



# ART-CONNECTION

**Educational tools for Cultural Connectors in adult education for enhancing  
the 8th European Key Competence (cultural sensitivity and expression)  
Developing individual and collective skills at the service of social cohesion**



|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Project acronym</b>     | Art-Connection   |
| <b>Project title</b>       | Enhancing the 8th European key competence (cultural sensitivity and expression) to develop individual and collective skills at the service of social cohesion                                      |
| <b>Project Agreement</b>   | 2019-1-FR01-KA204-062204   |
| <b>Project website</b>     | <a href="https://www.art-connection.eu">https://www.art-connection.eu</a>  |
| <b>Co - Authors</b>        | APapp : Cazin, Ferdinand - Salvi, Isabelle<br>CAI : Santos, Helder Luiz - Santos, Graça<br>ILS : Porro, Eugenia - Teodorescu, Loredana<br>Lboro : Dalmasso, Fred - Liguori, Antonia - Mott, Alison |
| <b>Coordination</b>        | APapp : Salvi, Isabelle<br>CAI : Santos, Helder Luiz   |
| <b>Date of preparation</b> | 2019-2022  |



***Disclaimer notice***

*This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the co-authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>General overview on the subject and the way to use this document and associated tools</b> .....                  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Art-Connection case studies out of participatory action research in the partners' territorial contexts</b> ..... | <b>6</b>  |
| 2.1 Cultural education through APP methodology and its latest developments (France) .....                           | 6         |
| 2.2 Cultural education through cultural heritage (Italy).....   | 20        |
| 2.3 Cultural education through Social Street Work practices (Portugal).....   | 38        |
| 2.4 Cultural education through Digital Storytelling methodology (UK) .....  | 45        |
| <b>ANNEXES</b> .....  | <b>53</b> |
| <b>Generic frames used and proposed by Art-Connection' partners</b> .....   | <b>53</b> |
| Canvas to conduct a participatory action research .....   | 53        |
| Activity form .....   | 56        |
| Frame for creating cultural projects .....  | 57        |

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW ON THE SUBJECT AND THE WAY TO USE THIS DOCUMENT AND ASSOCIATED EDUCATIONAL TOOLS**

The guidelines document for Cultural Connectors in adult education for enhancing the 8th European Key Competence and its associated educational tools have been produced by a collective of partners from France, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom, within the framework of the project Art-Connection, funded by the European Programme Erasmus+ 2019-2022.

It is dedicated to those professionals who use or wish to use the “Cultural awareness and expression competence” (8<sup>th</sup> EU Key competence), as part of Lifelong Learning in Adult Education and especially to benefit those who are in vulnerable situations.

It is dedicated to those educators who wish to get trained as facilitators, to members of a community who want to be acting for change, acting and interacting to connect people, acting to achieve an objective in the community and generally speaking to anyone who wants to create, generate and witness change, through awareness of cultural heritage and development of creative expression.

Its ambition is to be supportive, enriching, to develop and supplement knowledge, skills and practices for all stakeholders in the field of Adult Education relying on multiple intelligences (cognitive, creative, collective, emotional, digital or non-human) giving the reader space for reflection on the subject of cultural competences, to be developed to be open to other cultures and to other cultural backgrounds.

It also aims to develop an international perspective in educational practices, which are addressed by the Art-Connection project, with a paradigm shift in guidance, assessment and recognition, validation and / or certification of prior experience, in particular by focusing on the 8<sup>th</sup> European key competence to promote engagement in a self-directed learning process contributing to the construction of social cohesion.

It is based on the literature and practices review, the findings of ethnography and also the rich experience of its contributors, to elaborate a contemporary manual and an effective tool for the further training of trainers to support their activities of accompaniment of adults in the field of social-cultural and professional education.

The major intention of this guideline document is that it can be applied at various aspects of not only cultural life but also on social and education, such as cultural institutions (museums, art centers, archives...), NGOs, communities, municipalities, universal civil service, schools, VET institutions and universities, both at national and transnational levels.

The proposed Methodology is a vital part of the Sociocultural model (combining socio-economic, socio-political and cultural aspects) on non-formal and informal learning for interventions in the field of learning development through social Intercultural events among people, which will facilitate the learning of life-relevant knowledge and skills, especially for disadvantaged and marginalized groups of people or adults in lifelong learning.

It has been designed and co-constructed within the framework of a participatory action research methodology with professional educators and learners from different backgrounds, following a wide range of themes and using different reflective methodologies in order to increase awareness of the

value of our individual and collective culture and its potential role and impact within our educational systems for the development of individual and collective skills at the service of social cohesion.

The Art-Connection consortium partners are committed to develop and engage in innovative educational practices aiming to facilitate social inclusion and have undertaken a participatory action research on their respective territory to better understand the role and impacts of the “cultural awareness and expression” dimension and competences needed for Cultural Connectors:

1. at the **micro level**, the range of competences allowing learners to mobilize and appreciate,
2. at **the meso level**, the type of competences required for adult educators to become Cultural Connectors,
3. at the **macro level**, the requirements for an organization and a territory to set up cultural projects within a learning institution and the necessary conditions for its implementation.

The Art-Connection partners' have adopted a participatory action research methodology to induce and manage change (see also Art-Connection intellectual production "Theoretical and methodological framework for participatory action research" that provides a reflection on participatory action research)."

Cultural competences are intrinsic to human nature, they are transversal and fluid and at the same time fundamentally existential. They develop mainly in informal contexts and it is essential to redefine how they can be valued and recognised in relation to developments in neuroscience and psychosociology and as the foundations of social diplomacy.

Cultural competences are at the core of citizenship engagement and creative expression development; they are essential to the building of an intercultural world based on values of tolerance, openness, respect that allow citizens of the earth to find their own role and place in society and succeed in their life and develop their empowerment in connection with their life background - since we are all born somewhere!

### **What to find in this document and associated educational tools?**

- A contextual description for each case study in each partner's territorial context
- Some synthetic results out of the Art-Connection participatory action research methodology
- Pedagogical tools and/or links to specific UNhandbooks (this term UNhandbook is used to highlight the fact that these pedagogical tools are not instructions per se but have to be considered as resources to gain inspiration from for creating your own way to make change happen.)

## CHAPTER 2

### ART-CONNECTION CASE STUDIES OUT OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN THE PARTNERS' TERRITORIAL CONTEXTS

#### 2.1 CULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH APP APPROACH AND ITS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS (FRANCE)

##### 2.1.1 About APapp, APP label, APP approach and new developments

See UNhandbook « **Cultural experiences and self-directed-learning** or how to apprehend the APP' pedagogical specificities » as well as the Art-Connection State of Play, chapters 2 and 3.1 and Annex 1.

In France, the APapp (Association for the Promotion of the APP Label) is at the head of a national network that carries an educational label, the APP label (Workshops for Personalized Pedagogy). The APP label qualifies and certifies a very particular pedagogical approach, which is called the "démarche APP".

The purpose of the APP approach is to support people's self-directed-learning; that is to say, to support the development of people's empowerment (self-esteem, self-confidence, autonomy, development of soft skills).

APP pedagogical modalities are the result of a very complex learning process under the *accompagnement* of self-directed-learning that involves the whole person and at all levels of bodily, cognitive or theoretical interaction, but also affective, imaginary, emotional or in symbolic resonances.

We know that APPs are experienced by learners as places of life and fulfillment, with a large place left to informal learning. We realized that at the heart of the APP pedagogical model, it is a whole process of transformation of people that is at stake because it is the construction of the person as a whole, in the existential and holistic sense.

In the words of Bertrand Schwartz, an eminent French pedagogue, it will be said that in APPs we practice a "pedagogy of creativity, socialization and personal development".

The concept of *accompagnement* of self-directed-learning put into action in the APPs for nearly 40 years (the APP label was born in 1985 and more than 3 million learners have already passed through the APPs) induces a certain way of approaching the public - especially the public in vulnerable situations with various socio-cultural issues - in a humanist vision of training, imprint of the values of popular education. It is a pedagogy of the project, because there is no self-directed-learning without a project, that is to say without desire, without purpose and it is an organization of the training centered on the person, therefore personalized and individualized, to take into account the profiles and specific needs of each.

So it is never a question of learning alone, but on the contrary, of understanding one's experience (auto) in relation to others (socio) and the socio-cultural environment (eco) corresponding to the tripolar process of training modeled by Gaston Pineau, researcher emeritus at the University of Quebec, Montreal.

The APP label will therefore qualify and promote the self-directed-learning training practices developed by the actors of the APP network, according to the principles of a learning organization in a systemic approach.

These practices include trade gestures of the *accompagnement* of self-directed-learning, operating methods and pedagogical positioning on 3 levels:

- micro, the learner is an actor and author of his training: agency, self-determination,
- meso, the pedagogical team: educational approaches and implementation of pedagogical practices in compliance with the fundamental rules of learning in an open environment (person-centered approach - individualization, personalization, differentiation, facilitation - heterogeneity of audiences, pedagogical multimodalities, active and participatory pedagogies centered on action and experience),
- macro, structure and ecosystem of training: learning ecosystem, with the notion of an open learning environment and respect for the fundamental rules of learning<sup>1</sup>.

On the cultural and artistic level, self-directed-learning integrates the sense of beauty into everyday life and the way in which everyone is formed through works of art, folk art, music, cinema, cultural outings, creative activities. Self-directed-learning is also how everyone is formed in multicultural worlds where the understanding of others implies and refers each time, to the awareness of how I was formed myself and therefore constantly open his own sociohistorical conditionings to others, in an openness, in ever wider horizons.<sup>2</sup>

The cultural and artistic question is related to the cultural identity of each one, the relationship to oneself, to otherness, and the territory, because we were all born somewhere. It raises the questions of openness, difference, diversity, adversity. The artistic is an integral part of culture to bring out all cultures in a process of liberation of creativity, of the imaginary, leaving its place to the informal, to everything that is out of our control, that we do not control but that does exist; the art in order to let out this part of the unknown, the impalpable, the ecosystem of the living.

To conduct its participatory action research, the APapp focused on two fields of experimentation, to make a reflective study and an analysis of APP practices, as part of 2 cultural projects

- **With the APP of Barbezieux** (AAISC - Association Accueil Information Sud-Charente) **in New Aquitaine**, who organized with its learners in permanent input-output system and a whole collective of actors of the territory, a symposium of 3 days to enhance and promote crafts in South-Charente. This experience of organizing a large-scale cultural event in a rural locality allows us to look concretely at how to stimulate territorial creativity and partnership construction in learning territories.

The target group (participants in the cultural project of the symposium, including a first project to create an artistic work) was a heterogeneous audience, composed of persons in vulnerable situations, job seekers, young dropouts, including *travellers* people, young people graduated with a BTS and young people in a situation of illiteracy.

- **With the APP of Marquette lez Lille** (FCP – Pre-training workshop) **in the Hauts de France**, who led a cultural project for the collective creation of an illustrated booklet with a group of 9 learners to debate on the theme of discrimination. This experience makes it possible to

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the **State of play** of the Art-Connection project, chapters 2, 3.1 and Annex 1

<sup>2</sup> See video from Pascal Galvani in the UNhandbook "**Cultural experiences and self-directed-learning**".

concretely look at how to integrate the cultural dimension at the core of educational activities within a training structure and on a territory.

APapp's action research was an opportunity to highlight the interest of entering cultural situations (actions, activities, cultural experiences) as part of its Apprenant Agile device and in particular the methodology of kairos, for the recognition, valorization and validation-certification of acquired experience.

Cultural entry makes it possible to amplify the APP offer and to reach out to the most vulnerable audiences, far from all circuits, to accompany them towards access or upgrading of fundamental knowledge (reading, writing, counting) or access or upgrading of the digital tool, or to learn the French language for foreign audiences, immigrants or refugees.

## **2.1.2 Entering cultural situations and organization of cultural projects in the APP learning environment**

### **CULTURAL PROJECT WITH THE APP OF BARBEZIEUX**

Reflective study on the implementation of a large-scale cultural project, inviting all stakeholders to become aware of what is at stake and the lessons to be learned for the deployment of this type of practice.

*See also the UNhandbook "**Cultural Learning Territories** or how to stimulate territorial creativity and partnership construction: experience of organizing a symposium of crafts in South Charente".*

The participatory action research with the APP of Barbezieux was part of the [Re]connaissances project (funding following a call for projects "100% inclusion – The factory of remobilization", carried out by the APapp at the national level) and more generally, within the framework of cultural practices engaged for more than 30 years by the AAISC in partnership with the cultural leaders on the territory; in particular as part of its action "Learning through culture" developed in 3 municipalities, in Barbezieux, Montmoreau and Chalais, allowing "not alerted" audiences to overcome the fear of the unknown and dare to pass through the doors giving them access to culture for all.

The cultural offer is indeed part of the practices installed for a very long time at the AAISC, intimately convinced of its importance to hang up audiences in vulnerable situations, who no longer believe in much and who lack confidence, and of the impact of beauty in training paths, especially in the context of actions to remobilize audiences in great difficulty of social integration.

AAISC has launched a specific regional action "Move and invest in South Charente" to remobilize and restore confidence to audiences in vulnerable situations, often very far from employment, in a "go towards" approach and the organization of activities aimed at raising awareness and recognition of their skills, by offering a wide variety of creative workshops and cultural activities.

This action gradually gained momentum and led AAISC to embark on the organization of a very large scale event, throughout a territory, to promote craftsmanship, in the form of a symposium.

The symposium was scheduled at the time of the European Craft Days, from 1 to 3 April 2022.



### Summary of the stages of the launch of the symposium project in a learning organization<sup>3</sup>

- Reflection in a team and with all the actors of the territory on the problems of the territory: which fragile audiences to target? what types of actions to carry out? what stakes on the territory? what major economic problems?
- A first cultural project is emerging (March-July 2021 period): creation of an artistic work, a wooden tree, with young people in great difficulty "who we no longer know what to do!" The project is born from the questioning of how to accompany a young audience that feels completely lost, to whom several devices have already been proposed without success; or young people who have already done training, but do not know how to orient themselves afterwards; young people who have experienced the periods of confinement very badly and who no longer project themselves into the future, young people for whom everything has stopped and who are in need of action, activity, social relations, or young people who find themselves in a street situation.
- Gradually, the project of a symposium (period June 2021 to April 2022) was born to try to better understand each other and revalue the craft trades.

The project of the craft symposium was born from a recurring question relating to the lack of valorization of craft trades, especially among young people and the difficulties encountered by craftsmen to recruit and ensure the succession of their companies.

This tension in the craft trades is actually the consequence of a very bad image of manual trades and the brakes associated with unsuitable transmission practices, leading to this paradoxical situation where apprentices do not find bosses with whom they want to learn and bosses are not happy with their apprentices.

This tension is the result of a lack of motivation and social agility of young people and unemployed people to invest in an apprenticeship contract, because of the difficulties in projecting themselves on these trades and the peripheral obstacles they often have to overcome to enter training.

The symposium project was therefore an opportunity to gather and promote exchange with all these professionals from the world of craftsmanship. It has indeed allowed passionate men and women to make discovered the richness of their profession, in which they have revealed themselves.

