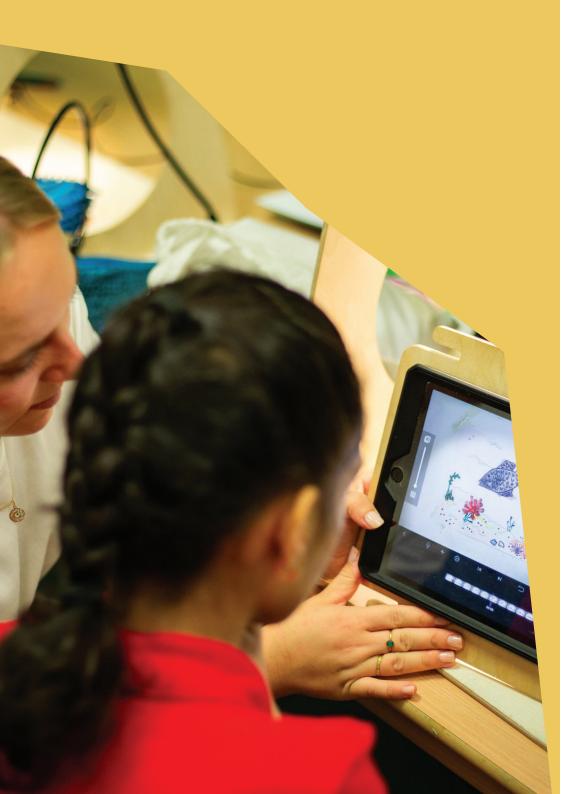
Film in Hospital:

A Toolbox of Good Practices

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Dear readers,

in front of you is a guide – a collection of very diverse examples of good practices developed and implemented by the partners of the *Film in Hospital* international project for children and young people in hospitals.

Implementation of cultural and artistic projects in hospitals is specific. Each day is characterised by particular medical examinations and procedures in different wards. Children's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing can vary from day to day. Sometimes the morning does not match the evening. However, despite specific circumstances, such projects and activities yield extraordinary positive effects in hospitals: for both children and young people, their parents as well as all other employees who take care of health and wellbeing of young patients.

In order to expand our knowledge and experience plus encourage as many individuals and organizations as possible to implement such projects, we have included in this guide a wide range of high-quality content, concrete information and practical advice as well as possible results that can help you during your journey with children and young people in hospitals.

You can read this guide from the beginning to the end or the other way around. You can take a little here and a little there. Make it suitable, up-to-date and relevant for your context.

With this guide, we want to reach a very wide audience, because everyone can contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people – artists, teachers and educators, medical staff, researchers and policy makers.

We hope that our stories will inspire you. And we would love to hear your stories as well, so please get in touch.

On behalf of the team of the Film in Hospital project,

Živa Jurančič, editor of the publication

As human beings, engaging in cultural activities contributes to our mental, physical and social wellbeing. There is now a considerable body of evidence on how arts can contribute to health, as outlined in the WHO's 2019 report What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing? A scoping review, collecting over 3000 pieces of scientific evidence. In 2022, the CultureForHealth Report. Culture's contribution to health and wellbeing. A report on evidence and policy recommendations for Europe compiled additional 310 scientific studies showing that participation in cultural activities improves citizens' health and wellbeing. This report takes a wider perspective than the WHO's 2019 report, looking at culture's contribution to individual wellbeing and community wellbeing as well.

The Film in Hospital project takes a holistic approach to human beings in healthcare settings: moving beyond treating the "physical illnesses" and also considering the "mental wellbeing" of the patients as well as their caretakers.

At the end of the day, we are all social human beings and we need to connect to each other. Cultural activities as well as receptive cultural experiences can ease the way we connect. This is why I find the research finding, namely that "the shared viewing experience, whether as a class or in occasional small groups, is more engaging and rewarding than individual or family viewing" particularly interesting.

We should remember this. We are creating an increasingly lonely society for many of its members, the two most affected groups being the elderly and the youth. Loneliness is not the same as being alone. Isolation is a measurable objective state, determined by the number of social interactions a person has, while loneliness is a subjective experience. Loneliness can be defined as a state of distress or discomfort, which occurs when we perceive a gap between our desires for social connection and actual experiences of it.

