

# How does an art therapy intervention cultivate resilience in migrant populations facing adverse circumstances?

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The Red Pencil's experience



Culture  
&  
Mental  
Health

Note: All photos in this presentation are used with consent of the individuals

# The Red Pencil Humanitarian Mission

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When we rescue the child, we save the adult

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Note: All photos in this presentation are used with consent of the individuals



# Our vision and mission

## Our Vision

Every individual uses the creative process of the arts to care for one's mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing towards healing and self-empowerment.

## Our Mission

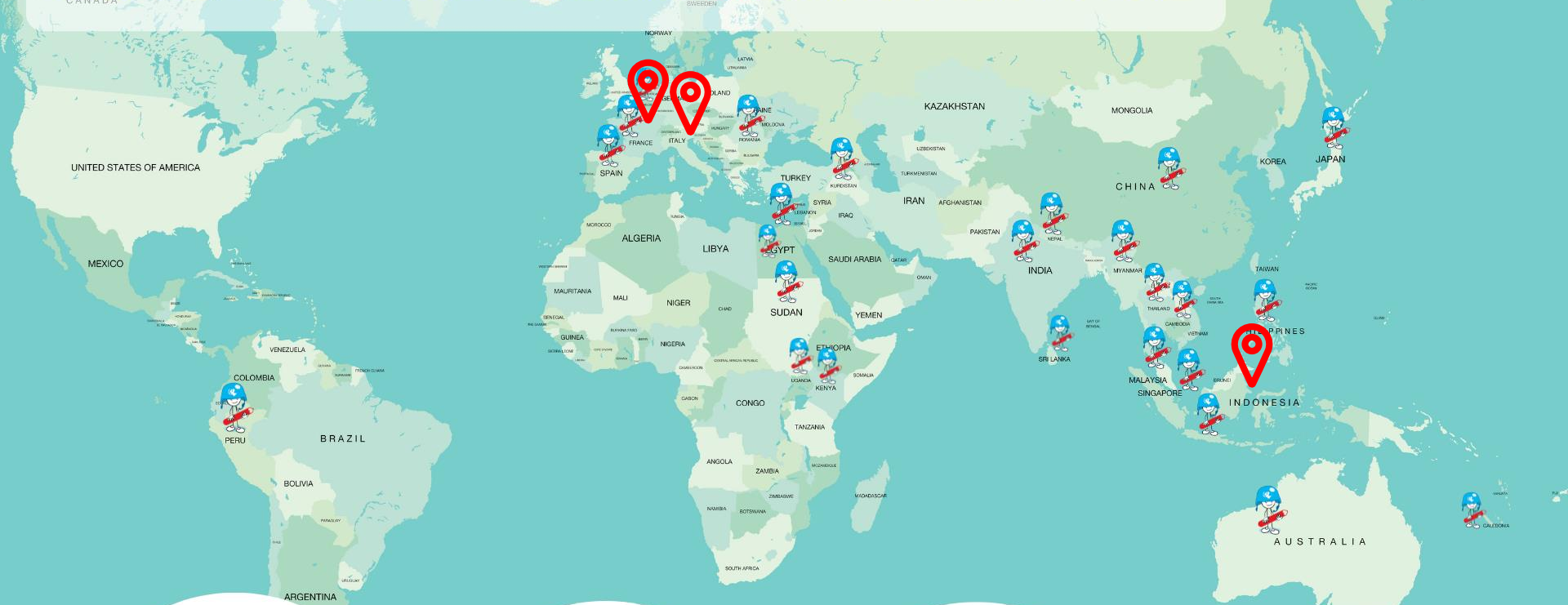
To instill hope and empowerment through **creative arts therapy** to vulnerable children, adults, families, and communities facing overwhelming life circumstances towards CHANGE: to improve mental health and resilience in creating a better and happier future for oneself and for others.

## How we work towards the Sustainable Development Goals





Since 2011, we have conducted missions in **25** countries around the world.



**24,406**  
empowered  
beneficiaries



**390**  
partner  
organisations



**872**  
trained caregivers  
& social workers



**1,600+**  
volunteer arts  
therapists






# In Europe, The Red Pencil works along 4 axes and proposes 4 interventions ...

## 4 axes



## 4 interventions

-  Group art therapy interventions
-  Arts-based capacity building and training for educators & caregivers
-  Discovery workshops
-  Corporate Resilience Training

Our operating model is highly collaborative, as we partner with local organizations, creative art therapists, and donors worldwide to fulfil our mission.



