



Workshop 3

The role of education and culture in the sustainable recovery for Europe

2 March 2021 | 14:30 - 16:30 | EESC - Brussels

Organised by Culture Action Europe (CAE), the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB), the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP) and the EESC section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)

There is no recovery or future for Europe without culture and education. The European cultural and educational ecosystem is convinced that Europe needs a new impetus for culture and education. The gravity of the COVID-19 crisis has proven yet again that culture and education are not a luxury, but a necessity for building cohesive, equal, sustainable and free societies.

The natural interlinkage between culture and education is increasingly taken for granted and cooperation between the education and cultural sectors at the political level remains, to a large extent, symbolic. If this situation remains, we will miss out on the vast potential that synergies between education and culture can have in the sustainable recovery of Europe, not only from an economic perspective – given the contribution that creative skills and industries make to the economy – but also, and more importantly, from a social perspective – given the benefits that learning about and through culture has for more inclusive societies.

The workshop was divided into three different parts. In the introductory part, the keynote speaker presented the interconnection between culture and education. In the second part, the audience and speakers were split into three different breakout sessions, where experts covered separate areas. The first session explored the role of intergenerational and lifelong learning, the second delved into the importance of holistic education, while the third session discussed the role of culture for the recovery and beyond. Thus, they gathered in a plenary session to finalise recommendations and draw conclusions on the role of culture and education for the future of Europe.

Introduction



EVBB
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
INSTITUTES FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING



After setting the scene and welcoming participants, Theodor Grassos gave the floor to Arja Krauchenberg, President of Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP) and Lars Ebert, member board of the Executive Committee at Culture Action Europe (CAE) for a short presentation of their organisations' profiles.

In the keynote speech, Dr. Eli Eisenberg, Professor at the Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research (Israel) presented the interconnection between culture and education and their role on the development of essential social emotional competencies for a sustainable recovery.

Break-out sessions

Subsequently participants were split into 3 break-out sessions.

In particular, in session 1, with Shanti George and Camee Comperen - from the Learning for Wellbeing Foundation - discussed how lifelong learning policies can be the sustainable solution to the economic and social recovery and in this context what the role of intergenerational learning is. The discussion verted toward the need of creating awareness about the benefits of culture and education reinforcing each other, which in turn would allow people to come together and find common solutions to common challenges. This can be achieved by showing good examples from EU projects and global initiatives.

In session 2, Dr Eli Eisenberg discussed with the participants how holistic education and culture can tackle the challenges raised by the pandemic and meet the needs of a sustainable recovery for Europe; and how they can also bridge the gap between the needs of education and the labour market. During the discussion, Lifelong Learning & Inclusive Education were conceived as essential tools to overcome interrupted educational processes; therefore, the education system needs to become more flexible and adaptable to get to know their students by 360 degrees. In this context, it was underlined that social skills are not less important than cognitive skills.

In session 3, Gabriele Rosana - Policy Director at Culture Action Europe - presented "A Cultural Deal for Europe" the cross-cutting, overarching framework that demonstrates the EU's political commitment to placing culture at the heart of the European project. During this debate, culture and education were depicted as a fertile ground for cultivating the skills and inspiring the innovation needed in the societies of both today and tomorrow. Lars Ebert, the moderator of the session, triggered the conversation together with Gabriele Rosana on how culture is interrelated with other fields and how it can become a catalyst for the future of Europe. As a response to that, Janusz Pietkiewicz, EESC member, highlighted the pivotal role of culture and education in shaping the future of our lives and underlined how they are main vectors that trigger a societal paradigm shift and make sure that no one is left behind in the recovery of Europe. The debate concentrated on how to include cultural approaches in the EU's main strategic programmes and policies and the process to go beyond sectoral perspectives. As a matter of fact, the conversation recognised the need to valorise cultural and artistic education

for the future of Europe by fully endorsing and mainstreaming STEAM education, where Arts is included on equal footing together with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Final plenary discussion

The workshop ended with a conversation with Tatjana Babrauskienė and Janusz Pietkiewicz, both EESC members and Paul Coughlan, member of the Executive Board of FEANI, the Federation of Professional Engineers.

During the conversation, two main topics were highlighted: the importance of including Civil Society Organisations in the design and implementation of National Recovery and Resilience Plans, and the necessity to consider education and culture not only as two sectors to protect, but vectors of changes for a more sustainable and resilient Europe.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The three breakout sessions and the final discussion come up with a set of recommendations for policymakers. The following main recommendations were highlighted:

1. Cultural values should be incorporated into all educational settings, formal, non-formal and informal, starting from an early age practising Inclusive Education continuing with Lifelong and Intergenerational Learning so that education and culture can keep reinforcing each other and are able to overcome interrupted educational processes.
2. A 360 degree approach to education and training is needed. We shall recognize the equal value of cultural and arts education by mainstreaming STEAM education - science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. At the same time, we should encourage dialogue and solidarity, foster empathy, and mutual understanding to become more flexible and adaptable.
3. As the EU prepares to recover from the pandemic, culture and education are crucial assets where to place investments to build a more resilient and sustainable future of Europe. This, however, should be translated in dedicated envelopes in the national recovery and resilience plans that are being prepared by the Member States and that will be validated by the EU Institutions. While much attention will be put on hard infrastructures, it is essential that *people* are supported to be at the centre of the recovery.