By imagining how lonely and distressed a child can feel in a hospital setting, the *Film in Hospital* project can help tackle this through filling

available time with carefully curated film content. While films are also viewed individually, sharing ideas about the film through the platform brings joy and happiness to the viewers, giving them additional human connection. Additional workshops and other cultural events organised in hospitals contribute to a sense of togetherness and of shared experiences, which should not be undervalued. Participatory cultural activities may additionally create a "state of flow" and a sense of purpose. Therefore, there is a huge untapped potential in all artistic disciplines to alleviate these settings.

We need to move such activities to a more systemic level and now is the political momentum. We all need to be vocal about the evidence and we need your help. Talk to your decision makers and proactively trigger and initiate local actions. Within the EU decision making process there is space for cooperation as well.

The new Council *Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026* set "Culture and Health" as one of the actions and EU Member States are having their "open method of cooperation meetings" in 2024. The work will consider the *CultureForHealth* report's policy recommendations, which have the ambition to trigger a true policy change in the EU on all levels.

The European Commission issued a communication on the *Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health* mentioning culture 7 times and the EU member states answered in the EU Council Conclusions, highlighting culture's important role for mental health. This means that each EU member state agrees there is a need to "prioritise integrated policies and services addressing mental health and wellbeing", such as "promoting mental health and wellbeing in different contexts during the life course with a focus on strengthening protective factors for good mental health and mental health resilience such as participating in sports and culture" and highlighting the importance of "access to culture".

Kornelia Kiss.

Head of Research and Development at Culture Action Europe and Co-author of the *CultureForHealth* report

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About Film in Hospital

The aim of the *Film in Hospital* international project is to provide children and young people undergoing treatment in hospitals access to quality film. This objective is based on the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Article 31 of which states that all children have the right to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and to appropriate equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities.

But the project is about much more than just access to quality films. It is also about bringing fun and positive moments, as well as some relief from health and medical concerns. It is about breaking the daily routine of hospital wards and creating pleasant memories. All of this can offer support to children and young people, their parents and other caretakers to cope with hospitalisation and medical treatment. Finally, it can be a useful tool for hospital school teachers and medical staff to connect more easily with young patients.

At the heart of the project are six national platforms with a high-quality selection of over 100 films of different themes, genres and forms for different age groups. Many are accompanied by additional materials and activities, such as fun video tutorials, games and quizzes, a VR app and study guides. Recognising the immeasurable value of offline encounters, we also organise workshops and other cultural events in hospitals to bring the joy of shared experiences and a sense of togetherness.

The Film in Hospital project is currently running in six European countries: Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. In 2024, the network will be extended to partners from Germany and Greece, with the aim of making the project pan-European in the future.

Partners and platforms:

JEF – Belgium JEF in het ziekenhuis iefinhetziekenhuis.be Kids Meet Art - Croatia
Film u bolnici
filmubolnici.org

Il Nuovo Fantarca – Italy
Cinema in ospedale
sites.google.com/view/cinemainospedale

Kinodvor – Slovenia Film v bolnici filmvbolnici.kinodvor.org

Pack Màgic - Spain
Film in Hospital
filminhospital.packmagic.cat

BUFF - Sweden
Buffilusk
buffilusk.buffise

New partners from May 2024:

SCHLINGEL International Film Festival – Germany ff-schlingel.de/en/ Neaniko Plano – Greece neanikoplano.gr

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Quality Criteria for Film Selection

The European Children's Film Association's paper What does Quality Mean in Films for Children? is an excellent reference point when considering what makes a film quality, relevant and meaningful to children and young people in hospital. The partners in the Film in Hospital project share all of these principles.

High quality films for children²:

- should take the view of the children instead of watching children from the perspective of adults;
- should tell their stories in a way that children can understand them;
- should show children that they are not alone with their problems and offer them opportunities to solve these problems;
- should point out the children's special power, fantasy and spontaneity as their advantage in the world of adults;
- should show the reality of life, even if it is hard, but leave the children some hope at the end;
- may give the children the chance for pure entertainment, pleasure, fun and/or suspense;
- should pay attention to the fact that half of the viewers are girls who need their movie heroes as well as the boys;
- should instigate communication among the children and between children and adults;
- can help the children to understand even complicated interrelationships in their lives;

- should convey some basic standards within our society as for example liberty, tolerance towards those who are different, non-violence, antiracism, solidarity;
- can give the children the chance to confront and experience different cultures, to identify themselves with people who live in other countries or societies.

