

Culture and arts education expanding cooperation: Cultural institutions and other stakeholders, knowledge and resource networks

THEMATIC WHITE PAPER TOWARDS

THE UNESCO FRAMEWORK ON CULTURE AND ARTS EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Striving to promote an holistic vision of cultural and arts education (CAE) as a right and a common good, this Thematic White Paper (TWP) is built on the evidence presented by the UNESCO Global Questionnaire (2022) about the need to strengthen cooperation and networks to promote quality education through culture and the arts. As a key point, it defends an approach to education that goes beyond the traditional walls of both cultural and educational organisations to engage pedagogically with place, context and meaning, using arts and cultures across the curricula, promoting inter and transdisciplinary learning. Making no claim to be representative or complete, since it refers to only a fraction of the data sources that may be available worldwide, the document's rationale argues that:

- Cooperation between partners is an imperative when facing the complex issues of current times, especially to overcome the competition model - to succeed, cooperative processes need committed leaderships, transparent and democratic relationships.
- Education systems must change, mobilising CAE in its transformation process, recognising that arts education has the power to equip students with skills for life, work and for a conscious cultural citizenship - contributing to stronger democracies and enlightened societies.
- CAE can provide safe places for critical thinking and innovation, emotional and cognitive well-being and stress reduction - education needs a shift towards valuing quality over quantity, cooperation over competition, diversity over individualism.
- Cross-sectoral policies have the potential to transform systems and originate flexible structures to operate at different scales.
- It's essential to recognize and strengthen the strategic role of cultural mediation and CAE across formal and non-formal cultural and educational institutions and other civil society organisations.
- Multi- and trans-disciplinary networks of stakeholders generate a multi-modal way of thinking and promote the transfer of relational knowledge for a systemic approach to CAE.
- Policy design should articulate models of democratisation and participation in a logic of complementarity, impacting on the way institutions operate from the inside out and are transformed from the outside in - from institutions into (ex)titutions.
- Igniting the power of arts and cultural experiences in teacher education leads to pedagogies that challenge conformism and open the school to the world and to life itself, transforming curricula.
- Innovative participatory methodologies, research collaborative practices, long-term studies and meta-analyses across disciplines (in addition to disciplinary classic approaches), and projects claim for national and transnational open access repositories and online platforms.

The need for transformation in education systems can be met through partnerships and cooperative processes. By valuing CAE and recognizing the strategic role of cultural mediation, education can evolve into a more inclusive, adaptable, and learner-centred adventure. Embracing a paradigm of "less" - authority, hierarchy, bureaucracy, consumption, competition, discipline, assessments, and angst - can ultimately lead to the transformative change our education systems require.

1.

CULTURE AND ARTS EDUCATION TOWARDS A COMMON GROUND

conceptual scope, understanding and implications

Today, what seemed stable and certain turns out to be insecure and reversible. What was once a reliable belief may now be a fallacy. While facing distressing realities, education is reimagining its purpose to equip learners with skills for life, work and conscious cultural citizenship for learners to appreciate diversity, create, inspire, question and share.

Culture and education are two interconnected pillars of sustainable development. Knowing that this premise is a priority in global policies, the education system must mobilise the power of the arts and cultural education (CAE), placing it at the centre of the transformation process in education policy, school curricula and pedagogy¹. Additionally, it is vital to recognise that cooperation between partners is an imperative when facing the highly complex issues that affect us all. Climate change, ecological transition², biodiversity loss, conflicts and war, artificial Intelligence, injustice, structural racism, migrations, health threats and social inequalities³ demand everyone to take responsibility for their social and cultural common ground. A joint effort is also urgent to combat identitarian and populist concepts of culture, which oppose coexistence between local and emerging populations due to immigration and understand that violence against the other is violence against oneself, as it assaults the living interdependency that makes up our social world (Buttler, 2021, p.31). How can culture and the arts expand education tackling these issues?

In line with the ESD for 2030, this TWP advocates for pedagogical learning concepts and practices that enable students to 'live *what they learn and learn what they live*'. An education through, with and for arts and cultures is a tool that nurtures adaptation, proactive resilience, creativity and mutual understanding, thus it must be considered as a vehicle to enrich and expand curricula, contextualise learning and foster human capabilities to face challenges. Only by following a different path can we transform our common future.

A PARADIGM OF LESS FOR EDUCATION?

We live in a globalised world that follows the paradigm of growth. More, new and better are keywords for the politics of everything, everywhere, at all times. This model is a dystopia that has no sustainability. Just like the planet, humans and all living beings have their limits, therefore this paradigm must be transformed to its opposite. 'Less is more'⁴. We urgently need lessness: more time to produce less, more space for new ideas and high-quality cooperation, and more solidarity and community-based knowledge.

'Schooling is in itself a main partner of the growth paradigm' (Ball & Collet-Sabé, 2022) and the impacts of this model on modern education are unsatisfactory. Often the desire for growth forces us to turn our attention from the essential to the superfluous. Schools report the excess of projects, the associated bureaucracies and the volatility with which projects spread without reaching maturity, empowerment or expected achievements and impacts. The lack of

¹ Arts and cultural education are still often regarded as non-essential in the school curricula, as peripheral subjects relegated to extra-curricular activities.

² The ecological transition is the process of technological innovation to achieve change in our society considering compliance with the criteria for environmental sustainability.

³ Gender, class, age, ethnic, racialised, religion, territorial, embodied, etc.

⁴ Quote minimalist artists.

committed leadership capable of integrated governance and vision leads, thus, to work overload and a subsequent increase of burnouts and other mental health issues. A shift in education is urgent, so let us retake the *Teach Less, Learn More* (Loong, 2004)⁵ motto.

An education of less aims at social inclusion, emotional and cognitive well-being, stress reduction and a healthier planet. It requires a shift towards valuing quality over quantity, slowness over speed, collaboration over competition, plurality over binary thinking, places over institutions and connections over isolation. Success will not be easy to achieve, as it implies swimming against the tide, but it is mandatory to embrace an alternative for a more sustainable and rewarding future.

Can a paradigm of less - authority, hierarchy, bureaucracy, consumption, competition, discipline, assessments, angst - transform education and create safe places for critical thinking, innovative ideas and high-quality partnerships? We think, yes!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD⁶

As human expressions, arts and cultures are means to expand life experiences and reimagine the horizon of our possibilities. Cultural manifestations are the mediation for personal and community recognition, since we create meaning through narratives using objects and contents, relating present, past and future, thus building our identities in dialogue with artworks and material and immaterial heritage⁷.

