EducOpera - An Education to Opera as a Method of Reducing Early School Leaving Editor: Dr Marco Bartolucci

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9 authors, including:

Marco Bartolucci
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44 PUBLICATIONS **166** CITATIONS

Niels Rosendal Jensen
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67 PUBLICATIONS **33** CITATIONS

Christian Christrup Kjeldsen
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18 PUBLICATIONS **90** CITATIONS

Mojca Kovačič
Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
21 PUBLICATIONS **30** CITATIONS

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:

EducOpera - Struggling against Early School Leaving View project

Making capabilities work – WORKABLE View project

IO3

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EducOpera

An Education to Opera
as a Method of Reducing
Early School Leaving

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Content

IO3

Annexes

Participants in the EducOpera Book and Project

This book is one of the three main products of the EducOpera project.
The following are the three main characteristics of the EducOpera project:

1- Tools and Method (IO1) www.educopera.eu/intellectual-outputs: to provide a method for identifying and evaluating the skills acquired by youngsters during the experience of music education in general and opera in particular. The assumption is that these skills and competences can then be translated into skills and competences relevant to educational success (that is that they can be successfully transferred into an educational context).

2- Training for Professionals (IO2) www.educopera.eu/intellectual-outputs: to train educators in this innovative pedagogical approach so that they will be familiar with the tools defined in IO1 and can use them in their assessments and in fostering dialogue between pupils' extracurricular experience and the school experience.

3- Guide for Professional Trainers (IO3) – so that they will be able to explain the EducOpera approach to other teachers/educators (working both in and outside of school) in music education. The hope is that this tool will be effective in combatting early school leaving (ESL).
The validity of the approach from the point of view of the final beneficiaries takes the form of "learning to learn" and represents a way to conceive of personal development as a continuous dialogue between formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

The contributions of project participants will be presented in this book. The first part includes articles explaining the so-called competences approach in extracurricular activities, how to identify competences with pupils, and how to bridge the gap between school curricula, non-formal, and informal learning. The articles also present how the EducOpera approach can be used in order to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and enhance personal empowerment among pupils. We go on to discuss how to promote the EducOpera approach among pupils, how to mobilize their competences through Education to Opera, and how opera can influence cognitive development and empowerment. Finally we discuss methods for reaching out to possible stakeholders and building networks.

List of Authors

OPERA DE MASSY
Direction
Jack-Henri Soumère   PARIS SUD

Opéra de Massy:

As a director established in Essonne (France), his native department (he was born in the city of Longjumeau), **Philippe Bellot** first joined the Theatre of Longjumeau then directed by Jack-Henri Soumère in 1987 after studies in law. In 1995, he started directing the Opéra de Massy which has become an Opera house of reference, fully respecting the requirements for a Public Service Delegation. He has used his successful experience at the Opera when he started directing the Longjumeau theatre in 2003. In 2011, the Soumère Group acquired several theaters in Val d'Yerres and more recently, in January 2019, the Theater of Blanc-Mesnil (in another department close to Paris, Seine Saint Denis). Philippe Bellot is today at the head of 11 theaters involving an experienced team of administrators. Most appreciated in his professional field, he has been strongly involved in the cultural sector for the past years - he is a member of several meaningful networks in entertainment, professional trade unions and other professional organisations (the National Union of Public Scenes, the Musical Forces, the Meeting of Operas of France - ROF, the Association for Directors & Producers in Private Theater, the National Union for Spectators). He regularly participates to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council in Essonne. In complement, Philippe Bellot has collaborated with several media including M6, NRJ group and Téléssonne. Most concerned by "opera for all", meaning its access among a public living in social sensitive areas, Philippe Bellot has participated and contributed to several Councils of citizens of the city of Massy

Graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts of Paris, **Marjorie Piquette** is the head of the Education Department at the Opéra de Massy which employs two people (Marjorie as the head of the department, and Eugénie Boivin as her assistant). She worked as an art teacher for six years before her position at the Opéra de Massy. For more than ten years, she has been in charge of developing the cultural policy of the opera house. She is responsible for planning cultural activities for schools, from early childhood to students (workshops, conferences, artistic meetings). She has implemented a strategy to address public with special needs (disabled people, prisoners, insertion, seniors) by proposing customized projects indoors and outdoors, short term and long term projects. She is working in close partnership with the artistic and technical human resources of the Opera de Massy (artists, technicians, administrative) but also with the companies in residence: orchestra of the Opera de Massy, dance company in residence (currently Julien Lestel). She is in charge of fund raising among foundations and public bodies in order to spread the word on educational work done at the Opéra de Massy, and a recognition of the an education to opera in the student's learning. Marjorie is also in charge of cultural action and youth programming for the 9 theaters, (including Massy Opera) belonging to Soumère firm and is managing 4 collaborators in this perspective. As a leisure, Marjorie also practices lyric singing, and has a passion for the art of floral weaving.

Eugénie Boivin is the second member of the Education department at the Opera de Massy, responsible for the planning of cultural and educative activities, producing all teaching material and engaging with the opera's varied audiences: schools, associations, community groups, etc.. Passionate about art in a broad sense, she obtained a Master's Degree in art history. In the meantime, she worked as an educational supervisor in secondary boarding schools for four years. This experience with teenagers turned out to be very fruitful. She joined the Opéra de Massy Education Department in 2005, together with Marjorie Piquette. Since then, Eugénie Boivin has handled the visits of the Opera, designing relevant contents for different audiences. Her pedagogical approach among diverse public has been improved thanks to several trainings such as the art of storytelling or visual arts. She has been in charge of the planning educational activities like workshops, public rehearsal or the organization of logistics for some events.

iriv Research Centre:

Bénédicte Halba, PhD in Economics (University of Paris Pantheon Sorbonne, 1996), is the founding president of the Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv). She is responsible for its studies and training programmes. She edits iriv's publications (books, reviews, newsletters…) and its websites & weblogs - including iriv's electronic review *Les rives de l'iriv* (since 2004) and iriv's newsletter *Regards croisés sur la diversité* (since 2016). The pilot European project she initiated and directed in seven EU countries (2003-2006), Assessing a Voluntary Eperience (VAEB), was awarded in Helsinki in 2006 for excellent practice in addressing the priorities of the Copenhagen Process (non formal and informal learning approach). The project Success at School through Volunteering (SAS, 2012-2014), she initiated with the University of Northampton across six EU countries was the touchstone for a monthly activity for youngsters implemented in Essonne since 2013. The project Migrapass (a portfolio for valuing a migratory path, 2010-2012) she designed with Autremonde (a French association) in 5 European countries led to the creation of a monthly club at the Cité des Métiers. She has lectured at various Universities in Europe (France, Austria, UK…) and has been a member of the board of several associations and scientific committees (France and Switzerland) since 2007. She has written several books and articles since 1995 and delivered speeches in several conference since 1994.

Faustine-Louise Blanco-Poisson is a student in Master's degree in management of territories and local development – international administration of territorial projects (University of Paris Est Creteil-UPC). During her studies, she has learned about fund raising and planification in local, national and international projects. During her master's degree she spent one semester in Erasmus at the Jagiellonski University in Krakow (Poland). She performed a nine-month civic service at the Zup De CO association (Tours), which consisted in facilitating and supervising tutoring sessions in a secondary school in a priority education area. She participated a mission at Sokodé (Togo) in 2016 with the association AVECS TOGO (Association of Volunteers for Exchange, Culture and Solidarity) to keep children in orphanage and teach in a school. She graduated with a degree in Economic and Social Administration (AES), management of Territories, at the University François Rabelais at Tours in 2015. For Iriv, she has been associated to various projects for young people: such as the EducOpera for which she has been actively involved in a couple of pedagogical sessions among youngsters.

Yazin Gunay is a Master's student at Paris Diderot University where he studies Migration & Ethnicity and he's currently writing his master's thesis on the Turkish community in Paris. A native of Istanbul (Turkey), he graduated from Galatasaray University (2016) and holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science. He also did an Erasmus year at the University Paris 1 (2015). He's just finished an internship at the United Nations Developemnt Program in Istanbul - the Regional Hub where he has been studying security issues in Eastern issues. At iriv, Yazin has participated in projects about migration but also on youth issues. For the EducOpera, he has designed 5 videos presenting the pedagogical sessions implemented among youngsters (with the comedian in January, the musician in February, the electrician in March, the conductor in April, the dancer and choreographer in May and the visit to the Opera Garnier in May. The videos combined the pictures taken during the sessions, some subtitles as explanations and a relevant music to support the pictures and text. They are all available online - www.educopera.eu/copie-de-videos.

![Aarhus University logo](AARHUS UNIVERSITY)

Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark:

Dirk Michel-Schertges is an Associate Professor at the Department of Education at the Faculty of Arts at Aarhus University in Copenhagen, Denmark. He holds an MA in Social Sciences and a PhD in Educational and Social Sciences from the University of Wuppertal in Germany. His primary interests include the (re)construction of identity formations in light of contemporary processes of alienation within the cultural contexts of aesthetic education/Bildung, art, educational policy, educational/pedagogical and social theory, political socialization, political education, social inequality, and biographical and historical approaches to the concept of Bildung. Among his many activities, he serves on the boards of the Research Committee 36 "Alienation Theory and Research" and RC 37 "Sociology of Arts" in the International Sociological Association. His recent publications include the following: Poverty, Social Inclusion and Egalitarianism. In F. Kessl, W. Lorenz, O. Hans-Uwe, and S. White (red.), **European Social Work – A Compendium**. Kapitel 2.Opladen & Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers. (forthcoming); Sprache und Halbbildung. Zur gegenwärtigen Lage wissenschaftlicher Produktion. I D. Stederoth, W. Thole, and D. Novkovic (red.), **Die Befähigung des Menschen zum Menschen: Heinz-Joachim Heydorns kritische Bildungstheorie**. Wiesbaden: Springer VS. (forthcoming); (2017). Aesthetics as the precondition for revolution. I M. J. Thompson (red.), **The Palgrave handbook of critical theory** (s. 329-348). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Political philosophy and public purpose.
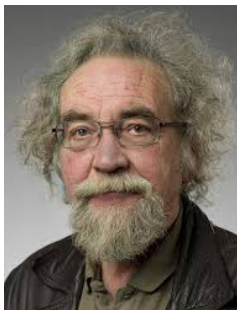
Niels Rosendal Jensen has experience as a guest professor in the Erasmus Exchange and has acted as the Program Director of PhD-Act (a European module at the PhD level in social work and social pedagogy) since 2009. He has also served as the national project leader of the EU project "WorkAble" (2009-2012), "Society" (FP7 2013-2015) and the "Leonardo da Vinci" project on real competence assessment (2010-2012), and also as the leader of a project dealing with the development of competence of action in pedagogical work commissioned and financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs (2005-2009). He has been involved in the evaluation of "The Holistic Intervention" (EGU, 2008-2011), a project on an holistic approach to education of youngsters with special

needs (STU, 2008-2011), the evaluation of the pedagogy and didactics of Steiner schools in Denmark (2010-2011), and a project on education/teaching of young inmates in closed institutions for the Danish Regional Council (2008-2010).

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Dr.Phil, Associate Professor **Christian Christrup Kjeldsen** is the Deputy head of the Danish School of Education (DPU) and director for research there. He also holds the position as Centre director for the National Centre for School Research (NCS) in Denmark. Kjeldsen have been researching empirically with means of statistics the relationship between school achievement and different forms of social background. Kjeldsen is the national research coordinator for the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) study TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and elected for the IEA Standing Committee.

Recent publications: Reimer, D., Jensen, S. S., & Kjeldsen, C. C. (2018). Social inequality in student performance in the Nordic countries: a comparison of methodological approaches. I A. Wester (red.), Northern Ligths on TIMSS and PISA 2018 (s. 31-59). Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. TemaNord, Nr. 524, Bind. 2018; Kjeldsen, C. C. (2018). Education for all? providing capabilities for young people with special needs. I H-U. Otto, M. Walker, & H. Ziegler (red.), Capability-promoting policies: enhancing individual and social development (s. 259-278). Bristol: Policy Press.

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU):

Mojca Kovačič holds a PhD in ethnomusicology. She heads the Institute of Ethnomusicology of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Kovačič's first profession was as a professor of music with four years of experience in teaching music in high school. In addition to regular scientific work carried out by the institute (where her interest mainly covers research in folk music and its various forms and contemporary processes, soundscape studies related to religious sounds and street music, migrant music studies and affect studies in relation to music and politics), she also carries out music workshops for youngsters. For the past eight years she has served as a professional consultant for the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia, working as an evaluator of music performances. She is the national representative of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) and a member of the board of the cultural and ethnomusicological society Folk Slovenia. She is skilled in project administration and the organization of scientific meetings and has been involved in Erasmus + projects related to volunteering such as JuciVol, Schola, and EducOpera.

Dan Podjed is a Research Fellow at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). He is an Assistant Professor for Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. He was a principle researcher in the applied research project "DriveGreen: Development of an Eco-Driving Application for a Transition to a Low-Carbon Society" (2014–2017) and the "Invisible Life of Waste Project" (2018–2021) both of which were financed by the Slovenian Research Agency. He has been involved in the development of various ethnography-based solutions (PEOPLE, MOBISTYLE, TripleA-reno projects, etc.) and also researches volunteering and altruism (JuCiVol, Schola, EducOpera projects, etc.) From 2010 to

2018 he coordinated the "Applied Anthropology Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists" (EASA) and initiated the international symposium "Why the World Needs Anthropologists" annually organized since 2013. His current research interests include volunteering and altruism, sustainable lifestyles, human-technology interaction, nature conservation, and organizational cultures. He is the author of many articles and monographs. His most recent book Seen: *Why We Like Watching Others and Being Watched in Return* was published in 2019.

Marjeta Pisk is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Ethnomusicology of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). After teaching Latin in high school, she earned her PhD in comparative intercultural studies for which she received an award from the Slovenian Slavic Society. In addition to her research on different aspects of historical and contemporaneous folk and popular culture, she has participated in various national and European projects (including "Song Reflections of Intercultural Coexistence", Erasmus+ Jucivol, Schola, Interreg Slovenia-Croatia). She also has considerable experience in project management. She focuses her research on the heritagization of border regions, the overlooked questions of oral and written traditions, and the contextual aspects of various minority cultures especially as regards music. She presents her papers at international conferences and workshops organized by different national and international societies (such as the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore, SIEF). In addition to her academic work, she works with young people living in vulnerable situations and are at risk of social exclusion. As a volunteer, she concentrates on the social inclusion of young women with migrant backgrounds.

![Info-def logo] INSTITUTO PARA EL FOMENTO DEL DESARROLLO Y LA FORMACIÓN

INFODEF, Spain:

Jesús Boyano is the cofounder and director of INFODEF (the Institute for the Promotion of Development and Training) and the head of the International Projects Department. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at the University of Salamanca. He currently works as a lecturer and researcher at the Faculty of Education and Social Work of the University of Valladolid. Since 1999 Boyano has worked as social researcher and project manager as well as a lecturer and trainer for local governments, universities, and private consulting companies. He is an expert in the design of innovative training and learning methodologies and the evaluation of employment and educational programmes, and is responsible of the evaluation of national programmes for the Spanish Ministry of Education. He has been involved in coordination and management activities in more than seventy European funded projects.

Federico Campos is a project manager with more than fifteen years of experience in the design of innovative pedagogical methods for educational and training programmes and projects. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at the University of Salamanca. He has extensive experience as a trainer, designer, and coordinator of programmes to promote innovativeness in education and develop skills in innovation. He has worked for different regional governments, universities, NGOs, and foundations on projects that support underprivileged groups. He is an expert in training and counselling programmes aimed at young people and disadvantaged groups. He was responsible for the implementation and coordination of the "Innovation in Education Programme" addressed to the regional official network of Schools and VET Centres at the regional government of Extremadura. He has participated in more than forty international and EU funded projects in the field of education and training.

Università degli Studi di Perugia:

Marco Bartolucci is a post-doctoral researcher with a PhD in neuroscience. His research interests include prevention and countering school dispersion, cognitive empowerment, reading and narrative listening processes, and the relationships between neuroscience and learning. As a clinician and researcher, he is interested in learning disabilities, school inclusion, and processes of learning and cognitive empowerment. He also deals with software for cognitive rehabilitation and educational strategies through augmented reality devices. His publications include *Dispersione scolastica: Ascoltare i protagonisti per comprenderla e prevenirla* (edited by, with F. Batini, FrancoAngeli, 2016), *Lettura e dispersione* (ed. by, with I. D. M. Scierri, R. Salvato, FrancoAngeli, 2018), Batini, F., Bartolucci, M., & De Carlo, E. (2017), "The Effects of Reading Aloud in the Primary School" in *Fight Dispersion Through Education: The Results of the First Cycle of the NoOut Project. Mind, Brain, and Education*, F.Batini, M.Bartolucci, A.Timpone (2018), "I Feel Good at School! Reducing School Discomfort Levels through Integrated Interventions" in *Psychology and Education Journal*, F. Batini, M. Bartolucci, E. De Carlo (2018), and "The Effects of a Narrative Intervention Program in People Living with Dementia" in the *Athens Journal of Education*, M. Bartolucci, F. Batini in *Psychology and Neuroscience* (2018).

Federico Batini is an Associate Professor of experimental pedagogy at the FISSUF Department of the University of Perugia. Among the last publications on the topic: with S. Giusti (edited by), *Imparare dalla lettura* (Loescher, 2013); with M. Bartolucci (ed. by), *Dispersione scolastica. Ascoltare i protagonisti per comprenderla e prevenirla* (FrancoAngeli, 2016); *C'era una volta un pezzo di legno* (FrancoAngeli, 2016); *Dropout* (Fuorionda, 2014 Premio Italiano di Pedagogia) and, among others, the contribution on *Rivista* (with M. Bartolucci and M. E. De Carlo): Fight Dispersion through Education: The Results of the First Cycle of the NoOut Project, "Mind, Brain, and Education", (nov. 2017), *Tra lettura e dispersione in Lettura e dispersione* (ed. by I. D. M. Scierri, M.

Bartolucci, R. Salvato, FrancoAngeli, 2018). He coordinates the international research network on school dispersion (IReNE) and runs the periodical *Lifelong, Lifewide Learning*. He founded the LaAV volunteer movement for reading aloud and devised methods of narrative guidance.

Alberto Santoro graduated in International Political Science and specializes in European Project Management, SMEs Internationalization, and European Public Communication. After having reported as a journalist for local daily newspapers on EU topics, he carried out a traineeship at the Council of the European Union (DG F Press, Communication and Transparency). He has worked as a EU Project Manager in several institutions and associations that deal with European Structural and Investment Funds. He worked as an expert on the 7th EU FP for Research and Technological Development and the Horizon 2020 Programme at the Enterprise Europe Network of the European Commission. He also has experience in specialized translations as well as in the tourism industry. He regularly participates as EU Affairs Communication Specialist in plenary meetings of the Club of Venice, network of the communication directors and senior communication specialists from the EU Member States, EU institutions, candidate countries, and other international organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Federico Batini

Università di Perugia

This book presents the experience and results of the EducOpera project the goal of which was to investigate how the acquisition of skills and competences through opera education, and, more generally, musical and artistic work, would reduce Early School Leaving (ESL). In particular, our aim is to address professional educators and disseminate methods and approaches used in EducOpera to music teachers and other educators.

Music fascinates and helps us from an early age

Recognizing and appreciating music is one of the first high-level functions of the brain in children, preceding walking and the acquisition of language. For people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, the enjoyment of music is one of the last mental activities to disappear. Even when a person has difficulty sustaining satisfactory interaction with others, the recognition and appreciation of music remains.

Music is a fundamental tool used to comfort newborns, attract people, and motivate and strengthen groups the members of which range from very young children to soldiers and athletes. Music allows us to both express and share our emotions. Its origins are ancient and it is one of the few areas of knowledge shared by all human beings. It is believed that the appreciation of music existed prior to walking on two legs (that is before man "got up") and before the development of language.

Many studies suggest the presence of sensitivity to music in the first months of life, which in turn supports the idea of a certain naturalness or even genetic component in the appreciation of music. Subsequent exposure to specific types of music in a culture

then define tastes and preferences. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that a certain musical competence is present in very young children even prior to exposure to culture.

V. Putkinen and his colleagues carried out studies aimed at finding links between the musical environment and the development of musical skills. The studies included scholars administering questionnaires to families. The questionnaires asked whether children were involved in musical activities (such as singing or dancing), and if, and for how long, parents had musical interactions with their children (such as singing to them). The children were presented with tasks that measured their musical skills and attention. Scholars found that children immersed in a musical environment were both more able to grasp changes in the duration and temporal structure of sound and less easily distracted. This was also demonstrated in the results of the Musikkindergarden study in Berlin (Putkinen V., Saarikivi K., Tervaniemi M., 2013).

Of interest is not only the precociousness with which music is recognized by children but also the contribution of music to the development of intellectual abilities. The Canadian composer and psychologist Glenn Schellenberg carried out a study of a sample of 144 six-year-old children who received, in exchange for their participation in the study, a year of free lessons in music and dramaturgy at a city conservatory.

The children were divided into four groups: two groups received group lessons for piano and singing; a third group took a course in theatre and dramaturgy, and; the final group received no lessons at all (though the opportunity was offered to them to attend them the following year). A standardized intelligence test was administered to the children before and after the experiment.

The results showed that children who had been given music lessons experienced a statistically significant increase in IQ during that year (as measured by the standardized intelligence test) both as compared to the children in the group who received theatre lessons, and to the children in the group who had received no lessons at all (Schellenberg E.G., 2006). These results confirmed what was demonstrated in an earlier study carried out by Rauscher, Shaw, and colleagues at Irvine University in California. In this study, specific intelligence tests were administered to a sample of kindergarten children to measure their IQ. It was discovered that children who received six months of musical education (singing and piano) showed a significant improvement in space-

time reasoning compared to those who had not participated in musical activities (Rauscher, Shaw et al., 1995).

Music therefore seems to directly influence intellectual development. In the EducOpera project, young participants were placed within various structures that involve opera and, more generally, music and the other arts. In addition to knowledge and experience related to music, the children were also exposed to organizational, operational, reflective skills and capabilities.

An open conclusion

The hope we have for this book is that it will not only be of occasional use in the musical experience (and for the validation of musical experiences that children have autonomously both as listeners and musicians) in the school context. The role of music as activator, motivator and at the same time the fruition appear to present an important opportunity that should not be missed. Music is often the only cultural product consumed by children who have a lower level of participation in school activities. Moreover music, and particularly, its new and emerging genres often succeed in representing the needs and hardships of a generation.

Another opportunity offered by music – whether opera or genres more typically enjoyed by young people – is the possibility of shifting from headphones to collective listening, from isolation to sharing. One of the best methods to fight Early School Leaving and social defeat is to find a foundation or a language of dialogue between school institutions and those who reject them. Music can represent this foundation and this language.

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Promoting the Acquisition of Skills and Competences Through Extracurricular Activities

Bénédicte Halba

iriv Conseil

The EducOpera project is an Erasmus+ Project that has the defined goal of combatting Early School Leaving (ESL) through the acquisition of skills and competences that come through Education to Opera. In this context, opera is considered an activity with the potential of providing "a greater understanding and responsiveness to social, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity" together with a "better understanding of interconnections between formal, non-formal education, vocational training, other forms of learning and labour market". First we will review the general framework of the competence approach (Section 1) implemented in 2006 in the European Union (and updated in 2018). We also intend to demonstrate that Education to Opera is a potentially promising strategy for pupils living in sensitive urban areas who are faced with difficulties at school and that it can be used to help them acquire specific competences along with soft skills that have an effect on general behaviour and mindset and may be beneficial both in school and in their future lives (Section 2).

