

State of the Art of the use of art and artists in Adult Education

CESIE - Italy

1. Status of cooperation between Art and Adult Education in Italy

1.1 Introduction on the need for cooperation between art and education

Adult Education refers to all those life-long learning practices happening in formal or non-formal settings that involve people beyond the 16th year of age¹. It aims to improve their technical or professional qualifications, but also to develop their soft skills, values and attitudes. Lifelong learning is, indeed, an essential instrument for personal development and can be realized in many different contexts. Traditional and formal learning, which takes place in formalized training institutions is, indeed, not the only way to gain knowledge and skills. Informal learning, which is the unintentional learning that takes place in a person's everyday life, and non-formal learning, are often underestimated despite their proven effectiveness. Non-formal learning refers to organized learning practices and processes that take place outside of formal education institutions. These are usually participatory and learner-centred, as they emphasize "the learner's intrinsic motivation, voluntary participation, critical thinking and democratic agency"² employing a range of core learning principles, methodologies and approaches that are specifically designed for this purpose. Art, in all of its forms, is one of the means that better serve this purpose.

Art beyond aesthetics, is a fundamental tool to gain not only professional competences and knowledge but also social and emotional skills. It supports critical thinking and helps learners find their own path to knowledge through unconventional methods. Artistic activity improves the learner's perception abilities and creativity, it encourages self-expression and helps

¹ Izzo, F. (2013). La pittura degli adulti tra artisticità e tecnologia del sé. Una ricerca qualitativa nella formazione lungo il corso della vita. *Encyclopaideia*, XVII, 35, 109-131

² Council of Europe. (2021). Non-formal learning / education. Retrieved 27 July 2021, from <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/non-formal-learning>

developing emotional intelligence. Art is also a language capable of connecting individuals and cultures. It can facilitate the research of a balance between individual development and collective well-being, and becomes a tool to improve our own conditions and our relationships with the environment, serving also as a powerful means for social inclusion when working with migrants, minorities or other vulnerable groups.

Within this framework, art can contribute to civic capacity and improve collective capacity facilitating the achievement of a greater *cultural democracy*. This concept was defined by Nick Wilson and Jonathan Gross of King's College London in their 2017 report *Towards Cultural Democracy* as 'when people have the substantive freedom to make versions of culture.'³ John Holden, cites 'universalism, pluralism, equality, transparency and freedom' as central elements of *cultural democracy*⁴, which is guaranteed only if three conditions are met:

- financial accessibility
- awareness of the concepts of culture and its emancipation capacities
- discovery of artistic practices through cultural activities with artists and educators

Synergies between educators and artists therefore emerge as crucial elements for the achievement of a more democratic and inclusive access to culture.

1.2 Art, adult education and democratization of culture in the European and Italian context

In its *Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture*, the European Commission stated that it is in "the shared interest of all Member States to harness the full potential of education and culture as drivers for jobs, economic growth, social fairness, active citizenship as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity."⁵ However, access to culture and art is still unequal throughout Europe. Eurostat data⁶ shows that more than a third of Europeans do not participate at all in cultural activities. The promotion and widespread use of different forms of art as an accessible educational tool is therefore still

³ Wilson, N. C., Gross, J. D., & Bull, A. L. (2017). *Towards cultural democracy: Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone*.

⁴ Holden, J. (2015). *The ecology of culture*.

⁵ European Commission. (2018). *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A New European Agenda for Culture*. Retrieved 30 July 2021, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0267&from=EN>

⁶ *Ibidem*

a challenge and calls for improvements in the cooperation between public and private institutions.

