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Art4Wellbeing

Project nr. 2025-2-NL02-KA210-YOU-000368916

Research & Need Analysis for Art-based mental well-being tools

TÜRKİYE National Research

FOCUS GROUP & INTERVIEWS

developed by ESIGED



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1.Executive Summary

The **Art4Wellbeing** project seeks to promote the mental well-being of young people through innovative, inclusive and art-based educational approaches. Within the framework of **Work Package 2 (WP2) – Research and Needs Analysis**, each partner country conducted a national study to better understand the needs of young people and professionals working in the fields of youth, education and mental well-being.

The Turkish national research was coordinated by **Eskişehir Social Innovation and Development Association (ESiGED)** using a qualitative research approach. The study combined one focus group discussion involving 6 participants and 6 semi-structured expert interviews representing different professional backgrounds, including youth work, education and psychological counselling.

The research explored current mental well-being challenges faced by young people, existing support mechanisms, the perceived effectiveness of creative and artistic methods, and the expectations of professionals regarding future educational resources.

The findings reveal a growing need for practical, accessible and participatory methods that encourage emotional expression, creativity, resilience and social inclusion. Participants consistently highlighted that art-based approaches—including storytelling, visual arts, music, drama, movement and creative writing—provide safe and engaging opportunities for young people to express emotions, strengthen self-confidence and build positive relationships.

Another significant outcome concerns the expectations of professionals. Participants emphasized the importance of developing practical facilitation resources rather than theoretical manuals. Ready-to-use workshop activities, reflection tools, adaptable exercises and user-friendly guidance materials were identified as essential components of the future Art4Wellbeing Toolkit.

Overall, the national findings demonstrate a strong demand for innovative, evidence-informed and easily applicable art-based mental well-being resources. The results presented in this report will directly contribute to the development of the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit and support the implementation of future project activities across partner countries.



Table 1. Research at a Glance

Category	Information
Project	Art4Wellbeing
Project Number	2025-2-NL02-KA210-YOU-000368916
Work Package	WP2 – Research & Needs Analysis
Country	Türkiye
National Partner	Eskişehir Social Innovation and Development Association (ESİGED)
Research Period	June–July 2026
Research Methodology	Qualitative Research
Data Collection Methods	Focus Group Discussion and Semi-Structured Expert Interviews
Focus Group Participants	6 Professionals
Expert Interviews	6 Experts
Total Direct Participants	12
Groups Represented	Youth Workers, Teachers, School Counsellors, NGO Facilitators and Mental Well-being Professionals
Main Objective	To identify the needs, challenges and expectations related to the development of art-based mental well-being tools for young people.
Expected Contribution	Evidence-based recommendations for the development of the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit (WP3).

2. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background

Mental well-being has become one of the most pressing concerns affecting young people across Europe. Rapid social change, increasing academic and professional expectations, digitalisation, social isolation and the long-term effects of global crises have contributed to higher levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness and emotional vulnerability. These challenges highlight the need for innovative, inclusive and accessible approaches that strengthen emotional resilience, self-expression and psychological well-being.

Art-based methodologies are increasingly recognised as effective tools for supporting mental well-being. Creative activities such as visual arts, storytelling, music, drama, movement and creative writing provide safe and participatory spaces where young people can express emotions, strengthen interpersonal relationships, improve self-confidence and develop healthy coping strategies. These approaches complement traditional educational and youth work practices by encouraging active participation, creativity and reflection.

The **Art4Wellbeing** project responds to these emerging needs. Co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ Programme, the project aims to develop practical, evidence-based and user-friendly art-based tools that support youth workers, educators and facilitators in promoting the mental well-being of young people.

3.2 Purpose of WP2

Work Package 2 (WP2) focuses on research and needs analysis in each partner country to ensure that the future Art4Wellbeing Toolkit is grounded in the real experiences and needs of professionals working directly with young people.

Rather than relying only on theoretical assumptions, WP2 adopts a participatory research approach that involves professionals from youth work, education, counselling and civil society. Their knowledge and practical experience provide valuable insight into current challenges, existing practices and expectations related to the use of art-based methods for mental well-being.

The findings gathered through the national research activities will directly inform the design and development of the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit under Work Package 3 (WP3), ensuring that the educational resources are relevant, practical and adaptable to different learning environments across Europe.