# How does an art therapy intervention cultivate resilience in migrant populations facing adverse circumstances?

## *The Red Pencil's experience*

### BELGIUM & SPAIN



Asylum seekers and forcibly displaced people  
(children, UAM, adults)



Group AT sessions  
(Resilience)



Reception centers in Belgium and Spain



Fedasil, Red Cross

### ROUMANIA

Institutionalized children escaping from Ukraine

Group AT sessions  
(Trauma-informed)

Shelters

Hope & Homes

### ERASMUS +

Migrant youth and youth workers

Train-the-trainer  
Arts-based capacity building & training for youth workers

Cyprus, Italy, France, Belgium

Essevesse, Ceipes  
Hope for Children







# Erasmus+ : a dance and art-based programme for social inclusion of migrant and refugee youth.



## WHERE

Nicosia (Cyprus), Palermo (Italy),  
Marseille (France), Brussels (Belgium)



## WHEN

ONGOING - From Sept. 2023 to Sept. 2025



## TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Train-the-trainer  
Group arts-based intervention



## BENEFICIARIES

About 40 Youth workers and 320 young migrants



## OBJECTIVES

To bring the benefits of dance and art therapy to young migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, by reinforcing the capacity of youth workers to use creative tools and techniques to improve young people's life skills & well-being.



## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

CEIPES



essevesse  
Antonino Ceresia Fabio Dolce



## WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Project number : 2023-1-BE04-KA220-YOU-000159447



# Spain : an art-therapy intervention to build resilience in forcibly displaced people



## WHERE

Andalusia (Spain)



## WHEN

ONGOING – Since 2019



## TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Group art therapy intervention  
Arts-based Capacity Building & Training



## BENEFICIARIES

About 500 asylum seekers and migrants  
Children, unaccompanied minor and young adults



## OBJECTIVES

- 1.To help asylum seekers build resilience, re-gain self-esteem and integrate into the community.
- 2.To leave lasting impact by training local care providers (Arts-based capacity building and Training) who are exposed to fatigue and secondary trauma through their work and enable them to implement basic arts-based techniques into their own practice.
- 3.To conduct research to study how art therapy can address migratory grief and build resilience.



## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



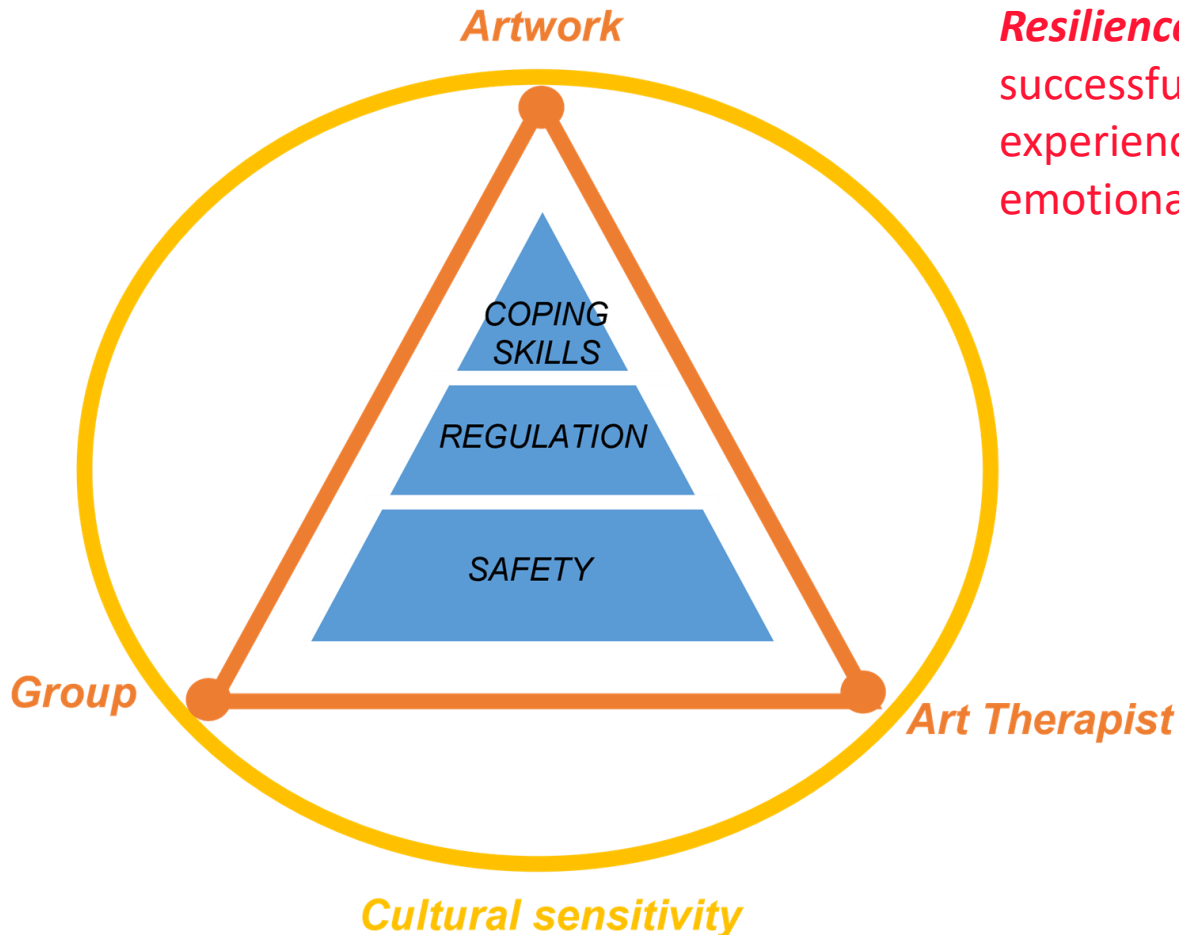
## WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF





