

This bilateral initiative is financed with the support of EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 through the National Fund for Bilateral Relations within the RO-CULTURE Programme



MINISTERUL CULTURII



What happened to the Heart

Emotional Treasure Box

theater, music and dance performance
born from the stories of those who have gone through violence



ATENEUL
NAȚIONAL DIN
IAȘI



Bilateral initiative carried out by:



A PRODUCTION
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND MEDIATION
CENTER FOUNDATION

ABOUT THE BILATERAL INITIATIVE

This bilateral initiative represents 4 months of intense and emotional work, full of inspiration and effort, insistence, deadlines and reports. But the unique cultural moments were also born as a result of the dedication and empathy with which both the artistic and technical teams contributed a lot of inspiration to this cultural initiative.

The entire artistic construction was created based on the stories of women who went through the experience of violence and emerged victorious from these traumatic experiences. For some of them, the writing process was a therapy, for others we put on paper what they wanted to tell us. Two social workers with experience in assisting victims: **Paula-Elena CIORTAN** and **Diana KOLCU**, were close to them and collected emotions and thoughts to unite them in a declaration of independence, transforming the women's memories into stories, writing the narratives that formed the basis of the four acts of our play and which were then collected in a book entitled Emotional Treasure Box.

Ballerinas and actors, all needed costumes; our set designer **Alina DINCA PUȘCAȘU** needed special materials, fabrics and accessories; for the promotion and filming of the artistic moments created, we needed services from specialized companies; the soundtrack composed by **Tudor NICORICI**; we needed performance and rehearsal halls, as well as many contracts and minutes. All these preparations were the responsibility of **Irina SIMIUC**, our procurement expert.

In our approach, we used art as a form of therapy with 17 children who witnessed domestic violence. They were accompanied in this process by art therapist **Cătălina ȘCHIOPU**, who managed to put the children's thoughts, pains and hopes into canvases that became part of the scenography. Any cultural project needs promotion and in this chapter **Laura ALBU** excelled, who masterfully managed to ensure communication with both the Norwegian partners and the general public, but especially with the team of artists and creators. Our accounting expert, **Andreea RADU**, took us for a pittance and kept the account for us, who showed us how sometimes the sum and the difference are not just mathematical operations but also solutions for welding a team. And because everything needed a supreme coordinator, she was named project manager: **Elena Petronela ȘERBAN**, seconded with rigor and professionalism by the project assistant, **Cătălina MÎTEL**.

But nothing would have been possible without the most incredible and creative team of artists inspired by the originality of director **Dana COJOCARU**. The team of actors transfixed by emotions - **Ana HEGYI**, **George COCOȘ**, **Ioana Natalia CORBAN** and the young **Cristiana ȘERBAN** - followed the script by **Cristina CHERTZ** working alongside the Norwegian partners of Foreningen Hedda: **Jorgen LORENTZEN** and **Marius KOLBENSTVEDT**.

Then, to make everything magical, choreographer **Oana FLORIEA** and the twelve little ballerinas created five dances inspired by the music of Norwegian singer-songwriter **AURORA ASKNES** from her latest album **WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HEART**.

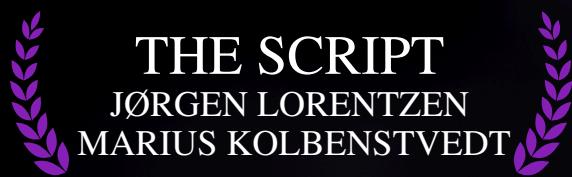
Project Promotor: Fundația Centrul de Mediare și Securitate Comunitară

Partner: Foreningen Hedda (Norvegia)

Value of funding (100% SEE and Norway Grants): 607.324 lei (122.040.83 euro)

Duration: 4 months (1 November 2024 - 28 February 2025)

Location of implementation: Iași (România) and Oslo (Norway)



ACTORS

Ana Hegyi

George Cocos,
Ioana-Natalia Corban



ALEXIA ANDREEA STAN
ANTONIA BOTEZ-ZAHARIA
BIANCA ANTONIA DĂNĂILĂ
BIANCA-MARIA NECHITA
CRISTIANA ȘERBAN
DELIA-ANDREEA FRÎNCU

COPIL ACTOR:

Cristiana Șerban

DANCING: BALLERINAS FROM
OANA FLORIEA BALLET SCHOOL



MAYA-ANDREEA LUCA
MEDEEA-MARIA CATANĂ
NICOLE GIULIA CEBOTARU
REBECA-MARIA MARIAN
SARA-MARIA ENACHE
ŞTEFANIA ANGELINA MUNTEANU

Together with artists, professionals, dreamers and bearers of the symbol of the heart and the sword that dispels darkness and brings light, we created this show as part of the bilateral initiative **Emotional Treasure Box - What happened to the Heart**, inspired by Aurora Asknes' latest musical album. We hope to have you with us on this adventure, in which you will discover the steps taken towards light and courage alongside our fighters whose true stories formed the basis of the theater, dance and visual art scenario mixed in a final product of emotions grouped in the treasure box. Come with us and see if we can answer the question: **What happened to the heart?** You can learn more by watching this show, described in words by director **Dana Cojocaru**:

the entrance of the spectators is done on the song DREAMS - music, lyrics, voice - AURORA ASKNES

INTRODUCTION: SHE enters from the audience, looks for a little girl and states that she will always be there for her, then dresses up as the child and falls asleep.