Cultural and artistic institutions, i.e. museums, libraries, theatres, cultural centres, archives, etc., increase debate with the audiences to change mindsets and question historical interpretations. By addressing complex societal issues, they are taking responsibility and creating social impact using arts and cultures to promote people's engagement, cultural citizenship and democracy as a social commitment and participatory process. Together with educational institutions, they hold the power to inspire communities and to transform learning through imagination, wonder, joy, encounter with diversity, aesthetic appreciation, cultural awareness, self-expression and critical thinking⁸. They can contribute to making sense of

⁵ Ministry of Education, Singapore, Engaging Our Learners: Teach Less, Learn More. TLLM strategy implemented in 2005 to improve the quality of teaching and enhance student learning in Singapore. TLLM built on the 'Thinking School, Learning Nation' vision, introduced in 1997 to create an education system that nurtures creativity, critical thinking and a passion for lifelong learning.

⁶ African proverb.

⁷ In 2020, in the context of the International Itinerant Festival of Theater of the Lycées and Collèges of Benin (also known as FITHELYCOB) and of the ADJROU festival The Association Theatre Mayton Promo, together with the International Federation of Cultural Associations and Networks for the Living, Visual and Fine Arts and Literature (p.18) joined forces to develop a series of hybrid and culturally diverse creations. The idea was to pair eight theatre directors with eight duets of storytellers and musicians to produce eight theatre shows and eight story shows. The project included international partnerships with collaborators from Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Togo. A special emphasis was put on the active inclusion of women creators. The final creations, that included theatre plays, musical performances, dance performances, tales and storytelling, have not only been showcased in the frame of the two festivals mentioned, but they have also travelled to several secondary schools and high schools from eight cities and towns of Benin. This tour of schools opened up paths for intercultural dialogue as well as debates on local and national identity, customs and traditions, tangible and intangible heritage, religious and personal beliefs, and more. These debates all had at their heart one common element: culture (Llobet and Vieux, 2021).

⁸ See The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, an entity aiming at promoting the recognition of culture as vital for a human development approach that responds to Uganda's identity and diversity, partnered

reality, broadening world views and innovation, enhancing personal and collective well-being, nurturing a sense of belonging and striving that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic background, can have equal opportunities and access to participation.

To trace strategic connections between arts, cultures and education is to look at the future with a rear-view mirror that shows past, present and futures as interdependent. This integrative vision is a priority in the *paradigm of the less*. In this vision, cultural institutions are taken as educational territories and schools as cultural poles. A holistic education requires crossing borders of space and time, establishing a common ground where partners cooperate with mutual trust, relevance and creativity, even more so when education, culture and arts become more relevant for society, opening up new fields of expertise (e.g. digital technologies, social media, AI, changes in workplaces and occupations, etc.).

Cooperation is a form of commoning⁹ that requires care while sharing power, working *with* rather than *for*. It demands time, safe spaces, commitment and togetherness. Systemic outcomes can be expected from coalition policies, processes and practices: social cohesion, solidarity, intercultural dialogue, professional development, emerging *signature pedagogies*¹⁰, learning opportunities and meaningful links to indigenous practices, as well as positive economic impacts to local economies. Ultimately, cooperation policies contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of education and to society at large¹¹.

It is therefore essential to pay attention to the places and the people who act as intermediaries, as they are the brokers of cooperation projects. Adequate funding should be guaranteed to individuals and private organisations to support the design and implementation of cultural education/mediation programmes, as well as to nurture existing and new mediation networks and structures, within and/or outside organisations. This highlights the need to support policies, funding mechanisms and advocacy campaigns to prioritise the role of arts

with the Community Peace Museums and Heritage Foundation, a Kenyan organisation which aims at using knowledge of cultural heritage as a resource for conflict resolution and sustainable development. Together – and bringing with them more than 150 cultural heritage clubs in Uganda, 100 peace clubs in Kenya and 21 community museums from Uganda – they reimagined the concept of competition and created a cultural and creative contest based on positive values, such as intercultural dialogue, conflict management, sharing, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. The initiative aimed at welcoming a diverse range of creations demonstrating a particular cultural practice (Llobet and Vieux, 2021).

⁹ A practice of collaboration and sharing to achieve the well-being of individuals, communities and environment, encompassing a view on solidarity in the way of using time, of relating to place, of building connections between people.

¹⁰ Signature pedagogies relate to creative pedagogical practices that are distinctive as a handwritten signature.

¹¹ The Integrated School Programme (PEI) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, was launched in 2007, including all 172 municipal schools, benefiting 65,000 children and young people aged 6 to 14. The PEI offers a range of complementary activities, including extended school hours, three meals a day, and off-site learning experiences. It seeks to improve the interaction between the school space and the surrounding territory, developing activities outside the school walls, in varied spaces such as churches, parks or private homes, to stimulate the knowledge and appropriation of territorial resources. Each school develops political-pedagogical projects according to specific territorial and social realities. One of the aspects to be highlighted is the mobility within the territory, achieved mainly through the so-called 'walking lessons' which, as in Portugal, are usually held in libraries, museums, cultural centres or parks, moving around 800 children and young people every week, both for these activities and for the development of interdisciplinary projects. It also emphasises collaboration with institutional partners, fostering community engagement and recognizing exemplary contributions through the Educating City of Belo Horizonte Award.

education in cultural institutions and in civil society organisations, raising awareness of its scope.

At different scales, intermediary agents¹² (teachers, mediators, artists, artisans, heritage professionals, indigenous and traditional knowledge bearers, etc.) ensure that connections are relevant in each context and endure over time; it is important to guarantee better working conditions, safety, status recognition, resources and continuous training for these professionals, as well as to improve their access to funding for the sustainability of medium and long-term projects. Moreover, the recognition of digital and virtual domains as spaces of intermediation implies investing in technology, digital media, data protection, security measures, specific training, learning environments and online resources to promote creation and cooperation in these areas¹³.

2.

WISDOM OF THE MANY

cultural and arts education expanding cooperation: key developments and contested issues

Working in cooperation and partnership is not a new topic but a strategic priority in the field of CAE (cf. e.g., Bamford et al, 2006; Carlisle, 2011; Davis, 1994; Hall & Thomson, 2007; Hanley, 2003; Purnell, 2008, Ferro et al, 2019; Nielsen et al, 2021). One could even say that a wide variety of different forms of cooperation at various levels is literally written into the anatomy of this cross-sectional realm of co-productive education (cf. Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke, 2013, p. 1034, BKJ, 2015/2021). Against this background, the call for stronger promotion and expansion of partnerships is making its way in waves over time and is currently gaining momentum again, which also clearly shows the provisional results of the discursive process initiated by UNESCO for the preparation of the new Framework on CAE.

¹² See [Aboriginal Artists in Schools](#) where Teaching through Creation Stories employs the expertise of local Aboriginal Elders, artists and cultural practitioners to collaborate with teachers, addressing the opportunities and challenges presented by the cross curriculum requirements of the Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. The program provides rich professional development for teachers and authentic learning outcomes for students through a sustainable artist in residence model.

