



Recommendations for Political Decision-Makers



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1. Introduction

From the research and project work, the EduArt team gained a series of insights into adult education and beyond, concerning the handling of societal challenges as well as the role of the arts and culture. The project was conceived during a time when human interactions suffered, particularly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Disorientation, fears about the future, loss of trust, self-doubt, and isolation inflicted damage to social cohesion, rendering people vulnerable to frustration, fear, hatred, and violence. The project's aim was to reignite communication within the social space and empower individuals to become proactive.

It became evident to us that this simultaneously redefined the requirements for a "new" adult education. Creativity and art served as the glue that brought people together in their neighborhoods for learning.

To achieve this, we seized upon the most visible symbol of the COVID-19 pandemic – the mask. (<https://eduart-project.eu>). The lessons learnt from EduArt are summarised in alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the Education 2030 Framework. They are based on the findings from project work involving various stakeholders in Austria, Germany, Italy and Poland.

"If we do not respond adequately here and thus significantly enhance the skills and abilities of adults, they are at risk of falling behind. This challenge is at the heart of UNESCO's global mandate, reflected in UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the Education 2030 Framework. In achieving this goal, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) should play a crucial role, as clearly demonstrated by the current Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)."

Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO-Generaldirektorin, 2020, 4. WELTBERICHT ZUR ERWACHSENENBILDUNG
www.unesco.de/sites/default/files/2021-03/4.%20Weltbericht%20zur%20Erwachsenenbildung%202020.pdf

The recommendations should not be considered as scientific research results; rather, they are based on our experiences in developing specific educational offerings and gathering lessons learnt from the actors and supporters involved in EduArt. Within the project, we highlighted the positioning of community-oriented adult education, identified competency gaps, and explored the learning potential of participants.

To achieve this, we deconstructed the requirements for community-oriented educational work in neighborhoods of Berlin, Vicenza, Vienna, and Warsaw. We substantiated these requirements with proposed action concepts. In our activities, we took into consideration the specific "neighborhood levels" and the target audience of adults from diverse population strata.

The focal points were crucial aspects regarding the future of adult education on organisational, didactic, and regulatory-political levels.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our recommendations are primarily directed at political decision-makers who influence local educational efforts: educational administrations/agencies, as well as stakeholders shaping the community space such as competency networks and associations from the education sector, cultural actors, academics, social partners, civil society opinion leaders, and local representatives of the business community.

During the project, in identifying the need for action, we also relied on investigations by other stakeholders, such as the German Cultural Council, as well as studies conducted by the Ministries of Education in Austria and Poland, and the EU. With our recommendations, we highlight areas requiring action for the key players, aiming to make adult education future-proof.

Simultaneously, we engage with highly topical themes in the educational policy discourse, such as the interconnection of various stakeholder groups, resilience, and crisis management. The integration of creative partnerships with approaches to community-oriented educational work is innovative, fostering collaborative learning in heterogeneous target audiences.

Considering the current societal conflicts, we anticipate a revitalisation of the discussion process regarding the significance of non-formal/informal adult education, as well as the role of cultural practitioners in the field of education and within society.

2. Informal Learning in Adult Education

Informal learning refers to a process through which adults intentionally, rather than coincidentally, expand their knowledge. It involves learning that is not part of institutionalised learning activities. This type of learning occurs in various places and is less structured. This encompasses not only learning from colleagues in voluntary work, neighbors, leisure activities, computer-based resources, but also through attending cultural events etc. Informal learning thus constitutes an essential element of lifelong learning.

Informal Learning in Partner Countries

The appreciation for informal (cultural) learning remains lower than, for instance, forms of learning in the context of political education, even though both forms share similarities in terms of measurement difficulties. Informal learning brings several advantages (e.g., flexibility, high motivation due to its voluntary nature) but also comes with disadvantages (lack of structure, lack of commitment, recognition, and certification).

This is one of the reasons why educational institutions have created informal learning offerings only sporadically until now. Past practice shows that additional learning options are turned to when existing offerings are insufficient or can be methodically improved. Typically, this leads to a blend of formal teaching offerings combined with informal learning pathways.

In the partner countries, the terms "informal learning" and "self-directed learning" are often used synonymously. The distinction is not always clear-cut, as adult education institutions also offer various types of further education that do not lead to formal certificates. This includes numerous further education offerings from adult education centers (e.g., in Germany, Austria, and Poland).

For example, in Poland, under the term "Further Education" (Kształcenie Ustawiczne), education in adult schools, secondary schools, as well as the acquisition and supplementation of knowledge, skills, and vocational qualifications in non-school form is understood. This is provided by individuals who hold formal educational qualifications. In contrast, there is Adult Education and Training (Kształcenie i szkolenia dorosłych - KSD).