And we have added a few more.

The final film selection includes films that:

- are of high cinematographic quality and go beyond established mainstream formats;
- are suitable for all ages from 3 to 15 (and beyond);
- represent a diversity of styles and techniques;
- represent a diversity of themes, genres, authors (gender, age, etc.), moods and aesthetics;
- represent the European countries' diversity of origin of the different productions with at least 80% of them produced in Europe.

Find out more about the quality criteria in our online film catalogue.



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¹Published on: https://www.ecfaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Discussion_Quality.pdf

² Listed in slightly different order to the original.

Evidence from the Research

To better understand the context and use of the platform in hospitals, the project's Italian partner *Il Nuovo Fantarca* and the *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* carried out a research activity in 2023, with particular references to the Italian case.

To highlight some of the findings:

- Children and young people most often use the platform individually in their hospital room. However, the shared viewing experience, whether as a class or in occasional small groups, is more engaging and rewarding than individual or family viewing.
- Children and young people enjoy using the platform most when it encourages them to experience emotions and learn new things, especially when they can share ideas and thoughts with other people.
- The more the use of the platform is part of predictable routines and within relationships that are repeated over time, the more engaging it is.
- The platform can provide a safety net that fills and shapes the empty time of children and young people in hospital with moments of fun, joy and relaxation (entertainment function).

Read more about the research and its findings - here.



Clearance of Film Rights

The Film in Hospital project would not be possible without strong partnerships with local distributors and international sales agents. We work closely with them to bring the best selection of films to a small but very vulnerable audience.

The project partners manage the rights to feature films individually, as each country has its own distribution system. But we join forces to clear the rights for short films. Each partner clears the rights to ten short films for all the countries involved. In this way, we can make more than 60 short films available on our national platforms.

If you want to know more about how we clear film rights, contact one of our partners.



JEF (Belgium)

Brief description of the organisation

They love youth films, games and digital media! They use them to broaden the perspectives of children and young people and to encourage experimentation and creation.

J'E.F

The Film in Hospital project in Belgium is regional (Flanders). It includes 16 hospitals plus Bednet.³

Type of organisation.

Non-profit organisation.

Youth Film Festival Antwerp.
Film distributor.
Film education organisation.

ACTIVITY: VR WONDERWATER

Type of activity

VR Game App

Aim

Youth Film Festival is more than just watching films during the spring holidays. Every year, visitors can also visit the XL medialab or take part in workshops. We wanted the children in the hospitals to be able to enjoy this as well. Virtual reality offers the opportunity to bring this part of the festival to hospitals or children's homes.

Brief description

To create the VR Wonderwater app, we visited children in hospitals and rehabilitation centres and held workshops with them. They shared their imaginative ideas and drew characters that the animators turned into 3D animations for the app. The game transforms their hospital room into a beautiful underwater world. The player has to look around and by looking at the water bubbles they activate new discoveries.

Duration

It is still up and running and is available on the Google Play Store and on the Apple App Store.

Main target group

6+, to be played individually

Number of children involved

Nearly 10,000 downloads of the app since 2019

Number of hospitals involved

All hospitals participating in Film in Hospital in Belgium.

Main partner in the hospital

Often it is medical staff with an additional educational role.

Implementation

The creation of the app was a collaboration between artists, game developers and JEF. A JEF staff member is the contact person for the hospitals.









For children and young people

A fun distraction to escape the hospital environment for a while. All they need is a smartphone, a Wi-Fi connection to download the app and the VR board provided by hospital staff. Easy to install and play in bed.

For parents

A fun and safe app for their children.

For medical staff

An easy activity to give and explain to young patients.

For hospital schools

A fun way to introduce students to VR.

For JEF

A wonderful way to bring part of the XL-medialab to those youngsters with limited mobility.



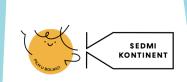
- **1.** Involve children in the process of making an app. Co-creation makes it much more personal and peer-to-peer.
- **2.** Make sure the app and accompanying materials are easy to use and require little explanation so that hospital staff don't have to perform time-consuming tasks.
- **3.** Use as little text as possible to make the application accessible and inclusive.