The competence approach: eight key competences to be enhanced

Every human beings need a wide range of competences to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world. Education in its dual role – both social and economic – has an important role to play in ensuring that Europe's citizens acquire the key competences that will enable them to adapt flexibly to such changes. Competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to a given context (EC, 2006).

The Framework Agreement "Eight Key Competences" was adopted in 2006 by the European Union and the European Commission and updated in 2018 with new

terminology taking into account the needs of modern society. Nevertheless the content remains more or less the same: four "basic competences" are defined and four "transversal competences" that help open additional doors.

The first key competence was defined as "mother tongue competence" (renamed "literacy competence") and is comprised of the basic skills of "reading, writing, [and] speaking in [one's] mother tongue". In the 2018 version, this basic competence includes the development of literacy, which "forms the basis for further learning and further linguistic interaction. Depending on the context, literacy competence can be developed in the mother tongue, the language of schooling and/or the official language in a country or region." The updated definition is therefore more inclusive and comprehensive.

The second key competence is "communication in foreign languages", also known as "reading, writing, speaking in a foreign language" with a special focus on expression and interactions with others. In the 2018 version, it was renamed "multilingual competence" with an emphasis on "[the] historical dimension and intercultural competences" and "the ability to mediate between different languages and media, as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference. As appropriate, it can include maintaining and further developing mother tongue competences, as well as the acquisition of a country's official language(s)."

The third key competence is "mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology" and involves an "understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen" (European Commission, 2006). In the 2018 version, the definition is elaborated as follows: "mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering" as it "refers to the ability and willingness to explain the natural world by making use of the body of knowledge and methodology employed, including observation and experimentation, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions". It insists on "applications of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs". This competence "involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen".

The fourth key competence is "digital competence" involving the "confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and

communication technology (ICT)" (European Commission 2006). The name of this competence was not changed in the 2018 version, though the definition was expanded to include a focus on "[the] critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and in society" along with "literacy, communication, and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, and problem solving".

The fifth key competence is entitled "learning to learn" (European Commission 2006) and is linked to "the ability of pupils to find answers by themselves [and] to acquire some autonomy towards learning". In the 2018 version, this competence has been given a more comprehensive title "personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence", which includes the "ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time, and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient, and manage one's own learning and career. It includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, learn to learn, support one's physical and emotional well-being, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life, empathize, and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context."

The sixth key competence is "social and civic competence". It includes an "understanding of codes of conduct and customs in different environments". Civic competence, and particularly "knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights)", should enhance active democratic participation (European Commission 2006). In the 2018 version, this competence is called "citizenship competence" and is defined as "the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability".

The seventh key competence is "the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship". It includes the "foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity". It also includes "awareness of ethical values and the promotion of good governance" (European Commission 2006). In the 2018 version, it is called "entrepreneurship competence" and "refers to the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values

for others". It emphasizes "creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social, or commercial value" and thus promotes a more comprehensive approach.

The eighth key competence is "cultural awareness and expression" (European Commission 2006). The name remains unchanged in the 2018 version. This competence involves "having an understanding of and respect for how ideas and meaning are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a range of arts and other cultural forms. It involves being engaged in understanding, developing and expressing one's own ideas and sense of place or role in society in a variety of ways and contexts."

The eight key competences are interdependent. The emphasis is on "critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, and constructive management of feelings" (European Commission 2006).

The acquisition of skills and competences in extracurricular activities and the example of Education to Opera

Opera is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as an art that combines "a musical play in which most of the words are sung, or plays and music of this type" (July 2018). In the EducOpera project, if two of the three elements characterizing an opera (singing/dancing/acting) are present, we consider the activity suitable for the spirit of the project with music being compulsory in all cases. The EducOpera perspective not only promotes artistic competences but has a broader approach, including other competences such as managerial, pedagogical, and technical skills.

Our concept of Education to Opera is based on it being part of a compulsory discipline learnt at school – musical education – but one that also promotes "literacy competence" (KC1), "multilingual competence" (KC2), "personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence" (KC6), and/or "cultural awareness and expression" (KC8). In addition, many of the tasks in the program require technical skills that are linked to "mathematical

competence and basic competences in science and technology" as well as the managerial competences needed to raise financing and enhance the sustainability of an opera house (KC7).

A second concept of the EducOpera strategy is that it is offered outside school as an extracurricular activity. The importance of such activities available to pupils during their free time (and in which they voluntarily engage) is a main characteristic of the project. The involvement in an activity outside of school encourages pupils who might be resistant to traditional learning to become open to other pedagogical approaches and, through them, to acquire knowledge and know-how and learn how to behave in an informal context.

The idea is to combine as simply as possible formal learning delivered at school by teachers with non-formal and informal learning delivered outside of school by educators. The EducOpera portfolio was designed to equip all educators (understood in the broadest sense) with the tools to build a bridge between learning "at school" and learning "outside of school". Each partner in the project gathered feedback on the ground, asking key actors in France, Denmark, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain whether the pedagogical approach suggested by EducOpera was familiar in their country, and, if so, how much it was used in their educational institutions. They were also asked if there were clear links built between school activities and extracurricular activities and how they functioned. Additional questions were asked on the basis of the European Qualification Framework and the National Qualification Framework (NQF).

A third concept of the learning process suggested by the EducOpera project is an emphasis on competences required at school which have been included in the European Key Competences Framework (as agreed to by all the Ministers of Education from member countries of the EU).

The portfolio designed for the EducOpera project addresses educators/teachers at schools and professionals (in associations or local authorities) outside of school in order to help them to identify and assess the skills and competences already acquired and/or to be developed by young people through an Education to Opera and to support their work with young people facing difficulties at school, including those who have already left school. It combines components of formal learning, informal, and non-formal

learning. First educators are asked to list the relevant skills and competences acquired by their pupils during an Education to Opera, and particularly to make connections with the eight key competences (EC, 2006). Educators are then invited to combine formal learning (required at school) with non-formal and informal learning (acquired outside school) with reference to the CEDEFOP guidelines (Thessaloniki, 2009).

The EducOpera portfolio also details different activities that can be part of an Education to Opera (singing, dancing, playing music; providing historical and cultural background; organizing and managing electricity and safety systems), and to define the four main competences that are developed during these activities (artistic, managerial, pedagogical, or technical competences).

The following presents the four-step approach suggested for identifying and assessing the skills and competences acquired through Education to Opera that pupils will find especially useful (and are even required) in the school context (Figure 1 annex A).

During step one, the EducOpera portfolio asks educators to define the environment in which Education to Opera takes place and the profiles of the educators. For example, they may be teachers working on a voluntary basis for various extracurricular activities. They may be social workers in associations or local authorities who have the role of supporting young people. They may be professionals in any activity connected to our definition of opera (in the arts: music, dance, theatre; in management: administrators, fund raisers; in pedagogy: educators; or technical staff: electricity, safety…)

During step two educators must identify the "profiles" of pupils to be involved in the programme, taking into account that there should be a balance between female and male pupils, and successful and less successful pupils in order to avoid stigmatization.

Step three is closely linked to step two. After having identified potential difficulties faced by the pupils, specific skills and competences should be targeted and additional activities suggested. These may also be soft skills. For example, agreeing to be involved in an extracurricular activity and attending it regularly is a positive behaviour from pupils who have been identified as having difficulties at school.

Step four is the evaluation of what the pupils in the learning process achieved at the end of the year. There may be some requirement such as a compulsory number of

sessions to be attended by pupils (for example, from three to five during the course of the year). Each teacher selects the most relevant assessment: ex ante/ex post analysis (to evaluate changes in the pupils and their results at school,) SWOT analysis (from the both the pupils and teachers perspectives), or collective brainstorming to underline the weak and strong points of the activity.

Conclusion

The EducOpera process goes beyond the usual extracurricular activities related to opera education because it combines formal and non-formal learning and also includes the competence approach (defined in the Eight Key Competences Framework) understood in a broad sense (that is including not only artistic competences but also managerial, pedagogical, and technical competences). Moreover it addresses educators with various profiles: school teacher, social workers in associations and local government, and educators involved in music, theatre, or dance. It is therefore a holistic pedagogical approach that will potentially open many doors to young people and even contribute to building their future: all thanks to Education to Opera.

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Education to opera/music – An opportunity to tackle Early School Leaving

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What's wrong?

In general, modern societies characterize early school leavers as wrong, irresponsible, demotivated, lazy, etc. We should instead ask what is wrong with schooling since many students leave school too early.

School has to be effective – a statement that is hard to decline. However, one of the problems of schooling and education is to do with effectiveness.

We enfold this to some extent in the following section.

The drive for school 'effectiveness' has taken various turns in recent decades, generating high-stakes accountability regimes, data mountains, a cult of leadership and most recently a demand for teaching to be securely 'evidence-based'. The search for Evidence-Based Teaching (EBT) has resulted in phenomena such as the international appeal of John Hattie's best-selling Visible Learning (2009), along with national products such as England's Toolkit for Teaching and Learning (Higgins et al 2014), now marketed in various other national versions.

All of these have in common a search for certainty, which takes little account of the complexity of educating young people and the messiness of their lives. In an age of environmental, social and cultural risk, 'evidence' offers an illusory promise of certainty in schooling the next generation; its premise is technical-rationalist discourses of efficiency and it loses sight of the curricular need to address the diverse global challenges we face.

Against this backdrop, education to music has not much in common with the search for certainty emphasized above. While the first drive is about formal learning as such and often in a very narrow understanding, the latter could combine formal and informal learning. Illich shares this viewpoint by presenting a critical discourse on education as practised in modern societies. His alternative is self-directed education, supported by intentional social relations in fluid informal arrangements:

'Universal education through schooling is not feasible. It would be no more feasible if it were attempted by means of alternative institutions built on the style of present schools. Neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the proliferation of educational hardware or software (in classroom or bedroom), nor finally the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility until it engulfs his pupils' lifetimes will deliver universal education. The current search for new educational funnels must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring. We hope to contribute concepts needed by those who conduct such counterfoil research on education – and also to those who seek alternatives to other established service industries' (Illich, 1971, p. xix).

Further, he argued that the use of technology to create decentralized webs could support the goal of creating a good educational system:

'A good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known'(Illich, 1971, p. 75).

We do not claim that schooling today looks like Illich's viewpoint. In contrast, education is no longer a state monopoly, rather an open market (Meyer and Rowan, 2007). The new institutionalism of education has had crucial impacts related to how citizens understand the world and themselves. Citizens are making sense by means of institutions. However, we need to take into consideration the important spinoff of schooling. Illich's point is that school is not capable of providing equal opportunities for all children. On the contrary, school cements existing inequalities. Schooling

means unequal chances in life, as school is dependent on the composition of cultural capital. In brief: The education system reproduce inequalities of society according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1970). In particular, your taste with respect to music depends on family background. In turn, this underlines that music creates differences between students. Tackling early school leaving by means of opera or music in general is thus an ambiguous matter.

These are the premises of assessing the conditions under which education to music takes place. This does not imply a general pessimism, rather the necessity of being aware of those conditions and their impact in formal, informal and non-formal educational arrangements.

Music – decline in school and growth outside

The Erasmus + project Educopera is concerned about socialization, learning and personal development. Our point of departure illuminates a paradox. The paradox points to some crucial circumstances related to the project. In formal settings like the Danish folkeskole (comprehensive school) music and other creative subjects are inferior or at best merely supporting the core subjects (like Danish, Mathematics, English, and Science). In non-formal settings – for instance among peers – music is one of the most important forms of expression. Therefore, two different modes of socialization exist side by side. The socio-cultural environment of the students improve music and arts while school does not pay much attention to music and arts. About 25 years ago, music and arts perceived itself as the third leg of primary schooling besides basic humanist subjects (like history and foreign languages) and natural science. Until recently, school reforms as a societal reaction of the PISA chock reduced music to a supportive role regarding the 'hard' and measurable subjects of Mathematics, Science and Danish. June 2018, Parliament decided to upgrade practical and creative activities, among other things introducing an exam regarding music. We assess this to open further opportunities related to music and arts. Yet students' choice of optional subject matters in the Danish folkeskole showed June this year a very modest vote for music.

As a conclusive remark, two paths are obvious. On the one hand, the formal setting emphasizes the teacher and the curriculum with a certain rationality in mind; on the

other hand, students engage in music not as a curriculum rather as a way to express their feelings and emotions like love, hatred, identity, anger, grief, jealousy, etc. Emotions are natural and necessary as part of the individual formation. Therefore, the paradox seems to be an entry to understand young people as well as to understand the necessity of combining formal and non-formal settings. The paradox causes unintended outcomes such as students' alienation (Illich, 1971, p. 46-47).

Early School Leavers

In addition, the project is focusing on early school leavers – a phenomenon translated into absenteeism in a Danish context. Absenteeism is not similar to ESL but we understand the phenomenon as an initial step eventually leading to ESL. The concept of ESL itself makes a contested terrain. Research points to the fact that school reforms urge youth to partake in education by means of an inclusive attitude referring to the Salamanca Declaration while at the same time excluding youth not familiar with secondary education in the inclusion. This is a consequence of the factual problems of inclusion as regards class, gender, ethnicity and religion. Some young people do not feel they belong to educational communities. Some researchers prefer to use the concept marginalization. This resembles the findings of Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe. We have paraphrased and repeated parts of the research made in the project RESL.eu in the following section.

A multilevel approach to ESL processes consists of three levels of analysis, i.e., the individual (micro), the institutional/social (meso) and the structural/systemic (macro) level. This multilevel approach is often referred to as an all-factors framework or a tripartite approach (Dale, 2010; Lamb et al., 2011). At the micro-level, we focus on the words of the young people telling their story and expressing their experiences. The macro-level largely consists of the broader context and the structures in which individuals as well as educational institutions define themselves and operate. The meso-level connects macro- and micro-level factors and focuses on the relationships individuals establish with different groups of significant others (parents, teachers, peers) and the wider context. The use of this multilevel approach enables us to not only focus on the individual educational 'failures' or factors of resiliency of groups

at risk of ESL, but also on how they are embedded within the macro-level context in which they live (e.g., Dale, op. cit.). In the Danish case at least, we noticed three constraints. First. A social limitation – who may partake, and who may not. Second. A physical limitation – where to situate the activities? In school, at the street corner or in youth clubs? Third. A mental limitation – when youth attempts to decide which kind of content of 'our' music we like to play, they compete with each other. During the performance further competitive factors are added: who should perform this or that role, who is the best playing guitar, etc.

The term *youth at risk* refers to youngsters with various educational, health and emotional problems and denotes a set of presumed cause-effect dynamics that place an individual youngster at risk of negative outcomes in the future if intervention is not undertaken. Youth at risk may encounter difficulties in completing school or finding employment and are therefore at risk of social exclusion. At-risk youth face multiple barriers to school engagement and school completion, and may encounter difficulties in their transition from school into the labour market, as having no or less-esteemed educational (and vocational) qualifications may lead to reduced employment opportunities. However, risk is a measure of probability, not certainty and the final outcome may not necessarily be a negative one, as long as the youngster has been offered and has benefitted from appropriate support or has found a way to obtain educational qualifications, combined with informal and non-formal support by means of music.

How to find a concept that does not become a stigma?

Criticism of the term *at risk* is not seldom. This implies that youngsters are responsible for failure or that the locus of responsibility for the risk and failures resides in schools not providing adequate content and organization of work with students and their families. In addition, the focus on risk does not help to determine who really needs support, which type of support and what will happen in the future (Artz et al., 2004). Aware of those reservations, we still prefer the term at risk, as it refers to a group of students that may have higher chances to encounter difficulties during their educational trajectories that could result in early school leaving. This approach is especially interesting as it could possibly include prevention, intervention and compensation measures.

Thus, we use the following definition of a *youngster at risk of ESL*: a person in danger of failing to complete (upper) secondary education (equivalent to ISCED 3 level, 2011) and/or failing to complete education with adequate level of qualifications, due to a set of risk factors on macro-, meso- and micro-levels. Moreover, by determining the needs of young people at risk of ESL, we could gain more insights into the processes of school disengagement. Comparing to the outcome of the SDQ we emphasize a similar trend.

Conclusion

To tackle ESL by means of music is thus not a piece of cake. Some students perceive of belong to those invited and welcomed, others may not. Formal education is not a perfect tool, as school tends to emphasize the differences between students and cement existing inequalities. The case studies show the importance of non-formal settings. Ivan Illich suggests four learning exchanges: networks, skill exchanges, peer-matching and professional educators (Illich 1971, p. 77-104).

Though we cannot evidence a direct correlation of music and ESL, we can evidence that music and arts may motivate students to stay in school and to develop their engagement and involvement in education. As education is the highroad to making a career or put in other words to getting a job it is of great importance to create strong communities of learning in class.

In the Danish case, the SDQ inquiry supports this viewpoint (cf. the Danish experience, page 74).

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Emotional and Cognitive Development from Education to Opera

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Educational institutions should define music as a fundamental element in the education of children, and support and develop musical practices because of the great potential possessed by the discipline: most importantly, the development of perceptive-motor, affective-social, and cognitive components (Branca, 2012). Musical education has the potential to not only develop particular musical skills but also to enhance creativity generally and to develop both cognitive and emotional skills. These three elements (creative, emotional, and cognitive) are interconnected, a conclusion supported by the insights of contemporary neuroscience. We no longer make a distinction, in terms of superiority or inferiority, between the two hemispheres of the brain. In fact it seems certain that the left hemisphere of our brain plays a prevalent role in symbolic-linguistic activities as well as in forms of logical-computational thinking while the right hemisphere is involved in abilities that are also characterized by emotional components. Many studies show that emotion is not only one of the fundamental dimensions of memories, mostly in its capacity to give greater or lesser importance to memories, but also an important agent in the construction of memory architecture: "[...] some experiences are coded in a more lasting way when they are accompanied by an emotional activation. The emotion would not only be the soul of memories, but would contribute to promoting formation and stability over time" (Scaglioso C.M., 2008).

The learning of musical language, even as regards completely natural procedures, represents a unique field of experience in terms of mnemonic connections that can reinforce and exert a constructive and reworking power of the knowledge contained in the three forms of memory that interact with each other: sensory-motor memory (preserving the stimuli coming from touch, sight, and hearing), social memory (preserving conscious and relational communication activities), and artistic memory (affecting the emotional-emotional sphere at various levels). It would therefore

seem that we are in possession of two systems: the emotional system that works very slowly and the cognitive system that works much faster because of its biological constitution (the wiring system and completely myelinated fibres). Both of these systems are intimately involved in musical education. Music can therefore be a tool that facilitates and develops the emotional system because it expresses messages that have an important effect on emotion. At the same time emotional factors are fundamental to the very existence of music.

The emotion generated by music influences the cognitive system and the construction of meanings. In fact "there is no denying the possibility that there are primitive responses to music that are shared by our entire species. For example, fast and strong music has an activating function, while slow and delicate music is soothing" (Sloboda J. A., 2002). The emotional and cognitive systems are therefore connected to each other. However, since the time of Descartes, much of Western culture lives with the assumption that to be logical means the exclusion of emotions. To the contrary, emotions do not represent an obstacle but rather provide stimuli to living, even allowing us to adopt adequate strategies to achieve certain objectives. It is no coincidence that the (scholastic) activities that produce the best results are the "pleasant" ones, which presuppose the involvement of the interests, passions, and desires of the children being taught. Cognition and emotion are not two separate components but are interconnected and together allow the development of creative thinking. This connection between emotion and cognition is also present in scientific creativity. There can be no scientific discovery, even those born of genius, without an emotion present to move it. And in this sense educating to support creativity and to develop imaginative activity requires work that is aimed at both emotional and cognitive enhancement.

We all agree that music is good, but to be able to clarify this concept we should think about how musical intelligence, more than other intelligences, influences emotional and cognitive development. It has been seen that children immersed in a musical environment were both more attentive to perceived changes in duration and the temporal structure of sound, and less easily distractible. (Putkinen V., Saarikivi K., Tervaniemi M., 2013) The musical environment therefore influences the development of cognitive abilities not only in the musical domain but also for the development of auditory processing abilities, which in turn influences the development of dimensions of language and attention.

It is often asserted in the expert literature that children who learn a musical language are more intelligent than others. In one study, children who were given music lessons showed a significant increase in IQ as compared to children who took classes in theatre (Schellenberg E.G., 2006). In another study, children achieved a noticeable improvement in spatio-temporal reasoning after six months compared to those who had not performed musical activities during the same period (Scaglioso C.M., 2008). Music can influence both the way space is perceived and the development of language, especially during the preschool period which represents an explosive moment in the mind of children during which numerous relationships between the environment and the subject are activated. It is also during this period that cognitive processes move more quickly and learning becomes more stable (Sloboda J.A., 2004). Although there is a close relationship between the age of exposure to musical education and the development of these processes, this does not mean that exposure to music at a later age is not also a source of empowerment.

Another field of study shows that musical education and music in general have a clear influence on the development of language, both musical and otherwise. It would therefore be useful to carefully look at analogies between verbal language and musical language, two very similar dimensions within the human universe. These two languages, verbal and musical, have many things in common: such as the use of sound for the transmission of the message and the use of the auditory channel for the reception of the message; written coding each with its own graphic signs, and; the capacity to produce an unlimited number of sentences. The two languages also have substantial differences, one being the semantic component. Musical language is lacking in terms of its self-explanatory capacity. Its semantics are not well defined, at least not as much as with verbal language where every word, regardless of context, has a meaning. Musical language, including contemporary classical music, also has meaning but it does not establish the relationship between signifier and meaning that verbal language does. Music does not mean something specific but rather suggests or creates imaginative forces capable of creating verbal associations. That is why music does not itself have verbal meaning but only acquires such meaning when it is described with words.

From here we deduce the potential power of Education to Opera, which combines musical and verbal narrative elements and encourages the development of a range of emotional and cognitive components through the merging of it various constituent

elements. Numerous neural circuits are involved in its narrative decoding (Batini et al. 2016, 2018). The cortical areas involved in the perception of movement are also activated when subjects read or listen to transitory verbs within a narrative itself (Wallentin et al., 2011). This activation is stronger when reading a narrative text than when disjointed sentences are read together (Kurby & Zacks, 2013). Through the combination of narration and music, the understanding of intentions and emotions, and empathizing with characters, stories contribute to the development of skills for correctly decoding beliefs and intentions in the real world (Kidd & Castano, 2013). Empathizing with a character not only implies understanding the emotional state of another person but also the ability to experience emotions along with the character (Brink et al., 2011). To summarize, Education to Opera, because it combines music and narrative, can act as an amplifier in the following areas:

Language: There is a strong correlation between language and music. In fact listening to songs and melodies facilitates language learning. Moreover the development of sound coding is enhanced and this helps in the understanding of foreign languages.

Memory: Music can be used to remember things that have been learned and is therefore a good tool to develop mnemonic skills.

Creativity: Children with musical skills have a greater degree of creativity than children who demonstrate less musical ability. Creativity and music reinforce each other.

Spatial intelligence: Spatial intelligence is the perception of distances and forms in the surrounding environment. Studies have shown that the sense of orientation is closely related to active listening of music.

Emotional intelligence: Music and melodies have always been able to arouse emotions and feelings of the most varied kinds. Depending on the type of music and the particular moment, listeners may be able to refine the perception of their emotional states and decode their feelings.

