

Plàudite Teatre

RE-CONNECTA'T project – Theatre as a tool for prevention and personal and social and transformation

[Plàudite Teatre. Espai d'Arts Escèniques](#) is a cultural organisation that promotes community and social theatre in one of the densest and most multicultural cities in Europe: L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, in the metropolitan area of Barcelona.

In 2024, Plàudite started, in cooperation with a research team of nine researchers of the Catalan Institute of Health (ICS), and the financial support of the Health Department of the Government of Catalonia, the project Re-connecta't (Reconnect), with the aim of researching and finding scientific evidence of the positive impact of regular theatre practices on children's and youth's development and wellbeing.

The idea of the project emerged in 2022, after two years of COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictive measures that limited interpersonal relations and community participation to the minimum. The title of the project, literally “reconnect yourself”, well represents the necessity and the willingness of reconnecting with others and also with our intimate self, especially among young people and children, who had been heavily affected by restrictions and lockdowns, as explained in 2022 Voices of Culture Brainstorming Report [Youth, Mental Health and Culture](#). At a regional level, according to the study [Youth, COVID-19, and Inequalities](#), conducted by the Catalan Youth Observatory (OCJ) in 2020, young people have been one of the groups that faced the most challenges during home confinement. [Acción contra el Hambre and Minyons Escoltes i Guies de Catalunya](#) (MEG) highlight a significant increase in cases of mental disorders among adolescents and young people since the beginning of the pandemic. In addition to eating disorders, anxiety, and depression, there has been a rise in suicide attempts and self-harm, making these the leading cause of unnatural death among young people.

The last decades have seen a rising interest and literature production about the benefits of culture and the arts, both in terms of access and participation, for the prevention and treatment of mental health issues (for example, the 2019 WHO *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review* or the 2019 study by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, *Prevention and Treatment of Mental Disorders*, among many others, including the CultureForHealth project Report CultureForHealth Report [Culture's contribution to health and well-being. A report on evidence and policy recommendations for Europe](#), published in

2022, which highlights that culture is an important resource in addressing health holistically).

Plàudite works in the field of theatre and theatre practice since 1998, and, like other organizations and professionals in the performing arts sector, has observed empirically that theatre is a promising tool for improving mental health and well-being. Evidence indicates that participation in artistic and cultural activities can have positive effects on the prevention, awareness, and treatment of mental disorders. This includes reducing anxiety and depression, among other benefits, as well as fostering resilience and building supportive communities.

However, despite the growing body of literature on the positive impact of the arts on mental health (especially, related to music and dance), evidence supporting the specific benefits of theatre in this area remains limited. This is particularly relevant in densely populated and multicultural urban contexts like L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, where Plàudite Teatre conducts its activities. Research is needed to integrate the perspectives of mental health, the arts, and the community to better understand the role of performing arts in promoting health and emotional well-being, to provide acknowledgement and authority to theatrical practice, and to identify effective intervention strategies.

The project and the related research will be carried out over four years, from 2024 to 2028. It is underpinned by the hypothesis that theatre practice has a positive impact on participants' emotional management, emotional well-being, and self-esteem and contributes to assertive communication among participants.

The process will follow 75 fourth-grade students from two schools in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat who will receive 45-minute theatre classes every other week over four academic years (from 4th grade to the first year of secondary school, 2024–2029).

The objective is to determine the effectiveness of theatre work in schools on children's emotional management, emotional well-being, and self-esteem over a four-year period, as well as to identify the factors associated with the effectiveness of theatre classes.

Data on emotional management, self-esteem, and emotional well-being will be collected using validated scales at the beginning and end of each school year. The results will be compared with a control group of 50 students of the same age from another local school that does not offer this activity.

At a scientific level, the research will be implemented as follows:

At the beginning, an initial meeting will be held with the parents/legal guardians of the children who have been invited to participate in the theatre classes to explain

the study and provide them with an information sheet and the informed consent form for signing.

Subsequently, information will be collected from the participants through questionnaires once the theatre classes have started and again once they have been completed (in June, at the end of the school year). The questionnaires will be repeated over the next 3 years, during the 5th, 6th, and 1st year of secondary school.

The variables are divided into main and secondary:

Main variable:

- Emotional management level: Continuous quantitative variable. Measured using the **TMMS-24 scale** for the Evaluation of Emotional Expression, Management, and Recognition (Fernández-Berrocal, Extremera, and Ramos, 2004).

Secondary variables:

- Biological sex: Independent variable. Categorical variable (male/female).
- Age: Independent variable. Continuous quantitative variable.
- Pathological history: Independent variable. Qualitative, nominal variable.
- Family history: Independent variable. Qualitative, nominal variable.
- Self-esteem level: Dependent variable. Continuous quantitative variable. Measured using the **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**.

As a result, children who participate in the theatre classes are expected to improve their self-esteem, emotional management, and emotional well-being. Artistic activities in schools, such as theatre, could serve as valuable tools for promoting emotional management and well-being and preventing mental health disorders, thus potentially having a positive impact on the community.

For more information visit: <https://plaudite.org/en/>