Another project that can be referenced is the [Seven Years Seven Schools \(Sete Anos, Sete Escolas\)](#) initiative. Since 2016, the Seven Years Seven Schools project challenges young people from schools in Almada and Porto (in Portugal) to create shows, videos or exhibitions based on a piece by the choreographer Cláudia Dias. Throughout the school year, the classes watch the performance, meet the groups from the other schools and participate in workshops and rehearsals where they develop artistic creation and personal skills. At the end of each year, they deliver to the other groups and the public. Cláudia Dias and the Teatro de Ferro team are the artistic coordinators of Sete Anos Sete Escolas in Almada and Oporto, respectively. A team of sociologists evaluates its social impact.

¹³ [Creative Voices of Muslims in Asia](#) is a three-year initiative implemented by Asia Society with support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. The goal of this initiative is to foster an increased understanding of the diversity of experience and voices within the multicultural societies of contemporary United States and Asia. The digital storytelling programs enable youth to tell the stories that have meaning to them and emphasise the storytelling process over the final digital product. Most importantly, they help young people make explicit connections between personal, local, and global concerns, assets, and actions. The initiative includes a series of exhibitions, cultural events, and public programs at Asia Society's headquarters in New York City, as well as a youth media exchange between high schools in the U.S. and Muslim countries in Asia.

This development hardly comes as a surprise, given the many transformations and challenges all societies around the planet are facing. It has long since become clear that we can only tackle the complexity of our time with collective efforts, as well as with multi- and transdisciplinary expertise (Joerissen et al, 2018; Jörissen, Unterberg & Klepacki, 2023; Klepacki, Meerkerk & Østern, 2024; Wagner, 2021). In addition to this very fundamental realisation, the discourse on cooperation currently focuses on the following key issues and topics (cf. e.g. BKJ, 2015/2021; Bowen & Kisida, 2017; Gigerl et al, 2022; Hall & Thomson, 2020; Meerkerk, 2020 & 2022; Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke, 2013):

- the quality increase of practical offers and programmes;
- the promotion of participation of diverse population groups, social milieus and people of all ages (e.g. to raise awareness for gender equity, social diversity and inclusion as well as to work against intolerance, populism, fake news, etc.);
- the creation of opportunities for cooperation and partnerships in rural and peripheral areas;
- the expansion, diversification and decolonization of curricula and subjects;
- the fostering of social engagement and (digital cultural) citizenship through cooperation;
- the support of art educators and mediators inside and outside schools (e.g., through special training programs, consulting agencies and funding programmes);
- the potential of cooperation and partnerships in addressing cultural school development, all-day school education design and implementation of new learning cultures.

In this context, it is striking that the general discourse focuses strongly on cooperation and partnerships between schools and extracurricular partners (e.g., cultural and art institutions, artists, designers, artisans, persons working in the creative economy etc.) (ibid.). What is new is the bold admittance that cooperation does not automatically mean added value for all parties involved. On the contrary, it is now openly articulated that cooperation is not a panacea and that partnerships should not simply be undertaken for cooperation since there are undoubtedly many hurdles to overcome for successful and fruitful cooperation.

Obstacles range from different understandings of what is meant by partnership and cooperation and of mutual expectations at play, to the clash of opposing institutional logics and (pedagogical/artistic) worldviews, issues of hierarchy and recognition/ marginalisation as well as employment status, equal payment, budgets and funding structures (cf. e.g., Hall & Thomson, 2020). How to cooperate becomes a fundamental question to be addressed when cooperation is not only a means, but above all the objective that allows for project impact assessment.

PARTNERSHIP (NOT) AS A PANACEA

How to overcome regular obstacles and lack of institutionalised funding and support - that often prevent the sustainable implementation of cooperative partnership structures - remain the most contested issues in the corresponding discourse. The search for cooperation best practices is therefore quite strong, while it is also widely agreed that success - as is so often the case - depends on the specific and sensible circumstances, requiring the development of different and customised cooperation models (Hall & Thomson, 2020, p.105).

With regard to successful partnerships between school and non-school partners, the following conditions are repeatedly mentioned:

- existence of intermediate agents;
- representation of partner diversity;
- respectful, reliable, diversity-sensitive interaction at eye level;
- clear agreements;
- shared goals;
- joint negotiation and decision-making processes;
- constant communication and self assessment;
- transparency;
- Professional training in the area of cooperation;
- support from the entire school community (cf. e.g., BKJ, 2015/2021, Bowen & Kisida, 2017, Konings & Heusden, 2014).

The training and assignment of teachers who act as cultural facilitators in their schools¹⁴ is also considered an important factor in establishing and maintaining successful and long-term cooperation structures with extracurricular partners of all kinds (Meerkerk, 2020 & 2022). This also highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder networks. On a practical level, the aim of these structures is to introduce partners to each other - often to simply communicate existing structures and services such as online platforms¹⁵ (cf. e.g., Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke, 2013, p.1037). However, under this approach often lies the will of the stakeholders to build up sustainable (community-based) ecosystems and landscapes of CAE (e.g., families, neighbourhood, local communities, cities, metropolitan areas, regional, national, international level), where cooperation can happen at many different scales and in manifold formats¹⁶ (cf. e.g., Bown & Kisida, 2017; Torres de Eça, 2014).

The school centred discourse on cooperation and partnerships opens and introduces a different, multimodal way of thinking about cooperation and partnerships for the promotion of CAE, where totally different cooperation partners come at play - even from social institutions not directly connected with CAE or from the creative economy sector (Hunter, 2015; Lorzena, 2015). In this context, it is helpful that state and municipal¹⁷ cultural institutions

¹⁴ As in a project funded by the India Foundation for the Arts, 25 students from the fourth, fifth and sixth grades of the Government Higher Primary School, in Alkeri Gauliwada, Uttara Kannada district, are exploring a local community dance form Radmal that is rapidly vanishing from these regions and the cultural life of the Gauli community. This is a collaborative project with the community that will craft a series of workshops that enable students to use the material from their Kannada, Social Science, History and Math syllabi in exploring the dance form. The outcome of the project will be a series of performances.

¹⁵ As an example from the German area, platforms such as Kultur und Schule and KS:BAM can be named here.

¹⁶ The purpose of Korea's Support for Arts and Culture Education Act is 'to revitalise arts and culture education, and to contribute to improving the quality of cultural life of the people and to strengthening the cultural capability of the State'. KACES involved 5,000 teaching artists and up to 3.1 million participants in 2017. It involves different strands, including a substantial investment in projects with the international community, valuing open education in an era of new technologies. The Imagination in Full Bloom-Arts and Culture Program, KACES provides specialised arts and culture education programs for examinees who just have recently completed their college entrance exams with opportunities to find new possibilities for their future, alleviating any stress concerning their careers, entering college, or finding their place in society through arts and culture education programs.

