

Fusion of Arts and Education

# Recommendations

on the cooperation between artists  
and adult educators



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# Introduction

These policy recommendations are aimed at making future cooperation between adult educators and artists easier, showing what conditions and agreements and what competencies are needed from both sides. They aim to encourage the implementation of more participatory artistic project with an educational aim.

They are based on the evaluation and reflection following pilot project in all partner countries, and include the perspective of artists, educators, the participants and partner organizations. They are targeted at artists and artist organizations, educators and educational institutions as well as other stakeholders in the field of art and education.

The content of these policies is based on data collected in four partner countries: Italy, Austria, Germany and Portugal, during the implementation of four pilot projects involving both artists and educators in participatory processes on the public space.

- Italy – The Invisible Cities – Danza Duende residential workshop
- Austria - „Klimagwandl“
- Portugal - “Perfect Mirror” Street performance
- Germany - »Climate,Art and Future Participation« / »Klima,Kunst und ZukunftMitMachen«

# Part 1

## State of the art of cooperation between art and education

### The status and benefits of cooperation between art and education

Cooperation of art and adult education can bring an added value to both fields and the social actors involved. It is as an opportunity to further change and innovate the traditional model of education while reinforcing the social, educational and political role of art .

The growing presence of art in non-formal education has indeed the potential to transform the current dominant model of education in society based on passive transfer of information. Rather, education is about motivation, reflection and identity. An education that integrates art enables **self-development, creativity, emotional intelligence and perception**. When it comes to political themes, like in the Fusion of Art and Education Project, the arts allow expression of fears, concerns and ideas. In the cooperation with education, arts provide a **framework and an open space for the process of self-expression**. Also, by cooperating with educators, artists can improve their abilities and develop their communication skills through arts.

At the same time, adult educators can help the artists cooperate with the participants, find the balance between offering an open space but also guiding the group and keeping the participants focused on the project. Through this cooperation educators can access innovative tools to catch the attention of their students in a more creative way. Importantly, **art can reconnect with its educational and social scope, beyond esthetics.**

The Fusion of Art and Education project created a space for both actors to meet and to reflect on the topic, sharing ideas and good practices in different places of the world. Allowing a moment to reflect and practice also enables a discussion on the political issues, economic interests and social/cultural mindsets that sometimes work as a barrier to include alternative methods to educate and explore creativity, in a society mostly directed to capitalism and repetition.

## Good practices and challenges for cooperation in partner organizations and pilot projects

The partners of the project have put in place a number of actions in this field and, as crucial actors of the communities they operate in, have insights to offer with regards to the good practices and the challenges in the cooperation between artists and educators.

In **Austria, UniT** fostered the cooperation between artists and educators in many different projects. They worked with elderly people, migrants and young people. What really worked well was that the participants were really dedicated to the project. They felt valued and appreciated the space for their contributions that was offered to them. In the cooperation with the artists the participants noticed that the expression of their ideas was lifted to a higher level with the framework given by the artists. They realized that thanks to the help of the artists, their concerns and ideas could be better heard and seen by others because they found a form of expression that worked. UniT created a project in which the participants and

the artists were able to create really interesting performances. Exhibitions and films that were also strong enough to be shown on artistic festivals like La Strada - as it happened with the project in the framework of FAE - and Steirischer Herbst. In the concrete work with the participants in our project "Klimagwandl", the artists and adult educators succeeded in creating a common framework that invited the expression of their own feelings, thoughts and ideas. When it comes to the presentation of the created material in public, completely new questions arise. The presentation needs a form that must be acceptable to an audience. But this means that one has to choose from the existing material, shorten and condense parts. This can be a mortification for certain participants. This is a contradiction that has to be dealt with and requires certain skills in leadership. Another problem is the fact that public presentations require participants to leave certain comfort zones - such as standing on a stage, moving around.... This is associated with hurdles, feelings of fear and shame arise. If the participants manage to dare to do it despite all their concerns, it is a really positive experience for everyone involved. Nevertheless, it is important to proceed cautiously here, to support and motivate the participants as best as possible. But therefore one condition has to be fulfilled : the participants must trust each other.

