

ARTIKKELI IV

Oinas, N. & Huhmarniemi, M. (2025). Co-designing with shared values: Designing art interventions to promote the well-being of social and healthcare workers. *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*, 17(2), 59–77.
<https://doi.org/10.18848/1833-1866/CGP/v17i02/59-77>

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Original Research

Co-Designing with Shared Values: Designing Art Interventions to Promote the Well-Being of Social and Healthcare Workers

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Received: 12/14/2024; **Accepted:** 05/05/2025; **Published:** 07/11/2025

Abstract: Art interventions and community art in healthcare construct cultural well-being. This study is part of an art-based action research fostering artists' positions in the health and well-being sector. Two artists facilitated art activities for twenty-one staff representatives in three different care institutions in Finland to enhance work satisfaction and well-being. Research data includes a research diary, notes from art interventions, and interviews with organization managers (N = 3). This article is framed around the planning phase of designing art activities for care institution staff communities. The findings indicate that co-design is the best practice, and artists, managers, and stakeholders should invest time and resources in the co-design phase of art interventions. At the same time, collaboration partners have various motives and expectations for art interventions. Enabling a sustainable and genuine artistic process through co-design requires time, resources, and shared values. Artists must facilitate co-design with stakeholders to achieve effective and creative artistic processes in social and healthcare institutions. The action research approach supports its co-design and development.

Keywords: *Art Intervention, Cultural Well-Being, Art-Based Action Research, Community Art, Care Institution*

Introduction

This article explores the planning phase of implementing art interventions and building interactions between art, artists, and care institution managers, seeking the means and structural organization that best identify and support their shared goals in multisectoral co-working. This research is part of a broader art-based action research (ABAR) aimed at developing the use of art in social work, healthcare, and wellness sectors (Oinas 2021; Oinas and Huhmarniemi 2024; Oinas and Kyllönen 2025). The research data of this article is collected from the “WorkArt: Art-Based Methods for Enhancing Well-Being at Work in the Social Sector” project (referred to as the WorkArt project) in Finland.

In the WorkArt project, Oinas, the first author of this article, designed and facilitated art interventions with the community artist Sinikka Kyllönen. Stakeholders were employees at three healthcare institutions: a nursing home, a day-care center for individuals with dementia, and an organization that supports individuals facing challenging life situations (e.g., unemployment or the need to re-learn everyday skills). This article tackles the co-designing phase of the art interventions to gain knowledge on better practices for artists' work in care institutions.

The research is made from an artist's perspective, seeking working conditions that enable continuation and established positions as salaried members in work communities. This article's research question is as follows: what conditions and approaches support the most successful design of art interventions in care institutions? We consider how to plan artistic activities for care institution workers' well-being while fostering better work conditions for artists.

In the WorkArt project, the developing point of view had a strong connection to cultural well-being. Cultural well-being refers to the positive effects of cultural activities and participation on an individual's and a community's overall health and happiness (Houni et al. 2020; Lilja-Viherlampi and Rosenlöf 2019). The central idea of cultural well-being—that people are creative and self-expressive beings with cultural needs and rights at every stage of their lives—is increasingly emphasized in Finland's social and health sectors (Nuutinen et al. 2021). Integrating art into the organizational structure of care institutions is one potential way of increasing cultural well-being for staff members and clients.

According to Berthoin Antal (2011), art interventions have the potential to transform organizations by introducing arts-related people, processes, and products into various industries. For example, the logic of art and the means of art can be used to examine how an organization works, including its underlying strategy and values, or to strengthen interaction, co-discussion, and the generation of new ideas (Lehikoinen and Pässilä 2016). Integrating the arts into organizations offers numerous benefits, as research shows that these interventions can support organizational change, enhance creativity and innovation, and refresh ways of working (Berthoin Antal 2011; Houni et al. 2020). In the transition of Finnish working life, creative industries and artists are recognized as having potential both as a source of growth within their own sector and as a means of enriching more traditional sectors (Juppi and Tanskanen 2022; Tarjanne 2020). The competencies of artists have long been studied in the context of work-life development (Bardy et al. 2017; Lehikoinen and Pässilä 2016; Nuutinen et al. 2021; Rantala and Jansson 2013), and their integration into various industries, including traditional sectors like social and healthcare fields, is increasing. These competencies are recognized for their potential to drive organizational change, creativity, and innovation, which may lead to new forms of work-life development and organizational enrichment. Despite their valuable contributions, artists and their methods are rarely acknowledged through permanent employment in these fields. Unfortunately, artists often initiate and design art activities without salaried employment (Haapakorpi 2022; Oinas 2021; Juppi and Tanskanen 2022). This is one of the reasons why artists' working conditions in care institutions must be developed in a more sustainable way (Oinas and Kyllönen 2025).