Kids Meet Art (Croatia)

Brief description of the organisation

A unique organisation that has created and developed film education and film literacy projects over the years to bring audio-visual art closer to children.



The Film in Hospital project in Croatia is national and includes 20+ hospitals.

Type of organisation

Non-profit organisation. Film education for children and young people.

ACTIVITY: FILM CAMP

Type of activity

Film screenings with filmmakers

Aim

To give children direct contact with those who create the magic of film, to meet them and spend an unforgettable day with them.

Brief description

A series of events where filmmakers (actors, directors, editors, producers) visit hospitals and share their professional experiences after watching a film together.

Duration

An event lasts between 45 and 90 minutes. It can be organised as a single event or as a series of many.

Main target group

Suitable for all ages. Children can come on their own, with their family or as a group.

Number of children involved

More than 1,000 per year and more than 13,000 overall

Number of hospitals involved

7

Main partner in the hospital

Educators and hospital staff, usually social educators employed in hospitals. They were responsible for organising the event within the hospital, i.e. getting the children in, organising the venue, getting permissions and so on.

Implementation

Mostly film educators, sometimes local film associations or filmmakers.

For children and young people

Experience of togetherness during hospitalisation; chance to meet their favourite film stars, learn new things, creating more pleasant memories.

For parents

Some peace of mind in knowing that their child is having fun and enjoying the company of other children while they are in hospital.

For medical staff

A better atmosphere in the hospital ward; easier recovery for patients; a more positive image of the hospital in general and among patients and their families.

For hospital schools

Adding value to the learning process and improving the daily atmosphere.

For Kids Meet Art

Knowing we are making a difference; connecting with film professionals & festivals; empowering everyone involved.



- **1.** Be prepared to change and reschedule at any time. We are there to fit into their schedules and activities, and they are challenging.
- **2.** Prepare film guests for the hospital environment. Many people have no hospital experience (or only negative ones) and get anxious. As we are in hospital to make children feel better, it is important that the guests feel comfortable too.
- **3.** Be there for children! You are there to bring the magic of the film. Make the content fun for them, but don't stick to the original plan. Create flexible activities with plenty of space for children to fill with their own thoughts, feelings, experiences whatever comes from watching and talking about a film.



Il Nuovo Fantarca (Italy)

Brief description of the organisation

They have been organising film festivals for children and young people for over 30 years (feature films, documentaries, short films made with children). They organise workshops on video production and media literacy in schools, prisons, Roma communities, on streets, in social houses to stimulate fantasy, culture and socialisation.



The Film in Hospital project in Italy is national and includes 29 hospitals.

Type of organisation

Non-profit organisation. Media literacy. Youth Film Festival.



ACTIVITY: CINEFORUM

Type of the activity

Film screenings with workshops

Aim

To give children in hospitals a shared film experience, the opportunity to have fun, to be creative and to share ideas and emotions with others.

Brief description

Children and parents are invited to come into the hospital playroom. Once the group is formed, the children select the film on the platform by choosing a letter or a card, an image or a theme. After the group has watched the film, the children share their thoughts, ideas and feelings inspired by the film. This is followed by a creative activity: drawing, telling a story, recording children's voices and dubbing films without dialogue, playing a digital game called Hidden Cinema.

Duration

Every Monday, from 3pm to 6pm.

Main target group

For children/teens and their parents (usually mothers).

Number of children involved

Nearly 2,400 since May 2021 (since the platform began working)

Number of hospitals involved

Main partner in the hospital

Volunteers, trainers and hospital stuff. They share the programme and organise the playroom.

Implementation

Staff of the II Nuovo Fantarca, artists who carry out the creative activities.

For children and young people

Time spent in hospital is usually experienced as an interruption to normal life. It is empty time, full of waiting: for a doctor, for medicine, for recovery. Through films and creative workshops, we build bridges between the hospital and normal life outside. Children are encouraged to play, learn, have fun and socialise with friends, which is what they need and want. This reduces anxiety, stress and makes the hospital stay more enjoyable.

For parents

They are encouraged to spend quality time with their children and other caregivers, which can have a positive impact on their well-being.

For medical staff

An experience of how the arts, and film in particular, can contribute to healing and wellbeing of young patients. Culture in healthcare settings goes beyond traditional approaches.