The AAISC carried out and organized this major project on its rural territory, with the help of all the economic and social partners, professionals in training and the cultural and associative field (campus of the trades of the Chamber of Trades and Crafts (CMA) of Charente, agricultural vocational high school of Barbezieux, Mission Locale Arc Charente) but also the young people it accompanied and a group of job seekers.

This symposium triggered a dynamic of partnerships and co-construction to make sense in the actions carried out, to find keys on how to learn to get in touch with the actors of the territory and its population.

The creative activities, carried out in the APP pedagogical environment, based on *accompagnement* of self-directed-learning, fostered unusual encounters, especially with artists and craftsmen, encouraged the audiences mobilized on the symposium project to take the step of social reintegration, through pleasure, sensitivity, beauty, the link to the imagination and one's own

---

<sup>3</sup> See also the AAISC - <https://www.aaisc.fr/symposium-de-lartisanat/> website

creativity and the possibility of creating something with one's hands and invited them to seek solutions to facilitate the mobilization and intellectual and bodily mobility of everyone and ensure that each actor in the territory finds its place.

Based on concrete actions, such as building a pergola, welding, building a wooden bench, wrought iron, designing a ramp, and a whole dynamic of cultural activities and creative workshops, this major project has raised real cultural questions, in connection with societal issues and the question of the place of the individual in our societies. In particular, it gave the opportunity to get to the heart of the issues of integration, the desire to learn, to find one's place, to find a profession, an orientation by taking the time to question the commitment of young people in finding a job and the meaning they can find in it.

Entering cultural activity allowed each of the contributors of the project, to act on their environment, at their scale, by listening to the people who live in a territory, or through the creation of works as part of a broader program of connection with craftsmanship.

From the creative activity, many people have moved on to the more global project of valuing craftsmanship; some were even driving forces by revealing their passion and proposing the implementation of competitions, photo and drawing, as part of the symposium. Others have simply benefited from the proposed activities, which has allowed them to regain confidence and mobilize on training, retraining and orientation.

For the accompanists, it was for many a revelation of another way to reach audiences in vulnerable situations through artistic media that are in fact rich and varied: visit to a museum, creative workshop, participation in a conference or a meeting with artists who explain their profession, their passion, etc.

**METHODOLOGICAL SHEET OF THE ORGANIZATION OF A FLAGSHIP PROJECT** (concrete example of the symposium of crafts in South-Charente)

#### Start of the cultural project

- Team brainstorming and with local actors to identify a promising project on the territory.
- Setting up the project, seeking funding and meeting potential funders by the AAISC, who acted as the project leader.
- Team coordination around the meaning of the project and objectives: numerous team meetings, distribution of roles.
- Canvassing and raising awareness of the project among partners: meetings with the Compagnons passant, artisans' association, CFA, LEPA, local associations, Local Mission, Pôle emploi, Cap emploi, MSA, CAPEB, Department, Region, Crédit Agricole, entrepreneurial club, Rotary club, Individual artisans, Actors of the territory for a place, local elected officials, AKTO...
- AAISC's approaches to recruit volunteer learners: proposal to learners enrolled in an APP training course in permanent entry-output; visits to training institutions to also target young people in training in search of internships.
- Implementation of organizational workshops directly applied to the needs of the symposium project in a methodology of the project: those who are there and who want to participate in the organization of the symposium, participate in these workshops during which missions, approaches, activities are entrusted to the members of the group, according to the APP' pedagogical principles of *accompagnement* of the self-directed-learning.

- For example, learn how to approach the actors of the territory and concretely organize the meetings with the town halls: identify the contacts, make the appointments, prepare the argumentation, the objectives of the project, the conditions to be met "we will choose the town hall which will have the best project and with a real involvement, therefore in the infrastructure, the volunteers, who will put the means".
- Establishment of creative workshops by people in integration, accompanied by a professional in computer graphics, communication brochures on the project: for the call for applications from town halls, for the call for applications from artists and craftsmen.
- Proposal to participate in meetings and workshops of creation of works, with craftsmen.
- Organization of cultural activities to raise public awareness of crafts: organization of film screenings on crafts, conferences with professionals, presentation in media libraries of books dedicated to crafts.
- Taken initiatives directly by APP learners, who participate in the organization of the symposium, to share their passions by launching several competitions on the occasion of the symposium: a drawing contest and a photo contest.
- Implementation of regular reflective practice workshops to take stock of the skills that have been mobilized during the various activities.
- Documentation of the project with photos, reports of meetings, sheets to feed the press.

#### Dynamic communication on the project with the actors of the territory, even at the national level

- Regular update of the AAISC website to present the symposium in an interactive way.
- Information from key actors, then word of mouth phenomenon that made the project grow (see documentary film on the organization of the symposium in the UNhandbook "Cultural Learning Territories").
- Media meetings and publication of articles in the local press.

#### Valorization of the project and of people

- The municipality of Chalais has enhanced the works created by installing them on the path linking the lower town to the upper town.
- Work to formalize the acquired experience of the young people who created the artistic work and the learners who participated in the organization of the symposium project as part of the Apprenant Agile device, through the validation of APP badges for the recognition and enhancement of the skills mobilized (see video of Célia in the UNhandbook "Cultural experiences and self-training").

### **CULTURAL PROJECT WITH THE APP OF MARQUETTE-LEZ-LILLE**

Reflective study on the implementation of a cultural project, inviting all stakeholders to become aware of what is at stake and the lessons to be learned for the deployment of this type of practice.

*See also UNhandbook "**Cultures and Learning** or how to integrate the cultural dimension at the core of its pedagogical activities".*

Participatory action research with the APP of Marquette-Lez-Lille is part of a recurring practice within this APP, namely, the programming and organization each year of a cultural project and more generally within the framework of specialized prevention actions, training, social and professional integration, in an approach of global care of the person carried out by the FCP association.

For the record, originally, the Foyer de Culture Populaire (FCP) of Marcq-en-Barœul was founded in 1956 by Louis Dooghe, a great figure in the world of popular education. Through this initiative, Louis Dooghe is promoting a dynamic of educational work close to the principles of street social work and the implementation of permanent construction sites (integration schemes around the building and cleaning trades). He created the pre-training workshop of Marquette lez Lille in 1977 with Denise Choquet, to launch the first actions to fight against illiteracy. Today the acronym FCP translates into Prevention Culture Training.

The specialized prevention of the FCP, carried out in accordance with the founding texts, aimed at intervening on the processes of social marginalization and fragility faced by young adults and their families, is played out in three sectors (Métropole Nord-Ouest (MNO), Lille-Lomme and Seclin-Wattignies). It includes a system specific to early school leaving, a housing service and permanent construction sites.

Training activities are provided by the pre-training workshop, in compliance with its APP specifications and in an educational approach to the overall care of people, accompanied by a multidisciplinary team, composed of trainers, specialized educators, specific referents (RSA - Revenu de Solidarité Active, PLIE - Local Plan for Integration and Employment, YEI - Youth Employment Initiative) and other specialists in psychology, speech therapy, psychomotricity, social education, cultural mediation and territory coordination.

The actions carried out by the FCP association have included, for twenty years, a specific component of integration through culture, which has gradually become a transversal action at the service of cultural and civic openness and social cohesion.

The beneficiaries of the cultural projects organized within the framework of the FCP are potentially all the audiences that the FCP is accompanying, namely, mainly audiences with difficulties in integrating other training structures, hence the name "pre-training".

- young people with major social or justice issues, including NEETs
- people in great precariousness, such as homeless people
- marginalised audiences, e.g. Travellers
- people with an immigrant background

Because cultural projects are implicitly integrated into the framework of a global care of the person within a training course at the FCP, the implementation of this type of action requires the involvement of a diversity of actors of the territory, whose nature can be financial, political, pedagogical, or relational ...

- Financing of the Hauts de France region
- Financing of vocational/continuing training
- Funding for specialized prevention
- Financing of the city of Lille for the FCP branch, its permanent language training workshop on the Faubourg de Béthune district in Lille (APLI)
- Partnerships with schools to promote the accompaniment of families by educators of street social work and specialized prevention
- Partnership with a culture-integration mediator and territorial coordination, within the framework of membership of a network, the CRIC (Collectif des Réseaux Insertion Culture:

www.cricnord.fr), and a mission funded by the Nord department, to make culture a transversal action.

The Art-Connection action research therefore starts on the basis of a recurring practice within the FCP, namely, the programming and organization each year of a cultural project, coordinated by Corinne Gosset.

Corinne Gosset belongs to the Collectif des Réseaux Insertion Culture (CRIC) and as such ensures territorial coordination as a culture-integration mediator within the FCP, with whom she maintains privileged relations.

Every year, she has been setting up, for many years, cultural projects based on artistic practices.

Over the years, a small nucleus of people who have become "regulars" of the cultural projects organized by Corinne Gosset, mobilizes regularly.

#### Summary of the steps involved in launching a cultural project within the FCP

- At the end of each year, Corinne Gosset organizes a brainstorming session with all interested parties, in order to collectively reflect on the theme and define the direction of the project to be carried out for the following year. In general, she launches the first ideas and all people are invited to give their opinion, or propose other ideas. A new project always includes people who have already experienced a previous project and who themselves mobilize new people.
- At the end of 2020, the meeting took place, and everyone spoke.
- The cultural project is always born from a dynamic of constructive exchanges, in a collective including people who have already experienced several cultural projects.
- At the end of this phase of discussion, brainstorming, debate and negotiation to decide on the cultural project to be carried out for the year 2021, and also thanks to word of mouth between learners, 18 people registered, including a majority of women from illiteracy.

**METHODOLOGICAL SHEET OF ANIMATION TO ORGANIZE A CULTURAL PROJECT** (concrete example of the launch of the cultural project for the collective creation of an illustrated booklet to discuss the theme of discrimination).

#### Writing of the story and production of the storyboard by the group engaged in the project

- At the 2020 brainstorming session with a group of volunteers to identify the new cultural project to be carried out in 2021, the group wanted to start with an imaginary creation, through writing, and illustration. Part of the group was groping, between the desire to make plastic art but also the desire to make puppets. After much debate, the group finally opted to work on discrimination using comics as a medium of expression. The group was keen to work on the theme of discrimination. The group also wanted to reproduce what had been done in another cultural project (SNOO), namely to create a reading medium that they could use to enter into negotiations with schools and other structures and propose an animation around living together, with other audiences in the neighborhood, children, ...
- Collective exchange workshop to identify the different forms of discrimination "what is discrimination? what forms can it take?". Deepening of certain scenes of discrimination that will be more specifically illustrated in the chosen story "in what place is discrimination? what is the situation?".

- Collective workshop to reflect on the way we create the characters of a comic book and then work on the life of the characters of the story.
- Creation of the main character: "Who is your main character? how do you see it? This character will therefore be confronted with scenes of discrimination, what will be his positioning? will he be a victim? a spectator? an active person? " each time the group chooses and positions itself collectively.
- Collective creation of the scenes of the story: the group composes a story built with bits of life of each, situations lived, feelings, that they bring back in a story that they build collectively, through the exchange and the debate "I lived this, hold we could take that, and I ... ». Gradually, the group creates and imagines the characters, the places, the scenes of life, the scenario.

#### Once the script is determined, move on to writing.

- Writing the story: they tell first orally, then construction of sentences. They must themselves elaborate their sentences collectively "there is one who elaborates, one who comes to add, another who comes to add, I tell them that is French, that is not too French, there I tell them you are sure it sounds good like that? and they see again collectively." It is a work of argumentation, communication, listening; knowing how to listen to others and accept the ideas of others requires a great effort that triggers the mobilization of all transversal skills continuously.
- The story created by the group tells the story of a 17-year-old girl named Emma. Emma will be confronted with 4 forms of discrimination, those chosen by the group, namely: racial, male-female, disability and physical. Emma is a high school student. It will be both a spectator and a stakeholder in these different forms of discrimination. Emma is a young girl who lives in the countryside. She chose to change schools because she chose an option in her final year. She will therefore pass her baccalaureate, in a new establishment in which she is confronted with several things. Initially she is rather spectator and gradually she will react in different situations. It starts with a barbecue scene at the parents' house before the start of the school year, and it ends again in a barbecue scene at the parents' house when she has chosen her professional project: she decides to become a lawyer in international law because all these scenes of discrimination have particularly affected her.

#### Realization of the graphic production by the group engaged in the project

- Once the story is written, framing by the artist of the graphic production and distribution of illustration tasks.

#### Valorization of the project and formalization of acquired experience

## **METHODOLOGICAL SHEET TO INTEGRATE THE CULTURAL DIMENSION INTO ITS PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES** (see also the UNhandbook "Cultures and Learning")

### Engage in knowledge of the territory, audiences and regional devices

- Get to know your cultural territory, develop and maintain a cultural network, create links. Start small and develop gradually, do not be too ambitious right away.
- Being on the lookout for the cultural offer, which requires being curious, being interested in the cultural programs that come out, going to cultural places, taking the brochures, looking at the posters.
- Be on standby with regard to the new devices that exist, as soon as something is put in place, go ask questions, take an interest in the offer, meet the actors in charge of these devices, go see on the internet.
- Be on standby with regard to funding.

### Mediate towards cultural openness with supervisory professionals

- Support teams towards cultural awareness by making them live cultural experiences and by listening to and taking into account their feelings, their questions in the implementation of cultural activities in the professional context.
- Propose a learning to the cultural life by mobilizing these educators on the cultural outings with their families and their learners. This prior awareness allows the educators to live cultural experiences outside their professional field, to personally discover their effects, to discover learners differently and facilitates engagement and investment in collective projects.
- Propose to educators to get personally involved in cultural activities with their learners.
- Gradually integrate cultural action into training activities. Start on small things and develop gradually. Work with writers, theaters to carry out actions around reading, which allows the team to see the impact that culture can have in training actions.
- Invest in pedagogical engineering work to create or pool common tools.

### Stimulate and develop partnerships with local stakeholders

- Create links with the world of entertainment, associations and cultural institutions.
- Do network meshing. Meet the actors of the cultural world, make links with educational objectives, for example, make the link between the cultural objectives of promoting children's literature and the pedagogical objectives of preventing illiteracy
- Launch experimental actions with volunteers. Example of an experiment carried out: working on the reading of albums to bring back young people who had been failing at school in relation to reading, in a rewarding position by allowing them to lead reading workshops for children in a school.
- Be in a dynamic of co-construction with the stakeholders of the territory. A cultural project is a collective project and not a project owned by a person.
- Possibly, support structures in setting up cultural projects, including the search for funding.

### Financial engineering, finding financing for actions

- Carry out audit work with target audiences to open budgets on cultural actions.
- Carry out an analysis and research of the sources of funding on its territory to develop cultural actions.

### Evaluate projects in a reflective approach

- Always plan evaluation times of a cultural project that has been carried out, organize a debriefing to reflect on what has worked, what has not worked, why, and learn each time from these evaluations to develop cultural projects in training actions.
- Accept to get out of your comfort zone, be in constant rehabilitation, not remain frozen, compartmentalized, have an open mind.
- Work in participatory research-action mode to perceive the interest of cultural projects, particularly in actions of literacy and combat illiteracy.

### Good mood: a real hook!

- Develop pleasure at work and good mood in the proposed activities.
- Broaden the learning objectives to the notion of pleasure and the valorization of the other.