The WorkArt project (2021–2022) was funded by the European Social Fund and Finland's Lapland Centre for Economic Development to enhance work well-being through art interventions. A detailed presentation and discussion on art interventions and the development of sustainable work conditions for artists have been previously published (Oinas et al. 2022; Oinas and Huhmarniemi 2024; Oinas and Kyllönen 2025).

Cultural Well-Being Integrated at Work

The term *cultural well-being* has gained prominence in Finland's health and social care discourses, but it is also used internationally with varying emphases. Frampton et al. (2025) have conducted a literature review on the international use of the term. They claim that it is employed across various disciplines—such as health and social care, education, psychology, and community planning—to refer to the understandings of health in Indigenous cultures, the integration of minorities, and as a complement to economic or social community well-being, particularly at the cultural level. In the Finnish context, Frampton et al. (2025) explain that the concept of *cultural well-being* brings together the arts and the health and social care sectors. While *green care* refers to outdoor activities that support health and well-being, *cultural well-being* is associated with approaches that involve the fine and performing arts (Frampton et al. 2025). Similar approaches are also discussed using other terms. In the United Kingdom, the concept of creative health refers to creative approaches and activities that have benefits for health and well-being (Jenkins et al. 2025; Ridgway et al. 2025).

It is increasingly claimed that engaging with art can ameliorate symptoms of mental and physical disorders (Mastandrea et al. 2019; Fancourt et al. 2023). However, a review of studies often cited as evidence for the efficacy of arts-based interventions suggests that there is no strong empirical support for a positive impact of the arts on people's mental and physical health conditions (Skov and Nadal 2025). Skov and Nadal (2025) critically evaluated the current state of research on arts-based interventions in health care and point out methodological weaknesses as well as a lack of evidence for the idea that engaging with the arts directly influences the etiology of health disorders. While this critique is important to acknowledge, the lack of clinical evidence for the healing effects of the arts does not diminish their value in contributing to a meaningful life, sense of well-being, and cultural well-being.

In the social and healthcare sectors in Finland, arts and culture have been developed as part of service systems, emphasizing aspects of cultural well-being. In recent years, several national and international studies have been carried out that contribute to the understanding of the well-being effects and potential of arts and culture from the perspective of social development (Fancourt and Finn 2019; Crossick and Kaszynska 2016; Laitinen et al. 2022; Lehtikoinen and Vanhanen 2017). In Finland, rural regions differ significantly from urban centers. In some central areas, care institutions already employ community artists as permanent staff members. In other areas, however, most artists work on short-term projects and individually tailored works in the social and healthcare field, often seeking funding for facilitating art through grants and other unconventional forms of compensation (Juppi and Tanskanen 2022; Oinas 2021).

The view of well-being in the context of cultural well-being bridges the societal, community, and individual levels and covers community development (Frampton et al. 2025). This research focuses on a socio-pedagogical perspective, which explores the challenge of realizing one's full potential within conditions surrounding the individual (Salonen and Rouhinen 2015).

Professional identity—encompassing goals, interests, values, ethical principles, work commitments, and future prospects—is closely linked to professional agency (Nuutinen et al. 2021). A collaborative arts-based approach enables individuals to discover their full potential as a member of the care home community and explore renewal and professional agency. While expectations and goals can be set for the artistic process, their outcomes or impacts cannot be predetermined (Kantonen and Karttunen 2021). Interaction, dialogue, and continuous reassessment of challenges and objectives are key elements of the process. In this context, art interventions serve as a method for reforming social and health institutions and responding to development challenges. Through art interventions, individuals are given the space to pause and reflect on their work identity, values, and ethics.

