



Work in progress: the Dutch contribution to the SWAN project

The aim of Kanker in Beeld/ Singing for Life choirs' contribution to the SWAN project is to share knowledge and experience about developing special choirs for cancer patients and their relatives across Europe. Kanker in Beeld is an umbrella organisation for creative expression, looking to enhance the quality of life of cancer patients and their relatives. It includes among other creative activities a network of 28 Singing for Life choirs all over the country. Such a network as in the Netherlands does not exist in any other country.

The Kanker in Beeld contribution to SWAN consists of three elements:

- A survey of specific skills of conductors of choirs for cancer patients and relatives and a guide for conductors based on this survey
- Exchange of conductors programme
- Experiencing a regional choir gathering in which singing will be combined with dance

In January 2024 we sent a questionnaire to all conductors, voice liberators and musical accompanists of our choirs. The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with two conductors. The response rate was 95%. After analysing the answers, we will now discuss the outcome of the survey with our conductors and use their feedback in drafting a guide.

Next to background information about musical education and experience in working with cancer patients and relatives we asked for knowledge and experience in group dynamics. They rated elements that they think are key for a Singing for Life choir, for example, the creation of connection, dealing with sorrow and loss, relaxation, pleasure, improvisation, being a good singer themselves. Since social safety is a hot item nowadays, we asked about this topic both for the choir and for the conductor.

We will finish the guide during summer time. It will be a practical guide with lessons learned, including a video of a gathering of professionals connected to Kanker in Beeld in which we put together different ways of creative expression. We strive to more connection between music, dance, theatre and visual work for the benefit of our participants. Hopefully the guide will inspire and stimulate other conductors to start a choir for cancer patients and relatives.

Cora Honing

President of Kanker in Beeld