In **Portugal**, the discussion about the cooperation between arts and education has been presented in recent years, with an impact on the format of the school schedule that started to include artists in the curriculum of the students, since primary school. Through cultural participation, cultural actors establish new social contacts. In this way, new cooperation can potentially emerge, and thus social networks can be expanded. During the realization of cultural events, cultural places that function as breeding grounds for social networks are created. In this way, further opportunities for strengthening and building social networks can be opened up. Examples of good practices (latest mentioned by the groups): "Frenesim" (<https://www.frenesim.pt/sobren%C3%B3s>). It is a good example that appeared in the city, using arts for kids to reach the parents, so at the end you have a whole family aware about the influence of arts not only in an individual level (as mental health) but also in a collective level (increasing the awareness about different and emergent social topics/problems, bringing it to a daily base, as environment, recycling, love, sharing, tolerance). **Embaixada da Juventude**, by testing performances in various locations (communities), made it possible to comprehend how, particularly in smaller communities, people with a strong sense of place might be sceptical of innovative transformation processes and have trouble being open to new, unfamiliar residents, which could prevent the emergence of new cooperation and, consequently, the expansion of social networks, in the field of cultural and arts education. What is missing is funding and awareness about the advantage of having this cooperation between artists and educators, especially in rural areas. In general, it is something that all

the artists are concerned about and always appear as a limitation to expand, innovate and progress.

In **Germany**, during the implementation of the Fusion of Art and Education project, **HochVier** identified some good practices in the cooperation between artists and educators. For example they facilitated democratic processes. The campaign was named: »ZukunftMitmachen« = »take part in future and climate protection«. The name was specifically created through participation, decisions and votes. Participants voted on five proposals. Furthermore, during the whole duration of the project they managed to ensure a relaxed atmosphere, foster appreciation, appreciative praise, appreciative criticism, talk about well-being or discomfort in the team, keep good tone, not asking questions, show attentiveness. The method of asking people to express their opinions, to say they want what they stand for, revealed that many people are hardly used to being asked seriously, how they would make the world better. With regards to challenges, Online communication was difficult to handle in the beginning of the Corona period. So the group needed Zoom conferencing and digital pads as we would find them in applications like trello and canvas. In the beginning, it was hard to communicate with those applications, because they would not run on operating systems older than a few years. So some had to invest a lot to participate in the digital spaces. The educators often had brand new computers in their offices due to state corona aid, while artists often had to use old machines and much worse access to funding as adult educators. When online votes are due, artists often needed more time to access the voting tool because of old computers and bad internet connections. The employed educators had no understanding for this precondition. This was a challenge. Monthly online-meetings made the group grow. During the lockdown the working group lost participants. So Hoch Vier had to find ways, to find new contributors. The »Green Board« was used to announce events like excursions, swap parties, readings and other artistic actions. Also interventions in public space were announced with that special »Green Board« (principle of the chalkboard – wipe off writings and write over it again). With the 30 cm x 80 cm small panels, the protagonists went to public places, for example to a weekly market, to a vegetable market and galleries. Several boards were cut from raw wood. The logo was replicated with mirrored, ironed laser prints. Some experiment with sustainable printing techniques, others use spray letters. Just recycled materials were allowed to be used. One disadvantage of that wooden board was the small writing surface. So one person wanted to use an upcycled, rollable, easily transportable 80 x 80 cm window blind roller as a »Green Board« as well. It was painted in the campaign color green, so that one could write on the surface with chalk. It contained logos and texts. Others wanted only the raw cut boards This is where the group got into an argument. A vote was taken against using this rollable item as an information board. So that person answered: The smarter give in.

