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RECOVERY PLAN FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION GROUPS IN THE EU CULTURAL SECTORS

DEVELOPED WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF THE
PROJECT:
EMPOWERMENT OF
SOCIAL INCLUSION
GROUPS THROUGH
CREATIVITY AND
CULTURAL WORK

A PROJECT FUNDED IN 2020
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PROJECT SUMMARY

The current project PALkonnnect is engaging cultural, artistic, and research organizations to stimulate European awareness and empower people of current and future generations to respect the inclusion and diversity and to be successful innovators in their local environment. The current project aims to support artists from social inclusion groups to present and promote their artworks in post-COVID 19 circumstances and to inspire their cooperation within the European countries. The project aims to equip artists and cultural workers with the necessary innovative skills and competencies to encourage their creativity and the creation of new art pieces. Additionally, the main objective of the project is to enhance the promotion and popularity of cultural and historical information about the targeted social inclusion groups to increase the public knowledge and facilitate the integration process.

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated a change process by highlighting already existing problems in the field of art and culture, such as the protection of artists, grants in the field of culture and art, funding mechanisms, social integration processes and social inclusion. Art as well as culture are at the center of today's debate on the importance of their inclusion in cultural, social, economic and artistic policies, through a process of integration and a multidisciplinary approach. The analysis conducted due to the Erasmus project in question, has highlighted how a change process is underway and explores it from the point of view of a greater legal, fiscal and social protection of artists, with different effects at European level (such as the need to increase the budgets both at the government, national, local and European level of grants in the field of art and culture). It also reflects on how Covid has triggered a process of digitization, which if on the one hand has innovative elements, on the other highlighted the need to integrate new policies both at the educational level and social policies to avoid that a part of society is excluded from the digitization process, creating a new band of social marginalization.

There is no doubt that the role of artists in society and in social, political, economical, processes is of vital importance, already in place for many years, but the project highlights the need to give greater guarantees to artists not only at national, but also at European level. Covid-19 pandemic has brought out, in this sector, a hybridization of professional figures, in many unsecured countries, which have been marginalized and excluded from financial aid processes during Covid-19, a need to be met.

On the other hand, the project also examines the importance of social inclusion, policies already in place in several countries, but if we want to talk about change in this sector, the analysis must focus on the need for impact observation parameters of these policies not only in the short term but also in the long term. How can a real impact on society be guaranteed in the long term? Hence the need for a budget increase in this field, as well as the need to include artists in the decision-making process of projects for a global analysis of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the need for greater round tables of consultations between the different subjects called to act and collaborate together, as well as the need for an exchange of best practices in art, and how to measure their impact on the stakeholders has emerged.

The analysis carried out also highlights how the legislation both on the protection of artists, as the "Legal Status" is different in the different European member countries, the same appears in the financing mechanisms, and the centrality of art and culture in the tables of consultations in the cultural and art fields, in some countries an exchange rate policy is taking shape, in others still weak from a financial point of view.

However, an interesting fact that emerged from the comparative analysis is in the field of education, in the inclusion policy, at university level of degree and master's courses that emphasize new professional figures linked to cultural and artistic mediation, to social inclusion.

This process highlights how the figure of the artist is increasingly present in social, cultural and economic policies.

However, there are some gaps, especially in the field of collaboration and cooperation with all those called to intervene. Covid has created an economic crisis in all sectors of society, affecting in particular the world of culture and art, where unemployment has increased, highlighting the fragility of the system, and creating greater social marginalization.

Art as a mediation between the different subjects, with the ability to create new alliances to face and help that social stratum that lives on the margins of society, disadvantaged groups.

This process seems to be already underway, however it still requires processes of change and innovation, such as new models of collaboration, and new organizational forms.

The comparative analysis and thanks to the Erasmus project conducted in 7 countries, highlighted the problems that existed before Covid, what happened during, and the innovative aspects in progress. The analysis aims to give an overview both at a financial level of the different financing systems, to bring out guidelines, and to highlight the efforts and changes taking place, and how to improve collaboration at European, national and local, to create a solidarity system in the field of social inclusion policies. The analysis also aims to outline possible solutions, still present, to improve the current system, highlighting the innovative aspects in place, but how to improve them to give all citizens the opportunity to be part of this process.

The comparative analysis is based on the following pillars: economic aspect, social aspect, innovation, and the guarantees given to artists, only through a comparative analysis and an interdisciplinary approach, can a new model of collaboration be created. The analysis will also try to compare policies at European, national and local level, taking into consideration both the directives of Europe, of the States, with their diversity of political organization, such as international organizations, to have a global framework for the different levels. From the analysis it emerged that there is still a gap between the European level of policy implementation and the national one, as well as the diversity between the member states, in positioning culture and art at the center of the debate. At a marginal level, these data emerged from the comparative analysis of financing mechanisms. Same approach regarding the figure of the artists, from the point of view of their legal, fiscal and social protection, we will still notice some gaps in this sector and the different degrees in the implementation of legislative bills on the subject. The comparative analysis has allowed us to also highlight the classes at risk, such as that of cultural workers and artists, here too we will notice the differences in place and what needs to be improved.

The analysis allowed us to analyze the change process from different angles highlighting the positive and negative aspects, the changes, the innovations, the changes taking place thanks to the presence of artistic and cultural practices, new protection mechanisms, and new financing measures. However, from the analysis it emerged that Culture still occupies a marginal place at the national level from a financial point of view compared to other policies.

However, the analysis will show that we are facing a very important and changing historical period, where changes are taking place in every member state with relative impacts in the coming years.

The analysis, in particular, highlights the following issues: fragility of the work system of the cultural and artistic sector; the opportunities and limits of the new digitalization world; towards a new transnational mobility and networking; towards new models of cooperation for social inclusion projects: Limits and Challenges; the role of the education in connection with culture, social and inclusion policy.