## **2.1.3 Some lessons from APapp action research**

### **AT THE MICRO LEVEL:**

Impact of the cultural entry on the beneficiaries to bring out the individual creative skills favoring a positive attitude conducive to the openness to the other, to the world, to the development of cultural competences and social cohesion.

- a lever to capture and hang up young dropouts (NEETs) and an engine for accelerating results in terms of learning "for example, a theater activity will make it possible to work differently on communication and promote expression" or positive outcomes such as find a job,
- a lever to create links, remove prejudices, fight against isolation, remove obstacles and overcome fears in the context of social and professional integration,
- a lever to boost the development of transversal skills, to dare to express oneself and argue, through the valorization and strengthening of self-esteem and self-confidence,
- a hook like any other to bring people back to training in the fight against illiteracy and a tool to fight against illiteracy "it makes it possible to approach the written word differently through activities that rely on imagination, sensitivity, listening and self-expression; entry is no longer focused on the learner's academic difficulties but on his skills, his history, his experience",
- a tool to trigger the pedagogy of the project and allow the person to be part of an active dynamic with actions that make sense for himself and for others and to act thus on professional integration and social cohesion,
- A tool to address all the themes of our society and put them into debate in a peaceful way and facilitate living together.

### **AT THE MESO LEVEL:**

Impact of cultural entry on pedagogical teams.

- A lever to enhance teams, foster interpersonal ties and strengthen a corporate culture.
- A tool to develop the feeling of contributing to a more inclusive society within the framework of lifelong learning.

What conditions to be met, what pedagogical principles to be respected, what knowledge-capacities and individual and collective skills to be mobilized by the Cultural Connectors?



- Dare to go beyond the formal framework and reintroduce the notion of the pleasure of learning and reinventing oneself.
- Be creative, be curious, have a mind always awake, be in a great open mind and not put barriers, know how to adapt, hack, be whole, passionate, fully invested and dynamic.
- Build open devices to promote creativity and a favorable pedagogical situation to give meaning to learning objectives in a global and transdisciplinary approach (heterogeneity and diversity of audiences, differentiation, multimodality, active pedagogy, learning through action and reflective practice).
- Knowing how to adopt a facilitator positioning to guide, respect people's choices, possibly rectify but never do in the place of the learner, what is produced must be produced directly by the participants.
- Be in a pedagogical positioning of valorization towards learners to promote confidence, by valuing the successes of people, by helping them to become aware of their abilities and the skills they mobilize, through the analysis of lived situations or from the actions and activities proposed. Valorization allows boldness and surpassing.
- Be a force of proposal and mobilizer, know how to maintain a link with the public to encourage their involvement in projects and their commitment to learning.
- Develop active listening skills and take an authentic interest in target audiences. Use the technique of explanation to remove obstacles, prejudices, a feeling of rejection.
- Learn to find the right language for different types of audiences, including audiences in situations of illiteracy or in great difficulty, and for different learning situations, so that no one in a group ever feels in a situation of failure or devalued.
- Integrate the different rhythms and times of learning into its pedagogical engineering.
- Organize debriefing and evaluation times of actions in a reflective approach, either in individual interviews or during collective workshops, giving everyone the opportunity to express themselves on the interest of the action-activity and what it has brought him.
- Document learners' follow-up files and help formalize acquired experience.
- Know how to mobilize your own transversal skills.
- Be able to lead workshops adapted to adult audiences in literacy and / or not understanding the French.
- Know how to adopt a position of valorizer also vis-à-vis his colleagues or partners. Have a sense of team spirit, be available, listen, recognize the skills of your colleagues. This valuation is a source of fulfillment in the work. This valuation also allows some to dare to embark on activities sometimes for the first time or to do things that might seem a priori difficult or even impossible, for example to get involved with a collective, to talk about oneself and an extraprofessional passion in front of other people.
- Rely on people on the team who already have a cultural sensitivity to make mayonnaise take with the rest of the team.
- For the project leader, know how to delegate and involve the members of the pedagogical team to give everyone the opportunity to take their place and have autonomy in the project. Be in the sharing of skills and work in partnership with colleagues to ensure that learners are effectively taken into account in their entirety and in transdisciplinarity.
- Understand that it is essential to find pleasure in work and learning, to be in a good mood, because it is unifying and it is what allows to let go of the pressure of everyday life, to create a positive and constructive dynamic.

- Having a sense of human encounter and humanist values means questioning, being benevolent, being in an active listening, seeking to really understand what interests the beneficiaries, what they need, what are their difficulties in a global approach. In particular, for the artist involved in the project, to be able to change his positioning and know how to get out of his place as a writer, sculptor, painter, cartoonist, photographer, singer, theater actor, which allows him to transmit extraordinary things.
- To be in a reflective approach, to question oneself, to question one's practice, what has worked, what has not worked and why, to question oneself, to learn from each mistake, to show sincerity in the vision of oneself, always seek to improve one's practice. Accept criticism of the other and hear what went wrong.
- Keeping a child's soul, seeing the beauty of human-focused professions, cultivating a positive mind, always believing in what you do and surrounding yourself with people to trust.
- Dare to exercise his critical and ethical sense in the respect of his values and his commitments.
- Develop a specific sensibility of arts and culture. Have personally experimented with several artistic practices to be better aware of what this type of practice can bring to lifelong learning.

### **AT THE MACRO LEVEL:**

What are the keys to success?

#### Investment logic and long-term vision to learn to work together and in complementarity

- Be in a co-construction approach with all the actors of the territory, involve its partners, adopt a positioning of openness, flexibility and active listening.
- Work in a network and partnership to build an adapted offer of proximity to people, especially in a rural territory. Go as close as possible to the populations in order to create a relationship of proximity and diversity of audiences.
- Leave a lot of room and flexibility to field agents and allow them to exercise their creativity. Allow each stakeholder to find their place in the project.
- Understand and accept everyone's constraints, make compromises. Strive to always identify the added value and objectives of each structure in its field of competence.
- At the level of a training institution, take the cultural project to the level of management and make it an establishment project. Accept to take the risk of carrying out an action sometimes not fully funded from the outset.

#### A question of a network of trusting relationships above all!

- A cultural project of territory requires getting to know its partners and its target audiences.
- Working on the co-construction of dynamic, innovative and quality projects is always a question of relationship with committed people and trust.

#### Invest heavily in communication actions

- Develop clear communication tools in order to obtain the frank support of all stakeholders on the challenges of the project. Build common orils that correspond to the reality on the ground of each.
- Solicit the press.

### Take the time to build new habits, accompany change

- Be patient in the implementation of a collaborative project that requires constant calibration times. Give each stakeholder time to understand the project, do not go too fast.
- Use a participatory action research methodology as a means of accompanying change in the development of new educational practices and in particular to break habits in the orientation or prescription of training by top-down paths.
- Mediate cultural openness with stakeholders to give access to education to all audiences and not only to a certain elite.

### **CONSTRAINTS:**

The period of health crisis with COVID occurring from March 2020 has led to many constraints and delays in the implementation of cultural actions and events. The implementation of both projects has therefore been delayed. In both cases they were only able to start from March-April 2021 (instead of October 2020).

Difficulties in the relationship with the comic artist for the Marquette-Lez-Lille cultural project led to many cuts in the dynamics of the project and complicated the implementation of the project itself. 9 people disengaged from the project during a "failed" workshop with the artist. This also made it difficult to carry out the enhancement of the project, which could only take place in May 2022.

This type of project requires a lot of professionalization at the level of the pedagogical teams.

The start-up of this type of project is necessarily long and requires a lot of energy to devote to coordination and financial engineering. As long as the project is not understood, the actors do not mobilize and the turnover of the employees of the different structures makes it difficult to monitor and continue the actions. It is necessary to organize many meetings to mobilize the team that will carry out the project; it is necessary to meet individually all the actors whose very busy schedules make it difficult to meet collectively.

The bureaucratic constraints and the lack of global vision in the calls for tenders, highlighting essentially requirements in terms of profitability, make the prevent the fluidity of the training paths.

## **2.2 CULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE (ITALY)**

### **2.2.1 A brief theoretical frame**

Education in the arts and cultural heritage was considered by authors one of the key factors in the development of knowledge society and creative ability.

For instance, Marion Gruber (2009) found that arts and cultural heritage education hold great potential for encouraging greater participation, innovation, and creativity in learning. The cultural institutions should also provide services for communication and learning purposes.

Furthermore, the modern pedagogical functions of cultural and educational institutions in raising the moral culture of young people have been studied as an important field.

Italian research presented both the use of cultural heritage as a form of education and its application to young people.

The proposed action research, in fact, aimed to investigate the dimensions of culture and knowledge paths starting from the idea that culture, expressed in a tangible way in our cultural heritage and documented in historical archives, is able to create and promote the learning and self-directed learning process, also in non-formal education contexts

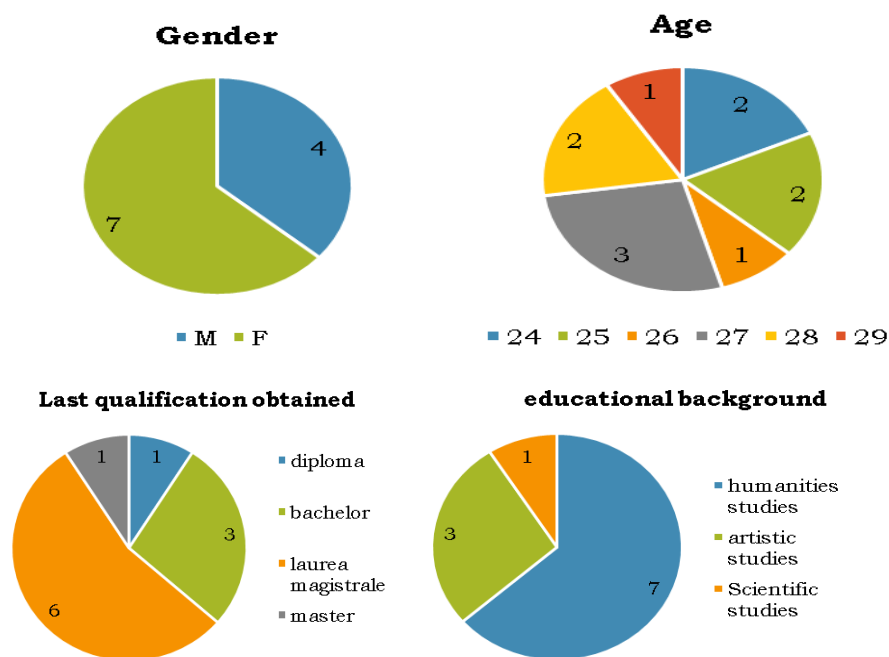
### **2.2.2 The context of the research**

Action research is a form of social research that holds knowledge, action and change firmly together and therefore emerges as an activity of cognitive investigation and transformative learning (Mezirow, 2003). It is strictly connected to a specific context and moves from real problems or issues to which a change or development is to be passed on. The relationship with a context is not empty (Tedeschi, 2005) but represents the place within which it expresses the social meaning and the place where the social actors act (Solivetti, 2001). The relationship with the reference context determines both the practical and situational character of action research in which the research design does include specific methodological issues characterized by a high degree of creativity and that are strongly contextual (Silverman 2000, Agnoli 2004). The research project took place starting from archival research within the Sturzo Institute in Rome, which since 1951, the year of its foundation, following the teaching of its founder Luigi Sturzo, deals with knowledge and culture in its many forms, thanks to a rich documentary heritage preserved in its historical archive and in the library, which today become the reference scenario of the project work as a place of non-formal learning for the group of young people in SCU (Servizio Civile Universale - UCS Universal Civil Service).

The choice of the group of UCS:

The choice of a group of 11 young people participating in the Universal Civil Service is based on the fact that UCS represents an opportunity for growth and training for the young people who join it. Furthermore, the choice of UCS participants in the role of the action research target group reflects all the main purposes of the action research itself, especially thinking at culture as a form of self-directed learning and development of skills. The young people engaged in the project faced up the opportunity to learn the techniques and use the tools of action research, and above all, the research process lead them to understand how culture is a vehicle and tool for personal development and social cohesion, as well as a form of self-directed learning of new skills: learning by doing.

The group had the following socio-demographic aspects, as we could note by the questionnaires:



## THE RESEARCH PATH AND ITS PHASES

The entire research path is structured in phases through which the action will be able to transfer contents and operate a deeper transformation in the way of thinking and doing, both for individuals and organizations synergistically.

The following research design is an adaptation of the model developed by Cunningham (1976; Quaglino, 2007), aimed at an essentially consultative approach with the model of Susman and Evered (1978; Quaglino, 2007) more oriented towards learning of the subjects involved in the action research, implying a cyclical approach in which research and learning outcomes influence the whole organization (see also D. Kolb's experiential learning model).

In this sense, research is a process where knowledge is developed through the observation and transformation of the experience that passes through some different learning stages (from perceptions of experiences, listening, observation, analysis and the organization to achieve experimentation) (Kolb).

The RAP has been activated in April 2021 and will end in November 2021, with a total duration of 8 months. Describing the main RAP phases, we have to consider the characteristics of research methods as overlapping and circular. In fact, the typical character of the qualitative research design must be considered as "emerging", since it develops and changes during the research process itself (Earlandson et al., 1993).

### Phase 0 – Planning (two months, April-May 2021)

This phase represents an important moment in order to organize and arrange the research tools forward the subsequent actions, including the arrangement of materials and the identification of the group in the UCS who will take an active part in the process. In this phase, the materials useful for starting the research and the tools to be given to the students at the beginning of the research work were prepared. Due to the current pandemic crisis, the planning will take into account the contingent

conditions in each phase, providing for any alternative action if the health restrictions would make the provisions not practicable.

## **Phase 1- Diagnosis of the issue and Goals (two months, June-July 2021)**

### **Defining the research problem**

This phase will be elaborated together with the group of UCS during the first meeting at the Sturzo's Institute in July 2021.

In this phase the students built the working group for the first time and became familiar with some concepts concerning the research work, starting from the themes to choose.

In this phase they were explained the phases of the work that you engaged them in the following months and what it means to take part in a participatory action research.

The main aim of this first meeting was both to share and co-build, at least in part, a work plan that should be useful, meaningful and self-representative for them, but also a work in which they will recognize a common vision. For this reason, in this phase it was necessary to work on the group development, also creating a mutual knowledge among the group, following these main steps:

- Start-up (training)
- Constitution (training)
- Description of objectives and research plan (training)
- Co-definition of the research key question problems (Inception)

At the end of the first meeting, the 4 working groups were set up, coinciding with the four working groups of the institutes involved in the research, deciding the themes gradually:

- Sturzo Institute (two boys)
- Basso Foundation (two girls)
- Murialdi Institute (4 boys)
- Sraffa's Center (3 boys)

At the end of the first meeting with the group of volunteers, a methodological tool useful for action research and final results was also administered: it consists in a self-assessment questionnaire useful for self-assessing and mapping one's skills and for tutors and useful in acquiring a starting point based on the final assessment of self-directed learning.

