

CRé-ActionRome

Foreword

Official statistics every year and the 2013 OECD Survey of Adult Skills in Italy offer a clear and dramatic evidence of the fact that differences in the access to cultural services result in social, far-reaching, deep and increasing social exclusion.

Cultural services are essential citizenship services, based upon the art.9 of the Italian Constitution, but, so far, neither factual, nor legal practice reflect that statement. Indeed, no provision has been made for culture – contrary to the explicit mandate of the Constitution art.117 - of “essential levels of performance concerning those social and civil rights that must be granted on the entire national territory”. Consequently, cultural services are, in practice, regarded as non-essential, and as dispensable, especially when public finance, and Municipalities’ expenditure in particular, are subject to cuts and increasing constrains.

A recent example is the 2014-2020 National Strategy for Italy’s Inland Disadvantaged Areas, based upon the recognition of inequality of access to essential services, that only considers education, health and mobility. Culture is not among such services.

Essential levels of performance represent an advanced step of social protection, higher than minimum levels, having the purpose of securing qualitative and quantitative performance levels apt to grant every citizen the full enjoyment of Constitution-granted rights.

The Italian Members of **Culture Action Europe**(CAE) – an European network that gathers over100organizations in all the fields of arts and culture and about 50 individual members(www.cultureactioneurope.org) - have met in Rome, on28th April2016, at the MACRO Museum, to discuss the theme of culture as an essential citizenship right with operators stakeholders of the sector. The general theme has been specified into three subthemes: culture and citizens, culture and communities, culture and development.

With over 80 participants, the initiative aimed at identifying, starting from the analysis of contexts and exploration of needs, strategies to be pursued to create and strengthen a virtuous link between culture and the different segments of society.

The case-study of the day was the city of Rome. Analyses and suggestions presented here refer therefore to Rome. Guidelines and method are however applicable to and reproducible in other cities and contexts.

The Method

Method is a priority issue in the work of CAE Members. The method of the public policies for the governance of cultural processes cannot be questioned without an open and transparent debate.

This is why we have decided to build the event on participatory strategies and tools. The reflection proposed by CAE Working group has thus prompted an open and inclusive debate. This is why we have chosen the World Café method, the purpose of which is to use the force of informal conversations to mobilize in a creative way thoughts and resources, producing learning, sharing knowledge and generating change and preparedness to social action.

The 3 working groups on culture and citizens, culture and communities, culture and development have been in turn divided into very little working tables, each devoted to a specific aspect and animated by a chairperson who also acted as rapporteur. The participants circulated around the different tables, so that they met all the other contributors and discussed each and all the themes.

A summary of the works is proposed in the next section.

- 1. Put culture and inter-cultural dialogue at the centre of the public policies of the Metropolitan government.**

- 2. Renew the vision (basic principles) of public policies for culture. In particular:**
 - Keep the 4 key themes for wellbeing and quality of life of the city: environment, public mobility, transparency and legality connected. Culture and its processes may act as facilitators of a new concept of city and its liveability, without neglecting the dimension of inclusion and social cohesion
 - Favour access and participation of all citizens to culture
 - Support innovation, also to promote new talents and professions, rewarding creativity in the cultural sector and in other sectors
 - Favour narratives and identities of places as well as cultural diversity, through the representation of other cultures
 - Foster local intelligences and their capability to produce change and include them in the governance processes
 - Strengthen and empower such territorial agents as schools, libraries, social organisations and active communities, who can become actors of dissemination of knowledge and competences (e.g. apartment-building libraries), promote projects for the care of common goods and change through virtuous co-planning
 - Grant infrastructures and common services, which can create a favourable context for collaborating with the cultural and creative industries, foster their development and facilitate the intervention of the private sector in the care and promotion of the common good

3. Renew the method (basic principles):

- Make processes lighter and less bureaucratic, procedures more flexible, strengthen transparency and certainty of rules
- Make resource allocation instruments more dynamic and less bureaucratic, discontinue the competition logic of tenders in favour of calls for ideas among qualified subjects and negotiated selection procedures
- Define multi-annual conventions and agreements to implement projects (their duration depending on dimension of projects, nature of the convention, partners, etc.) in a framework of shared planning and continued monitoring activity

4. Strengthen a unitary vision and method about tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the city, through:

- Stronger guidelines, cultural vision and strategies, which the Administration must make public and clear
- Stronger, clearer methods
- Simplification of procedures
- Involvement of the administrative structures to share the change

5. ... at the same time, entrust the direct dialogue with the territory, the investigation and the interpretation of needs, to highly qualified mediators:

- Re-launch the central role of Metropolitan Municipalities, with innovative instruments apt to strengthen their role as intermediate territorial agent. Devote spaces in each Municipality to the encounter of citizens and organisations, good practices fairs, exchange of experiences. Municipalities could make good practices from the territories visible via social networks, local tvs and radios, etc.

