Crowddreaming – Youth co-create Digital Culture
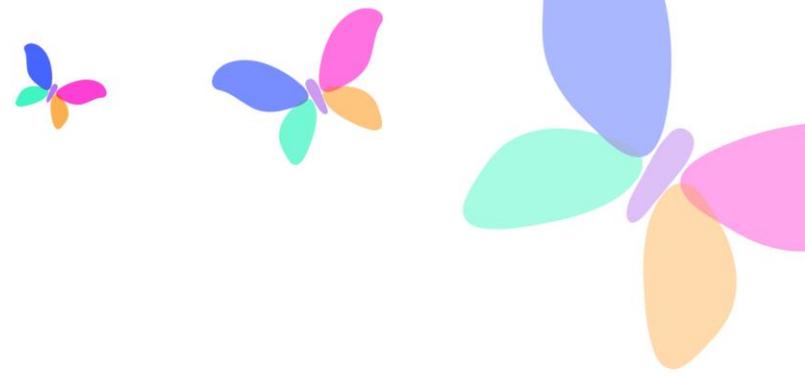
Policy Recommendations

CDDC Crowddreaming Youth co-create digital culture

Policy Recommendations

604517-EPP-1-2018-BE-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN

Agreement number: 2018-3186

Erasmus + KA3 Social Inclusion

www.crowddreaming.eu

Partners:

ALL DIGITAL aisbl (Belgium), Stati Generali dell'innovazione (Italy), Hellenic Open University (Greece), CTC Rijeka (Croatia), LIKTA (Latvia)

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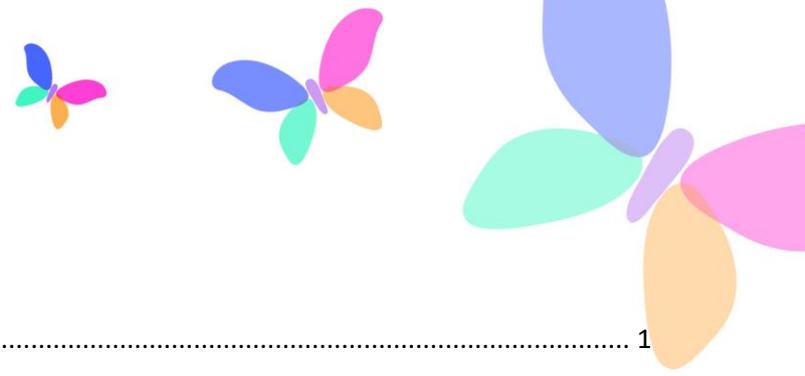| Project Acronym	CDDC
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1. Project Description

The Crowddreaming: Youth co-create Digital Culture project is funded by Erasmus+ programme of the European Union under KA3 Social Inclusion and Common Values: The Contribution in the Field of Education and Training action. The total duration of the project has been 28 months: from January 2019 to April 2021. It is coordinated by ALL DIGITAL and involves 5 partners from 5 countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Latvia and Belgium). The aim of the project was to disseminate and scale-up at European level the Crowddreaming method, an Italian good practice in the field of the valorization of digital cultural heritage as a mean for inclusive education and for the promotion of European values among youngsters.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 was an unprecedented celebration of our shared cultural heritage and values, as well as a wide mobilisation of heritage actors across Europe and beyond. Organised as a bottom-up initiative, it engaged 12.8 million citizens through more than 13,000 events[1]. Cultural heritage is an invaluable resource, enabling us to reflect on history and critically engage with it, helping to identify not only different memories, but also the common threads that bind us all, thus promoting diversity, dialogue, cohesion, solidarity and mutual understanding as well as enriching knowledge of our tangible, intangible, natural and digital assets.[2] As such it also has an important role in all forms of education – formal, non-formal and informal – and contributes to the development of key competences among young people and promotion of European values among them.

In this context the CDDC project **provides teachers** with the necessary knowledge, competences and skills on digital cultural heritage and **empowers young people** in the acquisition and development of cultural heritage and heritage-related skills, as well as knowledge and competences in common history, intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, media literacy, creativity and digital skills.

