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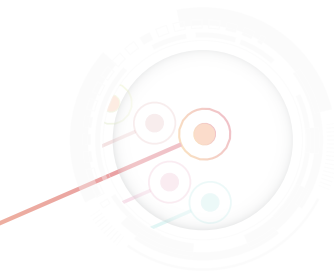
Cultural Policy
TRACKER

Culture, Community and Democracy



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editorial

In this issue of the ENCATC Policy Tracker, we explore a variety of compelling and contemporary topics within the cultural policy landscape. Our contributors bring a diverse range of perspectives, shedding light on the challenges, innovations, and future directions of cultural policy in Europe and beyond.

The issue includes a contribution by Dr. Angelos Agalianos from the Cultural Policy Unit of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, titled "Participation in Cultural Activities Strengthens Democracy and Social Cohesion – The Evidence". This piece presents compelling research linking cultural participation with democratic engagement. As Europe approaches its 2024 elections, this piece is particularly timely, underlining the importance of cultural activities in fostering civic engagement, volunteerism, and community involvement. It's a testament to the role of culture in building robust and resilient democracies.

The second contribution is titled "Post-covid challenges for European Live Music" and authored by Léna Lozano. In this insightful piece, Lozano, a research officer at Live DMA, a European non-governmental network, discusses the evolving landscape of European live music in the post-Covid era. Live DMA, representing a vast network of music venues and festivals, has been at the forefront of understanding and addressing the unique challenges that the pandemic has presented to the live music industry. This article delves into the strategies implemented and lessons learned, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of the live music sector.

Subsequently, the European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage (ESACH) introduces their "Youth for the Future of Cultural Heritage in Europe" position paper. This document, crafted by young volunteers across Europe, outlines the priorities and visions



editorial

of youth for the future of cultural heritage. It's not just a reflection of the current perspectives but also an open invitation for the cultural heritage sector to integrate youth voices in decision-making processes and actions.

In their article, "African Hub for Sustainable Creative Economies", Prof. Comunian and Dr. England from King's College London (United Kingdom) explore the synergies between higher education and creative economies in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. Their article highlights the journey of an international team collaborating with various creative sectors in these countries. By focusing on sustainable creative economies, they shed light on innovative projects that bridge academia and the creative industry, demonstrating the impactful role of collaborative ventures in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, in "Art for Mental Health: A European Mosaic of Projects for Young People", Annalisa Cicerchia and Martina Caroleo – Senior researcher at the Italian National Institute of Statistics and Registered Social Worker (Italy), respectively – bring to light the power of art in addressing mental health issues among young people. Through their exploration of various projects, this article showcases how artistic and cultural engagements have been instrumental in empowering youth, reducing stigma, and promoting mental well-being. It serves as a beacon of hope and a call to action for integrating art into mental health initiatives.

Each contribution in this issue not only provides a rich analysis of current trends and challenges but also paves the way for future discourse and action within the realm of cultural policy.

Yours truly,

GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens
ENCATC Secretary General



Participation in cultural activities strengthens democracy and social cohesion – the evidence

Angelos Agalianos



In the run-up to the European elections in 2024, a compelling amount of international research shows that citizens who participate regularly in cultural activities are more likely to vote, to volunteer, and to participate in community activities, projects, and organisations. The evidence confirms that citizens' participation in cultural activities and organisations is key to healthy, vibrant and resilient democracies.

Introduction

In the EU Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022¹, the EU Member States asked the European Commission to carry out **a study on the relationship between culture and democracy**.



The study was authored for the European Commission by independent experts after a Call for Tenders. The aim of the study was to help us better understand the relationship between culture and democracy and the value of cultural participation to cohesive societies and democracy. The findings were published as a report in June 2023 (Available at: https://op.europa.eu/publication/manifestation_identifier/PUB_NC0822225ENN). This paper is a summary of those findings.

¹Since 2018, the Commission's New European Agenda for Culture provides the strategic framework for cooperation at EU level in the field of Culture. In this context, the EU Member States define, in cooperation with the European Commission, the main topics for EU-level policy cooperation through multi-annual Work Plans for Culture. The study leading to the results reported in this paper was one of the actions foreseen in the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022.

To know more about how the European Union supports the cultural and creative sectors in the EU (in terms of both policy and funding), see: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu>

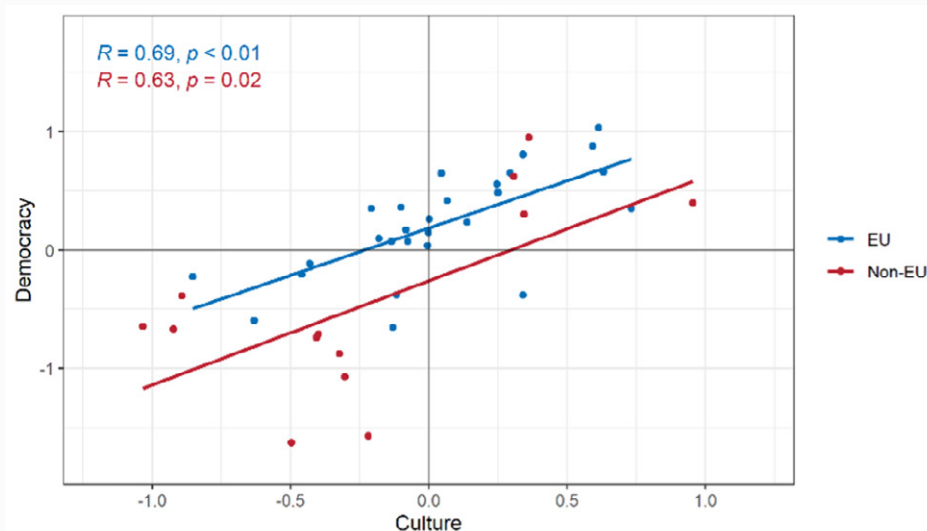
What does the evidence say?

The evidence shows that citizen participation in cultural activities² has a clear and positive association with civic engagement, democratic attitudes, and social cohesion.

National level

The evidence shows that **at the national level**, there is a clear and positive correlation between rates of cultural participation and indicators of civic engagement, democratic health and social cohesion, across both EU and non-EU countries. Analysis of the IFCD dataset shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between the **general** Culture indicator and the Democracy indicators (see *Figure 1* below). This means that countries which score higher than average in the culture indicator also score higher in the democracy indicator. The relationship is statistically significant for both EU and non-EU countries, but EU countries show a slightly stronger link. Importantly, the broader culture indicator includes a broader set of dimensions, including cultural participation as well as other dimensions such as cultural funding, cultural infrastructure, cultural education, and cultural freedoms and equality.

Figure 1. Correlation between Culture and Democracy indicators as reported in IFCD data



There is also a statistically significant positive correlation between **cultural participation** and democracy indicators across both EU and non-EU countries, and overall (see *Figure 2*). It is worth noting that the relationship of cultural participation

²In the work reported in this paper, "cultural activities" includes a broad range of cultural experiences and creative activities. For example, cultural activities may include, but are not limited to, choral and theatre groups; fairs; festivals; gallery exhibitions; music events; carnivals; the creation and sharing of literature; storytelling; dance; and craftwork - and the institutional, community and social settings that support them.

and democracy initially appears to be stronger in non-EU countries compared to EU³. However, this is largely driven by the UK, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland that have comparatively higher incomes and economic output than other non-EU countries. This suggests that there is a relationship between economic measures and both patterns of cultural participation and civic and democratic outcomes. Economic indicators of culture, including the size of the cultural sector, are both positively and significantly correlated with cultural measures more generally, as well as democratic outcomes. This suggests that the size of the cultural industry, and investment in cultural opportunities, is closely related to patterns of democratic participation.

Figure 2. Correlation between Cultural Participation and Democracy indicators as reported in IFCD data.