¹⁷ As in IntersECCions, a citizenship programme that, since 2016, has been promoted by the Prat de Llobregat City Council to improve people's quality of life. It promotes cross-cutting work between culture and education as an axis for social and community transformation. It is developed based on cooperation and co-responsibility within the educational and cultural ecosystem of the municipality,

(including schools and museums) see themselves increasingly called upon by political and governmental institutions to see and understand themselves as places and stakeholders of CAE (Vermeersch & Vanderbrouke, 2023, p.1053)¹⁸. The systematic creation of corresponding funding programs, at an international, national and regional level has certainly contributed to the establishment of new partnerships.

Cooperation for the promotion of CAE doesn't only happen between mediators and other practice partners. To meet the challenges of our time and to advance in the field, there is also a need to strengthen multi and transdisciplinary partnerships with researcher(s) and advocacy networks¹⁹, non-governmental organisations, higher education institutions²⁰ (Pascoe, 2015, Rowe, 2014), policy makers, government institutions, local authorities, stakeholders in the (creative) industries, and other agents worldwide. With their diverse expertise, knowledge base, as well as political power, they can make a fundamental contribution to the quality of CAE with a view to a systemic approach.

Especially when it comes to curricula and practice redesign and the development of sustainable policy frameworks and funding strategies, there is a strong need to think more in terms of networks and resource platforms to foster relational knowledge transfer and make the most out of the 'Wisdom of the Many' (Schonmann, 2013 & 2015; Surowiecki, 2005).

3.

MICRO AND MACRO SCALES

data sources and available indicators and statistics / evaluation and monitoring

The following remarks make no claim to be representative or complete, since - simply for language reasons and accessibility - they refer to only a fraction of the data sources that may be available worldwide. It can be strongly assumed that the research and data situation vary considerably from region to region²¹.

involved in the challenge of cultural promotion and the democratisation of cultural practice together with the right to quality education throughout life. The programme proposes three types of actions - projects, laboratories and learning centres - which are developed in relation to five areas of knowledge - Literature, Promotion of the English language, Artistic education (theatre, music, dance, visual arts and film), Awareness of the city and Scientific, technological and digital awareness. IntersECCions is a city commitment to place Education and Culture as strategic axes of the municipality and drivers of social transformation.

¹⁸ See for example: [Artists in School Programme in South Africa](#), [IntersECCions](#), [Kūrybinės jungtys \(Creative Connections\)](#) or the [National Plan for the Arts](#).

¹⁹ [UNITWIN Arts Education Research for Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development](#), UNESCO Arts-in-Education Observatories in the Asia Pacific, Compendium, [WAAE](#), [ENO](#), [ACEnet](#), [AMACAD](#), [OEI](#), [CAE](#), [NEMO](#), [ICOM](#), [ICOMOS](#), [ENCC](#), [InSEA](#), [IDEA](#), [ITAC](#), [IFLA](#).

²⁰ As in the case of [Nagata's courses at Chiba University \(Japan\)](#) (p.15), an art project incorporated into the general education curriculum was able to attract students from fields other than art such as economics, law, and the social sciences. We can speculate that when students, who will be tomorrow's leaders in various fields, see the importance of art as something that goes beyond rationalism and has the power to transform people's values in ways that can lead to social change, they may become conscious of art's vital role in society (Kumakura and Nagatsu, 2015).

²¹ For example, on the German research platform [kubi online](#) some open access studies and contributions have been published in the last few years, which deal specifically with educational landscapes and partnerships and cooperation, but which are not made available in other languages and

CAE practices and policies have been focusing on developing good practices at a local level and its outcomes and impacts are subject to several research approaches. The microscale research approach has been privileged in creative experiences leading to specific recommendations for policy. The main gap in knowledge regarding CAE impacts lies on how cooperation can contribute to achieve important goals in this field, due to the lack of indicators and available statistics: how cooperation helped in the achievements of particular microscale projects e.g. what was the role and level of cooperation, are relatively absent indicators²².

Research and data vary considerably from region to region, namely because of the available sources for research and political interest in investing in this topic, but some resources can be tackled. There are statistics reports from the Education Commission of the States in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership providing wide views of arts education in the different U.S. states. Arts Education Partnership promotes ArtsEdSearch and ArtScan where some projects and indicators can be consulted.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), reports interesting data and indicators on several aspects, including arts education, grants and services in the field of arts education, the professional development of arts education managers and the teaching arts relationships with state arts agencies. The Youth Wiki²³ supports evidence-based European cooperation in the field of youth, providing information on national policies in support of young people. However:

- a) there is a lack of research and statistics on the effectiveness of institutional partnerships in the field of CAE;
- b) at a policy level, there is a small number of strategies to put together initiatives coordinated by different ministerial and governmental authorities;
- c) at a national level, there are almost no programmes to generate synergies through cross-sectoral cooperation usually organised at regional/federal or local levels²⁴.

Recent research (Bowen & Kisida, 2019) shows that cooperation improves arts learning opportunities and stimulates support, creating resources for CAE, but we still lack information on the views and perspectives of the contributing organisations. Bowen & Kisida (2019) focus on a survey of a large-scale school-community arts partnership initiative and found a substantial variation in the organisations' views about their impacts on students' educational outcomes and in the levels of involvement for the collective efforts put in place. Researchers acknowledged that the role of the organisation that coordinates the initiative can significantly influence the levels of support of others involved, concluding that transparent and democratic communication and operating modes can solve competing priorities.

are thus only conditionally accessible for the international discourse (cf. e.g., Bildhauer, 2018; Borchert & Deister, 2022; Freund, Norrenbrock & Gördel, 2019/2017; Fuchs, 2014/2013; Gumz, Rohde & Thole, 2019; Hübner & Braun, 2021; Hübner & Kelb, 2015; Kegler, 2018; Kelb, 2014; Keuchel, 2014 & 2019; Klopsch, 2022; Lewalter & Noschka-Roos, 2013/2012; Oberhaus & Eller, 2018; Obermaier & Köhler, 2022; Oberschidt, 2015; Rossmeissl, 2022; Schlingensiepen-Trint, 2019; Schorn & Wolf, 2018; Sturzenhecker, 2014; Züchner, 2018).

²² Especially if we think of available data in English, the *lingua franca* for international work.

²³ By the European Commission.

²⁴ An exception, for example, is the National Plan for the Arts in Portugal.

Local/regional reports promoted by Municipalities can also be found²⁵, where statistics on partnerships between schools and arts and cultural organisations are revealed. At a regional, national and international scale, we lack data and statistics for an overview of cooperation in the field of CAE, so international funding should be improved to mobilise experts' research in these matters.