Specifically, it created a platform for sharing knowledge, good practices and innovations in digital culture and education. In its framework, new technologies become an excellent tool in the hands of teachers for the dissemination of cultural elements and the visualization of knowledge and offer a more direct and suitable learning process for the students of the 21st century.

Students participating in the project were asked to produce materials for the construction of the digital monument, which is mainly based on multiculturality and on the theme of "thanksgiving": students worked on a research basis on how their local/national cultures have influenced or have been influenced by other

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[1] https://www.europanostra.org/ep-plenary-adopts-ambitious-report-on-the-legacy-of-the-european-year-of-cultural-heritage/
[2] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0008_EN.pdf

countries' cultures and will reflect on how European cultures are interconnected and important for the development of national and European identities. Youngsters usually start from a point a view centred on their own regional/national culture, assuming by default that it is most valuable to anyone as the true centre of global culture. Only if guided by trained teachers they become able to switch this point of view and start identifying common values and cultural understanding with other countries. This is how students start to thank other cultures, which is the starting point for the construction of "Europa Square", a digital monument and a stage where youngsters and teachers can meet in a multicultural laboratory on the theme of digital cultural heritage.

Primarily, the role of the Digital Cultural Heritage is storytelling. CDDC introduces this specific tool to provide the conceptual framework of Digital Culture. The content of the digital stories can vary from historical, artistic, archaeological, sociological, modern or referenced in the past. The CDDC introduces Culture to Education using cutting-edge technologies such as augmented and virtual reality which has been proposed as the predominant type of digital content for digital culture collections.

The CDDC project key results are:

- **Training Needs Analysis Report and Transfer Framework** introducing Crowddreaming method, presenting the analysis of the training needs of the participating schools from participating countries and outlining operational framework to transfer the good practice.
- **CDDC Learning Programme** (Massive Open Online Course - MOOC including training content and workshops of the teachers with youngsters)
- **"Europa Square"** as a digital monument to European transculturalism is an ecosystem composed by three main tightly interacting components: (1) The Museater, where values relevant to the community are preserved in time and staged as interactive digital stories, and augmented and virtual reality experiences; (2) The Community, that keeps the digital monument alive and meaningful and, (3) Online platform (VR version) where Community members meet, plan, work and deliver together.
- **Policy recommendations** based on the results of training and piloting activities, for further transferability and upscaling of the project results.

Two **key reports** have been produced by the CDDC project partners. The **Design, implementation and delivery of the MOOC Report** sums up the evaluation results of the CDDC Learning Programme and feeds its findings into the MOOC upgrade and the policy recommendations. The **Experimentation report** explains the piloting methodology used to scale up the workshops with young people. It also contains evaluation results from the young people who participated in the workshops, teachers who were conducting the workshops

and the national tutors who facilitated the piloting phase in their partner countries. Both reports also explain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemics on the training and the piloting activities.

The CDDC Learning Programme includes:

- **Curriculum for training of teachers** incorporated to the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for the training of the teachers to introduce to them digital cultural heritage and how to teach it to the students, on the use of augmented reality (AR) and digital tools for digital storytelling, and how to use them for developing of digital thanksgiving scenes in classes.
- **Training toolkit** designed to assist tutors, teachers and other educators in creating a successful training initiative. It contains a training plan, guidelines, Open Educational Resoures (free tools, samples and templates) and learning outcomes to use along the way. It provides the guidance and resources that support teachers in learning (through MOOC) and implementing Crowddreaming methodology.

Key **project results** are available in **English, Croatian, Greek, Italian and Latvian** language on the project website: https://crowddreaming.eu/.

The CDDC impact in numbers:

- **CDDC full Learning Programme** (including MOOC for teachers and workshops with young people) delivered and tested in four project countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Latvia);
- **137 teachers** successfully completed the CDDC MOOC;
- **1631 young people** (13-19 years of age) involved in **210 CDDC workshops**;
- **15 tutors** supported teachers in their training, and organising and implementing the CDDC workshops;
- **236 digital thanksgiving scenes** produced by young people supported by their teachers (80 selected scenes available on the Europa Square platform).
- **Europa Square digital monument and** online community involving over 2000 participants at the end of the project.