1

**OVERVIEW OF THE CULTURAL
SECTORS OF THE SEVEN COUNTRIES
INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT DURING
THE COVID-19**

The comparative analysis will be based on the study of the 7 European partner countries of the project, through a reflection both from an economic, social and cultural point of view, before, during and after Covid-19. The comparative study together with an analysis of the major European directives in the field of social inclusion policies, will help us to comprehend the global understanding of what will need to be changed both from a structural and a decisional point of view. We report here the conclusions and the most important aspects of the Covid 19 effect on each country, for more information the guidelines document can be consulted.

IMPACT OF COVID -19 RESTRICTIONS

**FINANCIAL
ASPECTS**

**CROATIA, ITALY,
ROMANIA,
SWEDEN,
GREECE, CZECH
REPUBLIC, SPAIN**

**SOCIAL
ASPECTS**

Romania

Covid-19 was and still is a true challenge for artists and the cultural sector in Romania, that was not prioritized by the national government during the pandemic, pursuing the status-quo of being less important. Both levels production and consumption of art has significantly decreased. While some of the financial help was distributed, it only partially supported both public and private parts of the industry. No special attention was given to artists from the marginalized groups. Culture from the point of view of financial aid and government programs, however, needs strengthening and budget increases.

Greece

Greece is an example of an outstanding digital transformation in arts and culture, initiated by the pandemic. It helped to preserve artistic works and gave the opportunity for cultural consumption for people, who did not have access to physical, on-side entertainment before due to their reduced mobility, health conditions or financial restraints. The financial support ensured by the state was substantial, especially compared to other Member States in 2020.

However, other than that the pandemic did not anyhow influence the issue of cultural centralization in the country and existing exclusion of marginalized groups from entering culture as artists or industry employees. Thus, social aspects of arts and culture remained unchanged.

Sweden

Sweden proved culture to be one of the priority sectors for the economy, before and after the pandemic. Covid-19 caused a sharp decrease in revenues and doubled the unemployment level. The governmental response was fast and tangible, while a large number of specific actions were made to ensure the survival of the industry and support institutions and individuals. The government also initiated a strong social campaign, mainly focusing on preventing and treating long-term health issues, improving mental health, and providing digital skills for marginalized groups of people in order for them to be able to create and consume cultural products.

Czech Republic

The pandemic brought some substantial changes into the cultural industry of Czech Republic. The national government reacted on multiple levels and tried to best support the fragile sector. It involved cooperation of entities, such as three ministries and productive work of cultural NGOs active in the country. The financial grants were given in a few rounds, however, they were difficult to obtain due to high bureaucracy-related processes. The deep level of centralization of arts and culture was also clearly visible over the crisis, with Prague launching its own initiative on attracting tourists and revival of arts.

When it comes to social aspects, Czech Republic keeps implementing new projects or adapting existing ones to support social inclusion groups, mainly Roma people. The digitalization of contacts with governmentally designated authorities make it possible to ask for support or help for people who are experiencing health-related issues, reduced mobility, poor vision or hearing-regated disabilities or do not have a high level of digital skills.

Spain

Over the course of the pandemic, Spain was sticking to its decentralized approach for culture that has remained unchanged for the past several years, which kept the rational and well-suited redistribution of financial resources on the same level. Other measures were also developed and implemented by the regions, for instance Action Plan created by the municipality of Barcelona that addresses empowerment and support of socially excluded artists. In Spain as a whole, the cultural institutions also did not completely close and were operating under the reduced capacity, which helped to maintain a connection with the public and prevent sharp unemployment.

Italy

Also in Italy the cultural sector has a huge impact on the economy of the country and is able to generate innovation and create new work positions. For this reason the government put in place useful laws and aids in order to try to safeguard this sector during the pandemic. In this period what was underlined is the extreme importance of the culture in connection with other sectors like the health system and how much cultural contents are important to overcome the trauma.

Croatia

The post-pandemic recovery of cultural industry in Croatia is challenged by the absence of regulation of art on the governmental level - a tendency that existed before Covid-19. Defragmentation and scarcity of data does not allow to create a uniform strategy.

During the pandemic itself, Croatia allowed cultural spaces to remain open under certain conditions, but still the number of events, revenues and public engagement dropped by more than a half. The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia was the most important source of support for the cultural sector, especially financial assistance for independent artists. Mental health of artists demonstrated a decline because of the experienced stress and uncertainty and this issue is yet to be tackled.

2

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND POLICIES RECOMMENDATION

2.1 CULTURAL SECTOR: Limits and New Challenges

Despite the main EU culture programs on the culture field, in the analysis emerges how culture and art don't have a priority in the agenda of some member states, from a budget point of view and form a multidisciplinary multisectoral approach. It appears there is an existing gap among EU and Member States policies harmonizing different social and cultural initiatives and the effective role of artists in society, thus, an effective legislation on how to include the most vulnerable groups in decision-making should be put in place. However, in recent years and especially during the covid-19 period, the European Commission and private foundations have increased their budgets for cultural projects in order to strengthen and increase the competitiveness of the cultural sectors.

Some of the most important programmes supporting art and culture are: **Creative Europe** (1), **The European Social Fund (ESF)**(2), **New Horizon Call for Culture** (3) and the **Rights and values programme** (4) with a budget of €912 million allocated for the period 2021-2027; the funding through this programme aims to protect the rights and values enshrined in the EU treaties in order to support open, democratic and inclusive societies. It establishes four specific objectives: to promote equality and rights, including gender equality, anti-discrimination and children's rights, to promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the EU and raise awareness of Europe's common history, to combat violence, in particular against children and women and to protect and promote the values of the EU.

From the analysis of the various states involved in the project we can see that the cultural and creative industries and all its sub-sectors have always been fundamental to raise awareness among citizens on relevant social issues and are strongly able to promote democratic values of equality, social cohesion, non-discrimination and freedom of expression, that are fundamental for the development of an inclusive and supportive society. In addition, cultural practices develop shared social experiences that enrich the interactions between the various actors of society by stimulating inter- and trans-generational dialogue, which thanks to mobility becomes global; thus integrating various national and international minorities equally.

Cultural industries are also one of our most dynamic sectors, with positive effects on other sectors of the economy, such as technological innovation and the mobility that cultural tourism creates. Their contribution to the European economy is enormous and it represents 4.4% of EU GDP in terms of total turnover, with a turnover of over 600 billion and a total added value of 253 billion euros in 2019.