Monitoring CAE regularly is considered a crucial step for maximising its impact, allowing for comparison of data and knowledge collected worldwide. There are good experiences and practices to follow in this field. A first step to international monitoring was initiated in 2016 with the project MONAES²⁶, which started within the framework of the INRAE²⁷ and aimed to understand arts education around the world and to compare the conditions and features of arts education practices and policies across countries and regions, following the UNESCO Seoul Agenda (UNESCO 2010). Over the past decade, and notably since the adoption of the Seoul Agenda, there have been several key evolutions in CAE that emerged in the questionnaire responses for the Global consultation towards a UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education (UNESCO Report 2023): greater awareness of cultural diversity, diversification of curricula and broadened cooperation.

In the regard of the evaluation of the long-term impact on the effectiveness of cooperation in the field of CAE, it is crucial to develop appropriate evaluation methods and tools to assess its outcomes, benefits and methodologies. The results will support decision-making, design and implementation at local level, as well as links with best practices, experience and research, practitioners and professionals.

4.

THE ANATOMY OF PARTNERSHIPS

needs and gaps / opportunities, good practices / impacts and outcomes

FROM INSTITUTIONS TO (EX)TITUTIONS

policy design and implementation

The dominating educational and cultural policies in post-war contemporary Europe and the US invested in democratisation models that privileged accessibility over participation and cooperation, focused on expansion and growth, aiming to deliver for everyone. Despite reaching many people, they are top down, paternalistic and insufficient in empowering and supporting people's agency as active protagonists and as partners. From the 1970s/80s on, there was a shift in policies towards cultural rights. The model of cultural democracy focused on a bottom-up approach, participation, building trust, sharing power, social diversity and intercultural dialogue, thus fostering cultural citizenship and cooperation and accepting its consequences.

Reflecting on the two models at the heart of cultural policy, it's clear that both, democratisation (expansion) and participation (engagement), should be implemented in a complementary logic. The complementarity of the *pre-defined offer* and the *co-creation offer* models determines deep transformations within the institutions, their audiences and

²⁵ Such as the Arts in Schools 2020-2021, by the New York City Council Department of Education.

²⁶ Monitoring National Arts Education Systems.

²⁷ International Network for Research in Arts Education.

communities. This political choice - from institutions to (ex)tutions²⁸ - implies a change that occurs in the way they perspective themselves from inside out, as webs instead of centres, considering the features, needs and interests of those they serve and relate with. (Ex)tutions create new work relations/new joint work culture.

Supporting (ex)tutions is crucial because:

1. in the process of change (ex)tutions undergo tensions and conflicts;
2. they build trust, collective meaning and compromise within and outside the organisation;
3. they implement and develop partnerships between civil society organisations and the public and private sectors, essential for the execution of intersectoral policies;
4. they nurture and care for the collaboration between artists, educators, practitioners, teachers and learners, and between organisations, promoting an integrated and contextualised circuit of practices, knowledge and methods.

Transformation anchors in recognising the importance of plural methodologies and responses while building networks and co-learning (Paker, 2021). When connected with CAE, it fosters an intersectional approach that impacts policies and institutional transformation.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Cross-sectoral policies address common priorities and make changes happen, but they are not easy to draft or implement. Under shared governance, these policies have the potential to transform systems and originate flexible structures to operate at different scales.

The forthcoming UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education advocates for a broadened understanding of the role of culture and arts education today, as for a better adaptation of policies in these fields to the needs of societies and economies, encompassing an expanded vision of culture (built and living heritage, creative economy and developments resulting from the digital era), and a renewed vision of education 'grounded in human rights and based on principles of non-discrimination, social justice, respect for life, human dignity and cultural diversity.'²⁹

In this context, cross-sectoral policies which foster cooperation call on culture and education to jointly address key issues in their national and regional contexts, recognising from the outset three challenges to the implementation of CAE programmes/projects:

- a) time – sustainability and maturity of projects;
- b) space – impact, scale and integration;
- c) people – trust, equity, empowerment and emancipation.

Implementation of intersectoral policies implies a mindset shift in decision making that entails a comprehensive vision, dedicated follow-up, cohesion and trust between the parties, support and funding, monitoring of quality and social impact.

²⁸ Cf. [Porto Santo Charter](#), (ex)tutions are institutions that operate from the inside out, mirroring the communities and territories they cover, beyond their borders.

²⁹ UNESCO report [Reimagining Our Futures Together: A new social contract for education](#).

CO-CREATION COOPERATION

Based on the assumption that creativity, critical awareness and solidarity are the way forward to tackle our global problems, design and implementation of local and national policies that seek to foster cooperation in the fields of CAE, should aim at the following aspects:

- a) **to share power**, establishing a paradigm of cultural democracy with the participation of each one in the education and culture of all to develop a fuller and emancipated citizenship;
- b) **to focus on the territory**, by working with endogenous resources, indigenous and traditional knowledge bearers, local partners, local heritage, for the common interests and specific needs of a community, building trust, representativity, and by tackling its relevant issues;
- c) **to mainstream**, network and integrate the programmes, by adjusting strategies and methodologies to micro, meso and macro scales;
- d) **to diversify** and integrate other forms of expression and sensibilities, foster universality, diversity, dialogue and peace;
- e) **to build capacity and autonomy**, register and evaluate quantitatively and qualitatively, sharing good and bad experiences, knowledge and practices on project design and implementation;
- e) **to empower**, self-recognise own-traditional-knowledge and acknowledge that all intelligences and capabilities are valuable, distinct and equivalent;
- f) **to break the cycle of exclusion**, to realise one's expectations, objectives and desires, breaking from what is established, preconceived, foreseen and determined by one's background.

Ultimately, CAE policies envision the development of capabilities far beyond artistic vocations, maintaining a focus on social-emotional skills, conscious citizenship, non-violence and an ethics of care, to deal with uncertainty and adversity when facing the challenges of the present and near future times.

THE KINDLING OF A FLAME, NOT THE FILLING OF A VESSEL³⁰ *curricula and pedagogy*

Currently, it is important to distinguish art education as a transdisciplinary content from the traditional disciplinary model of art education - mainly focused on the acquisition of artistic and technical skills or the learning of art history. The up-to-date transdisciplinary model breaks stable structures and tackles the challenges of the post-internet era, offering the opportunity to make changes that affect pedagogy and the educational ecosystem (including its different agents, their relationships, knowledge and ways of generating learning). A cross-disciplinary approach 'requires broad interdisciplinary cooperation to strengthen learning opportunities, processes and outcomes' (UNESCO, 2023).

Arts and cultures - embedded in the syllabus - are vehicles that expand education beyond the specific educational context (Zemos98, 2009), enabling a learning experience open to

³⁰ 'Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.' Quote attributed to Socrates.

otherness, rousing students to understand and to commit to the world in a way no longer confined to the limits of curricula but to its own time and place, contradictions and crises. How can CAE perform pedagogical transformation in educational systems nowadays?