Logic: In most cases, children with the musical skills that come with the study of an instrument have a predisposition to learn and succeed in logic and mathematics. Analytical capacity is developed as the brain interprets the notes as symbols that create the whole that is the melody.

Life skills: Music helps children develop general life skills, the basic emotional, cognitive and relational skills that all people learn over the course of a lifetime. Concentration, perseverance, commitment, dedication, self-control, and assertiveness are all skills that are developed with the study of music, especially the mastery of an instrument.

Conclusion

Educational systems should participate not only in the traditional education but should also provide experiences that can mobilize the transversal competences of pupils. In this sense, schools are often not effective, and non-formal or informal learning activities can become essential in the lives of pupils in order to mobilize a series of resources and skills that will serve them not only in the school environment but over the course of their lifetimes. As we have seen, education combined with the effects of learning with music, including its narrative component, has the potential to become a real "gym" for cognitive, emotional, and linguistic skills and in general for what we call "360-degree" cognitive empowerment. Extracurricular, and in particular musical, activities can encourage the maturation of these transversal competences and thus is an approach that brings these competences into the curriculum of pupils to improve both formal learning and the achievement of life skills

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Musical taset, preferences and identifications of youngsters: how to approach them through opera education

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Introduction

Extra-curricular activities have many positive effects on young people. Such activities help many to spend their free time in a quality manner, as they often do not have suitable spaces to socialize. Their advantage is also that they are voluntary, that is, the youngsters choose themselves in which activities they will participate and from which they will be excluded. When choosing an activity, youngsters acquire a sense of power and control over their own decisions; many times, they may also perform demanding extracurricular activities in an excellent manner and dedicate more time and energy to them than to school obligations. Extra-curricular activities follow their own aims and they are usually methodologically freer and have a more diverse approach to transferring knowledge, skills and competences to youngsters.

Extra-curricular activities have a positive impact on the youngsters' behaviour, learning performance, conclusion of schooling and self-esteem and they encourage confidence that youngsters will become successful adults and will be able to take on important social roles (Massoni, 2011). One of the key elements for a positive effect of extra-curricular activities on youngsters is a voluntary choice. Thus, the choice itself and the consequent involvement in the activity bring the first responsibility of the youngster to attend the chosen activity. This is later upgraded with the responsibility of performing the tasks in the framework of the activity and the responsibility towards the mentor, teacher and other participants. The involvement of a youngster in an activity in which he or she feels comfortable and is successful in it also influences the youngster's self-image, self-respect and pride and, consequently, his or her behaviour as well. Being successful in extra-curricular activities thus especially contributes to behavioural changes in problematic youngsters.

The fact is that extra-curricular activities fill leisure time and thus prevent inappropriate situations in which youngsters may find themselves when no one is guiding or supervising them. Experts point out that the afternoon time from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. is the most dangerous time in this regard, or during this period, the youngsters are "at most risk at committing violent acts and victimization" (Holloway, 2002, p. 2). Since children learn to control their own behaviour and make their own decisions between the ages of ten and seventeen, it is important that they are supervised or guided in this process, in order to learn to avoid dangerous situations, actions and behaviours.

For more than a decade, the competence approach has been at the forefront of the European Commission's incentives and numerous projects include it in order to empower vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, early school leavers, youngsters in diversity contexts.[1] These projects strongly emphasize the importance of knowledge, values and skills acquired by these groups outside the school system (through non-formal and informal education). The evaluation of competences thus obtained is within the European Community "a key element in national lifelong learning strategies" (Union, as cited in Wouter 2016, p.15). The emphasis is also on the competences being systematically and correctly recorded, evaluated and then considered in the school system or later in the access to the labour market. Many competences acquired by youngsters outside of the school environment are today still left unrecorded, without self-reflection or evaluation. Nowadays, this can be changed because there are many tools (www.educopera.eu/intellectual-outputs) that provide assistance in evaluation either in the form of a portfolio or other, also digital ways of recording competences (i.e. Youthpass, IM-PROVE, Open Badges).

The ideal to build a bridge for formal, non-formal and informal education in most European countries is not yet functional and although many educational institutions and European policies support such approaches, many of us are discovering that new ideas are extremely difficult to implement in the existing formal education systems.

In this article, I present the importance of extra-curricular activities and their mentors for youngsters' behaviour, personal growth and competence acquisition and highlight

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[1] See projects such as JuciVol (www3.ubu.es/jucivol), Schola (www.schola-erasmus.eu).

those activities that are related to music. Music is a medium that attracts young people because it is mostly actively or passively already involved in their free time. However, opera, which is the central topic of the EducOpera project, is a musical form that is not the closest to young people and they are usually not devoted to it in their free time. In this article, I thus also dedicate to understanding the musical preferences and musical taste of youngsters, the culturally-conditioned stereotypes to certain music and their overcoming.

Extra-curricular activities and music

Since extra-curricular activities are often taking plac in smaller groups or even individually, the relationship between a mentor and a youngster can be more authentic, confidential and long-term than usually in the school environment. Similarly, extra-curricular activities are less subject to bureaucratic burdens, which often limit the time teachers in schools have for establishing a personal relationship with students.

A chosen extra-curricular activity is the one in which a youngster wants to participate in his or her spare time and often sees it as a professional ideal as well. A mentor of a chosen activity may also represent an ideal for a youngster or may even become an idol, that is, a person who inspires the youngster and in this period represents a stronger authority than parents or teachers at school. With the rules of behaviour, a mentor of an extra-curricular activity can have a great influence on the development of a youngster's attitude towards, for example, drugs, alcohol, tobacco or violence. Due to voluntary involvement in the activity, a youngster often accepts even stricter forms of behavioural rules or achieves higher goals within the activity than in the school environment. In the USA, they have thus realize that they can use the devotion to extracurricular activities as a tool for preventing early school leaving among young people. Thus, for some sport activities, the rule has been introduced that a youngster must achieve high enough grades in school in order to be able to join the activity at all or remain a member of the activity. This has further motivated young people to achieve satisfactory grades in schools (Massoni, 2001).

However, the activities vary greatly. Looking only at the field of extra-curricular music education, we can see that the inclusion of young people in music education can be

very stressful. Teaching systems in music schools are often heavily subject to rigorous curricula with ambitious goals in achieving musical competences; young people, who mostly learn to play an instrument there, invest a lot of effort in order to achieve appropriate results. Playing a musical instrument of course requires daily practice at home and young people also have to learn the basics of music theory. Many do not complete music education within the framework of the system, which envisions several years of education. Young people attending music schools often abandon this activity during the adolescence period also because their personal musical interests do not coincide with predominantly Eurocentric and historically oriented music teaching. Today, more than ever, young people find it easier to access music on contemporary communication media and "this allows them to set cultural agendas rather than accept agendas laid down by others" (Sloboda, 2001, p. 250).

Formalized teaching of music theory and instrument also has a powerful influence on the reflection on who we nowadays consider to be a musician. Thus, many young people who, even within the school system or in the home environment, devote themselves to music by listening to it, performing or creating it, do not, however, consider themselves to be musicians (Lamont, 2011). The status of a musician is thus strongly linked to formalized education in the framework of extra-curricular music education activities.[2]

Identification, musical preferences and musical taste

An important element in the process of identification in young people is music. Listening to or performing a particular musical genre often influences youngsters in a variety of ways: it has an effect on their thinking, their view of the world, the attitude towards people, things, animals and plants, their ethical and moral principles and, last but not least, the social ties with their peers. The results of an empirical research among

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[2] On the basis of his own research among children – instrumentalists in Great Britain – John Sloboda even believes that "classroom music, as currently conceptualised and organised, is an inappropriate vehicles for mass music education in 21st Century Britain" (2001, p. 251). On the other hand, another study in Great Britain contests his findings and highlights the popularity of the subject of music in formal school education among young people (Lamont, 2003).

Dutch teenagers testify to the fact that "similarity in music preferences is related to friendship formation [but] not to friendship discontinuation" (Maarten et al., 2009, p. 95). Music is also a tool "for in-group – out-group differentiation" and the musical taste "part of a pattern of symbolic exclusion aimed at including or excluding groups from gaining access to social, economic and cultural resources" (ibid.).

Music or musical preferences could symbolically establish boundaries between races, gender, class, sexuality, language, culture and religion and it is encouraging that recent research reveals that the openness and acceptance of various musical genres is a form of cultural capital and that "culture exclusivity is no longer valued "(White, 2001, p. iii). The same research reveals that age is what most defines the openness to the diversity of music and thus "no longer should musical preferences be examined simply as varying by social class but also as changing across the life cycle" (ibid.)[3]

Contemporary psychologists generally avoid "stage-type theories", however, they believe that openness to different types of music and musical preferences can be linked to age-related changes and an individual's cognitive development (Hargreaves et al., 2006). Children are in the early childhood very open to different musical styles (even those with only a small circle of adult listeners, for example, modern classical music), however, research shows that a fall in this openness (the so-called *open-eardness*) occurs in late childhood (sometime between 10 and 11 years of age). At that time, their preferences and taste are most susceptible to the influence of mass media and strongly prefer certain musical styles within popular music (Hargreaves et al, 2006). Since, later on, we can again detect an openness to different musical styles, we can conclude that education also affects this phenomenon.

The knowledge and skills that young people acquire in the framework of music education are based on experiential and analytical experience of music. Activities such as listening, creating and performing music (even if it differs from the music that is part of their free time and the background music that surrounds us as in everyday life) indirectly affect the preferences and musical taste of youngsters. The introduction

[3] One of the least investigated phenomena is an increase in acculturation to various musical styles in a lifespan (Hargreaves et al., 2006).

of different musical styles in the framework of formal or extra-curricular education thus expands their ability to "independently"[4] form a musical taste.

Opera and young people – raising a new audience

Many curricula, in contrast to the past, nowadays largely include a variety of musical styles in formal education (with the exception of music schools), but the main subject of teaching remains the historical Western European art music (both from the point of view of delivering the learning material in terms of data, as well as listening and performing). This does not in any way mean that the musical preferences of young people correspond to the music they come across in the school system, but usually the exact opposite. Studies on musical preferences must take into account broader factors of influence, including the characteristics of the adolescent period. These are related to identification elements, the development of attitudes, values, goals and plans for the future, self-evaluation as well as independence and opposition. One of the features may also be the cultural opposition – this is the opposition to "adult approved types of music" (Leung and Kier 2010, p. 681). Due to the general barrier between the music that the young listen to and the music that is part of the school education system, many music institutions have decided to try to come closer to young people.

Jeunesse Musical International is the largest non-governmental organization, which already in 1945 recognized the need to bring the Western European art closer to young people in a different way and recently, they also opened up to other musical styles such as: world traditional music, jazz and pop/ rock music. Today, they operate internationally and have branches in many countries around the world. Their main fields of activity are: Young Musicians, Young Audiences, Youth Empowerment and Youth Orchestras & Ensembles. In addition to encouraging young people to actively participate in musical performance, they organize commented concerts for young audiences and school concerts.

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[4] Although I am aware that the shaping of a musical taste cannot be independent of numerous social factors, what I have in mind with the term 'independent is the relative independence of developing a taste from mass media, peer preferences, social groups etc.

In the wider European area, many opera houses have already opened their doors to new audiences and opera is again becoming an inclusive musical practice. Today, a much broader spectrum of activities is understood under the term 'opera' than in the time of its blooming in the 19ᵗʰ century, as it also includes practices such as opera on CDs, DVDs and in films as well as the collaboration of opera singers with pop musicians (Storey, 2002). Some opera houses are looking for innovative ways to attract young people and remain at the heart of young people's interests and take care of the cultural integration of vulnerable groups, such as migrants, people with disabilities, socially weak etc. (Reseo, 2010). Nevertheless, many have never entered an opera house, so the prejudices remain connected with unfamiliarity and ignorance.

Many youngsters who have never came in close contact with the opera (for example, visited an opera performance) and experienced the entirety of its stage performance (but perhaps only briefly heard it on the radio), opera presents an inaccessible, elitist[5] and unattractive musical form. Thus, one of the indirect aims and at the same time the results of the EducOpera project is the breaking up of the stereotypes in relation to opera among youngsters. This can be achieved in several ways: with a good preparation of youngsters before seeing an opera in terms of content and music, by involving opera artists (directors, choreographers, soloists ...) in school or extra-curricular processes, by involving young people in the process of creating an opera (e.g. cooperation of volunteers in the promotion, the sale of tickets, in the backstage ...), or in such a way that young people co-create an opera under the guidance of competent mentors.[6]

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[5] Despite the efforts of certain institutions, opera still produces class boundaries due to price inaccessibility and is in opposition to what it represented, for instance, at the end of the 18ᵗʰ century and up until the end of the 19th century, when the opera house was a "meeting place of all social classes in society" (Zelochow, 1993, p. 262). The opera was supposedly deliberately separated from other forms of entertainment at the end of the 19th century and so it slowly acquired the status of high culture (Storey, 2002, p. 34).

[6] The handbook for mentors, created as a result of the EducOpera project (www.educopera.eu/intellectual-outputs), provides some useful examples for incorporating elements of opera into the work with young people or preparing young people to view the opera performance.

Conclusion

In addition to providing an artistic aesthetic experience, music is an important element of inclusion and exclusion, self-defining and group-defining in the everyday lives of many. It also has a special place in the lives of youngsters; therefore, the integration of music into youngsters' leisure time is important. A musical activity guided by competent mentors usually has a positive effect on a youngster's personality and development. With guided musical activities, young people learn about the dimensions of musical genres and manners of expression and create a distinctive musical taste, which is not only subject to massive cultural offer, they overcome prejudices to different types of music, thus expanding their cultural capital. The empirical research, which I present in the description of the EducOpera process in Slovenia (see page 89), also confirms that youngsters, with their involvement in extra-curricular music activities, spend leisure time in a quality manner and strongly develop culturally expressive (dance, singing and theatre …) skills. In the process of education with opera, they also develop a number of competences, which are not only related to the cultural artistic expression; in the process of self-reflection, they thus often emphasize self-esteem, tolerance, sense of teamwork and patience.

The process of education and creation of opera is highly embedded in the reference frame of the eight key competences defined by the EU Council Recommendation as "crucial to better prepare people for today's societies" (Education and Training, 2017). By focusing on libretto, diction, recitation and the singing of lyrics, young people are strengthening literacy, improving multilingual communication (Key competences 1, 2), by preparing scenography, requisites, performing rhythmic patterns they are developing mathematical, science, technology and engineering competences (Key competence 3). Video and photo documentation of the process, editing and sound engineering helps to develop digital competence (Key competence 4), role playing, co-operation in production, promotion, planning, organizing participation in the musical process in accordance with school obligations contributes to the personal, social and learning to learn competences (Key competences 5). Depending on the message of the opera as well as through teamwork with different peers, youngsters are developing gender equality and non-discrimination sensibility, strengthen interpersonal relationships and expand (multi)cultural capital (Key competence 6). Planning and promoting of the opera performance, their involvement into the process as well as recording of the

acquired competences enables the development of entrepreneurial competence (Key competence 7) and, last but not least, creative involvement in the process, expression through art and emotion, development of music, staging and dancing techniques strongly support the improvement of the cultural awareness and expression competence (Key competence 8).

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Connecting Key Actors and Stakeholders in Education to Opera in Spain

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The main aim of the EducOpera project is to provide new ways to combat early school leaving (ELS) drawing on the artistic elements of Education to Opera (dancing, singing, acting, etc.). This innovative pedagogical practice was tried out with several target groups of the project during at least three experimental sessions for young people and three experimental sessions for professionals in each country where it was implemented. Specifically national networks were built that gathered educators and youngsters in five European countries. The building of these networks is a key aspect of the EducOpera project and involves schools and other relevant actors outside the formal educational system including cultural institutions, foundations, and NGOs supporting underprivileged youth. In this chapter we will present information about the role and importance of building networks in the formal school system and some guiding principles of the EducOpera approach.

Networks are a tool for better connectivity between stakeholders within and between different levels of the system and facilitate the achievement of defined educational goals and greater equity, efficiency, and quality. Furthermore networks can create an environment in which to explore and pilot new policies, pedagogical ideas and working methods (Council of European Union, 2014). Networks can be permanent structures or function as temporary 'experimental' stages in policy development; formally or informally constituted; centrally managed and directed, or operating on the basis of consensual decision-making among multiple stakeholders.

Networks are a way for different actors and levels of school education systems (policy makers, schools, school education leaders, teachers and a range of stakeholders) to promote and support school development and to address and potentially solve problems concerning the education of young people in collaborative and flexible ways. Understanding how these professional networks function, and identifying the

important elements to consider, can help to better achieve network goals, identify opportunities for networking across school education systems, and contribute to a broad and embedded culture of learning. The network culture values and indeed depends on trust and motivation as well as confidence, communication, collaboration, and critical (self)reflection. At schools, in particular, it depends on the satisfactory conditions and status for teachers and the acknowledgement of the demanding nature of teaching. Networks should not exist for their own sake: they depend on mutualism and action driven towards shared goals. They create co-responsibility and shared accountability. It is important to monitor the establishment and development of the network and to consider that the same goal might be achieved more effectively through alternative means. This was, for example, proved by the different approaches followed by EducOpera partners in the countries.

The following are several guiding principles for policy development regarding the use of networks in school education systems (Sliwka, 2003):

1. *Goal-setting and shared goals:* A shared vision is needed to inspire the cooperation of different actors working in the area of school development. Clear shared goals should be defined during the first stage of network development in order to engage the appropriate actors in an appropriate structure. Goals may be redefined as the network evolves.

2. *Autonomy, accountability, and flexibility:* Attention should be paid to the decision-making capacity of different actors and their sense of agency and responsibility. Flexibility within policies may encourage increased activity. Self-assessment may help to identify and motivate new network actors, to help existing members define their needs, and contribute to network development with an increased sense of ownership.

3. *Motivation and benefits:* An open and supportive environment supports inter-school and inter-professional exchanges. The interests of different actors should be balanced within and between different system levels as friction or competition between schools and other actors can undermine network cohesiveness. It is important to demonstrate that the inputs (in terms of time and resources) are proportionate to the outputs.

4. **_Roles:_** Cooperation between teachers as key actors should be supported by: a) providing time for dedicated activities; b) assuring recognition; c) assuring a climate of trust, and; d) giving teachers and actors a voice. Actors should be educated about their roles as networking activity may be different from their daily professional tasks. Effective distribution of leadership is also very important.

5. **_Capacity-building:_** The collaborative competence of teachers should be developed through initial training followed by ongoing professional development. Both horizontal and vertical cooperation should be developed and care taken not to overload particular actors. Mediators between network points may need specific support.

6. **_Cross-sectorial working:_** Action plans should identify points of shared interest and align policy development cycles of different areas. Evidence-based policymaking and practice requires connections between teacher-led experimentation and expert pedagogical research.

7. **_Network development:_** Networks should be flexible. They may be temporary or long-term or may exist as an initial phase in establishing and embedding a culture of collaboration. They may also create lasting connections (of which project activity may only be one part) guided by the actors in the network. Management and action within networks may inform decisions about the distribution of resources.

8. **_Impact, quality assurance, and evidence:_** Monitoring and evaluation is central to understanding the effectiveness of networks. Self-reflection is key to ongoing development. Network developers should define key indicators, consider how progress and outcomes will be measured, and determine how and by whom they will be measured. Appropriate data generated by networks should be taken into account by decision-makers at local and national levels of government.

It became clear during the implementation of EducOpera that there is a keen interest in networks as a way of supporting interactions between key system actors as well as a tool for harnessing connectivity to achieve defined educational goals. Networks are both a pre-condition for well-functioning educational systems and a policy lever for managing interactions between different educational sub-systems and achieving greater equity, efficiency, and quality. They can be permanent structures or function

only during temporary 'experimental' stages in policy development. They can be formally or informally constituted. They can be centrally managed and directed or operate on the basis of consensual decision-making among multiple stakeholders. Networks have a special set of characteristics that are not always present in more conventional educational hierarchies. As the EducOpera project has demonstrated, the involvement of cultural institutions, NGOs and other type of actors in dealing with certain educational challenges (such as the prevention of Early School Leaving) can provide an adequate response especially if their involvement is built upon synergies created by a network that connect schools with the surrounding communities.

Different roles involved

In many of the networks that emerged from the EducOpera project, managers primarily played the role of facilitators, creating spaces for teachers, schools, and other key stakeholders so that they could take an active role in testing and innovating. Networks are based upon establishing trust and equity, harnessing participants' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and clearly articulating the benefits of invested time. The most effective networks adopted a self-critical approach, periodically reflecting upon their value and relevance, and making adjustments when necessary. There is also an evolving sets of competences required for educators operating within the networking environment. At the most rudimentary level, networks concern connectivity between different social actors and, as such, require the capacity for empathy and self-reflection, and an openness to inter-cultural learning (European Commission, 2017).

At the local level individual teachers and schools often search for solutions independently. They may begin to collaborate spontaneously and a partnership of two or three school teams may begin experimenting. At some point the partnership may be noticed by government actors has and have the chance to develop and grow as local authorities provide a more extended structure that leads to the formation of a network. Each partner adds their piece to the puzzle, the teachers and/or schools learning from each other.

There is a contrast between vertical networks that tend to be hierarchical or institutionalised (e.g. school networks and councils) and horizontal networks that may be characterised as small-scale or peer-to-peer. The latter includes learning networks, networks for innovation, networks to prevent pupils from dropping out, networks for the labour market, and networks for the integration of newcomers. A variety of stakeholders are involved: school principals and staff, contact persons and coordinators, teacher training institutions, government ministries, city and municipal governments, and unions (European Commission, 2017).

Based on the experience of EducOpera, there are a number of requirements for any facilitator of a network that is created from partnerships and works on aspects of learner development. These include: trust building and maintaining a balance of benefits, supporting the process as well as the structure, and keeping the goals clear and focused given that fact that the needs of learner groups may be diverse. There is always a risk of overloading demands on the actors and having to compete with other important issues in school education as well as the wider community. Nevertheless there are clear possibilities for such networks to have a positive outcome such as learning lessons from the ground level up, and actively and directly helping specific groups of learners.

Multi-stakeholder networks targeting specific groups of learners

While education policy and practice networks in education are almost always concerned with schools, school leaders, and teachers, it is also important to consider the roles of a much wider and more diverse set of key stakeholders within the system. The concept of multiple- stakeholder accountability has gained increasing prominence in educational discourses, including in the work of the OECD. Horizontal measures involving a range of stakeholders can significantly enhance and strengthen vertical measures of regulation and school performance in addressing the full range of school improvement objectives within increasingly complex education systems. Multi-stakeholder networks, such as 'inclusive systems' geared towards learner development, also offer enhanced scope and capacity for meeting the needs of specific populations or learners with special needs. As such, they are a common feature of programmes developed to meet the needs of disadvantages learners, such as those at risk of Early School Leaving (ESL), migrant

and minority ethnic groups, and learners with special educational needs. This was an important feature of the EducOpera project.

Critical points to consider when integrating networks in school education systems

There are a number of key questions concerning policy needs and actions, and creating, sustaining, and developing networks to support learning and development across school education systems. These questions can be used by policy makers and others as critical points to consider when deciding whether to invest in a network:

1. How to know when and where to initiate networks?
  a. What is the value and role of networks in terms of supporting learning and development within different parts of the system?
  b. What kind of evidence helps to identify the need for a new network and the effective functioning of existing ones?

