

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



The Anna Lindh Foundation  
**VIRTUAL MARATHON**  
FOR DIALOGUE IN THE EUROMED

## VIRTUAL MARATHON FOR DIALOGUE

*Promoting Cultural and Social Cooperation in the EuroMed Region  
May-June 2021*

## ARTS AND EDUCATION FOR INTERCULTURAL CITIES: LOCAL PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE

*JUNE 9TH, 2021*

### DISCUSSION TOPIC

*The incorporation of Art in Education  
and the importance of creating platforms  
for intercultural interactions*



## TEN HIGH-LEVEL GUESTS AND PARTICIPANTS

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## TOPIC

# ARTS AND EDUCATION FOR INTERCULTURAL CITIES: LOCAL PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE

## THREE PILLARS

①

### USING BOTH FORMAL & NON- FORMAL EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Incorporating art as  
an essential tool for  
education

②

### CREATING INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE PLATFORMS & UPSCALING NATIONAL PRACTICES

The role of NGOs &  
the importance of  
establishing  
synergies

③

### IN-PERSON INTERACTION & THE CURRENT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Understanding the  
world and the media  
in order to create  
effective policies

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main Recommendations emerging from the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue on Arts and Education for Intercultural Cities: Local Platforms for Dialogue, tackling the importance of art and non-formal forms of education, bringing together groups of different cultures, the role of NGOs in facilitating intercultural exchange, and the implications of the current digital transformation.

①

**TO FULLY INCORPORATE ART INTO EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS USING INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES** in order to fill the gap in conventional educational methods.

②

**TO BUILD THE CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS OF THE YOUTH THROUGH PEER EDUCATION AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES** in order to facilitate intercultural dialogue.

③

**TO PLACE THE COMMUNITY AT THE CENTER OF INITIATIVES** in order to allow people to become their own leaders.

④

**TO LAUNCH SIMPLE BUT IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES AND CREATE PLATFORMS FOR INDIVIDUALS OF DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS TO INTERACT** in order to reach the ordinary population and bring them together.

⑤

**TO EXPAND THE NETWORK OF DIALOGUE BEYOND THE LOCAL DIMENSION, LINKING NATIONAL ISSUES TO BIGGER INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS AND ESTABLISHING SYNERGIES AMONG THEM** in order to form a more comprehensive picture, promote large-scale action and maximise the impact of positive practices.

⑥

**TO ACCELERATE RESEARCH THAT ALLOWS THE CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS** in order to promote platforms which contribute positively to intercultural exchange.

⑦

**TO ENSURE THAT EDUCATION TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE CURRENT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WHILE EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW WAYS FOR IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS** in order to allow the youth to get the best of both worlds.

## CONTEXT

In the framework of the Celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the “Renewed Partnerships with the Southern Neighbourhood: a new agenda for the Mediterranean”, the *Anna Lindh Foundation* and its EuroMed civil society Network organised the Anna Lindh Foundation Virtual Marathon for Dialogue in the EuroMed region (VM).

The Virtual Marathon gathered activities of ALF civil society Network and partner organisations were set to take place during 42 days from the 19th of May to the 29th of June.

## MAIN AIMS OF THE VIRTUAL MARATHON FOR DIALOGUE

The first aim of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue is to **highlight the importance of the Intercultural Dialogue to build sustainable societies in the EuroMed Region**, taking into consideration the challenges and opportunities brought about by the Covid19 pandemic.

The second aim of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue is to **develop and promote new ideas and policies towards better cultural and social cooperation in the EuroMed region**.

*The Public Virtual Dialogues will involve participants and panelists who play a major role in the economic, ecological, social, and cultural development of the region. Those include high-level policymakers, journalists, decision makers, young people, business & private sector, gender pioneers, academics, CSO representatives. The challenge is to create synergies with the civil society, especially the Youth and the Women, to create the conditions for positive social change.*

## ABOUT DIALOGUE 4

Dialogue 4 would focus on the importance of incorporating art into education, the vitality of creating platforms where intercultural dialogue could take place, and the need to implement positive national practices that promote intercultural

exchange, diversity, and peace on a global scale. Art is a tool capable of breaking down cultural barriers, a mission that lies at the heart of the *Anna Lindh Foundation* mandate.

