

ART(IST)S AND ADULT EDUCATION

A Study by Embaixada da Juventude as part of the Erasmus + KA2 Project: *Fusion of Art and Education*



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Arts and adult education in Portugal - Overview

Formal education settings

Adult education is a field where Portugal has been improving in the last decades, but the qualifications are still below the levels of more developed countries.

The National Qualification System (Sistema Nacional de Qualificações – SNQ) aims to promote widespread completion of upper secondary education as the population's minimum qualification. It also deals with the mechanisms necessary for its implementation, in coordination with the appropriate financial instruments, the National Strategic Reference Framework 2014-2020 in particular.

Adults education should be developed alongside personal competencies, modernization of the companies and educational vocational progression.

The SNQ has an agreement with social partners to restructure the professional education curriculum inserted in educational and vocational systems in articulation with the labour market, with common tools and goals and under a renovated institutional framework. Previously, in 2005, under the programme “Novas Oportunidades”, it was valued the recognition, validation and certification of competencies acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts; and the offer of vocational training. With this system developed, increased the number of adult education training, the network of centres to recognise, validate and certificate competencies (Centros Novas Oportunidades - CNO). These centres reinforced the need for lifelong and youth orientation, besides the adult intervention.

In 2016 a new programme was implemented: Programa Qualifica. This programme has the goal to improve the qualification levels of adults, improving the level of qualification of the population in general and the employability of individuals as well.

In total, this programme developed, until 2020, 310 centres, 521321 subscriptions, 52745 certifications RVCC (Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences) and 446366 of other types of qualifications, like EFA courses (adult education training) .¹

Despite the political speeches given by some politicians and leaders, the existing financing is not enough to re-launch the public policy in force until 2011, much less the adoption of a new policy that denotes characteristics of the democratic-emancipatory logic.

¹ Source: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-60_pt-pt.

The current public policy suffers from several problems. The first is related to the lack of variety in educational provision. This is mostly certified, with no support for non-formal or informal education



actions, as well as on topics that have no direct relevance to the labour market and increased competitiveness. A second problem refers to the small number of offers available compared to the number of adults who currently intend to attend them. This is related to a third problem that is linked to the low funding available. Most of the available financial resources come largely from the European Social Fund (in 85%), with no support from the Lisbon and Algarve regions. Additionally, the funding available in 2017 and 2018 were lower than those allocated annually to local adult education structures between 2007 and 2011. A final problem is related to the significant number of adults (about 50%), in general, poorly educated and with low professional qualifications, who have not participated in education and training actions and who do not express any intention to do so in the future. Involving these subjects requires educational² provision purposes close to the democratic-emancipatory logic, committing them to the observed social and educational changes, which public policy currently does not propose.

The participation rate of adults in education and training actions increased from 9.6% in 2014 to 10.5% in 2019, but it is still 0.8 pp below the EU average. In 2019, this rate is more representative in the group of people with higher education (21.2%, +2.2 pp than that of the EU28), but it decreased considerably when analyzing the participation of people with a low level of educational qualification (4.2%, -0.3 pp than the European average).³

It seems that adult education policies have been viewed by most Portuguese governments as an ideological concern typical of a revolutionary period in the past, while the qualification of human capital, professional training of workers and managerial strategies to increase economic competitiveness are real priorities that, purportedly, they will make everything possible in terms of modernization and growth of the country.

Non-formal education settings

In Portugal, there are many projects in art education developed in contexts of non-formal education, in the community, cultural institutions and organizations such as museums, cultural centres, theatres, cultural associations and foundations.

²INE (Instituto Nacional de Estatística) (2013). Aprendizagem ao longo da vida. Inquérito à formação e educação de adultos 2011. Portugal.

³ Source: <https://www.poch.portugal2020.pt/pt-pt/Noticias/Paginas/noticia.aspx?nid=687>.

The field of culture has been trying to invest in education. First on public education and then in the development of artistic training for children and adults, with some support from the government, as well as some international support for cultural groups.