Despite the evident importance of cultural and creative industries and the influence they have on European markets, during the covid enormous barriers were highlighted, barriers that already existed due to the instability and precariousness of the cultural world, which during this pandemic period found itself collapsing. The cultural sector is one of the economic sectors that has suffered among the others the most, despite the great and clear relevance of the creative and cultural industries at the European and global level.

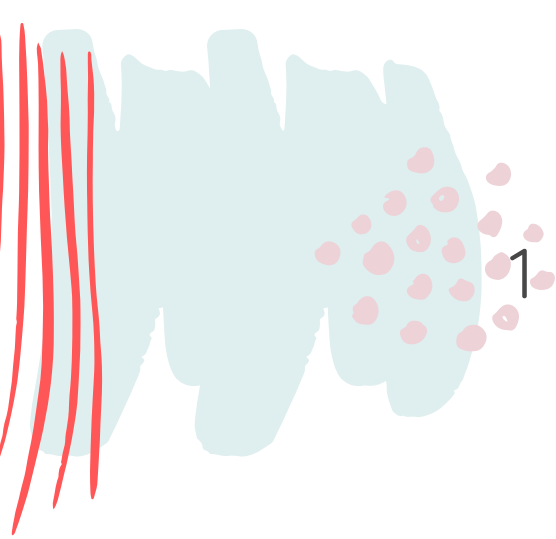
(1) Creative Europe <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/about-the-creative-europe-programme>

(2) European Social Fund (ESF) <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

(3) *Horizon Europe*: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-2-culture-creativity-and-inclusive-society_en

(4) *Rights and values programme: Council presidency and European Parliament reach provisional agreement*: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/12/17/rights-and-values-programme-council-presidency-and-european-parliament-reach-provisional-agreement/>

RECOMMENDATIONS



1

Improvement of the importance and fundamental role of art and culture in society. It is necessary to support and relaunch this sector through new financial models and cooperation , not only in the short term but also in the long term.

2

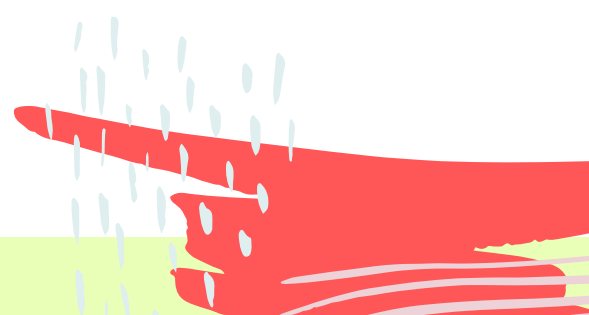
Valorizing the cultural industries in promoting their connection with other sectors of the society with new financial support of bilateral and multicultural cooperation projects.

3

Define a single definition recognised at European level relating to artistic and cultural workers. In order that they may be legally and publicly recognised by all the states of the European Union.

4

Reinforce public investment in culture and encourage private investment as well as public-private partnerships. At the same time, it should be ensured that artists and all cultural creators have easier access to these funding.



2.2 FRAGILITY OF THE WORK SYSTEM OF THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC SECTOR

STATUS OF ARTISTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS IN EUROPE. EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES, DOCUMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

The debate about the legal recognition of the status of artists is not a contemporary debate, but one that has its origins in the past.

Already in **1980**, UNESCO published a first recommendation concerning the **Status of Artists** (6). This text invited Member States to take action to improve the working and professional situation of cultural workers and artists and at the same time called for their recognition as an essential sector for the economic development of the countries.

Moreover, the document calls upon Member States to implement policies and legal measures to offer artists greater employment security, such as social protection, reduced taxation, and legal guarantees. It also recognises the right of artists to be organized in trade unions or professional organizations that can represent and defend the interests of their members. The recommendation was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its twenty-first session in 1980.

The absence of a uniform definition of artists within a single employment and legal status, combined with the uncertainty of their income and employment patterns, results in a weakened access of this class of workers to social and legal security systems, especially in a cross-border perspective. Despite the fact that the cultural sector is one of the sectors with the greatest economic impact in Europe, the controversial political and legal rights of this group of workers have not yet been regulated.

Therefore, in **2007**, the question came up again in the **EU Parliament** (7). The resolution related to the social status of artists calls on the European Commission and the Member States to apply coherent and comprehensive measures regarding the cultural sectors. These measures should be linked to the social security of artists such as: access to sickness insurance, unemployment, maternity and pensions, direct and indirect taxation; it also suggests taking into account periods such as rehearsals in artists' actual working hours for both unemployment and pensions. The resolution also claims that in order to implement these measures it would be necessary to offer easier access to this legal information for both artists and cultural workers and that this could be done by creating texts and platforms, available in national languages, that would summarize the relevant rules and regulations.

Subsequently, individual states started to implement various protection measures for the cultural sector, some states started to create targeted and more inclusive policies such as Belgium and Germany, while other states started to introduce sporadic support measures. But in any case, it remains evident that the same legal and protective measures have not been introduced at European level. Thus the working conditions of artists and cultural workers have continued to remain unresolved and volatile for years.

In 2017, the European Parliament created the document and action plan "**The European Pillar of Social Rights**"(8) that sets out 20 key principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labor markets and social protection systems in Europe.

(6) 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist. Unesco. <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/status-artist>

(7) European Parliament resolution of 7 June 2007 on the social status of artists (2006/2249(INI))

(8) The European pillar of social rights action plan. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en

The document aims to reinforce social rights to address economic and social insecurity in the EU caused by changes to labor markets and emerging challenges brought by globalization, digital revolution, changing work patterns and societal and demographic developments. The pillar states the need to provide fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to social protection and training – principles that support strengthening the status of artists in Europe.