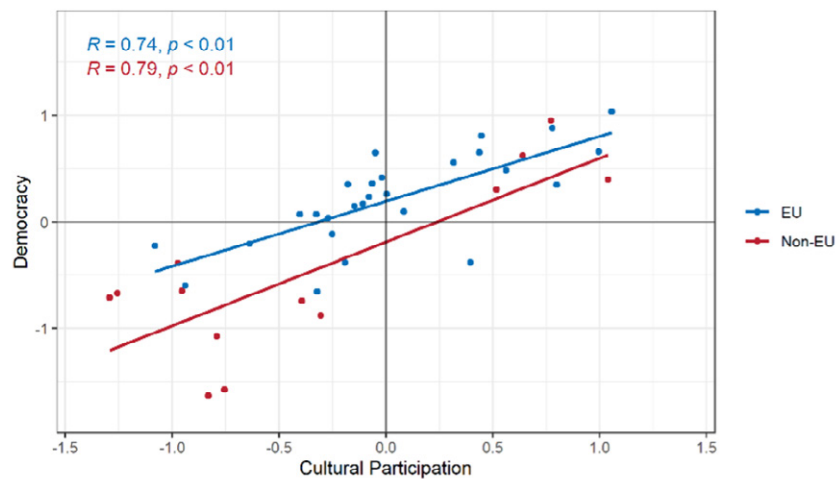
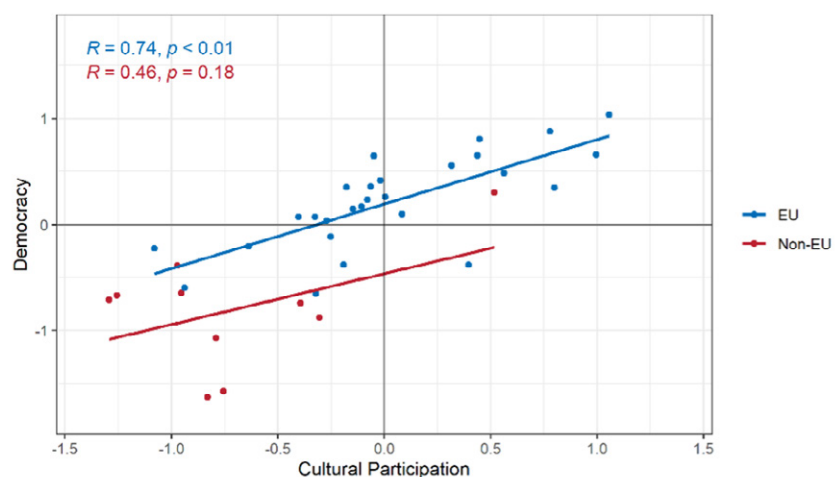


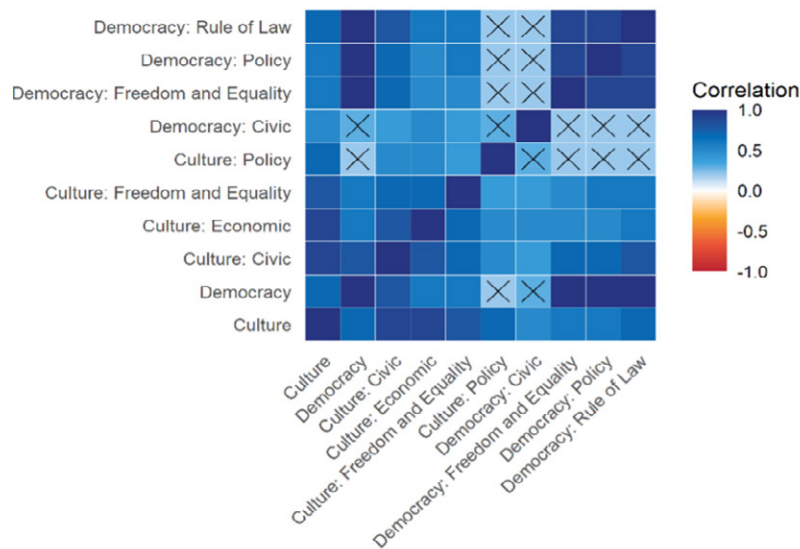
Figure 3. Correlation between Cultural Participation and Democracy indicators as reported in IFCD data, after removing three outliers (Norway, UK, and Switzerland).



³ Non-EU countries in the IFCD dataset are Albania, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Iceland.

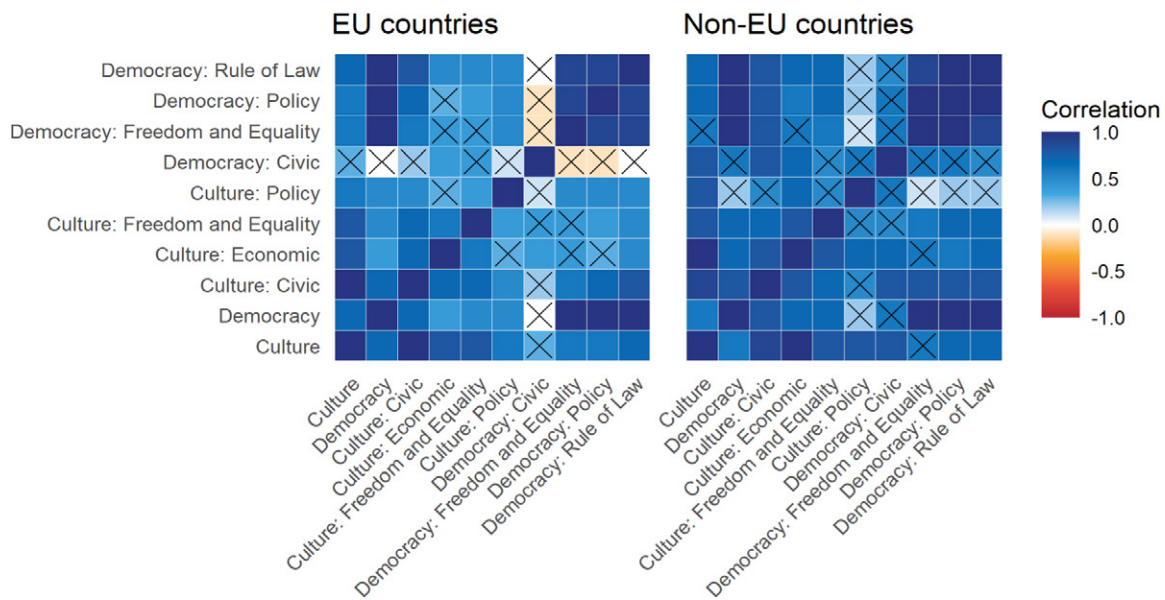
Looking at the specific dimensions of culture and democracy indicators, the IFCD data suggests strong links across the two domains (Figure 3). The heatmap below (Figure 4) shows the degree of correlation among the two main indicators and sub dimensions, as well as statistical significance. All indicators are positively correlated with each other, suggesting that countries with above average performance in one indicator also shows above average performance in others, although not all correlations are statistically significant. It is worth noting that the strength of the rule of law (rule of law indicator), checks and balances in government (policy indicator), and individual freedoms and democratic representation (freedom and equality measures) are the three main dimensions that are related to the overall ratings of democratic outcomes (as opposed to the civic indicator which is not significantly correlated). The three dimensions are also strongly correlated with each other, suggesting that countries which are performing well in one are also performing well in the others, as well as in overall democratic outcomes.

Figure 4. Correlation between Cultural Participation and Democracy indicators and selected dimensions as reported in IFCD data in EU countries. Note that 'X' indicates correlations which are not statistically significant at the 5% level.



The same analysis was conducted to compare correlations across EU and non-EU countries. Overall, correlations are stronger in EU countries, as opposed to non-EU countries, aligning with the previous analysis. Although overall Democracy and Culture are correlated across both EU and non-EU, there is variance across the different dimensions of those (some of the significant correlations between dimensions are identified only for EU and not for non-EU, and vice versa). For example, the policy dimensions of Culture are strongly linked to policy dimensions of Democracy for EU countries, while that is not true for non-EU countries.

Figure 5. Correlation between Cultural Participation and Democracy indicators and selected dimensions as reported in IFCD data in EU and non-EU countries. 'X' indicates correlations which are not statistically significant at the 5% level.



Population level

A range of large-scale population level studies show that rates of cultural participation are strongly related to positive civic and democratic behaviours, including rates of voting, engagement in community activities, volunteering and other civic-minded behaviours and attitudes such as tolerance, social trust and solidarity.