In this phase, the volunteers also participated in an online methodological training conducted by Dr. Eugenia Porro, lasting three hours, in which they explored the following topics:

- What is a participatory action research
- What are the main stages of a research design
- How to choose the right tools for the research process
- A focus on the in-depth interview and communication tactics
- A brief study on story telling with Prof. Antonia Liguori

In this phase of the work, the main research questions have already begun to delineate with clarity and to emerge, risen from both the main research settings and the work carried out with the group of young USC.

After defining the problem, we will proceed to answer some cognitive questions such as:

- Does culture allow learning and the transmission of knowledge?
- How does culture promote self-directed learning and the sharing of knowledge?

- How can culture be a means for personal and soft skills development?
- In addition to being a means of learning, does it also permit the development of skills useful also as a value in the job market?
- Is culture able to promote social cohesion and integration, also in an intercultural meaning?
- How can culture and self-directed learning bring out leadership skills?
- How is leadership representing a functional tool for disseminating and interpreting culture?
- How can culture be a means of gaining greater awareness of one's identity and history?
- How is the concept of European identity built? What are its founding elements?

Starting from this first meeting with the group and after the methodological lesson, the research design was carried out working on two levels:

1. Desk analysis (level 1). Documentation, self-training and benchmarking on the Sturzo archive, the Basso Foundation, Sraffa Institute and Murialdi Institute. It involves in-depth bibliographic research aimed at reconstructing the historical and socio-graphic antecedents (previous research), useful for locating the subject of the research and defining its context. The UCS volunteers' work followed some research themes guidelines: historical, economic and sociographic. Helped by the staff of the Sturzo Institute and their mentors in each institute, the young participants started to focus and to study in depth the chosen themes (leadership, citizenship, interculture, social inclusion, women history and participation, democracy and journalism, economic aspect of Italian and European identity).
2. Desk analysis (level 2). Structuring and subdivision of working groups on the basis of themes chosen by the students. In this phase, the working hypotheses will also be defined. They will also carry out, if possible, background research on the territory and the mapping of the chosen context.

### Goals

The proposed action research aimed to investigate the dimensions of culture and knowledge paths starting with the idea that culture is able to create and promote the process of learning and self-directed learning, even in non-formal education contexts. It also plays as a tool aimed at acquiring skills. In fact these skills are based on the implementation of tools, useful for demonstrating the effectiveness of the competency-based pedagogy paradigm (Masciotra, 2007).

One of the research objectives is also to feature the concept of culture through the lens of other transversal issues such as leadership, citizenship, intercultural and social inclusion, functional to the action research.

### Used methodologies:

- Bibliographic and archival research by UCS of eleven boys group
- Study of qualitative and quantitative research techniques
- Group building techniques
- Mentoring
- Qualitative questionnaire (only for UCS)

### Internal stage results:

- Improving the knowledge on bibliographic research tools
- Knowledge on qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Knowledge on tools and methodologies concerning facilitation and community projects
- Mentoring experience

## **Phase 2 - Action and implementation plan (2 months, July-August 2021)**

### Action plan for data collection

In this phase of the project, the actors involved in the process were asked to start concretely the action research work. In the face-to-face meeting held in July at the Sturzo Institute, the volunteers met for the second time and worked on the research design.

After an initial initial briefing and some team working techniques aimed at establishing roles and identities within each working group, the students divided into groups and began to define their research work following the proposed scheme:

- Title and themes
- Goals
- Methodological tools
- Articulation of the project
- Expected results

At the end of the meeting, the volunteers had developed four posters outlining the research process and the subsequent steps of the research, both at a chronological and procedural level.

This can be considered as a crucial phase of action research because the starting point is also for the next field experimentation in which "the dynamic and social development potential was put into action" considering Kurt Lewin's point of view. In this moment also the interventions that emerged during the initial and preparatory phase were well organized and implemented.

In this phase, the students of the UCS drove and experimented their own action research, using different techniques and qualitative methodologies.

On the one hand, the students continued to carry on the work on the archives helped by their mentors and at the same time to build their final research works, following the scheme indicated in the meeting phase, creating and co-creating their product.

For example, some have begun to think and realize in-depth interviews addressed to privileged and significant witnesses, others have begun the experimentation of storytelling techniques, and some others to study editing techniques including archival material or photographic ones. Among the objectives to be pursued also the use of creativity and previous skills shared with the group, functional to the development of action research.

The action plan aimed to create:

- A team building, illustration of the project and the path that involves SCU GROUP (team building activities for any subgroups that will then work together, preparation of materials and tools
- Group work to issue participants' imaginaries (participatory research and peer education
- Individual interviews with privileged and key witnesses
- Storytelling

### Implementation

Considering the specific characteristics of the action research, implementation may include a redefinition of some steps of the previous point to accommodate any needs related to the group of participants. In fact, during this phase the volunteers were constantly followed and supported in the research work and in defining each step to be faced by the facilitators with online meetings, also



continuing in the mentorship work. The results of this phase were discussed with the interested parties at different times. Once the sharing activity was closed, it was necessary to dedicate time to understand, together with the interested parties, how to intervene for development and change. This phase also included mentoring and peer tutoring activities.

The learning outcomes that inevitably emerged from this stage are themselves material to be considered for research.

*Acquired knowledges and learnings of the internal phase results by a methodological point of view:*

- How to do in-depth interviews
- How to transcribe interview
- How to edit videos

**Phase 3 Evaluation (2 months, September-October 2021)**

The evaluation phase aims to collect and present the fruits of the research work in the field. At the end of this moment the effects of the actions taken were also evaluated. It was useful for this purpose and to gather the opinions of the students on the work done and on some general cognitive dimensions to organize a focus group that took place at the Sturzo Institute in September. This third phase of the research work was the most demanding from the point of view of the work and it was developed on three main phases:

- Focus group with the group of volunteers
- Conclusion and presentation of the final works of the entire action research process
- Data collection of research materials

▪ **The focus group with the group of volunteers**

The two-hour focus group made it possible to investigate the main cognitive dimensions of the research path, the skills acquired and the perception of learning and the self-directed learning process experienced in sharing skills in groups among young people thanks to peer education mechanisms.

In fact, the following directives were followed in the track of the focus, which also represent the main cognitive dimensions that have moved the entire action research process:

- Focus on the Research: Initial context and research problems.
- Focus on methodology:
- Which methodology was used or tested and evaluation of the perception of the participatory path.
- The perceived and expected results, focusing in particular on:
- What individual and collective competences were mobilized and developed during the research by the target group
- The judgment and perception of the work of facilitators and mentors in designing a learning and self-directed learning work
- Individual development of collective skills
- How culture allows the emergence of individual creative abilities that promote a positive attitude conducive to openness to others, to the world and to people, social, professional and economic development
- A personal reflection on participatory action and research as sources of social innovation.
- The conditions for successfully replicating participatory action and research (in a similar context)
- What difficulties the volunteers encountered and what challenges they faced

### ▪ **The research outcome**

During the third phase of the research work, the students worked specifically to systematize the work carried out and in the creative development of the outputs as, also in view of the final presentation phase. The facilitators and mentors in the institutes followed and supported them in their work, letting them work independently, following their own attitudes and, if necessary, leaving them the freedom to modify and intervene on some formal aspects of the final work. Finally, they presented their work during a dissemination meeting organized at the Sturzo Institute on November 12, 2021, in the presence of their mentors / oip, facilitators, stakeholders. During the meeting, each group showed the final product of the research process, in digital format and explained the most significant aspects of the work done. The documentary sources of the archives of the four institutes and the work of digitization constituted the main sources of the research paths that present the following themes: The municipality of Paris, in the work carried out by the Lelio and Lisli Basso Foundation, with Maria Chiara Garasto and Ileana Amadei; 1949-1989. Birth of a Western Democracy for the Luigi Sturzo Institute, with Pietro Bonaccio and Vanessa Cordisco; La voce del Palchetto, for "Paolo Murialdi" Foundation on Journalism, with Federico Cava, Marco Roberti and Francesca Nardi; Research and culture without borders, for the "Piero Sraffa" Research and Documentation Center, with Angelo Bianchi, Michela Bonifacio, Martina Vacca and Roberto Chiodo. The girls of the Basso Foundation created a video in which the vintage photographs and the prints of the Basso's archive were mounted with their narrative voices in the background, in order to describe important historical passages of the Municipality through the iconographic symbolism present in the prints. The volunteers of the Sturzo Institute have built an exhibition-itinerary, told by the voices of the volunteers of the Civil Service, which crosses the premises of the Institute, showing its wonderful structure and the precious documentation collected here. The boys of the Murialdi Institute have instead created the first page of a newspaper which can also be accessed via a qr code, in which important news of the Italian journalistic and its journalistic heritage is reported, made even more creative by another newspaper page in which they invented a hypothetical dystopian future of Italian history. Finally, the boys of the Sraffa Center have made a documentary video in which two great personalities of Italian economic history were described, Pietro Sraffa and Angelo Garignani, told in an interview with Attilio Trezzini, professor of Roma Tre and scholar of Sraffa and Garignani.

### ▪ **The data collection of research materials**

At the end of this third phase of work, the data were collected and transcribed to be classified and to analyze qualitative and quantitative materials. All the material collected was systematized to be monitored at the end of the research by the facilitators.

The available materials are:

- Materials of the group building meetings
- The transcription of the focus group
- The transcript of all in-depth interview
- Survey data
- Logbooks, sketchbooks

This moment is functional to reduce the complexity of the material and the amount of evidence collected (Gianturco, 2009) and useful for delineating the macro-areas of thematic analysis relating to the themes that emerged during the research in the field.

#### **Phase 4 - Learning (2 months, October-November 2021)**

In this phase we proceeded identifying the general principles of the research and trying to answer the research key questions (formulation of the research problem). To do this, a triangulation procedure of the data collected during the work and convergence between the sources will be implemented. Furthermore, at this stage it is important that the work done and the knowledge learned, shared, built, are brought to a wider level of generality to function as a model for the entire organization. In this case we validated the results of data collected on an analytical basis rather than a purely statistical one (Yin, 2011). This generalization criterion allows to evaluate the level of reliability and external validity of the project, understood in the sense of the external replicability and transferability of the contents and of the action research process.

Finally, a detailed description of the work carried out can be used to identify transferable “good practices” in similar situations.

In order to proceed with the validation and drafting of general guidelines that emerged from the research project, some in-depth interviews were also carried out for the OLP-mentors of the civil service in each institution involved.

The aim of the interviews was in fact: 1) to proceed with the comparison between the data that emerged in the work done by the volunteers by comparing what emerged in the opinions of the young boys and their mentors; 2) to investigate the macro dimension of research and therefore on stakeholders and understand the impact of the research process within the institutes; 3) to bring out further lines of development of the project.

The interviews were conducted with:

- Luigi Giorgi – Luigi Sturzo Institute
- Attilio Trezzini - Centro Sraffa
- Maurizio Locusta - Basso Foundation
- Margherita Martelli - Murialdi Center
- Paola Pati - Coordinator of the Arci Civil Service

#### **Internal stage results**

We proceeded to validate the initial research hypotheses and the success of the research project in terms of process and content, as well as the learning and skills acquired by the CS students. Preliminary criteria can be provided to guide the action research and the results collection phases using some criteria established in the reference literature (Yin, 2011; Lincoln and Guba, 1985):

| <b>CRITERIA</b>            | <b>TECHNICS</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Problem Validation</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The convergence and triangulation of the information collected during the first and the second phases (the theories and initial research hypotheses will be compared with both literature and archival research)</li></ul> |
| <b>External validation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replication and comparison: We will evaluate whether the path can be replicated in other similar situations and contexts.</li></ul>  |

| CRITERIA  | TECHNICS   |
|---|--|
| <b>Generalization</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferability: whether the research can be transformed into good practices</li> </ul>   |
| <b>validity of the skills and learning gain</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The self-assessment tests collected during the first and the second phases</li> <li>• Focus group</li> <li>• Final peer de briefing activities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Validity of the final outcome</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Result of the final outcome in terms of communicability, creativity, group collaboration.</li> </ul>  |

### 2.2.3 Main results

From the data that emerged during the action research work and from the materials collected, together with the focus group and the in-depth interviews carried out with the PLOs of the project, some guidelines for the analysis of the results were outlined. We proceeded by considering the expected results indicated in the research design compared with most significant data.

#### **Cultural heritage, history and cultural values: the importance of social cohesion and active citizenship**

Beyond the research path itself, Art Connection meant for the young people who took part in it, above all, to be an active part of a journey of discovery and rediscovery of values and historical and cultural roots of our country. Through archival research, they had the opportunity to work in direct contact with our cultural and historical heritage, with the Italian and European social memory.

This also means taking part in a process of reflection and self-reflection on one's roots, being active protagonists of a path and being closer to current events and therefore being the engine of a change that leads them to be more reflective, develop a critical conscience, better understand the past to improve the future of the next generations.

Thanks to Art Connection this year the young people have followed this path in a different way than in previous years, because they have done it as a greater awareness: they have understood that they can be an active part and the added value of work on cultural heritage that does not want simply say you speak and digitize documents automatically.

*On the meso level* of research, this theme has also played a fundamental role for the cultural Institutes involved. The promotion of social cohesion, - which becomes also a vehicle for active citizenship -, has allowed the Institutes to further enhance the civil service paths in the institutions, also being able to learn ways to better tell their heritage with more creative tools and with a language closer to young people.

The added value of this step lies in the fact that the path of Art Connection has allowed cultural institutes to adapt more and more to modern times and to reach citizenship, especially reaching the new generations.

This therefore means making sure that our cultural heritage is not just a heritage destined for experts, professors and lecturers, but that it can include everyone, especially young people.

*On the macro level*, this process affects the local community and the community in a broader sense: This work allows cultural heritage to be transmitted outside the institutions and to be disseminated in a simpler and more innovative way, relying on a more creative language that reaches young people and also helps cultural institutions to open up.

On a social level, this also means opening new channels for transmitting cultural heritage and making sure that culture is increasingly at the service of all, as a good that everyone must be able to enjoy. This shows that culture is on the one hand a vehicle for acquiring skills but also as a means of activating social cohesion and active citizenship.

### **Results - Micro level**

The main results of the micro level of research emerged by the focus group with the target group, (eleven universal civil service volunteers), on the 8th of September 2021. During the focus group, several interesting dimensions emerged for the purposes of the discourse concerning the research. Volunteers describe their civil service path and consequently the research process as an important form of learning and a way to exchange skills and competences, especially as regards the cultural skills of the archival and historical-cultural sector. The group considered this path "fascinating" and "stimulating" because it put them in contact with a world and an environment like that of archives and cultural institutes that they would not have been able to know otherwise. They underline the importance of the document digitization process both as a form of cultural competence and acquisition of digital competence, but also as regards the practical and methodological aspect of this work: "it allows to have knowledge not only theoretical but also practical, capable of learning to move in this hitherto unknown sector". From all this, therefore, the importance of both the cultural dimension emerges as a theoretical learning process, but which also allows the development of practical and methodological skills.

Three areas of description of the focus group results can be broadly defined, starting from a macro to a micro level:

Macro level: The importance of individual and collective skills: in this sense the students indicate the main competences acquired, dividing them into three areas:

- The individual ones: methodological skills, digital skills (i.e. the use of specific software), archive research skills.
- Collective skills: team building and group building competences through the division into tasks and roles inside each small group.
- Soft skill: the importance of creativity.