However, despite the publication of these guidelines, the condition of cultural workers and artists in Europe has not improved and their precariousness has remained unchanged until the current economic and health crisis exploded in March 2019, with the Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a shock worldwide and in all productive and economic sectors, as we know, the arts and culture sector was among those that suffered the most since the start of government-imposed closures and preventive measures. Revenues dropped between 75% and 80% for museums in tourist areas, while cinemas and music venues saw revenues drop by 70% and 64% respectively. For artists, cultural institutions and industries, this was one of the worst crises in decades. The instability and precariousness of their work has emerged in a substantial way. For this reason, the European Parliament and the Member States have decided to support the cultural sectors with significant financial support. However, financial support can only help cultural workers in the short term, what should be necessary is a regularization of these forms of work and the provision of incentives for their development and sustainability in the future. For this reason, the European Parliament has developed a recovery plan for the sector, in order to launch and structure guidelines for the Member States and for the recovery of this sector.

This document of the European Parliament related to the situation of the artists and cultural workers and to recovery of this creative sector dates back to the 20th October 2021: **“The situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU. European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 (9) on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU (2020/2261(INI))”**. In this document the European Parliament emphasizes that the cultural and creative industries have been the sector that has been hit hardest and most substantially during the Covid-19 pandemic, due in part to the closure of cultural spaces, restrictive measures for concerts and public events, and the shift from live work to digital work. In this context, the Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States for a short-term recovery of the sector but also aims to look at long-term solutions in order to achieve a situation of sustainability, resilience and innovation in the future. The text calls for strengthening the cultural sectors by providing fair and structured support, in particular for the most vulnerable actors, and calls for promoting employment opportunities for artists, authors, performers, cultural workers and cultural mediation professionals by supporting cooperation between different disciplinary sectors.

These long-term recovery measures should also be aimed at improving the working conditions of artists and cultural professionals. For instance, encouraging the creation of training and mobility programmes to enable the circulation of ideas and the creation of a European creative and cultural network. The document also discusses the challenges of digitisation and encourages states to create copyright laws that protect cultural products. Cultural industries, supported by governments, should be encouraged to improve business models in order to develop market-oriented solutions based on big data, cloud computing, ICT, artificial intelligence etc.

(9) *The situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU*. European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU (2020/2261(INI))

It encourages the promotion of the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence so that artists can explore new ways to create and disseminate their work and benefit more from the opportunities offered by the digital environment.

The Parliament therefore underlines the importance of guaranteed funding for the digitisation, preservation and online availability of cultural and creative content and our European cultural heritage. However, it emphasizes that digital engagement should not replace live cultural experiences and these should be maintained and preserved.

The Parliament also calls on Member States and companies, NGOs to share documents on good practices to be adopted both in the economic field and related to the distribution of funds in the short and long term in order to ensure the maximum coverage of the CCS, ensuring that not even one artist or cultural worker will be left behind now and in the future.

Artists and cultural professionals are at the heart of an innovative, creative and future-oriented Europe, they are the bridge and the link between different traditions and thanks to their creative insights, a prosperous and flourishing renewal of our society is possible.

The absence of a definition of artist under a single category of work can unfortunately cause various economic, legal and social consequences, such as: (10)

- Weakened access to social security system
- Lacking unemployment benefits
- No fair wages that provide a decent standard of living
- Obstacles to mobility
- Difficulty of accessing loans from banks
- Copyright laws to be adapted and implemented
- Problematization of digital activities' monetisation

THE FRAGILITY OF THE ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL WORK

Despite the economic and social importance of cultural industries at national and European level, prior to COVID-19 the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) were already characterized by a very fragile economy in terms of legal working structures. (11)

Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit Europe in spring 2020, the cultural industries sector has been among the hardest hit. Sub-sectors based on in-person activities such as performances, concerts or all activities involving the presence of spectators and/or visitors have been among the hardest hit.

What has increasingly highlighted this Pandemia is the precarious position of many cultural workers such as artists, freelancers and temporary workers. In fact, they have the highest rate of intermittent contracts with no social security or health care support. Compared to employees in other sectors in general, who can count on more stable working conditions and easier access to social security schemes, sickness benefits, the large number of cultural workers rely on very unstable income streams and, in most cases, no health or safety support.

(10) "Towards a European Recovery Plan for the Cultural Sector - Fundamental Pillars for a Recovery Plan" presentation of Mondinsieme.

(11) Supporting relevance: Ideas and strategies for inclusive, fair and flexible arts funding. IETM — International network for contemporary performing arts. November 2021.

The lack of social and economic protection and a legally stable working model create barriers that do not allow the integration of cultural workers into society and at the same time hinder innovation and the inclusiveness of the sector.

This already existing precarious situation of the cultural sector described here has increased exponentially due to the covid-19 (12).

The crisis caused by the pandemic has highlighted the equal treatment of workers in the artistic and cultural fields.

For example in countries where there was already a system of legislative protection and recognition of the work of artists, like any worker, they were able to benefit from the system of financial aid, on the contrary in other countries, in the absence of a clear legislative and administrative system, these sectors have been excluded from financial aid, creating greater social exclusion and financial disadvantages.

Europe and the governing bodies of the various European states have undertaken unprecedented and huge financial maneuvers to support the cultural sector during the crisis. At the same time, a lot of aid also came from private foundations and non-public organizations. However, studies show that all aid offered so far is characterized by short-term measures with a lack of a broad and long-term perspective that is capable of integrating the cultural sector into society and in harmony with other sectors.

It should be highlighted, however, how this world crisis has led many European states to redefine their cultural policy, creating systems of greater protection for this class of workers, in recognizing art and culture as vectors of change in the society. Europe moved in this direction, recognizing the importance of introducing the role of artists and culture in the economic and political development of each country. However, we are still a long way from a system that can recognize the rights of artists as workers, with the consequent social and fiscal guarantees at the European level, through a harmonization of legislative norms both at national and European level. And on the other hand, while acknowledging the importance of creative industries, there is no fair balance for the conditions of cultural workers.

(12) Supporting relevance: Ideas and strategies for inclusive, fair and flexible arts funding. IETM — International network for contemporary performing arts. November 2021.

(13) Why arts and culture must be the cornerstone of European recovery plans

<https://www.friendsofeurope.org/insights/why-arts-and-culture-must-be-the-cornerstone-of-european-recovery-plans/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Legal Status of the artists at European Level.
Necessity of new recommendations at European Level for the Member States. Recognize artists as workers through a harmonized system in the various member countries that can give greater social and fiscal guarantees.