Lilja-Viherlampi (2021) describes cultural well-being as a phenomenon, an experience, and a field of activity. As cultural well-being becomes mainstream, strategies and methods for promoting it are being developed, and related services are produced, recognizing its importance for a balanced life (Lilja-Viherlampi 2021). A systematic understanding of cultural well-being has emerged in the fields of social pedagogy (Nuutinen 2024), social and healthcare research (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2015; Fancourt and Finn 2019), and the arts (Lilja-Viherlampi 2021). Cultural well-being typically refers to the experience of arts and cultural activities contributing to an individual's well-being (Lilja-Viherlampi and Rosenlöf 2019). It highlights a phenomenon where culture and art convey meanings related to health and well-being, positively impacting individuals and communities. Cultural well-being—a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of multi-professionalism—produces knowledge and education related to cultural well-being while developing practices and competencies in this area (Lilja-Viherlampi and Rosenlöf 2019). Cultural well-being can also be seen as a border zone that facilitates interdisciplinary discussion and negotiation, for example, regarding how to demonstrate the effectiveness of art (Laukkanen et al. 2017).

At the political level, arts and culture were recognized as part of Finnish social and healthcare services and the promotion of well-being and health in the 2019 ministerial recommendation (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2019). Since 2022, cultural well-being has been included in the checklist of lifestyle guidance for integrated services (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2022). These are recommendations for improving the accessibility of arts and culture in social and health care (Ministry of Education and Culture 2018; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2015). In 2020, the Finnish Arts Promotion Centre established expert services on cultural well-being to promote cooperation between artists and social sectors.

Community art is a powerful tool for promoting cultural well-being in different communities. In Finland, community art projects have been initiated since the 1990s (Hiltunen 2009; Kantonen 2005), with art events and art interventions being used to rehabilitate, engage, and integrate individuals in diverse life situations. The effectiveness of participating in art activities stems from the freedom that artistic expression offers both creators and audiences a journey into the unknown (Bergman et al. 2021). Long-term studies in Finland have also

explored strategies, methods, quality, and the impact of enhancing well-being at work through art (Lehikoinen and Pässilä 2016; Rantala and Jansson 2013; Väänänen et al. 2011).

The impact of art and culture—whether aesthetic, cultural, social, educational, economic, or related to health and well-being—largely depends on the experience of encountering art (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Consequently, the concepts of the art encounter, the meaningfulness of the art experience, and the accessibility of art are all central to discussions on art and cultural well-being (Lehikoinen et al. 2020). Culture, understood as the imprint of society’s human activities and actions, plays a crucial role in this context (Salonen and Rouhinen 2015). People absorb cultural traits as part of their identity and way of life and actively shape the culture in which they live (Salonen and Rouhinen 2015). This perspective broadens the definition of culture, viewing individuals as active agents within their cultural environment. It also encourages the involvement of stakeholders in designing art activities within their communities in collaboration with artists.

Artmaking in welfare-sector objectives has aroused fear and heated debates about instrumentalizing art. This does not refute the fact, proven by research and the speeches of experiential experts, that the power of art to articulate human and emotional themes is a peculiar enabler (Ansio et al. 2017; Bergman et al. 2021; Fancourt and Finn 2019). Several projects have considered and developed ways to bring artistic freedom and the possibility of creativity to new environments at a time characterized by social solid malaise and a lack of encounter, presence, and creative space (Fancourt and Finn 2019; Houni et al. 2020; Jokela and Huhmarniemi 2020). While art can bring welfare and solutions as by-products, the main focus should be on art as a participatory, questioning, encountering, and open-ended activity. There is a risk that discussions on arts are focused on the technicalities of performing a task or implementing a ready-made formula, which would subsequently lead to the loss of the essence of art and art-based activities that are based on undefined, open-ended activities in the world of wonder and discovery (Lehikoinen et al. 2020; Nuutinen et al. 2021; Martin 2021). However, when art is produced with multi-sectoral project funding, the concept of art in well-being can promise significant and unique results. In cultural well-being, the emphasis is mostly on the possible, whereas there is no guarantee of a certain outcome in arts (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Because phrases such as “art can bring benefit” or “art activities can create experiences for the community” are commonly used (Lilja-Viherlampi and Rosenlöf 2019), it is natural to feel pressure to develop an activity based on the expectations of the organizations and the project funder.

