



# Investigating Arts and Music-Based Embodied Training Initiatives for Teachers in Europe: From Teacher Well-Being to Inclusive and Cohesive School Communities

Ester Giamberini – Ph.D. Student – ester.giamberini@unifi.it

Tutor: Prof.ssa Rossella Certini; Co-tutor: Prof. Gianfranco Bandini

## Introduction

This research project investigates arts and music-based embodied training initiatives for teachers across Europe, focusing on how these experiences support teacher well-being and contribute to more inclusive and cohesive school communities. Drawing on educational perspectives inspired by embodied approaches, the study emphasizes the central role of the teacher's body as a site of learning, relational awareness, and personal and professional transformation.

Through a set of European case studies, the project explores emerging contributions and promising practices for both in-service teachers and teachers in training, showing how embodied artistic and musical training can strengthen teachers' empowerment and inclusive postures (communicative, relational, and inclusive competences), while fostering healthier and more connected school environments.

## Main Aims

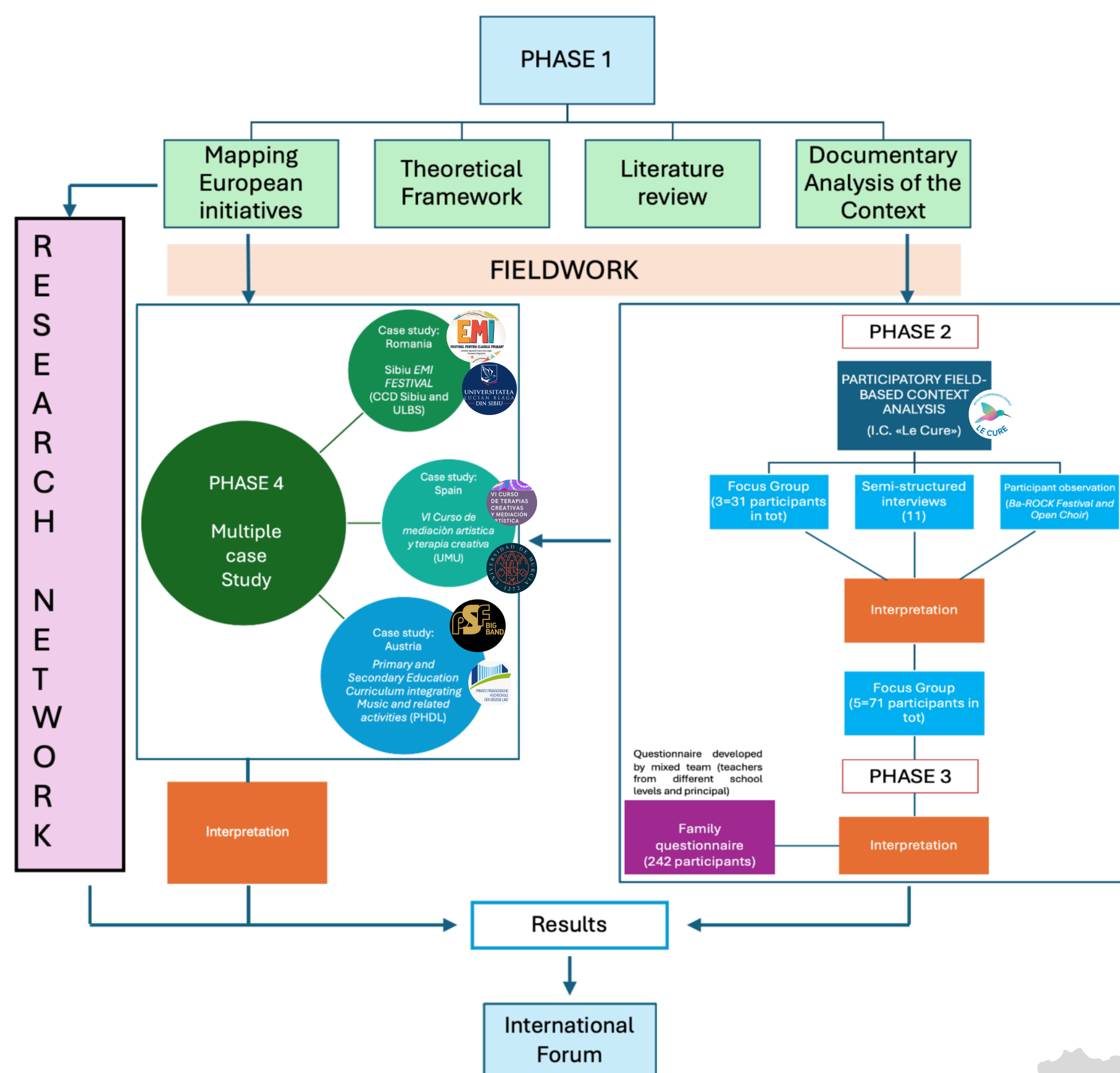
- To map and analyze European arts and music-based embodied training initiatives -for both in-service teachers and teachers in training- and to identify promising methodologies and case-based practices emerging from these programs.
- To explore how these embodied artistic and musical practices contribute to teacher well-being, including emotional balance, self-awareness, and professional vitality.
- To examine how these training pathways foster inclusive, relational, and communicative competences, positioning the teacher's body as a key site of learning and pedagogical transformation.
- To investigate the broader implications of these initiatives for whole-school cohesion, focusing on how teacher development in embodied practices may positively influence relationships and the school climate.
- To explore the potential expansion of arts and music-based embodied initiatives to the wider school community -including students, families, and staff- and assess how broader participation may enhance inclusion and community building.

## Theoretical background

Artistic and musical experiences act as transformative learning tools, fostering self-awareness, emotional expression, and relational skills through embodied practices. They can be understood as aesthetic experiences in Dewey's sense (Educating through Art), where engagement with art promotes reflection, imagination, and personal growth.

Key approaches include Jacques Dalcroze's eurythmy, Embodied Music Education, and arts-based mediation, which emphasizes the role of the facilitator in guiding participants and connecting the body, the artwork, and the social context. These practices help create inclusive, engaging, and participatory educational environments. Central to this process is the teacher's posture of care: an embodied stance combining attentiveness, relational sensitivity, and commitment to well-being and inclusion. This supports meaningful learning experiences and contributes to a cohesive and supportive school community.

## Study Design: Methodological Phases and Participant Distribution



## Context and Approach

This research involves three main stakeholders: the Education Department (Assessorato all'Educazione) of the Municipality of Florence, the FORLILPSI Department of the University of Florence, and the Comprehensive Institute Le Cure in Florence. The project adopts a participatory and collaborative approach, actively listening to and involving all participants -particularly the teachers and staff of the Le Cure school community- to co-reflect, co-design, and co-develop this pathway of research and educational change.

The study also embraces a cross-European, collaborative perspective that fosters dialogue and exchange among the initiatives involved, contributing to the development of a shared learning and research community.

## Discussion and Future Directions

Preliminary findings from the ongoing data analysis indicate the potential of arts and music-based embodied training to enhance teachers' self-awareness, self-confidence, and enjoyment of being together with colleagues. The emerging data also highlight its contribution to the development of relational and communicative skills, by allowing teachers to experiment with new ways of interacting and inhabiting educational relationships. These insights suggest that embodied and arts-based approaches can foster more attentive, connected, and supportive educational environments, positively influencing school well-being and community cohesion. Future directions include extending these initiatives to the wider school community -including families and local stakeholders- and strengthening long-term collaborations among European institutions, while cultivating a research community that engages in dialogue, reflection, and the exchange of good practices and experiences.

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