2

Improving the working conditions in the cultural sector with the abolition of precarious contracts, or hybrid contracts for a greater guarantee both on a fiscal and social level.

3

Improve cooperation between member states to guarantee the cultural and artistic sector the same professional conditions at European level, to avoid social disparities in the various member countries.

4

Developing educational mentoring and training programmes to facilitate the transition from the theoretical cultural field to practical creative work.

5

Recognise planning time and idea development time, or in the case of a performer the rehearsal time, as real working time. Financial aid should therefore also be related to this working time.

6

Creation of an European Platform able to help the artists and culture workers at European level on the different work conditions (insurance, contracts, fiscality, administration, and so on) in each country. An example to be considered could be the "Touring Artists": <https://www.touring-artists.info/en/home/>. Another platform that can be taken in consideration could be the Smart: <https://smart-ib.coop/>, <https://smartbe.be/en/>, already present in different European countries.

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITS OF THE NEW DIGITALISATION WORLD

The covid-19 has brought an unprecedented acceleration towards the digital world, all businesses in all sectors especially culture and art have used digital tools to allow the general public to access cultural activities virtually. This change has led companies, small institutions, and associations to almost completely reinvent their business model, which whereas before was mostly characterized by physical presence, such as live shows, performances, exhibitions and so on; during the pandemic all these kinds of activities have been converted into virtual presence. In order to ensure active access to culture even during the pandemic period, some organizations such as museums, galleries, theaters and concert halls have started streaming performances in creating virtual art collection tours, digital ebooks and online conferences. Social networks started to become indispensable for the cultural world, which used them both as a showcase and as a networking tool.

Certainly, these initiatives have primarily highlighted how much culture is able to renovate and innovate quickly to try to be as inclusive as possible even in such a complicated period. However, this digital acceleration has revealed a great generational and a social gap due to the lack of sufficient education, in terms of skills, on these issues and by many people. It also emerges that digital content is often not adapted to all the types of audiences; many people were not used to using social networks and digital platforms everyday and the "forced" adoption of these media has led them to be excluded to this digital society; instead of the inclusion that has always been the main and fundamental characteristic of the cultural world.

In the perspective of a long-term vision post covid-19, it would therefore be necessary to introduce and teach digital communication strategies for both artists and cultural workers. Digital tools could be used to promote their works, to create new alliances and could be a useful tool that can be used to sell their artworks and work. In order to achieve this, and with a view to building an inclusive society, new cultural workers need to be educated in the profitable use of these media. At the same time, we need to educate our citizens and provide them with the tools they need to use this content as fruitor.

In other words, since digital and virtual environments are part of our real world, especially as regards the consequences they have on our lives and work, it is important to support an educational training in this field, starting from cultural workers, and it is also important to introduce and to pursue through these medium a strong sense of inclusion and respect.

Moreover, during the covid-19 pandemic the possibility of enjoying cultural content in the digital world without limits and free of charge has conveyed the wrong message: that cultural content should be free of charge and for everyone. This aspect leads us to reflect once again on the fragility of the work of those working in the artistic and cultural worlds and on the necessity to redefine a new sustainable model of work for the cultural sector.

During the pandemic, the Coalition of Cities for Digital Rights formed by Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York City with the membership of more than 50 cities around the world published a document containing a set of recommendations to guide city leaders in setting guidelines for the use of technology, how to manage digitisation to promote inclusive and positive access for all where human rights are at the heart of the discourse. These recommendations were created to avoid inequalities within countries in terms of access to the technologies and use of technologies (14).

(14) Digital rights in the COVID-19 era. Eurocities. <https://eurocities.eu/latest/digital-rights-in-the-covid-19-era/>

Below are some future projections of the European Commission concerning the development of digitisation and emphasize how important it is to invest in digital skills and lifelong learning.

By 2025, 90% of people who are without formal education should be regular internet users.

Individual who are regular internet users, by education level

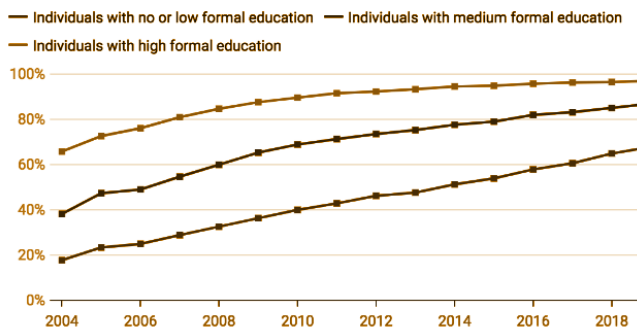


Chart: DIGITALEUROPE • Source: Eurostat • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

By 2025, enterprises in Europe should be providing ICT training to 70% of their employees

Enterprise provided training to their personnel to develop/upgrade their ICT skills, by Enterprise size (Small, Medium, Large) | European Union

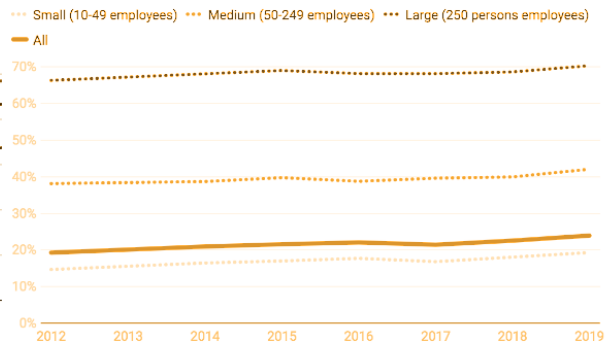


Chart: DIGITALEUROPE • Source: European Commission, Digital Scoreboard • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

By 2025, Member States and companies should have completed retraining for 20% of the workforce

Average reskilling needs (share of the workforce), 2018

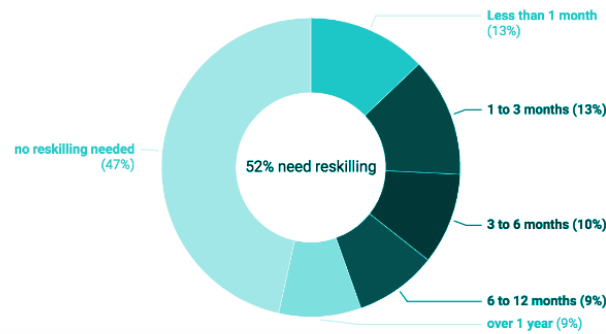


Chart: DIGITALEUROPE • Source: World Economic Forum • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Recognising digital cultural and artistic work with the appropriate copyright laws. In order to protect digital work/creation and facilitate the process of making it legally recognised, ensuring remuneration for the creative sector.