3.3 Purpose of the Turkish National Research

The Turkish national research was coordinated by the **Eskişehir Social Innovation and Development Association (ESİGED)**. It aimed to explore the current mental well-being needs of young people from the perspective of professionals working in education, youth work and psychosocial support.

The research specifically sought to:

- identify the most common mental well-being challenges affecting young people;
- explore existing practices and support mechanisms currently used by professionals;
- examine the perceived effectiveness of art-based approaches in youth work and education;
- identify barriers to implementing creative mental well-being activities;
- collect practical recommendations for the development of the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit.

To achieve these objectives, qualitative data were collected through one focus group discussion involving six participants and three semi-structured expert interviews representing different professional backgrounds.

4. Research Methodology

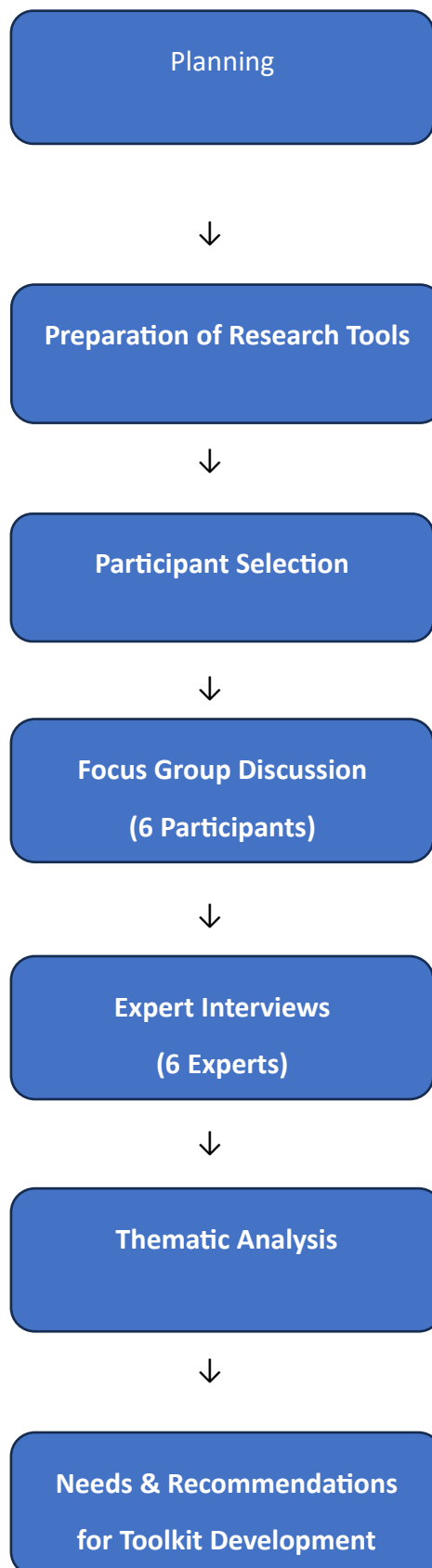
4.1 Research Design

To ensure that the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit is grounded in the real needs and experiences of professionals working with young people, the Turkish partner adopted a qualitative research design. This approach enabled the collection of rich, experience-based insights that could not be captured through quantitative methods alone.

The national research used two complementary qualitative methods: one focus group discussion with six participants and 6 semi-structured expert interviews. These methods made it possible to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, challenges and recommendations regarding mental well-being and the use of arts-based methodologies in youth work and educational settings.

The collected data were analysed using **thematic analysis**, which allowed common themes, recurring needs and practical recommendations to emerge from participants' contributions.

4.2 Research Process



4.3 Data Collection Methods

The research combined two complementary qualitative data collection methods:

Focus Group Discussion

A national focus group was organised with six professionals representing different educational and youth work backgrounds. The discussion followed a semi-structured format based on six guiding questions developed within Work Package 2.

The focus group encouraged interaction among participants, allowing them to exchange experiences, identify common challenges and discuss expectations regarding future educational resources.

Semi-Structured Expert Interviews

To complement the focus group findings, 6 in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals with extensive experience in youth work, education and psychosocial support.

The interviews explored participants' professional observations, existing practices, perceived gaps and recommendations for developing practical arts-based mental well-being resources.

4.4 Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data were analysed through **thematic analysis**, a widely used approach for identifying recurring patterns in qualitative research.