In the Italian context, the debate on the democratization of culture and cultural democracy has had very little space over the years. The 1947 Italian Constitution states that “The Republic promotes the development of culture and of scientific and technical research. It safeguards natural landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the Nation.” (art.9); it guarantees “pluralism and freedom of art and science”(art. 33), as well as “ any other manifestation, oral and written, of thought ”(art. 21). Nonetheless the Italian governments often failed, during the two decades after the war, to make effective cultural policies that allowed to meet these objectives. The few financial resources available were dedicated to the maintenance and restoration of the cultural heritage and to support the film industry that suffered from censorship during the war. A stronger link between art and education was established by municipal theatres such as the Piccolo Teatro⁷ inaugurated by Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi, which provided public education in art disciplines. During the 1970s, the movements resulting from 1968 brought a renovated artistic excitement that started at the bottom, in local contexts. It was a decentralized movement across the national territory that reflected on the need to emancipate art and education from mere economic interests. Yet, cultural policies in Italy have, especially during the 80s and 90s, revolved mostly around the awareness of the economic potential of the cultural heritage and, consequently, its conservation, enhancement and often privatization for economic exploitation. Since the late 1990s, a renovated interest for themes such as participation in culture, social cohesion through culture and intercultural dialogue has gained ground. Many cultural projects, mostly led by movements, collectives and third sector organizations have been implemented over the years, usually supported by EU funds or independent funding.

Artists in Italy live today a renovated urgency, similar to the one experienced during the 70s, to create closer connections between art and life. Maria Rosa Sossai⁸ (2017) underlines the strong need, in both the artistic and pedagogical field, to experiment new forms of resistance to the marketization of culture and education that can restore the most authentic, pedagogical, vocation of art. These forms aim to promote participation and inclusion in art education; they

⁷ Carla Bodo, « La démocratisation de la culture en Italie » in Démocratiser la culture. Une histoire comparée des politiques culturelles, sous la direction de Laurent Martin et Philippe Poirrier, Territoires contemporains, nouvelle série - 5 - mis en ligne le 18 avril 2013.

URL : http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Democratiser_culture/Carla_Bodo.html

⁸ Guida, C. (2017). Arte come pedagogia. Retrieved 30 July 2021, from <https://www.alfabeta2.it/2017/07/17/arte-come-pedagogia/>

try to move beyond “authorship” to experiment new forms of commoning (e.g. *creative commons*, *urban commoning*), enacting through art-educational practices that democratization of culture that has often been overlooked. Often their pedagogical theoretical framework is also grounded in innovative educational methodologies such as the ones elaborated by Maria Montessori or Danilo Dolci. The frontline of this innovation movement is occupied by self-managed art schools, collectives and movements that implement a number of innovative projects. One example is Gruppo Oreste, born in 1997, which founded “La Casa Caufasica” in Puglia, a lab for art education and experimentation that implements workshops, art residencies, exhibitions and talks with a focus on creative and participatory education⁹. These self-managed pedagogical and artistic communities are probably the most significant example of collaboration between artists and educators in Italy at the moment. Other collectives operating along these lines are ALAGroup, Last Station, Fondazione Wurmkos, Radical Intentions, the Stalker, A Cielo Aperto, or artists such as Ettore Favini and Stefania Galeati. These can be seen as forms of “artistic disobedience” that place the role of art in community education and the experimentation of new forms of *commoning* as the starting point for societal transformation.

⁹ ALAGroup. (2017). Arte e attivismo pedagogico . Dal Centro al Sud Italia. Retrieved 30 July 2021, from <https://www.artribune.com/professioni-e-professionisti/didattica/2017/01/attivismo-pedagogia-centro-sud-italia/>

2. Academic research on the synergies between art and adult education

While, art and education have been connected throughout all centuries since ancient times, it is only during the second half of the 20th century that art starts assuming a stronger educational value. On an academic/theoretical level, this century marks a significant paradigm shift in the reflection on the meaning of art that overcomes an ancient understanding of art exclusively as *tekhné*, “ability”, to also value its extrinsic properties: relational, pragmatic and social properties. Art stops being exclusively the performative realm of the artist, to also become a fertile ground for education in its etymological sense of *e-ducere*, “to bring out”, “to liberate”. (Bollino 2005). Remarkably, the twentieth century also marks a paradigm shift in the analysis and methodologies of teaching and education. Paulo Freire, describing the movement of *culture democratization*, poses the learner at the centre of the learning process, as power holder rather than a mere spectator of history and culture-making. In this process of resignification, a need for innovation and renovation of educational methodologies becomes evident and moves towards the acquisition and development of relational, personal, communicative and cultural competences (Izzo, 2013).

