

## DRIS: Final recommendations

Addressing racism and discrimination requires implementing proactive approaches on how to deal with discriminatory behaviour and recognise racist attitudes, including in oneself. Projects tackling these issues should generate results with guidance for cultural professionals and policy makers.

Indeed, attitudes can change only through knowledge, reflection and practice. Rejecting a different skin colour or cultural custom may run deep within us: it is like a second skin, an addiction that no kind words can cure. Information from someone who "knows better" is simply not enough to revert such attitudes, and even those who claim they are not racist may have hidden prejudices that surface in critical situations.

"DRIS – Co-creating intercultural societies: a focus on racism and discrimination" aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue and creating new anti-racist narratives through artistic participatory processes, involving cultural and social agents. It expressly acknowledged the need to go beyond a "traditional" educational approach, focusing on enhancing this with input from shared practices.

The DRIS participants learned through formal and informal training sessions, active engagement, co-designing artistic experiences, and a final exchange of results among the project partners and participants. Although the cognitive dimension was key throughout the process, the emotional and human components were also factored in, given their intrinsic value to personal development.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

We recommend that more operational programmes of the European Union, in addition to the Creative Europe Programme, provide opportunities for projects such as this, based on the importance of a “cultural approach” supplemented with “experienced-based” activities.

### DICTIONARY ENTRIES

- Intercultural dialogue:

A process (not an end!) that involves people from various cultures on an absolutely equal footing. It is a generative process that creates beauty from diversity and sets new knowledge in motion.

Promoting intercultural dialogue means knowing how to listen and recognise different points of view regarding the heritage that surrounds us. To some extent intercultural dialogue invites us to get involved and to pleasantly note that many different paths can lead to the same destination on another route that is more humanly beautiful. Intercultural dialogue is the bridge that unites all roads; it is the bridge whose crossing leads to the other.

- Marginalisation:

Refers to the displacement of individuals or population groups to the margins of society. The displacement can take place on different levels, such as geographical, economic, social, or cultural, although it is usually on several levels at the same time. Marginalisation takes place in a power structure and is accompanied by discrimination: the more a group is on the fringes of society, the less power it has and the more disadvantaged it is compared to the centre of society. Marginalisation involves loss of resources, influence and status, and can affect mental and physical health. If the marginalised group is a minority, one can also speak of minority stress with regard to psychological and physical consequences. However, marginalisation does not only affect minorities. Femininity is marginalised in a patriarchal society, even though women are not a minority. In the cultural sector, the marginalised have poorer access to funding and influential positions. They often choose art forms where approaches are less regulated, such as contemporary dance or spoken word, as opposed to ballet or poetry. Their art usually takes place in niche spaces and they are denied interest from a larger audience in their topics.



In Rome and Reggio Emilia, DRIS featured an installation by artist Alice Padovani that put direct questions to the audience. However, rather than asking “are you afraid of strangers?”, the question was “what are you afraid of?”, to encourage participants to consider their fears and realities. They wrote down their answers on pieces of paper that were then hung from the ceiling. Visitors could read these personal thoughts and compare them to their own fears and experiences, proving that active participation is a way to foster critical thinking and that safe environments facilitate personal expression.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

Based on the assumption that participation in cultural life is a human right, we recommend that active participation not only be enabled but also fostered to ensure education and personal growth.

### DICTIONARY ENTRIES

- Common space:

Art is the common language to bring differences together. In the “common space” of the museum, by definition a protected environment, all potentially excluded audiences find acceptance and the chance to engage in experiences of narration in the presence of the habitual museum audience.

This is how the museum fits positively into the difficult path of integrating the so-called “non-audience”, making itself the interpreter of a profound need: to escape the conditions of marginality and isolation and to seek an identity through participation in cultural life.

- Cultural democracy:

The concept comprises a set of related commitments: protecting and promoting cultural diversity and the right to culture for everyone; encouraging active participation in community cultural life; enabling people to participate in policy decisions, and assuring fair and equitable access to cultural resources. It sustains the idea that we all have rights that deserve respect and must have a voice in the vital decisions that affect the quality of our lives. It expresses the tension between cultural democratisation, understood as making elite art more attractive, towards more challenging ideas of cultural democracy which recognise culture as the diverse, multipolar creation of all social groups and a human right. In light of the above, cultural democracy and democratisation of culture should both serve a coherent political system and its sovereignty structures by overcoming the underlying ambiguity in the concept of “democratisation of culture” whereby public policies are intended to promote access to culture and not necessarily initiation to culture (active participation) which needs mediation and education policies to

reduce the hurdles for a fulfilling experience. Cultural democracy is therefore about learning to understand, interpret and recreate; but also about participating individually and collectively in cultural life and decision-making of cultural policies and programmes as an active citizen.



In Berlin, DRIS featured improvisational theatre where the audience shared their feelings about discrimination and exclusion with the performers. This exchange led to a common understanding of concepts such as trust, compassion and mutual respect, proving that artists play a crucial role in mediating education and constructive experiences.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

Formal and informal education are not sufficient to foster intercultural dialogue processes. We recommend that all projects in this area involve constructivist thinking, two-way exchanges and training activities with practical, experience-based processes. Furthermore, we recommend that evaluation be a fundamental part of both the training and practical components of projects on the ground.