The spectrum extends far beyond the realm of vocational and higher education and traditional qualification-focused courses and studies. KSD also encompasses practical learning in work environments and organized activities within community settings.

Despite the differences across EU countries, adult education is generally understood as learning during the phase of adulthood, which constitutes a part of lifelong learning in various forms and at different locations (both within formal and non-formal contexts). There is no complete and uniform definition.

3. Art Creates Togetherness!

At the heart of our considerations lie adult learning, diverse forms of learning, and the potential for collaboration between cultural practitioners and educational actors.



Picture 1: © BGZ

General Conclusions

1. The integration of innovations requires an environment that fosters creativity, encourages critical thinking, and promotes collaborative efforts among different stakeholders who are also willing to explore new avenues.
2. The diversity of various stakeholders and the amalgamation of competencies and experiences positively impact the development of solution approaches and concepts that enhance diversity, transferability, and sustainability.

In EduArt, participants came together not only from different countries but also:

- Possessed diverse professional qualifications,
 - Represented various institutional structures,
 - Encompassed the education sector, the cultural and arts scene (cinemas and museums, NGOs, and the migrant community, as well as business and city administrations, among others).
4. The participatory approach significantly enhances sustainability. At EduArt, it has been affirmed that the involvement of volunteers, local committees, advisory boards, and representatives from neighborhood administrations in the development of new education concepts tailored to the target audience is the necessary foundation to successfully meet the current demands of adult education.
 5. Diverse channels should be employed for outreach and dissemination. *The prevalent practice of disseminating information, including educational and cultural offerings as well as projects in these domains, digitally, does not align with the principles of democratic participation and inclusion!* On the contrary, it restricts access to educational opportunities of all kinds for many adults.
 6. Alternative paths and venues for learning, such as utilising nearby and cost-free options, are only sporadically available and typically not well-known. Measures to expand the dissemination of these options should be strengthened.



Picture 2: Cultural Centre, Poland © BGZ

Unlike adolescents who are still in the regular learning process, adults can be reached in a variety of different places. Additionally, the age differences and educational backgrounds of individual adults are highly heterogeneous. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the choice of communication methods and learning venues.

For instance, the fact that women participating in the learning offerings at our partner institution in Italy had the opportunity to bring their children along and involve them in a small creative workshop and made it easier for the women to engage more actively in their own workshop activities. The offered fresco painting course had positive effects on the participants and sparked their interest in further learning opportunities. Moreover, participating in the course and the accompanying exchange of experiences had a positive impact on relationships among the women and contributed to breaking down social and cultural barriers.



Picture 3: Fresco Workshop, Italy © BGZ

7. Inclusion and Informal Learning

Throughout the project, it has been confirmed that particularly migrants, refugees, older adults, individuals with lower qualifications (especially men), people with disabilities, and long-term unemployed individuals generally have limited access to further education offerings or are unaware of existing educational opportunities. In terms of informal learning, these groups also have fewer chances to expand their knowledge and skills.

Often, this situation can be attributed to their financial circumstances, housing and family situations, inadequate language skills (including English), and most importantly, a lack of connections with people who could contribute to their skill enhancement.

Especially in urban outskirts and rural regions, the situation is even worse.



Picture 4: Cultural Centre, Austria © BGZ

4. Insights from the close Collaboration between Educational and Artistic/Cultural Stakeholders – What have we learned?

Through meetings and discussions with project partners, it became evident that the two realms - education and the arts - are significantly divergent in terms of approach, goals, and financial support. Particularly, the arts are hardly or not represented in the context of educational activities. When artists are involved in educational tasks, they are often treated as temporary workers.

Therefore, our questions were as follows:

- Which tandems could come together for future activities?
- How can the project outcomes be transferred to the education sector?
- How can the project outcomes positively influence societal cohesion?
- What benefits can artists derive from collaboration?
- Under what conditions can cultural education lead to an increase in competencies or have positive impacts on skills such as empathy or crisis management?

EduArt dedicated itself to addressing these questions, considering various realms of artistic/cultural education (music, dance, visual arts, etc.).

THESIS 1: The collaboration between the education sector and the artistic-creative sector is challenging!

1. Artistic impressions are highly subjective and challenging to capture, making it difficult to translate methods into any form of pedagogical work or classroom situations.
2. Not all artistic performances are beneficial for education.
3. Certain artistic methods are only relevant for specific groups, for instance, storytelling may be particularly effective for younger learners.

CONCLUSION

A method is needed that demonstrates how artistic practices and methods can be meaningfully integrated into adult education. The strategic approach of forming tandems composed of cultural practitioners and educational actors enables a better fusion of pedagogical and creative methods, enhances diversity of ideas, and results in more effective practical application.