# The art therapy intervention : an art-therapy

## *The model to foster resilience*



**Resilience** is a process (and outcome) of successfully adapting to adverse life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility



# The art therapy intervention : an art-therapy

## The model

AT group intervention aiming at building resilience : Eight-session plan

Session	Objectives	Art therapy activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce Art Therapy</li> <li>- Presentation and getting to know one another</li> <li>- Connect to self-identity (culture, country of origin)</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>Symbol of self</u>" - collage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup: choose an image to introduce yourself</li> <li>- Create a collage artwork that represents yourself</li> <li>- Present in the group and reflect on similarities &amp; differences</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote safety</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>My safe place</u>" - recycled 3D material (box, fabric, wool, string, paper,...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup : breathing, grounding &amp; visualisation of a safe place</li> <li>- Create a safe place (real or imaginary) where you can go when you need to</li> <li>- Reflect on what it is like to be safe</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster group cohesion</li> <li>- Experience positive emotions in a group</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>We are connected</u>" - painting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup: group movement-activities on music selected by the participants</li> <li>- Create group mandala on large sheets</li> <li>- Reflect on what it is like to be in a group</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to emotions and emotions regulation</li> <li>- Body awareness</li> <li>- Emotions regulation</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>Where do I feel my emotions?</u>" - pastels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup : breathing &amp; body scan</li> <li>- In pairs: ask your partner to draw a life-size outline of your body. Make a map of your emotions inside. On the outside bring in things that will make you feel good</li> <li>- Reflect on emotions</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highlight internal resources of the participant</li> <li>- Highlight support circle</li> <li>- Allow reconnection with loved ones</li> <li>- Allow a place for absence/deaths</li> <li>- Express gratitude (positive emotion)</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>My loved ones, my pillars</u>" -pastels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup : relaxation</li> <li>- Create a piece of work honoring those people who are/have been significant in your life</li> <li>- Present in duo</li> <li>- Reflect on what does it feel to honor loved ones</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Body awareness</li> <li>- Letting go</li> <li>- Connect to implicit knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>On the way to the unknown</u>" - clay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup : grounding, exploring clay with your eyes closed, and create 5 mini artworks</li> <li>- Choose the one that touches you most and further develop. Create an environment around that makes you feel good</li> <li>- Share in the group</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Free expression</li> <li>- Promote self-agency</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>Free expression</u>" - choice of material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup : body scan</li> <li>- No directive</li> <li>- Reflect on what does the artwork tells about you</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare to leave</li> <li>- Reinforce self-confidence and empowerment</li> <li>- Give perspective, instil hope, help to project in the future</li> </ul>	<p>"<u>My amulet</u>" - recycled 3D material (cardboard, fabric, wool, string, paper,...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmup : body scan</li> <li>- Create an object that embody positive aspects learned throughout the sessions that will help you in the future</li> <li>- Reflect on personal strenghts and future</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow participants to reflect on their journey</li> <li>- Collect evaluation measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio image recording interviews</li> </ul>

