



BEST PRACTICE IN ADULT EDUCATION FOR A JUST TRANSITION

Stand up to Climate Change

**Engaging People with Disabilities
through Creative Expression**

JULY 2024



Co-funded by
the European Union

Stand up to Climate Change

– Engaging People with Disabilities through Creative Expression

Context and Initiative Details

Name of the initiative	Stand up to Climate Change
Geographical scope	Local
Sources of funding	AVISTA, St. Vincent's Centre
Duration of the initiative	This was a one-year project
Target audience	The programme worked with 28 individuals with intellectual disability, all members of the Centre's creative dance programme.
Social justice focus area	Just Transition, environmental justice
Goals of the initiative	The general aim of the dance programme was to empower a vulnerable group of people whose voice is too often not heard. The specific aim of this initiative was the creation of a video involving interpretive dance which focused on the key themes of environmental degradation and the need to take action to address climate change. The group wanted to create awareness about climate change and the impact that human actions are inflicting in our world. They also wanted to emphasise the way in which we all have a responsibility and a role to play in protecting our beautiful and fragile world.

Good Practices Description

Stakeholder engagement in the process

The project coordinator and session facilitator, staff, students, and community members were all involved. The learners were involved throughout the development of the project. Reacting to what they had learned about climate change, they shared their ideas with the project coordinator and this shaped the dance sequences. They were also present and contributed to the overall production of the video.

Methodology used

The methodology was designed to fit with the needs and abilities of the participants. It was very much centered on empowerment, facilitating the participants to express their concerns and ideas to shape the content of the video. The role of the project coordinator was to facilitate the learning, gather ideas and reactions and work with the participants to shape the dance and the video.

Teaching approaches

The project coordinator sourced easy read materials to engage the learners and used educational videos on deforestation, plastic pollution, water pollution and public littering. The learners had the opportunity to engage and react to the content either verbally or via assisted technology. The learning sessions were held via Zoom and in person depending on Covid-19 restrictions. The participants also learned about environmental issues through sourcing and preparing all the materials used for the costumes and sets.

Challenges and outcomes

Key factors contributing to success

Success was based on ensuring that the participants were involved throughout the project's development and were empowered to shape not just the concepts behind the dance and video but also be hands-on in the preparation and creation of costumes and sets – thus they had real ownership of the initiative.

The project was also supported by the whole staff team and the parents of the individuals involved.

Encountered difficulties and challenges

There are challenges involved in working with those with intellectual and physical limitations, but the organisations and the project coordinator are highly experienced.

Recommendations

At the macro level, organisations and campaign groups should ensure that the most marginalized and vulnerable in society are not ignored when building environmental campaigns – everyone deserves a chance to make their voice heard. The creative arts are a powerful means of engagement and for making key messages accessible.

Impact

The participants were members of an established dance group for adults with intellectual disabilities.

The video expresses the participants desire to engage the wider public and raise awareness of environmental issues and the negative impacts that we are having on our planet. As a societal group that are very marginalized, the video (<https://vimeo.com/666016120>) has enabled them to reach out and become active citizens and advocates.

This video project helped unite staff, individuals and visitors to work together to improve day-to-day activities and think more about the effect of these activities on the planet.