

Voices through Water

The Creative and Activist Methodologies Toolkit

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Body Percussion

Artistic



The activity involves using the body as a musical instrument to create rhythmic sequences. Participants will learn to synchronize as a group, using hands, feet, and other body parts to generate a collective rhythm.



Target group

Young people and adults

Minimum 8, maximum 20



Environment

A room or space large enough to accommodate all participants



Time needed

1 hour 30 minutes



Materials

None

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to promote cooperation and synchronisation among participants, developing rhythmic awareness and body consciousness. Each participant learns to use the body as a musical instrument, creating a collective connection through rhythm.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Introduction to the activity:

the facilitator explains the concept of body percussion and demonstrates basic movements (e.g., clapping hands, snapping fingers, stomping feet).

Each participant should try to replicate the movements.

Step 2

Creating the basic rhythm (for example 4/4 or $\frac{3}{4}$ metre):

the facilitator creates a simple rhythmic sequence (e.g., clapping hands, snapping fingers, stomping feet) and invites participants to follow in sync.

Step 3

Creating a more complex sequence:

once the group has learnt the basic sequence, the facilitator adds new movements or variations, creating a more complex rhythm that the group must reproduce together.

Step 4

Working in groups:

participants are divided into pairs or small groups and each group creates its own rhythmic sequence.

Each group presents their sequence to the others, trying to maintain synchronisation.

Step 5

Collective Body Percussion:

all participants perform a sequence together (from step 3 or from step 4), aiming to maintain a common rhythm.

The facilitator guides the group to ensure everyone stays in sync.

Step 6

Debriefing session:

participants stop and reflect on the experience.

Questions to consider include:

- How did it feel to create a collective rhythm?
- Was it easy to synchronise with others?
- What sensations were evoked by using the body as a musical instrument?



Tips for the trainer

- Ensure all participants are actively involved.
- In case of difficulties with rhythm, slow down, and take breaks to practice separately before resuming as a group.



Alternative

If the number of participants allows, small groups can be created where each person adds a personalised movement to the rhythmic sequence, creating individual variations within a collective flow



Comment

During the session, it is interesting to observe how cooperation and mutual listening influence the success of the collective rhythm. This type of activity can also foster strong group bonding, as participants must work together to achieve a common result.



Source

Adapted from body percussion activities developed in the context of music education workshops.