Within this framework, a review of some of the academic literature at the intersection of art, adulthood and education, brought to light a number of **core concepts**:

The power of art education to facilitate understanding and valorisation of differences –

The greatest potential of art in adult education is its ability to facilitate comprehension and valorization of differences and therefore people’s ability to live with one another in the same communities in a multicultural society. (Hayes & Yorks, 2007)

The role of art education in processes of self -care –

art has the potential to trigger a process of transformation of the self because it allows to access realms of the self that are usually not explored (Geiger 2005). Art opens to new opportunities for creative exploration for the adult learner without undervaluing his/her emotional and affective dimension. The images that come from the physical environment, our memories, our imagination or our dreams are vehicles of emotional processes and create a link between us and the outside world that Dirx calls *soul work* (Dirx 2001).

The autonomy of the learner – Adult learners are fundamentally self-directed, oriented towards their personal choices, tastes, desires. Taking this self-direction into consideration means facilitating the development of personal talents in more effective ways (Edelson 1995)

The motivational component – Motivation for learning in adult learners has great influence in the learning process. Motivation depends on multiple factors: level of self-determination, level of involvement, level of control, curiosity and personal interest (De Beni, Moé 2000). Others also noticed the influence of economic factors, empowerment and enthusiasm on adult learners' motivation (Knasel, Meed, Rossetti, 2002). The motives that bring someone to initiate a process of art education are reflected in their artistic and formative practices.

As Francesco Izzo (2013) underlines, art-making happens at the intersection of technical-artistic and formative- existential needs of the individual, in a place where poetic and esthetic meet motivation and desire for creativity. The *making* meets the *being* and becomes a vehicle for the individual's emancipation, expression and construction of feelings. In this process the focus shifts from the *product* to the *process*, and art becomes a "technology of the self" (Foucault,1992), a tool for research, care, valorization and emancipation of individual and collective beings.

3. CESIE's Art and Education projects

CESIE, a European centre of studies and initiatives, has implemented several projects using art as a tool for adult education. This is an overview of the most significant initiatives.



VOICE – Voice and Body for adult educators (2021-2023)

The VOICE project, which will be implemented throughout the next two years, aims at:

- helping educators assess their vocal performance and non-verbal behaviour during their interventions;
- giving educators the background knowledge to be able to understand and systematise their vocal profile and performance in order to connect them to underlying factors and identify possible domains of development;
- developing educators' vocal/Non-verbal behaviour in class, online and on video;
- offering educators online training materials as an alternative or as support for face-to-face trainings to develop vocal and non-verbal behaviour in pedagogical interventions.

In order to achieve this objective, 7 art-based methods, focusing on dance, theatre, singing, will be developed in order to assess the impact of vocal and performance analysis on multimodal performance.

CHIMES - Competences, Citizenship and Inclusion through Music and Movement Education Solutions (2021-2023)

The Chimes Project's main goal is to foster inclusion of young people and engage them in education, training or employment, using art as a means of skills development, valuing performing and creative arts not just as entertainment but as a means to develop and demonstrate new skills.

The project will organize Creative and performing art workshops to foster social inclusion and develop technical skills; local events to demonstrate technical skills and competences; community exhibitions to celebrate young people's achievements, share best practice and raise awareness of social inclusions' issues;

CTF – Creative Talent Factor (2020-2022)

The general aim of the CTF project was to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship in the creative sector, and more precisely, it focused on the following creative areas: visual and performing arts; craftsmanship; art and antiques market; fashion; music and dancing.

By developing a set of Open Education Resources, a creative talent factory E-training programme and an e-toolkit, the project has successfully created a link between art and entrepreneurship. It provided an innovative easy-to-learn pathway for upskilling the creative entrepreneurial competencies needed to set up or improve a creative business.

[LIBERTY – A New European Generation – Exploring Freedom and Identity through Creative Integration \(2019-2023\)](#)

Liberty encompasses a variety of different arts, from music to visual art and street theatre to engage young people, raise issues, provoke discussion, stimulate debate and encourage actions addressing better integration of communities.