2. How can necessary conditions be created for different types of networks to function effectively?
  a. What competences (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) need to be developed in members and leaders for networks to function in different contexts?
  b. Who drives network processes and how can a sense of ownership and engagement be maintained across different groups of actors?
  c. What resources are required and how can it be ensured that these funds are used efficiently?

3. In what ways can network outcomes feed back into different parts of the system and support decision-making and development?
  a. What approaches can ensure that networks respond to defined needs in policy development and also to local needs?
  b. What are the limitations and opportunities for different types of networks to transfer knowledge and ideas across systems?

Conclusion

It is evident from the EducOpera experience in partner countries that networks provide a way to test and experiment often in the context of pilot projects or initiatives and with specific issues in mind such as tackling school under-performance, Early School Leaving, and supporting the educational inclusion of migrant pupils. These networks are typically, though not always, time-limited in their nature and rely on the suspension of 'business-as-usual' methods to create conditions for innovation whether these come in the form of regulatory exemptions, additional funding, or the provision of extra staff or infrastructure.

In most of the participating countries, the networks created and the stakeholders involved will continue to cooperate beyond the duration of the project, facilitating the further use of the EducOpera approach and generating a greater impact on schools, networking organizations, and target beneficiaries.

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EducOpera in France – A Successful Combination with a Future:
Project Implementation by the Opéra de Massy

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The EducOpera project was initiated by Opéra de Massy together with the iriv Institute of Research. The touchstone of the partnership was a previous European project "Schola" (2016-2018), the aim of which was to increase volunteering among students as a means to combat Early School Leaving (ESL). In the case of EducOpera, the proposed extracurricular activity was not voluntary experience but an Education to Opera. In this article we will describe the French strategy to combat ESL as inspired by the European eight key competences framework with a number of additional specificities. One example is provided by the "detour strategy", a very popular pedagogical method currently used in France, particularly in sensitive urban areas (Point 1). The implementation of the EducOpera project in Massy, with two groups of youngsters (in 2018 and then 2019), has been meaningful as the achieved results differed over the two-year period because of the introduction of a more open planning approach. It also provided useful feedback in terms of the sustainability of such projects among educators in France (Point 2).

EducOpera in the French context

Combating Early School Leaving (ESL) (1)

Both the European framework to combat Early School Leaving and the international programme to measure the performance of pupils (PISA) have had an impact on the French educational system's effort to enhance success at school. Following a national debate on the future of the school system in France, a report (Thelot, 2004) focused on skills and competences that pupils might gain in order to become functioning citizens

of the twenty-first century. It set forward five main goals for the educational system (Thelot, 2004: 38-39): 1) to equip all pupils with knowledge, skills, and competences and "social" rules in order for them to function well in their social and professional lives; to address all education to as many individuals as possible in order to enhance "a diversity of excellences"; to have multiple "national" partners in order to increase success factors by combining the educational, psychological, and moral aspects of education; to enforce equality of opportunity, and; to rationally use pupils' own resources.

Three main elements were emphasized to achieve these principles (Thelot, 2004: 31-32). The first was that schools would participate in the overall education of youngsters and would offer appropriate material and theoretical conditions to develop appropriate pedagogical practices. The second was to make sure pupils master common knowledge and competences. The third was that schools be fair enough to provide an efficient pedagogy that favoured diversity. Three main missions were also given to schools (Thelot, 2004: 34). The first was to create an educational environment with agreed-upon "codes" to prevent inappropriate behaviour that could lead to the failure of pupils and Early School Leaving. The second was to pursue the goal that all pupils master a common "package" of knowledge and competences that would prepare them for success in life in general and to succeed in their own lives. The third was to enhance social cohesion, which implies both working against social inequalities and organizing learning in a way that would achieve excellence regardless of the background of the pupils.

According to this report, therefore, five main objectives must be pursued in order to build a successful educational system (Thelot, 2004: 38-40). The first is subsidiarity, which means that school is not the only place for learning and should be complemented by other forms of learning. The second is continuity, which means that lifelong learning must be possible, allowing for a "second chance" or "continuous opportunity" whereby learning becomes an ongoing process. The third is the continual update of knowledge, meaning that education must be adapted to take into account the requirements of modern life and its continuous changes. The fourth is to generate a precise definition of knowledge, "know-how" (competences) and "know-how-to-be" (behaviour) that will be needed by citizens of the twenty-first century. The fifth is feasibility, meaning that any mission undertaken by the educational system must be realistic and operational in order to be achieved.

On the basis of these theoretical principles, the Thelot report offered a "common basis for knowledge and competences" required for any pupil aged between six and sixteen years old (the age of compulsory education in France) with different steps to be undertaken depending on the age of the pupils. This programme integrates the PISA approach that identifies levels to be achieved in three main domains defined by an international programme: reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy. The following three main stages are primarily linked to the age of pupils: 5-7 years old to achieve the basic level, 8-11 years old for implementation, 12-15 years old for improvement. The proposed educational system would combine compulsory competences (speaking, reading, writing, calculating, speaking a foreign language, mastering ICT) with optional disciplines (sport, arts, etc.) (Thelot, 2004: 52-56).

The competence approach and its application in France

The Thelot report was articulated in a more practical and less theoretical way with the publication of "Competences Required at School" by the Ministry for National Education, Higher Education, and Research in 2016 (MENHER Competence 2016). The publication refers to the Eight Key Competences framework adopted in 2006 and updated in 2018 by the European Union and the European Commission.

The MENHER Competence 2016 provides a foundation for supporting the evaluation of pupils by their teachers. It is divided into five domains: Domain 1 – languages for thinking and communicating; Domain 2 – tools and methods to learn; Domain 3 – the development of the individual and the citizen; Domain 4 – natural and technical systems, and; Domain 5 – representations of the world and human activity.

In the Thelot report "A Common Foundation of Knowledge and Competence" (EC 2006 & Thelot, 2004: 52-56), the emphasis as regards "literacy competence", which is the first competence in the European framework, is on pupils' ability to express themselves. In the MENHER Competence 2016, it falls under Domain 1: "Understanding and expressing oneself by using the French language in both oral and written form". The second key competence, "multilingual competence", also falls under Domain 1 of the MENHER Competence 2016: "Understanding and expressing oneself by using a foreign language and, if necessary, a regional language". The third key competence,

"mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering", has become a key aspect of the French educational system from primary school onwards (Thelot, 2004: 52-56). It falls under Domain 1 of the MENHER competence 2016: "understanding [and] expressing oneself by using mathematics, science, and computers". The fourth key competence, "digital competence", has also become a priority of the French educational system from primary school onwards (Thelot, 2004: 52-56) and a crucial source of knowledge outside of school (Perissol, 2005:9-10). It also falls under Domain 1 of the MENHER competence 2016.

In France, the fifth key competence "personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence" has become a main focus in the curriculum offered in French universities for training teachers (Ecoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Education- ESPE). It falls under Domain 2 of the MENHER competence 2016: "methods and tools to learn". The sixth key competence "citizenship competence" is included in the French educational system from secondary school onwards under the general title "training a person and educating a citizen" (Thelot, 2004: 52-56). It falls under Domain 3 of the MENHER competence 2016: "training for the individual and the citizen". The seventh key competence is "entrepreneurship competence". It is addressed in the French educational system in a program entitled "discovery of companies and trade" (Thelot, 2004: 52-56), a one-month internship in a firm or organization for pupils aged 14 to 15. It falls under both Domains 4 and 5 of the MENHER competence 2016 – "natural and technical systems" and "representations of the world and human activity". The eighth key competence "cultural awareness and expression competence" is included in the French educational system from the first years of school with optional subjects such as "arts" and "crafts" (Thelot, 2004: 52-56). It falls under Domain 1 of the MENHER competence 2016: "understanding and expressing oneself by using languages of art and the body".

Non-formal and informal learning in the school context - "detour" pedagogy

It has been stated in many official reports of the French Ministry of Education that a bridge needs to be built between "formal learning" acquired at school and the "non-formal and informal learning" acquired outside of school. This could play a role in the success of pupils with less traditional profiles who are resistant to classical methods of learning and do not necessarily have the conditions for efficient learning. (For example,

they may come from a violent background, or a community that lacks teachers and other pedagogical tools). This concept of a bridge between formal and non-formal educational contexts is called the "detour" strategy and has been developed by French researchers in the pedagogical sciences (Henri-Panabière, Renard &Thin, 2013).

According to this theory, the best way to approach young people who have dropped out of school is to offer them alternative pedagogical programs called "detours". One such programme is the "ateliers-relais" that offers teaching and general socializing practices that will help pupils reengage at school. This approach is focused on action. Detour pedagogy must be understood by both sides. On the one hand, youngsters involved in such activities must be made aware that the entire learning process is at stake in order reduce reluctant behaviour on their part. On the other hand, teachers and educators in a broader sense must implement a socialization process in order to increase the chances of a successful experience at school. The activities offered in the "ateliers-relais" workshops are meant to suggest different roles that pupils can play through team work, smart games, manual work, sport activities (or "learning through the body"), practical learning with direct relevance for day-to-day activities, and role playing (for example, a professional interview or a meeting with a banker). Other pedagogical exercises might include a walk into the city to learn the names of the streets (and the history of famous people attached to them) or the design of a short video to combat addiction. The main idea promoted by this program is the avoidance of formal learning and other similarities to school as well as material that is perceived as too abstract by Early School Leavers, and to rely on informal and non-formal learning tools to convey knowledge, know-how, and behaviour that will help Early School Leavers to deal with life's challenges. Such programmes would generally not offer non-standard activities that appear elitist such as any project related to opera.

The main goal of the programme conducted by the secondary school college Paul Langevin in Alfortville (Val de Marne, Ile de France) and monitored by a sociology researcher was engagement with a cultural activity that could only seem elitist to youngsters in schools located in sensitive urban areas (aged 13 to 15 years old, the same age as for the EducOpera project). The project was entitled "10 Months at the Opera" and involved more than thirty classes in schools in the Parisian suburbs. The principle at stake was the "positive action" perspective (Morel, 2006). Over the course of two years, selected youngsters visited opera houses (rooms, backstage, workshops)

and attended three performances: *Vaisseau fantôme (Der fliegende Holländer – The Flying Dutchman)* at the Opéra Bastille, *Viva l'Opera* at the Opéra Comique and *Giselle,* a ballet, at the Opéra Garnier. They also attended the play *L'Avare* in a Paris theatre. They had the opportunity to meet several professionals – a photographer, a social worker, a doctor, and a technician in reprography. The teachers had to take a three-day training course in order to include pedagogical sessions linked to opera or ballet in their classes (*Othello* in English class and *Don Quixote* in Spanish class). Some art teachers offered a workshop on the topic of opera (including postcards, creative writing, short stories writing, etc.).

In the opinion of the author, the main reasons for cultural institutions to offer programmes are to advocate the universality of art ("cultural proselytism") and to find a new public (and the younger the public, the more likely they are to establish long-term enthusiasts). The success of such programmes is linked to the profile of the pupils – the more successful at school, the more likely they are to be interested in culture. If they have a positive attitude towards school and are supported by their family, it is also more probable they will understand and appreciate examples of "high culture" as opposed to "popular culture".

Opera and music education at school

The French educational system has been developing extracurricular activities as a way for pupils to acquire so-called "transversal competences": namely, sports, leisure, and cultural activities with a focus on theatre, music, or dance offered outside of school. Education to Opera is not the most common of these programmes although a number of initiatives have been launched in France in recent years.

Music education, included in compulsory courses offered at school, has three main objectives: listening to music; playing and/or composing the music, and; providing musical and artistic education. There are generally three main pedagogical activities: listening to, playing, and composing music. A number of extracurricular activities that complement formal musical education are also often available, such as choirs inside and outside of school and annual concerts throughout the year (www.education.arts.culture.fr).

Music education combines several fields of knowledge, including history, literature, and the sciences. Therefore it plays a special role in transversal pedagogical strategies and multidisciplinary learning (such as art history). Youngsters are given opportunities to play music outside of school, for example at associations and conservatories. In France, motivated pupils from primary school are sometime offered an adapted schedule (CHAM) so they may supplement their compulsory educational courses with musical activities (Circulaire N° 2002-165 - August 2002 - www.education.gouv.fr).

In 2011, Opéra de Massy launched the project "Opéra à l'école" (opera at school) at a primary school in Brunoy (Essonne, Ile de France). A team comprised of a director, conductor, scene designer, choir director, and two primary school teachers prepared an original play (based on Bach, *Didon et Enée*, an opera by Mozart, and fairy tales) with two classrooms of nine-year-old pupils (B. Esposito, 2017).

Education to Opera gives children and youngsters with access to artistic culture (emphasized in Key Competence 8) and specifically a cultural practice that used to be very popular. This pedagogical approach focuses on creativity (a soft competence), which fosters harmonious personal development. Opera involves disciplines such as music, drawing, sports, and dance. Education to Opera may reveal hidden talents in young people. It emphasizes collective team spirit, improves knowledge of culture, and may lead to the acquisition of other competences: the mastery of the body, concentration and breathing, and stimulation of memory. It combines written and oral expression in the pupils' mother tongue or in a foreign language (Key Competences 1 and 2) and may enhance personality development in teenagers, becoming a tool for empowerment.

David J. Elliot, musician and academic, has an approach based on praxis and believes that musical education is more pragmatic than aesthetic. Antti Juvonen, who also specializes in pedagogical studies, states that: "at the heart of pedagogy is the musical experience. Pupils are asked to play instruments and to sing in order to better understand the music not as an abstraction but through the practice and sensations it reveals. Acting for feeling and understanding before learning theoretical knowledge, that is the methodological principle." Learning music enhances the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development of youngsters and can be a primary source of creativity. Music education, and more generally artistic education, is advisable for children as early as possible in the educational process in order for them to become adults who are open

to the world, who have relevant knowledge, and are capable of critical thinking and sharing values with future generations (Suzana Kubik, 2016).

EducOpera – test implementation in France

Profiles of French participants in the project

The key participants associated with the EducOpera project are organizations active in culture. In addition to Opéra de Massy, RESEO, a European network of opera and dance that is involved in the European project "Get Close to Opera" for migrants, wrote an article about the project (April 2018). A journalist at France Musique (the public radio broadcasting company) also wrote an article about the project on the occasion of "all in Opera" in 2018 which was quoted in the EducOpera pedagogical approach.

The second type of key participants involved in the EducOpera project were secondary schools in Massy: in particular, two associated classrooms at the College Blaise Pascal (for two consecutive years) with pupils from the ages of 13 to 15 years old most of whom were not familiar with opera prior to the project. Another secondary school, the College Denis Diderot in Massy, was also included in the project.

The third type of key participants associated with EducOpera were educators working with youngsters in social centres and youth centres, mainly in the framework of programmes intended to enhance school success with a target group of pupils who were identified as at risk of facing difficulties at school.

Work with pupils

The promotion of the EducOpera project took place from 2017 to 2018. The work with the pupils began in the autumn 2017 in a close partnership between Opéra de Massy, College Blaise Pascal, and the teacher in charge of the programme selected on the basis of her previous involvement in an Opéra de Massy production entitled *La*

Vestale (2016-2017). The first meeting brought together pupils (aged 13 to 14) with two professionals in the field selected by Opéra de Massy, a conductor and a director of theatre and opera. These two professionals and the selected teacher conducted the first pedagogical sessions. Before Christmas, a visit to the opera house was organized by Opéra de Massy with the theatre director, the teacher, a member of iriv Conseil. Regular weekly sessions took place from January to March 2018 attended by the director, the teacher, and her pupils. Additional pedagogical support was offered by Frederique Lombart, a director of theatre and opera, who designed an inspirational leaflet entitled "Les Grands Sentiments" (grand emotions) that posited that "working on Opera is working on feelings".

Participation in the sessions was high during January and February (around 12 pupils) but collapsed after the winter holidays. During a session led by a conductor in March 2018, no pupils showed up. Another session led by a dancer from the Julien Lestel Company, Opéra de Massy's company in residence, was attended by only three pupils. At the end of March, a meeting was organized for the teacher to get feedback from the participating pupils and to try and understand why the pupils had dropped out of the activity after a couple of months and stopped attending after the winter holidays. An assistant pedagogue from the school attended as an intermediary between the teachers and pupils because of his personal relationship with the pupils. The pupil explained they had stopped attended the sessions because they "didn't care" about the "world of opera" and that the weekly activities were too demanding. In agreement with the head of the school, it was decided to end the project after a final session held in April that took place during school hours. The goal was to bring all the pupils together with the professionals who had participated with the first year of the project. In addition, a graffiti workshop, focusing on another artistic competence, was offered in May 2018.

On the basis of the feedback received, the second EducOpera project (2018-2019) was organized differently. The first meeting with the pupils took place in September 2018 and was spent defining a shared plan for the project, including topics to be covered, profiles of professionals from the opera, and the schedule of the monthly sessions (it was decided to have the session Thursdays after school from 17h to 18h30). The group also defined the rules of the project. The pupils had to attend the sessions regularly, coming to at least three to five sessions. The only other requirement was to show an actual the interest in the topic of opera. The reward would be an evaluation, written by

the teacher, and signed by the head of the school (though this was optional). The pupils' involvement in the project would be evidenced by their signature on the attendance list which would show their active participation.

The project began in October 2018. A professional from Opéra de Massy in charge of pedagogy addressed an audience of all ages (from babies to retired people). This event was organized by a network of schools, social centres, and the Massy City Hall. A second professional, a make-up artist, led a session in November. Her work was both technical and artistic, and she presented an example of her skills by transforming a young boy into an old woman and a young girl into an old man. A third professional, a theatre director, led the session in December, presenting a special show she had created entitled *Masculin/Féminin*. Afterwards she explained elements of the production to the pupils. A fourth professional, a comedian, gave a session in which he described his professional development, how he had begun his career working in pantomime. Then he played a trust game which involved the spelling of demanding sentences to prepare the pupils both physically and mentally. A fifth professional, a musician and percussionist, gave a lecture to the pupils about his role in the orchestra and the different music instruments played. He also discussed different musical cultures (European, African, and Latin American). A sixth professional, an electrician at the theatre, gave a lecture on the use of electricity in the theatre and the different kinds of lights he used in staging a play or an opera. A seventh professional, a conductor, gave an intensive session that combined music (piano) and song (a chorus in two groups, one with boys, the second with girls). An eighth professional, a dancer and choreographer, created a choreography especially for the pupils combining a song by Michael Jackson and elements of opera. The pupils suggested a visit to the Paris Opera and, in response, the team of educators organized a field trip to the Palais Garnier. All nineteen pupils who had regularly attended the sessions throughout the year were invited and sixteen attended. They were accompanied by six of the educators and the College Blaise Pascal teacher in charge of the programme. The visit was organized by Opéra de Massy and the travel organized by the school. A final session, attended by the French teacher and the director of iriv Conseil, was dedicated to the evaluation of the pupils.

Working with the educators

At the conclusion of the first year the programme was implemented (April 2018), three training sessions were offered to educators involved in the EducOpera project. the teacher in charge of the program at College Blaise Pascal, a retired music teacher, the director and conductor from Opéra de Massy who had previously been involved in the project, and the leader who had given the workshop on graffiti attended the sessions. The first session was spent analysing the feedback received from the educators, asking them to identify the weak and strong points of the programme, and why it had ended earlier than expected. The second session focused on the potential benefits of Education to Opera as an extracurricular activity that might reduce Early School Leaving (ESL) using the competence approach. The third session was dedicated to the pedagogical support provided by educators, an explanation of the four-step approach articulated in the EducOpera portfolio with a focus on the eight key competences defined in the European framework. During the last session, the head of Collège Blaise Pascal gave a very detailed and productive discussion on how to use informal and non-formal learning methods in extracurricular activities. The French teacher in charge of the EducOpera project at the school also provided interesting feedback that was collected in questionnaires she had distributed to the pupils after the last session in April when the entire class was invited to attend a collective rehearsal together with the director and conductor and a quartet that played on stage. It was decided that during subsequent implementations of the EducOpera project, a special evaluation would be given to pupils who participated regularly.

During the second year the project was implemented (2018-2019), the training sessions were offered before the end of the project. Mostly teachers participated in these sessions: the French teacher in charge of the project at College Blaise Pascal, two language teachers (French and Italian) from another school in Massy who were interested in the EducOpera approach, a retired teacher who had run a similar program involving opera at a primary school in Brunoy (Essonne). In addition, two representatives from the Massy City Hall who worked with youngsters during their free time (mainly after school), attended a session each and the theatre director attended part of one session. The content of the first session was comprised of a presentation of the four-step approach defined in the EducOpera portfolio. The second session focused on tutoring designed for educators by the Slovenian team and on a presentation of the evaluation

process generated by the Danish team (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire- SDQ). The last session was dedicated to an overview of the EducOpera process combining the portfolio, mentoring methods, and ways to creating a sustainable process. A clear connection was made between the experience acquired by pupils during the project and competences required at school: on the one hand, hard skills such as literacy competence-KC1, cultural expression, and awareness competence-KC8, and, on the other hand, soft skills such as regular attendance of the monthly sessions, pupils learning to introduce themselves to adults they didn't know, asking relevant questions about their professions, and actively and positively participating in the programme.

Collecting feedback – SWOT Analysis (Strengths Weakness Opportunities Threats)

The following are the two key aspects of the EducOpera project: a holistic approach that includes the acquisition of competences that are linked to professionals working at the opera, and the informal/non-formal learning approach of an extracurricular after-school activity that necessitates the voluntary involvement of pupils in the learning process.

The two-year project was successfully completed thanks to the involvement of the Opéra de Massy professionals who participated on a regular basis. The monthly workshops they offered was the main reason the nineteen pupils remained involved and interested throughout the year despite the voluntary nature of the project. Very few pupils dropped out of the project once it began.

On the basis of feedback received during the sessions, the following SWOT analysis was generated for the two-year EducOpera project (2017-2019)

A second important benefit of the project has been the close mutual relationship built between the three partners of the EducOpera project (Opéra de Massy and its expertise in the field of educational programs, the College Blaise Pascal and some of its teachers who have been involved in several previous similar programs with the opera, and iriv Conseil that entered a partnership with the school as a result of previous programmes with pupils related to volunteer activities).

The third point we would like to emphasize is the positive spirit of the second implementation of the programme. The group was composed of pupils with diverse backgrounds, varied results at school (good, average, to critical results), and a balance between boys and girls. The participating pupils also had varying knowledge of opera (some of them had already attended a production or visited an opera house). The pupils respected the rules agreed upon at the beginning of the project and did not consider EducOpera a "one-shot deal" – that is that they could come and go as they pleased. Very few dropped out during the year and the programme conducted from September to June generated the growing interest of the participating pupils, some of whom even suggested a visit to Garnier Palais in Paris.

Discussion and concluding remarks

The EducOpera project combines a theoretical and practical approach. On the one hand, the "detour strategy" has been a successful and innovative pedagogical approach implemented in the past years and promoted by educators who work with Early School Leavers (and potential Early School Leavers). The idea is to find alternative ways for pupils, especially those who resist the methods of the traditional educational system, to acquire competences in diverse learning environments. On the other hand, the practical implementation of the two-year project emphasized the necessity to carefully select youngsters, to offer a regular but not too demanding schedule as this is an extracurricular activity, and to actively involve them in all activities. The school teachers who participate in the program must be supported by an active and constructive team of professionals working in the field of opera who also have relevant pedagogical experience with young people in a non-formal/informal educational context. The two-year pilot programme suggest that the project is sustainable in France if both teachers and heads of school believe that it would be useful to apply the competence approach, and especially when implementation is accompanied by the use of the EducOpera portfolio along with tutoring sessions designed for educators. The EducOpera project will have a bright future if evaluation is focussed more on acquired competences than on grades and takes into account the recommendation expressed in the public report "Knowledge and Competence Approach in the French Educational System" (Thelot, 2005) that school is intended to generate not only future workers but also awakened citizens.