2

Re-thinking a new financial model to guarantee a salary for the participation in a virtual conference, webinar, a new model of work based on the online participation.

3

Reallocating budgets. There is therefore a need to redefine payment methods in the digital world in order to offer adequate remuneration to artists and cultural workers.

4

Create new educational models to be included in the curriculum of the school, university, museums associations, at local, national and European level. Training program for teachers, insiders, students and parents.

5

Redefine the budget of the art and culture sector with the introduction of the digital world with the acquisition of new technical material as well as new training courses to adapt to the use of new technologies.

6

Improving the capacity of the artists to use digital tools for their career through new training programs to expand their presence and their influence in the digital world.

7

Improving the use of new blockchain platforms, NFTs, and digital crypto currencies in order to broaden the knowledge of artists in offering them new market opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS



8

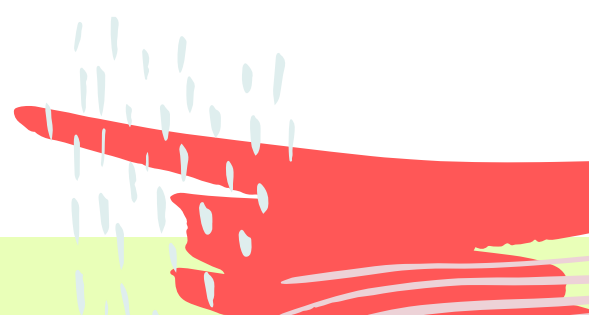
Promote a new digital training model to permit the participation of the whole society without any exclusion for a democratic social integration process.

9

Promote an inclusion policy to permit all the possibility to be part of this new digital world in creating new educational models and new models of collaboration.

10

Take in consideration the disadvantaged groups, and the financial conditions of the marginal groups to be included in this new digital process and to benefit too.



2.4 TOWARDS A NEW TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY AND NETWORKING

**“INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS, AS WELL AS CREATING A FEELING OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND BELONGING BY DEVELOPING A CULTURAL VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL COMPANIONSHIP”
ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK (ESN)**

International mobility, cooperation and networking have been in the last years an essential aspect of the artistic and cultural world, offering the possibility to expand the networking, knowledge, new creative strategies and cultural exchanges in developing cultural innovation.

There are many successful examples of such initiatives (16), with most notable being the Erasmus programme that facilitates the mobility of artists; Horizon Europe - EU's key funding programme for research and innovation and i-Portunus - a demand-driven mobility support scheme for cultural workers and artists. Many opportunities of mobility, residences and fellowships for cultural exchange might be found due to European-wide or international platforms, such as Resartis (17), Transartis (18) and On The Move (19). There are also local and regional initiatives, such as Roberto Cimetta Fund (20), that support cultural operators of the Mediterranean Region.

The art residencies and the international exchanges have always been considered an innovative model for conveying cultures and exchanging the best parts in the field of art and culture. In recent years, exchanges and mobility policies at European level have been intensified thanks to new programs and platforms, in recognizing the artist as a new figure to create bridges and exchange artistic and cultural practices also in connection with exchange projects, social, education and economic development. Among the main aims of the mobility programs is the idea of creating a more united Europe based on mutual knowledge thanks to cultural exchanges by destroying the barriers between different countries. Indeed cultural, linguistic and customs differences are transformed into creative wealth, in addition, all geographical and racial barriers are broken thus allowing, through international mobility, the development of a more resilient and inclusive society. Sometimes such experience expands outside Europe as well: Bogliasco Foundation (21) is an American non-profit project that awards fellowships for artists in Italy.

However, as emerges from the analysis in the previous paragraphs, the Covid-19 blocked and subsequently decelerated this process. Certainly, the use of the new technologies allowed at first not to paralyze the system but to continue the mobility through new digital forms in offering shared digital spaces where many cultural workers were able to continue and expand their network and work, in creating new forms of collaboration albeit with the limitation that we have already mentioned before. Among the aspects of reflections born during the Pandemic is the aspect of the collaboration and cooperation between the different sectors of the society.

(16) For other examples, please consult: https://europa.eu/youth/go-abroad/working/mobility-opportunities-artists_en

(17) <https://resartis.org>

(18) <https://www.transartists.org/en>

(19) <https://on-the-move.org/news>

(20) <https://www.cimettafund.org/index.php/article/index/rubrique/1/lang/en/fm/1>

(21) <https://bfny.org>

If it is true that the mobility of artists can help to bring cultures closer together and break down barriers and prejudices, it is also true that the same concept should be applied to the world of culture, or to cultural workers, as vehicles of knowledge for a growing society.

From the previous analyses it clearly emerged that it is essential and necessary for a greater social cohesion policy also to bring the suburbs closer to the cities and vice versa, in order to create models of exchange capable of improving mutual knowledge of the various systems of cultural, artistic and social policy. In conclusion, we can say that the use of new technologies has allowed a different way of breaking down geographical and territorial barriers, through digital mobility, bringing together groups and countries that previously could not have collaborated due to the lack of budgets. Even though we recognize this advantage, we must not forget the importance of the human value that comes only through the physical presence and direct knowledge of the places. Therefore it is necessary to reunite the two models of collaboration, digital and in presence, with the active participation not only of the artists but also of the cultural system for a more inclusive Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Improving the Cross-border mobility for the careers of artists and cultural workers, through a new system less bureaucratic giving more fiscal and social guarantee. Countries should therefore simplify their rules and facilitate the movement of people.