THESIS 2: When the arts and education collaborate, it could lead to a loss of their respective characters.

1. When collaborating between the arts and education, it is crucial to ensure that the partnership between these two sectors does not result in a loss of their inherent characteristics.

2. Artistic creation should not forfeit its creative qualities. Moreover, only certain artistic tools/methods are suitable for transfer into the educational context.
3. It must be guaranteed that educational offerings still fulfill their purpose even when supported by artistic elements.

CONCLUSION

The primary focus should be on utilising specific artistic elements rather than attempting to transfer all methods and practices of the arts in their entirety. The objective isn't just to add creative elements into learning offers, but to thoughtfully integrate everything sensibly. Therefore, a combination of the arts and education is meaningful.

THESIS 3: Artistic elements make a significant contribution to the education sector and its teaching methods.

1. Staging art (e.g., collectively creating a play) can contribute to addressing certain societal topics and themes that can be incorporated into educational offerings. The artists and cultural practitioners of EduArt were drawn to the theme of "masks." Their objective was to process pandemic situations and utilize creative means to raise awareness about building resilience, thereby enabling better coping with future personal and societal crises.



Pictures 5-6: Theatre Workshop, Poland © Tomasz Parzychowski

2. This form of integration aids in finding solutions for working with adults who struggle with learning in a typical classroom setting or with conventional pedagogical tools.

The "Mask Courses" by EduArt are uniquely structured. These courses encompassed two main aspects. Firstly, they comprehensively addressed societal and social topics through the lens of the mask as a symbol, including themes of loneliness, violence, prejudices, social anxieties, etc.



Picture 7: Staging Art Workshop, Germany © Kulturmarkthalle

Secondly, all participants extensively engaged with the artistic, craft, and digital techniques and methods employed (production techniques, video and audio recording, etc.).

This led to the enhancement of various skills within the target group, such as 3D techniques, video skills, and ancient crafting and painting techniques. Simultaneously, it fostered the development of personal communication and intercultural competencies, including storytelling, interpretation of gestures, and body language.

CONCLUSION

Infusing innovative approaches and implementing playful and creative thinking serves as a valuable contribution to the development of offerings in adult education. The utilisation of specialised tools can facilitate the introduction to specific subjects.

THESIS 4: The art sector can benefit from societal acceptance and appreciation through collaboration with the education sector.

1. Individuals engaged in artistic endeavors often face pressure, particularly during times of crisis. Their work generally receives less societal acceptance compared to other professions.
2. The education sector only sporadically utilises collaborations with artists.

CONCLUSION

Education can provide stability to individuals engaged in the art sector, if the education sector consistently embraces the skills and methods of artists and values them. The collaboration between both sectors can reshape how individuals engaged in artistic pursuits are appreciated within society. This could potentially alter the overall perception of artists and their contributions in the social fabric. In the future, artistic activities could be viewed as even more valuable contributions to society than they are today, as these activities also constitute an educational contribution to society. Apart from positive implications for society, potential outcomes might include higher compensation for artistic work and improvements in the labor framework for artists.

THESIS 5: The artistic sector can benefit from the education sector's creative approach to addressing certain societal problems.

The education sector frequently engages with diversity-related topics and provides training that has yet to be adequately implemented within the artistic sector.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration with actors from the education sector can inspire artists to incorporate ideas for acquiring societal competencies into their work. For example, this could include enhancing diversity-related competencies.

THESIS 6: Art fosters a sense of togetherness.

Art can serve as a method to create social cohesion and has the ability to dissolve boundaries between individuals.

Artistic methods and tools can alleviate apprehensions associated with perceiving educational offerings.

CONCLUSION

Artistic methods can contribute to establishing a more comfortable atmosphere, making it easier to exchange thoughts with others, open up, and thereby collaborate more effectively.

THESIS 7: Both the arts and education benefit from independent thinking.

The arts and education can be seen as two domains capable of reaching people, prompting them to reflect and learn, and introducing new perspectives into their lives.

Therefore, it is advisable to redefine both the arts and education and consider them as a unified entity.

The EduArt project has demonstrated that there are numerous opportunities to connect the arts and education, and how various methods can work effectively for and with each other.

5. Résumé

To effectively address the current demands of adult education, particularly concerning competency development for enhancing resilience, societal cohesion, and empowerment, educational actors require suitable frameworks and capacities. This responsibility lies with policy-makers.

1. Both the arts and education can learn from each other and apply the highlighted methods. Moreover, the collaboration between the arts and education can offer numerous new avenues for action.