In 2006, a lot of interest started to bloom from teams in the context of non-formal education that integrated schools, also from regional directors of education, city councils, national and international foundations, museums, theatres. This happened at the same time as the European Union formally defined cultural expression as an essential skill to lifelong learning, relevant for creativity and innovation.

However, Portugal already had some organizations working for a long time in non-formal education services, such as Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação de Serralves, Elvira Leite (artistic school) and in a minor scale, the Nacional Museum Soares dos Reis and other national and private museums, theatre and dance companies, without any financial support from the government.

In fact, one of the main non-formal educational structures for Artistic Education has been the Educational Services of museums and arts foundations. In these, especially in the case of the museums, art is actually the basis of education, in the sense that the activities unfold within the scope of interpretation, fruition and reflection about art objects and their production. And the data shows that a high number of Portuguese museums regularly implement educational activities. (Augusto, 2004: 31)

Nonetheless, the main core of those activities target school groups, and traditionally that has been the way to conciliate artistic education between formal and non-formal education settings.

In some cases, recognizing the importance of educational services in a broader and more inclusive sense, museums, art schools and cultural organizations, have been leading diversified and inventive work, spotlighting the key role that arts education can play within citizenship development and social inclusion.

The case of Serralves, with its workshops for children and adults, is a very good example of quality and innovation. The educational services of the Gulbenkian Foundation are also having a good impact on the community. The workshops for children at the Casa da Música in Porto and other institutions deserve credibility.

There are many interesting partnership projects in Portugal such as the one that involves the municipality of Amadora and Almada, with arts education in the visual, drama and dance fields. There are programmes implemented by theatre companies as Paulo Ribeiro (in Teatro Viriato) and Teatro da Serra de Montemuro, where the culture and community education are holding hands.

It's also important to mention the work developed by Lucília Valente and her research group in Évora University [Núcleo de Educação, Cultura e Artes Aplicadas (Necaa)]. They work in the context of arts for the community, cultural education, social theatre, citizenship, peace education and lifelong learning.⁴



Academic and pedagogical research/discussion

Two main theories still prevail around the art-education binomial: Artistic education, in relation to art as a study field targeting technical skills development in the different art disciplines; and Education through art, in terms of using art in favour of other knowledge areas or as a means to other ends than artistic ones. (Augusto, 2004:22)⁵

However, for some authors we should strive for a more complete and integrated concept of Artistic Education, that encompasses education through art, art in education and education for art (Amaral, 2005. Cit in Augusto, 2004:22).

The discussions around education and art in Portugal date back to the First Republic (1910-1926), when thinkers like João de Barros and Aurélio da Costa demonstrated the importance of art for education in the construction of a democratic society. However, only in the 1950s did actual movements about the theme emerged, with the creation of the Portuguese Association of Education through Art, where investigators started to practice and theorize around the idea that arts are a means to an end - Education. (Augusto, 2004: 22)

Despite the progressive theories of those thinkers, it was only after the April Revolution (1974), which ended the 41 years old political dictatorship, that Artistic Education finally arose to policy discussions, and in 1986 gained real status by being included in the Portuguese Education Law. (Augusto, 2004: 23)

Although never actually implementing a true integration of arts in education, but instead a segmentation by modalities - generic, vocational, special genres and extra-curricular - music and visual arts classes entered almost right away general school curriculums for students between 10

⁴ Eça, Teresa (2008). Educação artística em Portugal: entre a tradição e a ruptura. In Pós: 1 (1), p. 26 – 36, Belo Horizonte, maio 2008; Lopes, Emília; Torres, Teresa & Lacerda, Anabela (2002). Projecto Bate lavadeira bate. In Imaginar, 39, setembro 2002.