Art-Based Action Research as a Methodological Approach

ABAR is a research strategy involving artistic processes, co-researchers, and/or stakeholders. This study’s stakeholders were managers and workers in three social and healthcare organizations involved in the WorkArt project. All three organizations had experimented with arts-based activities for several years and had previously offered art for their clients (patients in care

institutions). The goal was to create art-based workshops to enhance employee job satisfaction, provide new ways of reflecting on their work and work community, and collect research data to evaluate the process. All organizations named a contact person, usually a leader or supervisor, who was also the co-designer of the process. Typical to ABAR, the data resulted from the researcher's collaboration with the participants involved.

ABAR is conducted in cycles, with the researcher actively involved in the design, outcome, testing, and development phases (Jokela et al. 2015). Oinas collected data for this article during the design phase of the artistic activities, recording planning sessions and noting key discussion points in her notebook. She also maintained a reflective research diary throughout the process. Research data has been analyzed by typing it with entities related to the phenomenon under study: what are actors planning to achieve through art interventions? The findings have been subjected to interpretation, in which the meanings of the expressions and words have been considered: what does one mean, and how does one find connections between different points of view?

The community art process is characterized by an ethical, respectful approach, which was the core value of this research and design process. The University of Lapland is committed to research integrity (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK 2023) guidelines on ethical principles for research involving human subjects. At the time of data collection, all participants were informed about the research project in detail, verbally and in a consent form, about the anonymous participation in the study, and the opportunity to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without consequences. All three organizations formally permitted the research, and all the managers and supervisors involved in the co-design process signed the consent form. The final art intervention was implemented in each organization as a series of three art workshops. The themes of the art workshops involved imaginary journeys and sharing cultural stories, community painting exercises, word art, and embodied expression using theater-based arts (Oinas et al. 2022; Oinas and Huhmarniemi 2024). This article focuses on the co-designing phase of how workshops started to model to this outcome.

How Were the Art Interventions Planned?

Organizations had the autonomy to decide who would be involved in the planning and development of the art interventions. Each institution appointed a leader to represent them in the project. Oinas contacted these leaders in advance, gathering their wishes, thoughts, and observations through discussions, emails, and face-to-face meetings. During this preparation phase, it was decided that each organization would host three art workshops as part of the interventions. This format provided a clear starting point for the organizational representatives, making it easier to schedule art interventions within the finalized process outline.

This project's planning phase spanned two to three months before the first art interventions. This time period had been allocated for the planning phase in the project schedule, and all of it proved necessary due to unexpected staff turnovers, summer vacations of the contact people, and

other everyday challenges. The time set aside for co-design was also seen as an important part of the sustainable development of artists' working methods (Oinas and Kyllönen 2025).

To support the planning and monitoring process, the staff participated in a well-being survey developed by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, which addressed holistic human understanding, societal context, family relationships, values, and attitudes—all within the broader realms of well-being and workability. The well-being survey contributed to the baseline assessment of the art interventions but did not directly influence the design of the interventions themselves or the concrete measures. It is, therefore, excluded from the research data used in this article. As art intervention pilots were rather short-term projects, they did not notably impact the well-being measured by the survey. However, participants reported in the interviews about their perceived improvement in well-being and working spirit (Oinas and Huhmarniemi 2024).

Throughout the WorkArt project, planning and reflection were continuous as part of the development research process. The planning phase was particularly unique, requiring Oinas to carefully balance the frequency of her contacts to avoid overwhelming already busy managers and supervisors while still gathering the necessary information, building trust with the collaborators, and keeping everyone actively engaged.

In collaborating on the planning and implementing art workshops, Oinas and Kyllönen reflected on how to create meaningful and evocative experiences within the work community, despite the limitation of just three art interventions per community. The awareness of this time constraint led them to focus more on goal-oriented interventions than they were accustomed to. Combining administrative requirements with communal art processes can be expected to cause conflicts for artists, as the inherent freedom, time, and open-ended nature of art can feel compromised by administrative goals, stakeholder expectations, target groups, participant numbers, and strict schedules. Oinas and Kyllönen also faced this challenge but approached it curiously by asking: what could be created within the given framework?