The project is forging a vibrant curatorial and development team with 12 cultural partners from 10 countries), organizing free access events (75 new collaborative works from 750 young artists) and maximising engagement of audiences by delivering workshops in public spaces with prolonged artist development and sector learning opportunities. It prioritises culturally diverse and disadvantaged communities, including refugees, those from deprived socio-economic backgrounds and disabled people.

[My HandScraft – Migrants Hands and Skills to Create a Future Track \(2018-2021\)](#)

MyHandScraft, implemented until the end of June 2021, aimed to reinforce cooperation and networking among local and migrant handcrafters. During 13 workshops implemented in local communities, art and handicrafts became the core means for the improvement of the intercultural skills and creative thinking skills of local and migrant handcrafters. Each participant shared handicraft knowledge, ideas and traditions from different parts of the world and this became the first step towards the construction of collaborative professional projects and entrepreneurial ideas. The project also produced a Handbook for Adult Educators, an E-Educational Programme and a Digital Guide for Handcrafters.

[VOICES – Voices of solidarity \(2017-2018\)](#)

Concluded in 2018, VOICES aimed to enable artists from different European countries to work together to coordinate cohesive joined-up performance making visible the voices of refugees

and asylum seekers and encouraging integration. Moreover, the project aimed at using digital technologies to enhance and widen engagement with arts and culture and to facilitate the audience participation and involvement. In July 2018, VOICES festival was held in Palermo. On the 6th of July, the Boderline performance of Patricia Carolin Mai and Jakob Neubauer was organised at *Biblioteca Comunale Casa Professa*, and explored personal and institutional limits. The reflection focused on freedom of movement and mobility rights in a society that builds borders and walls. On the 11th of July, 200 participants performed the idea of welcoming in a parade. It was an opportunity to share and reflect on the migration issues.

Journeys (2016-2017)

By directly engaging and involving refugees and asylum seekers in each of the locations in the creation of artistic works, the project helped refugees and migrants to socialise and express themselves. Moreover *Journeys* enhanced the collaboration with organisations in other sectors. This collaboration resulted in “Look-Up” which is a high profile outdoor art exhibition presenting visual artwork from refugee artists on a large canvas in each city. Pop-up theatre were performed to share refugee stories and journeys. Seminars brought together artists, with refugee support groups and the wider public, to explore ideas and issues arising from the arts activity and its themes.

Create – Creative Therapy in Europe (2016-2018)

Create was aimed at improving the integration of migrants with mental health problems through development of Arts Therapies resources. It co-produced training packages for Arts Therapists and Community Support Professionals to enable them to support migrants with mental ill health, and engaged mental health centres and centres supporting young migrants creating a Network of Arts Therapists and Community Support workers in the field of migration and mental health across Europe.

ArtS – Skills for the creative economy (2014-2017)

The ArtS project aimed, among other objectives, at designing and delivering a joint vocational training programme for low-skilled, unemployed and self-employed artists, to update their professional competences and provide them with management, business and networking skills. The final conference addressed the possibility to turn personal artistic vibes into social

development processes. The project developed transversal modules and sector specific module in training, as well as the ArtS portal containing: an e-learning platform, a career guidance section, the ArtS forum and information on funding opportunities

[Art and act](#)

Art and act is an international art contest, organised by CESIE each year, inspired by the beliefs and passions of Marie Marzloff (02/11/1980 -13/02/2018).

Marie Marzloff was the vice director of CESIE. She was responsible for managing human resources and international cooperation. This contest sets to celebrate her interest in art, literature and interculturality and devotion to the causes that were closest to her: gender equality, intercultural dialogue and international cooperation. It aims at advancing the work that Marie has started so as to enable her beliefs and passions to endure. This contest seeks to inspire others with Marie's curiosity and her ability to grasp different ideas from diverse realities.

4. Best Practices in Italy

The table below collects a number of best practices in the Italian context of cooperation between art and adult education.