CDDC project partners:

- ALL DIGITAL, Belgium – project coordinator
- Centre of Technical Culture Rijeka, Croatia
- Hellenic Open University, Greece
- Stati Generali dell'Innovazione, Italy
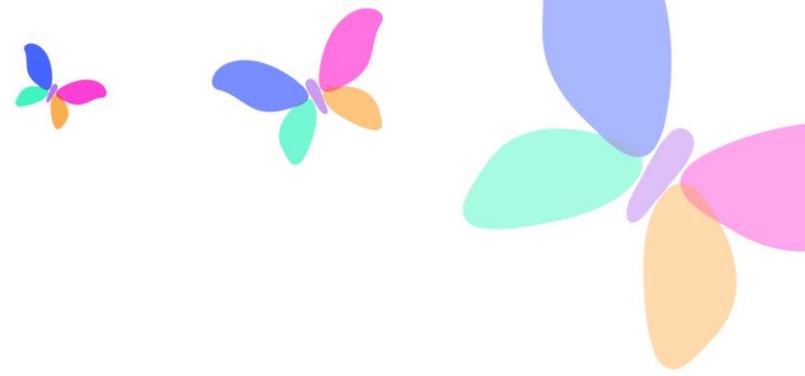
- [LIKTA](), Latvia

2. EU policy context on intersection between culture and education

"Education and culture are the key to the future –both for the individual as well as for our Union as a whole. It is how we turn circumstance into opportunity, how we turn mirrors into windows and how we give roots to what it means to be 'European', in all its diversity. When Europe's Leaders meet in Gothenburg this week, we must seize the opportunity and make sure education and culture are the drivers for job creation, economic growth, social fairness and ultimately unity". - President Juncker, 14 November 2017[3]

The rationale behind the CDDC project starts from the assumption that the Commission's proposal[4] to designate 2018 as European Year of Cultural Heritage, highlights how cultural heritage, with a view to the history and identity shared by all communities of the EU Member States, has a crucial role for the relaunch of Europe.

According to the Communication **"Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture"** (2017)[5], Europe's cultural diversity is a strength that fuels creativity and innovation and, at the same time, there is a common ground that makes up the distinct feature of the European way of life. Understanding and preserving our cultural heritage and diversity are prerequisites to maintain our cultural community, our common values and identity.

Education plays a crucial role in **educating future citizens to experience and be aware of what it means to be "European"**: this is a fundamental topic if we want to educate young people to be aware and understand common European history and values, intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, and mind openness, preventing racism, xenophobia, and radicalization. Intercultural dialogue can be defined as an "open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage based on mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world" (White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue 2008[6]). The awareness and understanding brought by intercultural dialogue are seen as means of reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society.

At the same time, it is stressed that also among the Cultural Heritage sector, the continuous digitization of the means of production offers both opportunities and challenges, with changing and shifting competences and skills. Nevertheless, many school education systems struggle to respond to the profound and complex

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[3] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0673&from=EN
[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0543&from=EN
[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0673&from=EN
[6] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d37c2

changes our societies and economies are undergoing. There is a need for schools to adapt to the changing context, in which they operate, including the digital era and the increasing diversity among pupils. All these issues require not **only the adaptation of school curricula, but more diverse teaching and learning** to address the needs of all learners (Communication "Improving and modernizing education", 2016[7]).

As the Council recommendation on **"Promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching"** (2018)[8] suggests, each Member State should find an effective way to promote the European dimension of teaching by "encouraging an understanding of the European context and common heritage and awareness of the diversity of the Member States of the Union".

These recommendations reflect the attitudes and opinions of European citizens regarding cultural heritage. According to **Eurobarometer 466**[9] that assessed the attitudes and opinions of people in the EU on cultural heritage out of 10 people think cultural heritage should be taught in schools because it is about our history and our culture and three in four Europeans think that the EU and its Member States and public authorities should allocate more resources to protecting Europe's cultural heritage (Gesche-Koning, 2018[10]).