⁵ Augusto, A. (2017) "A Educação Artística em Portugal (2006-2016): Estruturas curriculares e sistemas de apoios como espelho das políticas educativas". Master Thesis. ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE EDUCAÇÃO DE LISBOA and 14 years old. The specialized modalities were implemented as a second education system, in differentiated schools, like conservatories. (Augusto, 2004: 24)

Since the year 2000, many reports and discussions have been pointing to the insufficiency, inadequacy and inefficiency of artistic education within the Portuguese educational system, and policies have been coming back and forth in this matter. But even though some progress has been achieved, like the integration of the modality of special genres in the regular schools or the introduction of theatre in extra-curricular activities for children, the arts subjects in core curriculums have now become almost entirely optional. (Augusto, 2004: 27)

In turn, most of the Portuguese publications about art in non-formal educational settings actually relate to the notion of art education as a conductor to participatory democracy and society in a broader / communitarian scope.

José Guilherme Abreu, in the article “Public art as a vehicle of social interaction: From civic participation to community engagement” (2017) , refers to the concept of “public art”, as ⁶ conceptualized by Lorraine Cox in 1996, that broadly means the principle to use art as a way to improve the quality of one’s environment; or arts at the service of the common good. And identifies different types of public art events, from ancient to recent, like:

- civic celebrations, giving the example of the commemoration of the tricentenary of the birth of Camões (a notable Portuguese author) in 1880, where the festivities included lighting, music, exhibitions, performances directed at all the citizens and promoted by citizens, despite institutionally framed, as mayors or other political representatives;
- citizen initiative and public intervention in monuments erection, many times proposed, negotiated and financed by groups of private citizens;
- community engagement, when more than in the previous case, the citizens are involved in the artistic process, being co-creators and producers. As an example, the author cites the case of Paredes Municipality, which in 2013 presented a city circuit of artistic pieces about the territory, all curated, created and/or participated by local organizations and citizens that integrated an organized team called “Public Art Laboratory”, joining the artists and the municipality representatives.

⁶ Abreu, J G. (2017) “A arte pública como meio de interação social: Da participação cívica ao envolvimento comunitário”. Universidade Católica Portuguesa - Porto

Hugo Cruz, in the article “Communitarian Artistic Practices and Political and Civic Participation - Actions from Theatre Groups in Brazil and Portugal” (2021) defines community artistic practices ⁷ as a space of collective artistic creation, which joins professional and non-professional artists in the perspective of Art as a human right. Describing its artistic approaches as based in dialogue, idea sharing, critical thinking, concern for social change, connection to communities and celebration opportunities creations, through spaces of participative and artistic experimentation. Furthermore, Cruz (2021) mentions two key concepts/relationships surrounding community artistic practices: civic and political participation, and cultural and artistic participation. The cultural dimension is rooted in the concept of culture that integrates contradictions, disputes, heterogeneity and dissent, discussing from there democratization processes and cultural

democracy, which mobilizes not only the fruition and access to specific cultural references but also the amplification of access to the means of production.

For the author, community artistic practices have a key role in the constant update of the concept of cultural democracy, and cultural, educational and social policies integration, proving the importance of carefully considering the processes for creating, distributing and receiving cultural products, putting aside the idea of one and homogeneous audience. While, at the same time, these practices prompt the discussion about the concept of community as a unit, homogeneous and geographically shared, proposing in alternative a definition around heterogeneity, openness and spontaneous relationships with flexible, emotional and de-hierarchized rules as these ideas better match modern communities.

From the educational point of view, the main influences come from the principles of critical, liberating, engaging and of the oppressed pedagogies, based on the Paulo Freire education theory. Moreover, although a generally positive impact is broadly recognized, Cruz (2021) also sheds light on some negative results that community artistic practices can obtain. As in the case of approaches heavily performative, directed and stereotyped, that generate the potential to devalue research materials exploration and expressive possibilities; posing the risk of art instrumentalization and increasing the tension between inclusion and domination reproduction.

