

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## POLICY HANDBOOK ON PROMOTION OF CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION (OMC)  
WORKING GROUP OF EU MEMBER STATES' EXPERTS  
ON PROMOTION OF CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

### 1 | What is a creative partnership – and why does it matter?

'Creative partnerships' are forms of structured cooperation between cultural institutions and other sectors (such as education, training, business, management, research, agriculture, social work, public sector etc.), which explicitly aim at transferring creative skills by **bringing together new perceptions and resources, and introducing a new way of working**.

The group found that creative partnerships are high-impact, low-cost tools which may help address some of the important issues that Member States are currently facing, from revamping education to increasing the innovation capacity of enterprises, to addressing environmental challenges.

### 2 | Context for the report

This report is the outcome of the work undertaken by a group of 23 experts representing EU Member States. The Working Group was launched in September 2012 under the Council Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, which implements the European Agenda for Culture. Through the Work Plan, Member States authorities asked the group to 'identify and model the types of successful partnerships and practices, including their positive impacts'.

### 3 | What is in the report, and who is it for?

The handbook explores practices in different fields such as education, business and health, and explains what their success factors are and the possible challenges in implementation.

It addresses both policymakers and practitioners. It provides inspiration to public authorities who may decide to support creative partnerships so as to tackle some key issues, for instance in the field of education or support to business innovation. It also contains concrete guidance for practitioners to address possible issues in implementation.





## 4 | Benefits and impact of creative partnerships

As the *Manifesto for Creativity and Innovation in Europe* stated, the world is moving to a new rhythm. To be at the forefront of this new world, Europe needs to become more creative and innovative.

Creative partnerships may help develop attitudes that are key to innovation and creativity, such as the capacity to question and challenge assumptions; to make new connections, using intuition and imagination; the ability to refine and improve ideas; collaboration and emotional literacy.

Evaluations carried out on a range of initiatives showed that in education, creative partnerships significantly improved students' performance, by creating the conditions for a more engaging learning environment; in business, they substantially increased innovation capacity; in the field of health, they helped patients reduce stress and cope with difficult situations. For artists, carrying out a creative partnership may offer a precious opportunity for artistic development and build social and communication skills.

## 5 | What happens in a creative partnership?

Creative partnerships introduce a new way of working. Even if they often build upon practices traditionally used in artistic creation, their application in a new context, with new partners who champion different fields gives these practices a new aim and meaning.

In a creative partnership project, artists and creative professionals may engage participants from other sectors in joint creation; or in transforming already existing materials, objects and spaces to give them new functions; or in reframing something that is mundane, or unnoticed in its own surroundings in a way that highlights a new dimension or a controversial aspect; or also in artistic training, not with the aim of training many new artists, but so as to offer a change in perspective to frame thinking and provide new tools for creation.

## 6 | Implementing a creative partnership: management, funding, issues

The practices that were explored during the work of the group show that there is a wide range of models of management, depending on the size of the initiative and its specific aims.

Nevertheless, as a general rule, partnerships require the presence of an organisation which can act as **mediator** between the artists/creative players and the receiving body; and provide appropriate training to ensure that the objectives and needs are properly taken into account. The mediating organisation analyses the needs of the receiving organisation, and finds the artists and creative people who can best respond to the specific requirements. It builds and sustains networks and relations with stakeholders, and facilitates communication among the partners. The role of the mediating organisation is crucial to ensure the long-term continuity of the project and for quality assurance.



Concerning **funding**, most examples of creative partnerships receive public support, either from European or, more frequently, national or regional/local public budgets. A number of initiatives are funded by private foundations, and in some cases, the initiatives are operated as fully for profit initiatives (providing consultancy services to businesses, for instance), which is not without difficulty.

The group also analysed possible **challenges** in implementation – from the need to build trust and clarify objectives and expectations, to the effort to forge a common language for the two different sectors to understand each other, to the importance of allowing due time and resources and the need for specific training.

Finally, the report highlights the importance of **evaluation**, and provides some guidance on effective evaluation tools that may be used for this specific initiative.

## 7 | Recommendations

Creative partnerships are concrete examples of how cultural and creative actors may operate outside of their traditional arenas and contribute to economic and social progress.

The group recommends that policymakers, at national and regional or local level, look at their potential and consider ways to support them as strategic tools for social and business innovation. Also the private sector might be interested in exploring the potential of creative partnerships as alternatives to traditional teambuilding or innovation training.

The handbook highlights several EU funding programmes which may provide support to the establishment and development of creative partnerships – from the European Structural Investment Funds, to the Creative Europe programme, to the Erasmus+ programme in the field of education or the COSME programme supporting innovation in SMEs.

However, providing funds is not the only way for policymakers to support these initiatives. Such measures can be greatly helped by wider promotion and dissemination of information about the potential; by facilitating collaboration between different departments; providing information on funding opportunities; supporting exchanges through European networks; and helping the projects set up a sound evaluation mechanism.



**To read the full report, please use the following link:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/201405-omc-creative-partnerships\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/201405-omc-creative-partnerships_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/index_en.htm)

**Chair of the OMC Working Group:**

Adam Bethlenfalvy, 'bethlenfalvy@insite-drama.eu'

**For further information, please contact:**

**European Commission**

Directorate-General for Education & Culture

Directorate E – Culture & Creativity

Unit E1 – Culture policy and intercultural dialogue

E-mail: EAC-UNITE-E1@ec.europa.eu