2

Improving European online platforms to provide assistance to artists and cultural workers with an innovative system of information to enable people to move and travel and to exchange practice and experiences.

3

Cross borders project for the creation of a more united and solidal Europe by taking into account minority and disadvantaged groups. Create a link between the suburbs and the centers of the towns and cities.

4

Rethink a new model of artist and culture residency able to guarantee financial aid and support during the period of absence from one's own territory or country. Recognise periods of stay abroad as during an art residencies for example, like "working periods" in order to support later, artists and cultural workers, with all state aid, e.g. unemployment etc.

5

Improving the collaboration through the hybrid models taking in consideration the digital and real world to connect more countries and people.

6

Including the mobility of the artists in the Social Policy of the EU, as made for Art and Science with Horizon.

7

Rethink in a new program on Social Inclusion Art & Culture as a new hybrid model of collaboration to help the exchange and know how.

2.5 TOWARDS NEW MODELS OF COOPERATION FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION PROJECTS: LIMITS AND CHALLENGES

**“EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT FREELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE
COMMUNITY, TO ENJOY THE ARTS AND TO SHARE IN
SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS.”
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ARTICLE 27**

This research could not omit the crucial role played by art and culture in projects related to social inclusion and the consequent necessity to explore new ways of collaboration for ensuring a long term impact onto the local community.

Culture and art in collaboration with other sectors could provide an important response to the exclusion and marginalization by promoting intercultural dialogue across countries, people, and stimulate the local community to find creative solutions in connection with the main social policy and priority in our society, as for example: Agenda 2030, fight the climate change and raising awareness about environmental sustainability.

In terms of social inclusion politics, the ability of artists and the cultural sector to create a mutual trust and understanding allows minorities and disadvantaged groups to have confidence in starting a collaborative project. The Covid-19, unfortunately, has highlighted how today's society is fragmented with large differences in levels in the community, between the peripheries not only of cities but also of countries. The problem of immigration has led to the emergence of a society that lives on the margins of social development, creating not only inequality but also violence and marginalization. Among the various social policies applied in recent decades it has been shown how art can mend those fractures created by unemployment, political and social crisis. The new collaboration models implemented by administrations, states, at local, national and European level have highlighted how important it is to improve collaboration and cooperation channels between the various sectors. The artist's role in this specific case is symbolic - becoming a social mediator. The Covid-19 has highlighted even more how important it is to rethink collaboration models not only with new alliances but also with an increase in financial aid budget, in the short and long term, as the aim of greater social inclusion needs more time for a social impact on the territory. Consequently, the time element, the division of activities in the long term is of vital importance to mend the territorial policy and to re-include the disadvantaged classes (22).

Keeping in mind the 'Europe 2020' 10-years strategy, it is of great importance to note down the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027: the Commission proposes to further strengthen the Union's social dimension with a new and improved European Social Fund, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and a more effective European Globalization Adjustment Fund (EGF). All these strategies aim to facilitate the capacity building of youth, social inclusion and social innovation.

Arts and culture strengthen the dialogue between the different actors in society by promoting different cultural identities and fostering a real integration of people facing economic and health precariousness. Through a socio-aesthetic process, they shape collective and collaborative integration processes.

(22) From social inclusion to social cohesion — The role of culture policy. Guidelines for policy-makers and cultural institutions, by the 2017-2019 working group of EU member states' experts on fostering the contribution of culture to social inclusion. European Union, 2019

An example of innovative cooperation is France: since 1988, the law against social exclusion includes the contribution of culture and acknowledges the key role of cultural NGO's. Such legislation has further led to cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Social Affairs in support of equal opportunities in access to culture for disadvantaged audiences.

Thus, art and culture can help to overcome the fear of the unknown, of the unfamiliar, on a collective and individual basis such as disability, racial differences, disadvantages linked to social background. Through a creative approach young people, families and citizens can learn to understand these differences in a peaceful way, thus helping to prevent marginalisation and future radicalisation leading to violent extremism. That it would be possible if we re-think in a new model of collaborations, starting with the past, the new innovation and problems born during the last years of crisis, in taking in consideration how it is important to have a look in the long period and not in the short period. The collaboration takes place on different levels, both from a pedagogical point of view and knowledge of the territory and awareness of the diversity of each territory and location. Without knowledge you cannot be aware of the problem and find creative solutions. However, the need has emerged not only for an increase in budgets in social inclusion projects, but the need for a wider collaboration of the artistic and cultural sector throughout the decision-making process. A lack of budget to give continuity of projects in the long term, and of a platform or network of exchanges of experiences for an evaluation of projects where human value is of primary importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Reinforce the role of art and culture as variables of social change for reducing social inequalities, increasing social cohesion and consequently social capital.

2

Establish new alliances among the different sectors of the society (economic, social, politic, culture and artistic sectors), in order to expand cross-sectoral collaboration for a multicultural, innovative and multidisciplinary approach and long impact in the society.

3

Increase budgets for the activities/projects related to social inclusion in taking in consideration the territory, the real time for an impact on the local community, the human value of the project and prioritize long term over short time projects.

4

Reinforce the continuity of the project in the long period to avoid the suspension of the projects when the trust is created. Create the conditions for the autonomy of projects by giving the design skills to the subjects involved to continue the project autonomously.

5

Establish funds for small- to medium-scale projects in order to encourage national cooperation, experimentation and consequently innovation.

6

Create online platforms to share the most relevant examples of good practices to promote European projects, culture exchange, experiences and enhance the values of social cohesion and inclusion.

7

Improve the collaboration among the different experts in the redefinition of the social cohesion and inclusion policies for a better cooperation and development of the European projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS



8

Rethinking collaboration models from a financial point of view to support projects in the long term and not just in the short term to have a real impact in the society.

