

Building Synergies between Education and Culture!

Fostering a true partnership at all levels for inclusive societies

Culture and education share fertile ground for cultivating the skills needed in the societies of both today and tomorrow as well as our own personal development. In policymaking, they are the responsibility of the same directorate-general of the European Commission and some times of the same national ministry. However, this natural interlinkage is increasingly taken for granted and cooperation between the education and cultural sectors at the political level remains, to a large extent, symbolic. If this situation remains, we are missing out on the vast potential that synergies between education and culture can have, not only from an economic perspective - given the contribution that creative skills and industries make to the economy - but also and more importantly from a social perspective - given the benefits that learning about and through culture has for more inclusive societies.

Civil society from both domains recognise the need for a deeper, more wide-reaching collaboration. In 2013 the Lifelong Learning Platform, Culture Action Europe and Access to Culture released joint recommendations in their [paper](#) "Building synergies between education and culture". Those remain as valid as ever and we continue to urge for their implementation. Nevertheless, in light of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage and recent policy developments, including the European Commission's 2017 [Communication](#) "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture", we, the undersigned organisations, see a clear impetus to put forward additional recommendations. These stem mainly from discussions at the [conference](#) "Culture and Education for All: Building the Skills for More Resilient Societies" held in Brussels on 14 March.

Key Messages

1. Implement a shared cross-sectoral strategy for education and culture at EU level, reflected in both policy and programmes
2. Boost quality learning mobility for learners, educators and cultural professionals
3. Systematically address how digital technologies are affecting the interlinkage between education and culture
4. Recognise the equal value of cultural and arts education by mainstreaming STEAM
5. Adopt targeted measures to improve implementation of key competence *Cultural Awareness and Expression*
6. Mainstream a contemporary definition of "learning environment" and "educator" into education policies
7. Match the high importance of education and culture with adequate investment and programmes

- **Implement a shared cross-sectoral strategy for education and culture at EU level, reflected in both policy and programmes**

Erasmus+ and Creative Europe share some joint objectives and stakeholders see the benefit of strengthening these links.¹ Organisations seeking to implement a project with both strong cultural and education elements are confronted with evaluation and implementation processes operating in silos, which undermines the expected synergies. Provision should be made for a special cross-over option at the application stage.

Cooperation between formal, non-formal and informal learning should be substantially enhanced across these programmes, bearing in mind that cultural and arts education takes place not only in formal settings. These synergies between education and culture, and different forms of learning, are a 21st century reality and this should be matched by 21st century policy-making and programming.

- **Boost quality learning mobility for learners, educators and cultural professionals**

Mobility schemes under the Erasmus+ programme, as various studies and the recent mid-term evaluation have shown, contribute to individuals' skills development, employability and sense of European identity.² However, access to these popular mobility schemes remains limited to a small section of the population - it should be widened to learners of all ages, backgrounds and sectors with due attention to quality assurance and accompanying structures.

Teachers and professional educators, one of the least mobile professions, should be able to access mobility experiences in order to develop their skills and knowledge. Cultural workers (e.g. museum staff, visual artists) also lack these opportunities and should be able to benefit from a similar mobility scheme in order to enhance their lifelong learning prospects. Provisions for virtual mobility should also be strengthened, without detriment to physical mobility schemes, in order to offer a more flexible mobility experience for those not wishing to go abroad.

- **Systematically address how digital technologies are affecting the interlinkage between education and culture**

Although the digital revolution is rapidly transforming the way in which we live, education and training systems have struggled to keep pace with this change.³ Cultural production is at the forefront of new modes of digital learning based on knowledge co-creation. Collaboration between teachers, parents, creators, and students enabled by blended approaches, combining digital and social learning, anticipates future social change and modes

¹In the 2017 LLLP Erasmus+ implementation survey, 49% of respondents said that Erasmus+ would benefit from closer synergies with Creative Europe ([Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2017 – Results](#), p23)

² [Erasmus+ mid-term evaluation](#)

³ LLLP Position Paper "[Reimagining Education for the Digital Age](#)"

of production in the wider economy. Effective use of digital technology in learning environments, while supporting the update of technological equipment and bearing in mind age- and development-appropriate uses, needs to be encouraged through a responsible and evidence-based approach. This not only includes strengthening digital skills training but also developing pedagogical tools to foster innovative learning in all respects, whether in formal, non-formal or informal settings.

However, to unlock this potential we need to encourage and support creators, teachers and educators, during initial training, continuous professional development and by the curricula itself, to tap into digital innovation. While use of digital solutions for learning can be highly beneficial, it should nevertheless be balanced with concerns for well-being. Learners, regardless of age, should be encouraged to have a reasonable limit on their screen-time and continue to develop skills through offline educational and creative activities.

