



**COME2ART: Introducing a collaborative scheme between artists & community members  
fostering life skills development and resilience through creative placemaking**

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Erasmus + project, Partnerships for Creativity



*“A life skills curriculum through arts  
in the context of creative placemaking”*



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## A life skills curriculum through arts in the context of creative placemaking

### Introduction

The main aim of the training curriculum is to provide to trainees those methodological tools so that they can in turn, engage members from different communities in collaborative arts-related projects with the ultimate goal of fostering their life skills. The life skills that are expected to be enhanced are perceived as a method to boost community's creative resilience overall.

Namely, these life skills pertain to critical thinking, creative thinking and flexibility in the face of uncertainty and changing circumstances, an increased ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions as well as others'. Moreover, in relation to learning, metacognitive skills will be bolstered, with emphasis on learning how to learn and helping people to take initiative on managing their own learning.

Last but not least, communication and cooperation skills are key as collaboration, empathy and mutual acknowledgment of opinions and viewpoints is paramount in delivering results in any common pursuit, let alone an open-ended artistic project where outlooks and approaches should be synthesized in a coherent whole.

Against this background the specific training curriculum aims to use the active and collaborative participation in artistic projects that transform spaces (place making) as a fulcrum to foster the above-mentioned life skills of people who relate to specific communities that may be described as less privileged, bearing in mind a number of principles.

The design and delivery of the curriculum, due to its nature focusing on life skills that can be applied through creative practice and different forms of artistic expression, will be heavily based on arts-based, experiential learning, and learning by doing, while the overall delivery will be via blended learning, taking



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into account possible alterations due to potential social distancing implications.

Moreover, part of the curriculum has been designed to enable artists and cultural workers to undertake the role of the trainer for the community members, since, they are the ones who have to deliver the training material.

The Come2Art Life skills curriculum has been composed by eight Modules:

> 5 Modules (1-5) for the learning process led by artists (educators) and involving community members in creative practices to develop their life skills

> 3 Modules (6-8) for the process of training and preparing artists to become educators for their communities

The modules developed by Come2art consortium:

### **Modules for the trainees:**

Module 1: Arts in times of crisis: a way to self-regulate emotions?

*Partner in charge:* Melting Pro

Module 2: Creativity in practice: methods and tools for collective artistic expression  
*Partner in charge:* Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Module 3: Digital tools for creative expression

*Partner in charge:* Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Module 4: Collaborate with others in artistic projects, promoting collective efforts and shared understanding

*Partner in charge:* Melting Pro



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Module 5: Let's make public art: introducing creative placemaking as a tool for creating a resilient community

*Partner in charge:* Melting Pro, ActionAid Hellas

### Modules for the trainers:

Module 6: The social role of artist as a leader in sustaining creative activities at community level

*Partner in charge:* IoDeposito

Module 7: Promoting civic engagement through arts-based community revitalisation initiatives

*Partner in charge:* ActionAid Hellas

Module 8: Pedagogic methodologies and approaches for teaching life skills through arts

*Partner in charge:* Melting Pro, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

All 8 Modules will be structured following the same scheme:

- **Module Title:** as per the approved project proposal
- **Course Module Description:** A detailed description of the Module.
- **Course Units, Titles & Description:** A detailed description of the units (learning activities) that the Module will be broken down to.
- **Learning Outcomes:** A detailed description of the Learning Objective and expected Outcome per unit (learning activity), divided into cognitive and affective domain (see Methodology)
- **Assessment:** A detailed description of the learner assessment of the course module/units.

### Development of the training material



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The development of the training methodology as well as of the whole curriculum was completely undertaken by Come2art partnership.

More specifically, Melting Pro in cooperation with Aristotle University led the development of COME2ART curriculum while all partners developed content (see modules above) based on their expertise and taking into account their local communities' needs and challenges.

Following **Melting Pro's** experience as VET provider in the arts and creative local development fields, the 8 Modules were designed to structure an outcome-based process that can be adaptable, interactive, accessible in many other learning contexts.

The materials that were developed for each module are the result from years of research and EU collaboration in the field of creative practices and their impact assessment in terms of empowerment of people in and outside the arts. Melting Pro has been designing experiential learning targeted at artists and creative people with the purpose of increasing their employability and their role in societies.

The format SPACE (presented in Module 4) that Melting Pro has extensively used at national level in several local regeneration projects in Italy, offers concepts and tools to be provided to artists who want to engage people in artistic practices for the benefit of a community: ways to listen to the audiences, to gather the stories behind the tangible and intangible heritage that lies in a place and is shared by people, techniques to embrace a collaborative process where the artistic output is co-designed and co-implemented.

A select set of these approaches were chosen for the purpose of the Come2Art project and workshopped by a group of 15 artists from 3 countries during an intensive training and testing session that confirmed the usefulness and innovative character of the training materials here presented.



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In the context of the creation of the Modules for which **Aristotle University** had the main responsibility, the choices regarding the educational material and the teaching methodology drew inspiration from the experience of the author as a teacher in the courses of Art Education, Sociology and Psychology Education at the Department of Visual and Applied Arts of the School of Fine Arts of the University, with the co-assistance and valuable contribution of other professors of the Department.

Socially engaged and collaborative art forms are a central point of reference in the teaching of all the professors of the Department who participated in the writing of the material. The main aim of the designed modules was to connect expressive creation with the critical processing of personal or, in particular, social issues, through the language of contemporary art. Thus, primary emphasis was not placed on the development of skills related to the use of materials, techniques and morphoplastic elements, but on theoretical training, the understanding of the inseparable relationship between image and meaning in the visual arts.

This has helped to avoid creative processes that invest one-sidedly in impressing the viewer, and the aesthetic side, and to produce works that invite the public to think through artistic creations that form cooperates with meaningful content.

The Modules produced also drew material and methods from the modern logic of integration of new technologies in Visual Education that promotes a student-centered creation of informal networks between the participants. A summary of all the above mentioned approaches, experience and knowledge is presented in Modules 2 and 3, as well as in Module 8.



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**IoDeposito** has over 10 years of experience working on supporting people's – especially young people's- specific competencies related to visual arts, cultural management, and curatorial practices. Some indicative activities held by the association include exhibitions, workshops, laboratories, cultural events, conferences, research, publications, as well as experimental processes on curatorial disciplines, artistic languages and new technologies applied to art and

culture. The creation of teaching and laboratory paths based on art and creativity has led IoDeposito to experiment innovative educational techniques addressed to different groups of the community. All this accumulated experience of working with artists at local level has been incorporated at Module 6.

**ActionAid Hellas** specializes in the application of community engagement methodologies drawing from its international experience with vulnerable communities around the world, as well as from its work with local communities in the city of Athens and Thessaloniki. Especially, the Youth Hub of ActionAid in Thessaloniki has relevant experience from art-based projects mainly derived from the “Art for Youth leadership” program which aimed to transfer knowledge from the Mural Arts Institute in Philadelphia by building capacity in young artists and youth, active in the city of Thessaloniki, on community engagement and design of public art. Through its multi-level approach the program instrumentalized murals' public art for social change, and enabled youth of vulnerable background to come together, imagine and lead projects that build social capital. This knowledge and previous experience was incorporated in the development of Module 5 and Module 7.

Although, the training material was developed by different authors, still the consortium of the project strived for the cohesion and the continuity of the modules in a way that any reader could easily get familiarized with it.



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