The ballerina's solo that will dance symbolizes the dream of being free

CURE FOR ME - music, lyrics, vocals – AURORA AKSNES



ACT I

In Act 1, titled *Parallel Mirrors*, EA (SHE) searches for the words to tell about her childhood marked by a lack of love. EA (SHE) the deep hunger she felt, not only physical but also emotional, needing a look that would validate her. She describes the dysfunctional relationship between her parents and the nightmare she lived at home, until one day she decided to leave, hoping to find more. Deep down, she wanted the love she would find to be different from the one she had experienced in her family, but life has another way of laughing in your face.

The ballerinas from Oana Floriea Ballet School will dance.

SOME TYPE OF SKIN - music, lyrics, vocals – AURORA AKSNES



ACT II

In Act 2, *Reflection of an Imperfect Story*, Ana tells how she escaped her painful past and fell in love, hoping that love would be different. Always, on her way, she would have her conscience by her side, like an angel. She believed that in her lover's eyes she would find that "I see you" that she had wanted all her life, and at first everything seemed perfect. However, when she met her mother-in-law, things began to change. Her mother-in-law told her that it was hard to be a woman and that she had to support her husband, which made Ana feel guilty. Although her lover resembled her father, Ana did not immediately notice this because of the love that was overwhelming her. Despite these signs, she ended up getting married, believing that she would still find the love she was looking for.

The wedding guests will be the ballerinas from the Oana Floriea Ballet School.

A SOUL WITH NO KING - music, lyrics, vocals – AURORA ASKNES

ACT III

Act III of the play “*The Sweetness of Bitter Cherries*” continues to explore the abusive dynamics in their relationship. After the first hit she receives from HIM, SHE feels her world falling apart. This is a defining moment for HER, and the physical pain is overcome by the pain of the silence that follows. She begins to crawl towards the audience, symbolizing that she did not come all the way there just to end up in a place of suffering. HE, after the episode of violence, seems to transform, becoming romantic again, which makes her hope that things will change and thus bring a child into the world. This change is likened to a wolf shedding its fur, a symbol of his unpredictable behavior.

However, the abuse does not disappear, and SHE ends up living under the sign of fear. She begins to believe that every change in her husband is just a facade, and the relationship ends with another episode of more serious violence. What hurts her the most are not just the physical injuries, but the deep psychological terror that makes her believe she is responsible for everything that happens, that she deserves the abuse, and thus she constantly lives on the edge of the abyss, with an overwhelming fear for her own life and for the safety of her child.

Her thoughts will be expressed through the dance of ballerinas from Oana Floriea Ballet School.

THE BLADE - music, lyrics, vocals – AURORA ASKNES

ACT IV

In Act 4, “*Memories Released*,” SHE realizes that she has nothing left to lose. Everything that was stolen from her – her dignity, her self-confidence, her freedom – is lost, and her only hope remains that spark of inner strength that refuses to die. She leaves without looking back, knowing that if she stayed, she would be completely lost. She leaves behind the suffering and violence of her relationship with her ex-husband. On stage, her memories of him run parallel, recalling moments of abuse and illusions of love.

SHE promises herself that she will not return to that place of terror and rediscovers her inner strength to live free. She frees her child from this circle that she herself went through, repeating her mother’s story. **So, the ballerinas invite the child to dance, a sign of rebirth and a new trajectory full of hope.**

STARVATION - music, lyrics, vocals – AURORA AKSNES





AURORA ASKNES

"What Happened to the Heart? It's a journey from weakness to strength, from self-destruction to self-healing, a moving and introspective musical journey that explores the loss of spiritual connection in modern society, the healing power of vulnerability, and the call to ignite change by reuniting the heart with politics and personal growth."

"Directing this project was for me like an open window to a new horizon, where imagination took wings and each frame became a canvas on which I painted emotions and ideas. I experienced the joy of giving shape to a vision, of seeing how thoughts come to life through the eyes and energy of a dedicated team. It was an experience that showed me how fascinating it is to create worlds where people can find themselves in our story."



Cristina Chertz
screenwriter

"Creating and guiding writing through suffering is a dangerous game. Every word becomes a balancing act: how do you tell the truth without reliving the pain? How do you shape the story without loading the text with your own emotion?"



