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Socially Engaged Arts Curricula for Teacher Training Programmes

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CHAPTER 4

Socially Engaged Arts Examples Shared by CARE/SS Partners

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Introduction

The CARE/SS project partners were invited to share 3 “Best Practice” socially engaged arts (SEA) projects. The result is a rich collection of 16 SEA project descriptions - Cyprus presented an extra best practice project description. Together the shared SEA projects cover a whole array of contemporary issues including social, cultural, political, environmental and sustainability themes. Remarkably, the absolute majority of the projects draw attention to diversity and the need for social inclusion in our communities and society at large. Besides, of themselves, these SEA projects emphasise collaborations for value creation.

Taken together the projects covered all 5 “Big Ideas”; Public space (1), Respecting diversity and inclusion (2), Sharing knowledge (3), Collaborative processes (4), and Sustainable transformations in society (5). But coverage was far from evenly distributed:

The most commonly addressed Big Ideas were Big Idea 2 (with 14 out of 16 projects) and Big Idea 4 (with 15 out of 16 projects). Evidently, the need for working in collaboration with others, along with social inclusion (which unquestionably are a core issue going across [the 17 sustainability goals identified by the United Nations](#)) are very much to the fore on SEA project developers. And considering that a referenced project dates back more than a decade ago (“Inclusion and education of Roma children in the regions of Central Macedonia”, 2010, Greece) shows that these are not so new problematic issues.

Big idea 1 attracted the least attention (with 4 out of 16 projects). A few projects considered the issue of respecting diversity and inclusion generically, but the majority of the SEA projects related to specific minority, marginalised and mistreated groups, including migrants, refugees, people living with HIV, artists with disabilities, young children with special needs, Roma children, women and girls who suffer violence because of their gender.

The four projects putting public space (Big Idea 1) in focus surfaced from different countries (Malta, Greece, Spain and Cyprus) as if stressing the point that the problem of public space as a theme of challenges, struggle and/or conflict is not country specific.

Big Idea 3 (with 10 out of 16 projects) and Big Idea 5 (with 11 out of 16 projects) were targeted by slightly more than half of the projects. All SEA projects of themselves put on show the need for the pursuit of sustainability and sustainable processes, but from what was disclosed in the descriptions shared, it is not always the case that these are discerningly shown up as intentional goals.

The majority of the projects (11 out of 16) are small-scale ventures involving local participants. Four projects are medium-scale projects, some of which seek to involve the participation of international artists even if they are country specific such as the Malta Festival – “Świat w uścisku

[World held tight]" (Poland) and the "Songs from my neighbours" (Cyprus). The latter referenced medium-sized project also arises from a partnership involving 3 countries. The only large-scale project shared is the ongoing project titled "It could be me – it could be you" spreading across many cities in Greece (and shared by the Greece partner). This latter project is also an ongoing project started in 2015. Some of the projects shared are instances of annual events, including the "Współdziałanie w Kulturze [Cooperation in Culture]" (Poland), Malta Festival – "Świat w uścisku [World held tight]" (Poland), and the BufferFringe (Cyprus) and INTERFÍCIES [Interfaces] 2022. While each of these SEA projects happen/ed in set time frames, the overarching enterprises are ongoing. Such ongoing enterprises incorporating periodic instances of SEA projects not only highlight the importance of arts in community life but stress the arts as an important means to engage with current social issues in the community and act as a vehicle of advocacy. With the exception of the large-scale project "It could be me – It could be you" (Greece) which is ongoing, all other shared SEA project examples are time bound. The shortest two projects were of 1 month duration. The longest duration project spread across 10 years. Larger project initiatives spread across larger time frames, require substantial investment, countless resources and sustained commitment of a whole group of people committed to the project cause. Unsurprisingly, it is the larger projects structured by a periodic (annual) set of events that seek to bring in international artistic talent. From this collection of SEA projects, it appears that smaller projects are more likely to be localised touching upon current burning issues within the embedding context.