Finally, another relevant publication is the E-Book “Communitarian Artistic Practices” (2017),⁸ which compiles articles about experiences in six different countries, including Portugal, the authors show some common points/characteristics around the subject, summarized in the next topics:

⁷ Cruz, H. (2021) “Práticas Artísticas Comunitárias e Participação Cívica e Política - Ações de Grupos Teatrais no Brasil e Portugal”. In Pitágoras 500, Campinas, SP, v. II, n. I, [18], p. 3-22, jan.-jul. 2021⁸ Cruz, H; Bezelga, I; Rodrigues, P. (2017) “Práticas Artísticas Comunitárias”. E-book. ISBN: 978-989-8550-42-2

- vast diversity of approaches when it comes to artistic methodologies, standing out the participants empowerment during the process;
- primacy of qualitative investigation methodologies around the subject, such as stories, memories, personal accounts, ethnographies and autobiographies, and action investigation is the dominant method;
- artistic products presented and discussed reveal a big focus on political and social issues, and transdisciplinarity is a common denominator in the experiences. Social change and transformation become the engine of community artistic practices;
- diversity also appears in the contexts, prisons, schools, local associations, etc., and it has a strong connection to parties, celebrations and popular traditions;
- importance of the body as a starting point and the creative stimulus of the participants; - individual and collective reconfigurations in the face of central thematic of power and



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domination relationships.

Moreover, in the above mentioned E-book, the authors also point out some needs and directions to benefit the field of community artistic practices:

- build a consistent and structured network;
- a strong connection between practice and theoretical reflection for the development of the models;
- concretely present something as a result of these practices, and the re-conceptualization of the concept of community to keep it more in touch with the modern world; - come up with a base vocabulary that encompasses its richness and diversity, and a summary of training courses available, focusing on strengths and weaknesses.

Practical examples from Embaixada da Juventude (EJ)

Erasmus + KA2 Project “DAMN”

In the aftermath of the pandemic, EJ is participating in this transnational project that aims to develop activities useful for regaining self- confidence and capable of supporting and promoting concrete social inclusion, as a stepping stone to achieving active citizenship, that is to say direct participation to civil life through three key skills: knowing and knowing how to think, knowing how to be and knowing how to do. The methodologies used concern various cultural and artistic sectors, like contemporary dance workshops, interactive music workshops and narrative exhibition, incorporating a therapeutic dimension with a material recovery philosophy, healing, raising awareness and nurturing creativity all at the same time.

National/Local Project “Escola da Vid@-E8G”

Currently, EJ is also implementing an adult non-formal education educational project, whose name literally translates to School of life, with the goal to foster social cohesion and inclusion of young NEET women, empowering them to face the difficulties of (re)integration in the labour market, and fighting gender inequality within the access to employment and social participation.

One of its action fields refers to training sessions revolving around soft skills, citizenship, social and civic participation and public services access, under the belief that key-competences are essential for a successful transition to active life.

Local project “Youth Lab Challenge”



EJ organizes annually? the Youth Lab Challenge, a theatrical performance that aims to increase participants' self-empowerment and self-esteem.

Volunteering activities

Hosting many European Solidarity Corps foreign volunteers, EJ attends to their well-being in every possible way. Using different strategies towards emotional balance, and integration within the organization team and local community. In that sense, plastic arts activities are often implemented as a way to allow for personal expression through a universal language, soothing some difficulties felt by the volunteers in an environment where they don't speak the language.

Moreover, EJ promotes interactions between these volunteers and its local friends/volunteers by organizing visits, both on the spaces of the association and in interest spots in the area, around the purpose of shooting short promotional videos, giving them the opportunity not only to act as protagonists, fully integrated into the organization but also to learn about filmmaking and editing.

Portugal's Best Practices / Study-cases for orientation

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian - Art educators training

The Children's Art Center [Centro Artístico Infantil (CAI)] of Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian existed between 1984 and 2002, as a meeting point between artists and educators, students and teachers, parents and kids, amateurs and professionals of different education fields, of arts and poetry expression, animation and cultural education. Up to this day, it is described as a space for new and innovative ideas, sharing and exchange of experiences, to look for suggestions and answers for scholar programmes, for new teaching methodologies, under the frame of open cultural politics and expression languages.