Project	Goals and Activities
<p><i>Project</i> : CulTrees: Cultivating Openness to Diversity (2017-2018)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Centro di Creazione e Cultura</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cooperating with trainers and education professionals coming from the fields of performing arts education and adult education. ● Developing the teaching skills of professional art educators, enhancement of their personal professional profile, as well as the level of their organization's involvement in the field of Adult Education. ● Collecting training tools and methods. ● Developing a set of training methods and tools that can be used in non-formal education environments, making use of the benefits of peer learning and learning through art employing a variety of artistic styles and tools (theatre, dance, visual art, literary arts, etc.) ● Developing adult trainees' awareness about the cultural diversity in Europe and the need to be maintained.
<p><i>Project</i> : SENECA: SENiors for European CulturAl heritage (2020-2022)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Associazione di promozione sociale SiripArte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing innovative educational methodologies for the elderly population, based on the valorisation of local cultural heritage. ● Strengthening cooperation between cultural associations, cultural heritage management bodies, museums, civil society organisations from different European contexts. ● To promote active ageing through lifelong-

	learning through art.
<p><i>Project</i> : Lovearth through Art (2017-2020)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Cooperativa Sociale Immaginaria A R.L.Onlus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing inclusion techniques through the use of performing arts. • Generating a real virtuous cooperation path among the partner organizations, then among the other fields of performing arts and social media communication. •
<p><i>Organization</i> : Love Difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop creative projects in order to stimulate dialogue between people of the Mediterranean Basin belonging to different cultural, political or religious backgrounds • To build a strong network among individuals who wish to confront each other and solve social issues through art and creativity.
<p><i>Project</i> : Artability (2014)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Tlab</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop good practices supporting people with disability in lifelong learning processes via artistic reproductions • To address the gap in the practice of rights essential to social inclusion, self-empowerment and self-reflection in which people with disabilities are challenged
<p><i>Project</i> : Storytelling at the museum</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Museum of Natural History of the Mediterranean in Livorno</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To foster interactions between refugees and the local communities. • To get informed about the local culture and share their own culture.
<p><i>Project</i> : Who am I (“Self portrait – Art Lab”)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Provincia Di Livorno</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve writing, communication and language skills. • To learn about the importance of gestures and personal space • To look inward and reflect on how they see themselves and how they think others look at

	them
<p><i>Project</i> : The Myth of Hercules Labrone – The Story of the Establishment of Livorno</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Provincia Di Livorno</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To learn the historical background and the traditions of the host city through narration and dramatization. ● To work on language, text comprehension and analysis ● To improve storytelling ability and to develop imagination and creativity
<p><i>Project</i> : PICS - Photography Increases Creative-thinking Skills (2016-2019)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Centro Provinciale Istruzione Adulti</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To improve creative-thinking and cognitive skills ● To introduce genuine education about images in formal, non-formal and informal education ● To teach how to appreciate images and photographs in adult education ● To emphasize the role of amateur/professional photography as an art, as a tool for practicing active citizenship, and promoting European values. ● To promote new job opportunities, linking education with entrepreneurship.
<p><i>Project</i> : Integration Through Arts to Enhance Society (2019-2022)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Associazione Culturale-Progetto Musica Valeria Martina</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To promote long-lasting interaction between the local communities and people/groups of different origins whose aspects are equal dignity of cultures, mutual acceptance, equal exchange, open dialogue ● To develop learners' critical thinking, creative thinking and new patterns of behavior combating intolerance and discrimination ● To spread the use of creative methods in adult education and develop educators' awareness of their importance in building intercultural dialogue
<p><i>Project</i> : SPIRITUS LOCI - Partnership of places, communities and art forms for an</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To deal with the crisis caused by the European pandemic through creativity

<p>education to beauty (2021-2023)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Unpli Lazio Comitato Regionale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To look for innovation and transnational cooperation ● To unlock the potential of young people through new artistic languages ● To develop innovative and creative learning pathways for direct and final audiences acting in the cultural sector with new technologies.
<p><i>Project</i> : Digital Systems for A Smart Approach to Art (2019-2022)</p> <p><i>Organization</i> : Web per tutti</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To become aware of the artistic and cultural heritage of one's country ● To become aware of the importance of ICT ● To help adults in acquiring the basic life skills and competences necessary to overcome isolation and become an active and aware European citizen ● To develop knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of European civilizations and their value ● To encourage the learning of modern foreign languages ● To know the common roots of the European community countries ● To develop, promote and disseminate training courses for teachers with innovative content

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