

How can we REACH OUT when we can't GO OUT?

The first lockdown came completely unexpectedly, caught us all by surprise and forever changed our perspective on many aspects of what we considered *ordinary life*. One of the most impellent needs that everyone had to face was the urge to communicate, get in contact with each other and express our feelings, in a time of disconnection and distance.

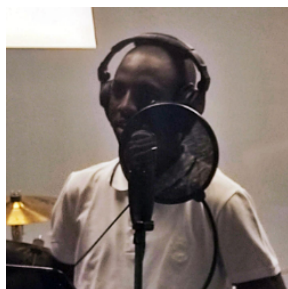
Schools had to especially address this problem, since young people suffered most from this lack of sociality. That is why EnAIP Novara vocational school decided to offer a variety of activities to help students express their emotions and avoid feeling alone and "out of touch" with each other and with themselves.



What better way to do so than to rely on the place of expression *par excellence*, meaning the Theatre?

We decided to keep offering the students the opportunity to challenge themselves in the field of acting and vocal expression, and so we converted our theatre group into an **online workshop of expressive reading**. Students felt the urge to make their voices heard even more than before, and the workshop welcomed students who even had difficulties like learning disorders, dyslexia, disabilities or came from foreign countries and would normally avoid reading out loud.

This fortunate encounter of pictures, written words, voices and emotions is now a published book, which includes a very professionally developed audiobook where the students' emotions are beautifully expressed by their own voices. The workshop was a success, and the output is an audiobook of great artistic quality and professional value, since the students had the chance to record their voices in an actual recording studio. In the audiobook, our little actors read a modern version of *The Little Prince: "il Piccolo Principio"*, written by Alessandro Barbaglia, local award-winning author, who was inspired by the illustrations of one of the students who took part to the workshop.



Was it a successful experience?

During lockdown, students needed opportunities to get in touch with each other and free time activities more than ever. They needed to express their emotions, both new and old ones, and to win back the human touch they longed for. Especially so-called "troubled" young adults, or people with difficulties of various nature, found themselves in really trying times and the art workshop gave them the opportunity to give space and voice to emotions and sides of themselves they had learnt to hide or suppress.

It has been a quite unfortunate occasion to discover new ways and methods to get people involved in such activities, but these ideas should not remain confined within the borders of such a sad coincidence. Theatre and acting give people the opportunity to speak their truth, express themselves, even more than usual, through the filter of a mask or the lines of a character. Moreover, to convey emotions on the stage or through a microphone, people need to look deep into themselves, understand their own feelings in order to be able to reproduce them convincingly. Lastly, people with difficulties and disabilities find place and are welcome in such activities, that do not require physical strength or to be quick at learning, and that give space to each one's peculiar traits.



Would you like to listen to our students' voices? Click [here](#)!