Experience of Co-Design: Analyses of the Research Data

Although the managers had very positive involvement in artistic activities, the need to enhance the staff's experience and raise the potential for promoting well-being through arts activities emerged as a topical challenge in all three organizations. “[Workers] give others joy, faith, and motivation through their work. In turn, the arts would bring them joy, faith, and motivation,” said one manager (Organization 3, team leader) in the planning phase. Moreover, the research data suggests that organization managers wished their staff could grow their arts-based toolbox and be encouraged to be more creative in their approach to work amidst their routine models. One manager described expectations for the project as increasing workers' practical working tools: “Direct tips about the [artistic] activity on how the employee can help the volunteer cope and develop their activities.” Another manager

expressed the expectation to support workers' capabilities to apply arts in care: "concrete help on how to get started is needed when you want artistic activity and giving staff the freedom to do things that increase their own resources."

According to the interviewed managers, some employees had a negative attitude toward the art. On the other hand, one manager said, "Art activities are eagerly awaited." To consider several prejudices art can bring up, Oinas and Kyllönen designed art intervention to include time to reflect on and confront views on culture and art and to discuss what could be found through artistic processes. The interventions were supposed to open up new visions among the staff on individual and community levels. All the interviews mentioned community spirit as one motivator for participation in the project.

The aspirations of the contact persons in the organizations were similar regarding the potential of arts-based activities. Art activities were expected to break the routine patterns of psychosomatically stressful work. Following routines is an efficient way of working in everyday life and makes it easier for staff to cope with their work. However, when work becomes too routine, workers can lose the elements of presence and interaction with patients and colleagues. One organization manager described the need for interventions: "An external stimulator is needed occasionally to break routines."

When discussing well-being at work, the managers identified the biggest challenge in working with patients suffering mainly from mental challenges and illnesses as the psychosomatic strain of the work. Therefore, they wanted to employ art activities to give the staff an opportunity for respite and creative thinking, which could reflect on the development of their job descriptions. All interviewed organization managers mentioned that the staff organized, encouraged, guided, and inspired others through their work. Through art interventions, staff can adopt a receptive role to experience what they offer to others. One of the team leaders emphasized art's potential in enhancing a sense of well-being at work: "The work is psycho-socially demanding, the competition is fierce, and staff turnover is high. Investing in well-being at work can attract the best people to our organization. Art has much to offer in this area, too" (Organization 2, team leader).

When planning the meetings with the people responsible for the organization, the management wants their staff to receive concrete tips, ideas, and models for their work. Several discussions revealed that the employees wanted to incorporate more artistic approaches. However, they were either shy or needed help finding a way to bring an artistic or creative dimension to their everyday work. In the project, the recognized elements allowed workers to respite and shake up their routines and analyze how organizations can implement artistic activities in their workplace.

In the changing world of work, the social services sector competes for highly qualified employees and committed staff. During the planning phase, one of the supervisors expressed that the values brought by artistic activities could give their organization a retention factor in the competition for the best employees in the sector. However, the team leader did not

elaborate further on how particularly arts could serve as a retention factor. Arts and culture have been identified as a strong attraction and retention factor in municipal policy (Ministry of Education and Culture 2018). Presumably, the same factors of attraction and commitment can be observed in workplaces and organizational structures.

Arts cannot be goal-oriented in answering all the challenges raised by the representatives of organizations. Foresight can be seen through thoughts in the planning phase, where artists felt uncertain and reflected their limited capability to transform stakeholders' attitudes toward art. "As artists, we can evoke presence, empathy, and consideration in the participants, but that is all we and art itself can do. If the resistance of a participant or staff is strong, we can only develop ourselves and our protective shield" (Research diary, Oinas 2021).

During planning meetings with the organizations' leaders and artists, essential discussions took place to clarify each other's goals and aspirations. The planning meetings clearly showed that collaborative art processes could address the goals of both parties. Co-designing artistic activities with managers was a way to get a more holistic picture of where to go and what to do as art interventions. The interviewed organization managers talked about the workers' creativity, independence, and connections with each other and the ability to have new visions for everyday working life. All of these hopes and goals caused some pressure for artists working on the project.