Meso level: the skills that represent the relationship between facilitators or mentors in the self-directed learning process of skills and knowledge. In volunteers' opinion the professionals support and help the group during the whole action research process, supporting them in the creation of the group and in the preparation of the final product, also through remote work and through face-to-face meetings.

Micro level: the relationship of learning and self-directed learning within the group and working groups. They support their peers by both exchanging information and materials useful for research and to build the final product. For example, they proposed to exchange useful images to other groups during the archive search phase.

## Innovations and key success factors

The students also believe that the experience of school and research allows them to "create skills", learning from teamwork and their personal approach to work in cultural institutes. In this sense, they insist above all on the KNOW-HOW dimension as part of a process that starts right from the universe of knowledge.

Specifically, the students believe that the research work allowed them to focus on a specific theme and to deepen it, "perhaps going to dwell on documents that initially they had only digitized and put aside" and "make some personal reflections on historical documents".

The group of volunteers described their involvement and the main objectives achieved during the meetings. These have been summarized in the following image. It is interesting to note how the expected objectives correspond perfectly with those perceived and reported by the students: the themes of the research that represent sharing, culture, citizenship and creativity emerge.



## Constraints

Due to the current pandemic crisis, they couldn't do meetings in presence, most of the meetings took place online and this did not allow them to fully share the work, especially in the ongoing phase. Besides, they initially encountered difficulties in identifying the themes towards which to direct the research and in the work done in locations located one from the other. Besides, they argue that it would probably be better to work on a single theme rather than four different themes.

## Meso level - results

We can consider the meso level results of all those elements concerning the results with an impact on the local communities and cultural institutes, our target beneficiaries, the professionals involved in the research.

In this meaning, the most important results concern the development of culture as a vehicle for learning and self-learning. These aspects emerged especially in the use of mentoring and peer educational tools such as team building and work building experiences.

For this reason the group of eleven volunteers took part in two main face to face meetings in which they experienced techniques of group working and team building.

At the end of the meetings (30th of June 2021 and 14th of July 2021), the volunteers completed two evaluation tests (in a questionnaire form): an initial one (phase 1) and a final one (phase 3). The results that emerged in the questionnaires allowed us to fully understand the impact of the techniques used and the collective experiences lived by the students, what skills they expected to acquire and how many they actually acquired at the end of the research process.

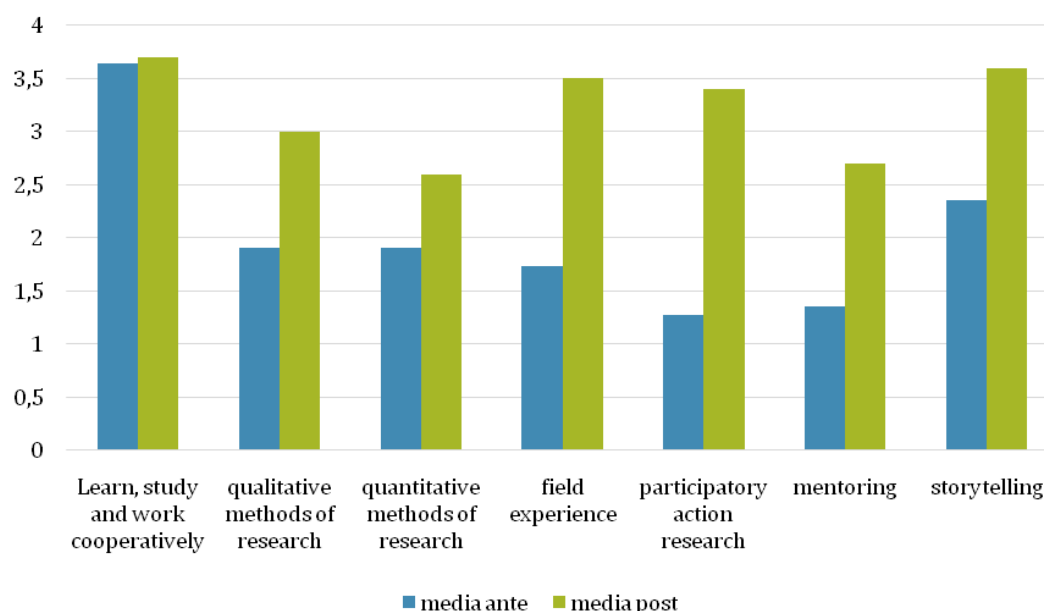
It is interesting to note which are the most significant responses of the group, for example to the question "What was the challenge that satisfied you the most?", the answers were:

- Videomaking
- Having made a final product whose result exceeded my initial expectations
- Get involved in the video making industry
- The process of designing which "final product" to make
- Collaborate
- Brainstorming with my mates
- Public speaking
- Create a qrcode
- Making a final product that reflects the extensive research work

**As regards the subject of skills, the volunteers answer the question "What skills do you think you have most acquired?" in this way:**

- Videomaking
- Storytelling
- A better understanding of the editing program
- Coordination and planning with colleagues
- Research methods
- Communication
- Creativity, working in a team
- Public speaking, digital storytelling
- Ability to use a new platform
- Expertise in archival research, in the field

In the graph below we also can see the self-assessment of the skills of the group before and after the research, with positive results on each item, especially "learn, study and work cooperatively":



### **Innovations and key success factors**

Cultural situations could be a "gate in" to allow the transition to a new paradigm of adult learning in order to encourage participation in cultural life in all its forms when they offer different perspectives on certain themes or serve to study the history of non-scholastic points of view. Or when they offer the practical possibility of putting new social practices into action. Also, creativity combined with cultural potential offers a paradigm shift.

## Constraints

The conditions of replicability of this kind of experience depends also on the economic conditions of the reference contexts. In the presence of these cases, in the same contexts it is possible to replicate and improve some dimensions of the research process, through the involvement of all the institutes and through the preparation of activities. The conditions are the presence of a group disposed in an organization and a contribution to the activities, the presence of resources from which one has such as archives and suitable software. For example, it would be possible to make some projects developed even more current through software that allow an innovative result such as immersive or digital reality.

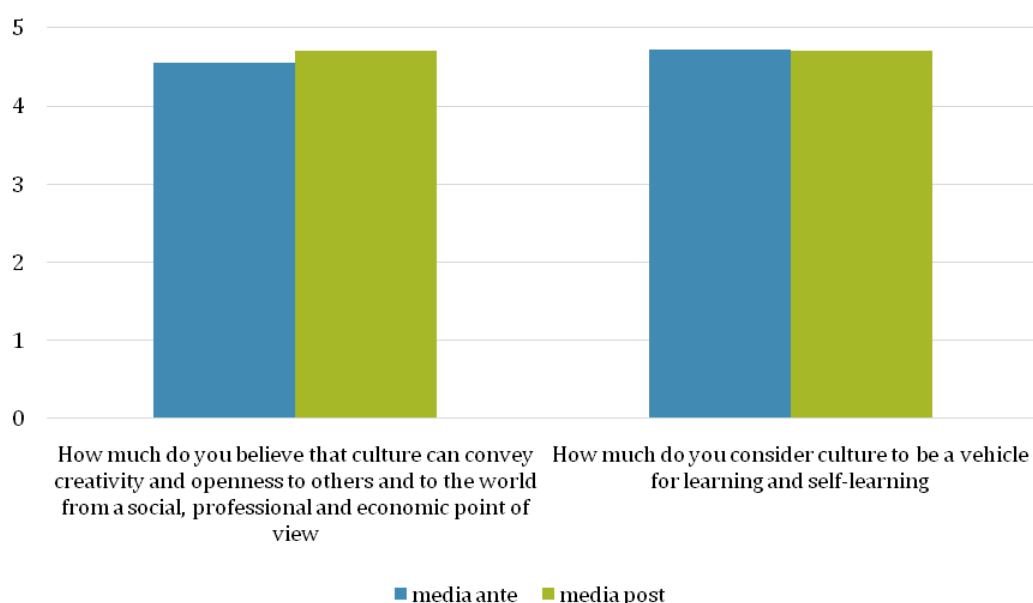
## Results - macro level

In this section we can consider the results concerning the impact of the action research on beneficiaries, the stakeholder emerged especially by deep interviews with the representatives of the cultural institutes.

### **Cultural heritage is able to construct political and educational strategies to develop learning cultural territories**

Culture is considered, by the organizations involved, as a trigger for the construction of educational strategies. The projects allow the implementation of some educational paths and change the cultural reality by triggering a reflection on what you do, in addition to the content it conveys, and allows you to share knowledge but, above all, to produce some replicable best practices. Educational and research projects also offer the opportunity to make cultural experiences happen in realities that usually seem closed and static to us, such as cultural institutes or archives. Being aimed above all at young people, as in the case of the Civil Service, they act as a bridge to connect realities outside the institutes, becoming forms of narration and self-narration of places and training experiences. In this way culture, transmitted through research projects, "makes me freer" and realizes the idea of a better society because it is made up of freer people and consequently triggers processes of political change in the community, not only for professionalization purposes.

In the two self-assessment tests administered to the students (before and after the research), we can see their consideration on the theme of culture that can be seen from the graphic below:





In addition, according to the interviews, the field research offers the possibility of triggering cultural changes. For example, the path of Art Connection gave the opportunity to convey and spread culture and cultural identity: Art Connection also represents a piece of knowledge transmission as it allows you to safeguard the memory of these people who represent Italian history even abroad. Therefore, culture shows itself as an expression of the present and conservation of memory: it allows us to implement paths of interest to understand the historical processes that are the basis of our historical present.

### **The social impact of cultural heritage: the hidden skill of active citizenship**

The realization of artistic works has a lot of importance, especially from a social point of view. According to the interviewed stakeholders, the impact role on the target is above all from a social and educational point of view. In fact, the projects make it possible to develop specific skills from a digital, information, relational and cultural point of view with a direct impact on the social level of the target audience. Thanks to the research path with the volunteers their competences are implemented by relational, interpersonal, social, communication, intercultural perspectives. In particular, the interviews show the possibility of developing, through cultural projects and also using the experiences of cultural heritage, the competence of active citizenship.

This is shown in the research paths in two ways: through practical non-formal education activities and the proposed themes and through the social values that are transmitted thanks to the projects.

In the first case, projects play a role in encouraging an active citizenship value for example by learning non-formal educational techniques such as active listening, communication skills, simulations, and role-playing games. These are not only theories, but also methodological practices useful in any work context and in social life. These are useful tools, for example, in developing empathy relationship skills, sharing values and knowledge, knowing how to work in a team, developing solidarity and social integration. Therefore, civic and relational skills represent also an experience of life learning, such as an approach to the world, a vision of one's social identity, and at the same time a professionalizing approach to the world of work and to the other.

In this sense, the research path shows to be able to promote civic skills as they are considered transversal skills that give posture and social identity, also fundamental in the field of work, in playing a professional role but above all in society.

Not at least, this aspect also concerns, for example, organizational culture since projects allow the development of skills in specific sectors of formal and non-formal learning and trigger processes of cultural activation in which the replicability of knowledge is sometimes also transformed into an opportunity for future work, especially because in some cases specific skills and training are required.

Not at least, this aspect also concerns the development of some specific skills about some formal and non-formal practices of learning and it can be also transformed into an opportunity for future work.

For example, the work on archives and cultural heritage presents all these aspects: the themes chosen by the students in the research works convey social contents and allow the transmission of memory and cultural identity, through the research work they were able to experiment working methods in which sharing, exchange and empathy have played a fundamental role and finally they have been able to learn working tools that are useful for the future of work and not.

if we consider active citizenship definition, "Active citizenship or engaged citizenship refers to active participation of a citizen under the law of a nation discussing and educating themselves in politics and society, as well as a philosophy espoused by organizations and educational institutions which advocates that individuals, charitable organizations, and companies have certain roles and responsibilities to society and the environment".

In the field research work on cultural heritage all these highlighted aspects are considered and above all, potentially, the possibility of using cultural heritage projects as a form of change in the community is hidden. Research paths, therefore, by promoting active citizenship connected to social reality and activities, allow at the same time to work on culture and cultural products, connecting to all social realities.

### **The importance of digitization to develop cultural skills and competences**

Thanks to the projects promoted by the cultural institutes involved, the archive research itself is a way to evaluate and learn this key competence. The research shows particularly the importance of the digitization of documents thanks to which archival materials are made available as sources of public utility. Thus, digitization is allowed thanks to the use of some specific software that demonstrates how digital skills are at the service of the octave one. They are very important because these works show and transmit our cultural heritage and at the same time allow it to be disseminated outside the institutional settings. Digitization can be compared to a creative process that allows the reproduction of historical memory and its conservation over time and history. The civil service, considered as training for adults, allows or carries out projects that promote culture and the memory of cultural heritage, carry out cataloging and archiving activities, also doing jobs that other employees may not have the time to do and acquire fundamental skills specific to that sector. The civil service is also a driving force for making heritage known and an opportunity for external visibility that leads to making that heritage known. There is essentially a relationship of reciprocity between organizations and targets: on the one hand, investment by the organizations for training and accompaniment throughout the learning process. Volunteers bring a cultural background and useful skills to organizations (digital skills that are not always already present in organizations), but they also acquire others along the way. So much so that at some point they almost manage to be autonomous in their work and therefore become an additional value, especially in cultural projects because they have additional skills compared to the organizations in which they work. In essence, these young people are a bridge of connection with the world of youth, "young people who tell other young people". They demonstrate how individual growth takes place through these works, which consequently contributes to collective growth.