In **Italy**, formal educational institutions are far from incorporating art as a means of education and personal development. Yet, outside of these environments there are many great practices that use art as a form of education. Some of CESIE's projects pursue this interest using many forms of art from visual, to movement, to photography to foster people's inclusion, personal development, empowerment and awareness. The power of this cooperation was self-evident in the implementation of the Fusion of Art and Education project – *Le Città Invisibili – Residential workshop of Danza Duende* - which provided a space for self-expression and growth for the participants. It is worth noticing that the two professionals involved were an artist with familiarity with education and an educator with familiarity with art. This enabled them to communicate well, understand each other, therefore enhancing the characteristics of both disciplines and allowing for the capacity building of both them and the participants. The mutual learning between the facilitators is one of the most significant impacts of the project and was coupled by a mutual learning between the trainers and the participants, enabled by an attitude of valorization of all points of view that the trainers promoted throughout the activities. In their words there was "mutual, constant active learning and a rich dynamic of proposals arising from constant and fruitful discussion". Working in a residential asset was also a good practice that should be replicated. It allowed to reach a higher level of quality and a deeper, more authentic and proactive involvement of the participants. Listening, dialogue, adaptability, patience, inclusivity were all behaviors and values that allowed for the success of the residency as an artistic and educational experience. There weren't many challenges in the implementation of the project, but to mention a few: dropouts were an obstacle which required a readjustment of the energy in the group. Also working with non-performers was a challenge in the sense that facilitators needed to put extra care to ensure that all activities were done in safety and health for the participants. Finally, preconceptions and assumptions were also an obstacle at the beginning, yet they gradually detuned as the participants went deeper into the practice.



# Part 2

## Recommendations

### Encouraging Change

Despite all the positive experiences of this collaboration between artists and adult educators, according to the project partners the possibilities for implementing such projects remain very limited. This is mostly due to the fact that the resources are limited. Art and education are both very **dependent on public and private funding**. This is necessary in order for art and education to be accessible to as many people as possible independently of their economic background. Due to the inconsistency and precariousness of this funding both adult educators and artists often live in precarious economic conditions. Furthermore, in adult education, the development of hard skills is still in the foreground for the funding agencies: education is supposed to make people fit for the labor market. Projects that address the whole person and creativity are considered a luxury and politicians and funding agencies are not willing to invest much in them. A change of attitude is needed here among those responsible in administration and politics. Perhaps then the recognition can grow that economic efficiency and a holistic approach are not contradictory, but can complement each other quite well, as has already been proven in various studies. The 4Cs: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, should be central in education which should be led by an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning. Arts integration is inherently interdisciplinary.

On the basis of these considerations and the experience of the pilot projects, the partnership has developed some recommendations addressed at policy makers, artists, educators and other relevant stakeholders in order to encourage change in a direction of greater cooperation.

# Methodology

The recommendations have been collected by project partners through qualitative research tools. Firstly, partners have actively taken part to the pilot project and observed the relational dynamics in place. Participant observation is a qualitative research tool that allows to grasp the nuances of a particular social environment or phenomenon and was therefore considered useful in this context. Furthermore, partners have conducted interviews on the basis of some common questions with the educators and artists involved in the pilot project in order to collect insights on their experience with this kind of cooperation in their fields and local contexts.

## Recommendations for Policy Makers

What follows are country-specific recommendations for policy makers:

### Austria

1. For the responsible politicians, we recommend to define the term adult education and lifelong learning as broadly as it is defined in the relevant documents of the European Commission and not to reduce it to economic usability.
2. Political decision-makers should promote civic education more than before, even if it does not necessarily always serve their party-political interests. They should support projects that promote citizens' participation in political life.
3. They should look at projects where artists are working in the field of adult education that show the substantial contribution that the collaboration of art and adult education can make to a holistic approach to education and that it is able to open up a space for participatory political education.

### Portugal

1. Increase the annual budget of the culture ministry.
2. Increase the hours of arts in the school.
3. Reduce the time indoor and sited classes and give more space for creativity, critical thinking and experiential learning.
4. Create multidisciplinary teams on the preparation of the school curriculum.