Keeping the Mind and Senses Open: Discussion

When developing an art intervention in a community or organization with little to no relationship with the arts and culture, it is particularly important for collaborators to remain open-minded and perceptive. While artists and art may be met with both positive and negative biases, artists themselves often carry their preconceptions about collaboration partners. These preconceptions are counterproductive and can hinder genuine engagement with the community. Therefore, artists should approach the process without bias, gathering information through visits, and meeting each worker with sincere and unprejudiced curiosity. The community art process begins like any other human interaction: getting to know each other, building trust, and listening. When communities, groups, or organizations engage in artmaking, artists often take on roles as inspirers, directors, and facilitators, ensuring that the artistic dimension remains central to the activity (Jokela and Huhmarniemi 2020).

From an artist's point of view, art should also have freedom. The power in community art lies in exploring new points of view together in the present space and time. Mental presence and an accepting atmosphere are also at the heart of arts-based activities and community art. Co-design by artists and stakeholders demands shared values enabling the setting of common goals (Figure 1). Objectives from the perspectives of artists and stakeholders are described in Figure 1.

Since art is a complex term and can have different meanings for different people, Oinas grouped the sources of information in a diagram (Figure 1) to be understood from the

perspective of the organization's managers and the artists working on the project. Analysis of the data showed that organizational managers expected art interventions to contribute to the development of employees' work profiles, to give employees new ideas for their own work, and to make work more interesting by making the work culture more attractive. From the artists' point of view, art was seen as a method of non-knowing that develops, brings a sense of playfulness to the human encounter, and makes meeting and being present with others a more profound experience. As there were major differences between these perspectives, it was important to take the time to find unifying values and terms at the interface of these two professional perspectives. This planning phase was one of the most important phases in the process of motivating artists in the right way and having the best possible understanding for all people involved in the project.

Three themes emerged clearly from the data, around which a common vision eventually emerged with representatives of the participating organizations (Figure 1). The common objectives identified by both parties for the project were to support creative thinking, to focus on well-being, and to develop interaction skills where possible. These themes emerged in the bilateral discussions with the managers or responsible persons of the organizations involved in the project. While the organizations talked about developing working profiles, providing new ideas for everyday work, and making workplaces more attractive by adding the grip of work, the objectives seemed too big and grandiose to be achieved through artistic interventions. Structural development in the context of a pilot project also seemed challenging. When the thought turned to what we as artists ourselves thought we could do with an arts intervention in the workplace, themes of not-knowing, playfulness, and an emphasis on deep encounter emerged. Through these perspectives, a common set of values and goals emerged as manageable and cross-cutting objectives that could be achieved through our artistic skills.

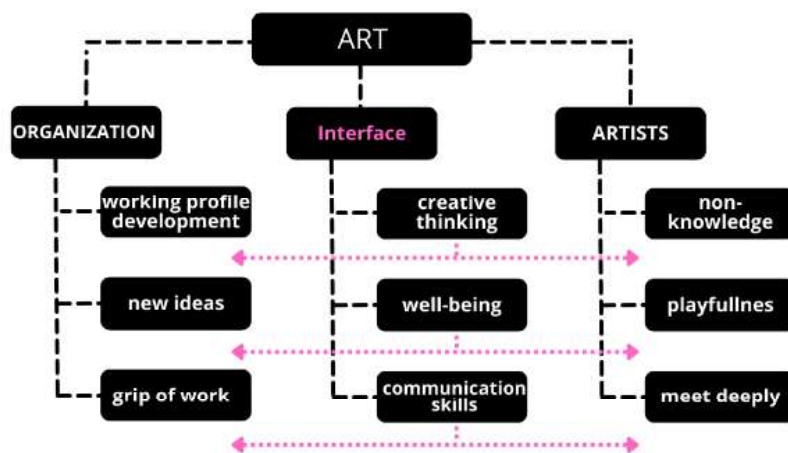


Figure 1: Defining Common Objectives on Shared Interface

Source: Oinas and Kyllönen 2025

Comprising the core of art interventions, this perspective led the artists to seek and reflect on participating workers' personal, artistic, and cultural relationships. Initially, arts interventions were planned to evoke the individuals' cultural relationships through objects and storytelling; however, in the course of the research, more content was developed, allowing artists to collaborate with the participants on a personal-encounter level and encouraging the work community to form a new group joined by project artists to foster group dynamics. The objective was to create a clear space, free from previous assumptions and preconceptions, allowing each participant to be open and genuinely present with the members involved. These research findings show the importance of time spent in the co-design phase to get the best out of the art interventions from the artist's and organization's perspectives.