Interview notes and focus group discussions were carefully reviewed and grouped into common themes. Particular attention was given to identifying:

- Mental well-being challenges affecting young people;
- Existing support mechanisms;
- Use of creative and arts-based approaches;
- Professional training needs;
- Practical recommendations for the future Art4Wellbeing Toolkit.

This analytical process ensured that the recommendations presented in this report are directly informed by the experiences and expertise of professionals working in the field.

Component	Description
Research Design	Qualitative
Focus Group	1 Session
Participants	6
Expert Interviews	6
Interview Type	Semi-Structured
Analysis Method	Thematic Analysis
Country	Türkiye
Coordinating Organisation	ESİGED

5. Focus Group Findings

The focus group discussion was structured around six-6 guiding questions. The following section presents the main discussion points and key findings emerging from participants' responses.



The national focus group brought together six professionals working in education, youth work, counselling and civil society. The discussion followed the 6 guiding questions developed within WP2 and focused on identifying emotional challenges, existing practices and expectations regarding future art-based mental well-being resources.

Question 1

What are the main emotional challenges faced by young people today?

Discussion Summary

Participants agreed that anxiety, stress, loneliness, social pressure and uncertainty about the future are among the most common emotional challenges experienced by young people. Social media, academic expectations and limited opportunities for emotional expression were identified as major contributing factors.

Key Findings

- ✓ Anxiety and stress are increasing.
- ✓ Young people struggle to express emotions.
- ✓ Social media negatively influences self-esteem.
- ✓ Safe spaces are needed for emotional sharing.

Question 2

How do you currently address them?

Discussion Summary

Participants reported using informal conversations, peer learning, guidance activities and non-formal education methods. However, they highlighted the lack of structured resources specifically designed for emotional well-being.

Key Findings

- ✓ Individual counselling
- ✓ Group discussions
- ✓ Peer support

- ✓ Experiential learning
- ✓ Need for structured activities

Question 3

What works well? What doesn't?

Discussion Summary

Creative, interactive and experiential approaches were perceived as significantly more effective than lecture-based methods. Young people become more engaged when they actively participate rather than passively receive information.

Key Findings

- ✓ Interactive learning
- ✓ Small group activities
- ✓ Reflection exercises
- ✓ Traditional lectures are less effective

Question 4

Have you used creative/art-based methods?

Discussion Summary

Most participants had previous experience using storytelling, drawing, drama, music, creative writing and visual expression activities. These methods were considered particularly effective for encouraging emotional expression among young people.

Key Findings

- ✓ Drawing
- ✓ Drama
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Storytelling
- ✓ Creative Writing

Question 5

What kind of support or tools do you need?

Discussion Summary

Participants expressed the need for practical facilitation resources that can be implemented directly in workshops and youth activities. Ready-to-use exercises, reflection cards and adaptable activity plans were frequently mentioned.

Key Findings

- ✓ Ready-to-use activities
- ✓ Facilitation Guide
- ✓ Reflection Cards
- ✓ Practical Exercises

Question 6

What would make a Toolkit useful for you?

Discussion Summary

Participants emphasized that the future toolkit should be practical, flexible and visually attractive. Activities should be easy to adapt for different age groups and educational contexts.

Key Findings

- ✓ User-friendly
- ✓ Flexible
- ✓ Visual
- ✓ Adaptable
- ✓ Practical

The focus group confirmed that young people need safe, creative and participatory spaces to express emotions, build resilience and strengthen social connection. Participants clearly emphasized the need for practical, flexible and ready-to-use art-based tools.

6. Expert Interviews



NATIONAL EXPERT INTERVIEWS – TÜRKİYE

WP2 – Research & Needs Analysis for
Art-based Mental Well-being Tools



Expert Interview 1 – School Counsellor



Expert Interview 2 – Teacher



Expert Interview 3 – Youth Worker



Expert Interview 4 – Educator



Expert Interview 5 – NGO Facilitator



Expert Interview 6 – Youth Worker

6 semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals representing different sectors including school counselling, education, youth work and civil society. The interviews provided deeper insights into current mental well-being challenges, existing support mechanisms and recommendations for developing practical art-based educational resources. The interviews aimed to gather practical experiences, professional perspectives and recommendations for developing effective art-based mental well-being tools. Each interview followed the same 6 guiding questions, allowing for a comparative thematic analysis across participants.