9

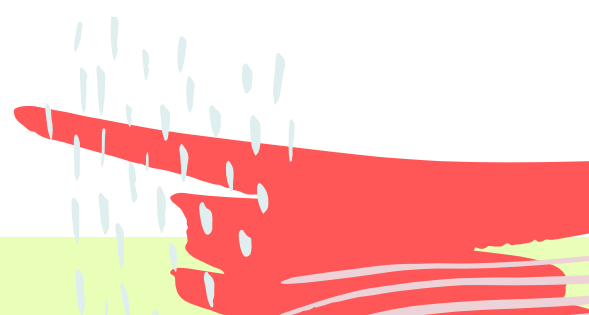
Emphasize the importance of training programs for artists to understand both the art market and how to work in integrated projects and politics and social change.

10

The artistic and cultural world is characterized by its hierarchical dynamics and its financial market logics; for this reason, training should be offered to artists and cultural workers who want to work in the sector. If there is no education about these complex relationships, the artistic and cultural world can become exclusionary.

11

Ensure the further widespread presence of art & culture and their strong role in EU policies.



2.6 THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN CONNECTION WITH CULTURE, SOCIAL AND INCLUSION POLICY

"WE NEED TO RELATE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC INSTITUTIONS TO SCHOOLS: THAT CHILDREN WHO TODAY LACK CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES HAVE THAT POSSIBILITY. ART EDUCATION AT SCHOOL CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION (...), HARDLY ANY OTHER KNOWLEDGE CAN GIVE AUTONOMY AND DESIRE TO BUILD. TO INVENT ANOTHER WORLD WE NEED TO KNOW WHO WE ARE, AND TO FIND JOY AND HAPPINESS IN THE ACT OF LEARNING, OF CREATING TO TRANSFORM OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THAT OF OUR COMMUNITIES".
LUCINA JIMÉNEZ ANTHROPOLOGIST AND DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, MEXICO

Preliminary analysis of the states involved in the project shows that Covid-19 has revealed and reaffirmed how art and culture play a fundamental role in the creative process as a useful vehicle for exploring and reframing many issues related to social inclusion. It is already demonstrated how artists can help to understand and explore the issues faced by many communities, groups of young people and non, belonging to categories that can be considered socially excluded. From this analysis it emerged strongly how important it is to start from education, from the role of schools, universities, to prepare not only the new generations but to create the necessary tools for innovative social policies.

For this reason, there is the necessity to coordinate and establish long-term cross-sectoral cooperation between the fields of education, culture and social affairs. These partnerships should be actively supported and facilitated by states through the funding of ad hoc projects. A major challenge could be to recognise the importance of creative thinking in these areas and to enhance the skills of those pursuing this path by facilitating their introduction into the labor market. For instance, the dissemination of culture and education via the internet will be a permanent feature.

Education will require a methodological update and teachers should implement a change in the curriculum and teaching methodology itself in order to increase and balance children's knowledge on contemporary life. If we recognize the value of art and culture as unavoidable variables for the implementation of social cohesion policies at European level, we can only restart in adapting the education system to the new geopolitical system, to new technologies, to the new changes that have now been made in place. The need to rethink at the European level, through a collaboration at the local and national level of the education system on different levels, can help us to create a new culture, a different way of thinking where multidisciplinary and multiculturalism are of fundamental importance for the construction of a more equitable and supportive society.

We must start from education, to create new channels of collaboration, to help heal our society by including the different segments of the population and people in the process of social and economic development. Education also for the creation of new professional figures in the field of social policies, and also to give artists the necessary tools to be active subjects in this process of change, rethinking a new professional career. The new digitization has led us to rethink also new models of education which, however, to avoid a new social exclusion and marginalization must be integrated into traditional models, taking into consideration the conditions of each territory.

Erasmus+ (23) programmes proved to be well-adaptive in terms of Covid-19 crisis. Even before the pandemic it provided the opportunities for people of all ages, origins and backgrounds: educational exchanges, short-term training and possibility to implement a project crucial for the local community. In 2020, Erasmus has also supported digital - online - studies exchanges, internships and artistic collaborations, which opened up a wide array of options for people who were previously excluded from using such options. For instance, people from lower class income families, people with disabilities, language barriers or those living in rural areas. It also has greatly boosted the participants' digital skills. Thus, Erasmus+ new strategy for 2021-2027 as a part of EU policy aims to keep up and stay inclusive, digital and environmentally-friendly.

(23) <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Promote digital platforms for cross education and collaboration to highlight the power of culture and social inclusion, the development of a critical thinking of equality and peer learning without diversity of gender, religion and social status.

2

Enhance the creative skills of people at risk of social exclusion, through educational and work orientation.

3

Train the new generation through the use of digital media and e-learning platforms, virtual and augmented reality, video editing and graphic design, using training methods that are able to enhance horizontal collaboration for the implementation of local project with local community.

4

Support evaluation methods for both formal and informal education in order to critically enrich those working in the field, and to offer useful analysis for future projects.

5

Develop educational mentorship and training programmes to facilitate the transition from the theoretical cultural educational field to the creative work field.

6

Include art in the curricula of the school projects to combat social exclusion, marginalization, to work together with school teachers on new teaching methods.

7

It is necessary to teach the development of transversal competences and soft skills through creative thinking. They are indispensable to increase critical thinking and at the same time to develop better knowledge related to social inclusion issues. In addition, soft skills combined with creative thinking can help to identify and develop solutions to combat social exclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS



8

Increase the presence of artists in schools as new professionals to raise awareness on social policies through a creative and practical methodology in the long term.

9

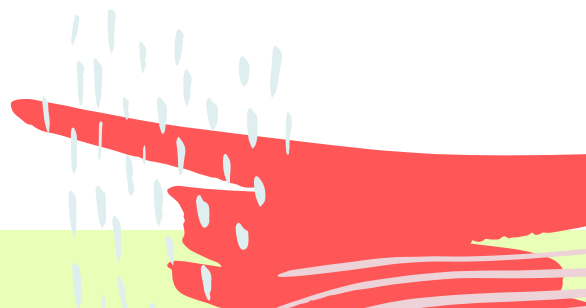
Train teachers on the use of art and creativity as methodologies for addressing social problems in an innovative way and developing critical thinking.

10

Include at the University level a new educational program for a new professional career in the field of social, cohesion and inclusion policy.

11

Promoting long life learning programs in the field of innovation technologies to avoid social exclusion due to lack of contemporary knowledge.



3

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