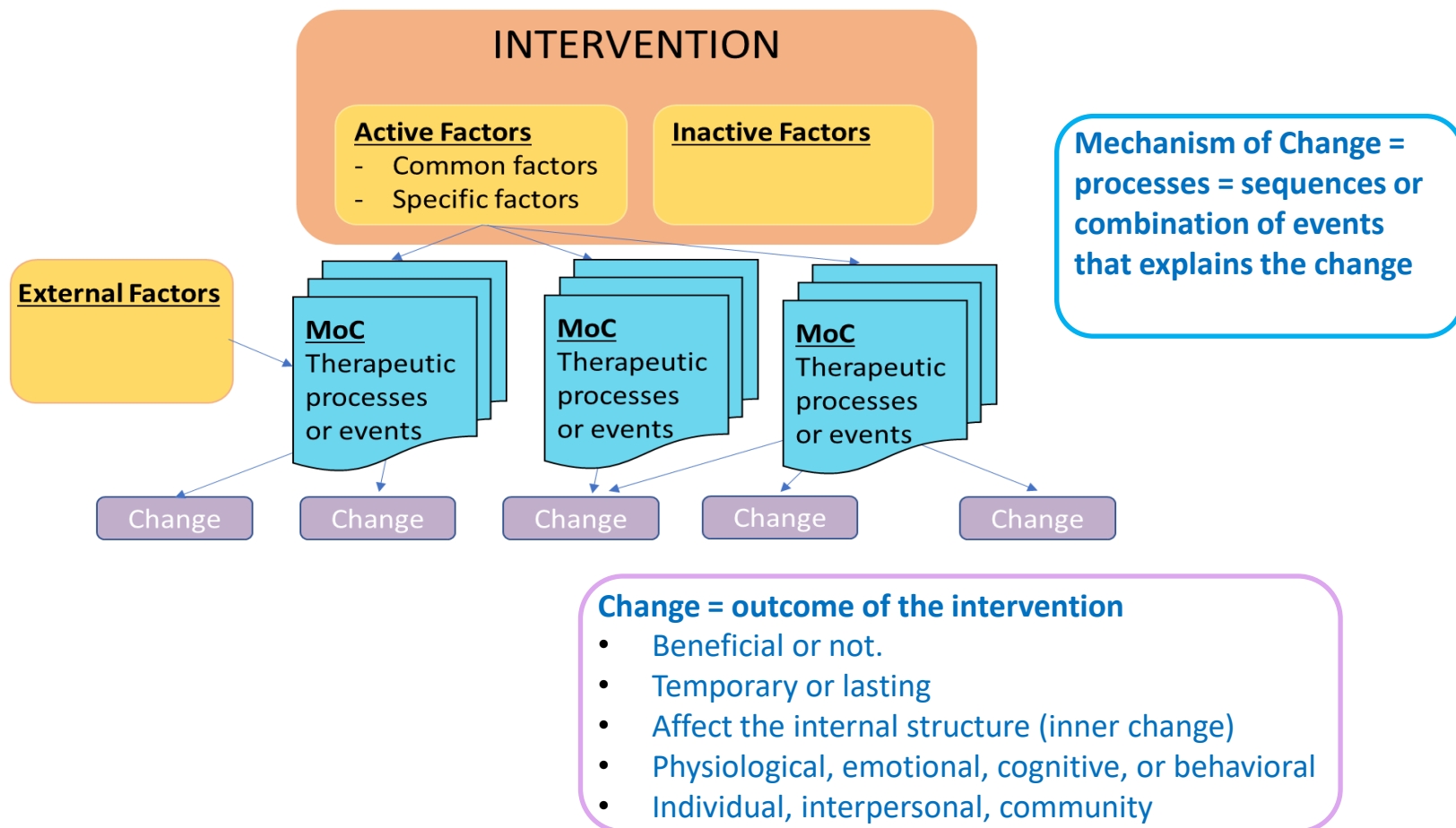
# The objective of the research



To investigate the perspective of adult forcibly displaced people on the process of change after a short art therapy intervention aimed at building resilience, i.e., to identify (a) the positive changes they experience, (b) the associated therapeutic factors and (c) the mechanisms they believe to be responsible for these changes.