## DICTIONARY ENTRIES

- Pedagogy of desire:

The use of art to provide the tools with which to make positive changes in one's life. It is a poetic expression, behind which emerges a real methodology to produce significant changes starting from a particular artistic inclination. Dance, music, photography, theatre and painting are the tools to open up and stimulate imagination and desire - a natural human instinct that is often lost, especially among minors in critical and extremely uncomfortable situations. Regaining desire means reclaiming dignity, rebuilding trust in oneself and in the world, taking back one's inalienable human rights and hoping for a different future by rebuilding one's interests, in a non-formal but creative educational journey. Art is a transformational power. The search for beauty in all its forms leads to knowledge of oneself and of the world, with which aesthetics and ethics combine. The pedagogy of desire is also an important exercise in humility for operators working in contexts of marginalisation. Unfortunately, "What would you like?" and, "What would you like to do?" are not obvious questions and are often overlooked in favour of the "top-down" imposition of and presumption to know solutions to complex problems. The pedagogy of desire forces us to take a step back, to break the educator-educated dialectic to construct a peer-to-peer dialogue from mutual understanding.

- Evaluation:

Evaluation is always conditioned by the subjects who conduct it, and who put themselves (or are placed, even against their will), in a situation of choice and decision. It is therefore these very decision-making situations that determine value and utility and thus they influence evaluation, choice, and decision. It is in this way that individual value or utility is determined, as with social utility (of the community, group, etc.). Even the most materially objective basic needs (food, health, housing) and the perception of their scarcity are influenced by decision-making situations and can be the subject of preference. Also, cultural diversity is projected on the diversity of preferences. To evaluate a thing or an event, a community relies on the knowledge of how its members evaluate that event. Evaluations differ from person to person and group to group, so the community must aggregate them and relate them to the perception of value by the community as a whole (social or community evaluations). Since individual and group evaluations, those of the community as a whole, and those of social or community perception are all influenced by the specific characteristics of the diverse groups that comprise the community, the social value can vary in different environments and for different communities.



The DRIS activities were carried out with mixed groups of migrants and non-migrants to foster dialogue and exchange between them and strengthen their relationship to develop mutual understanding and empathy. Offering people the opportunity to meet those who have directly suffered from discrimination is a pre-requisite to sustain inclusion and anti-racist processes.

In Barcelona, the DRIS results were showcased in a “marginalised” neighbourhood where visitors were given a suggested itinerary of key places and guided in discovering their area through the new lenses of the stories that the project participants narrated.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

We recommend that cultural policies and projects support intercultural exchanges that go beyond “migrant communities” to involve the population at large. Migration and inclusion policies must be revised to take into account this need for two-way processes that seek to avoid exclusion and allow migrants to integrate into their host cities.

## DICTIONARY ENTRIES

- Community:

While it is true that the [Faro Convention](#) stipulates the value of the link between heritage and community, this does not help us overcome the dichotomous view of "us" and "others" if the community perceives itself as a closed, immobile, or barely permeable system.

The only way to demonstrate and affirm the procedural, inclusive and dynamic value of cultural heritage from a post-structuralist perspective is to recognise, support and implement those same values as community values. This osmosis between individual, community, and heritage – conceived as open systems – can help us achieve the inalienable goals of social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability.

- Empathy:

In an increasingly arid and less human world, we must find the strength to direct our gaze towards others and rediscover emotional intelligence and the ability to empathise. At a historic time when we are used to reacting by judging and accusing, we must find curiosity and understanding about what surrounds us.

- Routes:

The fossil footprints of three hominids were discovered in Laetoli, Tanzania. They date back to over 3.5 million years ago and are the oldest footprints of bipedal primates in history. But the first true walkers in history belong to the genus Homo and appeared about two million years ago. They migrated in search of food, explored new territories, and moved incessantly. There is something of them in all of us, even today.



The experiences that were implemented under DRIS are likely to lead to other new experiences through the transfer of knowledge acquired within and from the project. However, this requires continuously developing the professional skills needed to support integration and intercultural processes aimed at reducing discrimination and racism.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

We recommend that public policies and operational programmes support training activities developed through innovative means and tools (such as actively engaging artists and participants from the outset, involving a transdisciplinary approach) that go far beyond traditional approaches to cultural and social mediation.

### DICTIONARY ENTRIES

- Diversity:

Closely connected with the previous concept, diversity is an emergent feature of life, without which evolution would not have occurred. Perhaps these difficult times will come to an end when “interculture” is no longer a word or definition, but rather a fully-fledged process. “Interculture” will be the norm, and normality does not need any special description.

It creates contact zones, new knowledge, spaces for encounter and dialogue, and new cultural heritage. In this difficult political and social period in which every occasion becomes a pretext for speculating on people's fears and moving away from each other, we must all put ourselves on the front line and reconceive the values of diversity, promoting and spreading their positive aspects. Diversity is recognising the multiple identities that each of us carries.

Diversity is an extraordinary, "emerging" property of life.

- Edge effect:

A concept we borrow from ecology to describe the features of the areas where two distinct ecosystems meet and where a third with new characteristics is born. For example, where the desert meets the savannah in Africa or the fresh water of the river Amazon joins the salt water of the Atlantic Ocean, new forms of life develop, benefiting from the intake of two merging systems. Likewise, when two different cultures meet in social systems, they create a melting pot; new peoples, new civilisations, intersections, exchanges which sometimes trigger refusal, exclusion, conflict, abuse of power, violence or intolerance. In contrast to what happens in nature, a resistance or defence mechanism emerges with the aim of preserving the status quo.

The willingness to encounter different cultures opens up unpredictable scenarios, unexpected resources which at other points in history gave birth to “cultural *metisage*”: a model of cohabitation that differs to the individual systems merged into it.