## Germany

1. Increase easily accessible funding for solo self-employed artists. Many best practices, even though they worked, end up not being renovated because the funding ends and artists then have to apply again and again for funding.
2. Art and education need spaces where people can meet and participate actively, fairly and responsibly. There must be more meeting spaces in rural areas so that people can talk to each other.
3. Citizens' questions and opinions must be allowed. There must be participation formats and solutions that help understanding each other's matters of concern. And funding is needed to implement these actions with citizens.

## Italy

1. Recognition of the value of all forms of art as a means of education and greater valorization of art in formal education contexts from elementary school to higher education.
2. More consistent and long-term financing of artistic project in educational and social contexts including rehabilitative contexts, such as detention centres, hospitals, etc.
3. Recognition of the therapeutic value of art and inclusion of artistic approaches in therapeutic contexts.

# Recommendations for Artists

What follows are country-specific recommendations for artists:

## Austria

1. Artists should see and define this kind of collaboration as a field of artistic work in its own right and not as something they do because their artistic activity brings them too little. There is a lot of theoretical and practical groundwork for this, starting with J. Beuys via Rimini Protokoll.
2. Artists who want to work in this field must definitely check their social competences and improve them if necessary.
3. This kind of collaboration works when all partners work as equals - artists, adult educators, organizers and participants. There are different roles, of course, but there needs to be absolute appreciation of each other's skills and perspectives.

## Portugal

1. Learn with educators/teachers how to develop structural framework to facilitate art sessions in classes
2. Open their own mind for innovative ways to bring arts to the communities, to the street, to public with low resources and rural areas
3. They should agree on the empowerment of their students by to put in practice the cooperation between arts and education

## Germany

1. Artists should take a far-sighted approach at the beginning, not limit the topic too narrowly. Take a critical and reflected look during the course. Don't make the issue too big.
2. Artists should implement the topic that they are working on with different cultural approaches. We experimented that at the DIY and the resource swap, for example. It was good to have both historical and literary sources linking exchanges with language acquisition opportunities in order to appeal to a wide range of people.
3. Artists should consider that art and education are not only essential parts of general education, they are also drivers for personal development.

## Italy

1. Artists should look for project opportunities on the cooperation between art and education.
2. Artists should consider the educational value of art, beyond performance and artistic virtuosity.
3. Artists should consider art as something that is part of the life of every human being, not only professionals and that everyone is capable of expressing creativity through art.

# Recommendations for Educators

## Austria

1. Artistic work is process-oriented and sometimes very open-ended. This distinguishes it from adult education, where goals and learning outcomes are often defined. Engaging with this openness, but also not losing focus on the content of the project, is a necessary contribution of adult educators in this kind of project.

2. It is important in the collaboration to define the roles of the artists and adult educators quite exactly so that they know what they are responsible for and how the collaboration in the project can take place.
3. Adult Educators who want to work in this field should really like artistic and creative work and appreciate its value. They should not see it only as a method but as an important part of cultural and individual identity.

## Portugal

1. Educators should listen artists from the same level, to learn with them innovative ways to teach and include non-formal education in their curriculums
2. Educators should improve non-formal competencies to teach
3. Educators should have the permission to take out the students from the class, as many times they want. Based on the freedom of students we are increasing their responsibility also.

## Germany

1. We recommend that adult educators widen their view of the dimensions of artistic and cultural adult education. Female artists know: »Culture makes you innovative.« This joint initiative also made it clear to the artists how important creative approaches to the world and their appropriation are.
2. We recommend adult educators to do creative work, to promote the formation of imagination, to strengthen the personality development of their target group and to promote their cultural understanding, so that they are also awake to political participation.
3. We recommend: Sharpen the creative dimension of learning content. Perceive. Be active in experiencing and feeling. Own the world. participates. Personal development benefits from creative input, as does the critical examination of the circumstances of the time

## Italy

1. Educators should look for project opportunities on the cooperation between art and education
2. Educators should consider the educational value of art and look for ways to incorporate creativity in their educational activities. They should train in non-formal education approaches that include artistic expression and create bridged between educational goals and artistic means.

3. Educators should consider including artists as co-leaders of their educational activities as an opportunity for their personal growth and that of their trainees.