By activating the power of arts and cultural experiences in the curricula it is possible to raise pedagogies that challenge conformity, open the school to the world, value place, people and contexts and establish concrete relationships between curriculum and life, making it an adventure rather than a prescription.

COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS: 8 PROPOSALS FOR A RADICAL CHANGE

From convergent to divergent thinking: Today's problems require people to reach new solutions, create new words for new ideas and take risks to achieve unforeseen results. Fostering creative thinking at school is fundamental to our future as a species, so it's urgent to shift from education based on answers and assertive assumptions and to foster co-creative pedagogy that seeks questions.

From boredom to pleasure: Schools should be places where curiosity and emotions are triggered, where pleasure is integrated, motivates and transforms. Designing lessons as hands-on, experimental creative learning experiences takes into account inclusion and participation in the teaching and learning processes, approaching Universal Learning Design (UDL) (Meyer et al., 2014), which starts from didactic planning and seeks to provide all students with equal learning opportunities.

From the educational centre to the cultural centre: Both learners and teachers are cultural producers of knowledge - acknowledging their cultural creativity as part of their cultural surroundings is recognising that it is in the education centre where topmost cultural policies emerge.

From static knowledge to arts project-based learning: Teaching strategies are still supported by quantification and specialisation, when they should stimulate unusual connections and forge new and 'undisciplined' structures (Acaso y Megías, 2017). Learning through artistic and cultural projects is the way to connect different disciplines via creative processes that generate discovery, cooperation, sharing and fruitful conflict.

From individual to collaborative work: Conceiving the school as a driver of activities carried out by the members of its local community allows a better understanding of the territory, as well as the connection to issues of interest of its people and learners involved (Garcés, 2020). This collaborative way of learning fuels collective intelligence and develops empathy and problem-solving skills.

From logical-verbal literacy to the incorporation of other languages: Accepting that we learn with all our body, other people and surroundings; and recognising the imperative to learn how to read images in a world that is mostly visual, will enrich pedagogy with other forms of expression such as audiovisual, performance or multimedia installation techniques.

From a global cultural curriculum to contextualised art education: An education system based on Western cultural hegemony does not consider the cultural wealth and heritage of communities uprooted from their original territories (Carnoy, 1974). The incorporation of local and diverse cultural references is thus vital for a cosmopolitan, plural and comprehensive understanding of our world.

From evaluating content to appreciating capabilities (Sánchez, 2015): The artistic processes provide us with tools that make possible a participative, reflected, meaningful, inclusive, fair

and plural evaluation - incorporation of multiple languages, errors, brainstorming, changing roles, positive feedback - instead of privileging memorization and other mechanical learning processes.

Excessive specialisation and homogenisation of curricula blurs the complexity of the world. Conversely, transdisciplinary dynamics with the arts and creative processes produce holistic and comprehensive worldviews with the potential to disrupt the status quo - to rebalance and bring about change. The insubordinate nature of creativity and the transformative power of the arts allow for a more inclusive and dynamic educational environment, closer to a global vision of the world and better able to prepare individuals to face global challenges. Through carefully selected cooperation and partnerships these potentials can even be increased.

INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AND EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS³¹

teacher training and resources

As a methodological tool, art is one of the greatest inputs that can be developed in teacher training to revolutionise educational systems. Rethinking teacher training as a joint and co-productive effort in the fields of CAE in formal and non-formal education is thus central to producing a real change in contents, methodological and didactic approaches and implying new perspectives on teaching and learning. Through partnerships and cooperation in teacher training the following key issues for change could be addressed:

Change mindset: CAE at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels generally ignore the concepts of art that enable teachers to make significant changes in their pedagogical framework, including reimagining their role as educators in today's world (Giroux, 1990). Teacher training should privilege the meaning-making processes and not only formal aesthetics, daring to develop self-expression alongside a critical, social and political view of the world.

Visual Sovereignty (Acaso, 2022): Education systems must assume that present day learning integrates consumption of audio-visual materials to provide learners with abilities to deal, produce and create them. CAE subjects are the proper place to achieve it and teachers should master knowledge about the elements that conform our visual universe, as well as be aware of critical and conscientious use of the platforms where images are created and consumed.

Present times issues: Educators must reflect on the issues that make up our reality and how they affect and reformulate teaching models, such as:

- feminist pedagogies that care for life and broaden the recognition of reproductive processes to the detriment of productive ones, moreover including knowledge that has been cancelled or ignored (Hooks, 1994);
- decolonized art education that allows us to question western narratives of power to develop specific narratives of repair (AAVV, 2013), and revise the idea of community;
- ecology pedagogies that raise proactive awareness about climate emergencies, ecological transition, green transition and sustainability, e.g. replacing the current idea of recycling - as for industrial consumerism - for ways to help learners to deal with

³¹ Quote attributed to Albert Einstein.

anxiety in view of the future; and also help teachers to look for strategies of communication among species, promoting empathy towards all living beings³².

Space as a third teacher (AAVV, 2010): Along with parents and teachers, contemporary theories and research informed by the Reggio Emilia approach space and environment as a 'third teacher'. The attention paid to how space can be carefully organised reflects the way in which pedagogy is designed. Changing the layout of the classroom - with respect to ecology, empathy, language and inclusion - provokes divergent relationships and ideas, alters the practices, processes and outcomes of teaching and learning, as well as learners' agency, motivation and perception.

Creative art processes as learning methodologies of technological/ digital tools: Creative tools challenge traditional education as opportunities to disrupt. Learning how to use artificial intelligence through artistic processes will give teachers and learners the chance to integrate this tool in the classroom in a transformative way, reshaping research and assessment.

Meeting-spaces between the artistic, cultural and educational spheres: Alliance between cultural institutions and teacher training promotes cooperation and shared learnings that foster other forms of performing evaluation and reflection with all of the involved agents.

Creating resource centres for teachers: for sharing best teaching practices is vital to promote digital and physical resources where teachers can find new contents, practices and approaches for their continuous support and self-managed training, e.g. RED PLANEA³³ offers to the art-teaching community a wide range of art and school materials created by teachers and artists, by subject, level or theme. Plus, learners should be challenged to take part in the creation of educational resources and to propose practices and projects relevant to their generation's world view, needs and interests, as students, individuals and as cultural agents.

AN OVERVIEW

research and data collection

Despite the general boom of research in the field of CAE in many regions in recent years, it can be noted that only relatively few inquiries focus on the field of cooperation and partnerships, even when studies are fundamentally based on collaborative projects. In addition, they are spread across a large number of different (types of) actions (yearbooks, handbooks, journals, websites, repositories etc.) from a variety of disciplines (e.g., educational science, sociology, social and behavioural science etc.). A considerable effort is required to obtain an overview of the available knowledge, from local to international level.