For example:

- A 2022 study in Italy found that a 1% increase in cultural consumption related to 20% reduction in hate crime (Denti et al, 2022).
- A 2018 survey of 30,000 households found that arts engagement increased the rates of giving and volunteering by 6 to 10% (Van de Vyver and Abrams, 2018).
- A 2012 study of 12,000 students found involvement in high school arts programmes were more likely to volunteer (by 21%), vote, engage in school and neighbourhood politics, and in community service activities (Catterall et al, 2012).
- The same study showed that 45% of young people from a low s-e background who had high levels of arts engagement voted in the 2004 US presidential election compared to only 1% of their peers who did not.

- ▶ A study of 18,000 families by Campagna et al (2020) found a significant link between cultural participation and indicators of interest in politics, trust in institutions, and civic behaviours.
- ▶ A 2012 analysis of 9000 individuals in the UK found a link between attending cultural events and a propensity to vote (Martorana and Mazza, 2012).
- ▶ A study of 6,257 US households showed a positive relationship between attending musical performances and voting, volunteering, donating, and participating in community activities (Polzella and Forbis 2013; 2016).

Group level

Extensive case study evidence suggests that cultural activities can also play a key role in strategies for community cohesion and engagement, and the inclusion and welfare of underrepresented or marginalised social groups and individuals. There is an extensive range of smaller scale evidence that indicates a range of relevant social effects including:

- ▶ Self-esteem, empathy, and self-awareness (e.g., Bone et al 2022; Kou et al 2020; Johnson, Keen and Pritchard, 2011; Pruitt, 2008; Hughes, 2004; Zelizer, 2004; Krensky, 2001; Flinders and Cunningham, 2014).
- ▶ Social networks, group belonging, and trust (e.g., Engh et al, 2021; ESPON 2021; Stern and Seifert, 2017; Maughan and Bianchini, 2004).
- ▶ Conflict resolution and reconciliation, and para social relationships (e.g., Rugg et al. 2021; Huss et al. 2016; Bergh and Sloboda, 2010; Weil, 2010; Zelizer, 2004; Lumsden, 1999; Epskamp, 1999; Bond, 2021; Murrar and Brauer, 2018).
- ▶ Cooperative behaviour and decision-making (e.g., Gato, Ramalhete and Vicente, 2013; Kelty et al., 2015; Eriksson and Stephensen, 2015; Falanga, 2020; Sand, 2019; Ferilli et al, 2017; Nakagawa, 2010).

Overall, the evidence shows strong civic benefits for communities.

For example:

- 1 Cultural activities deepen and broaden the social connections that underpin a resilient and cohesive society.** The strong emotional, creative, expressive and collaborative dimensions of cultural activities create spaces for dialogue, community gathering, sharing and celebration, social interaction and collaboration. By binding

people from a wide range of backgrounds and ages together in shared experiences, **cultural activities help build social capital**, the glue that holds communities together; they help create trust, tolerance and empathy for people from different backgrounds, that underpins social solidarity and cohesion. Cultural activities can also help people bridge social boundaries of race/ ethnicity, religion, gender, age, nationality, and occupational status.

2 Cultural participation promotes social attachment to a group or community or a place by deepening social relationships. For example, local cultural festivals can help to develop a sense of attachment and enhance local image and identity. Places with higher rates of participation in arts activities have a stronger sense of community belonging.

3 Artistic and creative activities are also essential for avoiding and resolving conflicts and enabling community reconciliation. Many conflict-resolution and community reconstruction initiatives have built on arts and cultural activities to bridge between different groups and communities.

4 Cultural engagement can play a key role in strategies for the inclusion of communities at risk of exclusion. Cultural participation can combat social alienation and segregation. Cultural activities create spaces and opportunities where individuals and communities can express their personal and group identities and perspectives as a valued part of a broader and diverse cultural and social landscape that can reinforce belonging. They are a powerful means of communicating across language barriers and of including vulnerable populations such as women, refugees, migrants, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, or LGBTIQ+ communities.

How does it work?

The evidence shows that the relationship between cultural activities and wider social, civic, and democratic outcomes is not linear or automatic. Rather, outcomes are driven by a collaborative but often indirect process of personal and community development. Participating in cultural activities does not automatically make someone a better person, more likely to pick up their rubbish, volunteer for local charities, tolerate their neighbours, or to vote. Rather, it makes someone *more likely* to do all these things as a by-product of the experience of participating in collaborative social settings that have creative and expressive activities at their heart.

Which specific forms of cultural activities have better results?

The social and civic benefits of arts and cultural participation are not intrinsically tied to a specific art form or practice. Both active and more passive forms of arts participation are positively associated with civic attitudes and outcomes. However, **stronger effects are found in more active forms of arts participation** that encourage personal investment in the creative activity. Those who participate *actively* in art and culture (by, for example, making music, participating in a theatre group, singing in a choir, playing an instrument, performing dance, creating painting or creative writing; or supporting community arts activities) have higher rates of volunteering and engaging in community activities than those who attend passively or visit cultural events and sites.

Other lessons from the evidence

Inclusive cultural organisations are essential foundations for a healthy and functioning society. Cultural organisations, including the network of grass roots groups and established organisations, need to be inclusive and representative of the whole of society through the types of cultural activities and outputs that they support, the audiences they attract, the stakeholders they work with, and their leadership.

The availability of easily accessible local cultural organisations and groups is a key factor driving cultural participation and involvement in the arts. The number of arts and cultural groups in a person's neighbourhood is the best single predictor of participation in arts and cultural events. Proximity, easy access, low cost and the attractiveness of the cultural "offer" are key factors for participation, more important than a person's income or education level. Actions include not just initiatives such as free admission or transport but active community engagement, and the diversification of cultural offers, to ensure activities and organisations are accessible and interesting to under-represented, marginalised or non-native speaking groups.

Another message from the evidence is that ***the density of cultural offer in an area and the volume of direct and indirect public funding for cultural opportunities are positively correlated with rates of cultural participation and with patterns of civic and democratic behaviours.*** Also, more developed cultural infrastructures coincide with higher levels of cultural participation.

Does it work for all?

Very importantly, the study found strong evidence that cultural participation influences civic and democratic attitudes and behaviours independently of a person's socio-economic background or education level. This means that people from all socio-economic backgrounds and education levels can –and should– benefit from cultural participation. However, the evidence shows that **patterns of cultural participation remain socially and spatially divided in the EU**. These inequalities reflect –and compound– wider socio-economic divisions. They carry severe consequences since the citizens of Europe are not sharing the potential benefits of cultural participation equally. There are significant inequalities in cultural participation and representation. For example:

- ▶ People with tertiary level education are 20% points more likely to participate in cultural activities than those with non-tertiary, upper secondary or post-secondary education and 40% points more likely to participate in cultural activities than those with no more than a lower secondary level of education (Eurostat 2015a).
- ▶ 60% of the culture sector workforce had a tertiary level of educational attainment, while only 7% had completed at most a lower secondary level of educational attainment, and 32% an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary level of educational attainment (Eurostat 2021).
- ▶ The reasons for not participating are generally reported to be a lack of interest of the cultural offer or reasons relating to the social perception of the accessibility of organisations or activities (Eurostat 2015b).

The message from these observations is that promoting democracy and social cohesion across but also within Member States requires addressing these inequalities.

Conclusions and next steps

In their seminal 2020 research paper, Desirée Campagna, Giulio Caperna and Valentina Montalto set out to test a crucial research question:

“Does Culture Make a Better Citizen? Exploring the relationship between cultural and civic participation in Italy”. In our own review of international research, we added the question “in what ways, how?”

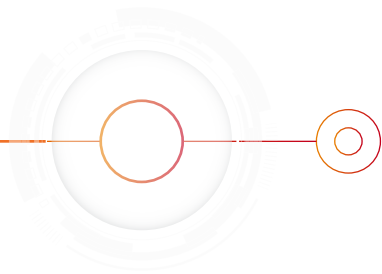
The work reported here does not claim to present definitive proof that cultural participation inevitably and deterministically leads to positive civic and democratic outcomes in a causal manner. Establishing a causal relationship between participation in cultural activities and associated social, civic and democratic outcomes remains complex. However, a compelling amount of international evidence confirms the strong **association** between cultural participation and civic and democratic outcomes. The evidence shows that art and culture are a lot more than leisure time entertainment for the rich. Based on the evidence, we can safely argue that investing in citizens' cultural participation is essential in any effort to promote civic engagement, democratic vitality and social cohesion in the European Union.

