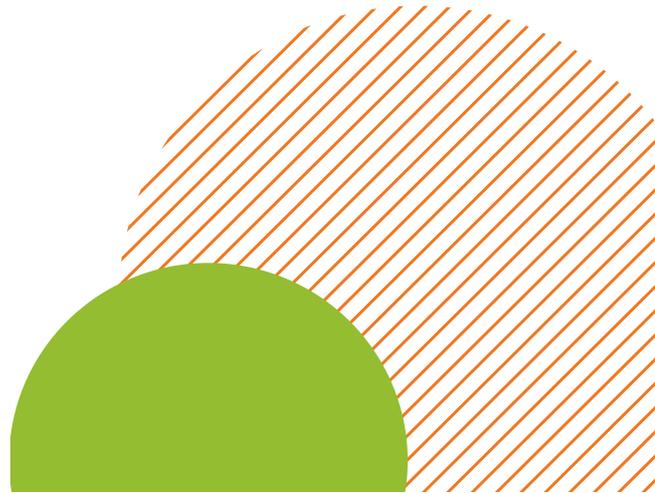




REPORT OF THE TRAININGS TO PROFESSIONALS, TRAINERS/REPRESENTATIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

Project: "Establishment of a transnational network of adult education providers for the promotion of social inclusion of vulnerable groups" – STEP UP
Project N° 621376-EPP-1-2020-1-EL-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN

The European Commission's support for the production of this publications does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



CONTENTS

- 03** Previous Note
- 04** Introduction
- 05** Usefulness of the STEP UP Manual to the design and implementation of art and cultural activities.
- 06** Overviews of the participants about the role of Art and Cultural activities in the promotion of social inclusion.
- 08** Overviews of the vulnerable groups members who participated in the pilot activities of the STEP UP's Project
- 09** Strategies for upscaling the impact of art and cultural activities for the promotion of social inclusion.
- 11** Conclusion
- 13** Websites and Social Media Platforms

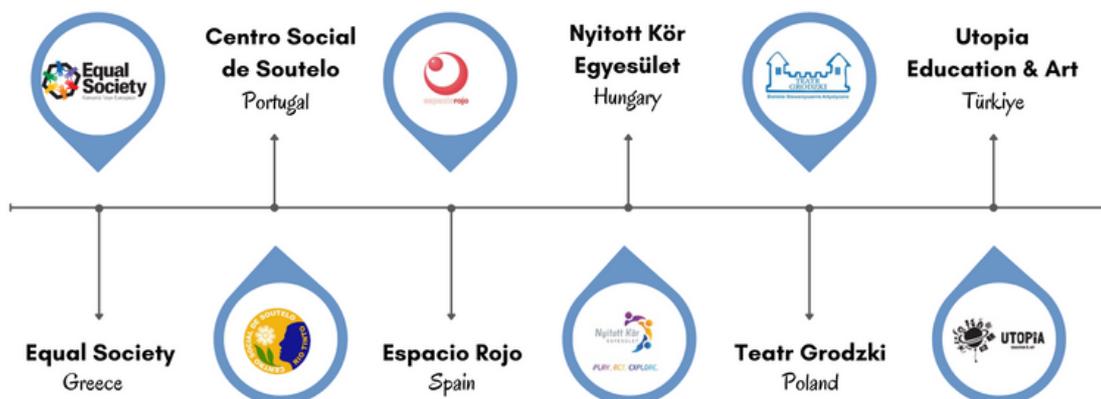
PREVIOUS NOTE

STEP UP PROJECT Art changes people's lives

The STEP UP Project aims to establish a new transnational network of adult education providers. The network's goal is to facilitate the cooperation and exchange of experiences among the participating organisations, and promote adult learning as a mean for facilitating the social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The Network supports the promotion of arts, as an educational method, in the context of the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as homeless people, refugees, the elderly, people with disabilities and mental health problems, the impoverished and disadvantaged women.

THE PARTNERS



INTRODUCTION

The STEP UP Project partners [*Equal Society* (Greece), *Centro Social de Soutelo* (Portugal), *Espacio Rojo* (Spain), *Teatr Grodzki* (Poland), *Nyitott Kör Egyesület* (Hungary), and *Utopia Education and Art* (Türkiye)] organised in November six Workshops for professionals, trainers/representatives of adult education organisations, and public authorities, to present the STEP UP Project and the results developed by the Consortium up to now, with special emphasis on the Manual.

Approximately **200 participants** attended the six workshops, including representatives of public authorities and non-governmental organisations, artists, social educators, psychologists, instructors from cultural institutions, volunteers, and some members from the pilot activities (Puppetry, Ceramics, and Radio), that was one of the main activities developed within the project.

The main objectives of this report are to highlight the participants' opinions on the usefulness of the STEP UP Manual in the design and implementation of artistic and cultural activities; to listen to their perspectives on the importance of implementing artistic and cultural practices in the social area and the relevance of these same practices as a facilitator of social inclusion, especially among vulnerable people. Finally, it was also discussed strategies to promote cultural and artistic initiatives as facilitating tools for social transformation.