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Opera and Rap-Music Education: Raising Awareness and Reducing Early School Leaving

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The national context – ESL, competence approach, non-formal and informal learning in the school context

In the Danish context, **ESL** does not mean that the students drop out of school and do not return to the education system and vocational system but that they "take a time off" (see chapter 3). A new study of Danmarks Statistik (National Statistics) shows that only 15 % of the upper secondary school graduates in 2018 started a new education in October 2018. This is the lowest number in decades.

With respect to recent dates concerning ESL, there was an increase of 2, 2 % in Denmark between 2013 and 2018 and the proportion of ESL has been higher in rural areas than in towns or the suburbs. In 2018, the rate of ESL of the Danish population between 18-24 years were 10,2 % and is located in the middle range within the EU. (Eurostat, 2019)

In Denmark, **non-formal and informal learning** take place outside the school resp. outside the formal schooling/learning context. In formal settings like the Danish comprehensive school music and other creative subjects are regarded as a kind of blue-sky-subjects and are perceived as a less important and a neglected part of primary schooling, inferior in comparison to the core subjects or at best merely supporting the core subjects, i.e. Danish, Mathematics, English, and Science. Thus, human (key) competences learned outside formal schooling are recognized as a crucial resource for the labor market or an index for a youngster's or a person's employability. Human (key) competences cannot be "learned" that means cannot be established or acquired

by (only) formal learning. Thez are appropriated mainly in a non-formal and informal learning context. Among peers, music is one of the most important forms of expression. The socio-cultural environment of the students is improved and in addition social and other competences established by music and arts by the non-formal/informal learning context, while school does not pay enough attention to music and arts, thus neglecting the tremendous potential that is connected to music and arts. As one teacher says, music education offers other dimensions with respect to learning. "It is an extra offer to them, making that their everyday life is related together in a better way, making them happier on a daily basis. So, one can imagine that they use this energy and motivation for other things they are doing, and because of that, the risk at drop-out is much more less, one can say. But also, because perhaps they perform better, as it is said now. And they get better grades, because they are happier, they are more motivated, the school means more. They don't focus any longer on other places and things, because they are happy to be here." (Teacher 56:36)

Opera (and Rapolitics) – Music at school level

The school reform in 1975 has changed the music education. The focus was not any longer singing. The content of teaching has been developed to a broader understanding and learning of music including rhythmic movements and dance as well as musical practice. In 1988, the focus was reduced to singing, playing instruments and music theory, and in 1995 rhythm and movement has been added to the former music content. The 2002-legislation introduced the three collective objectives music practice, music creation and music understanding that became more specified in 2004 and 2009. The development of the professional content relates to a development from subdisciplines to competence-oriented main disciplines. (Bechmann, 2013, p. 38-39)

In Denmark the focus on subject's like music and art is only at institutions of higher education or private institutions as, for example, the Steiner schools. In the folkeskole, music education takes place in grade 1 to 5 with two lections per week, grade 6 one lection per week. From grade 7 to 9, the subject music is one of a number of optional subjects. It is compulsory to choose at least two optional subjects. The offer consists of a one-year subject matter of 60 hours. School is facing a severe problem, as music

is taught increasingly by teachers who are not trained in the subject music themselves. (cf. Undervisningsministeriet, 2018)

As one teacher states, the obligatory subject music education has been cut down strongly over the decades with the result that in the last 25 years the number of music students has halved (teacher 4: 26). This cut down in music education resulted in changing the school culture in a negative way and entailed a bad influence on the community building (fælleskab). (teacher 6: 07).

Opera and Rapolitics project – description

While conducting the project we faced some minor challenges[7] and serious challenges[8] that resulted in major delays conducting the project. However the Danish National Opera had the opportunity to participate within the overall framework of the project. Besides the Danish National Opera, we won another organization, "Rapolitics", to participate. Both organizations showed a keen interest in developing the basic idea of the project.

Rapolitics is a non-profit organization aiming to promote youth empowerment via creative artistic expressions to engage students and young people for democratic awareness raising as well as empowerment and competence of action. The Danish National Opera offers workshops for school classes in order to introduce the world of opera and art to young people that barely have the chance to encounter with this kind of cultural institution.

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[7] The project-coaches or experts only employed for one workshop or project phase were not available for another interview, because already involved in other projects and projects were limited to one workshop per semester/year/class. In Addition, we had to accept that we were not allowed to use the questionnaire at one participating school despite explanations and discussions. We choose to participate in the project as non-participating observers.

[8] TLike collective bargaining, strikes in the public sector and the public employers responding by means of a major lockout. That led to that schools and other institutions dependent on public services did not dare to engage in the project. The holidays in July also delayed meetings with (possible) project partners.

Rapolitics is a private organization consisting of different units, that is project managers, rap-coaches and rap-storyteller as well as volunteers. The aim of Rapolitics is to work by the means of contemporary forms of expression, especially rap-music, to "educate" in a creative and constructive way to articulate one's political opinion with (modern) urbane means of expression in order to invite to democratic dialogue building and to strengthen democratic awareness. The project manager leads the organization and works closely together with rap musicians and storytellers. Those teach youngsters the theory and practice of rap music, e.g. meaning the relation between rap texting and traditional poetry and music theory that is interrelated and necessary to understand and perform rap music. The concept of Rapolitics consists of non-formal learning approaches combined with school knowledge to support skills and competences of the students with respect to music, rhythm, dance, text writing and expression of thought and poetry. To achieve these objectives Rapolitics emphasizes creative group work, performance of results and discussion about the creative processes.

The **Danish National Opera** is an opera-company supported by the Danish Ministry of Culture and the municipality of the city of Aarhus. Both traditional and innovative contemporary operas are performed within all Denmark by the Danish National Opera. The Danish National Opera runs projects aiming to educate children and youngsters to understand (the world) of opera, e.g. learning to "hear" and to "see" – to perceive – the genre of opera within the context of the respective opera-theme. The idea is to teach not just the theoretical part of the music but to win the interest of the young generation to express themselves with playing music and theater. Therefore, the workshop-based music education shall enable the young participants to transfer and perform traditional opera themes with modern instruments and texts on their own. It is a creative way to combine traditional and modern music and to show the still current relevance of opera. The creative song-writing workshop for students has been carried out for many years and the teachers and the educators are an established and well-functioning team. The cooperation with the schools and the National Danish Opera connects formal and non-formal learning situations and operates with creative approaches to provide positive experiences with peer students and teachers. In the case of EducOpera the opera "Carmen" served as main theme for the workshop with the school classes.

The work with students

Within the project EducOpera - Rapolitics and the Danish National Opera - worked with three school classes. Participants of the opera project were the students of three upper secondary schools (Gymnasium). Two of the participating classes worked with the opera "Carmen", the other with Rapolitics and the theme "heksejagt" (witch hunting). The participating students were all enrolled in grade 2. All three of the participating schools resp. school classes have focus, besides other subjects, on the subject music, one of the participating schools has the subject music as high-level education (A-level). A total of 63 students participated in the project. The number of students per workshop ranged from 12 to 26 students. 70% of the participating students were female. The students of two schools were mainly between 16 and 18 years. The age of the students of school 3 is unknown to the fact that this school did not want to participate in the SDQ, rather to abort the whole project.

With respect to the cooperation with the **Danish National Opera**, the starting point of the one-day workshop with the students was vocal exercises followed by loosening-up and rhythm-exercises. Two educators, the project leader and a pianist, from the Royal Danish Opera asked the students to build a circle. Following a flamenco rhythm given by the educator, all students were asked to say loudly where they live, and the group had to repeat it. After finishing this exercise, all had to loose-up by shaking out their arms. Another exercise was the confrontation with the theme "love". The educator gave a statement about feelings and love and the students had to go left or right in order to show agreement or disagreement with the statement. The atmosphere was relaxed, and the students commented on the concept of love. The mix between further loosing-up exercises combined with explanations about the opera Carmen and the protagonists lead to a concentrated working basis. Selected musical and dramatic themes from the opera "Carmen" were presented serving as central reference elements. In two following parts, the students discussed and interpreted, alternately all together and in groups, the presented themes to understand the socio-cultural meanings. In the framework of non-formal and informal learning situations the students were accompanied by the educators to express in gestures, texts and own musical compositions four different themes of the opera Carmen (a) at the factory; b) Carmen, c) in the jail, and d) torero). Working in a none-deficit-orientated learn environment the students were able to combine their individual skills and knowledge together without being anxious of

making mistakes. As one teacher describes, the EducOpera is not about perfection culture, but supports a secure atmosphere where the students have the possibility to develop their identity. "Today, I have heard some students saying something really good, because they should not start with what they have learned, now they should start with whom they are. Suddenly, they could talk; how is it with this here, how is it with love, what could this [theater] role mean or how is it possible to express this feeling with one's own body. Suddenly, other things were important, suddenly, they were all collectively together. And we were not anymore in this perfection culture, we spoke about earlier, it was forgotten. They have been ensnared, I guess, by the whole warming-up they have been ensnared, and started slowly… I just don't think, that they thought that it could be embarrassing outside the context they have been in. But, sure, there was still a shyness if they should do that, but that was not important anymore, there was no one here who wanted to mob the others afterwards. (…) I am pretty sure about that. They felt safe and secure. And had the courage at express themselves, today, isn't it?" (teacher 43:20)

With respect to the cooperation with **Rapolitics** the workshop has been carried out in cooperation with a school class and musicians, artists from Rapolitics. The workshop took place outside the school environment in a Historical Museum in order to make the students more sensible for non-formal cultural learning environments. The first part of the workshop consisted of the introduction of the theme "witch-hunt" in a city exhibited at the Museum. After a discussion with the teacher about the theme and the actual relevance in relation to the construction of otherness in contemporary politics such as migration and feminism, the musicians from Rapolitics started the creative part of the workshop explaining the use of poetic and musical language as a main tool to compose rap music. The following part consisted of limbering-up and rhythm exercises. In the next part, working groups were initiated aiming at writing a song text using the introduced poetic tools. One emphasis aimed at reflecting the Museum's theme and incorporating contemporary social topics. Social competences, theoretical reflection and discussion as well as the positive group-work processes helped to work together. The focus on a non-deficit orientated learn situation supporting the practice of social skills was at the core of the workshop. The combination with poetry and popular music, political topics and the relation to the student's everyday life revealed individual skills and competences that were unknown to the other group members. The different parts of the workshop and the different learning approaches led to a specific dealing with

"school" competencies and their (unexpected) usefulness in creative musical, artistic and songwriting processes. Thus, the workshop fulfilled its aim to improve social skills and key competences and served to open up the awareness of the relation between art-related learning methods and learning for democracy.

The work with educators

With respect to the Danish National Opera educators participating in the project, the topic of most meetings was mainly about the best way to implement the project's targets. Before every workshop preliminary talks were carried out together with the educators. The educator's focus aimed at the relation between the practical implementation of the workshop and the mediation of competences by means of experimenting with aesthetical expressions and relatedness of music, text, scenography and body language connected to musical and drama-oriented themes of the opera Carmen. The pedagogical actions were aimed at listening, playing and composing in general and in particular enhancing a collective team spirit, improving culture and knowledge as well as concentrating and breathing, stimulating memory and combining written and oral expression. Another crucial aim that was discussed was to motivate the students to engage more in group-work giving place to the various individual talents, experiences and (musical) knowledge, enhancing a strong and confident learning atmosphere in order to support engagement in learning within group settings to prevent the feeling of school failure and marginalization.

With respect to Rapolitics, there have been two preparation meetings with the educators/staff from Rapolitics. The initial meeting was held with the project leaders in order to discuss the concept. In all meetings, the focus was on how to motivate the youngsters in the best way in order to succeed to attain a long-lasting effect, that is to motivate the participants to engage themselves in music and artistic activities further on. The special aspect of these educators is that they on the one side are educators and experts in the project and on the other side students (gymnasium) engaging themselves in an active way. Hence, the projects of Rapolitics are two-dimensional focusing on one side on non-formal education of school classes and other groups by the means of music and art related experiences mediated via projects and workshop and on the

other side aiming at the learning and development processes of these young educators' self. One student-educators emphasized the learning aspect that comes with creating a project from the beginning to the implementation of the whole project. Working as educator helps to learn to work in a disciplined and structured way. Precisely these competencies can help to lower the risk of disengagement and ESL.

Findings and Feedbacks

When we look at the strength and difficulties among the youngsters in the Danish case, we find the following. The pupils affiliated to the EducOpera project in Denmark have in relation to two workshops conducted the "One-sided self-rated SDQ for 11-17 year olds" (SDQ, 2018) in local language (Danish, n=48) with a signed informed consent from each participant. These where gathered at the workshops of the programs Rapolitics (n=25) and the Danish National Opera (n=23). It is argued that "good practice has been gained from using the tool in relation to different target groups as well as positive assessments of the technical characteristics and suitability of the tool for evaluation purposes. Although the questionnaire is short, it covers most purposes to the same degree as the more comprehensive alternatives" (Socialstyrelsen, 2013, p. 13 own translation). In other domestic projects the tool has proven adequate (Kjeldsen & Jensen, 2017). The measurement instrument has in total 25 items which cover five subscales: 1) emotional symptoms; 2) conduct problems; 3) hyperactivity/inattention; 4) peer relationship problems; 5) prosocial behavior (SDQ, 2018). The higher the score on the difficulties subscales and total the more severe problems (low is good). The questionnaires have afterwards been scored following the standard procedure for SDQ in R (R Core Team, 2017). Furthermore, a Rasch-modeled scale for the questionnaire has been applied. The figure (Graph.1 Annex B, Total Difficulties Score for the two programs) is an overall radar plot of the Strength and Difficulties for the young people participated in the programs of Rapolitics and the Danish National Opera.

The distribution on the subscales (Graph.2 Annex B, Total Difficulties score and gender) seems in average to be nearly the same between the two programs. However, the youngsters participated in Rapolitics seem to have slightly more difficulties in all subdomains. This corresponds very well to the figure on dropout rates in table 1.

Among the young people, taken together, 10.4 percent are above the cut-off score[9], and as such probably attached to the so-called borderline area for the total difficulties and may be interpreted as being in risk of early school leaving. As can be seen from the boxplot (Graph.3 Annex B, Boxplot for the SDQ total score; SDQ subscales for Emotional Symptoms and Hyperactivity) on the distribution of emotional symptoms a large share of the participants are within the borderline area. This entails for 27 percent of the participating youngsters followed by EducOpera in Denmark. Of these young people 75 percent are girls. This is expected when comparing register data for the cohort's gender distribution in relation to this particular upper secondary education that the participants are enrolled in (cohort statistics for Rapolitics is 64 percent girls, for the National Opera it is 71 percent girls and the country average for young people enrolled in these types of upper secondary 62 percent is found to be girls). The SDQ instrument has in the international literature different norms for girls and boys. In the Danish project "Learning for Life" the SDQ instrument has been applied and afterwards Rasch modeled with emphasis among others on difference between gender (n=332). Bringing the different questions on the Rasch scale makes it possible to take into account the gender differences on this measure. It can still be found that girls among the participants have statistical significant larger emotional symptoms compared to the boys (t = -3.1206, p-value = 0.004557). SDQ total and its subdomains are similar when comparing the two programs on the Rasch scaled scoring of the SDQ instrument. The two radar plots in figure 2 provide the overall score of difficulties and gender for the two programs and the compositions within the different domain. A gender difference appears in both programs regarding emotions. Furthermore, the hyperactivity domain is in average higher among the youth in both programs than the other domains.

This SDQ results coincide significantly with the overall dropout rate for the educational institutions from which the participants are recruited. Let us briefly present the modelled dropout rate and the average age on when school leaving based on register data for

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[9] There is no norm on the cut-off scores for this group in Denmark. Some differences between countries can be found, so instead of using the international norms we draw on the research of norms in Norway (Roy, Grøholt, Heyerdahl, & Clench-Aas, 2006; Rønning, Handegaard, Sourander, & Mørch, 2004).

2017. (Table.1 Annex C, Dropout rates, age and average enrollment in months 2017) In 2006 the government made the objective that 95 percent of a student cohort should complete upper secondary education; this was later in 2017 changed to 90 % before the age of 25 (The Danish Government, 2017; The Danish Government, 2006). For the 2015 cohort the modelled prediction from the Ministry of Education was that 90 percent of the boys and 95 percent of the girls would reach at least upper secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2018). Consequently, early school leaving in the Danish case of EducOpera is operationalized as leaving the educational system before finalizing with an upper secondary certificate. In order to prevent early school leaving the period before the average age of dropout is our main concern and mainly represented by the 15-17 year olds. The students taking part in the affiliated programs of EducOpera are belong to the target group defined as young people in risk of early school leaving and not finalizing upper secondary education. When looking at the distribution related to the total score of difficulties and the sub dimension for emotional symptoms it reveals a number of pupils that are at risk of school leaving.

Broadly speaking expectations point out that the musical expressions such as singing, dancing, acting etc. learned in the extracurricular programs can provide the means for the end of not leaving school, whereas artistic expressions may support emotional competences of expression and robustness.

Related to the SDQ findings above, what does the conducted EducOpera project mean regarding to ESL resp. absenteeism in the Danish case? The work with the educators from both the National Danish Opera and Rapolitics has shown to be very constructive because the overall aim of all participants was, on the one hand, to motivate the participating students to learn and to enjoy learning and to initiate human capacity building and, on the other hand, to give a learning space helping to gain awareness of important societal political discourses. It was, thus, the mediation of citizenship values within music and art education. One interesting aspect was the possibility to practice learning in a neutral learning site. It has shown within the workshop that the classmates learned not to judge their fellow classmates just by their performance in school but, because as it turned out that all have their talents but that there is no place within the regular school activities to learn about these various individual talents. Furthermore, the alternation of the learning space seemed to sharpen the students' attention to the teaching and made it easier for them to maintain concentration. The

teachers assisting the experts from the National Danish Opera resp. the experts from Rapolitics became more a neutral co-learner than a teacher because the different location changed the social roles and figurations. In addition, the music educators were experienced as refreshing in their teaching because they had their individual way to mediate their musical and text writing-oriented knowledge in different ways as it was experienced in the general (music) education. To summarize, it is crucial to have a learning space which creates a safe atmosphere where the students can express themselves freely without concerns of doing something wrong.

Another important aspect – beside the learning environment and space – was the social interaction and the experience within the project that it is important to give space to each participant. It is the notion of being taken seriously by the others and not getting interrupted. With this respect it was good received that in the beginning and at the end of both projects a circle was built, and all had the chance to sing or follow their own rhythm to express themselves, reinforcing the impression of a safe learning space. The last positive crucial point is, that it was possible within the projects to be able to criticize each other in a constructive way, thus improving the creative process and the working relation by criticizing without getting personal.

Conclusion

To summarize both projects, the workshop (Carmen) by the Danish National Opera and the collaborative workshop of the Rapolitics in the History Museum emphasized learning and personal development as well as group work in order to prevent school disengagement and later on ESL resp. absenteeism. The focusing on music, song writing, performing arts, social learning and teamwork helped to develop social and key competences without anxiety in non-deficit orientated situations. The objectives of the pedagogical tools and methodological approaches promoted democratic values, empowerment as well as individual and social skills. Within the workshops, the students learned to create collaboratively an open and positive learning environment to have fun to learn and be able to use their individual skills in social learning processes. As one teacher expressed, output-oriented teaching neglects the support of autonomy, independent thinking, and independent feeling of human education. He adds that

today the focus is not any longer on context-understanding education. "And music, I think, is one of the subjects that is really good in creating this [social context]. And this is, what we have seen today. There were so many things. It was about history, gender problematics, plus that they worked with themselves in total different ways." (teacher 50:30) In addition, he said that the subject music should be obligatory again because it gives the opportunity to experience oneself, the others and learning in a different way. The workshop carried out by the Danish National Opera and Rapolitics supports personal autonomy, self-confidence and will help further on to engage in social learning processes.

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EducOpera in Slovenia: competence and artistic approach through the creation of opera by youngsters and for youngsters

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Conceptualization and facts about Early School Leaving, competence approach, non-formal and informal learning in the school context

In Slovenia, the educational level is high, thus the country has already achieved the national strategies of Europe 2020. Compared to the average in the EU, the level of ESL in Slovenia is low, but still, it should not be ignored. According to the data from 2016, ESL is at 4.9% and it grew by 1% since 2013. Lately, there is an increasing interest in vocational and technical secondary education, which is also strategically supported by the state policy (Pregled, 2017). Since ESL is not a major problem at the national level, there is almost no anti-ESL strategies. The strategies are implemented locally: The Ministry of Education has so far, together with local communities, financed a project learning program (PUM), which was intended for ESL. The program started in 2008 and provides support to the ESL aged from 15 to 26 years. The basic purpose of the program is to develop power sources for the integration into the labor market or into education, developing a professional identity and successful social integration. In 2005, the Center for Professional Training published a handbook for preventing ESL as a preventive strategy. In addition, the Slovenian Center for Philanthropy also published a handbook on "Volunteering in school", which records the examples of good practices to be implemented in school in order to motivate young people to join volunteering activities. The research among ESL in Slovenia shows that young people want alternative pedagogical approaches that include more interactive content in schools, more dynamics in teaching methods and as little as possible of traditional pedagogical approaches based on data mining and data storage, which use printed materials without visual illustrations and classical lectures (Bezjak, 2014). Young people want pedagogical approaches and content, which they feel they can benefit from in their current life. Due to the promotion of awareness of the competences by the European

Union, the competence approach is quite present in various forms of education. One can find theoretical explanations of 8 key competences in many different contexts and forms of education – in companies, recruitment agencies, non-governmental organizations and also state school systems that spread their knowledge among teachers through different projects. The practical application of the competence approach has also been developed by some institutions, especially in the framework of the European project partnerships. Two of them are more recognizable and also widely spread via mobile or web applications: e-Nefix – the system of recording informally acquired knowledge and IMPROVE – an application for recording volunteer experiences and transforming them into competences.

According to 2016 country report for the *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning* (Validation, 2016), Slovenia has a relatively new system of recognizing non-formal and informal learning. In 2016, the Slovenian Qualification Framework (SQF) was adopted and is now available online (www.nok.si). The validation process typically "consists of the lifelong learning portfolio of the candidate (certificates and other attestations of formal, non-formal and informal learning), a CV and an appeal for recognition (this can be a course, part of a course, a module or a full qualification)" (Slovensko, 2018). The submission is then analyzed by validation practitioners.

Slovenia follows the initiatives of the European Community in theory and practice and has introduced and promoted non-formal education through the concept of lifelong learning. Due to an inclusive school system that very successfully prevents dropping out, national strategies such as the evaluation of non-formal education are directed more towards the field of adults. The evaluation of non-formal education is thus more widely used in adult education than in "youth" (formal) education.