In art intervention, the starting points for planning were provided by a designated contact person in the organization, often a manager. The planning process and cooperation with the contact persons were mainly effective. The organizations involved were already positive and optimistic about the arts and arts-related activities. However, their employees' attitudes and reception could be the opposite. Management has preconceptions about the atmosphere and receptiveness of the work community. Still, it is only when the artist encounters all actors as individuals that the atmosphere and attitudes become clear. At the beginning of the process, the artist planning an artistic activity depended on the information they received from the contact person. In some cases, the manager or supervisor could give an over-optimistic view of the starting point for the art project, or the artist could get a more challenging view of the community than it actually was. During negotiations and meetings, the artist needs to be sensitive to what is being said and be able to hear what is not being said. However, it is important not to over-interpret these observations and to recognize harmful or limiting preconceptions about the community with which the artist works.

As a service design method, co-design means actively involving users, stakeholders, and other relevant people in the design of a service (Sangiorgi and Prendiville 2017; Penin 2018). Instead of designers working alone and handing over a service concept, the people who will use, deliver, or be impacted by the service collaborate in its creation in co-design. When designing art as a service for workers of care institutions, co-design teams could thus include representatives of stakeholders. In this project, the aim was also to involve employees from the planning stage of the process alongside managers. In some organizations, they were committed to using worktime for planning, and in others, it was not possible. From the analyses, it can be seen that the experience and commitment of the work community in the final art interventions were better if someone who knew the work at the grassroots level was involved in the planning process from the beginning. This was reflected in, for example, schedules, shifts, and facilities management of the artistic process.

It can be said that social and healthcare workers play a gatekeeping role in enabling the cultural well-being and cultural rights of patients and clients. It can also be assumed that if the staff have a positive attitude toward arts-based services in their organization and a deep

understanding of the impact of the arts and culture, they are more likely to communicate cultural experiences and values to their clients. At the same time, when arts activities for staff and workplace well-being were developed, it was important to engage the participants in reflecting on their individual cultural relationships and the resources behind them. The same finding was reflected in the speeches of the managers and frontline staff of the organizations, who hoped that art interventions would bring joy and personal empowerment to the workplace. Moreover, all the interviewed organization managers clearly expressed a desire to increase the courage and skills of the staff to introduce arts-based activities in their client and care work. Involvement in arts activities was also seen as a way of increasing the creativity and creative thinking of the staff.

A tightly scheduled work culture challenges artists to be influencers as a precision product. In response, a scalable model was designed that could be adapted to different organizations. It took many hours of planning to let go of old ideas and attitudes and to determine how much time was required to confidently create self-satisfying artistic processes within the community. Recognizing preconceived notions in the artist was also a place of growth. If elements of art are to be brought to new areas of activity, it is necessary to accept the pressure to change how art is realized through interactions. Ultimately, it requires developing professional skills and a deeper understanding of the artist's ethical and artistic values. When specialists know themselves and understand their competence, they can confidently apply their skills and artistry to new environments (Kantonen and Karttunen 2021; Nuutinen et al. 2021). Although artistic freedom is preserved, the artist remains responsible for nurturing their actions and values. Collaboration with a new field requires efficient communication skills, the courage to take risks, and the ability to listen to the organization's representatives.

The information about the working communities collected during the design phase plays an important role in developing art activities in well-defined forms of work in the social sectors. However, this information is collected to provide background information and clarify the framework within which the work will be carried out. The real space given to art, the reception, hierarchies, and atmosphere of the working community became clear to the artist through the encounters that take place in the art workshops. One of the challenges for the artist is to constantly venture into unknown domains. Yet, confidence in the sufficiency of genuine encounters and the ability to create an atmosphere of trust around the art activity provide strong grounds for artistic processes, leading to indeterminate outcomes. The degree of commitment of the collaborative organization is a significant factor in enabling this to happen. Managers, human resource planners, and trainers must understand what is required to create and enable an artistic process. Mental space, physical activity space, and tangible creative time within the working day will most likely transform art-based experiences into profound processes. There is a need for collaborative experiences and co-development research between these two distinct sectors to transform artistic activities from a project-based blip into a permanent part of a new multidisciplinary working culture in the healthcare and social care sectors in the future. The approach of arts-based action research supported co-design in art interventions.