USEFULNESS OF THE STEP UP MANUAL TO THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ART AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION.

In each partner country, a presentation of the STEP UP Project and its results, in particular the Manual, took place. The participants were able to read and analyse the document, which was distributed in paper or digital format, according to the decision of each partner. Subsequently, there was a moment of discussion about the contents of the Manual, and the participants paid added attention to the analysis of **Section 3 - "Design and Production of Artistic and Cultural Activities as an Educational Method for Vulnerable Groups"**, as it was the most practical section, thus of most interest to the attending professionals.

The attending professionals considered that the strongest point of the Manual is the presentation of good practices already tested and based on real-life experiences, as well as the practical information, providing the reader with some guidelines and tips to take into account when designing and implementing cultural and artistic activities. Furthermore, it provides a real insight into the needs and expectations of people with different vulnerabilities, allowing for the uptake of ideas and concrete suggestions on how to solve complicated situations, as well as highlighting the aspects to pay attention to during the implementation of these activities.

The Manual presents a simple and visually appealing graphic design and is of rather long length, but with very rich and empowering content, capacitating every professional who wants to implement the activities it contains. The participants expressed interest in incorporating the guidelines and tips contained in the Manual, and applying them in future projects.

It should be noted that its practical approach, together with the ToolBox, will allow a better replication of the good practices described in it.

OVERVIEWS OF THE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE ROLE OF ART AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

As planned, the intention was to reflect with the participants on the relevance of artistic and cultural activities as a tool for promoting social inclusion.

In this sense, it was shared by the participants that the framework of artistic and cultural projects within the scope of social work is of great significance, contributing to achieving greater and better social impact.

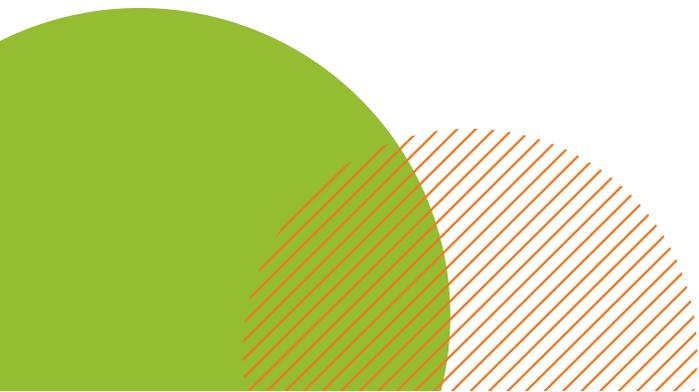
They stressed that projects should be disseminated to a larger number of institutions, both public and private, that are receptive to receiving these artistic and cultural activities, recognising their added value in the integral development of individuals, namely after an adequate communities' needs evaluation.

In the social area, to generate better results and added value social impact, there should be a focus on projects of longer duration. Presently, projects have a very short time limit, which does not allow professionals to develop effective and integrative work with the community. Complementary to the previous point, the technical teams, who work only in the implementation of social and community projects, also stated that there is little appreciation of their professional activity, to the extent that most of these professionals have no employment relationship, being liberal professionals, and their work is dependent on the approval of projects, which, consequently, brings with it great financial insecurity.

They underlined that professionals should have the qualifications/training to perform functions in the artistic and cultural area. The trainer is the keystone in designing and implementing activities, creating empathy with trainees, and managing relationships and learning. In addition, the use of non-specialised volunteers in developing artistic activities is a non- solution, as it may compromise the performance of the activities. However, their support would be considerably useful in other, non-technical actions, such as the development of dissemination strategies for the projects.

They reinforced that the activities should always take place in "inclusive" places, i.e., places that meet accessibility requirements, and safe and adequate spaces for the development of activities. And always give preference to face-to-face activities rather than online, with rare exceptions, as was the COVID-19, because in person there is more interaction and a better interpersonal relationship between the participants and the trainer.

From the perspective of the attending representatives of public entities, among which we highlight the presence of City Councils, Parish Councils, Public Institutes of Culture and Education, Employment and Vocational Training Centers, and Universities, there was a unanimous desire to contribute to promoting social and community projects, especially those that develop artistic activities and are addressed to more vulnerable groups. They urged the professionals in this field to persist and insist with the policymakers, underlining the added value of these projects for the personal and social development of communities. Finally, some representatives of public entities consider not only including some activities from the Manual and the Toolbox in social and community projects that are being implemented, but also supporting the dissemination of these results within the social network of their territories.



OVERVIEWS OF THE VULNERABLE GROUPS' MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PILOT ACTIVITIES OF THE STEP UP PROJECT.

Members of vulnerable groups, who participated in the six pilot activities developed in each partner country (Puppetry, Ceramics, and Radio), were invited to be present at the workshops to give their perspectives on their experience.

In general, they all praised the teams that accompanied them and how important their participation was throughout the sessions. The activities developed allowed their emotional empowerment, they felt more able to perform activities that, initially, they thought they could not, coming to the conclusion that they can do everything, even what seems most unlikely.