- **Recognise the equal value of cultural and arts education by mainstreaming STEAM**

Current and future jobs and societal challenges require and will increasingly demand a broad range of transferable skills, such as teamwork, intercultural competences, empathy, creativity, problem-solving and independent non-linear thinking. Cultural and arts education, particularly conducive to developing such skills, thus has a pivotal role to play.⁴ Yet, the emphasis on STEM⁵ in current policy discourse refutes the importance of these competences in supporting learners' ability to adapt to change. We therefore propose STEAM (A for Arts) as a more relevant paradigm.

However, mainstreaming this approach into curricula is not enough by itself - it must be accompanied by a rethink of how the skills in question can be embedded into a holistic educational approach encompassing personal development and of how these skills are evaluated. Current assessment methods are still largely rooted in a linear, summative approach which incentivises "teaching for the test" which appears as a contradiction to an educational approach aiming to better match learners' needs through appropriate assessment of the "soft" skills that they are expected to acquire. This formative assessment approach has long been the basis for arts and cultural forms of assessment. We call on the European Commission to facilitate peer learning activities and the exchange of good practices among Member States in the field of assessment methods, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders including civil society.

- **Adopt targeted measures to improve implementation of key competence *Cultural Awareness and Expression***

⁴ CAE Paper "[The value and values of culture](#)", p10-14

⁵ STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

We welcome the update of the key competence for Lifelong Learning *Cultural Awareness and Expression*⁶, including cultural engagement⁷, to reflect the widest possible range of forms of cultural expression and to include a positive and open-minded attitude towards understandings of culture that we might not be familiar with. Indeed, as recognised by the European Commission⁸, European common values are underpinned by openness to cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, as acknowledged by the dedicated Open Method of Coordination Working Group, *Cultural Awareness and Expression* contributes to developing almost all key competences⁹, from the obvious contribution of literature to communication into mother tongue and foreign languages, to the development of social, civic and intercultural competences, creativity and our sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. However, the role of the arts in unleashing these learning processes needs to be further acknowledged and an explicit recognition of the importance of cultural awareness and expression by the Council and the European Parliament is needed to progress in this domain.

Cultural awareness and expression is of fundamental importance, yet educators need dedicated support to grasp and implement such a transversal and multidimensional competence in their pedagogical practice. Hence, *we call for further emphasis in both pre- and in-service teacher education to support teachers and educators in acquiring this competence themselves and in learning how to facilitate its acquisition among learners*, across formal, non-formal and informal domains. This could happen through more mobility for teacher education under Erasmus+ as well as more systematic collaboration between educators in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors, including artists and staff of cultural institutions.

- **Mainstream a contemporary definition of “learning environment” and “educator” into education policies**

Lifelong learning encompasses learning in all forms, by learners of all ages, and takes place in a multitude of physical settings. Community and cultural spaces including museums, libraries, theatres and other cultural heritage institutions can be as much environments for this learning as a school or university. By the same token, an educator can be more than a teacher in a primary or secondary school - a youth worker, a volunteer in a community centre, a poet or a visual artist are all examples of people who can facilitate the learning process and so serve as educators in the contemporary sense of the word. *In this respect, the European Union is encouraged to promote collaboration between different learning spaces, e.g. schools and civil society organisations and visits by cultural workers to schools - in a similar vein to the [Creative](#)*

⁶ [European Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, January 2018](#)

⁷ [Annex to the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, January 2018](#)

⁸ [European Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the document Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, January 2018](#)

⁹ [Cultural awareness and expression handbook: Open method of coordination \(OMC\) working group of EU Member States' experts on 'cultural awareness and expression](#), p7, 2016

Schools Initiative in Sweden - should also be promoted as a valuable way of enriching the learning process and developing social, cultural and artistic competences. Advancing towards the recognition and validation of non-formal learning outcomes, acquired in cultural spaces and through engagement in cultural organisations, is the first step towards acknowledging cultural and artistic learning environments as a sound educational pathway for all ages. This is also key given the crucial role these spaces play in reaching out to marginalised groups and fostering more inclusive communities.

- **Match the high importance of education and culture with adequate investment and programmes**

To support the implementation of the above recommendations and promote a high-quality and inclusive offer of culture and lifelong learning for all citizens, we call on the European Union and its Member States to invest sufficient resources to make this a reality. Investing in people's skills, well-being and personal development, by ensuring access to education, training and culture in all forms, is an urgent goal and a precondition for achieving the various social and economic priorities outlined in the Paris and Rome Declarations by EU leaders. Reaping the benefits of closer synergies between education and culture likewise calls for robust investment, which should happen without jeopardy to the specific needs and characteristics of education and culture as stand-alone sectors. Overall, we believe the EU should thus envisage better synergies between what is at the heart of its values - culture and education - ahead of the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.



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