



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

**EUROPEAN CULTURAL LEARNING NETWORK
LEONARD DA VINCI
ECLN**

Grant agreement: 2012-3657 / 001-001

WP2-2C

**10.e. RESEARCH STUDY –
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

(English)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL LEARNING NETWORK: A NETWORK OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS THAT DEVELOP TALENT AND OTHER POTENTIAL THROUGH CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES WORKING ACROSS EUROPE

The European Cultural Learning Network (ECLN) was established to explore the Vocational Education and Training issues that are relevant to 'Cultural Learning' practitioners, and the organisations that employ them. By 'Cultural Learning', we mean the whole range of artistic and cultural learning that is delivered by artists and creative people, as freelancers or within cultural organisations. Cultural learning (CL) includes the whole range of artistic and cultural learning delivered or led by artists and creative people in any social, educational or professional situation. ECLN has been funded by the LEONARDO European Life Long Learning Programme to explore and pilot new ways of supporting people and organisations working in the CL sector across Europe. ECLN will endeavour to increase the profile and connectivity of the sector as well as supporting its vocational education and training (VET) needs. The first stage of this work is this research, which maps Artist-Freelancers and Cultural Organisations and their work practices and other stakeholders in the sector.

BACKGROUND:

Artists and Creative Freelancers (AFs) and Cultural Organisations (COs), participating in this highly qualitative research, were selected from the country networks of the partner organisations. The research took place between July and September 2013 and was carried out by ECLN partners from 11 Countries: Association Prostor Plus (Croatia), Hope for Children (Cyprus), VIA-UC (Denmark) Kau Academy (Estonia), Dimitra (Greece), Associazione Culturale Mulab (Italy), New Arts (Netherlands), Fundacja Arteria (Poland), MItra (Slovenia), CEPS (Spain), and Collage Arts (UK). The partners were requested to select a sample that was diverse in age range, art-forms and gender.

PROFILE:

The AF sample consisted of 147 individuals of approximately equal gender balance. The CO representatives consisted of 41 organisations, the majority of which, were female. Despite being a small sample in each country, the COs included a range of different incorporation models including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), institutions, associations, charities/non-profit organisations, companies, cooperatives, centres and studios or 'other'.

There seem to be a definitive drop in the workforce age profile for both AFs and COs in the age-range 36-45. This decline could be in the actual workforce sample or because the workforce are leaving the sector after age 36. The sector, as a whole, tends to be low paid with little long-term security and younger people may be more prepared to give their energy for non-financial rewards and accommodate the riskiness of the sector than people from their mid-thirties onwards. However, the workforce rises again slightly to 19% at 46-55 with people perhaps being more available to participate in the research or moving into the sector to begin a second career with 8% staying on at work till aged 65 and 4% staying on

beyond 65 years of age. There are more young people, aged 16-25, in the workforce in Cyprus and Slovenia and more older people, aged 56-65, in the workforce in Poland.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED:

The AFs are very highly qualified. 86% of them are graduates or have certification equivalent to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 6 and 39% have post-graduate qualifications, including Masters Degrees and Doctorates. 14% of AFs give their highest qualification level as EQF level 5 or below and only 4 out of 147 AFs have qualifications below level 3.

ARTISTS NOT TEACHERS:

AFs average about 40% of their working time delivering *cultural learning support* and over 60% of their working time is used on their own *Artistic or Creative Practice*. COs across all countries present an average ratio of approximate 3:7 of time spent on their own practice compared to the time spent delivering *cultural learning support*. This indicates that Cultural Learning Support in COs is also predominantly delivered in the context of Artistic Practice. cultural learning support in AF and CO contexts can be conceived as '*Practice-based*' or '*Artist-led*' learning.

JOB CONTRACTS AND ROLES:

163 types of employment status are recorded by 147 AFs. The majority are freelancers, with a significant number employed and a small minority are unemployed, semi-retired and retired. Job-types include temporary and permanent contracts, full-time and part-time contracts, voluntary and paid work and employment and freelance contracts. The majority of the cultural organisation representatives are employed and full-time. 37% of these representatives are employed, 22% are volunteers and 14% are freelancers.

People in these jobs in the cultural learning sector inspire, motivate, identify, nurture and develop talent of people by engaging them in Creative and Artistic activities.

WHO PAYS FOR CULTURAL LEARNING:

The 41 COs report that they delivering cultural learning support in 96 contexts across 10 countries in more than 14 art-forms. The average range of income sources for COs is 45% public, 21% private, 22% earned and 12% 'other'. The costs of delivering cultural learning support are shared between the unpaid or voluntary contribution of COs, cultural learners and others. COs provide up to 42% of cultural learning support in unpaid contexts compared with AFs who provide slightly less at 40%. The beneficiaries of cultural learning support from AFs contribute 20% whereas those supported by COs contribute slightly more at 26% and the 'Others' fund 40% for AFs and 32% for COs. A clear rationale for carrying out unpaid work appears to be similarly shared between the AFs and the COs which could indicate

talent-development priorities or a combination of social-artistic-learning goals that are upheld and delivered alongside sustainable economic goals.

ART-FORMS AND CURRENT, HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LEARNING PRACTICE :

There is a significant trend in the sample showing that AFs engage in 1-4 art-forms, most with an average of around 2-3. This shows the versatility of the AFs and their engagement in multi-art-form practice. The 2 most popular art-forms practiced by the AFs in the sample were Music with 25% of the total art-forms identified and Visual Arts with 18%.