They emphasized that they felt they belonged to a group, where they could share their life stories, without fear of being criticized. During the sessions, they felt happy, welcomed, and able to withdraw for a few hours from their problems and anxieties, and felt less alone.

In brief, these activities provide them with the time and space to find themselves and with others, they improve their interpersonal relationships, their socialisation, gathering the strength and confidence to face new challenges in life.

STRATEGIES FOR UPSCALING THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION.

The last debate point was the presentation of strategies for promoting artistic and cultural activities, ensuring their greater sustainability. Among the many suggestions shared, the most mentioned in the different workshops are below registered.

One of the most to-the-point suggestions was to ensure **the sustainability of cultural initiatives in a long-term perspective**, allowing for the fulfilment of their social mission. Consequently, if this time extension of the projects was to be verified, the professionals would have greater professional and financial stability, as well as more fruitful results and greater impact on the populations involved would be ensured.

To promote awareness in organisations and public entities for the importance of artistic and cultural activities, as tools for the empowerment and capacity building of their communities, especially of the most vulnerable.

To set up a Network of institutions and informal groups, according to the logic of an exchange of methodologies and experiences between different target groups.

To create a website promoting the exchange of Good Practices in the cultural and artistic field, where organizations can disseminate their work and allow for its replicability.

Up holding workshops or events that promote the work developed in this artistic and cultural field, carried out by professionals either on its own or jointly, whenever possible, with the organizations and/or public entities available to do so.

To incorporate the social and artistic projects in typified public responses, to ensure greater financial sustainability and guarantee a greater social impact.

Finally, it was also mentioned that the project promoters should be **rigorous in the selection of professionals** who promote cultural and artistic activities. These professionals must be qualified to work with people in vulnerable situations, understanding their needs and limitations.

CONCLUSION

The STEP UP Project was well received by all workshop participants, with a greater focus on the presentation of the STEP UP Manual, which stood out as it point out the project´s practical side, which will enable better replicability of the activities it included, and the presentation of already tested activities, with different target groups, and confirmed results and impact.

All participants believed that, effectively, artistic and cultural activities are of utmost importance for the development of target groups, especially the most vulnerable ones. These activities offer individuals an improvement in their emotional and interpersonal skills, resulting in a healthier social coexistence.

It is worth highlighting the testimony of the participants in the project's pilot activities, who gave a very positive account of their experiences and allowed those attending to verify the impact that these activities had on theirlives.

As for the suggested strategies, it is important to remember that it is crucial to ensure the sustainability of cultural initiatives in a long-term perspective, as well as to raise the awareness of organisations and public entities to broaden the field of intervention in social and artistic projects, valorising their professionals and recognising the added value of these projects for the communityin general.

It should be noted that the STEP UP Project already has a website (<https://www.stepupart.eu/>), which could play a highly relevant role in the dissemination of artistic and cultural projects at european, national and local levels, being a first step in the dissemination, articulation, and cooperation between several professionals and organisations in the cultural, artistic and social area.

Therefore, and despite the cultural differences between the partners of the consortium, the Workshops allowed us to observe a great similarity of needs and challenges in social and artistic projects' field. In this context, the STEP UP Project may serve as an inspiration for driving change, through concerted and effective cooperation between all artistic, cultural, social, and political players, towards the recognition of cultural and artistic initiatives as socially inclusive tools.

For further information please visit the STEP UP Project website and social media platforms.



stepupart.eu



[linkedin.com/in/step-up-network-400868209](https://www.linkedin.com/in/step-up-network-400868209)



[facebook.com/stepupproject](https://www.facebook.com/stepupproject)



twitter.com/StepUp56919723



[instagram.com/stepup.art](https://www.instagram.com/stepup.art)



[youtube.com/channel/UCSb0KuFaMhEzT-dMdk7GZxg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSb0KuFaMhEzT-dMdk7GZxg)

For more information about the Consortium you can visit the partners' website and social media platforms.

EQUAL SOCIETY

-  www.equalstociety.gr/en/
-  facebook.com/equalstocietyngo/
-  twitter.com/EqualSociety1
-  instagram.com/equalstociety/
-  youtube.com/user/equalstociety

ESPACIO ROJO

-  <http://espaciorojo.com/>
-  <https://www.facebook.com/asociacionespaciorojo/>
-  https://www.instagram.com/espacio_rojo/
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/asociacion-espacio-rojo/>

TEATR GRODZKI

-  <https://www.teatrgrodzki.pl/>
-  <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/TeatrGrodzki/>

CENTRO SOCIAL DE SOUTELO

-  centrosocialsoutelo.org/
-  facebook.com/centrosocialdesoutelo
-  instagram.com/centrosocialdesoutelo/

NYITOTT KÖR EGYESÜLET

-  <https://nyitottkor.hu/>
-  <https://hu-hu.facebook.com/nyitottkor/>
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/nyitott-kor/>

UTOPIA EDUCATION & ART

-  <https://www.utopiaeduart.org/>
-  <https://www.facebook.com/utopiaeduart>
-  <https://www.instagram.com/utopiaeduart/>