In the specific line of adult education, CAI developed activities related to art education, aesthetic education, artistic/cultural education and cultural animation. With a special focus on lifelong learning for art teachers, educators and non-formal activities facilitators, who missed pedagogical skills and tools in their college basic training.

During its 18 years of existence, CAI implemented adult training courses, both global and specific, in a number of artistic disciplines, such as music, drama or visual arts. These courses had a duration of one or two years. But also workshops that could surpass the Center walls, occurring both there and in the trainee's workplace (schools, municipalities, non-profit organizations, etc.), clearly integrating a community-based approach.



The teaching methodologies implemented had a deformed and experimental character, prompting the trainees to contribute with their own ideas and actually practising them, in order to observe and discuss the results. In addition, the art piece had a central role as a starting point for learning, contradicting the then reigning pedagogical theory based on the artistic techniques: While also paying special attention to the ludic dimension in education.

These methods turned CAI into a real hub for innovative and effective art education strategies, and their annual reports showed the importance attributed to experience sharing, through seminars and conferences in the field of art education, both national and international. The documentation and materials produced around the CAI training activities were meant to disseminate the results and pedagogical models implemented.⁹

Despite the extinction of CAI, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian still provides workshops for teachers, as well as diverse didactic materials, from video tutorials to activity guides, under its service called Gulbenkian Descobrir.

Fundação de Serralves - Audience education and awareness

⁹ T., Pereira, A., A. Almeida, N., Vieira, M., C. Loureiro. (2016) Atas do VII Encontro do CIED – II Encontro Internacional, Estética e Arte em Educação. Lisboa: CIED – Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos Educacionais. ISBN: 978-989-95733-7-6. p. 325-330

The roots of Fundação de Serralves date back to 1989, at a time when several movements claimed a contemporary/modern art exhibition space for the city of Oporto. And the creation of the foundation marks an innovative partnership between the Portuguese government and 51 other public and private organizations.

Located on old farmland, nowadays Serralves encompasses a variety of cultural infrastructures, dedicated to multidisciplinary fields, namely: Museu de Serralves (modern art museum), Casa de Serralves (an exemplary villa of Art Deco architecture), Parque de Serralves (an 18 hectares park, composed of gardens, woods and a farm space), and Casa do Cinema Manoel de Oliveira (cinema museum, dedicated to one the greatest Portuguese directors). The foundation's great effort in projecting, nationally and internationally, contemporary art and its architectural and scenic patrimony, makes Serralves one of the most important Portuguese cultural organizations. The key strategic axes are: Artistic Creation; Environment, Ecology and Landscape; Audience Education and Awareness; Contemporary Society Critical Reflection; Creative Industries; and Transversal Institutional Special Projects.¹⁰

Having hosted a study about policy measures towards the cultural sector in Portugal, between 2011 e 2013 , Fundação de Serralves has an important contribution for the critical and ¹¹ constructive discussion of the theme and excellent know-how within Audience Education and



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Awareness, which definitely permeates the whole intervention of the foundation.

Even though its Educational Service targets in great extent children and youth, through many activities directed at schools, over the course of its more than 30 years of activity, Fundação de Serralves has also implemented a variety of other initiatives directed at adults, and even families as a whole, with the objective of promoting the knowledge and fruition of cultural spaces in order to fully experience active citizenship. Shedding light on the critical role family has on the personal development of its elements, and consequently on the collective development of society.

Within the initiatives and activities directed at art education for an adult audience, since the year 2000 Serralves have been promoting an annual meeting for trainers and teachers/educators, as well as courses and workshops for different audiences regarding contemporary themes. Furthermore, Serralves em Festa is a great example of good practice in art education/awareness and social inclusion, consisting of an annual festival, mainly held on the grounds of the foundation, but also in other Oporto city locations, since the year 2004.