The study reported here concludes with a set of fourteen specific recommendations for the European Commission and for national/regional/local stakeholders. One key recommendation is to help schools use culture in citizenship education and to support them to develop civic-oriented partnerships with cultural agents.



This topic is central in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026. In this context, in 2024-2025 the European Commission will collect existing knowledge on how to build effective school/culture synergies that can explicitly and purposefully promote young people's democratic attitudes. This will include good policy and practice examples of how to establish and run such partnerships at national, regional or local level and how to support them as strategic tools in a concrete and practical way. The Commission will then share this knowledge with key stakeholders across the EU in an organised peer learning way. This plan is outlined in the 2024 Annual Work Programme⁴ for the implementation of the Creative Europe programme.

⁴ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/resources/creative-europe-annual-work-programmes>, p.41.



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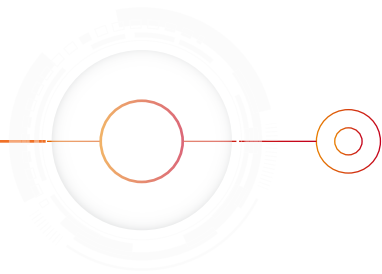
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Angelos Agalianos holds a PhD in the Sociology of Education and the Politics of Educational Change from the University of London Institute of Education. In 1998-2006 he worked in the Directorate-General for Research of the European Commission as scientific officer for European research policy in the social sciences monitoring education-related research projects. Since 2006 Angelos works in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. In 2006-2015 he worked mainly on inequalities and social justice in education policy. In 2016-2020 he worked for the Jean Monnet Activities, where he promoted the need to teach about the European Union at school. Since 2020 he works in the Cultural Policy Unit of the same Directorate-General, primarily on the links between culture and democracy and on the wider benefits of culture.



Post-covid challenges for European Live Music

Léna Lozano



Live DMA is a non-governmental network created in 2012, representing over 2600 popular music venues, clubs and festivals across 16 European countries.

In 2017, the network was granted a dedicated funding to develop its project *Live Style Europe* by the European Commission, allowing the development of its 3 core activities: observation, cooperation and advocacy.

The complementarity of these missions confers Live DMA with a solid integration within the popular music sector. Its members are national associative networks such as Fedelima (France), VNPF (The Netherlands) or Accés (Spain)¹, each of them gathering venues and clubs that they represent and advocate for at the regional and/or national scale. The network aims to empower live music professionals and to participate in public policies to improve the conditions of the live music sector, and hence actively engages with other European cultural networks and projects in order to influence the European approach of culture. By way of an example, Live DMA coordinator Audrey Guerre has been elected Chairwoman of the *European Music Council*² in June 2023, and the networks regularly collaborates with fellow European organisations such as *Music Moves Europe*³ (participating into the feasibility study for the establishment of a European Music Observatory), *EMX – European Music Export*⁴ or the global network *Keychange*⁵, working towards a total restructure of the music industry in reaching full gender equality.

Observing local venues...

Live DMA regularly publishes facts & figures about the live music sector through *The Survey*⁶, a data collection process undertaken in 2017 that allows the network to compile, analyze, compare and display quantitative indicators gathered from European music venues and clubs.

¹ All 20 members (including associates) are presented here: <https://www.live-dma.eu/our-members>

² <https://www.emc-imc.org>

³ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors/music/music-moves-europe>

⁴ <https://www.europeanmusic.eu/emx-home>

⁵ <https://www.keychange.eu>

⁶ <https://www.live-dma.eu/the-survey>

Once analyzed, the data derived from **The Survey** becomes a powerful tool to better understand the European musical sector. **The Survey** embraces details upon the administrative formats, functions, activities, audiences, human resources and financial situation of the European venues and clubs, allowing many cross-tabulations through space and time: international and yearly comparisons have then proven themselves extremely useful, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic period. Indeed, the clear snapshot that The Survey provides allows Live DMA to monitor the situation of live music in Europe pre, during and post-covid⁶ and to evaluate the major shifts that venues and clubs still have to cope with.

... to foster cooperation between music stakeholders...

The results withdrawn from this data collection process have then been complemented with qualitative feedback. In an effort to maintain its mission of cooperation between live music actors in the hardest times of the pandemic, Live DMA hosted monthly member's meetings online so each and every national association could share their experiences with restriction measures and support funds. Once real-life meetings eventually resumed in the midst of 2022, Live DMA participated into a variety of events (*One Voice for European Music* in Prague, *Bime Music Convention* in Bilbao, *MaMA Music Convention* in Paris...) while carrying on with monthly member's meetings, which have enabled these discussions to go on.

Live DMA hence published a dedicated report "Post-covid 19 challenges in the live music scenes across Europe⁸" in January 2023, combining all of said qualitative after-covid insights. This report has been shaped as a tool aiming at a clear depiction of the live music scenes struggles, guiding policy makers on a local, regional, national, and European level to refine their understanding of the roles, capacities, and values of these music entities.

... culminating into the identification of international concerns & recommendations

Based on this continuous data collection and observations, Live DMA released a list of **10 recommendations** to answer what appeared as on-field priorities:

1

Improve the working conditions and wages for the cultural workers to keep the sector attractive, especially to young professionals.

Before covid, the music sector professionals were already working in a pressurized, fast-paced environment. The pandemic added even more constraints and loss of income on them, private commercial venues having

⁷ Live DMA published a Survey back in 2019, hence describing European venues before covid; another issue has been released in May 2023 detailing post-covid figures, and additional publications focusing on the impact of the pandemic upon live music venues and clubs are all to be found on Live DMA's website: <https://www.live-dma.eu>

⁸ *Post-covid 19 challenges in the live music scenes across Europe*, to be retrieved from: <https://www.live-dma.eu/report-post-covid-19-challenges-in-the-live-music-scenes-across-europe/>

lost 47% of their working hours between 2019 and 2020. This massive brain-drain among staffs and crews is combined with a damaged perception of the sector that is losing attractiveness in the eye of the younger generations: in 2019, 7% of all working hours were led by interns and trainees that now tend to desert the field. Norway has then implemented an educational and capacity building program for young industry professionals named Master-class⁹, aiming to provide skills and knowledge to the participants so they are prompt on the job.

2

Reinforce the EU and national support schemes for venues, clubs and festivals to book emerging artists.

When asked to hierarchise the items on which they would cut back when facing inflation and rising costs, 70% of the Dutch venues represented by the VNPF association answer that their first move would be to cut back on risky programme in aid of a more advantageous cost/profit balance, at the cost of emerging artists that are left with less and less opportunities to play live, at the cost of artistic development schemes sometimes implemented by venues and clubs.

3

Develop local diplomacy tools and include live music representatives in urban planning strategies and sound regulations policies.

Following the reopening of bars, clubs and venues after lockdowns, a rise in the complaints about noise pollution have been spotted by the French network Culture Bar-bars¹⁰, urging for a future environmental noise regulation that will safeguard the cultural rights to live music and artistic freedom.

In 2023, Live DMA then launched the Watchtower¹¹, which consists in an active watch of the cases in which venues are threatened by noise complaints. The aim of this Watchtower is to report on cases in order to alleviate the feeling of isolation, debate about the solutions found and enriching the dialogue between local authorities and live music venues, as well as mediating with neighbours.

4

Support alliances with education systems to provide trainings and certification for live music professionals and develop their skills.

To help renew the pool of workers while alleviating the workload on people

⁹ <https://musicnorway.no/english/news/young-music-leaders-program>

¹⁰ <https://euradio.fr/emission/4qA4-live-style-europe/WNan-cafes-culture-et-nuisance-sonore-collectif-culture-bar-bars>

¹¹ <https://www.live-dma.eu/watchtower-noise-diplomacy>

still on the job, adequate training and/or smoother career change paths would be beneficial to the sector, and shall contribute to the top recommendation of improving the working conditions and wages for all cultural workers.

5

Support community building actions in the live music scenes and local audience development.

These shifts in cultural practices, combined with climate awareness, might be perceived as an opportunity to reshape live events and working habits into more sustainable models, both environmentally and socially speaking. As an example, Live DMA is working upon a tool named *The Try-Angle*¹², consisting on a step-by-step methodology to accompany live music actors in their everyday work into building new audiences and go beyond the usual conception of a concert. 18 European music venues participate into the experimentation.