A standing idea of digital cultural heritage is that it will make participation and accessibility more accessible and used as a tool for education. Digital processes change the way we are learning today and shift the place of learning from traditional areas such as classrooms to everywhere. Integration of digital tools and digital learning methods require new strategies, methods and ways of assessment to support lifelong learning and ensuring all citizens can be proactive in the digital transformation. These has been reflected in the recent EU's policy documents in the field of education and culture.

The **New European Agenda for culture (2018)**[11], **Work plan for Culture 2019-2021**[12] and evaluation of the **Recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2011)**[13] which is first step towards a new policy framework to make cultural heritage institutions ready for the digital age clearly set the **ambition for mainstreaming of cultural policy and strengthening cross-sectional cooperation**. The latter also emphasizes the huge potential of the advanced digital technologies (e.g. 3D digitisations) or emerging technologies like virtual reality or augmented reality.

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[7] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0941&from=EN
[8] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607(01)&from=EN
[9] https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2150_88_1_466_ENG
[10] Gesche-Koning N., 2018, Research for CULT Committee – Education in Cultural Heritage, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels
[11] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0267&from=EN
[12] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1221(01)&from=EN
[13] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011H0711

In September 2020, the European Commission published the **Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027**[14] (DEAP) focused on two strategic priorities: (1) To foster a high-performing digital education ecosystem; and (2) To enhance digital skills and competences for the digital age. The COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the need to promote a sound understanding of the digital world and support the development of digital competence of citizens and learners of all ages. Actions under the priority 2 look at both basic and advanced digital skills with the aim of fostering digital citizenship and inclusion. The DEAP highlights how the uptake and use of digital technologies for teaching and learning requires a critical approach and a holistic perspective: "Embedding digital technologies in teaching and learning processes does not mean simply replicating or transposing face-to-face practices or traditional approaches online. It is a complex process, which requires robust digital capacity, including planning for organisational change, ongoing monitoring and adaptation, and a strong focus on learning driven pedagogy".

3. Recommendations for transferability of project results

The training methodology upscaled and developed in the CDDC project achieved the set objectives and was positively evaluated by pilot participants (teachers and students). Nevertheless, the impact of the COVID-19 on the implementation of activities was significant. The training path of the CDDC project has two strands, one for the teachers and one for the students which resulted in even more challenges for the project partners, national tutors, and participants themselves.

The original plan was to implement online training (MOOC) with teachers and face-to-face workshops with students. The main aim of the face-to-face piloting was to test the Crowddreaming methodology with their students. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face training activities had to implemented, when it was allowed by the national restrictions in the partner countries to be implemented, with some restrictions and constraints.

Project partners devised **two sets of recommendations** (for education providers and policy makers) to promote and support transfer and further upscaling of Crowddreaming methodology and exploitation of project results in the formal educational sectors across Europe. Recommendations are based on the project results, extensive experience and expertise of project partners in the field. Both training methodologies (MOOC and co-creation of digital scenes) have proven to be adequate for the project's target group and effective. The following recommendations are based on the results of CDDC implementation in four project countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Latvia).

3.1 Recommendations to education providers

The following recommendations are based on the CDDC project experience, and the feedback provided by project participants from the 4 piloting countries and are addressed to educators. These recommendations specifically address how to valorize digital cultural heritage as a mean for inclusive education, empowering young people's skills (heritage-related skills, as well as knowledge and competences in common history, intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, media literacy, creativity and digital skills), and the promotion of European values among youngsters. They are targeted at schools and other providers of formal education to students aged between 13 and 19 years.

Teachers' work in schools across Europe follows the same mission, but how it is implemented is dependent mainly on national legislation, school settings, and headmasters' decisions. The autonomy of the formal education sector is of outmost importance and with the following recommendations CDDC project partners do not undermine it as such.