The access is free of charge for all, and the duration of the festival is around 48/50 hours straight, where usually more than 100 hundred different activities take place, ranging from music, theatre, dance, cinema, performance, Dj and exhibitions, involving various organizations, artists

¹⁰ Source: www.serralves.pt

¹¹ Investigation project: "POLÍTICAS CULTURAIS: Um olhar transversal pela janela-écran de Serralves", supported by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. Ref.^a SFRH/BD/77251/2011.

and volunteers. The growing public adherence is a success statement since within 10 years the numbers had grown from under 100.000 people in 2009 to more than 250.000 people in 2019. Other dimensions of the Serralves activity worth mentioning is the growing special concern in making the cultural spaces accessible to people with disabilities; and the intertwining of art and environment/sustainability education and awareness.¹²

Elvira Leite - Art education on the streets

Elvira Leite is a Portuguese artist, who graduated in Painting from the Arts School of Oporto University, in the year of 1964. The beginning of her career was essentially dedicated to the actual painting, a time when she won some awards in the field.

However, in the years after the Portuguese revolution of 1974, which ended the 41 years old dictatorship regime "Estado Novo", the political and social turmoil of the then and finally democratic country, societal issues and people's rightfully so demands for better living conditions gained special relevance for her.

And so, between the years of 1976 and 1977, Elvira Leite developed a community-based project at the heart of Oporto city, in the poor neighbourhood Pena Ventosa, where the housing conditions



were a big problem. As the project developed, those streets became an active meeting point to discuss ideas, plan activities, and learn new skills, turning it into a workshop where children of all ages interacted to give life to a plan that reflected their personal interests. The initiative was primarily motivated by a sense of frustration, impotence and outrage experienced by the local community when confronted with the unfulfilled promise of better housing conditions.

The project was documented in photography, which resulted in an exhibition later on entitled “Pedagogy of the Streets: Porto 1977”, the international version of the original one, held in 2016 by the Oporto University “Quem te ensinou? - Ninguém” . But, mostly, that experience became ¹³ the precursor to a career dedicated to teaching from that point on.

Elvira Leite opted for a career as a high school teacher after she concluded the Course of Pedagogic Science. From 1976 she dedicated herself to activities of cultural diffusion; she acted as a consultant of UNESCO for artistic teaching in Portuguese-speaking countries; was invited by the Portuguese government to plan and coordinate training for Portuguese emigrant women in different countries; was a fellow of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian to create educational

¹² Gama, Manuel. (2013) “Sensibilização e Formação de Públicos na Fundação de Serralves”. p. 132-142. In: Revista Diálogos com a Arte - revista de arte, cultura e educação, n.º 3. ISSN 2183-1726¹³ English translation: “Who taught you? - Nobody”

materials for teaching arts; she acted as a consultant of the Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, of the Regional Traditional Arts Centre and of the Educational Service of the Fundação de Serralves. During her career, firstly inspired by the ideas and knowledge that resulted from the project, Elvira Leite developed her own method of teaching/art pedagogy, firmly rooted in research and education. It is a minimally prescriptive pedagogy that welcomes the unpredictable and aims at realizing individual and collective projects. It involves active engagement from the community and the students/trainees, a methodology that in the end has great relevance within the more recent theories of promoting social participation and citizenship through arts.¹⁴

In addition, throughout Elvira Leite’s art education work one can also appreciate a contribution to bringing art and audience closer together, and at times actually merging artist and audience, like the case of the Pena Ventosa project.

PELE Associação Cultural e Social - Empowering individuals and communities

PELE is an artistic structure from Oporto city, operating since 2007, whose intervention is based on the notion of art as a privileged space for dialogue and collective creation, putting the empowerment of individuals and communities at the centre, in order to leverage community, social and economic development. Thus, contributing to social and territorial cohesion.

Under this mission, PELE offers training courses but also has been leading many artistic



residences and projects, targeting different groups.

Deaf theatre group: since 2008, through a partnership with the Oporto Deaf Association, PELE has implemented a theatre group with the objective of building communication bridges between deaf and listeners, by using theatre as a universal language. And until now more than five public performances/productions have been presented.