In conclusion, this collection of SEA projects collating examples shared by the partners constitutes a wide-ranging showcase as shown up by the summarising tabulation (Table 1). This SEA project collection inspires artists to engage with the world around them, locally and more widely, to individually and collectively use their creativity for helping to build a more positive and constructive world. This fine collection of SEA project examples is a manifestation of the arts as a means for the promotion and advancement of equity, social justice, and hope for all that everyone thrives in peace and respect for all.

Table 1: Socially Engaged Arts Examples Shared by CARE/SS Partners. Big Ideas: 1 Public space; 2 Respecting diversity and inclusion; 3 Sharing knowledge; 4 Collaborative processes; 5 Sustainable transformations in society

Country	Project Name and City	Population	Societal challenge	Art Form/s	Outcomes	Big Ideas	Scale	Duration
Malta	Suitable Citizens	Sub-Saharan migrants	Inclusion, discrimination, civic engagement	Visual arts	Learning of artistic and creative skills, critical thinking, collaborative action, sustainability	2,3,4	small-scale, localised	7 months
Malta	Il-Pozittivi (Positive people)	People living with HIV	Discrimination, self-stigmatisation, alienation, loneliness	Theatrical production	Generation of creative methods giving a voice to HIV positive people in Malta, encourage emergence and integration of HIV positive people in Malta, advance the theatre as a means for social activism and social change	2,3,5	small-scale, localised	7 months
Malta	Batman Gżirjan	Local inhabitants and users of the seafront (aged 18+) in a given harbour town.	Public space, civic engagement	Visual arts, performing arts,	Locals and affected others were given a voice to make themselves heard. There was development of greater consciousness of over-development. Project served to reveal controversial issues such as the private appropriation of land in the area of Manoel Island.	1,3,4,5	small-scale localised	8 months
Poland	Cooperation in Culture *PL: Współdziałanie w Kulturze.	School teachers and school children of different levels and social backgrounds, including people with disabilities	civic engagement	Music therapy, Visual arts, Community ceramic cladding, circus pedagogy, Permaculture, Multicultural activities, film education	Learning of creative and artistic skills, identification of needs and conditions in local general education institutions, promotion of cooperation between schools and professional animation and culture education institutions, Creating opportunities for lowly ranked schools to be involved in competition and cooperation action.	2,3,4,5	small-scale	periodic

Poland	Malta Festival Poznań - Świat w uścisku ("World held tight") 2022	All generations of audiences	Diversity and Inclusion, racism, human crisis, civic engagement	concerts, meetings, lectures, workshops, artist presentations, exhibitions, film screenings, children's clubs, warm-ups, visual arts, debates, sound installations, theatre installations and workshops, singing, dance, and performance	There is prompted a diversified social and cultural context. Organizers found themselves in an extended process which is both outside- and inside-oriented: foreign artists, performers, activists, and animators living in Poland are welcome to submit their ideas for artistic activities, interventions, objects, exhibitions, performance, sound installations, community work, field work, online work, workshops, and other forms of art.	2,4,5	medium-scale (international participants)	periodic
Poland	OBECNOŚĆ (Presence), Poznań	Artists and people with diverse disabilities and at risk of social exclusion. All generations of audiences	Diversity and inclusion, social exclusion, marginalization, prejudice, normativity	Theatre performance and theatre workshops	Creation of a space open to all people interested in art. Encourage reconsideration of the inclusive theatre as a professional theatre (and the dismissal by participants and audiences that the inclusive theatre is a second-class theatre, a substitute for theatrical art, or some form of therapy in which the play itself takes a secondary place. PRESENCE project seeks to change prevalent exclusionary ways of thinking. PRESENCE seeks to develop the openness of art and show the enrichment of art through the involvement of people with different physical and personality traits with different lives.	2,4,5	small-scale and localised	2 years
Greece	It could be me – it could be you ; Greece, many cities	teachers, students, migrants	Human rights, refugee issues, Inclusion, civic engagement	Drama, creative writing	A deeper understanding of issues at hand (human rights and refugee issues), lowering stereotypical approaches and stronger response to hate speech; improved methodological drama skills	2,3,4	large scale	ongoing