Investing time and salary in the design of artistic activities can support artists' working conditions in the health and well-being sectors. However, other strategies should also be developed and explored. For example, hiring artists as permanent or long-term staff members within care institutions could strengthen their professional position. This kind of position has enabled Kartano (2023) to design an art program that takes into account the residents' abilities. Art methods have been used to deepen encounters and enhance understanding of the clients (Kartano 2023). Inspired by the artist, nurses and carers have also begun to use creative and arts-based methods in their work (Kartano 2023). From the perspective of developing artists' working lives, being employed and integrated as a stable part of the organization would offer a more sustainable, equitable, and impactful opportunity for artistic work.

Conclusion

This article focused on co-designing art interventions for workplace well-being, particularly cultural well-being. Arts and arts-based approaches were introduced to the social care sector in abundance, as positive research and experiential knowledge are growing. Artistic activities were designed for three different care institutions in Finland. From the beginning, it was clear that organization managers and artists had very different perspectives on the projects. The arts-based action research approach and co-design phase helped artists design and facilitate successful art activities, and organizations were able to gain the expected benefits of them. Co-design between artists and organization managers was based on mutual trust, respect, and appreciation. Artistic activities were facilitated as open-ended processes: trying to assume nothing and keeping the artistic outcomes open to new possibilities and participants' creativity.

Cultural well-being is seen as a resource for human well-being and efficient client care. Arts-based activities and community art in care units can promote staff mental presence, encounter, and interaction skills, supporting their well-being at work and client competence. The challenge for a wider collaboration is the differences and gaps in the structures and cultures of care institutions and artists' working conditions. Long-term commitment can provide a sustainable model of artistic action to which all participants can commit. The more willing people are to engage in an arts-based process over the longer term, the more likely it is to meet the evolving needs of the organization.

When implementing artistic activities within social and healthcare communities, shared values and a common understanding of artistic activities are needed. Leaders of the care units must participate in some of the artistic activities to gain personal experience with creating art, helping them understand the nature and impact of art, as well as the conditions required for such work. This appreciation of art will encourage them to invest in art-based workshops and activities. Time should be allocated to co-design artistic activities between artists, social and healthcare sector leaders, and employees. This planning should also be compensated for as paid work. Therefore, the planning of art interventions should not be left solely to the artists.

Based on this research, the design of artistic interventions can be developed through an ABAR approach, which includes the ongoing reflexive evaluation of the design and artistic interventions, and data collection for evaluation. When working in a multisectoral field, it is important to have time for multisectoral points of view and to search for shared values for the process. The information and wishes gathered from the leaders are an important starting point for the artistic process to achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome. As always, in the community art process, it is important that artists facilitating the artistic process have an ongoing critical and open mindset, ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to contribute to the collective process. This research indicates that the action research approach could be implemented in co-designing artistic practices and arts-based methods in care institutions.

This action research has some limitations due to its context-specific setting. While the research was conducted in three care institutions in Finland, cultural, organizational, and policy differences in other countries or institutions may affect the implementation and outcomes. The success of the co-design process relied on the willingness and engagement of specific managers and artists, which may not be replicable in contexts where such commitment is lacking. The findings may also not generalize to situations where artists do not possess a similar level of training and experience. In addition, co-design and participatory planning require significant time and resources. This investment may not always be feasible, particularly in overstretched care environments. Furthermore, the requirement for compensated planning time may not be met in all institutional contexts. It must be also noted that the research data were collected from a single action research cycle. More research cycles and longitudinal data would be needed to evaluate the long-term impact of co-designed artistic interventions on workplace well-being and institutional change.

AI Acknowledgment

The authors acknowledge the use of Grammarly to proofread the manuscript. Grammarly was used for grammar checks and tone adjustments. While the authors acknowledge the usage of AI, they maintain that they are the sole authors of this article and take full responsibility for the content therein, as outlined in COPE recommendations.

Informed Consent

This study was conducted with the informed consent of all participants. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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