Projects in prison establishments: since 2009, the association has worked in different prisons, resulting in a set of several plays performed by prisoners, both men and women, integrating the programmes of theatre festivals in the north of Portugal; and also implemented a transnational project, under the Leonardo Da Vinci Program, “Personal Effectiveness and Employability through the Arts”.

Community projects: since 2008, several performative projects have been developed by PELE, resting on the idea that all human beings have creation potential, with the possibility of not only individual but also collective transformation. As well as on the premises that co-built and shared

¹⁴ Source: <https://www.pierrotlefou.pt/08-Quem-te-ensinou-ninguem-1>
artistic processes offer people the chance to rediscover their own narratives, to rewrite them and even find other languages, turning them into protagonists of their change processes.¹⁵

Casa da Música no Porto - Art education and social inclusion

The Casa da Música project goes back to 1998 when the city of Oporto was nominated ¹⁶European Capital of Culture for the year 2001, resulting in a long and complex process of resources management and artistic, social and educational programmes creation. Thus the idea for a music residence in the city was born and Casa da Música (CdM), despite the connection to the 2001 event, opened its doors in 2005, after an ambitious and innovative architectural endeavour.

The building design came from Rem Koolhaas (Dutch architect), which main features include a fluent and coherent language of the use of easy to maintain materials, a universal adaptation of indoors and outdoors, and a formal uniqueness, that quickly turned Casa da Música into an icon of the Oporto city.¹⁷

Currently, the Educational Service from CdM encompasses a wide range of activities, under the motto “music for all”, like musical workshops for youth and children (including babies), school groups and adults; training courses for music teachers, animators or musicians; open/public orchestra rehearsals; traditional musical instruments, both national and international, special presentation and exploitation projects; special spaces for sound creation and development, with digital or analog tools, like “Digitopia” or “Sonorium”, with free public access; children and adult choirs; etc.



But, besides all the abovementioned educational activities, what really differentiates CdM in the art education dimension is probably its deliberate focus on direct contact and engagement with vulnerable groups, providing them with a unique opportunity to express themselves through music. And really promoting social inclusion through arts.¹⁵

The CdM specific programme “Ao Alcance de Todos” , with over 10 years now, entails different ¹⁹ projects, targeting different vulnerable groups, from people with disabilities to

¹⁵ Source: <https://www.apele.org/pele>

¹⁶ Literal translation: Music House.

¹⁷ Source: <https://www.casadamusica.com/pt/a-casa-da-musica/a-obra/#>

¹⁸ Source: <https://www.casadamusica.com/pt/servico-educativo/?lang=pt>

¹⁹ Translation: “at everyone’s reach”

economically/socially challenged communities. Two of these projects are “A Casa Vai a Casa”²⁰ and “Orquestra Som da Rua” .²¹

The first one consists of activities led in loco on different organizations, where the attending people cannot go to CdM, such as hospitals, prisons, elderly homes, disability services, organizations working within social housing infrastructures. The selected organizations change every year, and the activities range from 1 to 6 sessions.

As for “Orquestra Som da Rua”, the sessions occur once a week, on the exterior of the building, and the target groups are mainly people with homelessness stories. At the beginning of the project, several partnerships were created with organizations dedicated to supporting formal or informally these groups, in order to disseminate the activities. The participants can stay engaged with the project for as long as they want, and new people can join anytime. And furthermore, the instruments utilized are a mix of conventional ones and built from recycled materials, and the orchestra performs, in different spaces, regularly.²²

Núcleo de Educação, Cultura e Artes Aplicadas (Necaa), de Lucília Valente - Social Theatre

Necaa is an Évora University department, coordinated by Professor Lucília Valente between 2002 and 2010, and where she spearheaded and developed important work about community art.

Lucília Valente graduated firstly in Art Education in Évora University, and then specialized in educational psychology and creative arts, between 1986 and 1991 in the UK. From 1996 on, she became an associate professor at the Arts School - Évora University, having been the first



coordinator of the Theatre Studies Graduation Course. Maintaining a heavy presence within art therapy, specifically dramatherapy, being the founder and president of the Portuguese Association of Integrative Dramatherapy.

