

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The training scenario can happen in a computer room or classroom using computers. A recording device is necessary (mobile phone) and a device with the ability to play back music files.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Headphones (or earphones)
- Mobile phones (iOS or Android)
- Audacity with FFMpeg library installed.
- Computers (with Audacity installed)

AIMS

This workshop plan is designed to encourage trainers to implement a soundscape composition workshop in the classroom (alternatively, a youth centre, or other spaces of professional formal or non-formal youth engagement). It aims at developing participants' active listening and raising their awareness of the sounds and soundscapes surrounding them. It seeks to realize the importance of the auditory experience, which can contribute to the sense of "belonging" to a community and the environment. In addition, it aims to help participants discover the invisible but magical world of sounds. Finally, it seeks to utilize this raw material in the composition of original music and the expression of emotions through creative and innovative ways.

The approach will be made through a process that incorporates research, adventure, and creativity. Initially, participants will recognize and characterize sounds from their daily lives, focusing on the importance of sounds and their impact on the quality of human life. In combination with an application of the FAM strategy, participants might be directed to explore pre-decided themes that are indicative of societal divisions (e.g. exploring sounds of female vs. male spaces). Participants will then record a soundwalk in their area. Finally, they will learn how to use an audio editing software tool to create soundscapes.

"The FAM informed implementation aims to foster a bridging of societal divisions, embracing alternative perspectives, enhancing of creative and critical thinking skills, and advancing cognitive transformation."

Teaching aims:

- To record sounds of the area, everyday life and social surroundings
- To recognize and evaluate the sounds of the environment through active listening.
- To understand the value of the sense of hearing for human life.
- To recognise how sound can help identify, demarcate and represent distinct societal spaces.
- To characterize and evaluate sounds and music using appropriate terms.
- To develop non-familiar ways of telling a story through composing a soundscape composition.

Time required: minimum 4 hours – can be implemented in short training sessions.

Level of Difficulty: Moderate

Type of activity: Active learning

Level of interactivity: High

Phase 1

Introduction to soundscape concepts

Option B only

FAM-guided pre-pulse of participants through discussions, music elicitation, or questionnaires: establishing existing perspectives on social or natural environment. If the theme is being set through pre-pulse discussion, facilitators would need to decide what theme was most prevalent before proceeding. .

Option A & B

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 10 minutes

Place: classroom

Activity where the teacher asks students to:

- Write down three sounds you just heard when you woke up.
- Next, write down three sounds you heard when you came to school.
- Next, write down three sounds you currently hear inside or outside the classroom.
- Next, write down three sounds that you like (not musical).
- Finally, write three sounds you do not like.

Ask students to share the sounds they wrote down in class and encourage discussion about the importance of sounds in our lives.

Option B only

If following a FAM-guided creative and critical intervention, this would be the appropriate time to ask participants to think of sounds associated with the specific theme, e.g. sounds associated with male/female spaces, sounds associated with exclusion, sounds associated with environmentalism..

Option A & B

TEACHER ACTIVITY

Time duration: 10 minutes

Place: classroom

Modes of Listening

The teacher defines “sound” and the difference from “audio”.

Sound: variations of the pressure level in the atmosphere that reaches our ears are interpreted as sound.

Audio: sound reproduced by media (analogue or digital). No human is involved but a device.

The teacher offers a new idea to students: we listen in different modes.

We listen to someone or something, and through the intermediary of sound, aiming to identify the source, the cause, it treats the sound as a sign of this source.

We hear lots of things we are not trying to listen to nor understand passively. Hearing is involuntary. .

Phase 2

Thinking of soundscapes

Option A & B

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 10 minutes

Place: classroom

The teacher asks students to look at a painting and imagine what would be the sounds they hear if they were in the presence of this landscape? In groups students should write down their responses and then share in class.

Example of painting to use: Albert Bierstadt “*Among the Sierra Nevada*”.

Option B: only

Facilitators may opt to use a painting that represents decided upon theme.

Option A & B

TEACHER ACTIVITY

Time duration: 10 minutes

Place: classroom

What is a Soundscape?

The idea of the soundscape refers to both the natural acoustic environment consisting of natural sounds, including animal vocalisations and the sounds of weather and other natural elements; and environmental sounds created by humans, through musical composition, sound design, and other human activities including conversation, work, and sounds of mechanical origin.