Here is a basis for a similar participatory action research:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Title of the activity</b>                            | <b>CULTURE, CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL COHESION: the importance of the cultural heritage in the perspective of a civil service group.</b>   |
| <b>Topic, keywords</b>                                  | Cultural heritage, knowledge, creativity, Europe, European citizenship, learning and self-learning processes, culture, interculture, social inclusion, social cohesion, active citizenship.  |
| <b>Duration</b>   | 8 months   |
| <b>Brief background</b><br>(method behind the activity) | <p>The research was structured on the basis of a participatory Action research, a form of social research that holds knowledge, action and change firmly together and therefore emerges as an activity of cognitive investigation and transformative learning (Mezirow, 2003).</p> <p>It is strictly connected to a specific context and moves from real problems or issues to which a change or development is to be passed on. The entire research path is structured in phases through which the action will be able to transfer contents and operate a deeper transformation in the way of thinking and doing, both for individuals and organizations synergistically. The research design is an adaptation of the model developed by Cunningham (1976; Quaglino, 2007), aimed at an essentially consultative approach with the model of Susman and Evered (1978; Quaglino, 2007) more oriented towards learning of the subjects involved in the action research, implying a cyclical approach in which research and learning outcomes influence the whole organization (see also D. Kolb's experiential learning model).</p> <p>In this sense, research is a process where knowledge is developed through the observation and transformation of the experience that passes through some different learning stages (from perceptions of experiences, listening, observation, analysis and the organization to achieve experimentation) (Kolb).</p> |
| <b>Objectives</b>                                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to demonstrate whether culture could be a vehicle for learning and self-learning</li> <li>2. to demonstrate if culture is a vehicle for social cohesion and active citizenship</li> <li>3. to demonstrate if cultural heritage can be a way to transmit memory, history and cultural identities</li> <li>4. to demonstrate whether the learning and self-learning processes also work within non-formal education contexts</li> <li>5. to demonstrate how creativity in its various artistic expressions is a tool to communicate learning also externally, for example to the local community</li> <li>6. to learn to plan action research</li> <li>7. to learn qualitative and quantitative research techniques (interviews, focus groups, qualitative and quantitative questionnaires, participant observation)</li> <li>8. to learn group building and team building techniques</li> <li>9. to be able to evaluate the skills gained by the students during the project (through self-assessment tests)</li> </ol>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | 10. to learn to create a final outcome able to show the results of the action research   |
| <b>Impact</b> (indicators of success)                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Micro level:</b> satisfaction and personal involvement of the target group; Learning skills</li> <li>• <b>Meso level:</b> the positive feedback of the target group, respect of methodology steps (time, deadlines); the evaluation of the research works</li> <li>• <b>Macro level:</b> Satisfaction of Institutes involved and stakeholders; Repeatability of the project; creativity</li> </ul>   |
| <b>How many cultural developers are needed</b>                      | 3  |
| <b>Roles/capacity needed (mentoring, coaching...</b>                | Mentoring, peer education practices, team working, group working practices, doing deep interviews, cooperation, exchanging competences, knowledge on qualitative and quantitative research methods, developing a research project, collecting data and organizing materials , creating a multimedia product.   |
| <b>Level of trust needed for the implementation of the activity</b> | High level of trust.   |
| <b>Level of participation</b>                                       | Medium   |
| <b>Description/steps</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 0 – Planning (two months)</li> <li>• Phase 1- Diagnosis of the issue and Goals (two months)</li> <li>• Phase 2 - Action and implementation plan (2 months)</li> <li>• Phase 3 Evaluation (2 months)</li> <li>• Phase 4 - Learning (2 months)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Debriefing</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture can be the driving force of learning and self-learning processes</li> <li>• The participatory research can be a process to validate and recognize the knowledge acquired based on the development of the 8th competence in this kind of social and cultural environment.</li> <li>• the diversity of expression, creativity, appreciation, participation and realization of works of art impact especially on the social level of the target audience and of the institutes benefiting from the experience</li> <li>• culture expressed also through cultural heritage is a vehicle for the development of skills and peer education and knowledge</li> <li>• the diversity of expression, creativity, appreciation, participation and realization of works of art shows an impact on organizations working in the field of Adult Education;</li> </ul> |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural heritage can be a way to express and stimulate active citizenship</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Materials needed</b>              | Recordings, pc, pc software, stationery items.<br>Interviews, focus groups, team working and group working material tools, data collected, multimedia products.   |
| <b>Suitable environment to do it</b> | Formal and non-formal educational places (Cultural institutes, classrooms, etc..)   |
| <b>Comments, tips &amp; tricks</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The process is more important than contents and specific themes: In the research process it was not so much the themes to be developed that guided the volunteers but the process created the basis for the development of learning, self-learning and above all an exchange of skills and knowledge.</li> <li>- The research has brought out a “circular” learning scheme based on the exchange of skills and the sharing of talents and social values.</li> <li>- Participatory research allows the balance between top down and participatory training tools in which the tutor acts as a mentor who accompanies guiding the group and not imposing teaching methods.</li> <li>- This allows for the development of forms of self-learning and the emergence of skills in a natural, gradual and non-directive way.</li> <li>- The development and creation of a climate of trust between tutors and volunteers, inside civil service group and between volunteers and stakeholder or internal mentors allows for the creation of the background that stimulates training processes and the affirmation of skills.</li> </ul> |

## **2.3 CULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH SOCIAL STREET WORK PRACTICES (PORTUGAL)**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

Skills' training has a central role not only in economic development but also in sustainability and resilience of contemporary societies. The building of specific social and personal skills, aim to create the next generation of responsible and active citizens, 'capable' and 'trained' adults, who will have the flexibility to adapt to the demands of the labour market and society in general, but also to carry out the complex difficulties assigned to them as active citizens. In this way, the social diversity is recognized, as well as the need for continuous adaptation of people to the new developments.

The main focus of the participatory research, carried out by CAI and SwTI – Street work Training Institute, was to implement and Evaluate with Adult Learners targeted by them (Micro level), Social Street Workers (SSW) (Meso level), and Trainers of these Educators (SSW) (Macro level), with the aim to identify which are the skills that are needed to become a promoter of culture competence among their target populations, that means the skills for Cultural Connector's.

Working with these three groups, despite having different backgrounds and roles the study shows that are a common understanding what they are the soft skills needed for Cultural Connectors.

The literature is prolific demonstrating that increasing the use of learning methodologies connected with cultural competence impacts directly in vulnerable groups boost self-learning and social inclusion including the skills that allow them better access to the labour market and to be active citizens in their communities.

For a long time, the Social Street Work methodology used by the Education, Cultural and Social sectors aiming at social cohesion, has dedicated a special interest on learning strategies through cultural activities based on Intercultural Education, Non-formal education. The Social Street Educators as Cultural Connectors searching an educative relationship with their target population, using cultural background-based approach of their target populations – persons in vulnerable situation aiming to promote life skills. Using Art as an Educative tool they impact in their target population new learning Process approach that empower them to face some important issues, as NEET learners' condition, early dropout from the formal school, and antisocial behaviours, illiteracy or haven't enough learning path requested to integrate the labour market.

In the following sections, firstly we present the result of the discussion, in the three groups about the skills needed, considering the participants' perspectives and including their experiences stemming from their direct involvement in Social street work activities. Secondly, we provide some tools that can be used by Cultural Connectors details.

### 2.3.2 Results of the discussion about skills for Cultural Connectors

Our focus here is mainly on the development, enhancement and further promotion of basic *soft* skills through the working as Cultural Connector. First of all, it is important to sketch how skills were considered according to the conclusions of the three groups with whom we were working.

A skill has a tripartite structure: a. theory b. practice and c. aim (e.g., to intervene and change reality and identity). In light of this specific structure, we had identified some soft skills that are necessary to enable active social inclusion, especially working with people at risk as Cultural Connector.

Through the lens of soft skills, we will try to analyse the sayings of the participants in our study.

- **Communication:** language has a key role here; how to build an argument and discursive and persuasive strategies in general.

Being able to communicate effectively is perhaps the most important of all soft skills. It is what enables us to pass information to other people, and to understand what is said to us. It refers to the ability to transmit ideas, information and opinions clearly and convincingly both verbally or Non-verbal and in writing, while listening and being receptive to the proposals of others.

Communication is not the same as broadcasting, or simply sending out information. It is a two-way process. In other words, it involves both the sending and receiving of information. It requires both speaking and listening, but also – and perhaps more crucially – developing a shared understanding of the information being transmitted and received.

Therefore, this is an essential skill that cultural connectors should acquire in order to be able to build an argument as well as discursive and persuasive strategies when they are working with Adult learners. Moreover, they need to build up a program of promotion of soft skills that allow their target population to achieve the same goals, such as “to build an argument as well as discursive and persuasive strategies”, in order to empower them as active citizens.

All three groups considered that culture, in its all forms as included (theatre, music and dance performances, film screenings, workshops etc.) can be a great vehicle in order to craft communication skills between people.

Cultural Connectors beginning with, arts activities have the power to overcome the language barrier: drawing, painting, manual activities, dance & music, enable people to express their personality without using words. Starting from such a non-verbal communication base the adult learners not only can start building bridges among them, but also express themselves while feeling free and safe, so as to begin developing new verbal communication skills.

Furthermore, as language holds a key role in communication, there is persuasive evidence from practices around the world that participation in the arts can powerfully enhance literacy skills.

- **Cooperation/collaboration and networking:** team building; also, organizational skills, negotiation and conflict resolution are mentioned as part of this soft skill.

Collaboration means working together with one or more people to complete a project or task or develop ideas or processes. Being collaborative has several advantages such as problem solving and conflict resolution skills, self-analysis (becoming more aware of your strengths as well as your weaknesses) and organizational skills. Also, it involves sharing resources and knowledge, harmonising interests and contributing actively to reach the objectives of the organisation.

Most arts are collaborative by their very nature said the Social Street workers. They are about forging connections through sharing common interests and goals with colleagues and adult

learners. Through arts' workshops they practice working together, sharing responsibility, and compromising with others to accomplish a common goal. "When someone has a part to play in a music ensemble, or a theatre or dance production, we begin to understand that our contribution is necessary for the success of the group" conclude the adult learners group. Through these experiences they can gain confidence and start to learn that their contributions have value even if they do not have the biggest role.

Moreover, collaborative art projects often demand problem solving skills.

*'Art does not solve problems but makes us aware of their existence'*. M. Abakanowicz, sculptor said a trainer of Cultural Connectors. How then do the arts contribute to the skills of problem solving? "Simply put, by understanding the creative process we learn the process of problem solving by default" said a Social Street Worker.

Artistic creations are born through the solving of problems. How do I turn this clay into a sculpture? How do I portray a particular emotion through dance? How will my character react in this situation? Without even realizing people that participate in the arts are consistently being challenged to solve problems. All this practice problem solving develops skills in reasoning and understanding.

"Finally, considering the fact that arts are about building trust with those we work with" said a Social Street worker, emphasizing that is the goal that they as a professional want to achieve – build a trust relationship with their learners. "We also learn to weather challenges and disagreements constructively and proactively developing negotiation and conflict resolution skills. It is very useful and vital for us" said a learner from vulnerable social settings to develop the abilities: a. to manage conflict, which means stimulating, regulating or resolving conflict between two or more parties; b. to argue clearly and coherently and conciliate different opinions to reach an agreement that satisfies everyone with the aim of achieving the proposed goals.

- **Critical Thinking: Seeing beyond the obvious.** *'Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.'* (The Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Critical thinking is deliberately and systematically processing information so that you can make better decisions and generally understand things better. The above definition includes so many words because critical thinking requires the application of diverse intellectual tools to diverse information.

To put it in more simple words, critical thinking truly requires out-of-the-box thinking. Rather than just embracing and following blindly popular approaches, critical thinkers challenge the consensus. This means they often have to pursue less popular thoughts or approaches.

"So, if we think about it closely, critical thinking is an absolutely necessary component of creativity. Without it, how can the creative person continue to evaluate and improve upon his or her ideas?" conclude the group of Trainers of Cultural connector in our research.

"Through art, in particular, we are encouraged to observe the world from many different angles" said a learner in his discussion group. For all conclude that "It's this very process of observation and study that teaches us to more intensely observe and analyse the world". "And it is through that process they acquire the skills that build the foundation of critical thinking" conclude the Cultural connectors group.



Having this foundation, adult learners can develop their own perspective around economic, political, social and community issues.

- **Participation in public space or sphere** (to learn to be exposed to others and strategies to manage exposure stress and emotional management in general)

Good processes of participation can generate significant contributions to decision making in group as well communities. Social participation promotes active engagement by residents in the debates and deliberations about the future of a city or a neighbourhood. Such dialogues are promoted in the Social Street Work methodology through several activities and events such as participatory knowledge workshops for citizens, parents, educators, and learners, open discussions, round tables, arts workshops etc.

“Arts workshops and activities taking place in public spaces are often used by Social Street workers mainly because both give us the possibility to gather people in street situation for our activities and in other hand help the participants not only to learn to be exposed to others but also develop strategies in order to manage exposure stress and their emotions in a broader sense” conclude the social street work group.

“As arts and creativity are tied to emotions, it is highly important first to learn to recognize them and then to practice how to regulate them. Once participants are able to identify their feelings and better regulate them, they will be one step closer to successfully participating in collaborative work” argue the trainers group. By promoting thoughtfully designed participatory practices we create a culture that naturally supports social-emotional growth.

- **Intercultural sensitivity** (languages, dances, songs, arts, sports, theatre, cinema, cooking, books etc.)

It is an undeniable fact that today we live in societies characterized by cultural pluralism the existence of different cultures living side by side. This cultural pluralism makes the dynamics of interpersonal relations more challenging, requiring that we learn how to relate effectively to people who may behave, think and feel differently from our own personal and cultural expectations.

“Intercultural Knowledge is the knowledge, attitudes and skills that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts in order to adapt to and build relationships” are discussed by trainer’s group.

Since societies develop mutual aims and different societies perpetuate developing long-term economic, social and cultural relationships with other cultural groups and the global instability continues hitting the world, developing Intercultural Knowledge and sensitivity becomes more and more important, especially for people.

Therefore, “the call to integrate intercultural knowledge and competence into the heart of education is an imperative born of seeing ourselves as members of a world community, knowing that we share the future with others” conclude social street workers.

Art is the most used instrument (and through the most varied forms), not only for remembrance and celebration of important events but also for preserving collective identities. Festivals, exhibitions, drama, dance, music, literature or film are among the most powerful ways for people to express their worldviews, emotions and opinions.

“Through art, individuals and groups” also actively exert citizenship and “propagate opinions”: “we claim rights, influence public opinion and encourage action of our mates” debate the learners

group. Art is used to educate learners, to stimulate solidarity and collective links and to foster community wellbeing.

“Due to such great power, artistic expression is often used as a tool to better understand diversity. In fact, art initiates, fosters and protects diversity and so it can be a universal tool to initiate, nourish and protect intercultural dialogue, while celebrating cultural diversity” said some social street workers speaking about their practices.

Creativity, imagination, and innovation are integral parts in the process of art creation. At the same time these same ingredients are the manifestation of diversity and the result of interaction, dialogue and cultural influence which promotes new forms of cultural expression and permits cultural survival and adaptation.

- **Empathy** (To get to know and to recognize the other)

*‘Empathy is the imaginary participation in another person’s experience, including emotional and intellectual dimensions, by imagining his or her perspective (not by assuming the person’s position).’*  
Bennett, J. 1998.

In simpler words empathy involves the ability to emotionally understand what another person is experiencing. Essentially, it is putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they must be feeling.

“There are several benefits of being able to experience empathy. To start with, empathy allows people to build social connections with others. By understanding what people are thinking and feeling, people can respond appropriately in social situations” said the social street workers group. Moreover, “empathizing with others helps people in learning how to regulate their own emotions. Emotional regulation is very important as it allows people to manage what they are feeling, even in times of great stress, without becoming overwhelmed. Finally, empathy promotes helping behaviours while people empathizing are more likely to engage in helpful behaviours.

“So, empathy as a skill is very important in a person’s life and growth” conclude the learners group. The Trainers group raised that “while you can’t really teach it, exposure to other minds certainly helps and nothing creates the required level of exposure into the minds of others than art. Any work of art is a peek into the creator’s mind. For a second, minute or hour, it’s the closest connection to feeling what someone else is feeling. A cultural connector by getting involved in art projects as well as being exposed to art works, learners can develop empathy and come closer to understand, feel and accept that others may see the world differently from us.

- **Self-reflection and self-evaluation**

*‘Follow effective action with quiet reflection, from the quiet reflection will come even more effective action’* Peter F. Drucker

The learners highlight that “All people learn by experiences and mistakes, even if the school avoid that possibility”. But, unless they question themselves about what these experiences mean and think actively about them, research has shown that Cultural Connectors can’t proceed to any changes. Self-reflection enables people to move from just experiencing, into understanding. It encourages a level of self-awareness and consciousness about practice and enables people to identify not only the areas for improvement but also the areas in which they are strong.