Necaa had an undeniable contribution to the development of the abovementioned Theatre Studies Graduation Course - Teaching branch, which aims to educate and train specialized teachers in Theatre, where besides the “theatre knowledge” there's a demand for human relations training, based on group leading in the communities.

²⁰ Translation: “The house goes to the house”

²¹ Translation: “Sound of the street orchestra”

²² Silva, Marta. (2017) “Ser-se, sentir-se, cantar-se: música e inclusão – olhares sobre projetos do Serviço Educativo da Casa da Música”. Tese de Doutoramento em Educação Artística. Universidade do Porto - Faculdade de Belas Artes. p. 87-92

The action-research approach of Necaa’s work allowed for the realization of community-based artistic activities as a developmental exercise that provides the participants progressive critical knowledge, awareness and transformation. In the sense that a creative project is simultaneously an individual and collective experience in the construction of performative objects, which boost creativity skills and aesthetics fruition.

Believing that education is a lifelong process, based on reflection, dialogue and culture, thus promoting community development, Necaa leaned over instances of social activation, awareness development and informed active citizenship. Investing deeply in building and developing local partnerships, like Évora Municipality, or Alentejo’s Cultural Management Office, as a way to put into practice an eco-sustainable vision that responds to artistic, cultural, social and patrimonial concerns.²³

In Lucília Valente’s own words, Necaa’s approach to art educators (namely in the Theatre Studies Graduation Course) can be named “emancipatory theatre”, in the sense that it is an artistic-formative intervention connecting educational, theatrical and civic activities, as a form of artistic literacy. And for that, its dynamics rely on the conductor, “engine-teacher”, who assumes many different roles such as actor, director, facilitator, or motivator, switching constantly between them. Moreover, skills in drama therapy and participative action investigation are necessary, because the “engine-teacher” needs to figure out and experiment, in action, alternative paths and directions according to the specific population he/she’s working with.

In sum, community intervention based on emancipatory theatre is a space of experimentation, flexible observation, artistic (co-)creation, in which the thoughts, feelings and actions of all the involved, and their own interactions, are taken into account.²⁴



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Conclusions

The present research shows that Art as a revered and distant object has slowly but steadily been transformed into a starting point or the means to reach soft skills development, social awareness, participation and inclusion.

²³ Cruz, H; Bezelga, I; Rodrigues, P. (2017) "Práticas Artísticas Comunitárias". E-book. ISBN: 978-989-8550-42-2. p. 81-84

²⁴ Valente, L. (2008) "Para Uma Teorização do Teatro Emancipador". In v. 9, n. 1: V Congresso da ABRACE. ISSN 2176-9516

Artistic and cultural education, truly understood as education through art and education for art, as the examples presented testify, has the potential to become a touchstone for basic and lifelong learning. An education environment based on creativity and collaborative work boost both solidarity and co-creation, which in turn can result in innovation and entrepreneurship, foreshadowing even economical development. And also the power of healing emotional scars if used for therapeutic purposes.

Additionally, even though the pedagogical discussion in Portugal has a rich and progressive history, the wide range concept of Artistic education as accessible, inclusive, formative, creativity oriented and collective booster, appears as more viable in non-formal settings. Especially because, traditionally, formal adult education in Portugal doesn't include or makes room for artistic education. whilst in non-formal settings, there are plenty of good practice examples that mirror and inspire innovation in the field.

Also, as the pedagogical discussion reveals there is a broad and vast amount of contributions and conceptualizations around community artistic practices, that really would benefit from an effort of compilation, simplification, turning the publications and discoveries around the subject more accessible and widespread.

Ultimately, the advantages of art and artists for adult education compared to teacher-centred education became clear, like the decentralization, which means more accessible; the participatory approach, instead of passively receiving art; the inclusion potential, reaching more audiences and their needs; and the transformative process, enabling actual societal change and individuals well-being.



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