Think of soundscapes in terms of how the listener's surroundings present themselves through sound, much in the same way as landscapes present themselves visually.

Phase 3

Field recording and Soundwalks

Option A & B

TEACHER / STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 30 minutes

Place: classroom

The art of Field Recording

Field recording is the art of capturing audio recordings outside of a recording studio. Field recording is all about capturing audio straight from the source, no matter where it is. Subject matter ranges from natural to human-made sounds.

How to make a field recording?

- Use your smartphone's audio recording app.
- Do a Soundwalk!
- Decide what sounds to record
- Listen to the sound source
- Monitor whilst recording using earphones

The teacher will demo how to use audio recording apps to capture sounds in the classroom.

Then ask the students to capture sounds in the classroom (they could probably go out of the class for that purpose) using their smartphones. Then come and listen back to the sounds they recorded.

The art of Soundwalk

Walk where the participant (or participants) can concentrate on listening. The main goal of the activity is to facilitate heightened listening. When more than one person is involved, silence is expected throughout (no chatting during the walk). And there is usually a discussion about the sounds, and the soundwalk, at the end.

Soundwalks can be recorded and used as a source of sounds, or used as an inspiration for works.

“Field recording is the art of capturing audio recordings outside of a recording studio.”

Phase 4

Soundwalk exercise

Option A & B

TEACHER / STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 30 minutes

Place: outside of classroom

You will record the sounds that you hear on your walk using a mobile phone so that you can listen to them again at a later time.

Duration of soundwalk: 10 minutes.

What you need:

- Headphones (or earphone)
- Smart phone (which is your recording device)

Route: Perhaps look at a map and try to plan a journey that takes you through a few different areas (e.g., past houses, a factory, a river, near a road), but also passes through key locations (e.g. past the town centre with the clock bell, the railway station, the bus station, the shopping centre).

Remember: you are a **listener!**

Phase 4.1

Exploration Day

(Option A), Option B

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: Whole day

Place: Personal/social environment

Depending on the time available for the workshop, it would be beneficial at this point to allow participants an individual exploration day.

Armed with both conceptual and practical knowledge, participants should be encouraged to explore their own surroundings away from the workshop to record sounds for creation of their soundscape.

If implementing with critical and creative objectives, practical divergent thinking activities should take place prior to dispersal of participants. A task sheet could be developed around the specific theme to encourage alternative perspective-taking. A simplified example of such a task sheet, in this case focusing on gender norms, is available in appendix 2.

Phase 5

Introduction to Audio Editing

Option A & B

TEACHER / STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 30 minutes

Place: classroom

The teacher will now introduce the essential functions of audio editing using the software Audacity. First, they will demonstrate how to import the recorded soundwalk into Audacity and then perform editing functions such as cutting sounds, saving them as individual files, creating fade-ins/outs, and changing the amplitude of a sound.

Then they will ask students to import their soundwalk into the software and perform similar edits. The aim is to specify significant sound events captured in the soundwalk recording and then isolate those and export them as separate audio files, ready to be used at a later stage.

Phase 6

Composing a soundscape

Option A & B

TEACHER / STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 60 minutes

Place: classroom

Based on the soundwalk recording, edit the sounds you gathered in smaller audio files and create a soundscape composition study based on a narrative or idea you will come up with.

The narrative could be something along the lines of a representation of an idea (i.e. bewilderment, inclusivity, cultural diversity).

Your composition should be between 2-3 minutes long. Feel free to experiment with different edits and repetitions of the sounds.

As an example, listen to the composition "Bewilderment" by Valerio Zanini.

Here's a link to Zanini's composition: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GIRjrUqm6g>

Tips:

Explore the interesting and unique sounds available in your location.

Soundscape composition relies upon detailed listening, and clever editing.

Often, there is a play between sounds that are in the foreground and those that are in the background.

Sounds might move, from being in the foreground to being in the background or vice versa..

Phase 7

Exhibition (and Post-Pulse)

Option A & B

TEACHER / STUDENT ACTIVITY

Time duration: 1-2 hours

Place: classroom

The participants will each have a chance to exhibit their soundscape to the rest of the group. Discussion should be encouraged surrounding the perspective and purpose of their individual composition and any difficulties they faced whilst recording. During this phase it would also be beneficial to ask the participants what they both liked and disliked about the workshop, and what they feel they have learnt – this is to gauge likelihood of them using these skills moving forward, and how the workshop can be bettered for next implementation.