*The Anna Lindh Foundation's* recent research shows consensus among the inhabitants of the Mediterranean that equal opportunities and rights must be granted to minority groups within their societies, and that cultural diversity is a source of economic prosperity and growth. Additionally, 89% of Europeans and 90% of SEM populations support local authority and civil society initiatives that promote coexistence, and 80-90% of both populations also agree that investment in art and education is necessary to promote diversity and to prevent polarisation and hate speech. In short, the need to move towards peaceful societies characterized by solidarity, particularly using art, is a dominant view across the EuroMed region. Even though 28% of Europeans and 45% of SEM populations still consider cultural and religious diversity as a threat to social stability, this should be regarded an incentive to work towards integration.



**Eleonora Insalaco**  
Head of Operations &  
Intercultural Research at  
ALF

## Pillar ①: THE IMPORTANCE OF USING BOTH FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION APPROACHES IN PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE

What can art offer that other methods of education cannot? How can exchange programs promote diversity and peace?

### Art as a transformative tool in Portugal



The work of *Aequalitas* in Lisbon is heavily focused on using *art as a transformative tool* for the development of society. Living in multicultural societies, different groups across both shores of the Mediterranean experience diverse realities, and **it is important to acknowledge the differences and uniqueness of each group as valuable, while recognising equality of all individuals**. Ms. Monica Salas explained that the power of art in education stems from the fact that in art there are no filters since participants do not need to be professionals in order to produce music or act on stage. They only need to channel their creativity, ultimately boosting their mental health. Art-related activities may come in the form of solidarity projects, international youth exchange programmes, and training courses for educators or youth workers.

Last year, *Aequalitas* used poetry to tackle hate speech, uniting groups of local young people and migrants and working with them over several months on how to express their emotions and needs in constructive ways. While the outcomes are generally tangible and measurable, some are intangible and related long-term changes to behaviours of participants. As a result of the work of *Aequalitas* for instance, the participants were generally able to express themselves better as well as relate to others whom they would have normally been in conflict with. **This approach increased solidarity in the neighborhood, as different groups began working together and learning from each other.**

### The advantages of using art in promoting the formation of intercultural cities



Panelist Raffi Feghali identified three main advantages to/ways that art can promote the formation of intercultural cities. The first way is through creating a liminal space that few other mediums can create. This space allows both reality and imagination to coalesce, forming a third space which is both entirely real and entirely imaginary and which would act as a laboratory where new things can be attempted without consequences. The second advantage is that art involves low skill but high sensitivity. The participants

do not need to be artists who are creating their finest work; they simply need to get in touch with their emotions. Third, Mr. Feghali highlighted the importance of the multimodality of art in triggering multiple parts of the brain in ways that traditional cognitive educational processes do not. Mr. Feghali emphasised that **art is not an additional tool** that helps education play its central role. Instead, **art is a necessary approach, methodology, and technique that brings something to education that no other method can**. Therefore, **we must change our approach in order to integrate art.**

### RECOMMENDATION 1

**To fully incorporate art into educational systems using interdisciplinary approaches in order to fill the gap in conventional educational methods.**

## Peer education as a non-formal form of education



Formal education alone cannot provide the youth with the personal development and soft skills needed to become active citizens in their communities. The solution can be through non-formal approaches. One example, according to Panelist Andi Rebiaj is *peer education*: the process where motivated young people undertake non-formal educational activities often involving art with their peers. While this is not a new approach, it can be utilised for intercultural dialogue through activities aimed at developing the youth's knowledge, attitude, beliefs, and skills, and enabling them to engage in intercultural dialogue. Furthermore,

peer education and cultural diversity projects have the same aim of replacing negative views and stereotypes with positive images. Therefore, there is a need to **combine non-formal and formal education in and out of schools, and to recognise peer education as a non-formal learning process that builds confidence and independence among young people regardless of background, therefore.** In Albania, non-formal education has already been integrated within the five-year international youth action plan, and educators are collaborating and doing exceptional work promoting positive behavior and building values.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

**To build the confidence and skills of the youth through peer education and exchange programs** in order to facilitate intercultural dialogue.