Self- evaluation is closely aligned with (self)-monitoring and reflection. It is a process of critical evaluation of one’s performance. More specifically, it is a procedure to systematically observe, analyse and value actions and their results in order to stabilize or improve them. It is the ability

to look at one's progress, development and learning to determine one's strengths and which areas need improvement.

*'Fostering thinking requires making thinking visible. Thinking happens mostly in our heads, invisible to others and even to ourselves. Effective thinkers make their thinking visible, meaning they externalize their thoughts through speaking, writing, drawing, or some other method. They can then direct and improve those thoughts. Visible Thinking also emphasizes documenting thinking for later reflection.'* – Making Thinking Visible, Ron Ritchhart and David Perkins

This externalization of thoughts through drawing, writing, dancing, singing or performance is simply what we call Art. And as art is all about the process, without self-reflection and evaluation artists cannot learn to their full potential. By getting involved in art projects, through regular and purposeful reflection while exploring and assessing areas in their own artwork, people can increase comprehension, build and extend these skills.

### **2.3.3 Methodology**

The basic goal of this research was to outline which skills can be developed or promoted by Cultural Connectors. Our aim was to reclaim the experience of learners, social street workers and Trainers who voluntarily engaged in the field of Adult Education, in order to design future learning pathways which, enable the capacity-building of vulnerable young people by culture.

To meet this research aim we applied a qualitative research methodology. In particular, we implemented three *focus groups*. The selection of the key aspects of the discussion was made under the guidance of the participants.

A *focus group* consists of a small number of individuals, usually holding a key role in the situation under study, selected and assembled by the researchers to discuss and express their personal experience considering the topic of the research. The main advantage of this method over other qualitative methods is the dynamic created by the interaction among the participants.

Ideally, through this process, the statements are becoming enriched because result from a collective discussion. Another important aspect of focus groups is that they can contain narratives both as biographical life histories and productive arguments. This collective procedure can provide meaningful data regarding the research question Focus groups are preferable since they eliminate the fear in face-to-face interaction. The sense and the atmosphere created by a group of people can alleviate these feelings.

Participants were fully informed about the objectives of the Art connection project before their involvement in the Focus Group.

### **2.3.4 Conclusion**

The Importance of soft skills improvement are considered a key issue in non-formal and informal learning pathways for Cultural Connectors as actors of Adult Education through Culture. As contribute to the enhancement of specific social and personal skills, the three Focus Group considered the following soft skills: *communication, collaboration/cooperation and networking, negotiation, conflict resolution, critical thinking, participation, intercultural sensitivity, empathy, and self-evaluation*. In this sense, they play a role in the reinforcement of the citizenship and the identities of responsible and active citizens and flexible employees, who will be able to adapt to the demands and complexities of the new global working and social environment.

In particular, during the research, the participants of the study expressed freely their feelings and thoughts about their actions and relationships with other people. It is worth to mention that for most of them their participation in the focus groups of the research was one more opportunity of being together with people from different cultural contexts.

In participants sayings it was revealed that culture operates as a utopian common ground. Participants are inspired and motivated by the values of cooperation, togetherness and sharing. Hence, not only they want to develop new skills, but also, they try to get close with people from different cultural backgrounds and build 'bridges' to get together through cultural elements under which they establish more rational, sustainable, and fair ways of socializing and acting.

To sum up, these people create public common spaces by getting together voluntarily explore a cultural issue and they form a common space of sharing and collective action and reflection. Characteristically, the main concern of the focus group's during the research was 'what can we do next together?' and 'what can we learn next time from each other?'.

## 2.4 CULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING METHODOLOGY (UK)

### 2.4.1 What is digital storytelling?

According to Wilson (2014), 'Storytelling is the art form of social interaction,' with the ability to unlock creativity. The impact of stories can be more than just the telling a fact (Christine Trace, Librarian, Montgomery College, Maryland, USA), generating empathy and trust in the audience and with 'the power to give meaning to human behaviours and to trigger emotions' (Bourbonnais and Michaud 2018).

In the oral traditions of African and Jewish cultures, storytelling's role has been for 'learning, celebrating, healing, and remembering', and something that 'each part of the life process necessitates.' (Joe Lambert, 2010. The failure to mark these life processes through story 'threatens the consciousness of communal identity' whilst in contrast, honouring them 'enriches [...] individual, emotional and cultural development.' (Joe Lambert', 2010)

Storytelling, therefore, has been used for thousands of years to 'unearth the stories embedded in our daily lives [...] to learn about ourselves, our relationships, and our place in the community,' stimulating a sense of place (Leyshon and Bull 2011; Pile 2002) and an important act for 'passing on stories so that they are not lost' (Joe Lambert', 2010)

Digital Storytelling - the modern-day incarnation of the practice - is a creative method used for participatory research and public engagement which allows participants to reflect on and share a first-person narrative about a particular topic - firstly in oral form to an audience in a story circle and then as a 2–3-minute film the storyteller has made, using personal photos or film they have selected and supported by a voice over.

The process of creating the digital story follows a well-established methodology formulated in 1995 by Joe Lambert and his colleagues of the Center for Digital Storytelling, California, consisting of five steps: the story circle, script writing, recording of the voice-over, video editing, and the shared viewing of all participants' stories.

Co-design and co-production are key elements of the digital storytelling process, connecting storytellers and story-listeners in the creation of stories with emotional meaning, triggering memories from the past, and stimulating critical thinking about the present as well as potential scenarios for the future.

As such, the digital storytelling process makes grassroots facts and information about the world available to all, promoting a communal, holistic understanding that reflects shared and conflicting values, feelings and concerns, and amplifying the voices of those not usually heard, particularly in hard-to-engage cultural, social and economic communities.

The combination of community skills and creativity facilitated by the digital storytelling methodology make it ideal for use in cultural education, with its potential for creating a shared sense of place, a creative process that generates a common narrative, and the 'storying' of cultural heritage which give students the chance to use their use memories imaginatively.

## 2.4.2 Overview of project/ Methodological approach

The participatory action research (PAR) focus groups investigating the use of storytelling approaches to enhance a sense of place took place in Loughborough and Birmingham, England, UK.

In them, four groups of drama students worked with members of the local community for 12 weeks to explore their sense of belonging. They applied different storytelling techniques (in particular, soundscaping and digital storytelling) to communicate the relationship between food and culture; how it inhabits and influences our everyday life and how people experience food differently because of their culture.

The students worked on creating a collective digital soundscape and an accompanying interactive digital platform documenting the creative and socio-cultural process through online storytelling, blogging, vlogging and a variety of formats. Students were organised in different production teams, depending on their interests and skills.

The first part of the project consisted of the creation of a soundscape/soundwalk that investigated social issues (i.e. displacement) in the town of Loughborough through the medium of food. Students had to gather testimonies, sound atmospheres in streets, restaurants and take-away outlets around town.

Critically considering space and place was at the core of the participatory process. Beforehand, the words space and place were perceived as two fairly interchangeable words, disregarding an awareness for how deeply they could be deconstructed. French philosopher Michel de Certeau prompted the re-examination of this when he said place 'implies an indication of stability [...] space is composed of intersections of mobile elements' (Certeau, 1988, p.117).

The students' initial response was that place is a more fixed and tangible, less negotiable, construct, something more permanent. A space, by contrast, is more fluid and interactive, neither set nor permanent because of the ever-changing elements within it.

In fact, the truth is even more complex than this original breakdown because the students failed to consider the psychological and emotional attachments that can be involved when speaking of place and space. It took some time to consider the obligation to this in relation to the construction of the soundscape and whether this could be materially embedded or simply used as a train of thought in developing the different environments.

For example, Loughborough's Students Union is notorious for student clubbing and alcohol consumption, and the students who fill this space have emotional and psychological attachments to it due to the friendship and memories they have created there. When representing a 'clubbing' environment in the soundscape, it proved important to consider the difference between student emotional connections and an outsider's perspective (for example, older residents of the town) who may view this behaviour as disrespectful and disruptive. These contradicting attitudes reflect the fact that different people, and groups of people, may have different attachments to the same place.

Certeau ignited this exploration even further when stating 'space is like the word when it is spoken [...] space is a practiced place' (Certeau, 1988, p.117). 'The word' and its verbal transmission are two distinct things with different meanings. Words can be used and applied differently depending on context and, like space, this is flexible and forever changing. It is also dependent upon the individual and how they choose to use it.

By investigating the social constructionist definition of place; 'underlying social processes [...] the unique attributes of a place' (Cresswell, 2013, np), the students were able to develop their understanding even further. This quote prompted a complex re-understanding of how the soundscape was interacting with environments or different sites and the need to be aware of the socio-cultural, emotional and psychological effects of the students replicating that.

Was there any way the students could actually show the uniqueness of a place? Could they differentiate Loughborough's market from any other? The ringing of the Town Hall bell, for example, is symbolic to Loughborough and, matched with the distinctive accent of some marketeers, demonstrates the uniqueness of this place.

Could the campus environment be distinguished from another University and exclusively depict the social processes unique to this place? How could the students show an awareness for the social processes at play and their emotional attachments to place through the sole means of sound?

These were all questions at the heart of the process and served as a prism in which to edit the 4 soundscapes.

### **2.4.3 Some lessons from Lboro action research**

#### **Results – Micro Level**

The beneficiaries of the project at micro level were the drama students, who showed a strong desire to understand the community [in which they currently live]. Participation in the project strengthened their engagement with that community and practiced and developed their storytelling ability, including their technical skills. Public engagement was experienced here as a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2020). Beneficiaries of the project felt that professionals involved in such a project must have the ability to listen and empathise with community members, as well as an openness to other people's views, and that applying storytelling as a participatory practice would require collaboration and peer support throughout the process.

#### **Impact from the point of view of the Beneficiaries**

Exploring reconstruction and the notion of truth in relation to the creative process was a key aspect of the action research projects, as evidenced by the multiple levels of construction encompassed in the soundscape. To an extent, the art of the soundscape pertains to a 'construction of archaeological knowledge' (Pearson and Shanks, 2001, xvii) tracing the palimpsestic material remains and cultural identities that a specific site (in this case the town of Loughborough) contains and including present traces.

On one layer, the voices included in the soundscape are answering questions through the prism of their own subconscious bias, agenda or memory. On another, the listener hears and edits these together - deciding what to utilise and what to disregard - through the lens of their own opinion and construction of what they consider important or relevant. As such, 'rather than the verbatim recounting of interviews undertaken' (Anderson and Wilkinson, 2007, p.155), in this research process they re-construct it to form and enforce new meaning.

These interviews do not correlate with each other in a literal sense and the students' voices collected do not conflict with any of the resident testimonies gathered on a personal level. Their voices have been symbolically manipulated to construct a metaphorical story on the division that was noticed

(using personal opinions and stories to create collective thoughts on this matter and present it to the public). The final layer of consideration is the listeners, who will likewise hold a separate perception based on their own construction of the world, and this adds another level of complexity.

There is a clear responsibility on the part of the artists to show an awareness of this re-construction basis and of what they want to say to the world (admittedly through the lens of personal perception). It was challenging trying to reject previously-held beliefs on how to define truth and approach it through a different philosophical and artistic lens, unpacking it as what William James describes as an 'agreement... with reality' (James, 1907, p.141).

As people, are we agreeing to a reality we are born into and not questioning it, or thinking to the social relatedness of humanity are we experiencing 'a shared reality' (Anderson and Wilkinson, 2007, p.156) whereby we all collectively decide to agree to a set construction of the world, too afraid to go against the norm? If we consider the world as a construction, does this give us less freedom as we are being told how to perceive it or can we then re-construct it once more if we know we are able to do so?

In creating their soundscape, the students were able to engineer the stories and voice voices to construct a narrative on Loughborough and problematic experiences with migration (experienced there). The soundscape format acts as a privileged medium to address truth as a construct and it is arguably much easier to materially fragment and construct a story through one sense (sound) than it is in absorbing information through a bombardment of senses. Sound provides individuals with one singular (audio) format to construct and deconstruct their own version of truth or reality, if such a thing exists. We each manipulate our version of a story through this soundscape medium, proving the idea that we can manipulate/deconstruct the world that surrounds us to present our own version of it.

### **Innovations and key success factors**

'Community' has so many connotations that when starting work on a community outreach project, it can seem like an impossible task. The first thing that comes to mind on first hearing the word community is a group of people who live in the same geographical location, which is often several thousand people. As such, it's very easy to think "how do I start telling the story of a community?"

However, "the desire to be among other people is manifest throughout human history" (Simpson, A, 2014) and this became apparent during the project, underlining that 'community' doesn't simply refer to a geographical location. Communities come in all shapes and sizes and in the Loughborough soundscape alone, several different communities were represented. The restaurants and businesses interviewed, such as Baobab Café, Papa Si's and Bom Bom Patisserie, are all communities, working together towards a common goal.

Many of the people interviewed mentioned their religion, and religions are also a community. A community can be people who share the same cultural identity and many people from different places were involved, such as Cyprus and China. The idea that you can find community everywhere added depth to the soundscape and really helped shape how the students interacted with the community of Loughborough as a whole as well as the smaller communities within it.

A lack of visual aids to show to the community made the process more challenging than expected, overcome by the realisation that there are more senses than just sight. The idea that you have to see something to experience it, which "has been rooted in the ideology of the visual and has



neglected the extent to which sound generally, structures space and characterises place” (Smith, SJ, 1994) was proved to be a correct one.

The students realised just how much they'd been neglecting the potential of the sounds the community holds, and through talking to everyone they interviewed, gained a real perspective on what community means to them. This message came through clearly in the soundscape, both through the use of sound and the art of conversation. They discovered that many of the sounds that characterise Loughborough for themselves as artists also achieved the same for the interviewees, and would likely do so for other people in the community.

The students hopes were that they had created a platform on which communities in Loughborough would feel able to share their views, where their unique voices could be heard and where they felt represented, both within their individual communities and in the broader community of the town.

### **Constraints**

The project began in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, and as a result of Government guidelines on social distancing and the directive to stay indoors as much as possible, it became increasingly difficult to connect with members of the public and gather the required information. In light of this, the students adapted their plans to focus on local businesses and restaurants, whilst also engaging with family and friends to get a different perspective on Food in the community.

Initially, a number of businesses and food outlets rejected the invitation to take part in the project from a mixture of time constraints during working hours and difficulties they were experiencing related to the pandemic. These included the introduction of the Government's 'Eat Out to Help Out' initiative which offered people a discount to encourage them to eat in restaurants and food outlets, but which prompted a significant rise in new infections, 'accelerating the pandemic into its [...] second wave' whilst delivering economic benefits that were 'short lived.' ('Eat Out to Help Out' scheme drove new COVID-19 infections up by between 8 and 17%, new research finds,' 2021.)

Other businesses failed to respond to the students at all. The students overcame this issue by widening the list of restaurants and food outlets they approached, to increase the likelihood of acceptances. In the end, many businesses responded to the students and were happy to be involved.