In the formal education system, it is emphasized that non-formal education is mostly supporting formal one by the acquisition of social skills. For this purpose, various activities, workshops, project work and the like are implemented in schools. One way of non-formal educational system (even though it is not named like this) in Slovenia has been introduced into the system in the form of so-called compulsory optional content, which the school must offer to students or they chose and perform it outside the school. Some 'optional content' is compulsory for all students, some is optional for individuals, but schools must offer it in the program – including voluntary social

work. Typically, these contents focus on the development of competences that are neglected in the context of formal education. Students can 'collect hours' of 'compulsory optional content' outside the school offer, but they must prove their activity there (with certificates, tickets, prizes etc.). Many students are included in music education, which is recognized in the context of 'optional content', while the other rather common form of activity is participation in fire brigades. State programs emphasize that "with compulsory optional content, we usually introduce methods, forms and techniques of active (experiential, project, cooperative, entrepreneurship, etc.) learning that differ significantly from traditional teaching methods. The emphasis is on student creation and co-creation, cooperation and a good relationship between the leader and the participants" (Razpis, 2019). This systematic form of non-formal education encourages students to engage in non-formal and informal activities, but there is a shortcoming in this system, which does not evaluate these activities in terms of competence evaluation. Evaluation is only quantitative, what counts is the number of hours worked outside the school.

Opera and music at the school level

Slovenian state policy offers extremely strong support in the music education system, since it largely co-finances extra-curricular music programs, so that they are largely accessible to all who want music education. The co-financed programs are implemented by public music schools, which include children from the age of 6 onwards. A child without musical knowledge or proof of musical skills can attend pre-music school education, while enrolling in the first grade of music education requires a test of musical skills. Lately, the interest in these programs is extremely high, which is why a large number of private music schools are being opened. Those are at least twice as expensive as the co-financed ones and many of them implement a different methodological approach to music education. Music schools also include lessons on opera, but to a lesser extent. Some individual schools carried out opera-related projects (i.e. performances of operas with children). Thus, in the past year, the Conservatory for Ballet and Music performed the opera Rusalka and the society Glasbena Matica performed the opera *Hobit* with children aged 9 to 14. Music has never been used, researched or proven as helpful in the context of the prevention of ESL. The public

music school system is demanding and competitively oriented and raises students more in the light of developing musical skills rather than soft skills. In the general education system, music education is also a part of a compulsory curriculum and each school must offer two hours of children's and junior choir, while it is optional for children to participate in the choir. The subject of music education is part of the curriculum throughout the elementary school and in the first year of gymnasium, while in vocational education, music education is part of the subject of overall art education. Some secondary schools, such as educational schools or art gymnasiums have compulsory music education in all 4 years of secondary schooling. The subject of music education is assessed and the grade is equivalent to other educational subjects. Art gymnasiums offer music as part of the matura examination.

Opera project – description

The EducOpera project was implemented in Slovenia with three stakeholders: Glasbena Matica Ljubljana, Srednja vzgojiteljska šola, gimnazija in umetniška gimnazija Ljubljana (SVŠGUGL; the Secondary School of Education, Gymnasium and Art Gymnasium Ljubljana,) and Zavod BOB (the BOB Institute).

Glasbena matica Ljubljana is a society that has many experiences in non-formal musical education for young people. In addition to offering musical workshops and choirs, for several years now, they have been creating musical works with children and adolescents that are performed on stage. The BOB Institute is a non-governmental organization, strongly involved in empowering youngsters through volunteering and preventing Early School Leaving. Through their projects and programs, many youngsters that already left the path of formal education, have found their way back to formal schooling or have entered the labor market. The SVŠGUGL is a 4-year program high school with a long tradition in art education namely different programs for preschool education, general upper secondary program, contemporary dance program, theatre, drama and film program.

Glasbena matica took over the educational process of making the opera with youngsters and provided the contacts for the youngsters and the ZRC SAZU with the other two

stakeholders to be included in the process. We had many conversations with educators and teachers from SVŠGUGL school to find a place for youngsters in the opera and the result was that many of the youngsters from the SVŠGUGL (aged 15–17) performed in the part of the opera where singing and dancing was required. Other youngsters and students from the BOB Institute performed the tasks where no specific musical or dancing skills were required. For many, this was their first contact with opera, professional singers, instrumentalists, conductor, director etc., so with this process, the stereotype of opera being an inaccessible and elitist musical form was overcome as well. Another added value is that this particular opera opens up a number of topical issues that Europe has been facing in the recent years. As Veronika Brvar, president of Glasbena matica Ljubljana, presented in the promotional text: opera "does not offer narrow responses to any of the complex social issues, but rather as an artistic work, encourages thinking and tries to sensitize younger audiences to questions of cultural diversity, their own cultural and linguistic identity, respect for human dignity and the sense of humanity" (Glasbena matica, 2019). The opera titled Všeč si mi (I Like You) speaks about a meeting of two young people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs. The content exposes the fear of the foreign, the unknown, as well as the underlined compassion and the desire for understanding. It reveals the topic with which we are surrounded on a daily basis and asks us, at the same time, with all the artistic sensibility: What is the price of our freedom? What makes us human beings? Where is our limit of tolerance of accepting a difference?

The poet Milan Dekleva conceived a story of a meeting of two teenagers in our current time, coming from different cultures. Vesna and Tariq meet when Tariq leaves his homeland and settles in the Vesna's area as a refugee. Vesna recognizes more than just a refugee in Tariq. For her, he is a nice boy, who is different from his classmates due to special life experiences and she likes to talk to him and be in his company. Among the inhabitants of the area where Vesna lives, disagreements arise due to the presence of refugees, among which there are also sharp opinions that refugees must leave. Vesna takes a firm stand for Tariq and bravely defends him (Glasbena matica, 2019).

The opera's premiere was on 6th December 2018 and it had 17 repetitions. In particular, secondary schools and students from the last triad of elementary school and high schools were invited to attend the opera, so most performances were sold out very soon. For the teachers who accompanied the children, we pre-arranged the material

(exercises on music, questions for the reflection on the content of the opera, rules of behaviour during a concert performance …) to be presented to the students before the opera performance.

The opera consists of the overture, followed by 12 scenes or pictures. The opera lasts almost one hour. It is written in the Slovene language and throughout the opera, there are certain words that are often repeated, e.g. r*uins, home, birds, fear, dragons, desert, sky* and have a special symbolic and affective meaning. In the first and last picture, *light* and *hope* are in the foreground, pronounced in some European languages as well as in the languages of Africa and the Arabic language. Tariq and Vesna "speak" the selected words in sign language as well, as the choir is including the sign language in their choreography.

For the purpose of the EducOpera project and its international integration, we have filmed the premiere and translated the lyrics of the libretto in English and subtitled the whole film, which is now available on a YouTube channel, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=223TOCiLPO8

The work with students

In addition to the soloists that include youngsters and professionals (in the roles of adults in the opera), there were also 70 singers and a few dancers aged between 10 and 17. As already noted, many of the students involved were from our stakeholder school (SVŠGUGL), because there was a need for certain artistic skills that are being developed at this school.

One of the most demanding tasks of the project was the identification and inclusion of potential dropouts in the artistic process. Since the identification is relative, as the school included in the project has no systems of detection of potential early school leavers, the task was even more challenging. At the same time, many obstacles prevented the school from being actively involved in the project through teachers and directors: non-financing their contribution to the project, lack of time for extra-curricular work, lack of will by already being engaged in many European projects as well as the

psychological congestion within the school system. Realizing that early school leaving is a very variable category and that every young person is a potential dropout, we gave preference to the artistic involvement of youngsters in the project, regardless of their success at school. Also due to the artistic demands of the stakeholder Glasbena matica, in this segment we gave priority to young people who showed a strong desire for artistic expression.[10] That is why we decided to include youngsters who have difficulties in schooling or have already dropped out of education system in another way. Three boys from the first year of the SVŠGUGL, who were involved in the theatre and film program at school, were invited by a teacher from the school to make a trailer for the opera. Although their involvement was on a voluntary basis and their work had to be done in their free time, we still faced problems in the process, such as their lack of response due to the general lack of will and problems with school success. Therefore, strong motivation and support were needed to complete the film and now it is available to the wider audience through a YouTube channel, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1EXOlAXIrs.

Another important part of the process was entrusted to the youngsters who were involved in various programs of the BOB Institute. These youngsters were older than 14–16 years (which is the focus group of the project), because they have been excluded from the school system for some time and included in the programs of the BOB Institute. Since from the very beginning of the opera, they were conducting interviews with the composer, conductor, director, librettist, children, parents and others involved, and recorded them on the camera. The final part was dedicated to the montage of all the collected recordings and, with the help of a film-editing expert, we transformed them into a 22-minute documentary film, which is accessible with the English subtitles at www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9CiRIRiHIg.

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[10] Since this is a shortcoming in project work in Slovenia, the contribution of Danish counterparts who offer a questionnaire to measure this risk of dropping out is a matter of great importance to us and has already been presented to many teachers in the context of meetings. Unfortunately, due to the work dynamics, it could not be included in our project work).

The work with educators

In the initial phase of the project, we tried to get in touch with teachers within the formal education system and motivate them for a more intense participation in the project. After the initial rather difficult attempts to set the date and hour of the meeting, we finally all sat down together. At the meeting, it turned out that the teachers generally support the project, but they do not want to participate more actively in it, as such cooperation is not rewarded in the framework of the promotion system set by the state for the teachers in schools. We thus realized that an important segment of such projects is also the motivation of teachers for the cooperation, as well as an efficient system of evaluating the acquired competences, which would then offer them rewards in the framework of their employment. At the SVŠGUGL, we managed to recruit some mentors who closely followed the involvement of their students in the project work and informed them about the progression. The main part of the project was carried out by out-of-school mentors, namely the employees of Glasbena matica Ljubljana, those who were compensated by Glasbena matica for the costs of their work and a mentor employed at the BOB Institute. Due to the lack of motivation by the teachers, I had an opportunity to present the EducOpera project – with the help of Glasbena matica Ljubljana – to 26 educators from various Slovenian schools at one of the seminars, which was devoted to the development of musical competences. In the framework of the presentation, I also carried out a shorter research with the purpose of determining to what extent are the teachers familiar with or recognize the involvement of children they teach in extra-curricular activities and what significance they attribute to it. The results showed that teachers (for example, the upper level music teachers who teach up to 600 children per week) are mostly familiar with the involvement of children in extra-curricular activities: some record them, others ask the students about them and to some teachers, the children mention their involvement by themselves. However, when I asked the teachers, if they were willing to evaluate the competences related to the subject they teach also in the framework of the school system, almost all of them refused. Some believe that this is inappropriate because they are not competent for this sort of evaluation, some say that this is legally impermissible and others emphasize that it would be unfair and exclusive to those who do not engage in extra-curricular activities for various reasons (personal, social, economic etc.).

The second part of the project included the creation of a handbook for mentors (IO2) with the instructions for including the EducOpera approach in school and extra-curricular processes, which was prepared at the ZRC SAZU. After coordinating the content with partners, we translated the handbook into the Slovene language and presented it to teachers. Three meetings were held, first at the premises of Glasbena matica Ljubljana in the framework of their annual event the Day of Glasbena matica (Dan Glasbene matice). At this meeting, especially the mentors of the process of creating the opera (Glasbena matica, BOB Institute) and some external interested visitors were present. This event was the reason that I was invited to the Academy of Music by the head of the Department of Musical Education. The next two presentations were thus conducted for future music teachers as well. They recognized the EducOpera approache as very interesting and useful in their future work. Lately, they also encounter competence approaches in the framework of higher education at the Academy of Music. All the responses and impressions were extremely positive.

Feedbacks

Due to the aforementioned unwillingness of teachers to evaluate the inclusion of young people in the processes of creating an opera, in the case of project work in Slovenia, we decided that the evaluation of the competences will be carried out by the youngsters themselves and we also invited their parents. In the continuation, I thus briefly present a part of this empirical research. With the research, I wanted to primarily investigate to what degree and how young people think about the acquired competences.

In Slovenia, young people were involved in the process of creating an opera for 9 months. After the conclusion, they self-reflected on their involvement in the process via an online questionnaire. The research included 26 participants, of which there were 20 girls and 6 boys of the average age of 13.8 years. Below, I present the responses to some of the questions, which reflect which competences young people point out and how they see their use in everyday life. In the survey, we allowed the young people to express their experiences in a narrative form, without limiting the length. Nearly all responded to the invitation and reported almost exclusively positive experiences. Among the rare negative aspects, they listed only hard work and difficulties in coordinating with school obligations. Here are some of the responses:

What did/will I really gain from this opera? Certainly, a great deal of experience in working in a choir and theatre, a new vocal technique, a better stage expression, respect (for all soloists and dancers because they are REALLY trying and this is not easy), self-confidence for new performances, some advice on make-up and in general, a lot of friends. (Youngster 1)

Participation in the opera gave me a sense of belonging, which is always good. I have been battling with social phobia for some time and I think I am getting better because of this experience as well. The more experience I have, the easier it will be for me. (Youngster 2)

Participating in the opera was a great pleasure, fun, joy. I met many people with whom we have created great friendships and learned to work together. I have accumulated a great deal of experience regarding the work in theatre, on stage, where I feel comfortable. The practice was interesting and I believe that it strengthened our mutual relations. I preferred the practice in directing, as there were several things happening, but it was also much more demanding and difficult. The thing I liked the most was the connection of all the performers, which is also reflected in the final result. I have to thank the people I met here, because they have changed my life. (Youngster 3)

To present the results in this article, I also made a synthesis of two responses by highlighting the key words in the answers and representing them in graphs. Several key words may appear in an individual response.

The results presented in the first graph (Graph 4 Annex B) show that young people were strongly influenced by the content of the opera.[11] The youngsters who participated in opera, strongly emphasize (as a competence) that they have acquired a different perspective on migrants and tolerance towards the ones that are different. This seemed even more important to them than the acquisition of competences in the music and dance fields, while they emphasized the cooperation in a group or group work as a third achievement.

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[11] The latter touched upon the contemporary migrant issues and was related to a concrete event in Slovenia, when a student dormitory wanted to accommodate under-age asylum seekers unaccompanied by parents, but the parents of other children and the local population resisted it.

In the reflection, which focuses on the use of competences in the future (Graph 5 Annex B), among the first three competences, young people emphasized the importance of the acquired knowledge (related to the content or musical skills and knowledge), tolerance and self-confidence. With the latter, I conclude that this competence is related both to the thematic context of the opera as well as to the mutual cooperation and the necessary tolerance and perseverance in the practice and the confidence that will empower them in the school process.

In a shorter survey, we asked the parents how they see their children after the completion of the process of creating the opera and, above all, what the young people have gained with their participation. Most of the parents mentioned that the young people made good friends, which greatly attracted them to cooperate in the opera and they also noticed progress on the artistic and personal levels. I present three responses by the parents:

She has more energy, joy – every day, she looks forward to something. It is nice to see a child who has a passion in life. She feels great in society. She gained independence ... she rides a bus to Ljubljana by herself. She also gained responsibility. She learned a great deal about the creation of the performance (Parent 1).

She surprised me with her responsibility, independence in cooperation and the initiative to apply despite her self-identified lack of self-confidence when performing (Parent 2)

As an introverted teenager, by participating in the project, my daughter had the opportunity to gain new experiences of being included in an unknown social environment. In my opinion, this experience has greatly enriched her and increased her self-confidence and organizational abilities. (Parent 3)

Conclusion

The EducOpera project brought numerous novelties into the Slovene area: the inclusion of teenagers in the processes of education with the opera, overcoming of stereotypes related to this musical genre, development of artistic and social competences, awareness of the acquisition of these competences, raising the awareness of teachers and parents about the great importance of extra-curricular activities in the music field for their children. New approaches, working methods, and, last but not least, an international partnership have been developed, which spurred all the participants in the work process. In Slovenia, they thus listened to the course of events, approaches and possible problems in other European countries with great interest, while at the same time, they were proud to be part of such a process. Precisely the main stakeholder in the project, Glasbena matica Ljubljana, which will continue with similar projects in the future, wishes for us to continue with such approaches. Such a desire is for us also a moral reward for all the effort invested in the project work.

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The Italian Experience - EducOpera as a strategy to enhance students competencies

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Introduction

The struggle against Early School Leaving is one of the main research areas of the Lab of Experimental Pedagogy of the University of Perugia (Department of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Education). For several years, the group has been using empirical experimental approaches, including the active teaching of competences, in an effort to prevent school dispersion. The group has also engaged in studies focused on how this kind of teaching could affect the learning outcomes of pupils and have an impact on psychological and cognitive dimensions (Batini, Bartolucci and De Carlo 2017, 2018). The group also conducted a study on how reading aloud can empower people (Batini, Toti, Bartolucci 2015) in early childhood and how it can improve the pathological cognitive conditions of the elderly.

In Italy, early school leaving impacts 17.6% of 18 and 24 years old, which is well above the Europe 2020 target of 10%. Roughly 5.5 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who have left school are not engaged in upper secondary education or in employment or training. The unemployment rate in this population is 40.1%. Reducing Early School Leaving is essential in the effort to achieve sustainable, smart, and inclusive economic growth.

The Chair of Experimental Pedagogy placed the activities of the Erasmus+ Project EducOpera within the context of the "alternative education and training" experience of pupils in upper secondary schools, which generally take the form of compulsory internships. One of the aims of the EducOpera project is to create a portfolio for both school teachers and professionals outside school (associations, local authorities, etc.) so they will be able to evaluate the skills and competences acquired by youngsters in

Education to Opera and music education in general and to evaluate the "alternative education and training" activities implemented by associations and professionals working in these fields with a view to developing the transversal competences of students.

Music education in Italy

Despite the renowned historical and cultural tradition of opera in Italy, music education has long been an optional subject in the Italian school system, even at the beginning of the twentieth century when theories about music learning were rapidly developing throughout Europe. Music education became compulsory in lower secondary school as late as 1977 (as a result of Law No. 348 of 16/06/1977). As regards primary school, the Presidential Decree of February 12, 1985 included the subject of music education in all official school curricula, and changed the course title "Choral Singing" to the more general "Education in Sound and Music".

For the first time an emphasis was placed on both the implementation of music education and its benefits. In addition the general objectives of an education in sound and music, through both listening and playing, were highlighted: namely, that it teaches both the ability to perceive and understand acoustic reality as well as the ability to produce different sound languages. In 2012 the Italian national guideline for school curricula included the opinion that music education should not be aimed either at the transmission of technical knowledge, such as the mastery of an acoustic instrument or generic education in choral singing. Rather music should be understood as a fundamental and universal component of human experience that offers a symbolic and relational space allowing for the activation of processes of cooperation and socialization, the acquisition of knowledge tools, the enhancement of creativity and participation, the development of the sense of belonging to a community, and interaction between different cultures.

The first year of EducOpera in Perugia

Our starting point was that the aim of the EducOpera Project was to support schools in combatting the phenomenon of Early School Leaving as well as to promote social inclusion and pupils' acquisition of new skills and competences through educational activities related to music and opera offered outside of school. The University of Perugia, using a model implemented by the Lab of the Experimental Pedagogy, organized an experimental program related to the project in the framework of Alternative Educational and Training Systems. Alternative Education and Training Systems were formalized in Italy under Law 107 promulgated July 13, 2015 for the school year 2015/2016. The intention of the law was to provide a structure for programs implemented in the final three-years of high school that would have a duration of at least 200 hours the purpose of which was to "increase job opportunities and guidance skills".

Such a program for secondary school pupils was proposed in the form of the EducOpera project through a dedicated national internet portal that defined artistic and musical activities and the acquisition of new skills and competences as its main objective. The Lab of Experimental Pedagogy collaborated with the following three upper secondary schools in the Province of Perugia: the Liceo Scientifico Statale "Galileo Galilei" in Perugia, the Istituto Superiore "I. Calvino" in the Città della Pieve, and the Liceo Statale "Jacopone da Todi" in Todi.

 Since there is no opera company in Perugia, we involved several associations working in the fields of music, theatre, and performing arts education, and selected four of them to participate in the project. Activities provided by the participating associations were proposed to third and fourth-year pupils in the framework of Alternative Educational and Training Systems with the support of four teachers from the three schools. Once the associations were chosen, the pupils entered a preliminary phase of training at the University of Perugia and undertook a twenty-hour introductory training course at the individual associations. Both pupils and teachers were informed about the EducOpera project, its goals and purposes, as well as the role and the activities of the associations involved with the aim of prepared them for the activities in which they would later be participating. The meetings focused on competencies both at the European level (key competencies) and at a national level (sixteen basic competencies). They also focused on opportunities for work programs with the associations that would make use of the acquired competences and on the certification of the acquired competencies at school.

At the end of the initial activities within the associations (totalling some sixty hours), the final phase (another twenty hours) was used for evaluation and the enhancement of what was achieved. The pupils, along with the Italian team and the educators/teachers of the school, also worked on balancing the skills achieved during the experience by using the VAEB tool. All participants (teachers and educators/professionals) participated in six meetings held at the Department of Philosophy, Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Education of the University of Perugia between December 2017 and May 2018.

The various sections of the Intellectual Output 1 (IO1) were presented during the seminars. Feedback was collected from the participants and a translated version of the IO1 was provided to the participants and other interested stakeholders. After the first four seminars, participants were asked to read the IO1 and provide written thoughts/feedback before the end of May 2018. A general discussion was held during the last seminar. Professors and other stakeholders expressed interest in better understanding the eight key competencies. They also focused on the four transversal skills, considering "learning-to-learn" and "social and civic competences" to be the most significant and the "closest" to the activities carried out by the associations. Several participants found it useful to "fix" in a certain way the eight competencies by making a precise diagram which could be used in order to spread the knowledge among operators and teachers thus preventing the risk that they would not recognize and value them as much as they actually deserve because of a lack of familiarity.

The second year of EducOpera in Perugia

During the second year of the project, mentoring for educators – both school teachers and professionals outside school – was provided during a series of seminars. The aim was to help these actors to implement the EducOpera project using the output of the research and activities that took place during the first year.

The seminars that were held between December 2018 and May 2019 had both theoretical and practical content as well as an introductory discussion on school dispersion and Early School Leaving. Those who attended also learned about official strategies to prevent and combat these phenomena and their potential effects and were presented with an analysis of different types of learning (formal, non-formal, and informal).

The seminars included a debate on the Intellectual Output 2 (IO2) of EducOpera in order to gather feedback from the participants. Meanwhile pupils were engaged in the activities of the Alternate Training and Education system, following the same programme that was provided for during the first year of the project. At the end of the experience, an open debate ensued to gather feedback from pupils and other stakeholders such as teachers, volunteers, educators, and professionals. Opinions on the program were collected during the training sessions intended for both pupils and teachers and through an online questionnaire. This information was used to improve tools created at the European level for the EducOpera project. The main opinion expressed by participants was that an experience such as EducOpera, especially because it is framed in an Alternative Training and Education system, can help pupils to acquire transversal skills and competences that may be valuable in life and at school. Participants were also positive about the tools and methods used in the project by educators, professors, and professionals from the associations.

The following list presents the three upper secondary school involved in the project, the names, sectors, and specific activities of participating associations, two of them – ASSIOMI and Teatro dell'Equilibrio – hosted the pupils during their alternative education and training experience:

Schools

• Istituto Superiore "I. Calvino"
Location: Città della Pieve (PG)

The Istituto Superiore "I. Calvino" is located in Città della Pieve and includes both a high school and a vocational institute for commercial services. The high school offers four courses of study: science, applied sciences, languages, and music. Among its numerous activities, the institute provides courses for language certification and the possibility of language internships as well as numerous laboratories for developing and strengthening skills in a variety of disciplines. In addition to activities related to the Italian language, science, and foreign languages, there are many related to music and artistic-cultural education such as theatre, choir, and orchestra.