6

Create an ambitious European Music Observatory to monitor the fast evolutions of the sector, especially regarding audience practices and the live music sector's competitiveness.

In 2020, the 2600 venues represented by Live DMA were hit by a 76% decline of their audience visits, culminating in an income loss of 496 million €. Upon the reopening of live music places, audience behaviours have not been back to what they used to be. They are harder to predict, concert-goers tending to purchase their ticket at the very last minute, and may result in cancellations since the economic balance is unforeseeable prior to the event. Moreover, other factors such as the shifts in musical practices themselves call for a real-time watch, in order to properly adjust music stakeholders' decisions regarding audience development strategies.

7

Regulate the maximum artists fees and ensure fair remuneration for all within the Status of Artist to reduce gaps and pressures on the live music ecosystem.

The festival concentration phenomenon, as addressed by researchers Matthieu Barreira and Emmanuel Negrier¹³, combined with the rise of artistic fees and the cut back on risky programmes indicate that live music events tend to go mainstream in order to maintain their activities. In order to help the music actors to renew with talent development and protect inde-

¹² <https://www.live-dma.eu/try-angle/>

¹³ <https://editions-attribut.com/product/nectart15/>

pendent venues, clubs and festivals from buy-outs, a harmonization of the legal frames that wraps artistic performances in Europe would be valuable asset.

8

Support slow touring initiatives, including residency programs in the funding schemes.

An online survey focusing on the needs of Live DMA members pointed out that most of said members have inscribed sustainability as part of their association's strategy, and are working upon awareness campaigns, measurement actions and programmes and/or carbon reduction and calculation. Live DMA then hosted The Greenhouse, a series of 6 online trainings to align (cross-)national strategies on sustainability. As artists and audience mobility are the main carbon emissions for venues and festivals (between 50-80% of the carbon footprint), these trainings gave participants the possibility to reflect upon the booking strategies, one of the solution emerging from these discussions being supporting slow touring initiatives, with more gigs for the artists which should also include residency programs and cooperation on booking strategies.

9

Regulate the energy costs and index subsidies on the inflation rates to maintain the live music activities.

The live music economy has always bore fragile business models, which are now aggravated by the raising artistic, production and energy costs. The latter are still rocketing up to 3 times what they used to be in certain European countries, pushing the live music scenes to raise the tickets prices and / or increase their audience capacity to stay financially sustainable, possibly jeopardizing their social and/or local anchorage.

10

Create a working group with EU institutions and live music representatives to define the scope of support to live music venues, clubs and festivals in the Members States.

This recommendation comes from the urge for live music venues to be recognized as full cultural actors bearing a heavy social responsibility. As a matter of fact, Live DMA noticed that during the pandemic, the associations which venues were recognized as cultural actors managed to implement an emergency support fund more efficiently. However, many European countries do not benefit from the same level of recognition for their venues and are still lacking support. As way of example, Covid 19 support fund from governments was able to cover diverse ranges of lost income

regarding the legal status of music venues and clubs: it covered 11% of the lost income¹⁴ of public venues and clubs, 29% of private non-profit venues, and 6% of private commercial venues. The main purpose was to cover fixed costs (housing costs and wages of employees), but hardly conferring any support money to cover artists' fees for cancelled shows, for freelancers that could not be offered any work anymore, or for suppliers in the industry depending on live music events.

AUTHOR



Léna Lozano After studies in Performing Arts Management and a Master's thesis in ethnomusicology, Léna Lozano received her Ph.D in Performing Arts in 2021 from the University of Western Brittany for her work about amateur, professional and pro-am music and theatre-making. Her research interests are rooted in popular music, with an emphasis in rock, metal and Celtic music and a particular taste for international comparisons. As a research officer at Live DMA, she now investigates the roles of live music in artistic development, programming practices and studies the European music festivals ecosystem.

¹⁴ The loss of income reflects the difference between the total income perceived by music venues and clubs between 2019 and 2020

Youth for the Future of Cultural Heritage in Europe

ESACH

We understand cultural heritage as a collective consciousness encompassing all human experiences from the past into the present. Remembering this is essential in creating a sustainable future. It not only holds the knowledge of our being but plays an essential role in promoting sustainable socio-economic development. Furthermore, in the face of intensifying climate change impacts, we need to do more, we need to do better. We, the youth, take seriously our task of taking cultural heritage further as a constant reference for better societies.

“Youth for the future of cultural heritage in Europe” Editorial Team

The European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018) initiated the establishment of the European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage ([ESACH](#)), a network that has since expanded, affiliating with prominent sector organisations and engaging hundreds of individual members. Stemming from this and as part of ESACH's programmes, the “Youth for the Future of Cultural Heritage in Europe” emerged.

The auspicious context was marked by the 2022 European Year of Youth aimed to underscore the significance of European youth in forging a more sustainable, inclusive, and digital future. ESACH took this opportunity to support its generation that was disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the escalating challenges of climate change, security issues, and has underlined the imperative need for a collective response to these risks. #EYY2022 witnessed numerous activities across Europe emphasising the involvement of young people in addressing societal needs.



European Heritage Masterclass “Climate Heritage Digital Advocacy” 2022 © Josef Rabara / Europa Nostra

Given the multifaceted challenges confronting cultural heritage in Europe, an inclusive and intergenerational approach was particularly pertinent. The European heritage landscape stands at a critical juncture as it adapts to confront the impacts of climate change and align with prevailing socio-economic priorities, notably the post-pandemic era, green and digital transitions, and people-centric governance and planning approaches. To carry out this transformation comprehensively, the input of all generations and sectors of society is indispensable.

In response, the “Youth for the Future of Cultural Heritage in Europe” position paper aims to articulate the youth’s priorities for cultural heritage, contributing to the public discourse on the future of cultural heritage in Europe.

Drafted by a team of volunteers from over 15 countries, the document underscores the determination, dedication, and capabilities of young people across Europe, serving as a snapshot of current perspectives. Simultaneously, it extends an invitation to the cultural heritage sector to act on youth priorities and integrate young people at all levels, from decision-making to on-the-ground actions.

Looking ahead, the youth’s sentiments offer a clear guide for all future engagements and activities: “Sustainability is the goal for the future of cultural heritage. Cultural heritage bridges past and future and helps societies achieve sustainable development.”

The five identified principles serve as stepping stones to tangibly operationalise this response, pinpointing strategies and exemplifying good practices:

- 1 Inclusion - Heritage as a confluence;**
Cultural heritage is a powerful tool to strengthen social cohesion, sense of belonging, mutual understanding, and thus, resilience.
- 2 Collaboration - Heritage as a collective network;**
Collaboration among stakeholders is decisive in attaining cultural heritage’s goals and potential.
- 3 Intergenerational exchange and dialogue - Heritage as a bridge;**
Bringing together experience and skills intergenerationally is a priority for the cultural heritage sector.
- 4 Strengthen the sector - Heritage as a future profession;**
Strengthening the inclusivity of cultural heritage as a profession increases its overall resilience and, thus, its sustainable mission.
- 5 New technologies - Heritage as an expanding field;**
Digital technologies should be embraced to enable new connections between cultural heritage, society and professionals.

To act on these principles and take actions on the priorities of youth, ESACH invites all readers and partners to sign the pledge and commit to working towards these goals, identifying specifically the strategies they will use to implement this. You can read more about how we are planning to take this forward on this dedicated webpage. Both individuals and organisations can become signatories of the pledge, helping ESACH boost this collective message for a better, more inclusive and sustainable future.

This extensive collaborative initiative, representing the most significant joint effort of ESACH, together with Europa Nostra, and The Future is Heritage, to date, materialised through the concerted engagement of diverse stakeholders, partners, and volunteers within the European cultural heritage domain. This endeavour specifically concentrated on networks and organisations dedicated to the active integration of young individuals.

Youth pledge for a sustainable and inclusive future for Europe infographic inviting people to sign the pledge.
 CC-BY-NC-ND Creator: Medina Fazlic with Tetiana Golub's support

YOUTH PLEDGE FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE

for cultural heritage in Europe

WHAT IS IT?

"Sustainability is the goal for the future of cultural heritage. Cultural heritage bridges past and future and helps societies achieve sustainable development."



For this transformation to be effective, it needs the contribution of all generations and sectors of society



We hope this work will contribute to strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration, knowledge-sharing, peer-to-peer learning and advocacy in our field of activity.