The self-critical engagement of representatives from institutions like adult education centers, evident during their contributions at the project's closing conference in Berlin, demonstrated a willingness to embrace more open concepts of adult pedagogy beyond traditional course offerings.

2. Within the project, it became apparent that even within education institutions deeply rooted in conventional vocational training, there is a strong interest in artistic and creative learning methods, particularly within the context of projects or themed workshops.

Example: Professional development for educators, "Artistic Instruction and 3D Printing."

3. Workshop-based learning and the collaboration between diverse education professionals and art experts contribute to enhancing the pedagogical and social competencies of personnel.

In the project, both sides - educational personnel and artists - worked hand in hand, enhancing their own competencies through regular method testing and the creation of materials.

In this context, we'd like to highlight the issue of limited to non-existent training opportunities for artists and cultural practitioners who usually work as freelancers or on an honorarium basis. Factors like job availability, restricted funding options, and legal considerations contribute to this situation.

However, adult education could serve as a field of work for artistic individuals. For example, they could offer workshops on educationally relevant topics, which could provide them with a valuable avenue for utilising their skills and expertise.

4. Collaborating with partners from the art and cultural sectors represents a significant developmental step for the pedagogical competencies of educational personnel.
5. Expanding offerings for educational professionals to acquire competencies, especially in innovative communication and presentation methods, in turn enhances the appeal of educational programs.
6. Designing a Participatory "Neighbourhood Mapping". The approach of the "Neighbourhood Facilitator"*, focusing on civic engagement, is adaptable in various forms and is well-suited for democracy education. In the project, local and international individual and collective fears were playfully explored and critically reflected upon through artistic, performative, and discursive contributions.

(*EduArt result - A model for the implementation of "Neighbourhood Facilitators" - with suggestions for working with Neighbourhood Facilitators, including a training course)

The partners were able to establish new connections and lasting relations with neighbours. Their "neighborhood networks" have expanded. The demand for similar offerings has increased.

7. Utilisation in the Field of Further Education

The potential for applying the EduArt project approach, involving tandems of education and arts/culture in the realm of vocational training, is considered high.

The arts sector faces similar challenges as the adult education sector:

- Formulating offerings that align with the increasing complexity of the target group's life and work environment;
- Contributing to lifelong self-learning strategies; and
- Understanding personal development as an integral part of adult learning.

8. There is now a relatively extensive pool of experience and various suggestions for improving learning offerings in the field of adult education, including reevaluating the role and perspectives of collaboration between education and art.

As an example, the position paper of the German Cultural Council on cultural adult education should be particularly mentioned here. The Council's demands for strengthening cultural adult education are also shared by the EduArt partners from all participating countries.

Quote: "Cultural adult education in all artistic disciplines and forms of expression holds the same importance as cultural education for young people and needs more attention. Cultural adult education must not be discredited as part of leisure-oriented activities."

Source: February 2, 2019, Offensive for Cultural Adult Education, Position Paper by the German Cultural Council on Cultural Adult Education

9. The support of decision-makers is crucial in determining the significance attributed to non-formal/informal educational efforts.

Action at the educational policy level is required in all EU countries.

The significance of non-formal education, particularly cultural adult education, should be emphasised, and the capacity building of providers of informal adult education should be strengthened. In this regard, further education funds are established instruments through which the government and/or social partners can collaborate to increase investments in further education within a country or industry. These funds exist in Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus, as well as in many countries outside of Europe.

Further education funds are inspired by the French model, which was designed in dialogue with social partners as early as 1968 and expanded in 1971 as a contribution-based system between the government and companies. However, this model primarily aimed at promoting vocational training.

Source: Gerhard Bosch - Investing in Qualification - a Further Education Fund for Germany - Working Group on Labour and Qualification of the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation 2010

The existing further education laws today continue to be focused on labor market policies. The issue of promoting informal adult education clearly lies in the recognition of informally acquired competencies. EduArt, as a EU-wide transferable model for community-based and resource-oriented adult education, using methods of culture and the arts, demonstrates how non-formal education can contribute to addressing societal challenges and to the quality, innovation, and future orientation of adult education. Erasmus+ funded and similar projects contribute to the visibility of the added value of competencies acquired by adults who have expanded their knowledge outside regular educational structures. They enable the improvement of learning and education in adulthood.

As the need to shape a new form of adult education has gained importance, let us continue the dialogue together to utilise existing potentials and promote lifelong learning with creative and contemporary concepts, not only in projects. In times

where we now speak of a "generation crisis," communication in the social sphere must be rekindled so that people are empowered to take active steps. This should not only be perceived by young people. By promoting and facilitating learning arrangements, competency acquisition can be combined with strengthening social cohesion through collaborative learning - irrespective of age, gender, social, and cultural background.



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