Interview Question 1

1. What are the main emotional challenges faced by young people today?

Discussion Summary

Experts consistently reported that anxiety, stress, low self-confidence, emotional isolation and difficulties in expressing emotions are among the most common challenges affecting young people today. They also highlighted increasing social pressure, excessive use of digital technologies, academic expectations and uncertainty about the future as important contributing factors. Many experts observed that young people often struggle to recognize and communicate their emotions in healthy ways.

Key Findings

- High levels of stress and anxiety
- Low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence
- Emotional isolation and loneliness
- Difficulty expressing emotions
- Social media and academic pressure
- Need for safe emotional support environments

Interview Question 2

2. How do you currently address these emotional challenges?

Discussion Summary

Experts explained that they mainly rely on individual counselling, group discussions, active listening, peer support activities and experiential learning methods. Many participants emphasized the importance of building trust before introducing any intervention. Preventive activities promoting emotional awareness are increasingly integrated into educational and youth work settings.

Key Findings

- Individual counselling sessions
- Small group discussions
- Peer learning approaches
- Active listening techniques
- Preventive emotional education
- Safe and supportive environments

Interview Question 3

3. What works well? What doesn't?

Discussion Summary

Participants agreed that interactive, participatory and experience-based methods generate stronger engagement than traditional lecture-style approaches. Creative activities encourage

young people to communicate more openly. However, limited time, lack of practical materials and insufficient staff training often reduce the effectiveness of existing interventions.

Key Findings

What works well

- Interactive learning
- Small group activities
- Creative participation
- Reflection exercises
- Peer interaction

Main challenges

- Limited resources
- Time constraints
- Lack of practical tools
- Need for additional facilitator training

Interview Question 4

4. Have you used creative or art-based methods?

Discussion Summary

Most experts reported previous experience using drawing, storytelling, music, drama, role-playing or creative writing activities. They observed that artistic methods create a relaxed atmosphere where young people feel more comfortable discussing personal emotions. Experts considered art-based approaches particularly valuable for participants who are reluctant to communicate verbally.

Key Findings

- Drawing and painting
- Drama and role-play
- Storytelling
- Creative writing
- Music activities

- Visual expression exercises

Interview Question 5

5. What kind of support or tools do you need?

Discussion Summary

Experts emphasized the need for structured, ready-to-use resources requiring minimal preparation. They requested practical session plans, facilitation guidance, printable materials and flexible activities suitable for different age groups and educational contexts.

Key Findings

- Ready-to-use activity plans
- Facilitator guidelines
- Printable worksheets
- Reflection cards
- Flexible implementation options
- Age-appropriate adaptations

Interview Question 6

6. What would make the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit useful for you?

Discussion Summary

Participants agreed that the toolkit should be practical, visually engaging and easy to implement without requiring specialized artistic skills. They recommended including step-by-step activity instructions, estimated durations, learning objectives, reflection questions and suggestions for adapting activities to different participant needs.

Key Findings

- Easy-to-use format
- Step-by-step instructions
- Visual resources
- Flexible activities
- Reflection questions
- Adaptable for different groups

- Practical facilitator guidance

The expert interviews confirmed that professionals working with young people strongly support the use of art-based approaches to promote emotional well-being. Participants highlighted the need for practical, flexible and evidence-informed resources that can be easily integrated into educational and youth work settings. The findings reinforce the importance of developing a user-friendly toolkit that empowers facilitators to create safe, creative and emotionally supportive learning environments.

7. Overall Analysis

Overall Analysis of Research Findings

The findings from both the focus group discussion and the six expert interviews revealed a high level of consistency regarding the emotional well-being needs of young people and the expectations of professionals working in youth education and support services.

Both participant groups identified anxiety, stress, emotional isolation, low self-confidence and difficulties in emotional expression as the most significant challenges currently affecting young people. These issues were frequently linked to academic pressure, uncertainty about the future, social media influence and limited opportunities for meaningful social interaction.

Participants agreed that traditional information-based approaches are often insufficient for addressing emotional well-being. Instead, they emphasized the importance of participatory, experience-based and creative learning environments that encourage young people to express emotions in a safe and supportive atmosphere.

Art-based approaches—including drawing, storytelling, drama, music, movement and creative writing—were consistently recognised as effective methods for promoting emotional awareness, self-expression and group cohesion. Experts particularly highlighted that creative activities reduce communication barriers and encourage participation among young people who may struggle to express themselves verbally.