Inclusion
Heritage as a confluence



Collaboration
Heritage as a collective network



Intergenerational exchange and dialogue
Heritage as a bridge



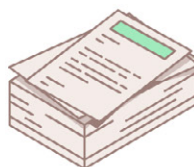
Strengthen the sector
Heritage as a future profession



New technologies
Heritage as an expanding field

WHY SIGN THE PLEDGE ?

To act on these principles and take actions on the priorities of youth, signing the pledge and committing to working towards these goals, identifying specifically the strategies they will use to implement this mentioned above



The "Youth for the future of cultural heritage in Europe" position paper brought together over 30 volunteers and 10 institutions from 15 countries



European Year of Youth, institutions, individuals and organisations are invited to commit to the priorities expressed by youth to work together towards a sustainable, inclusive and intergenerational Europe.

Lead partners together with European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage (ESACH):

Europa Nostra

The Future is Heritage (FisH)

Associated partners:

Europeana Initiative

ICOMOS

Future for Religious Heritage

Europa Nostra Sweden

Michael Culture Association

European Heritage Volunteers

ENCATC

Thanks to the support of:

European Heritage Tribune

Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

Erfgoed Brabant

Erfgoed Gelderland

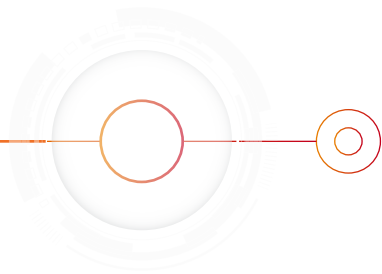
Dutch Culture

The building brick of this position paper was an online consultation conducted as part of the Europa Nostra project titled "European Cultural Heritage Agora: Empowering Europe's Civil Society Movement for Heritage" (2022-2024), co-funded by Creative Europe. This initiative, serving as an initial step in shaping the youth's role in the future of European cultural heritage, solicited responses through online consultation and supplemented the data with in-depth interviews. The outcomes of the Europe-wide consultation were systematically gathered, analysed, and presented in a dedicated edition of The ESACH Quarterly, the digital publication of the European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage.

The survey collected responses from approximately 120 participants, with the overarching objective of empowering and amplifying the perspectives of Europe's youth. This initiative also counted on the partnership of: Erasmus Student Network (ESN), the European Heritage Tribune (EHT), The Future is Heritage, the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force of the Europeana Initiative, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the European Heritage Volunteers.

The findings derived from the consultation illuminate the dreams and aspirations of the younger generation actively engaged in the cultural heritage domain.

This effort seeks to augment the perspective of youth regarding the future of cultural heritage, with the expectation that such an enhanced vision will foster a heightened sense of ownership and commitment in a transversal manner. This empowerment is envisaged to yield benefits for the European heritage landscape and, consequently, for society on a broader scale.



Simultaneously, respondents underscored certain challenges perceived to have adverse effects on the positioning of youth within the overarching context, both professionally and otherwise. These challenges, identified as detrimental to inclusivity and accessibility for young professionals, contribute to a less favourable environment for their engagement. **In summarising the key findings of the consultation, it is possible to categorise the implications inferred from the results into the following distinct thematic divisions:**

- ▶ Transdisciplinarity, diversity and dialogue;
- ▶ Development of skills and capacity building;
- ▶ Access to education;
- ▶ Meaningful introduction into the professional environment;
- ▶ Decent pay-out opportunities.

AUTHOR

ESACH

**EUROPEAN STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION FOR
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

ESACH (www.esach.org) is a growing international network of students and young professionals working within the cultural heritage field. The network's day-to-day activities and programmes are coordinated by a group of volunteers working towards enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration amongst cultural heritage students, young professionals, and organisations through networking and sharing knowledge. ESACH is a proud supporting partner of the European Heritage Hub project.

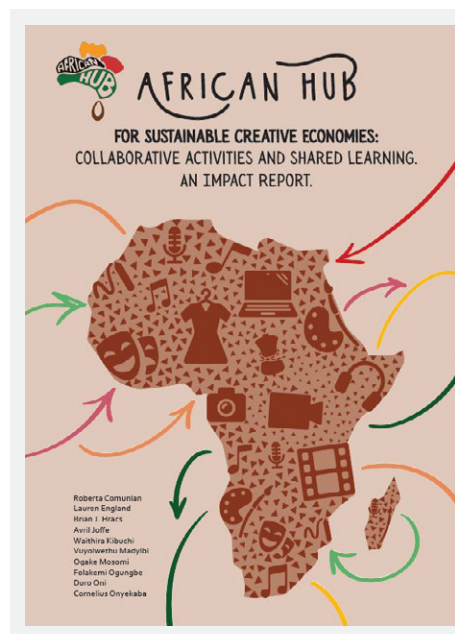
African Hub for Sustainable Creative Economies explore the importance of collaborations between higher education and creative economies in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Roberta Comunian and Lauren England

Overview

This paper highlights the collaborative activities and journey undertaken by an international academic team across King's College London (UK), University of Southampton (UK), University of Nairobi (Kenya), University of Lagos (Nigeria) and University of Witwatersrand (South Africa). It illustrates the ways in which each African partner – supported by key intermediaries and sector partners – engaged with their respective creative sectors: Fashion, Theatre, Film and Digital Media. In each country and sector, the project built bridges with creative practitioners, intermediaries, academics, graduates and policymakers through a series of online events (*Creative Imagination Workshops*) and launched a small grant initiative (*Collaborative Voucher Scheme*) to support 25 creative projects that showcased creative collaborations and engagement with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while also providing valuable knowledge about the value of collaborations in creative economies to the academic partners, participants and wider community.

In this short paper, we reflect on the range of impacts that the overall project and the creative projects supported through the Collaborative Voucher Scheme had. For example, learning about the rewards and challenges of international research collaborations. AHSCE has also built new bridges and pathways for academia to engage with creative economies and support their development. From the comments of aca-



[The project final report](#)

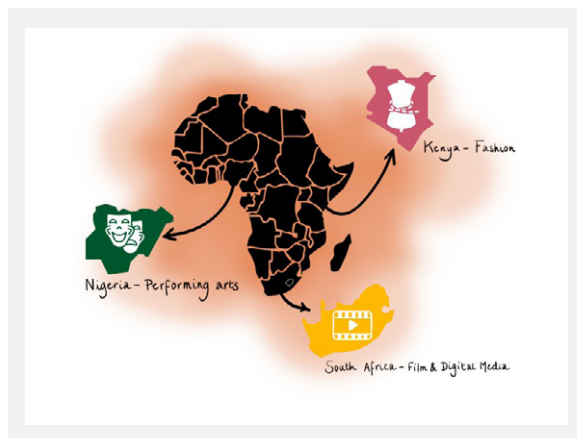
demics and creative practitioners who delivered the 25 funded projects, it is evident that the AHSCE project had an impact and contributed to a range of UN SDGs. It is also clear that participants experimented and learned about how to collaborate and the importance of collaboration. Specifically, they learned about the value of collaborating with academia, and working across sectors as well as co-producing and collaborating with young people and other communities.

The knowledge generated includes important policy reflections in relation to the importance of funding and business support; enhancing knowledge and skills; protecting creative workers, valuing creative careers and celebrating and supporting creativity. In the conclusion, it also reflects on the the project's legacy and the launch of a new Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) on Creative Economies: Cultures, Innovation and Sustainability with the support of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild) that will enable further fruitful collaborations and knowledge sharing in the years to come and continue to build capacity and impactful research to address future challenges.

Key project activities and outputs

The overall aim of the project was to support the development of sustainable creative economies in Africa by engaging African HEIs and empowering them to interact with their creative economies and entrepreneurs working alongside sector project partners. It proposed that strengthening the capacity of HEIs to interact with key stakeholders in the sector (graduates, creative entrepreneurs, creative intermediaries and policymakers) could have a positive and sustainable impact on the individuals, communities and sectors involved. In doing so it aimed to empower the development of a more innovative and diverse workforce. The project was built on equitable partnerships with three African HEIs and local creative partners. The project had three main objectives: To support and strengthen connections between African HEIs and creative entrepreneurs (nationally and across the continent) through collaborative knowledge sharing and innovation activities. To contribute to sustainable entrepreneurship by collecting and sharing career development stories and practical knowledge with creative entrepreneurs across Africa, working alongside sector project partners and paying particular attention to gender representation and how diverse cultural heritage can be represented. To strengthen the profile of research on creative economies and creative 12 entrepreneurship as a key development area for Africa, by scoping potential collaborations with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) which includes all of our African university partners.