For hospital schools

Access to the free platform and the opportunity for a more creative approach to school education.

For Il Nuovo Fantarca

An opportunity to contribute to media literacy, education, socialisation and wellbeing of children and young people in hospital.



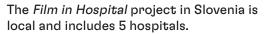
- 1. Watching a film is something of a ritual and children love to be involved. Try to organise regular activities, if possible at the same time and in the same place, this will make it easier for everyone to remember.
- **2.** Try to involve everyone who can share your project with the children, even if you are not there. Parents, hospital staff, volunteers, teachers, etc. This will give the project a wider reach and increase its opportunities.
- **3.** In hospitals you will meet children and young people of different religions, languages and ages. It is important to choose films and activities that everyone can easily enjoy and participate in.



Kinodvor (Slovenia)

Brief description of the organisation

A city cinema offering a diverse programme of film screenings and events for the widest possible audience of all generations, with the aim of promoting a vibrant and inclusive film culture within the community.





Type of organisation

Public institution.



ACTIVITY: CINEMA DAY AT THE HOSPITAL

Type of the activity

A selection of short films with additional video content.

Specific aim

The curriculum in hospital schools is similar to that in mainstream schools, but teachers are faced with various constraints related to the children's health and medical treatment. The aim is to provide a high quality film experience, while at the same time supporting teachers with creative video content that can enrich the hospital school process.

Brief description

Several short films that were already streaming on the platform were selected together with teachers from the hospital school. For these films, additional video content was created with ideas for creative activities after watching the film. The teachers used these films and video content to create a special theme week dedicated to film and art.

Duration

One week

Main target group

Children attending school in hospitals and their teachers.

Number of children involved

100 on two events

Number of hospitals involved

Main partner in the hospital

Two teachers at the hospital. They were included in the selection of films, designing the following creative activities, planning the whole process and evaluating it at the end.

Implementation

The ideas for the videos were developed by the artist based on short films pre-selected by the member of Kinodvor staff in dialogue with the hospital teachers. The video content was shot in cooperation with a professional video team. The workshops in the hospital school were conducted by the teachers themselves.

For children and young people

A fun and enjoyable day of activities that encourage them to be playful, creative and engage with others. They can enjoy a variety of films and try their hand at making short animations.

For parents

Positive emotions when they see their children enjoying the platform and creative activities.

For hospital schools

Enriching the learning experience, a break from the daily routine. Films also provide topics that can be discussed with children in a light-hearted way.

For Kinodvor

Working closely with hospital teachers, which gives the opportunity to better understand the daily reality in the hospital, making the project more visible and widening access to the platform.



- **1.** You don't have to provide an abundance of content. But what you do provide should be carefully considered and tailored to children's needs. Less is more!
- **2.** Work closely with people who work in the hospital. Their help is essential to ensure that the activities are relevant to the children and suitable for the hospital environment.
- **3.** Make it easy and fun! If the result of the workshop is something the children can use to decorate their rooms, even better.



BUFF (Sweden)

Brief description of the organisation

BUFF, the International Children's and Youth Film Festival in Malmö, was founded in 1984. The aim was and still is to show good films for children, young people and adults. A meeting place for people who work with children, young people and film. BUFF strives to open up the possibilities for more influences from Europe and the rest of the world by showing films that might otherwise never be screened.

The *Film in Hospital* project in Sweden is national and includes 29 hospitals.



Type of organisation

Non profit organisation. Film festival. Film distributor.



ACTIVITY: DRIVE-IN CINEMA

Type of the activity

Film screenings with workshops

Aim

To bring quality films to young audiences. Every year, the BUFF festival programme is also on the platform. The workshop is mainly for the children to have fun.

Brief description

Workshop with different stations where children can build their own car, make a driving licence and watch a film sitting in their own car.

Duration

2 hours

Main target group

Ages 4-7, but all are welcome.

Number of children involved

15

Number of hospitals involved

1

Main partner in the hospital

Teachers or someone working in the cultural activities at the hospitals.

Implementation

An organisation from outside that has done the drive-in cinema at festivals before. This workshop was led by six mentors.

For children and young people

The children had a chance to do something different for a while. Together with their parents, they got the materials to build their cars from boxes and other recycled things. The films shown were suitable for everyone. It was a package of short films with no dialogue.