Overall, it can be said that there is a wide range of project documentation, theoretical contributions and qualitative-oriented studies (see Bibliography) where to find very good data, namely on the Local Cultural Education Partnerships³⁴, which has been subject to close scientific monitoring. Alas, a lot of projects documentation focus on impact and outcomes, but not on the anatomy of the partnerships and cooperation itself (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke, 2013), also because they often prioritise individual projects, few cooperation partners and particular art forms.

³² Teacher training on these issues is developed in the proposal for the master's degree in artistic education offered by the OEI.

³³ A website centre promoted by the Spanish State.

³⁴ A program initiated by the Arts Council in England and Wales.

There is a clear lack of research and data collection relating to figures and statistics, but there are exceptions like, e.g., the mixed-method studies on 'Schools and cultural organisations. Natural partners in art and cultural education (CAE)' carried out by Lode Vermeersch and Anneloes Vandenbroucke (2013) or the 'Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement [TALE]' (Thomson et al, 2015) project and the 'Exploring Teacher-Artist Partnership as a Model of CPD for Supporting & Enhancing Arts Education in Ireland: A Research Report' (Kenny & Morissey, 2016).

To tap into the existing treasure of the 'Wisdom of the many' (Schonmann, 2013 & 2015; Surowiecki, 2005) and to make it productive for the entire field of cultural education, particularly when addressing the effects, but also the individual framework and conditions for for successful cooperation, it is relevant to note that:

1. Innovative participatory methodological approaches are needed, as well as long-term studies and meta-analyses across disciplines and projects (in addition to traditional quantitative and qualitative research approaches and forms of impact analyses);
2. National and transnational repositories and online platforms in open access format are needed, available for international and for interdisciplinary research (Bresler, 2015);
3. Existing national and international research and advocacy networks can and must play a crucial role in university-level cooperation, as well as specific partnerships of schools and other actors with research institutions (Faik-Simet, 2014; Pascoe, 2015; Rowe, 2014; Moreno 2014);
4. Specific research funding is needed to carry out high-quality research, which can be the database for building multimodal monitoring frameworks.

5.

TOWARDS A MANIFESTO: BEYOND WORDS AND INTENTIONS

specific and general recommendations to UNESCO and the international community

To foster cooperation between arts, cultures and education immaterial and material conditions are necessary to ensure partnership sustainability. The recommendations are interconnected proposals addressed to the different stakeholders of the CAE ecosystem, at different levels, in a systematic way.

To UNESCO:

- Create a Category 1 Institute to support the Framework on Culture and Arts Education implementation, monitorization, evaluation and mainstream.

To policymakers:

- Design cross-sectoral Culture/Arts and Education policies, strategies and programmes at different levels (national, regional and local) to ensure that the objectives of an integrated vision for culture and education are materialised in funding, planning, management and evaluation measures. Make cooperation on very different levels possible.
- Design policies articulating models of democratisation, cultural democracy and participation in a complementary logic. And foster the collaboration of different players in policy making (for example different responsible ministries).
- Transform the education system, embracing the needs of society and learning communities, incorporating artistic and cultural content and practices into curricula in

a disciplinary and trans-disciplinary way, assuming equal status between arts subjects and other curricular areas. Culture and the arts can be the lens for understanding diversity, for innovate and learn to deal with uncertainty, climate emergence, combat inequalities and other societal factors that generate conflict and distress.

- Develop policies, funding mechanisms and advocacy campaigns to strengthen and recognize the strategic role of cultural mediation and CAE in formal and non-formal cultural and educational institutions, and other civil society organisations. Mediation agents establish and nurture relationships between partners, build bridges based on trust, sustainability and vision for innovation.
- Create cross-sectorial policy observatories based to assess the long-term and social impact of culture and arts on education.
- Support interdisciplinary research and CAE cooperation networks and partnerships and invest in data sharing in national and transnational repositories and online platforms in open access format.
- Create cross-sectorial policy observatories based on a qualitative and quantitative evaluation to assess the long-term impact of culture and arts on education.
- Improve international and national funding to mobilise experts and practitioners to promote networking and cooperation, knowledge and resources. To empower and train stakeholders in the areas of CAE it is essential to promote research and produce useful indicators for monitoring cooperation practices and processes.
- Subsidise grassroots projects that foster indigenous/local knowledge, artistic creations/ crafts practices/ expression, as well as local heritage and traditions, with a view to a cosmopolitan approach, avoiding framing them in identitarian or stigmatising perspectives.

To cultural and educational organisations (e.g. schools, universities, museums, libraries, theatres, cultural centres, archives, etc):

- Ensure that cultural organisations fulfil their educational role according to the needs and interests of the audiences, following a lifelong learning perspective, becoming (ex)tutions that cooperate with the formal and non-formal education system.
- Strengthen the role of cultural institutions as educational territories and of schools as cultural poles and expand partnerships between organisations on different scales and in different fields of action, encouraging joint strategic thinking, communication and exchange.
- Empower and trust young people, assisting and working with them, promoting their agency by supporting projects with an impact on society, matching their proposals with cultural and educational organisations, other stakeholders and networks, promoting cooperation on a common intergenerational platform.
- Support meaningful youth engagement in culture and the arts, promoting transition to employment in cultural fields while dignifying work in the cultural sector.
- Develop pedagogies based on CAE that challenge conformity, open the school to the world, value place, people and contexts and establish concrete relationships between curricula and life, making it an adventure rather than a prescription.
- Favour the encounter with all forms of cultural/ artistic/ sensitive experimentation, in digital and analogue platforms, avoiding the algorithmic approach that pre-defines an ideal product for each individual.

- Promote co-creation and role exchange between the audience, the creator, the producer, the organiser and the sponsor. Taking on different roles and diversifying relationships consolidates participation, promotes cultural awareness and social and creative skills.

To cultural and educational mediators (e.g. teachers, educators, artists, artisans, heritage professionals, indigenous and traditional knowledge bearers):

- Recognize that everyone is a cultural agent, responsible for the cultural and educational specific needs of the communities, acting on behalf of a common ground where partnerships arise.
- Welcome dissent in cooperation projects - constructive conflicts are essential for innovation, creativity and imagination.
- Foster partners representativity highlighting multicultural diversity and its agents.
- Have the courage to work together, speak at eye level, work participatively, enter unusual collaborations.