## Pillar ②: THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE PLATFORMS AND UPSCALING NATIONAL PRACTICES TO INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

What can NGOs do in order to facilitate intercultural dialogue? Are there limits to their interference? How can we establish synergies and work together?

### Placing the community at the center of initiatives

**The importance of using the target community's own stories and realities when approaching them with initiatives** was highlighted by panelist Feghali. The artist should not worry about the quality of the end product but should instead **allow the community to project their own reality, which they are experts in, through their art.**



Forms of theatre such as *the theatre of the oppressed* are highly effective in empowering the community rather than just the individual, therefore multiplying the result. Panelist Monica Salas stressed that **it must not be the activist that leads the people towards change, but the community that leads itself.**



In a similar fashion, the first generation of asylum seekers in Ireland are now producing their own literature said panelist Piaras MacEinri. Moreover, in Cork, music is also helping people connect where *music groups are coming out of direct provision centers and organising concerts.* People attend these concerts to listen to the music and converse with each other, which in itself creates integration. He recommended that **policy makers and**



NGOs give the community space to act by themselves. More important than initiatives is hearing the voices of the people and building bridges between ordinary people.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**To place the community at the center of initiatives** in order to allow people to become their own leaders.

#### Platforms that facilitate intercultural exchange in Ireland and Italy

According to panelist MacEinri, the majority of the population has never been involved with NGOs, and so for any dialogue to be truly meaningful and effective, **ways must be found in order to involve ordinary people**. Only when there are **spaces for dialogue** to take place can a local response be initiated, as dialogue allows people to communicate, get to know each other, and build a better understanding. Mr. MacEinri used the *Sanctuary Runners* initiative as an example of a simple activity that resulted in profound change. Sanctuary Runners is a marathon in which people of different backgrounds and ages come together and run short races. This has been greatly successful and twenty-five running clubs have already been formed. Moreover, during the pandemic, cooking classes were also being offered online, whereby attendees learnt about Algerian and Tunisian foods amongst others. **People of different backgrounds have the chance to get to know each other once they are given the space**. In Ireland, furthermore, an art gallery was founded on campus of University College Cork, through which a special programme for asylum seeking children is organised. **Through the programme, the children speak about isolation, loss of homeland, and the search for identity, while also integrating themselves within the new culture by getting in touch with other students and teachers from university**.



*The Fellini Foundation* has a huge heritage which is used to organise exhibitions and master classes. Some of their activities include organising cinema and photography programmes, where black chambers are being utilized by students to develop their own photos using an old fashioned technology. The foundation has also launched two exhibitions where high school students interacted with young migrants, working together to produce the photos shown in the exhibition. Both the 2017 and 2019 exhibitions were extremely successful in promoting diversity and unity, having **created a platform for different cultures to interact, and helping migrants feel proud of their work and contribution**.



### RECOMMENDATION 4

**To launch simple but impactful initiatives and create platforms as well as spaces for individuals of different cultural backgrounds to interact** in order to reach the ordinary population and bring them together.

#### Expanding networks to promote collaboration and togetherness

Since 2003, *AHDR* has been bringing together students and teachers from across existing divides in Cyprus. By establishing synergies and platforms for interactions between Cyprus and other countries, *AHDR* promotes intercultural dialogue. Their main goal is to connect the national experiences in Cyprus to the macro world and the experience of other countries with similar conflicts. Panelist Loizos Loukaides suggested **improving the network of intercultural dialogue by expanding local and regional networks to include individuals outside their natural region**. Every nation believes that its issues are more severe than those of others, so the work *AHDR* involves introducing case studies from



external societies in order to highlight the shared nature of problems. This also cultivates a holistic approach to conflict, connecting local, national and international experiences.