# The change process in art therapy

Active factor = active elements or components of the intervention that affect change



(Cuijpers et al., 2019)  
(Kazdin, 2007)

# The participants

- Participants recruited at the end of the intervention;  
no inclusion criteria other than having attended the sessions
- All were residents from the reception or humanitarian centers from The Red Cross, Malaga
- All participated to an information session about the research and signed an informed consent documents which was available in their native language;
- Pseudonymisation of data

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**



11 Participants



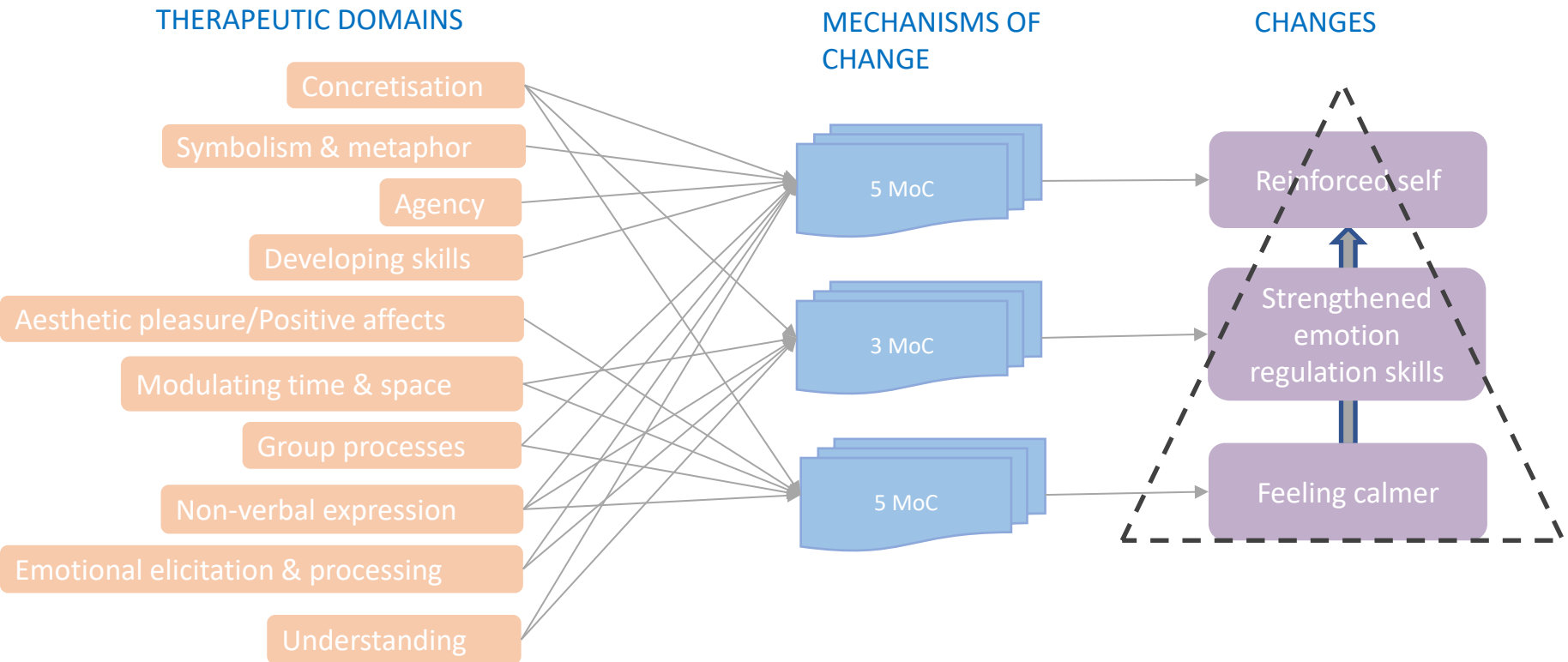
Morocco, Mali, Ukraine  
Ivory Coast, Russia



8 men / 3 women



Adults



(de Witte et al., 2021)

