

## **ARTS FOR SOCIAL COHESION**







### **WORKSHOP ON THE STATE OF THE ART OF THE RESEARCH AND FUTURE PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD**

**WebEx meeting on 19 March 2021**

**Chaired** by Christina SARVANI (DG.RTD.E4) and Giuliana SICOLO (REA.B3)

**Participants:** AMASS, ARTSFORMATION, CICERONE and MEMEX

#### **1) The role of arts on social cohesion and socio-economic development**

-  Cultural and creative industries and arts are crucial for the social and economic development, the social innovation, creativity, inclusion and cohesion. Until now, the research has developed very valuable results on the role of arts on people's integration both in arts and culture and consequently in the society.
-  The arts empower peoples' participation and representation, while digitalization and technology plays significant role to these efforts (from the production to the dissemination of arts).
-  Arts can empower social cohesion, by building dialogue, creating connections and reflecting alternative knowledge. Arts sector provides solutions that aim to overcome communication issues and marginalisation among the different communities. Moreover, it develops opportunities for the social cohesion and inclusion of different groups, including disadvantaged groups (such as Roma and third countries' nationals) and vulnerable groups (such as women and young people).
-  Arts sector is a dynamic sector internationally. Apart from the social benefits, it can also impact significantly the economic development of the Union. However, the overall socio-economic impact of the Arts is largely determined by the heterogeneity of the sector. The heterogeneity across the sub-sectors puts barriers in the influence of Arts, while some actors within the production network (such as producers) might affect the labour conditions as well as other social conditions.
-  The socio-economic benefits of the sector are also affected by the size of the firms and the form of employment in the sector, the motivation of key actors in different stages to produce art services and products, the local and regional identity as well as the traditions.
-  Digital arts are particularly important for the social inclusion and development of the Union, as the sector uses the IT tools and technologies to overcome inclusion challenges, promote social cohesion and diversity and increase innovation. Particularly, the digital tools are used as means for social inclusion, help in the creation and preparation of events, they can provide participative diagnosis and offer insights on the role of arts and creativity in the society.

#### **2) Gaps in the knowledge & challenges**

- ✚ There are still several gaps in knowledge concerning the digitalisation of arts. Better understanding is needed on the role of arts on the transformation of societies into the digital age, their full potential in terms of their contribution to increasing social inclusion and methodologies that better reflect their role and benefits.
- ✚ Regarding the digitization of arts, we also need to better understand how digital arts can affect the labour market and the economic development of the EU or the EU policy. There are still gaps on how to digitally process the intangible heritage as well as on how to overcome physical distancing through technology.
- ✚ The accessibility of the society to the digital content of the arts is another element that needs to be studied, together with the current and future needs on digital skills (and skills development), which will increase better access of society into digital arts. The extent that AI, science fiction and other IT tools can benefit arts needs also to be examined, while the research should take into consideration elements such as ethics, innovation and creativity.
- ✚ There is a large untapped potential of Arts on transformation in society. The role of the Arts in co-creative processes present unique challenges, both theoretical and methodological. On one hand, the ongoing discussion on the conceptual models of Arts-based research and arts-based innovation can help design an analytical and theoretical framework. On the other hand, the participatory methods engaging differently with artist and communities still need to be further developed beyond the experimental applications.
- ✚ The artistic creation is often rooted in the local dimension. The local adaptation can help untangle the complexity of social and economic implications and capture the value and the impact of artistic productions. However, the Arts contribution to the social cohesion presents methodological challenges for researchers in the field (e.g. the identification of target communities, difficulties in mapping the networking of practitioners, create *sustainable ecosystem* in two directions: with artists and the communities, strengthening the community involvement takes time, dichotomy human centric vs focus on community, etc.)
- ✚ We need to further examine how the disadvantaged groups can be better integrated into society through arts and bottom-up approach, with particular focus on the vulnerable groups that do not have enough opportunities or not able to get involved with the arts and culture.
- ✚ We need to increase knowledge on the role of arts on changing behaviour of the citizens, the relation between arts and education, how to involve better arts in education and pre-education. A meta-analysis of the education needs, in relation with the arts, and the development of new innovative methods that will better measure its influence are necessary.
- ✚ Beyond the dialectic between inclusion and exclusion and the limits of interdisciplinary approach, we need to further analysis how arts can inform and be embedded in many fields of research, including the research on margins, without losing its specificities.
- ✚ In order to increase the socio-economic impact of arts we also need to understand how power it is distributed in the production system of the sector as well as to better understand the dynamism of the different sub-sectors and their barriers and needs for further development.

- ✚ We need to further explore how Arts conveys the development of *cultural democracy* through a contribution to evidence-based policymaking and playing an institutional role.
- ✚ The accessibility of the people to digital arts' content, the heterogeneity of the sector from the creation to the distribution stage, the type of employment, the better collaboration across other fields as well as other barriers that affect the market power internationally are some of the research challenges that the sector is facing.
- ✚ The pandemic and the consequent measures to tackle covid-19 have significantly affected the arts and cultural and creative industries in general, impacting the creativity of the sector, as well as the artists and other creative professionals. Research should find measures that can increase involvement of arts into societies, in times of covid-19 crisis, keeping us safe from the virus at the same time.

### 3) Future R&I needs

- ✚ Future R&I is needed to increase collaboration and promote participation of Europeans in the arts. The creation and development of synergies, partnerships and arts network is necessary, specifically under the covid-19 circumstances, while further research and innovation solutions that will increase the role of arts and arts digitalization on social cohesion and socio-economic development is required.
  - ✚ R&I is required for the development of new methods that will better integrate all groups, including disadvantaged groups and will increase knowledge and awareness through other disciplines and sectors (e.g. education)
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