- **Simplification of rules and procedures allowing and enabling teachers to get involved in the extracurricular activities**

Providing more flexible procedures in terms of complexity and length would greatly contribute towards increasing the motivation and readiness of teachers to involve in the extracurricular activities (especially project supported by the EU's programmes like Erasmus+) that have a positive impact on teaching by providing new methodologies, enable students to acquire valuable key competences and skills for life and contribute to the common European values.

- **Provide equal conditions for (distance) learning**

33% of participants in CDDC project's piloting activities were from the rural areas and they reported on having outdated and insufficient equipment in some schools (computers, tablets, etc.) and / or problems with internet connectivity (stability, broadband, etc.).

COVID-19 has revealed some critical gaps and differences in the quality of equipment and infrastructure available to teachers and students in non-urban areas. It is critical, especially in the short term, to go beyond discussions of who is responsible for this field, and look for solutions that will in short and medium term ensure equity of all teachers in conducting and implementing long distance learning by providing adequate equipment and internet connectivity.

- **Invest in teachers' training to propel the use of new teaching methodologies and technologies for distance learning**

Learning new digital skills and technology is a strength recognized by the students and teachers in the evaluation of the project activities. Also, teachers reported that learning the Crowddreaming method allows them to plan new and exciting classes in the future. This would not be possible if schools and teachers did not opt to invest human and financial resources to participate in the CDDC project.

Formal education providers must further recognize the value of these collaborations for teachers' professional development and the positive effects on regular teaching and learning activities in schools. Online activities and distance learning often seem deceivingly simple. Using online tools (e.g. Moodle, MS Teams, Zoom, etc.) for implementing interactive and meaningful teaching activities requires different skills and knowledge than residential teaching. It is also essential to recognize the need for going beyond general training and enable teachers to enrol in activities that provide them specific competences crucial for quality distance learning.

- **Stimulate and foster cooperation with external partners**

The main strength that was identified by students, teachers and tutors was the ability to cooperate on a large scale. Students worked in groups, teachers introduced them to museum, archive and library representatives which enabled new partnerships and collaborations, tutors facilitated teachers' cooperation and project framework provided an opportunity for international exchange and community building of teachers beyond national educational frameworks.

Schools, teachers and students benefit greatly when schools collaborate with other organisations and institutions from various sectors. The benefits are wide reaching: professional development of school staff, new project partnerships and collaborations, improved teaching methods that contribute to learning skills and competences. This kind of cooperation rarely happens by chance, therefore education providers should stimulate and foster the cooperation by identifying their needs and wishes and actively seek to partner up with appropriate organisations.

- **Interesting topics (digital tools, augmented reality, exploring cultural heritage, European values, co-creation) and captivating activities stimulate motivation and engagement in teaching and learning activities**

Our evaluation showed that the theme of the project (digital cultural heritage) is captivating and interesting to both students and teachers. This factor helped them keep the enthusiasm and motivation at a higher level and thus reducing the dropout rate.

Education providers should use this factor to the advantage of everyone involved in the education process. The key to this is a two way communication between all involved parties (school leadership, teachers and students) and enabling meaning participatory processes to shape the activities in schools that can be adjusted to the needs and interests of students and also teachers. This will yield better results not only in terms of satisfaction but also in the rate and quality of acquired competences and skills.

- **Culture is a glue that connects people from different nations and backgrounds and is able to facilitate the use of new technologies and digital services**

Using a cultural heritage as a mean for education and transmission of values is probably one of the oldest teaching techniques. Crowddreaming methodology has not rediscovered this. It has merely provided a framework that enables educators to utilize this knowledge and built tools and methodologies to support it. Similarly has been done by other initiatives and organisations across

Europe, but the one that stands out in terms of the quality and variety of educational resources using (digital) culture is Europeana's initiative and its platform Europeana Classroom.

- **Use virtual and augmented reality technology and tools in education**

  Technology is a great catalyst of progress. Digital transformation in education has been propelled by the COVID-19 lockdowns that forced educational sectors to adopt new tools and teaching methods to foster quality education. Nevertheless, few technologies are as compelling to young people as virtual and augmented reality technology and tools. This has also been confirmed by very positive feedback received from students and teachers participating in CDDC project after experiencing the results of their work in Europa Square digital monument.