• Liceo Scientifico Statale "Galileo Galilei"
Location: Perugia

The Liceo Scientifico Statale "Galileo Galilei" of Perugia offers its pupils a range of alternative education and training paths that emerged from agreements made over time with firms, public bodies, and companies operating in the third sector. The school has identified six specific paths in which various projects are included: technological-scientific (research, production, dissemination); territorial resources; social security services, assistance, voluntary work, sports; chemical-biological-sanitary (research, production, dissemination); humanistic-linguistic, legal-economic path (research, dissemination, services), and; basic training (transversal competences). The high school has a choir, evidence of its dedication to music education.

• Liceo Statale "Jacopone da Todi"
Location: Todi (PG)

The Liceo Statale "Jacopone da Todi" offers four courses of study: classical, scientific, languages, human sciences. As far as extracurricular activities are concerned, the school offers cultural and language exchanges, language courses, computer science and theatre programmes in addition to alternative education and training activities available outside of school. Since the school year 2016/2017, the "Jacopone da Todi" high school has belonged to the network of Italian Schools associated with UNESCO.

• Liceo Scientifico Statale "Galeazzo Alessi"
Location: Perugia

"Galeazzo Alessi" is the first advanced secondary school for science in the city of Perugia. Over time the school has developed a teaching style based on defining learning as a dynamic collaborative process rather than as the acquisition of knowledge in which the key role is played by learning/teaching skills. The school enters partnership projects with universities (disciplinary didactics, guidance), local authorities (promotion and distribution of culture), and public and private institutions, and encourages internships and international exchanges.

• Liceo Statale "A. Pieralli"
Location: Perugia

The Liceo Statale "A. Pieralli" in Perugia has considerable experience in pedagogical and didactic research and is divided into three areas: human sciences, human sciences with a socio-economic options, and languages. The school participates in numerous PON projects – mainly focused on the development of skills, digital citizenship, alternative training and education abroad – and it is a partner in several European projects that are part of Erasmus + and Comenius programmes.

Associations

• ASSIOMI - "ASSociazione Italiana Musica d'Insieme" (Perugia)

The mission of the ASSIOMI Association is to promote ensemble music and disseminate its use as a tool of education and socialization.

Activities:
Music events, guided listening to concerts, music campuses, and international pairing. Participation in national and European projects, international competitions, ensemble music festivals, and "fairy tales" for charity purposes in collaboration with Telethon, Aulci, Cesvol. ASSIOMI also organizes music courses (drum, guitar, piano, violin).

Alternative education and training:
Organizational activities through several special programmes, the main one being the "Orchestrando la nostra amicizia" project that takes place on a weekly basis at the "G.Cena" primary school (two-hour morning sessions from January until May). The final concert was held at the Sala dei Notari in Perugia.

Training Programme - 2018

March 26-28
"Tutti suonano tutto" at MANU Museo Nazionale Archeologico dell'Umbria (National Archaeological Museum of Umbria) in cooperation with the Archaeological Superintendant of Umbria.

April 4-7
"Voices for Peace" Assisi/Perugia, International Festival of Choirs that includes fifteen choirs, 400 youngsters from abroad, in collaboration with Interkultur-Umbria Region, Municipality of Perugia, Arcum, Agimus, MANU.

April 14
"Pianofortissimo" Four-handed Piano Competition at Salone di Apollo, Palazzo della Penna

April 16-18
Theory phase

May 12
"Orchestrando la nostra amicizia" at Sala dei Notari,"Museo in Musica" Ensemble Music Festival (15th edition). School performances at I.C. Perugia 4, Conservatorio Antinori, I.C. Castelfidardo, I.C. Deruta.

May 26-27
"La scatola armoniosa" at Salone d'Apollo - Palazzo della Penna

June 6-7
Ne resterà solo UNO

• **TEATRO dell'EQUILIBRIO** (Perugia)

TdE organizes performances and shows in various locations and theatres at the local and national levels.

Activities:
Experimental courses, workshops, and internships related to theatre (diction, mime, reading, and writing), acting and music (improvisation, stage movement, performance), and production (screenplay, casting, rehearsals, staging). Other activities include edutainment for school institutions and theatre courses to support the training and communication segments of companies, institutions, and (profit/non-profit) organizations.

• **TETRAKTIS Percussioni** (Perugia)

Tetraktis is an Italian Quartet of percussion instruments with twenty years of artistic and teaching experience. It offers educational programmes and detailed concert lessons for a range of age groups (e.g. chamber music for percussion instruments). Tetraktis collaborates with several national and international artists.

• **Commedia Harmonica** (Assisi - PG)

Commedia Harmonica is a vocal ensemble group created to promote choral music not only as presented in concerts but also combined with poetry, literature, theatre, and dance. Composed of a group of polyphonic voices, it is mainly devoted to the study and execution of ancient music from Gregorian to classical polyphony. It carries out numerous projects, shows, concerts, and collaborations throughout Italy.

Conclusion

All of our debates, discussions, questionnaires, and meetings have shown the remarkable potential of the EducOpera project for pupils and the positive impact such experiences can have on their development. Professors, educators, and professionals all believe in the importance of supporting schools in combatting the phenomenon of Early School

Leaving, promoting social inclusion, and the pupils' acquisition of new skills and competences through educational activities outside school related to music and opera.

We decided to frame EducOpera activities within the context of the alternative education and training law in Italy, thus creating a replicable model and implementing a path that will continue beyond the scope of the project. We offered students an unusual and different option for an alternative education and training experience that was much appreciated and produced excellent results in terms of satisfaction and personal growth, educational success, and the acquisition of new competences and skills. We also co-administered a test to all participants in order to evaluation changes in psychological dimensions such as perceived self-efficacy. The table below provides a graphic presentation of these results (Graph 6 Annex B).

 To summarize: the participants improved their scores in dimensions such as "finalization of actions" (i.e. the ability to plan and finalize any kind of working action), "relational fluidity", and "context analysis".

The activities are interchangeable and may be revised and adapted according to specific needs and the area of implementation. Adjustments can be made depending on the field of the project and on the specific target groups at which the project is aimed. The implemented process is suitable for objectives such as those of the EducOpera project for which we created a collaborative network consisting of schools, associations, professionals, university, educators, teachers, and pupils. The project is actually becoming even more collaborative and we will continue to cooperate in the future on related projects carried out in other European countries with similar participants sharing common goals and values.

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Connecting Key Actors and Stakeholders through the EducOpera Project in Spain

Jesus Boyano, INFODEF

During the implementation of the EducOpera project in Spain, INFODEF engaged key institutions and stakeholders. All the organizations involved are institutions of reference for opera education in Spain. They included different kinds of organizations and programmes such as Teatro Real, Spain's leading opera house, considered to be the top institution in the country in the field of music and performing arts, and LÓVA (Opera as a Vehicle for Learning), an initiative with more than ten years' experience supporting Education to Opera at schools.

During the implementation of the project, several meetings and working sessions with cultural entities, NGOs, and schools were held at the local level in Valladolid and at the regional level in Castilla y León. The series of meetings began with OSCYL, the Symphonic Orchestra of Castilla y León, which supports a range of educational programmes for schools in the region based on music education. The coordinators of educational programmes at OSCYL provided relevant information for the implementation of activities and evaluations tests to measure the results of Education to Opera. Similarly, meetings with the directors and teachers at CEIP Antonio Allúe and CEIP Kantik@ Arroyo, two schools that have previous experience in Education to Opera were very productive, collecting relevant experience and knowledge and exploring the implementation of new activities with similar objectives as EducOpera. NGOs, such as LaBienPaga which supports cultural programmes for underprivileged young adults, provided additional analyses and included the perspective of educators from civil society who work with schools in order to prevent school failure and Early School Leaving.

Methodological approach

The methodology applied during the different phases of the project was inspired by previous successful programmes using Education to Opera and other projects addressing the needs of underprivileged young people.

The first programme, LÓVA (Opera as a Vehicle for Learning), was a project carried out by tutors in the classroom over the course of a full school year. The classroom is converted into an opera company that creates from scratch an opera or a short piece of musical theatre. The pupils who form the company are organized in professional teams that compose the music, write the script, design the scenery, make the costumes, carry out the press campaign, raise funds, manufacture props, design the lighting, etc. In Spain, training for music education is only provided for primary school teachers. Secondary school teachers are not trained in music education at all. Music teachers are traditionally musicologists (who studied musicology at university) or instrumentalists (who studied an instrument at conservatory). In Spain, anyone who has graduated in any field (philology, physics, biology, history, pharmacy, etc.) is allowed to teach music at the secondary school level.

The aim of LÓVA teachers is to teach music through creating a challenge in the classroom: namely, to create and perform an opera. Opera, the integration of several disciplines, also offers the metaphor of a journey that pupils travel together. The final piece and its performance is not the goal of the project but only a small part of the project. The show, the magic: this is what happens in the classroom. The performance, entirely created by pupils, usually lasts a half an hour and features songs and musical moments interspersed with theatrical action. During performances, the nascent company is solely responsible for the show and the teachers sit among the public.

Over the past eleven years, the project has expanded to fifteen CCAA and has continued to expand its activities. LÓVA has created projects such as *aprendanza*, annual meetings of art and movement education. It has also created the program *arteducar,* the collaboration of public administrations in the area of teacher training.

It must be remembered that the only requirement for teaching music at public secondary schools is that teachers must have graduated in any field and have passed a

central examination (*oposición*) in one of the Comunidades Autónomas. The majority of the content on the exam has to do with the history of Western classical music. The training for primary school music teachers has existed since the 1990s and takes place at universities (generally departments of music education at faculties of education). The introduction of the new title of music teacher trained for primary school education at the Spanish university ("Maestro en Educación Musical") was seen by many social groups – political parties, universities, trade unions, and pedagogical organizations – as a complete success at the time, this despite serious concerns about the large number of student teachers in each generation and the fact that there is no specific entrance exam for music and no individual classes for specific instruments or singing.

The specialist degree course that lasts three years provides student teachers with musical abilities, skills, and knowledge as well as an appropriate level of music-didactics, pedagogical, and psychological knowledge for work with pupils from the first to sixth grade (aged 6 to 12 years old). From the seventh grade onward, music education varies widely depending on what music teachers have studied and on the pedagogical and didactical training they have received. Although the majority of these teachers have some knowledge of music, the absence of specific pedagogical skills in the teaching of music is commonplace. A degree for music teachers includes different teaching and learning approaches. Because of the large number of student teachers in universities, lectures are the most common way of conveying knowledge and these lectures usually combine theory with the actual making of music. A large lecture hall is often divided into smaller subgroups in order to create smaller workshops and music-pedagogy practice classes. Portfolio and e-learning are not frequently employed. Individual instrumental or singing classes do not exist. Student teachers can really only develop their teaching skills in the last of the six semesters when they visit schools. Here contact with the reality of the classroom is close and intense. In this context, they are usually supervised by a music teacher in coordination with a lecturer from the university, so student teachers have the possibility to observe, actively participate as a teacher, and compare their ideas with supervisors and other colleagues.

The second project referred to above is ON STAGE, a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project carried out by INFODEF and partners between the years 2013 and 2015. The project aimed at empowering young migrants by improving their employability through biographical work and elements of drama. The project ON

STAGE combined two previous successful projects that sought to provide concrete solutions by introducing new forms of empowerment through Vocational Education and Training as well as through counselling, and more specifically by combining biographical learning models with drama techniques when working with young migrants and other clients.

The partnership developed didactic materials to be used by VET providers and their staff working with first and second-generation migrants in sectors at risk of not having a chance in the labour market due to poor school experience and difficult personal background. The main materials for VET trainers and counsellors to help them improve the migrants' situation were the ON STAGE Handbook, the ON STAGE Practice Set, and the ON STAGE ECVET KIT. Activities with the targeted learner groups included different biographical reflective work and drama sessions, among them YOUNGSTERS ON STAGE, selected scenarios produced by the young migrants themselves.

Action plan and activities carried out

During the first months of the project, efforts were concentrated on work with teachers and educators in order to gather relevant feedback about their experience with programmes and activities related to Education to Opera. In September 2018, the beginning of the new school year, activities with pupils began.

INFODEF worked with CEIP Antonio Allúe, a school from Valladolid involved in the project. The principal and the teachers responsible for music education at the school conducted activities related to opera. They received the pedagogical support of the OSCYL, the Symphonic Orchestra of Castilla y León region. INFODEF also supported the improvement of key competencies in non-formal and informal activities with youngsters in order to prevent Early School Leaving.

Several sessions with the pupils were carried out, selecting one group of pupils to participate in the activities. One of the key findings from the feedback collected by several organizations and educators with expertise in Education to Opera was that the best approach for this type of project is to focus efforts in small groups of pupils

as the activities tend to be intense and challenging. Pupils in the group attended the sixth grade of primary school, children between the ages of 11 and 12. This age is the most suitable for the use of music education to prevent Early School Leaving. The group was taught directly by one of the music education teachers in order to ensure a deeper control. The group included twenty-five pupils from various backgrounds:

- Pupil at potential risk for Early School Leaving were defined as pupils coping with social or psychological factors that might lead to Early School Leaving or even school failure. This includes pupils that present learning difficulties and pupils from social environments with higher rates of Early School Leaving.

- School integrated pupils were defined as pupils with good performance at school that do not show any sign of potential risk of Early School Leaving.

Before the testing phase, INFODEF organized a joint four-hour working session with two participants from INFODEF, two school teachers, and two educators from the LaBienPagá association, experts in music education, and advocates of underprivileged students. The goals of the session were to prepare the implementation of the testing sessions, work on pedagogical approaches, and define methods to monitor the process before the launch of the testing phase.

Methodological approach

The four-hour working session with teachers and educators was practical and focused on preparation for the implementation of the project with pupils. The participants discussed different methods and approaches for training young pupils drawing on aspects of opera. They offered their past experiences, including the previous implementation of the LÓVA programme and the regional programmes on music education supported by the OSCYL. INFODEF also provided information at the sessions, namely the different guidelines for the EducOpera project, including IO1 and IO2. In particular, we discussed different approaches for developing competencies using Education to Opera and motivating students in order to prevent school failure. Finally, the participants analysed and discussed different approaches for the assessment and evaluation of the progress of pupils and for the measurement of the impact of Education to Opera.

Sessions with pupils used a combination of non-formal and informal approaches on music education focused on opera themes. They combined practical activities with a learning-by-doing approach to work on the development of key competencies. The sessions focussed on using the metaphorical and evocative power of the performing arts, combining music, dance and theatre, and the teamwork cooperation for the development of key competences.

The sessions strived to make pupils decide on, create, and manage their own content around basic aspects related to the production of an opera. It included steps such as choosing the name of the opera company and its logo, writing a short libretto, the acting work, the scenography, the coordination of the activities, and, of course, creating the music and its instrumental performance.

The entire methodological approach emphasizes the empowerment and autonomy of the pupils. The aim is to explore and put into practice this pedagogical strategy as a way to motivate pupils in order to prevent their disengagement from learning and from school that ultimately leads to school failure. Through this methodology, they become invested participants responsible for defining and guiding their own learning process, using opera as the theme and vehicle for facilitating this learning process.

There was a focus on two basic perceptual organizational processes related to the encoding, retrieval, and production of rhythmic patterns: namely, the grouping and derivation of metrical structures. The grouping of metrical structures refers to what musicians typically call rhythmic patterns or phrases, each with their own beginnings and endings. The derivation of metrical structures refers to the ability to perceive and extract underlying hierarchies in a rhythmic pattern or in what musicians call musical meter.

The derivation of metrical structures and, moreover, the ability to synchronize the body's gestures and voice to the musical beat (i.e. rhythmic synchronization) is a complex skill that makes demands on auditory, perceptual, analytical, and motor functions. Both the perception and production of temporal events develop considerably during childhood. Age, musical training, and culture are known to influence children's discrimination of accents in rhythmic pattern, reproduction of rhythms, the ability to keep a steady beat, and rhythmic synchronization. Significantly, rhythmic synchronization is a

socially learned behaviour that is influenced by culture, stimulus properties, individual dispositions, and children's motor skills, including degree of control over their bodies.

During the implementation of the project, changes in children's pitch and rhythmic discrimination, pitch matching, singing a song from memory, and rhythmic synchronization skills were measured over the period. As noted before, rhythmic synchronization, because of its centrality in collective music making, is a major milestone of musical development.

Feedback and lessons learned

General reflections extracted from the testing:

- Good manners are an important area of development in the sessions: to say hello, goodbye, thank you, please, to look directly into the eyes of others, to consider others. The teacher has to be a model for this behaviour. The model is what will guide pupils through the process ("Thank you for not talking"; "Higher please"; "Thank you").

- One of the objectives is for the pupils themselves to regulate the process, to decide with which pupils to work, with whom to sit, with whom to form groups.

- It is better to make statements like "thanks for being quiet" and "thanks for respecting others" than statements like "shut up" or "sit over there".

- During the sessions, we tried to get pupils to speak clearly, to be firm in their opinions, to defend them with passion, but also to accept the opinions of others.

- Our goal is to get pupils to act independently.

- During the process, it is very important that pupils have time not only to promote and defend their ideas but to express their opinions. If we don't give them enough time, we will not understand what they really feel, how they are truly reacting to what is happening around them.

- During the session, the pupils sit in a circle with their hands on each other's knees. This way they don't have to rise their hand to speak and they are aware of who they are sitting next to. This is the basic position in which the pupils develop many of their activities and take time to reflect and share. They also sit in a circle and talk about how they are going to decide who they will sit with. In the beginning, they often sit and talk with their friends but soon they realize that it might be better if they sit with other people since they work better when they are less distracted. The pupils decide on their own place in the class and in the circle and learn to guide their own behaviour. The teachers responsibility is to empower them.

- We also decide together what kind of atmosphere we want to achieve in the classroom. We divide the class into groups that generate lists of what they think is necessary for a good classroom atmosphere: confidence, emotion, respect, freedom, open doors, and music.

- The arrangement of the space in classroom: when the activities start is good to have a blank space, so they can decide what they want to place along the activities.

- Concentration is very important during the warm-up exercises. No one should have difficulties because of lack of energy. The warm-up exercises are done to energize pupils, to provide a group feeling, concentration, to create relationships, to respect each other, and to learn good manners. These exercises can be considered a game, a routine, or a ritual, whatever has greater meaning for the group.

- It is important to propose different dynamics based on challenges that must be achieved by the group including the use of music, dance, and performance.

- A final evaluation of the pupils in the group is carried out is a key part of the process. The point is to discover how pupils perceived the learning process, deciding what they wanted to learn and learning in a group, and how it felt to express emotions and ideas through music, dance, and theatre.

- It is also important to do an evaluation among teachers and educators. We are looking particularly for responses to three questions: What elements in the classroom impede learning? What elements in society impede learning? What are the characteristics that concern us in our pupils and how can Education to Opera help them?

Conclusion

- The implementation of the EducOpera approach is very demanding. To successfully carry out educational programmes with opera depends on the personal commitment of teachers and educators. It requires a high level of involvement, time, and effort.

- The involvement of groups of underprivileged youngsters outside the formal school programmes is also quite challenging. It is less complicated to implement the EducOpera approach in the formal educational system than in the informal or volunteer sector.

- The EducOpera approach covers different activities with varied dimensions. It is necessary to precisely identify available resources and the capacity of organizations to carry out activities in this frame.

- It is necessary to prepare educators in advance and to plan the activities and methods to be applied.

- The more formal or organized the activity the higher the likelihood that young people will be involved and have a positive experience.

- It is recommended to define the role of the organization at the beginning and be clear about which persons are involved in various tasks. Staff, volunteers, and the pupils should be provided in advance with appropriate information.

- Given the unpredictability and changeability of issues in the music profession today, even trained professionals in the field cannot be expected to have ready answers for everything. It is far more useful if they acquire the skills they need to the find answers for themselves.

- In order to meet the challenge of education and vocational training, it is necessary to equip people not only with the ability to adapt to change but also with the ability to shape the direction of change.

- Laying the foundation for learning later in life should be a primary objective of early education.

- Developing education and training within a framework of lifelong learning is seen as the overarching concept.

- In terms of content, this means the acquisition of key skills and a broad competence base, the use of interdisciplinary approaches and encouraging the ability to learn in an autonomous and creative manner.

- In terms of the learning processes, it means adapting the processes to the needs of individuals and reformulating the teacher/learner relationship as active interaction bolstered by support, counselling, and guidance services that facilitate the creative use of knowledge.

- In terms of outcomes, it implies the need to develop possibilities for greater visibility, validation, and mutual recognition of learning outcomes achieved in all three learning settings: formal, non-formal, and informal.

- In non-formal learning contexts, pupils learn how and when to use their musical skills and knowledge, and to adapt them to the purposes of the particular context in which they work and learn. Metacognition and generic skills are taught so that pupils can adapt their present musical knowledge and skills to the context in which they will be used and so they can learn (new skills) from practice.

- Learning is fostered by reflecting on the learning experience by the pupils and by others who are present in the learning situation. In addition to musical skills, other relevant skills are imparted in non-formal learning contexts, including the fostering of attitudes such as openness to others and a good working ethos.

- Teachers must learn their new role as coach and engage in a thoughtful conversation with their pupils.

- Another aspect of the EducOpera approach is the development of deeper and more integrated collaborations with workplace partners.

- The following are the main features of the reflective practice of the EducOpera approach: learning by doing, coaching rather than teaching, and a dialogue of reciprocal reflection-in-action between coach/teacher and student.

- Whether by teaching music, theatre, dance, or singing, the EducOpera project aims to provide young beneficiaries with self-confidence and an opportunity to express themselves that they rarely have in other contexts. More than just teaching a technique, the EducOpera project aims to help pupils overcome

their circumstances, educational status, economic disadvantages, and even disabilities. The pupils have a direct experience of teamwork (for example, in orchestras) and of respecting and listening to others (for example, in the theatre). They learn or rediscover values such as concentration, zest for life, sharing, and self-esteem, and acquire the tools they need to tell their own stories.

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Perspectives: EducOpera: An Innovative way to Combat Early School Learning (ESL) in Europe

Bénédicte Halba, Marjorie Piquette

The goal of the EducOpera project is to design a tool (a portfolio) and a method (mentoring) for professionals and educators understood in the broadest sense (both at school and outside of school). This tool and method will equip them with what they need to evaluate the skills and competences acquired by youngsters through Education to Opera as a part of non-formal and informal learning (the Copenhagen process). In this sense, Education to Opera is an example of an extracurricular activity. The target audience of this publication is educators who would like to include the EducOpera process in their pedagogical approach. The publication may also reach a wider audience including heads of schools (with pupils aged from 13 to 15 years); representatives of NGOs offering extracurricular activities to youngsters, and; members of local governments in positions that offer support to families whose children might face difficulties at school with the goal of preventing Early School Leaving (ESL). These different types of professionals will be better equipped to identify, evaluate, and also support educators involved in extracurricular activities that builds a bridge between formal learning (acquired at school) and non-formal and informal learning (acquired outside of school).

The tool and method designed for the first year of the project included not only an artistic focus, namely, the learning of singing, acting, and playing music (the three compulsory elements that describe opera), and other skills linked to the activities of an opera house. The latter includes technical skills (electricity, makeup, costume design, construction of scenery), managerial skills (fundraising, human resources, project management), pedagogical skills (historical/cultural background, and the evaluation of the cognitive impact of an Education to Opera on pupils (the assessment of competences acquired and those required at school, etc.). The tool and method portfolio suggests a four-step approach in how to use Education to Opera to acquire experience relevant

to the development of competences required at school and to combat Early School Leaving (ESL). The last part of the publication provides a presentation of the project and testing implemented in different countries (opera in France, secondary schools in Italy, local schools in Denmark, association for opera in Slovenia, a variety of schools in Spain) along with detailed descriptions of the difficulties faced by educators and youngsters, which might prove useful to educators who decide to use the EducOpera portfolio.