Diana Kolcu
writer

"The show is like the flight of a bird. That's how I feel about this character: a bird that was flying happily and in an unexpected moment was injured on a wing. The road to recovery is difficult, with stones, clouds, storms, but at the end of the "hard" there is always light. The show is my path through life, yours, ours, everyone's..."



Alina Dincă Pușcașu
scenography

"... a new project, a new challenge, a new discovery, a new team with beautiful people! Thank you"

Dana Cojocaru
director



"The project represents a collaborative work of all those involved. Ideas, proposals, thoughts and emotions in a creative synergy of humanity. A step forward in discovering ourselves, creators and viewers at the same time."

Paula Elena Ciortan
writer



"This project was a challenge for me, a roller coaster of emotions from beginning to end. I started with the responsibility of collecting and retelling the stories of people who have gone through situations of domestic violence and I ended the project with great gratitude for each shared life experience. I ended this project with a renewed conviction that every story is worth hearing and I "enriched" myself on a personal level, both with emotions and with a lot of knowledge about resilience and the healing power of honest expression."

Ana Hegyi
actress



"My participation in this project is unique, in the sense that I really feel that I have to contribute significantly artistically, calling on all the experience accumulated throughout my 13 years of career on stage. It is a perfect opportunity for me to develop myself even more professionally, in the scenic direction of movement and improvisation."



Ioana Natalia Corban
actress

"What Happened to the Heart" was a profound artistic journey for me, a process of discovery and expression through dance. I had the opportunity to collaborate closely with my girls, creating choreographies that not only transposed authentic emotions into movement, but also brought to life a story about vulnerability, transformation and the power of the heart. Every moment spent on this project was a lesson in connection, creativity and dedication. I am grateful for this opportunity and for everyone who contributed to this unique experience, giving meaning and depth to each step."



Andreea Radu,
accounting expert

"As a procurement expert, I have painstakingly woven the invisible threads of contracts, ensuring that every artist and supplier finds their rightful place in the splendid tapestry of our cultural endeavor, turning dreams into reality and bringing art closer to everyone's souls."



Petronela Serban
manager de projet

"This time, this project makes me self-discover and self-educate through the experiences I've had with the entire beautiful team behind it. I've already learned a lot and I feel like I'm part of a team, that we're trying to bring out and highlight an extremely important and current message through artistic means."

George Cocos
actor



Oana Floriea
choreographer



"My participation in this project was an intense and different experience. Beyond the numbers and budgets, I felt like I was part of a story that was worth telling. I'm glad I was able to contribute to this project by doing what I do best."

Irina Simiuc
procurement expert



"The opportunity to witness the staging of these stories represented for me an avalanche of emotions that I relive with the same intensity every time I watch. And we all need such moments to nourish our souls. For 25 years, the CMSC Foundation has unconditionally opened its arms to any woman who asks for help. We will continue to be their voice, a ray of hope so that they feel listened to, supported, protected."

If we were to quote AURORA, the one who inspired a heartfelt team from Romania and Norway from the Community Safety and Mediation Center Foundation and Foreningen HEDDA to set out on their journey – we continue the adventure of the last 25 years in which we communicate with women and girls who have a warrior soul and feel misfit, misunderstood or weirdos.

It is a cultural initiative in which we want to give courage to women and girls who have gone through violence or are still in a toxic relationship, who believe that they are alone with their children and that they cannot escape the prison of life they are in now, in the shadow of the one who killed their dreams or buried their hope for a life free from fear.



Marius Kolbenstvedt

writer and actor

Motfavingmenter, Norway



I think the idea of this project is to find the place where you connect to your heart, like you have an intuition... nothing has to be structured, and reason is not the only important thing... it's more about what you want to express and then we'll find ways to fit things.



Laura ALBU,
President of Community Safety and Mediation Center Foundation



Jorgen Lorentzen

Director

Foreningen Hedda, Norway

What happened to the heart? The point is that the heart here was broken... we work with broken hearts and we work with healing hearts... and we work with the beauty of the heart... so that we are all there on stage. We are here because of a wonderful idea and the perseverance of a wonderful woman named Laura.

About EEA and Norway Grants

The EEA and Norway Grants represent the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to a green, competitive and inclusive Europe. There are two general objectives: reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and strengthening bilateral relations between the donor countries and 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltic States. The three donor countries cooperate closely with the EU through the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). Between 1994 and 2014, donors provided EUR 3.3 billion through consecutive grant schemes. For the period 2014-2021, the EEA and Norway Grants amount to EUR 2.8 billion.

About the RO-CULTURE Program

The RO-CULTURA Program is implemented by the Ministry of Culture through the Project Management Unit and has as its general objective the consolidation of economic and social development through cultural cooperation, cultural entrepreneurship and cultural heritage management. The Program budget is approximately 34 million euros. More details are available on www.ro-cultura.ro.