Greece	Inclusion and education of Roma children; Greece - Central Macedonia, Western Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia, Thrace-Thessaloniki-Northern Greece	Roma children, teenagers, unemployed, persons with specific medical conditions	Discrimination, Social inclusion, educational inclusion	Array of artistic forms including drawings, stories, songs, scripts, and drama.	Creation of safe spaces of interface between Roma and non-Roma populations, where terms of equality, justice and dignity prevailed. Development of teacher-student and student-student collaborative patterns and the creation of classroom community.	2,4	medium scale	10 years
Greece	Bench of Solidarity; Greece	young children with special needs; graduate students	Social inclusion, sustainable education	Visual arts	The painted bench has become a reference point for the "community of solidarity" built by the students on their initiative; universal participation of students in an artistic process; , the schoolyard's embellishment, the students' activation to take care of both the animate and inanimate things that coexist in the schoolyard.	1,2,4,5	small-scale and localised	1 month
Spain	Cultivating affects and care	Young children – preschool and primary school children	Civic engagement, climate change – care and respect for nature and the surrounding environment, mindfulness, sustainability	sound art, performance, sculpture, painting: artistic forms enfolding listening, co-existence, speculation	Understanding playgrounds as an extended garden, caring for the surrounding nature, respecting nature and ecosystems in nature, teachers understand and explore learning ecological issues through art. An unplanned learning outcome – growing awareness of afrofuturist, postcolonial or queer perspectives	1,3,4,5	small-scale and localised	5 months

Spain	INTERFÍCIES 2022: Diàlegs entre recerca artística, salut comunitària i drets socials [Interfaces 2022: Dialogues between artistic research, community health and social rights]	Arts students, secondary school students, young people with functional diversity, female residents, caretaker women.	multiculturalism, inclusion in diversity, civic rights including health and social rights	Cartography; photography; ;postcard art; visual, graphic, and documental archives as well as oral testimonies;	Collective art exhibition; a (royalty free) digital catalogue	2,3,4,5	small-scale and localised	periodic
Spain	Memòria, recuperació d'artesanía i sostenibilitat [Catalan: Memory, recovery of craftsmanship and sustainability]	University art students, high school students, local public	Civic engagement – knowledge of local history, professional experience; gender issues - bullying, prejudices, segregation	pattern making, sewing and natural dyeing	Workshops on textile techniques applied to art, textile sculptural pieces, open exhibition	2,3,4,5	small-scale and localised	8 months
Cyprus	It Starts with ME, together WE can: Frederick University against women's violence; Nicosia, Cyprus	University students, general public	Gender issues, inclusion, fight against stereotypes, civic engagement	Art installation	Signed pledge to end violence against women and stereotypes, raised awareness and shared knowledge through seminars and workshops, Creation of art installation at the university (made up of donated pairs of shoes).	2,3,4	small-scale and localised	2 months

Cyprus	Social ride by by TWOFOURTW O ART GROUP7; Frederick University, Nicosia, Cyprus	Marginalised groups such as financial immigrants, political refugees, persons with special needs	Marginalisation, inclusion, civic engagement	Monthly, guided tour of Nicosia Municipal Art Centre (and the exhibition "In Crisis"), dinner at the reconverted restaurant	Social and civic attention given to persons coming from marginalised groups,	2,3,4	small-scale and localised	6 months
Cyprus	Buffer Fringe annual festival; Nicosia, Cyprus	Mostly youth, and people from both sides of Cyprus	intercommunal conflict (in Cyprus);social state and status of immigrants and refugees, gender issues, civic engagement	variety of art forms and public space interventions (based on participants proposals)	Advancement of communication, interaction and collaboration among people of diverse ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds; promotion of dialogue and freedom of thinking and expression; inspire and promote creativity	1,2,4,5	medium-scale	periodic
Cyprus	Songs of my neighbours, Cyprus in partnership with Italy and Poland	Mostly youth, and people from the respective communities	Ethnic conflict - multiculturalism and multinationalism; Inclusion	Theatre, music workshops, performances	Advancement of communication, interaction and collaboration among people of diverse ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds; promotion of dialogue and freedom of thinking and expression; inspire and promote creativity, arts and collaborations among artists	2,4,5	medium-scale	2 years