- Make the schools places for awareness building and production: they are at the centre of Municipalities and places where communities are formed. They should define, with the Metropolitan authority and the Municipalities, practices aimed at putting them at the service of communities and of the most interesting expressions of the self-organisation of the young citizens
- Make the other places of culture acquire a greater strategic function as cultural territorial antennae/strongholds, that must cover the entire metropolitan area.
- Regenerate degraded or unusable cultural spaces and places, committing them, on the basis of a clear and shared public project, to organisations of the Third sector and Active Citizens' groups.
- Review the regulations concerning occupied spaces: grant benefits, tax breaks and exemptions for those cultural initiatives which are active and working.
- Involve the private sector in the care of the common good, strengthening public-private projects , making public goals clear and transparent, cutting out red tape from processes.

6. Grant a permanent training of the administrative staff in the Cultural Department:

- Train the staff to make them able to know the context where they operate, to have specific competences, find new enthusiasm and motivation, to listen, to acquire a proactive and project-oriented attitude;
- Grant a specific training on culture and creativity, as well as new methods and instruments, sustainable management models, the role and characteristics of territories.
- Favour participation of officials and staff and their enjoyment of cultural services and products, out of the offices, in the territories.
- Review personnel recruitment and training, favouring real competences and skills over titles and recognising acquired experiences and *soft skills*.

7. Know better the cultural field:

- Census of cultural operators and organisations;
- Data collection on cultural participation with innovative approaches and methods, with in-depth analysis apt to produce SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) indicators of impact of the cultural projects
- Data and project collection apt to identify the evident and latent needs of the territory in the cultural field and the major obstacles to their satisfaction, from logistic to security.
- Build a complete map of public and private spaces and infrastructures that host cultural projects.

8. Adopt reliable and transparent instruments for the control and assessment of processes:

- Identify new instruments for assessing the impact of cultural policies, using also a qualitative approach. Acquire instruments to include needs and characteristics of the demand, going beyond GDP as sole measure of development, in line with the Italian *Benessere Equo e Solidale* Project – which is the only one to include a few variables about cultural participation, heritage and landscape, but is still too vague about culture – or Social progress Index. Emotional maps of citizens and communities are also proposed.
- Refine and make more adequate the evaluation criteria for cultural projects, their effects on communities and their territorial rooting.
- Engage in mid-long term evaluations, so as to analyse complex processes, such as new audiences formation and participation strategies.
- Take into account the real representativeness and capacity of projects and subjects to be involved, rather than their fame; Prefer projects working for the collective interest of the communities and favour qualified occupation in the sector; balance public choice between continuity–selecting old projects, when they are able to produce sustained innovation –and new projects,

rewarding new ideas, generation turnover, social innovation; support projects of relevant dimensions and at the same time create a network of small and very small low budget initiatives that innervate the territory.

9. Implement a programme of interventions supporting the growth of cultural and creative enterprises and collaborative networks among enterprises to:

- Favour the sustainability of entrepreneurial projects, not only with financial contributions, but also and above all the access to common infrastructures and services, from communication to logistics, and incentives to the creation of cooperative platforms.
- Support projects of regeneration of spaces, not only in the start-up stage, with new administrative instruments, but also in the speed stage, through a supporting and monitoring network, involving all the actors in the territory.
- Orient, with a more balanced redistribution of resources, great events and big poles to create market opportunities and to reserve portions of programmes to new talent and independent organisations.
- Promote stable relationships, in the cultural sector, between universities, research institutions, cultural institutions, third sector organisations and enterprises, so that new competences, often still invisible, but necessary to the cultural sector, in the digital and sharing economy era, may emerge and find adequate occupational opportunities.

10. Open the strategic planning and the governance of cultural process to the citizens, the communities and the organisations of the territory, through:

- Participated process of a Strategic Plan for Culture and Creativity for Rome.
- Creation of a dedicated administrative direction in the Metropolitan administration, or a coordinator/facilitator who listen to the communities and favours their dialogue
- Creation of an open platform for cooperation and co-planning, multi-sectoral and multi-scale coordination, where the different actors in the system, including citizens, may conciliate, develop participated actions

- (digital ecosystem), and disseminate good practices.
- Community-based planning: move from “consultation” to co-planning processes, having clearly stated in advance intentions and goals. A possible process of participated planning involves the following steps: 1. Definition of public policies, calls, regulations, replicable models, etc.; 2. Platforms, fora, host, etc.; 3. Definition of evaluation criteria and outcome indicators, etc.; 4. Platforms to communicate outputs and decisions.
 - Incentive a virtuous use of the European Funds, fostering the participation of the Administration to international network projects, securing partnerships and support to enterprises, also through synergy with the other public administrations.