For parents

A fun, creative time spent with the children and other families in the hospital.

For medical staff

Any event that doesn't require any preparation from the hospital staff is always very positive. The staff were very enthusiastic. Our contact at the hospital was also very careful with the people who came to meet the children, knowing what it was like to meet very sick children.

For BUFF

It is a great way to make the film experience more special by building the cars. We would like to make the concept a little bit easier because it takes a lot of effort and a lot of manpower. There were some really meaningful and beautiful meetings and conversations both before and during the event.



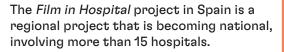
- **1.** Make it fun and relaxed. And be prepared for what you might experience when you meet the children.
- **2.** It is difficult to predict the number of participants. Be prepared for very few children.
- 3. Have fun!



Pack Màgic (Spain)

Brief description of the organisation

A film distributor dedicated to the dissemination of films and other audiovisual resources that stimulate aesthetic sensitivity, emotional education and the transmission of social and cultural values.





Type of organisation

Film distributor.



Type of activity

A film screening with a musical event

Aim

To give hospitalised children, their parents and medical staff the opportunity to watch a new film and have a good time. Everyone had the opportunity to invite their friends and family to spend some quality time together and to stimulate a sense of community and connection between the town and the health centre.

Brief description

A one-day event featuring the animated musical Yuku and the Himalayan Flower with karaoke. The event is actually an interactive play where children enter the screening room through colourful tunnels, learn songs from the film and then sing along during the screening. The whole show is hosted by actors from a professional theatre company.

Duration

Approximately one hour and a half.

Main target group

Ages 3-16. For a large group including children, families and hospital staff. The hospital may decide to open the event to extended family and friends to create a sense of community.

Number of children involved

It was an open event with approximately 20 participants at the hospital auditorium.

Number of hospitals involved

1

Main partner in the hospital

The main contact at the centre was a hospital worker who was both a nurse and a communications officer. This person was responsible for all event organisation and logistics in the hospital.

Implementation

Pack Magic took care of the formal part (contacting the hospital, fixing the date and place, planning and organising, production, activity designing) and then worked with a theatre company who carried out the activity.



For children and young people

The children loved the show, learning songs and singing. They were able to experience positive emotions and some relief by taking their minds off their illness, at least for a while.

For parents

A fun event that brought some joy to their children. It also gave them a chance to relax and spend some quality time together as a family.

For medical staff

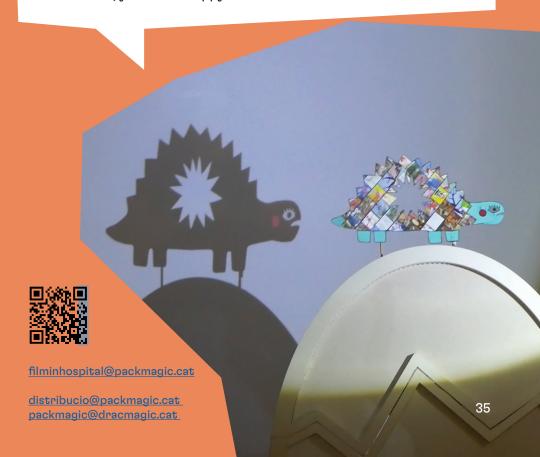
They were grateful for the break from their usually very busy and stressful days and were delighted to see the children enjoying themselves. The event has also had a positive impact on the image of the heath centre in the public eye.

For Pack Màgic

We were able to spend a day at the health centre and see the results of our work first-hand on the *Film in Hospital* project. It was a great learning experience and a chance to spend some quality time together.



- 1. Choose a fun film that gives you the opportunity to play and explore ways to entertain the children. In our case, the film Yuku and the Himalayan Flower gave us the opportunity to play with music and karaoke and the children loved it.
- **2.** Always consider the children's needs and any limitations they may have (limited mobility, medical restrictions etc.). Open communication with nurses and other medical staff is very important. Together you can find the best ways to work with children in difficult situations and make activities as inclusive as possible.
- **3.** Don't be in a hurry! Organising activities in a hospital is hard work. You must plan it in advance, communicate with many people, learn a lot and read the documents. It will be hard and difficult, but once you have done it, you will be happy with the results.



The international *Film in Hospital* project April, 2024

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