Option B

If FAM-strategy is applied (implementing with a critical and creative learning and evaluation objective) there must also be discussion about learning around the themed task. Participants should be coached to explain how the soundscape represents the societal boundary, and what they feel they individually have learned. Despite individual exhibitions taking place facilitators should encourage conversation between group members during this phase – various compositions may present differing ideas, and these differences can equally have the power to alter perspective.

This acts as a narrative, reflective 'post-pulse' in conjunction with the aforementioned aims and facilitators are encouraged to voice record this exhibition for evaluative purposes. Questionnaires can be given in conjunction with recordings, or instead of, in exceptional circumstances.

"If implementing soundscape composition with a critical and creative objective in mind, there must also be discussion about learning around the themed task."

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"[I learnt] the different ways of how people express their different views/opinions towards one or multiple matters" participant response, Shkoder.

"The imagination doesn't know any limits. Even though, in the beginning it seemed impossible for me to work with something so new, in the end I still managed to come up with satisfying results" participant response, Shkoder.

"Soundscape composition is a form of art where you can express your own opinions" participant response, Shkoder.

EVALUATION SYNOPSIS

the initial programme to better suit the needs of future participants. It was decided that two manners of implementing the intervention would empower future facilitators to better meet the needs of the young people participating. Due to this, the two differing aims and steps outlined above (Option A and Option B) were developed.

The young people, within this pilot project, produced insightful final pieces that were coupled with dynamic group discussions. This supported the aims of the FAM-strategy, utilising creative arts mediums to encourage young people to engage with perspectives beyond their immediate experiences.

FINAL NOTE

Subtle editing can transform a "normal", "everyday" soundscape into something mysterious and wonderful. Sound designers in film often do this to add to the film's story and the world of the movie in which it takes place.

Therefore, a soundscape is not simply presenting pre-recorded soundscapes but telling a story through the control and manipulation of these pre-recorded soundscapes.

To conclude the workshop on creating soundscapes, the teacher or youth worker can organise a showcase event where students will present their soundscape compositions in concert. The concert can take place in the classroom or the social events room of the school, alternatively in a youth centre. It might further be possible to explore possibilities of disseminating the artistic creation to a wider audience in collaboration with the young people, e.g. creating an online exhibition.

"Subtle editing can transform a "normal", "everyday" soundscape into something mysterious and wonderful."

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APPENDIX 1: PRE-PULSE EXAMPLE (QUESTIONNAIRE TYPE ONLY)

Section 1 could contain more general questions, should as age (if participants vary), gender, or any other administrative questions that are deemed appropriate. Names should not be required so they are unidentifiable.

1. Expectations and Motivations

1.1. What motivated you to take part in this workshop?

1.2 What do you hope to learn in this soundscape workshop?

3. Technical Understanding and Application of Soundscape Composition

3.1 Do you know what soundscaping and soundscape composition is?

Yes

No

3.1.2 If yes, where have you learnt/heard about it before?

3.2. Soundscape composition is based on: (select as many as you think are correct)

Active listening and recording

Writing Lyrics

Recording interviews

Telling stories through sound

Applying software skills (such as audacity)

Singing and recording

3.3. Can you envisage anywhere you could apply soundscape composition in the future?

4. Storytelling through soundscape composition

4.1. Prior to this workshop did you engage in storytelling through writing, music, video or any other art form?

Yes

No

4.1.2. If yes, which art form/s? _____

4.2. Do you think soundscaping can be used to tell stories that matter?

Yes

No

4.3. What type of stories do you think are important for young people to tell?

4.4. Do you think gender norms in your environment restrict the choices you have as a young person to shape your future?

Yes

No

4.4.1 Please explain your answer to the question above:

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE EXPLORATION TASK SHEET

1. Can you identify, in your environment, places where only men, or only women can inhabit?

Men:

Women:

Which places do genders come together?

2. Which gendered sounds can you record in these places?

3. Which places can you not enter because you are a young man or young women?

4. Can you identify sounds associated with the environment of a:

Younger woman:

Older woman:

Younger man:

Older man:

4.1 What differences did you identify?

4.2 Think about how you can describe the differences have discovered, through sound.

For this exercise it is of utmost importance not to record any sounds without permission from people in the space you are recording (if there are people present), and you must not record in places that could put you at risk of any danger.