*NGOs are crucial in building strong and peaceful communities, providing a spectrum of programmes that help the youth develop and play a constructive role in society.* Erasmus Plus was launched in 2019 and is one of the nine effective exchange programmes which strengthen bonds between different cultures. Panelist Aymen Bouaizizi culminated with a recommendation that **NGOs in diaspora should collaborate and enhance international relations, spreading the cause of intercultural connection.**



Panelist Karl Donert suggested that ALF could run networking projects across different countries, not just nationally, as parties must exchange knowledge, practices, and information across countries in order to learn the lessons of others through networking.



#### RECOMMENDATION 5

**To expand the network of dialogue beyond the local dimension, linking national issues to bigger international problems, and establishing synergies among them** in order to form a more comprehensive picture, promote large-scale action and maximise the impact of positive practices.

## Pillar ③: THE IMPORTANCE OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS

How can we truly understand the world and the media in order to create effective policies?

Evaluating digital platforms in order to identify positive spaces



A plethora of research is taking place on the spread of the pandemic, but unless we research the ways in which digital tools are being used by young people across countries, we cannot create adequate and informed policies, said panelist Karl Donert. We must therefore begin by clearly identifying different types of online spaces in order to evaluate which platforms we wish to promote as spaces that empower intercultural exchange and which we want to avoid and consider as unsuitable or even damaging. Additionally, **we must begin drawing attention to promising initiatives that connect people.** There are artists making music and drawing together online, but few people know about them. Mr. Donert **suggested experimenting with art through the digital media in a similar dynamic, identifying these activities and promoting experimental initiatives that could engage people in dialogue.**

#### RECOMMENDATION 6

**To accelerate research that allows the critical examination of digital platforms** in order to promote platforms which contribute positively to intercultural exchange.

## Keeping up with digital transformations

Due to Covid-19, digital technology is making almost irreversible changes to our habits that will likely stick with us after the pandemic. Panelist Donert highlighted the need to **ensure that education and the work on intercultural dialogue are embracing these digital transformations and taking them into consideration.** However, while interactions have been made easier with the help of digital technology, **experiential and practical work has to be prioritised** because it helps us understand the world.



*Karl Donert*  
EUOGEO  
Germany

**Mr. Loizos Loukaides highlighted the** importance of continuously learning and adapting but also the need to **invent new ways for people to interact face to face, in order to resist relying exclusively on the online experience.**



*Loizos Loukaides*  
AHDR  
Cyprus

Although the digital media is less relevant in the field of theatrical initiatives, it can still be used for logistical and administrative work prior to implementation. Mr. Feghali explained how the digital media has changed the way they work, especially during the pandemic, as it offered them new cost-cutting and resource-saving means.



*Raffi Feghali*  
Peacebuilding Consultant &  
theatre Maker  
Lebanon

### RECOMMENDATION 7

**To ensure that education takes into consideration the current digital transformation, while experimenting with new ways for in-person-interactions** in order to allow the youth to get the best of both worlds.

*The Anna Lindh Foundation* recognises the need to think of new engaging models on an international level. Ms. Eleonora Insalaco highlighted the importance of art as a powerful tool to use within intercultural dialogue, as it can change behaviours and attitudes in the long run. There are many positive practices across the region involving art, which shows that art can be used effectively. It is also important to work with people from a young age using an interdisciplinary approach, and the opportunities of digital technologies must be recognized, while simultaneously being evaluated critically. So far, commercial companies have been leading the use of digital platforms, thus further research is required to understand how these platforms truly need to be approached. *The Anna Lindh Foundation* supports initiatives that investigate possible experimental learning and the use of non-formal methodologies.



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