The project started in November 2021 and was completed in March 2023, with final reflections and reports being completed in the following months. The project had three main phases: 1) Disseminating existing knowledge; 2) Developing collaborative projects and knowledge sharing; 3) Reflecting on collaborative learning and legacy building. These phases ran concurrently throughout the project. Each institution acted as a thematic Hub and focused its work on an area of the creative economy to allow specific expertise to be developed and shared across the AHSCE and in connection with project partners (see Figure 2). In Nigeria the focus was Performing Arts, in Kenya the focus was Fashion and in South Africa the focus was Film and Digital Media.

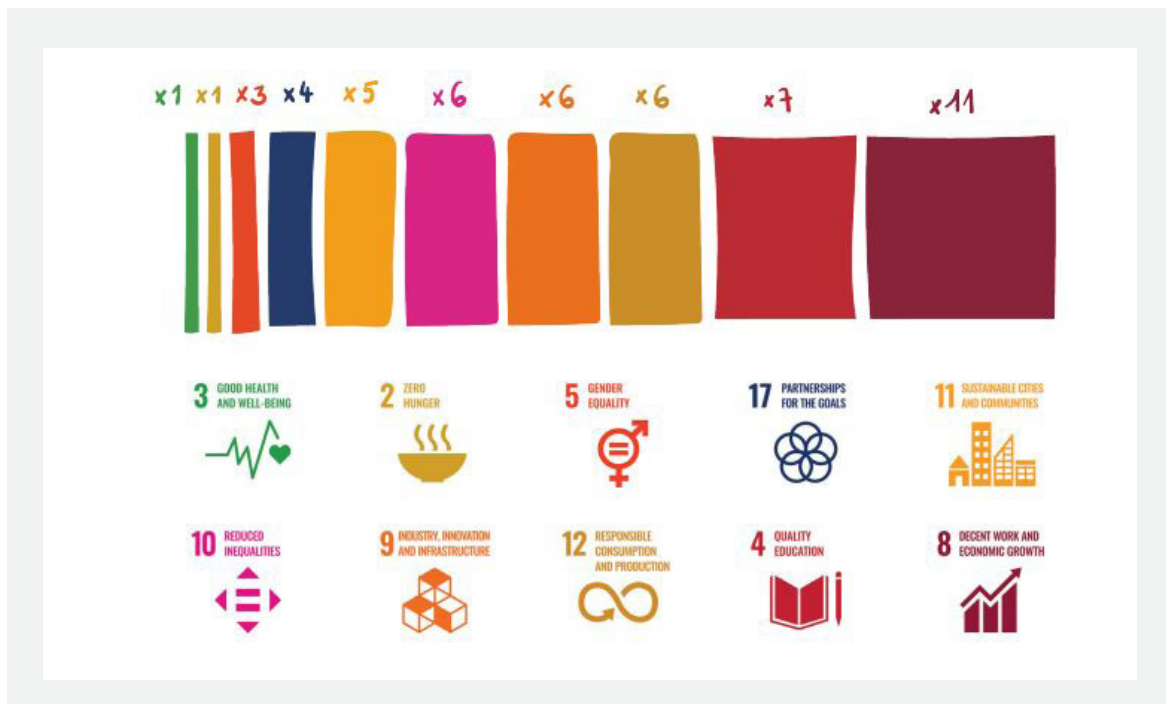


The core of the project concentrated on developing and following new collaborative projects, encouraging further knowledge sharing between the African HEIs partners and their local creative economies. A series of Creative Imagination Workshops was delivered and a Collaborative Voucher Scheme to support collaborations between creatives and between HEIs and local creatives was launched.

CREATIVE IMAGINATION WORKSHOPS Between May and June 2022, we held a total of 12 online Creative Imagination Workshop events across the three Hubs. Each workshop was hosted by the local Hub PI and the UK team and included a guest speaker. The different events attracted between 15 and 62 participants each. In total, 493 participations were recorded across the three Hubs' online events and discussions, with additional AHSCE team members joining from across the Hubs to support each other. The launch events introduced attendees to the AHSCE project and the whole team. At this stage, we also provided attendees with initial information about the forthcoming Collaborative Voucher Scheme and encouraged networking with potential future collaborators via an online platform, Padlet.

COLLABORATIVE VOUCHER SCHEME The Collaborative Voucher Scheme was an initiative to enable creative practitioners in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa to develop unique and innovative short-term (up to 6 months) collaborative projects that contribute to sustainable creative economies and connect with UN SDGs. A call was distributed to the participants in the Creative Imagination Workshops to submit proposals for between £500- £1,000 (in local currency) to kick-start collaborations between attendees or between attendees and academic researchers that supported future

innovations and developments for the creative economy. The funding could be used to pilot an idea, pay for time to develop the idea, hire venues or source skills, materials and equipment to take it forward. All proposals were required to be connected to the local theme and one (or more) of the SDGs. Up to 10 Vouchers were available for groups of two or more individuals at any career stage to develop a collaborative project/ idea. At least two collaborators had to have attended a Creative Imagination Workshop and applicants were strongly encouraged to connect with others at the events and via the Padlet in advance. Collaborations with the local academic partners were encouraged, but also with academics at other institutions and between creative and/or community practitioners (non-academics). Projects were selected based on: the quality of the proposal; relevance to the local theme and SDGs; budgets that were appropriate and represented good value for money; evidence of good partnership fit and that the applicants had the knowledge, skills and experience required to successfully deliver the project; benefit to the applicants' creative and/or professional development and benefit to wider local or national creative economies were also considered, including potential for long term partnership development. 8 projects were funded in Kenya, 9 in Nigeria, and 8 in South Africa. Once the projects and collaborations were selected, they were followed the collaborations for 6 months to capture and share knowledge and learning from the projects.



The collaborative projects were all showcased on the AHSCCE YouTube channel.

The selected projects covered a range of sectors around the core themes addressed by each Hub. Overall, we worked with 63 individuals. Many identified themselves with multiple roles and profiles, but overall, their many occupations were described as: academics (18) creative practitioner/ entrepreneur (42) and community organisation (3). Most projects stemmed from new collaborations – established during the Creative Imagination Workshops – but some included known partners. Out of 25 projects, 11 involved academics (within the partner universities but also beyond) and 14 included a collaboration with early careers researchers or practitioners. All projects engaged with one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 3). In particular, as seen below, the most popular SDG addressed was SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) but others of similar importance were SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption), SDG9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG5 (Gender Equality).

Evaluation

As part of the Collaborative Voucher Scheme, we distributed a short survey to the participants on the completion of their projects and gathered some collective feedback from their collaborative journey. Out of the 63 participants across the 25 projects, we received 45 survey responses. The survey results presented an overwhelmingly supportive picture, with most participants strongly agreeing that:

-  The CVS was well-managed, and working with the research team and university was smooth **79%** strongly agree
-  The CVS gave me new insight into the role that universities and university collaboration can play in local creative economies **80%** strongly agree
-  The CVS gave me new insight into the role that creative industries can play in supporting sustainable development **79%** strongly agree
-  The CVS has led to potential new collaborations or new business opportunities **80%** strongly agree

At the core of AHSCE activities and especially for the Collaborative Voucher Scheme was the need to learn and understand more about collaboration and, specifically: Collaborative practices between academia and the creative sector; Collaborating across different creative sectors and between practitioners; Collaborating with communities and young people. These themes are expanded on in the final report.

Learning and future work

During the project, through workshops, focus groups and interviews, we asked creative entrepreneurs and creative intermediaries about the challenges and barriers in their respective sectors and national contexts. In so doing, we also asked participants to reflect on potential solutions and to suggest policies and supports. These discussions highlighted a range of sector and location-specific issues. For example, the need for greater security for theatre audiences in Nigeria, the prohibitive cost and inaccessibility of camera equipment for filmmaking in South Africa and the difficulty in obtaining appropriate fabrics and materials for fashion designers in Kenya. However, in this section, we focus on a set of overarching challenges and policy recommendations that resonate across the cases, summarised in Figure 4. A detailed reflection on the role of policy is included in the final report.