The second year focuses on mentoring and includes the evaluation of skills and competences acquired by pupils during the Education to Opera product. It suggests the use of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) designed by the English researcher Professor Michael Goodman (Kings College, London), which includes social and emotional dimensions as well as hyperactivity and attention. It addresses a target group of teenagers aged 13 to 15 years, and has the goal of evaluating the triggers that cause Early School Leaving. The mentoring approach highlights the benefits of extracurricular activities for pupils, emphasizing voluntary activities and developing key competences through music and opera activities. In addition, a number of practical exercises are recommended along with a survey for both educators and youngsters (in order to evaluate the level of competences acquired). Perhaps the most significant illustration of a successful mentoring approach comes from the Slovenian Opera project created during the EducOpera programme. It includes many elements: artistic learning (singing, acting, playing music), a powerful message through a story (diversity and respect), and professional profiles of the Slovenian team involved. In the final chapters of the book, the Italian, French, and Spanish cases of the implementation of the EducOpera project are presented.

Education to Opera is not a typical extracurricular activity because it is often perceived as elitist, especially by people living in sensitive urban areas. This is part of the unique approach of EducOpera. The testing implemented in Slovenia and France was especially fruitful. Glasbena matica Ljubljana has many years of experience integrating children and youngsters using musical and stage productions. The opera they created for the EducOpera is both a meaningful artistic achievement and provides useful pedagogical support to educators in Europe who would like to repeat the experience. The Opéra de Massy company has accumulated long experience in Massy (a sensitive urban area to the south of Paris) involving pupils in the neighbourhood. The partnership built in

France – combining the opera house, a secondary school, and a research institute (iriv Conseil) that has worked with these populations for many years – may be considered an example of best practice for any school or opera house with the aim of implementing the EducOpera project. In both cases (Slovenia and France), the professional team is presented and the involvement of the pupils is shown in several videos (an extended video of the Slovenian Opera and six short videos in the French case).

The European partnership created for the EducOpera project with diverse professional profiles (university, research institute/centre, VET body, and opera house) has been crucial for the achievement of the Intellectual Outputs as well as the presentation of the range of different traditions and experiences of the five participating countries (Denmark, France, Italy, Spain, and Slovenia). It was a significant and also rewarding challenge to implement Education to Opera in an innovative way in order to support youngsters and educators in combatting the issue of Early School Leaving in sensitive urban areas, which tend to be less familiar with the culture of opera. Access to this supposedly exclusive cultural activity has become a concern in many European countries that generally have policies aimed at increasing the inclusiveness of culture and education. The French Ministry of Culture has recently created a so-called "directive in charge of issues of democratization, access to culture, coordination with the territories and support of innovation". EducOpera is a meaningful example of the spirit of this directive. It also represents an alternative pedagogical method relying on the free will of both educators and young people. It must not be compulsory otherwise or it loses its most important dimension: involving youngsters on a voluntary basis to join extracurricular activities with the support of educators also recruited on a voluntary basis and other professionals with diverse skills and competences (artistic, technical, managerial, and pedagogical). Education acquired in this spirit is different because it emerges from mutual agreement: educators agree to support youngsters in their effort to re-engage at school, and youngsters agree to regularly attend pedagogical sessions with a given goal: for example, performing an opera (the Slovenian example), learning about the many skills that are needed to create an opera (the French example), implementing extracurricular activities that are important to school (the Italian example), evaluating the difficulties pupils face at school (the Danish example), and enhancing diversity in sensitive areas (the Spanish example).

All the members of the European team hope that this challenging project will have a future in more European countries and also globally as opera has an emphatically international scope.

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List of institutions:

The Opéra de Massy House (Essonne, France) is the last and therefore youngest Opera house in France (established in 1993) and probably in the World. It is anyway a unique case of Opera house to have been built in a sensitive urban area characterized by a high diversity of its population - in terms of social, ethnic, economic, cultural and religious background. Its first aim is to make its productions be available to a wide audience, most of them unfamiliar to the culture of Opera, whatever the age (from kinder garden to retirement homes), the social or economic situation (the price shouldn't be a main obstacle to attend shows), and the cultural or religious background - enhancing values of tolerance and diversity. On the ground, the action implemented by the Opera de Massy team since its creation has been to open doors to an audience who would consider that Opera would be an elitist and therefore unavailable leisure for a « qualified » target group - in terms of social and economic capital. A special team, composed of two people with relevant skills in intercultural mediation, is in charge of conducting actions among relevant stakeholders such as schools (all levels from kinder garden to high school), the city hall, social centers, associations or any local organisation addressing a sensitive public (migrants, drop outs, disabled people, prisoners…) – guided visits, workshops, participation to rehearsals, pedagogical sessions gathering teachers. Its productions tackle issues such as struggle against discriminations gathering professional and amateur profiles. The main aim is to raise vocations, interest, critical thinking, with the final aim to struggle against Early school leaving among youngsters or social exclusion for any sensitive public.

The Institute of Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv, www.iriv.net) is a private, not for-profit institute, independent of public administration and economic interests. It aims to improve knowledge and practice through lifelong learning principles within the not for-profit sector. It was first focused on volunteering (between 1997 and 2003), then broadened into the field of migration studies (since 2003) ; both voluntary and migratory experiences are being considered as examples of non-formal and informal learning. In 2000, it created a profit organisation, iriv Conseil in order to carry on studies and trainings both on a national and European level. The results of iriv's projects are available at www.iriv-vaeb.net for volunteering and www.iriv-migrations.net for migration issues ; the general portal www.iriv-publications.net is publishing all the articles, research reports and pedagogical tools & strategies designed since 1997. Since 2004, the Institute has published an electronic review (www.benevolat.net) ; since 2016 a newsletter on migration issues was later on dedicated to Diversity (www.club-iriv.net). Since 1998, the iriv has organised or co-organised several conferences and seminars both on a national and European level (France, Austria, Netherlands...) on Volunteering and Migration. On the basis of two experimental projects implemented for migrants (Migrapass project, 2010-2012) and youngsters (SAS, 2012-2014), the iriv has conducted two actions on the ground- for migrants at the Cité des Métiers (club of iriv) since 2012 and for youngsters in Essonne (action with a secondary school and cultural bodies) since 2013.

The Danish School of Education was established in 2011 as a department of the Faculty of Arts at Aarhus University. It originates from the Danish School of Education (DPU), which was originally established as the Danish University of Education on July 1, 2000 with the merger of the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies, the Danish National Institute for Educational Research, the Danish School of Advanced Pedagogy, and the Danish National Centre for Technology-Supported Learning. On June 1, 2007 the DPU merged with the University of Aarhus and changed status from an independent university to a university school at the University of Aarhus. The Danish School of Education (known in Denmark as DPU) constitutes Denmark's largest and strongest university environment for basic and applied research within the field of education and educational theory (pedagogy). With its 155 scholars and 90 PhD students, it constitutes one of the largest education research environments in Europe. The research at the school has an international foundation and is built around strong scientific perspectives on educational theory including: didactics (subject-based and general didactics), psychology, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology In addition, we conduct interdisciplinary research aimed at specific educational fields of inquiry, with daycare and schools playing the largest and most central roles. The Danish School of Education offers high-quality advanced degree programmes with vocational relevance for university graduates, teachers, childcare professionals, nurses, and graduates with other professional Bachelor's degrees.

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) is the leading Slovenian research centre in humanities and a cutting-edge academic institution in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. It has a multidisciplinary character. In addition to the humanities, its spheres of research also cover the natural and social sciences. The research network of ZRC SAZU consists of researchers working at eighteen institutes. Researchers also conduct their studies at three regional research stations that connect the research network across Slovenia. ZRC SAZU has worked on the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Framework Programmes, the Interreg IIIB Programme, the European Territorial Cooperation Programme (transnational and interregional cooperation), Cross-Border Cooperation, the Life+ Programme, the COST Programme, the Lifelong Learning Programme, the eContentPlus Programme, the Culture 2007–2013 Programme, and the Erasmus+ programme. ZRC SAZU also carries out a series of applied projects that exceed the narrow orientation of individual specialized areas and enable valuable links between various institutes and disciplines. ZRC SAZU offers several postgraduate academic programmes. It also has its own publishing house, bookstore, and audio-visual laboratory.
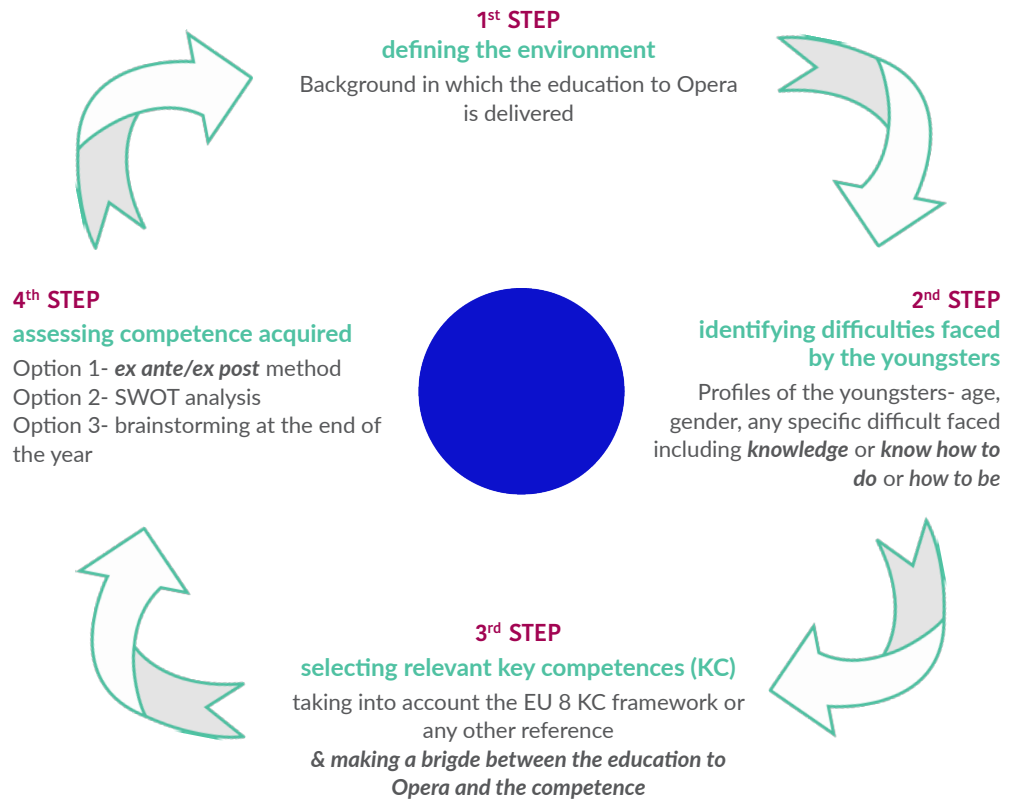
INFODEF, Institute for the Promotion of Development and Training, is a private and independent centre for research, development, and innovation whose mission is to design and carry out projects that contribute to sustainable and inclusive development through education, culture, and innovation. The centre designs and develops innovative tools, methodologies, products and services that respond to current social and economic challenges and anticipate and drive the changes needed to achieve future goals and objectives in society.

INFODEF supports the modernization of educational systems and the pedagogical innovativeness of public and private educational institutions at national and European levels. It has extensive expertise developing innovative teaching and learning methodologies, tools and resources and has worked on the development of (EQF and ECVET based) training curriculums and learning outcomes, the design of new tools for the identification, assessment, and validation of basic, key, transversal and professional competencies and new instruments, the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the evaluation and quality assessment of educational programmes.

The University of Perugia (www.unipg.it), founded in 1308, is one of the oldest universities in Europe. Research, education, and consulting activities are organized in 16 departments with approximately 23,500 students, 1,100 professors and researchers, and 1,000 staff members. In recent years, the university has undertaken a broad renewal of its programs and curricula in order to prepare students for the demands of the labour market and satisfy the needs for innovation in the private and public sectors. With its wide range of degree programs covering nearly all fields of study, the university combines a long and solid tradition of excellence with a commitment to innovation and an interdisciplinary approach. Postgraduate degrees are offered in top rated specialization schools and doctoral programmes along with a variety of masters programmes in various academic disciplines. On the international level, the university remains firmly committed to developing collaborative relationships with EU and non-EU Universities in order to facilitate and improve international advanced study opportunities for its students. Currently we have established working agreements with 361 institutions of higher learning throughout the European Union, and about 90 cooperation agreements with EU and extra-EU universities. Several degree programmes available at the University of Perugia already confer double degrees or European degrees.

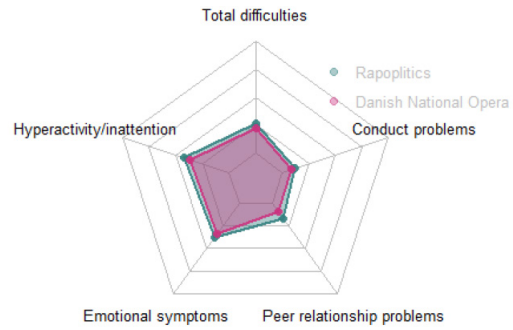**Figure 1: Schema presenting the 4 step approach**

A 4 STEP CIRCULAR APPROACH
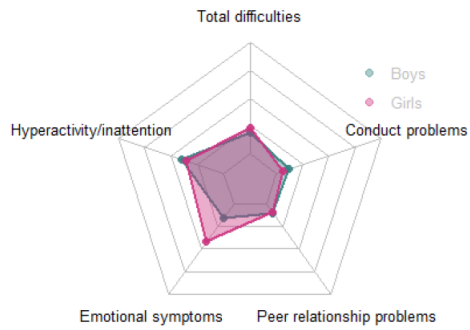
1st STEP
defining the environment
Background in which the education to Opera is delivered

4th STEP
assessing competence acquired
Option 1- *ex ante/ex post* method
Option 2- SWOT analysis
Option 3- brainstorming at the end of the year

2nd STEP
identifying difficulties faced by the youngsters
Profiles of the youngsters- age, gender, any specific difficult faced including *knowledge* or *know how to do* or *how to be*

3rd STEP
selecting relevant key competences (KC)
taking into account the EU 8 KC framework or any other reference
& making a brigde between the education to Opera and the competence

Graph 1: Total Difficulties Score for the two programs

EducOpera Participants SDQ Score

**EducOpera Participants SDQ Score
Danish National Opera**

Total difficulties

Hyperactivity/inattention

Conduct problems

Emotional symptoms

Peer relationship problems

Boys
Girls

**EducOpera Participants SDQ Score
Rapolitics**

Total difficulties

Hyperactivity/inattention

Conduct problems

Emotional symptoms

Peer relationship problems

Boys
Girls
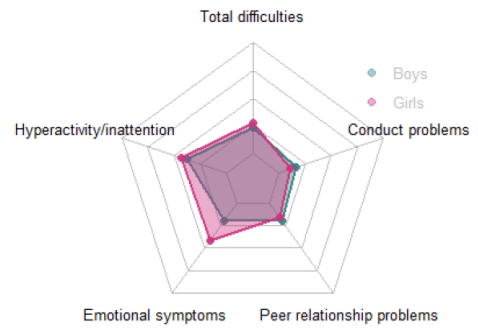
Graph 3: Boxplot for the SDQ total score; SDQ subscales for Emotional Symptoms and Hyperactivity

EducOpera participants Total SDQ Score

EducOpera participants SDQ Emotional symptoms

EducOpera participants SDQ Hyperactivity
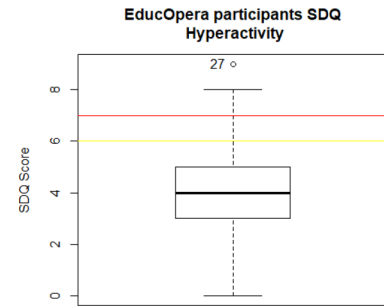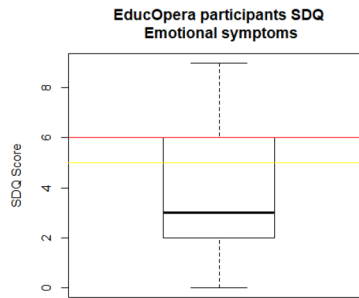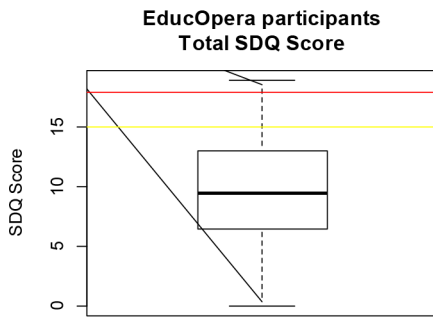
What new things did you learn by participating in the opera?
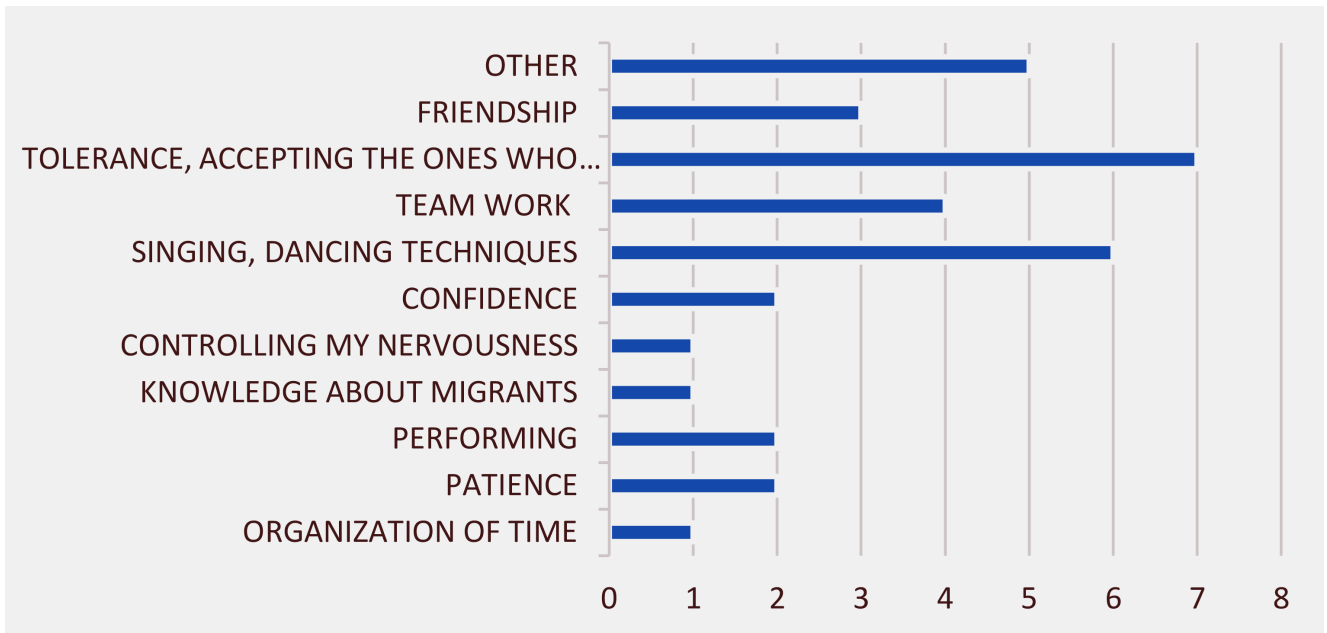
Why do you think you will or will not benefit from the knowledge that you acquired in the opera process?
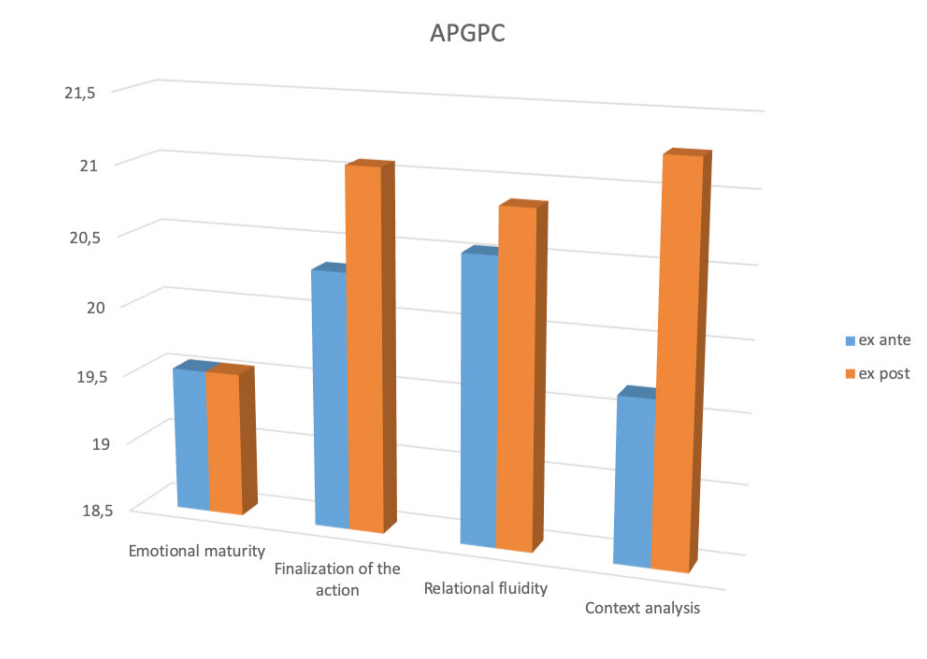
Graph 6: Results of different dimensions

APGPC

Table 1: Dropout rates, age and average enrollment in months 2017

Upper Secondary enrolment affiliated to the EducOpera programs	Average age on dropout (years of age)		Average modelled dropout rate (percent of enrolled)		Average number of months enrolled when dropout (months)	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Rapolitics	17.8 y	17.5 y	17 %	18 %	11.3 m	10.8 m
The National Opera	18.0 y	17.9 y	17 %	19 %	13.0 m	11.8 m
Country averages	18.0 y	18.3 y	17 %	17 %	12.3 m	13.7 m

Table 2: SWOT analysis from both pupils and teachers perspectives

Strengths	Weaknesses
The partnership between the three main partners: Opéra de Massy, College Blaise Pascal, and IRIV. The involvement of Opéra de Massy professionals who also had relevant pedagogical experience with young people.	The profile of pupils who may or may not be interested in a non-standard extracurricular activity (mixed results mixed during the first year, more successful implementation during the second year). The time and involvement required by the programme throughout the years was considered too demanding.
Opportunities	Threats
The introduction of the competence approach and new methods of evaluating pupils including the eight key competences European framework adopted in 2006 and updated in 2018. The introduction of non-formal and informal learning methods which is more relevant in the last year of the College (secondary school) because of the required internship.	The involvement of teachers who accepted the implementation of an extracurricular program. The interest of the head of the schools who agreed to participate in an evaluation of the program. The recognition of time given by teachers to their pupils during extracurricular activities.

Annex D

Audiovideo pedagogical supports/tools

France – training sessions with students

Click here

France – sessions on stage

Click here

Italy – presentation of the project

Click here

Slovenia – from training to show

Click here

Denmark – different kind of art

Click here

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iriv

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