ANNEX

case studies for exemplar approaches

The 4 selected study-cases illustrate exemplary approaches to CAE related to the theme of *expanding cooperation*. While different in scale, format, and the actors involved, they share methodological and conceptual similarities, such as:

- **Empowerment and Representation**, seeking to amplify the voices and perspectives of those often excluded, undervalued or marginalised, particularly youngsters;
- **Long-term and Place-based Approaches**, recognizing that meaningful change takes time and requires a deep understanding of the local context;
- **Access and Inclusivity**, reaching communities with limited resources and systemic disadvantages, striving to break down traditional barriers;
- **Collaboration and Networks**, leveraging resources, expertise and support by working together with diverse stakeholders (including local authorities, artists, heritage bearers, educational communities, cultural institutions, governmental bodies, foundations, higher education institutions, the media, civil society organisations, and private partners);
- **Community Engagement**; involving local communities, organisations and artists in their projects, fostering a sense of ownership, co-creation, and shared decision-making;
- **Flexibility and Adaptability**, recognizing the evolving nature of cultural dynamics and the need to respond to changing circumstances and challenges, and learning from successes and failures;
- **Social Change and Transformation**, going beyond providing cultural experiences, promoting social justice and cohesion, civic awareness and collective action, addressing issues of inequality, representation, political engagement and social positively impacting individuals, communities and society as a whole. They see culture as a powerful tool for promoting social justice, civic awareness, and collective action.

PROYECTO MIRA

Venezuela, Caracas

Photography + Youth and children

Org. [Tiuna El Fuerte](#) and Proyecto MIRA

Project MiRA is an alternative arts education initiative that brings free mobile photography workshops with vulnerable youth to the barrios of Venezuela's capital city, Caracas, f by Lexi Parra, a Venezuelan-American photographer and community educator under 30, whose work focuses on youth culture, the personal effects of inequality and violence, and themes of resilience. MiRA creates a space for discussion, critical awareness and visual creation, where young people learn photography and get the power and space to tell their stories and visually represent themselves, their neighbourhoods and social issues. This informal initiative is meant to empower during widespread disenfranchisement, systemic repression, political polarisation and a hyper-inflated economy. As it continues, it compiles an online and unfiltered archive of what it means to live in Venezuela today through the eyes of its youth.

Project MiRA goes directly to vulnerable communities and local schools. This methodology allows them to teach youth who may not otherwise have access to the arts and additionally creating bridges between these communities and the local permanent cultural institutions. The workshops are divided into age groups (10-14 and 15-20) and have already reached over 500 young people. Project MiRA has also collaborated with accomplished women photojournalists to co-host thematic workshops for teen girls, creating a safe space for young women to talk about gender-based and representation issues using the camera as a tool of empowerment. Canon USA and the Davis Peace Prize have supported project MiRA.

RAP2REP / VOICE2REP / VOICE TO REPRESENT

Liberia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Mali

Music + Youth

Org. [AccountabilityLab](#) and [Arts4Change](#)

When Rap2Rep (now Voice2Rep or Voice to Represent) was launched in Liberia in 2015, it was envisioned as a campaign to encourage creative activism among young people using Hip-Co – a popular Liberian musical genre often referred to as 'political music'. The United Nations named it one of the finalists for the [SDG Action Awards](#) for 'harnessing conscious music as a tool for social change through the platform of youth participation'. The campaign has since expanded to Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Mali.

This first-of-its-kind music competition searches for underground and undiscovered music artists who support greater representation, participation and accountability. It gives rising stars a platform to make their voices heard, connect with socially conscious leaders in the music industry, and build the skills they need through music. The finalists are trained in lyrics, style, performance and advocacy for accountability, governance and political engagement. Each artist is paired with a professional music producer for mentorship and coaching.

Each year, the campaign culminates in a large national concert where the selected artists perform in live television and radio broadcasts to showcase their message to a national audience, who can vote for their favourites. The winning songs are professionally produced and shared across the country and worldwide. Voice2Rep builds a network of musicians, producers, mentors, judges and fans of socially conscious music who are passionate about using their voices to advocate for the change they would like to see.

Rap2Rep was founded by [Arts4Change](#), a program that appeals to new collaborations and unlikely networks, bringing new ideas and energy from the grassroots, shifting how decisions are made, lifting people and supporting solutions wherever possible.

THE AGENCY

UK – Belfast, Cardiff, Southampton, London and Manchester

Creative entrepreneurship + Youth

Org. The Agency and [Battersea Arts Centre](#), Contact, [People Palace Projects](#) and a growing network of organisations³⁵

The Agency is a creative entrepreneurship programme enabling young people aged 15 to 25 from underserved areas to generate social change projects based on the needs they identify in their communities. It was initially developed by the Brazilian theatre maker, activist, and journalist Marcus Faustini (2010) and brought to the UK (2013), thinking about how to pool resources, knowledge and expertise to foster change based on the desires of young people.

The Agency seeks to be genuinely representative of the local area, working with people who are driven and ambitious and with those who may think they have nothing to contribute, to drive social innovation from the ground up. The model has brought together communities from warring favelas, and started to rebuild communities damaged by gang crime, far-right groups and post-industrial decline.

As a methodology inspired by local communities, delivered and adapted by local organisations, It can work everywhere. Agents pitch their ideas to a panel of industry experts and the ones not awarded are encouraged to join other successful projects to stay engaged.

The ideas developed through The Agency are as diverse in form (boxing, fashion, art, food) as the communities they tap into (young carers, young offenders, refugees). It is a human-centred model which begins with each young person's desire. This approach is radical in contexts where mainstream education's 'one size fits all' approach does not always work.

NATIONAL PLAN FOR THE ARTS (NPA)

Portugal – National

Arts, cultures, heritage and education – all citizens

Org. Portuguese Government

The NPA is a public policy mission structure created by the Portuguese Government for ten years. It works with the Ministries of Culture, Education and Higher Education, local administration, cultural organisations, artists and civil society to enrich the cultural and educational ecosystem throughout the country. Its mission is to foster social transformation in the life of citizens by mobilising the educational power of arts and heritage.

Its [Strategy/Manifesto](#) for the first five years pursues a transdisciplinary vision of education, building bridges between schools and artists, heritage bearers, and cultural institutions, and promoting cultural democracy. This strategy has three axes – cultural policy, training and education, and access – and the action plan aims to strengthen cultural rights, make arts more accessible, promote lifelong learning and foster participation, enjoyment and artistic creation.

³⁵ FabLab Belfast, The National Theatre of Wales, The Kiln in Brent, Blackhorse Workshop in Waltham Forest – Mayor of London's Borough of Culture Programme, Feltham Young Offenders Institute, Energise Me Southampton.

In the fourth year of its implementation, NPA works with more than 50% of the country's school groupings and 55% of the municipalities. Cooperation is at its core and some of its strategic measures are the Municipal Strategic Plan for Culture/Education, capacitating professionals to create integrated Culture-Education policy strategies for each municipality; a Cultural organisations' social impact bond - a support tool for self-assessment of the social impact favouring cultural organisational transformation; an Artists in Residency in schools programme, currently implemented in ¼ of schools in Portugal; and a Culture and Education Biennale that involves partners from all country, including the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores.

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