



# White Paper on the Future of Cultural Youth Education - C onclusions and Rec ommendations



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# Abstract

Building upon the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, and the European Year of Skills, this paper addresses the public and private sector's key players, to acknowledge the leading role of artists and cultural professionals but also youth workers and social workers to shape a flourishing future for the young generations. By focusing our collective attention on their working (global and interconnected) conditions we can truly acknowledge the creative practices at the service of and as propeller of **(youth) sustainable development** and accelerate **youth social and emotional flourishing**, hence leading to economic prosperity. Protection and promotion of individuality, cultural identity and expression of diversity of ways to be part of a community and sharing and enjoy creativity represents today, more than ever a challenge. Youth workers and professionals of the social-space, along with artists and cultural professionals have showed us -and allowed our young groups and the future generations - to stay connected, despite the diversity in background, interests and visions. The same way as youth creativity bring us together, it is now the turn for policy and decision makers to come together, join forces to enable the young people to speak up for themselves, and the professionals of the art and social sectors to benefit from creative partnerships and strengthened infrastructures and facilities.

The arts and cultural actors constitute a fragile ecosystem benefiting often from very little or no support, cultural policies and public investment are today very important to ensure that the positive impact of art to our societies might continue. Artists are in a challenging time to exercise their talents in new contexts, and transfer their knowledge and methods to the young generation, in particular to fragile youth groups. The artists are not alone in this task, as find in the longer acknowledged practice of social and youth workers in the social space as their allies. Whole social and emotional values could go under if not progressively supported, with devastating effect both on artists themselves, and also on the young people's right to take part in cultural and social life. Those vulnerable youth are struggling to find their place in society, and suffer from exclusion, isolation and stigmatisation for their diversity. Fostering the flourishing of creativity and diverse cultural expressions in the social-space(s) proved to be problematic for the professionals that find themselves facing with gaps in knowledges, gaps in current framework and supporting infrastructures, whom are facing digital shift, and are left with no choice but to adapt by developing new skills, practices and intervention models, without being supported throughout the process by relevant key players and policies.

Despite the critical situation of practitioners, urgency to respond to the needs of the youth also provided them with the chance to experiment, in some cases across disciplines (social sphere and creative spheres), reaching practices altogether novel. Resulting from the new ways of participating in the culture and the social-spaces generated a very strong indication that these new practices have the potential to continue fostering social (youth) well-being and development. Cultural actors and social operators who have reached vulnerable young people and who have empowered them to move beyond individual barriers to reach and perform in front of new audiences will continue to experiment, and will try to secure sustainable infrastructures to enable them, and many new actors, to embrace this opportunity to be part of and participate in this collective transformation.

The future relies on inventiveness to find common solutions, to establish solid mechanisms of support for all actors of the social-space, including the creative sectors, and the young people in meeting the systemic challenges that they are facing.

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