Figure 4

Beyond the lifespan of the funded project and the learning shared in this report, the Knowledge Hub will provide an enduring and valuable legacy for the AHSCE project. It will continue to provide a point of reference for creative economy stakeholders in Africa. It will also continue to raise the profile of creative economies as important career pathways and areas of work and provide a meaningful focus on teaching and research in this area.

Finally, the launch of a new Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) on Creative Economies: Cultures, Innovation and Sustainability (figure 5) with the support of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild) will enable fruitful collaborations and knowledge sharing to continue. This CoRE will examine the transformational potential of cultural and creative economies and aims to identify, empower, and protect the value of creativity for inclusive and sustainable growth and development. Building on the AHSCE project, at its heart will be research and capacity building that will shape the next generation of scholars and engaged researchers, specifically addressing three core research themes: Sustainable and inclusive business models and markets for the creative industries underpinned by technology and sustainability; Innovation, creation, protection and development for cultural and creative producers; Heritage, communities, socio-cultural value and inclusive development models.



Figure 5

The final report of the project is available to download here: <http://bit.ly/AHSCE>

Comunian, R., England, L., Hrac, B. J., Joffe, A., Kibuchi, W., Madyibi, V., Mosomi, O., Ogungbe, F., Oni, D., & Onyekaba, C. (2023). African Hub for Sustainable Creative Economies: collaborative activities and shared learning. An Impact Report. King's College London. <https://doi.org/10.18742/pub01-140>

AUTHORS



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Art for Mental Health. A European mosaic of projects for young people

Annalisa Cicerchia and Martina Caroleo

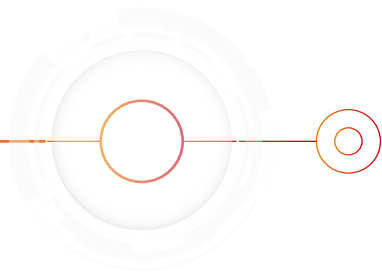
For the World Health Organisation, in its Action Plan 2013–2030, “mental health, [which] is conceptualized as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. With respect to children, an emphasis is placed on the developmental aspects, for instance, having a positive sense of identity, the ability to manage thoughts, emotions, as well as to build social relationships, and the aptitude to learn and to acquire an education, ultimately enabling their full active participation in society” (OMS 2021). The EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 devotes the fifth of its 11 objectives to mental health and well-being, which it describes in these terms: Achieving better mental well-being and ending the stigmatisation of mental health problems, thereby promoting the social inclusion of all young people (www.youthgoals.eu).

In Europe, the increase of acute and burning problems affecting young people, even at a very early age, such as coping with bullying and cyber-bullying, the post-traumatic stress disorder of so many young migrants, the pandemic scar, concerns about the environmental crisis and war, the increase in suicides, suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts, and self-harm, call for immediate, coordinated, and intense action.

All over the world and particularly in the EU, many cultural and creative projects actively address the mental health and well-being of young people, making their unique contribution to the promotion, prevention, treatment, and management of the most difficult and fragile situations.

Since 2019, the WHO has repeatedly recognised the validity of these practices, which make it possible to accompany the network of medical and social care support with a presence of widespread, non-institutionalised, low-threshold access points to care that are closer to the places of the daily life of adolescents and young people.

Young people’s mental health is also increasingly being addressed by the European Commission. Last June, within the framework of the Voices of Culture structured



dialogue programme, the EC issued an invitation to arts and cultural organisations to meet and produce their own reflections on the contribution of culture to improving the mental health and well-being of young people.

At the heart of the Voices of Culture 2022 call¹ was the realisation that art and culture already contribute a great deal to the mental health of young people, and can do even more, also to provide relief to the care and social service systems that have been severely tested by the pandemic. For this to happen, however, we need to move from a fragmented, often inconstant, and uneven approach to shared practices and a systemic vision.

86 organisations from 21 countries responded to the call on 'Youth, Mental Health and Culture'. The majority (61) are organisations from the cultural sector, working in music, publishing, literature, performing arts (theatre, dance, etc.), visual arts, museums, video and media sectors, circus, etc. Thirteen health organisations and 12 from the education sector also responded.

Fifty-five participants were selected based on the relevance, strength, size, and methods used by their organisations in previous experiences. For two months, the 55 selected engaged in an exchange and comparison of practices.

Among the many, we would like to mention here two projects, which have proved to be effective in addressing, using art and culture, the problem of mental vulnerability for young people, working both towards their empowerment and the reduction of stigma and raising awareness among a wider public.

The first, 'Quacky (Queer Arts Group)', in the UK, is aimed at young people between 12- and 18 years old belonging to the LGBTQ+ community. Through the preparation of a play based on personal stories of LGBTQ+ people, participants could work on themselves, feel part of a community, and give meaning to their lives. Shame gives way to a sense of pride when performed in front of an audience. Acting allows participants to enhance what makes them 'different', giving them the courage not to hide any longer but to become the protagonists of their stories.

The second project, "CSÁO!" is aimed at young people between the ages of 10 and 18 living in a community with a very complex past and experience. In this case, acting and music allow the young people to rewrite their story by playing other characters and imagining different scenarios,

¹ <https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VoC-YMH-14-6-2022.pdf>

with the constant support of specialised mental health workers, to provide a protected space to express themselves freely. The meetings result in products such as short films, video clips, and rap lyrics, which are then made available to the public via the project's social media pages and some festivals.

Representatives of cultural organisations who participated in this Voices of Culture round were invited to question the availability and quality of evidence on the effectiveness of artistic and cultural activities for the mental health of young people, the need for cross-sectoral actions involving the worlds of health and education, what are the key success factors and the most congenial fields of application. On 8 December 2022, an initial proposal of recommendations was presented to the representatives of the European Commission in Brussels².

The recommendations that have been developed revolve around the concept of global intervention. It follows from the WHO definition of mental health that interventions in this field must be multisectoral and multidimensional. This requires that the work includes a proactive social and health integration, which also includes artistic and cultural venues, operators, and programmes. It is well established that the involvement of young people in creative pathways in which cultural institutions are also engaged is an effective prevention tool; it also facilitates reaching a state of psychophysical well-being. On the other hand, art and culture would finally see their true value recognised and could no longer be seen as aesthetic accessories, as such expendable in times of shrinking public spending. On the contrary, they are tools that can be made available to people and can contribute substantially to improving their quality of life. Obviously, these objectives are even more easily attainable the more synergy can be achieved between professionals from different disciplinary fields (medicine, anthropology, art, culture, psychology, sociology, social sciences) who can collaborate with each other and achieve truly effective interventions in terms of social inclusion, prevention, empowerment, and the strategies for coping with one's own discomfort.

Another pillar underpinning the recommendations of Voices of Culture is concertation. Young people must be seen not as the inert recipients of actions, but as their protagonists. They must be put in a position to co-design and be able to make their contribution. Empowering young people, especially those living in vulnerable and marginalised conditions and who live with a social stigma, also in the decision-making process enables them to exercise a fundamental right for their lives.

² The final report can be found here: https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/YMHC_BrainstormingReport_FINAL-1.pdf

Projects that have succeeded in integrating the world of social and medical care with that of art and culture should be shared and made more accessible. Sharing within cultural sectors makes it possible to learn from what has already been done, to be able to implement, modify, improve, and above all replicate.

However, these initiatives, which are often intermittent due to piecemeal and project-based funding, need to be ensured continuity over time to turn them into fully-fledged services. This would ensure that people are taken care of with greater certainty, with the best projects growing based on experience gained over time. The quality of many cultural enterprises and organisations would also benefit.

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Martina Caroleo, Registered Social Worker, focuses on unaccompanied foreign minors and socially disadvantaged adolescents and young adults. She participated in the drafting of the Voices of culture call 2022 background paper on the contribution of cultural sectors to the mental health and well-being of young people.

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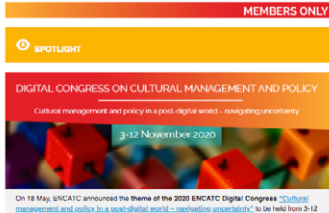
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ENCATC holds the status of an NGO in official partnership with UNESCO, of observer to the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe, and is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

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