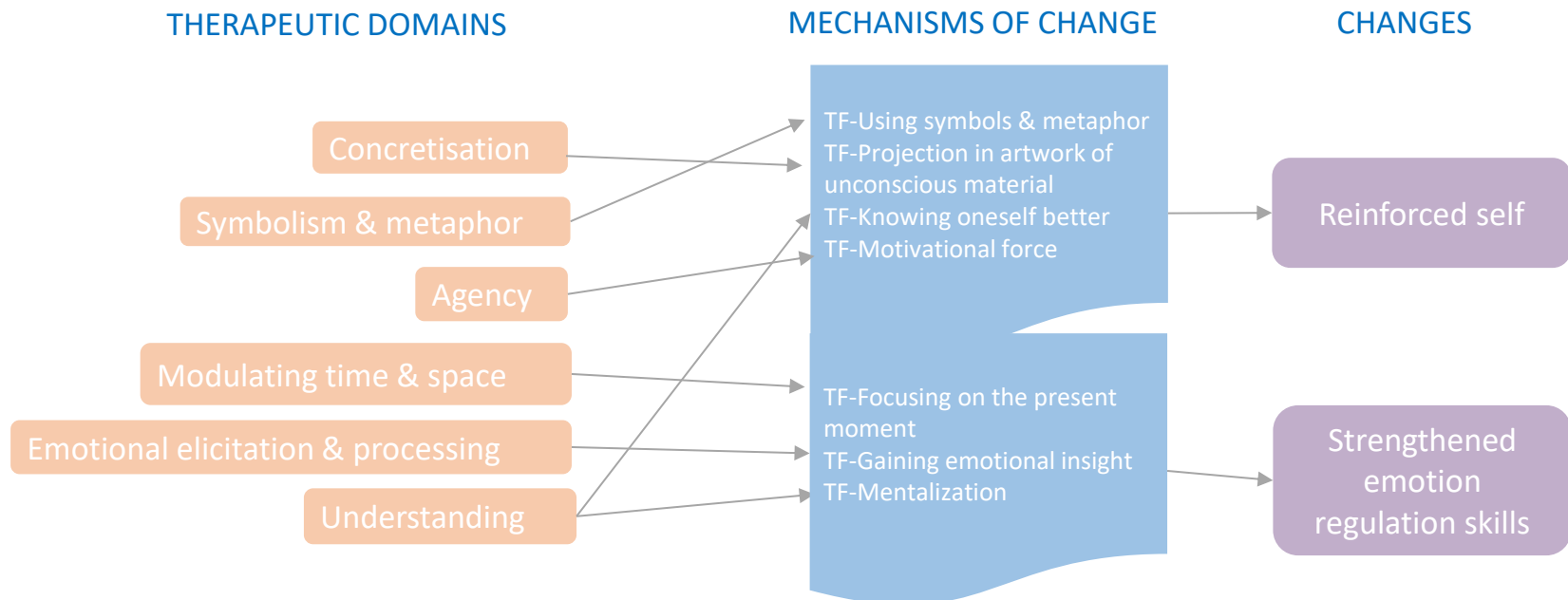


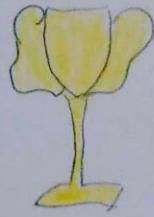
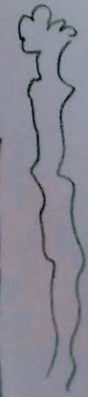
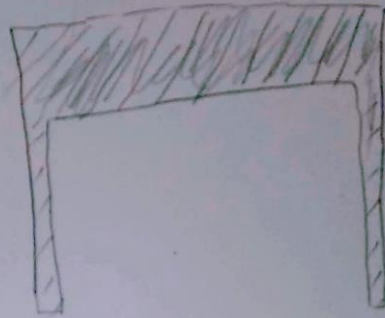
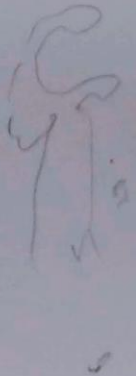
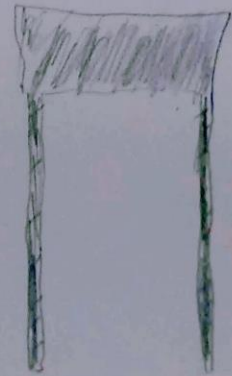


# The results - example

**MoC-Emotional awareness:** “It helped me stay focused on the emotions. I had to draw emotions. I had the time to think of them. And that's something that I've never done before. It was useful for me just to pay attention. And I could do that because of art therapy.(...) I wasn't as aware of my emotions and how to deal with them as I am right now.

**MoC-Revealing implicit knowledge:** “Looking at the artwork, I'd say that I learned that I have force within me. I thought it was going to be a very dark picture, but surprisingly to me, it it's not dark. And I drew a lot of force that I now do believe that I have within me. I didn't know that before. So that's something new that I can use to work on myself and to bring more happiness in my life.”





Final  
Objective

MAD Lab

LOVE

THANK YOU!

CERO

passport PLUS liberdade



# Stay in touch

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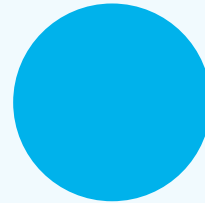


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