  It is worth noting that the threshold to use both technologies and tools in educational activities is often perceived high in terms of the costs and required competences. This is not the case. There are several open access tools available to utilise augmented or virtual reality in education that educators are able to use without acquiring highly specialised digital skills or investing substantial financial resources.

3.2 Recommendations to policy makers

The following recommendations specifically target policy makers in the field of culture, education, and youth on local, regional, national and European level (depending on their competences):

- Actively **promote and support the STEAM approach** that provides an interdisciplinary and applied approach curriculum which is vital to equip young people with key competences and digital skills pivotal for successful participation in the digitally transformed society.

- A **more flexible, more interdisciplinary orientated curriculum**, that actively encourages cooperation amongst teachers from different fields in the joint implementation of a project, not only would enrich the learning process but would also teach the true value of cooperation to students through practice and real-life experience.

- The **institutionalization of official time slots dedicated to creative extracurricular activities,** and for projects like CDDC, integrated within the traditional curriculum of schools for all grades of education. This would encourage greatly the participation of teachers and students in such projects and would offer them the possibility to make the utmost effort. The meaningful integration of these projects in the daily scholastic curriculum would also upgrade these projects in the collective subconscious of both parents and teachers, from secondary activities to what they really are, aka projects that encourage divergent thinking and teach students useful life skills for their future.

- Provide better **internet infrastructure and equipment in schools**, especially in rural area schools, is a precondition for inclusive and quality distance learning. The need for this goes also beyond education sector as digital transformations across all policy spectrums require solid connectivity and hardware infrastructure. This is also pivotal to ensuring equity and inclusion for all, school staff and students.

- Increase the support (financial and institutional) for initiatives, activities and projects on the intersection of **educational** and **cultural** fields.

- Broad and **holistic approach** towards students and education. Education policies and strategies need to move from a focus on restrictive and generalised curricula towards learner-centeredness.

- Further support education and training to adapt to the digital transformation, including a more **inclusive approach** to digital competence development and further stimulating partnerships between formal education, non-formal education and other stakeholders (such as civil society organisations, cultural organisations, museums, archives, etc.)

- Provide greater visibility to the initiatives that use **co-creation** and **peer-to-peer learning** for learning and promoting cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, media literacy, creativity, and digital skills by offering more opportunities to present and share **good practices**. In the same way, support participation of representatives of public administrations in these initiatives to additionally underline their support.

- Support **pedagogica**l and **digital upskilling of educators** in both formal and non-formal settings.

- Quoting the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 (page 6): "The key lesson of the COVID-19 crisis is that digital education should no longer be viewed as an island of its own but considered an integral part of all education and training".

Both sets of recommendations mirror the findings outlined in the Experimentation and MOOC design and delivery reports which are based on feedback and evaluations from teachers, students and national tutors. This is important because it substantiates the call for actions and other recommendations on a two year process and hundreds of feedback collected along the way. Therefore, the last recommendation is to read the policy recommendations together with the other CDDC project outcomes.

4. Conclusion

The mainstreaming of cultural policy and fostering of cross-sectional cooperation with other policies such as education, economy and international relations have been put on the forefront of EU and national cultural policy frameworks. Education field is constantly innovating and improving to develop new and better ways to effectively transmit knowledge, skills and attitudes to all generations.

The contribution of the CDDC project in this regard is an affirmation of the positive impacts of this policy directions with concrete results, analysis and evaluations compiled and presented in project results and Experimentation and MOOC design and delivery reports. One of the important lessons from the CDDC project is that the key action to transform guiding principles, values and directions of cultural and education policies to activities and results is support.

Systemic support that is manifested by financial means, infrastructure, sustainability and decision making on top levels. And individual support like the one given to schools by enabling them to open their doors to collaborations and experimentations, to teachers by supporting them in upskilling and innovation and to students by encouraging them to dream and dare.

When provided, it is projects like CDDC, programmes like Erasmus+ and dedicated people like teachers, students and tutors from Croatia, Greece, Italy and Latvia that come together to create real and meaningful impact for individuals and society when that happens.