Another important finding concerns the practical needs of facilitators. Both focus group participants and interviewees requested structured resources that are simple to use, flexible across different settings and adaptable to the varying needs of young people. Ready-to-use activity plans, facilitator guidance, printable materials and reflection exercises were identified as essential components of a successful toolkit.

Overall, the research findings clearly demonstrate the need for an accessible, practical and evidence-informed Art4Wellbeing Toolkit that combines creative methodologies with non-formal education principles. Such a resource has strong potential to support educators, youth workers and facilitators in promoting emotional well-being while strengthening resilience, communication and social inclusion among young people.

Theme	Evidence from Research
Emotional Challenges	Anxiety, stress, emotional isolation, low self-confidence and emotional regulation difficulties were consistently identified.
Effective Approaches	Interactive, participatory and art-based learning methods were considered more effective than traditional approaches.
Value of Art	Creative expression helps young people communicate emotions, build confidence and increase engagement.
Facilitator Needs	Professionals require practical, flexible and ready-to-use educational resources.
Toolkit Expectations	Participants recommended visual materials, structured activities, reflection questions and adaptable session plans.



The research confirms that art-based methodologies can play a significant role in strengthening young people's emotional well-being. A practical, user-friendly and flexible toolkit will support professionals in creating safe, engaging and inclusive learning environments where young people can express emotions, develop resilience and improve their overall mental well-being.

8. Recommendations for the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit

Based on the findings obtained from the focus group discussion and expert interviews, several practical recommendations have been identified to support the development of the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit. The toolkit should be accessible, flexible and easy to implement in different educational and youth work environments. It should empower facilitators with practical resources that promote emotional expression, creativity and psychological well-being among young people.

Recommendation	Purpose
Ready-to-use Activity Plans	Provide structured sessions that require minimal preparation and can be implemented immediately.
Art-based Creative Activities	Include drawing, storytelling, drama, music, movement and creative writing activities to encourage emotional expression.
Reflection Questions	Support self-awareness and meaningful group discussions after each activity.
Facilitator Guidelines	Offer step-by-step instructions, facilitation tips and suggestions for adapting activities.
Flexible Implementation	Ensure activities can be used in schools, youth centres and community organisations with different group sizes and ages.
Printable Resources	Include worksheets, emotion cards, discussion prompts and visual materials that are easy to print and use.
Inclusive Design	Develop activities suitable for young people with diverse backgrounds, abilities and learning needs.
Evaluation Tools	Provide simple reflection forms and feedback questionnaires to assess participant engagement and learning outcomes.

The Art4Wellbeing Toolkit should combine creativity, emotional learning and practical usability. Rather than providing theoretical information, it should offer interactive, flexible and evidence-informed activities that enable educators and youth workers to create safe, engaging and inclusive learning environments where young people can express themselves, build resilience and strengthen their emotional well-being.

9. Conclusion

The TÜRKİYE national research conducted within the Art4Wellbeing project provided valuable insights into the emotional well-being needs of young people and the practical experiences of professionals working in education, youth work and community settings.

The findings from both the focus group discussion and the six expert interviews consistently highlighted the importance of creating safe, supportive and participatory environments where young people can express themselves freely. Emotional challenges such as anxiety, stress, low self-confidence and social isolation were identified as common concerns, while creative and art-based approaches were widely recognised as effective methods for strengthening emotional resilience, communication and personal development.

The research also demonstrated a clear need for practical, flexible and easy-to-use educational resources that can support educators, youth workers and facilitators in their daily practice. Participants emphasized that the future Art4Wellbeing Toolkit should focus on interactive activities, facilitator guidance, reflection exercises and adaptable materials suitable for different learning environments and participant needs.

Overall, the research findings provide a strong evidence base for the next phase of the project and will directly inform the design and development of the Art4Wellbeing Toolkit. By translating research findings into practical educational resources, the project aims to promote emotional well-being, creativity, inclusion and resilience among young people while supporting professionals with innovative, non-formal learning tools.

The Art4Wellbeing project demonstrates that creativity is not only a form of artistic expression but also a powerful instrument for fostering emotional well-being, strengthening social connections and supporting the healthy development of young people across diverse educational and community contexts.



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APPENDIX A – Focus Group



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APPENDIX B – Expert Interviews



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