AFs have a repertory of different art-forms and different and are operating a context type of portfolio as well as an art-form portfolio. They are practising simultaneously as Professionals, Specialists and Generalists with one or more art-forms. The conceptual boundaries between these 3 types of contexts do not restrict AFs from freely admitting to be currently practising in many contexts, for many reasons. Strongly held differentials between practitioners for social or leisure reasons, i.e. hobbyists, amateurs and professionals does not seem to apply to this group who see themselves as being able to move fluidly between these different types of location as part of their *current practice*. They apply their practice for different purposes including to undertake paid work, to specialise or deepen their knowledge and experience and to have fun, be sociable and play. There is additional evidence to support this from a historic view of the AFs journey in which they develop a repertory of art-forms and cultural learning contexts of between 3 -10 types.

AFs are working in both individual and group contexts historically but the group contexts diminish and the individual contexts increase as they move forward in their careers in accordance with professional opportunities and aspirations. There is the same level of engagement historically and currently with community contexts and this is of particular interest to a potential European Association.

The opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and experience required for the *Professional* contexts then clearly comes from both *Generalist* as well as *Specialist* contexts. This has implications for policy-makers and others wishing to support the development of creative talent to enterprise.

Cultural learning is not viewed as a replacement for formal education, since 86% of the AFs are graduates and highly qualified, but rather as an ecology of artistic practice development with its knowledge networks, informal systems, journeys and opportunities. The mix of informal, non-formal and formal learning activities that are delivered, shared or experienced via AFs and COs within 9 cultural learning contexts equip aspiring artists to develop their practice organically and in multi-directions. It is by experiencing this ecology and by undertaking a continuously negotiated role within the community of practice that a novice artist navigates the *Generalist*, *Specialist* and *Professional* roles as well as the *Individual*, *Group* and *Community* contexts of their practice in organic and flexible ways over

time. The cultural learning sector can be viewed both as an ecology and as a community of practice that individuals move through, learning informally, non-formally and formally to build their portfolios of *art-forms, roles and contexts*.

COs and AFs generally serve different communities within the 9 cultural learning contexts. The organisation mission and stakeholders of the COs influence their priorities, whereas the AFs are likely to be freer to respond to opportunities, paid or otherwise.

A CORE CURRICULUM FOR CULTURAL LEARNING:

Through the research a broad ECLN shared *Core Curriculum* has been developed from *Core-Competences* which are considered by AFs and COs as essential to developing and equipping the *Cultural Learning Support Practitioner* for working in the 9 cultural learning contexts.

This *ECLN Core Curriculum* consists of competences in the following :

- A. *Creative Processes*
- B. *Artistic Techniques*
- C. *Communication*
- D. *Teamwork*
- E. *Coaching*
- F. *Training*
- G. *Cultural Contexts*
- H. *Mentoring*
- I. *Self-Awareness*

The least valued competencies of both the COs and the AFs were 'Employability', 'Self-Employment' and 'Self-Management' potentially expressing that this type of learning experience is focused more expansively on human potential rather than being solely concerned with using the arts as a purely instrumental tool to develop the economic production of individuals.

RESOURCES FOR CULTURAL LEARNING:

The top 5 recorded resources used in the delivery of cultural learning support across all countries clearly indicates the importance of dedicated space and the importance of contacts when engaging within a community of practice. It also highlights the position of the AFs and COs as current practitioners with 'live' contacts that can be used as a resource to enable *Cultural Learners* to access further learning and opportunities to develop their practice.

EVALUATION:

Across all countries 81% of AFs use *self-evaluation*, 85% of AFs have their work *evaluated by cultural learners or the people they support* and 67% of AFs have their work *evaluated by*

others whereas 80% of COs use *self-evaluation*, 93% of COs have their *work evaluated by Cultural Learners* and 73% of COs have their *work evaluated by others*.

POTENTIAL ROLES FOR A EUROPEAN CULTURAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION:

'Connecting' and *'Training'* were the clear front-runners as potential roles for a European Cultural Learning Association with both COs and AFs but then COs preferred *'Researching'*, *'Lobbying'*, *'Monitoring'* and *'Recognising'* compared with the AF preferences of *'Lobbying'*, *'Recognising'*, *'Researching'* and *'Monitoring'*.

CONCLUSION:

The ECLN research project has provided an overview of a very diverse sector that has 2 main constituencies: the first is the Artist Freelancers that share their practice through formal, non-formal and informal contexts and strategies; the second, is the Cultural Organisation that delivers Cultural Learning to different people for different reasons.

There is a very diverse set of work contracts and organisational structures for this type of work according to the research participants, however, there is a remarkable consensus about the competences and resources needed to do this work and there is a highly qualified work-force to do this. The sector has been operational for at least 30 years, yet it is fluid, structurally under-resourced with low financial returns with minimal security for workers. Despite the sector context, it has been able to sustain itself using the goodwill, creativity and entrepreneurship of its creative community work-force together with the supportive public, private and other stakeholders. There is very little public recognition and validation for this work which exists as a cultural learning ecology and consists of a networked community of practice who transfer creative and cultural knowledge to each other as a means of developing talent and other human potential.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.