Interviews were initially carried out face-to-face, with great care taken to maintain social distancing, face masks worn (?), hands and equipment sterilised as necessary and sound recording equipment held by the interviewee to ensure that their responses – of most importance to the soundscape – were captured clearly. As time went on, however, the interviews were moved onto Zoom, which proved to be much safer and also easier to record.

Altogether, the pandemic forced the students to make adjustments to the project which challenged them to problem solve and be flexible and adaptable. It also caused inconvenience to participating restaurants and food outlets who rely on consumer consumption and traffic for their businesses to grow and thrive.

### **Results – Meso Level**

Teachers working in Higher education institutions were the beneficiaries of the project at this level, with the potential for it also to be of benefit to Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs.) University students, academics and community members all gain value from participation in the process.

In this instance, the Higher Education teacher facilitated conversations with the students around a variety of storytelling techniques and, in particular, on creating soundscapes and digital stories. Resilience and flexibility were revealed to be key competences during the process. The need for tutorials on the specific methodology to be applied with self-assessment tools was discovered, as well as a critical need for tools to assist with mutual support and peer learning.

It was felt that Higher Education teachers would require engagement values and knowledge of specific participatory methodologies in order to implement these pedagogical practices in the field with the target populations. Most importantly, facilitators will have to make sure these values are reflected in the engagement process.

### **Impact from the point of view of cultural connectors**

Andrew Hill's 'Listening for Context' article aptly states how the careful composition of sound that happens when creating a soundscape can make us feel more connected to humanity and reminds us of our interrelation to one another. The sounds we hear tell us about our world and help to define us within that world, and in this sense is one variable in all our lives that we can mutually experience. We will all hear sounds differently dependent on the framework of our existence and past experience so far, but the sheer fact we can all experience this sound and environment as one is both powerful and connecting.

Our own past experiences of migrating to Loughborough will be different to another listener, but we will nonetheless both be experiencing this soundscape journey. Perhaps we will identify more strongly with different characters (likely based on our own identity markers). It is interesting to consider that whenever humans gather for an occasion, be it celebration, mourning or ceremonies, sound or music will almost always be at the heart of it, transforming a singular and potentially isolating experience to something much greater, a powerful and collective togetherness. Sound is without doubt a universal connector.

### **Innovations and key success factors**

Research has shown that we physically respond to unified sound, it helps to drop our differences and promotes us being closer together – and if we have this at the heart of our soundscape and can make it tangible through experimenting with texture and grain of individual sounds, we would achieve a sense of togetherness. Soundscaping as collaborative practice may address division, but ultimately our constructed story focuses on inclusivity, how we can all (from a range of backgrounds, ages, nationalities) exist cohesively in the same space.

### **Constraints**

Time, staff allocation and technical resources were all difficulties experienced by the Higher Education teachers in carrying out this project.

### **Results – Macro Level**

Participatory projects involving higher education institutions could generate the following benefits for all staff categories:

- Support professional growth, by promoting in-career development through life-long learning;
- Celebrate diversity and put respect and inclusivity at the centre of all they do;

- Offer access to activities that benefit health and wellbeing and enable staff to achieve a good work-life balance;
- Help individuals to become outstanding leaders who inspire others;
- Earn rewards and recognise staff contribution to the University in ways that have personal value and meaning;
- Enable the institution to become the organisation of choice for those seeking new opportunities.

A 'people strategy' is the core element of any institution that wishes to generate impact in the real world, and the 8th key competence is to be able human connections in a multi-diverse society such as the British society is.

Additionally, knowledge transfer partnerships between organisations involved in education and local cultural organisations could represent the ideal territory for long-term collaborations and the delivery of impactful projects.

To create an impact, educators must embrace diversity and appreciate co-creation to support successful learning experiences.

Here is an example of one of our activities:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Title of the activity</b>                            | <i>Creating a soundscape</i>  |
| <b>Topic, keywords</b>                                  | <i>soundscape, digital storytelling, community</i>  |
| <b>Duration</b>   | 3 days  |
| <b>Brief background</b><br>(method behind the activity) | This activity consists in enabling participants to create a soundscape/soundwalk to provide a social panorama investigating social issues (i.e. displacement) in a given location. The soundscape can include a recurrent leitmotif (for example, the importance of food within a community) as this helps starting conversations or be open-ended. The aim is to gather testimonies, sound atmospheres in streets or specific urban locations such as restaurants, shopping-centres around town and then edit voices and sounds together to create a landscape of sound or soundscape. |
| <b>Objectives</b>                                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Enabling participants to gather testimonies from members of the public in specific environments</i></li> <li>2. <i>Enabling participants to edit testimonies and surrounding sounds into a soundscape (panorama of sounds at a given time in a given location)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Enabling participants to value other people's opinions, enabling participants to give a "voice" to others, enabling participants to listen and "reclaim" their environment and community in a renewed way.</i></li> </ol>                                |
| <b>Impact</b> (indicators of success)                   | <p>Participants will acquire the following measurable skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have an understanding of the planning, researching, rehearsing and production of a creative piece of work.</li> <li>- This work should have aided the development of participants skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to the production process on a par with industry processes</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be able to analyse a creative production appropriate to a given text or subject matter and relevant forms of site-specific public engagement;</li> <li>- Have developed a chosen key skill or skills in relation to a selected production role i.e. interviewing, recording, editing;</li> <li>- Have gained an understanding of how to develop a collaborative creative production from various participants' skills;</li> <li>- Have extended their capacity for self-management and group enterprise in a manner which may prepare them for professional small-scale creative production;</li> </ul> |
| <b>How many cultural developers are needed</b>                      | 2 (depending on their existing skills)  |
| <b>Roles/capacity needed (mentoring, coaching...</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- technical coaching (how to use voice and sound recorders, how to edit soundfiles)</li> <li>- public engagement coaching (how to approach members of the public, how to lead an interview, how to respect safety and ethical guidelines)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>For whom</b> (age, individual, group ...)                        | 16+   |
| <b>Level of trust needed for the implementation of the activity</b> | Moderate to High<br>(This activity relies upon the participants' ability to communicate with members of the public, it also involves using technical equipment)   |
| <b>Level of participation</b>                                       | Participants need to be highly motivated, as the task involves rigorous planning and execution.   |
| <b>Description/steps</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Identifying a specific urban environment</i></li> <li>2. <i>Identifying possible interviewees</i></li> <li>3. <i>Recording testimonies</i></li> <li>4. <i>Recording sounds</i></li> <li>5. <i>Selecting and editing testimonies and sounds into a soundscape</i></li> </ol>  |
| <b>Debriefing</b>   | <i>What did you learn about your community by listening to what people said without any expectations? What did you learn about a specific environment by listening to how it sounds anew?</i>   |
| <b>Materials needed</b>   | sound-recorders (i.e. TASCAM), sound editing software   |
| <b>Suitable environment to do it</b>                                | Urban environments that would provide passers-by with time to engage in a conversation and be recorded, and also specific sounds that could be recognisable (clock tower, railway station, etc.) to set the scene.  |
| <b>Comments, tips &amp; tricks</b>                                  | This activity is all about listening and hear the story that emerges from interviewees' testimonies, rather than planning a storyline in advance. Same with sounds, it is important to take the time to listen to a specific location anew and hear it as for the first time, before recording specific sound "events".   |

## ANNEXES

### GENERIC FRAMES USED AND PROPOSED BY ART-CONNECTION' PARTNERS

- **Canvas used by Art-Connection' partners to conduct their own participatory action research**

*This plan is proposed to guide the questioning in the context of a participatory action research. It can also be used as a guide to animate a Focus Group. The proposed grid is made up of two columns: on the left, the elements to be analyzed; on the right, the questions to be asked and the space to answer them so as to describe the element.*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>MICRO LEVEL – Learners (beneficiaries - target population)</b></p> <p><b>Why and how does culture allow the emergence of individual creative skills that promote a positive attitude conducive to openness to others, to the world, and to personal, social, professional and economic development?</b></p> <p>We will seek to analyze with the experimental learners, the individual and collective skills they have identified, mobilized and developed, and how to formalize them in the reference framework of the 8 EKC but also how they wish to be accompanied and how they could themselves accompany their peers in this process of self-directed-learning.</p> |   |
| <b>Title</b>   | <i>What name best describes participatory action research (PAR)?</i>  |
| <b>Location/geographical coverage</b>  | <i>What is the geographical origin of PAR? If possible, the country, region, province and city should be indicated here.</i>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>  | <i>What is the context (situation of departure), the problem raised? Give a brief definition of the practice discussed and indicate the length of time it has been in place.</i>  |
| <b>Beneficiaries/ Stakeholders</b>   | <i>Who are the beneficiaries or target group? Who are the users? Which institutions, partners, implementing organisations are involved and what is the nature of their involvement?</i>   |
| <b>Methodological Approach</b>   | <i>What methodology was used or tested to address the initial problem that led to the results? What was the approach and how was the process participatory?</i>   |
| <b>Results Micro I</b>   | <i>What individual and collective competences did the target public identify, mobilise and develop during the action that is the basis of the research?</i>   |
| <b>Results Micro II</b>  | <i>What kind of competences the target public think the professionals should have to accompany them in this self-training process?</i>  |
| <b>Results Micro III</b>   | <i>How could they, themselves, support their peers in developing individual and collective skills in their social and cultural environment?</i>   |
| <b>Impact Beneficiaries</b>  | <i>In what way does entry through cultural situations allow the emergence of individual creative abilities that foster a positive attitude conducive to openness to others, to the world, and to personal, social, professional and economic development?</i> |
| <b>Innovations and key success factors</b>   | <i>How is participatory action and research a social innovation?</i>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <i>What are the conditions for replicating the participatory action and research successfully (in a similar context)?</i>   |
| <b>Constraints</b>  | <i>What are the difficulties encountered by the beneficiaries and the challenges to be met?</i>   |
| <b>MESO LEVEL – Les professionnels de l'éducation et de la formation</b><br><b>Why and how culture does it enable the transition to a new paradigm in the education and training of adult population?</b><br>We will seek to identify with the experimental professionals, within the framework of the activities carried out, the practices and gestures to be developed, the principles to be respected, the conditions of success, the appropriate educational tools, to implement cultural practices in the field with the target populations (= participants in the cultural project). |   |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <i>What is the context and what are the issues with which professionals are working? Give a brief definition of the practice addressed and indicate the length of time it has been in place.</i>  |
| <b>Beneficiaries/ Stakeholders</b>  | <i>Who are the beneficiaries or target group? Who are the users?</i>  |
| <b>Methodological Approach</b>  | <i>What methodology has been used or experimented with to address the issue of cultural competences that has led to results? What was the approach and how was the participatory process?</i>   |
| <b>Results Meso I</b>   | <i>What individual and collective competences should the professionals mobilise and develop during the action course which is the basis of the research?</i>  |
| <b>Results Meso II</b>  | <i>What pedagogical tools need to be developed to support people in a self-training process? What knowledge-capacities and skills need to be acquired or developed by support professionals for the implementation of pedagogical practices in the field with target populations?</i>   |
| <b>Results Meso III</b>   | <i>What principles to respect, what appropriate educational tools have to be developed by the accompanying professionals, for the implementation of pedagogical practices in the field with the target populations?</i><br><br><i>What knowledge-capacities have to be acquired or developed by the accompanying professionals, for the implementation of pedagogical practices in the field with the target populations?</i> |
| <b>Impact Cultural Connectors</b>   | <i>How does cultural situations could be a "gate in" be enable the transition to a new paradigm of adult learning in order to encourage participation in cultural life in all its forms?</i>  |
| <b>Innovations and key success factors</b>  | <i>How is the participatory action and research a social innovation?</i><br><i>What are the conditions for replicating participatory action and research successfully (in a similar context)?</i>   |
| <b>Constraints</b>  | <i>What are the difficulties and challenges faced by professionals?</i><br><i>How did they address them in context?</i>   |
| <b>MACRO LEVEL – Local Stakeholders</b>   |   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Why and how does culture make it possible to develop learning territories and to value and make visible the economic and social impacts resulting from this diversity of creative expression, appreciation, participation and realization of works of art?</b></p> <p>We will seek to know how private or public organizations can seize the pedagogical tools, developed as part of the Art-Connection project, to build within their territories, an educational system capable of encouraging, valuing-viralizing (deploying from within) all the talents and creative capacity of all men, bearers of innovation and prosperity for our new societies</p> |  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <i>What is the context and issues in which the organisation works? Give a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities in your field of action?</i>  |
| <b>Stakeholders/Actors</b>  | <i>Who are the beneficiaries or target group? Who are the users?<br/>What are the cultural institutions, partners, implementing organisations and what is the nature of their involvement?</i>                           |
| <b>Methodological Approach</b>  | <i>What methodology is used or tested to address the issue? What is the approach and how participatory is the process?</i>   |
| <b>Results Macro I</b>  | <i>How does cultural situations could be the trigger to enable the construction of political and educational strategies to develop learning cultural territories?</i>  |
| <b>Results Macro II</b>   | <i>What extent does the diversity of expression, creativity, appreciation, participation and realisation of works of art impact on the economic and social level of your target audience?</i>                            |
| <b>Results Macro III</b>  | <i>How could stakeholder organisations put into practice strategies for the validation or recognition of knowledge acquired based on the development of the 8th competence in their social and cultural environment?</i> |
| <b>Impact Organizations</b>   | <i>To what extent does the diversity of expression, creativity, appreciation, participation and realisation of works of art have an impact on organizations working in the field of Adult Education?</i>                 |
| <b>Innovations and key success factors</b>  | <i>What are the conditions to be met to successfully reproduce this action in a similar context?</i>   |
| <b>Constraints</b>  | <i>What are the difficulties encountered and the challenges to be met?</i>   |

- **Activity form** (you can see concrete examples in the partners' case studies)

Expand or reduce table, if needed:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Title of the activity</b>  |  |
| <b>Topic, keywords</b>  |  |
| <b>Duration</b>   |  |
| <b>Brief background</b> (method behind the activity)                |  |
| <b>Objectives</b>   |  |
| <b>Impact</b> (indicators of success)                               |  |
| <b>How many cultural developers are needed</b>                      |  |
| <b>Roles/capacity needed</b> (mentoring, coaching...)               |  |
| <b>For whom</b> (age, individual, group ...)                        |  |
| <b>Level of trust needed for the implementation of the activity</b> |  |
| <b>Level of participation</b>                                       |  |
| <b>Description/steps</b>  |  |
| <b>Debriefing</b>   |  |
| <b>Materials needed</b>   |  |
| <b>Suitable environment to do it</b>                                |  |
| <b>Comments, tips &amp; tricks</b>                                  |  |



- **Frame for creating cultural projects** (you can find some concrete examples in the APP case study)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Project name</b>                                |  |
| <b>Purpose</b>                                     |  |
| <b>Pedagogical objectives and expected results</b> |  |
| <b>Medium used</b>                                 |  |
| <b>Target audience</b>                             |  |
| <b>Schedule, sequence, number of sessions</b>      |  |
| <b>Difficulties</b>                                |  |
| <b>Conditions for success</b>                      |  |
| <b>Impacts and results on the public</b>           |  |
| <b>Partnerships</b>                                |  |
| <b>Financing</b>                                   |  |