## Recommendations for other organizations

### Austria

1. In our experience it is helpful to work with artists whom you know a bit. If an organization wants to work more with artists in their projects it would be recommendable to create a network of artists the organization can ask.
2. For the organization it is very important to define a clear framework - role definition, financial structure, timeline, outcome.
3. After a framework for the project is defined it is important that the artists have free space to develop the project process-orientated and to trust the artists and to have the confidence of the organization

### Portugal

1. Expose participants to the art world and invite their participation: Through the participation in artistic sessions, students, parents, docents and teachers are exposed to the world of visual arts. They learn about art history and visual art techniques and become familiar and engaged more with art spaces outside the school such as galleries, museums, and art classes;
2. Connect people to one another. By creating the opportunity and need for people to work together to carry out an artistic performance (e.g., coordinating volunteers, fundraising), helps to connect stakeholders to one another. Connections include: (a) organizations/schools to community; (b) teachers to students and parents; (c) parents to schools, teachers, and to one another; and (d) students with their peers, parents, and their schools;
3. Create "spaces" that foster creativity. By using art in education (and vice-versa) improves the creation of three types of spaces: (a) a physical space - even if a designated art room did not exist, the physical space of the gym, lunchroom, or classroom was transformed to create an environment for art-making; (b) a temporal space - a designated time in the schedule had to be carved out for an artistic product; and (c) an intellectual space - which has a spirit of openness and creativity.

## Germany

1. Different types of competence and diverse forms of representation are recommended for both art and adult educators. When artists and adult educators first met, it was important that the project was open to a wider group of artists and adult educators. They jointly determined the topic and contributed to it within the scope of their choice.
2. We would also recommend organizations that want to create access to art and education in their projects, it is the basic need for many people to grow, to surpass themselves or simply to learn for a lifetime. Art and education are not only essential parts of general education, they are also drivers for personal development.
3. We would recommend not looking at projects one-dimensionally, but always in the light of art and cultural history, the local geography.

## Italy

1. Organizations should foster opportunities of mutual learning between artists and adult educators in professional training
2. Organizations should campaign on the educational value of art in society, highlighting the fact that creativity is part of every human being and should be given the space to come out.
3. Organizations should advocate for greater presence of art in formal educational institutions from primary schools to higher education, also through projects that involve students and teachers.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the experience of the Fusion of Art and Education project has brought to light the need that people have to explore their creativity as a means of self-development, self-expression, self-care, as well as a means of protest and expression of concern for common issues such as climate change. Art is a means of education, yet this connection is often lost. Art is too often considered as something exclusively performative and limited to professionals. And it's in the encounter with adult education that art can be reconnected to its educational and public scope. In spite of the national differences there are some issues that can be recognized across the partner countries with regards to the challenges and consequent recommendations needed to facilitate the cooperation between artists and educators.

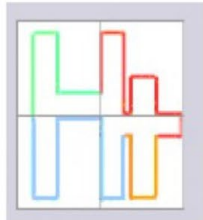
1. Funding for projects is insufficient and fragmented. There is a need for policy makers and funding bodies to consider offering core funding and/or more stable financial support for project and initiatives that have proven successful for participants, artists and educators alike.
2. Greater recognition of the educational value of art is needed at policy level, and should impact on the guidelines offered to formal education bodies from elementary school to higher education.
3. Citizens' participation in the political decisions should be promoted and enabled systematically.
4. Artists should value art as a means of education and as something that all human beings are capable of. This should impact on their interest to look for opportunities to improve their training and personal competencies, as well as scouting for project opportunities beyond the artistic environment, with a multidisciplinary and open-minded approach.
5. Adult educators should increase their artistic competencies so as to be able to create bridges between them the artistic environment, scouting for project opportunities beyond educational environments, with a multidisciplinary and open-minded approach.



6. Organizations should create opportunities for cooperation and mutual learning between artists and adult educators acting as mediators between the categories and offering a space for this relationship to thrive.
7. Advocacy on the educational value of art is much needed in the society at large.



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