

Cultural Economy deserves recognition and support

I. Introduction

This recommendation is the result of the Greek Amplify Hub: Communitism, a physical hub for underrepresented communities of the social and cultural sectors, activated a network of 30 Initiatives active in urban and rural centers, grassroots but also legal organisations, non profit and for-profit entities with cultural objectives, yet also relevant to the aspects of education, sports, migrants' rights , advocacy, the environment, urban and rural life focus, feminist, queer, and other social issues. It was a common decision of the Amplify hubs to invite interdisciplinary communities, indicating the fact that culture is present in a broad spectrum of expressions in everyday life and this fact should be acknowledged, endorsed and supported by the public decision makers.

Thanks to almost a decade long experience, the initiatives invited were able to play a crucial role in facing the multilevel socio economic crises, they are now able to communicate their insights towards a sustainable and efficiently systemised context.

II. Key issues identified

1. Value systems : Although we all use the same words, we don't mean the same things. This affects negatively bespoke communication and the feeling of transparency.
2. Sustainable cultural economies :There is a need for recognition of the value of arts and the multifaceted nature of artistic professionalism.
3. Unity and coherence: a common approach of legislation in between the EU countries but also on a social level
4. Climate change : Moment zero. promote the value of environmental sustainability
5. Time: Lack of consideration of the timely creative processes in the design of policies.
6. Rural areas: consisting mainly of underrepresented communities, they are deprived of access and accessibility.

III. Recommendations

1. Cultural education is a catalytic factor in the eradication of social inequalities and discrimination. Art's and art educators' roles need to be restored and elevated in basic education, with more hours of art in school, access to funds and resources for art education, permanent teaching positions for art teachers in educational institutions, spaces for arts and creativity in schools. Through these actions, the process of reevaluating the interrelation of culture and education will bear results of a more inclusive and equal society.
2. Utilise embedded knowledge with bottom up, participatory processes: Repurpose unused infrastructure in rural areas. Map, learn and acknowledge the experience from on the field, active, "bottom-up" cultural collectives and groups through bidirectional teaching-learning processes. They are effective in their actions, securing funding and support by using alternative paths of 'economies of solidarity'. Decision making and policy design should require research into the specificities of every sector, including field visits, and on site evaluations involving representatives and citizens of all ages. The internet could be utilized to decipher how policies would be received by citizens

(before they are actually decided in definite) or to upload various useful ideas and make them public. These methods will reinforce efforts in decentralizing power.

3. Creation of a legislative framework that covers the whole spectrum of culture. Long term design of policies and actions. Ensure the legal framework treats artistic professions equally with the rest.
4. Fund cultural actions straight from the EU in order to eradicate corruption and avoid 'favorable client' relationships with institutions. Create funding focused on local actions, and local funding institutions in order to decentralise governmental and institutional management. The public should have access to art actions free of charge, and long term and independent funding in addition to government support for artists should be available. Finally, offer capacity building to the cultural sector on financial sustainability in order to ensure effective management of said funds.
5. Policies should focus on polluting businesses and not on polluting citizens and focus should be given on system planning and designing (That could be a system of any kind, e.g. infrastructure, cultural activity etc.) There should also be a current broadcast of climate change ramifications and what we can do to mitigate them, promoting hope instead of fear-mongering.
6. The role of the European Council needs to be updated, from being perceived as a funding opportunity, to creating a framework and policy making that is meant to empower communities and not repress them in the fear of economic sanctions. In that way, the co-configuration of a common value code according to pluralism and equality is important as well as a shift in our way of thinking. As such, social issues could be redistributed more equally and a cooperative way of thinking can be promoted. Elimination of competition between European countries and the supply of equal opportunities for development in each of the countries.

IV. Discussion

1. **Background**

As mentioned, the process involved initiatives from a spectrum of underrepresented cultural initiatives, working in a country where the official field of culture acknowledges culture as the ancient and byzantine civilization, but as far as contemporary culture is concerned, it is mainly represented by the established elite. Grassroots or contemporary initiatives of sociocultural nature are rarely taken into account when policies are designed, they are offered very little in terms of education and they usually feel treated as hobbyists or volunteers by the public decision makers, as particularities that shouldn't be accounted for. Nevertheless, these initiatives have played prominent roles in supporting society during the consecutive socio economic crises. Many of them work on a volunteering basis, or holding other professional practices in order to support their cultural work. They contribute to their local economies in ways that are still unmapped, but they know their work is of essence as the demand grows steadily year by year.

2. Context

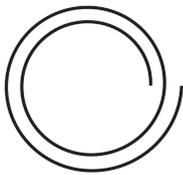
During the process, the participants recommended ideas for better inclusion of their input in the design of future policies, as the local state is not requesting their input often. They have questioned the unity of the value system throughout the EU and they recommend redefining it in more contemporary and transparent ways, that will involve the issue of climate change, and time as a component. They need better understanding of production processes and recognition of the real urgencies. They need the rural areas to be as supported as big urban centers. They request for the inequality in the ways of application of EU policies between the member countries throughout Europe, to be addressed.

Lastly, they need to see the recognition of cultural economies as an important component of life in EU member-states, to be depicted in the ways EU designs and the member states apply their approaches. They would expect to enjoy relief from the struggles they face daily as a result of this recognition and their roles as cultural actors to be saluted.

V. Signatures

1	Elena karagianni (People with balloons)
2	Giorgis Benias (Qreclaim)
3	Ioanna Nissiriou (We need books)
4	Nasrouddin Nizami (We are solomon)
5	Alkmini Petrou-Hatzipanagiotou (Oistrogones, Sporos)
6	Christina Serifi (Tirilab, Zuloark)
7	Juan Chacon (tirilab, Zuloark)
8	Vassilis Noulas (Okto)
9	Kostas Tzimoulis (Okto)
10	Gigi Argyropoulou (Okto)
11	Rania Mavriki (Cultopia)
12	Nadia Siokou (Urban dig Project)
13	Irini Iliopoulou, (Urban dig Project)
14	Marw Magoula (Peripatos)
15	Evangelia Pelendridou (Peripatos)
16	Agis Bardopoulos (Athenian centaurs RFC)
17	Konstantina Aggeletou (Plegma)
18	Michael Afolayan (Anasa / Social circus)
19	George Papadopetrakis (Red Umbrella, Positive Voice)
20	Christos Papamichael (Liminal)
21	Maria Kondyli (Save your hood)
22	Thanos Zeris (Vice Versa)
23	Konstantinos Kotsyfis (Vice Versa)
24	Aggeliki Gkirgkinopoulou (Vice Versa)
25	Manto Paparigopoulou (Vice Versa)
26	Marina Skarpeti (Communitism)
27	Effrosyni Tsiritaki (Communitism)

28	Adamantidis Stefanos (freelance lawyer)
29	Penny Travlou (FAQ research)
30	Argyro Barata (Thessaloniki Alliance for Culture)
31	Sozon Krikellis (Piloiko)
32	Sotiris Karagiotas (Peri viou)
33	Stelios voulgaris (Common, Culture for Change Network)
34	George Theothorakis (Mikilio, Communitism)



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